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Covering White Plains, Greenburgh, Harrison

COVID-19 Breakdown:
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Greenburgh
4,370 (213)
Harrison
2,546 (177)
Scarsdale
1,075 (38)
Elmsford
696 (29)

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March 30 - April 5, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 11, Issue 502

WP Installs New Traffic Signal to Assist Pedestrians

By Rick Pezzullo

The City of White Plains has installed a new traffic signal on Main Street between Lexington Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard to make it easier and safer for pedestrians to cross.

The HAWK (High Intensity Activated Cross Walk) signal gives pedestrians the ability to cross at the most desirable and efficient location while providing only a short disruption to motorists.

Like conventional traffic signals, the HAWK signal provides a pedestrian with an indication notifying them when to cross the street. Unlike conventional traffic signals, the HAWK is only operational when activated by a pedestrian.

The HAWK signal rests in a dark state, allowing normal traffic flow. In its resting state, the HAWK displays a constant "Don't Walk" indication for pedestrian crossing until activated by a pedestrian. When a pedestrian presses the button, approaching drivers will see a flashing yellow signal indicating that they should reduce speed and be prepared to stop for pedestrians. The signal then changes to a solid yellow, then a solid red light, indicating for drivers to stop. Once the dual red lights begin to alternately flash, vehicles must stop for pedestrians but are permitted to proceed if there are no pedestrians in the crosswalk. When the signal is dark and if the pedestrian crossing has completed, the vehicular

movement can continue through the crosswalk.

An audible tone and vibrating arrow button help visually impaired people locate the HAWK signal's activation button.

City officials noted most pedestrian fatalities occur at mid-block crossings or on multi-lane roadways at non-signalized locations. Main Street between Lexington Avenue and Martin Luther King Boulevard sees many mid-block crossings on their way to and from the White Plains Metro-North station. At this location, Main Street is also a multi-lane road. For pedestrians, walking just a half block out of the way to get to a signal can increase their delay by up to three minutes.



Traffic signals at busy intersection in downtown White Plains.

Greenburgh Officials Split on Reopening of Town Hall

By Anna Young

Greenburgh Supervisor Paul Feiner found himself at odds with Town Board members after he pressed for Town Hall to reopen and senior programs to resume as the number of immunized individuals continues to rise.

Feiner last week lobbied that town employees should return to Town Hall by May 3, suggesting it would be a safe environment with every worker now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. While he essentially had no plan for how to safely reopen Town Hall, he didn't budge on his suggestion despite reluctance from most board members.

"The employees should be working at the Town Hall," Feiner said during the March 23 work session. "Every employee is able to get the vaccine right now and if somebody doesn't take the vaccine they should still come to work."

When Councilwoman Gina Jackson asked if employees would have their temperatures screened, Feiner responded, "If you want to do the temperature, we can do the temperature also. Anything that we can do to make employees feel safe I think is worthwhile."

Feiner's one suggestion was to erect tents outside Town Hall in the parking lot for employees to meet with residents. He also recommended allowing residents who have been vaccinated inside the building, but only

if they provide proof they have been immunized.

While Jackson asserted the town shouldn't set a reopening date until a plan has been written out and reviewed, Councilman Francis Sheehan said officials should be heeding the advice of medical professionals instead of placing employees at risk. He also advised that other variants of the coronavirus have emerged despite the success of the vaccine.

"It's clear to me there's a major political push nationwide to open up when all the health professionals are saying 'be careful,'" Sheehan said. "I'm objecting to having a hard and fast date that this is when we're going to open up without any caveats in it, which is why I would prefer something that is written up."

Feiner said the town should try to give a reopening plan a chance, adding that if there is another surge in virus cases, the town can "go backwards" and shut everything down. He said "there's no reason" Town Hall shouldn't reopen and employees should be working in-person with the vaccine so accessible.

"We've been talking about reopening for months and nothing ever happened," Feiner said. "Right now, there's enough vaccines that are being made available (and) it's very easy now to get a vaccine. By May 1, it's going to be even easier."

continued on page 2



White Plains Hospital's Day of Hope

On March 9, 2020, White Plains Hospital received its first COVID-19 patient—marking the start of a life-changing journey. One year later, the hospital brought together its leadership, COVID-19 survivors, elected officials and community members to reflect and honor its healthcare heroes. Attending were COVID-19 survivors, including Hugo Sosa, former FDNY Captain who beat COVID after a 44-day hospitalization; The Westchester Children's Chorus; Susan Fox, WPH President & CEO; White Plains Mayor Tom Roach; and nurses, physicians and staff who led the COVID fight.

Greenburgh Officials Wrangle Over Reopening of Town Hall

continued from page 1

Currently, New Yorkers 50 and up are eligible to get vaccinated. Health workers, teachers, first-responders, individuals with comorbidities, restaurant employees, public transit workers, hotels personnel, for-hire drivers, residents and staff at long-term care facilities and congregate settings, government workers and essential in-person building service employees are also eligible.

There have been more than 218,000 doses of the COVID vaccine

given in Westchester County, with over 16 percent of the population fully vaccinated and about 31 percent of residents having received the first dose of the Pfizer or Moderna shot.

Feiner also stressed that programs at the Theodore Young Community Center need to be made available to senior citizens.

He stated with most of the senior population already immunized in Greenburgh, it would also be safe for them to resume the spring and summer programs offered by the town. He explained that seniors are struggling with mental health

issues and depression and need to partake in their activities.

"I think that there's a very, very big quality of life problem for senior citizens who have taken their vaccines and are not getting the advantage of the programs," Feiner said. "The seniors are isolated, and they would love to take part in the programs, and I feel if everyone has been vaccinated then there's really no risk."

He added programs, like bingo, could be moved outdoors where attendees could wear masks and be properly distanced. While Sheehan

expressed dismay with unintentionally placing seniors in harm's way, the board agreed to resume certain outdoor programs on April 16.

A plan to reopen the community center for indoor recreational use for seniors will be discussed by the board this week. The current proposal has the center reopening only for card playing and table tennis at 50 percent capacity per room.

All indoor programming would require advance registration and everyone entering the facility would be required to fill out a coronavirus assessment form. Addition-

ally, individuals would be required to wear masks, no eating or drinking would be initially allowed, and seniors wanting to play cards and/or ping pong would have to bring their own equipment.

Participation would only be permissible if all seniors designated to a room are fully vaccinated, the proposal states. More indoor activities could be offered depending on the decline of the infection rate.

The proposal requires three votes from the Town Board before indoor programming for seniors can begin.

DEC Ruling Clears Way for Review of Water Plant in Harrison

By Rick Pezzullo

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has cleared the way for a proposed water filtration plant in Harrison to proceed with an environmental review.

By the DEC designating the Westchester Joint Water Works (WJWW), a nonprofit public benefit corporation, as "lead agency" under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) in a March 10 ruling, WJWW can move forward with the scoping process for the Environmental Impact Statement for the water plant.

"Westchester Joint Water Works understands the urgency to construct a water filtration plant to protect the health and safety of the approximately 120,000 Westchester County residents that we serve," said Paul Kutzy, WJWW Manager. "We will ensure that a thorough environmental review is completed for the filtration plant in collaboration with an expert team of environmental engineers, scientists, planners, architects, government agencies and legal specialists."

Both the New York State Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have ordered WJWW to provide filtration for its raw water source at Rye Lake

to comply with surface water treatment requirements and control harmful levels of disinfection by-products, including HAA5.

Traces of haloacetic acids (HAA5) have been detected in WJWW's water supply system. HAA5 compounds are a common by-product of the water disinfection process, as they form when chlorine reacts with naturally occurring organic matter in untreated surface water from WJWW's Rye Lake source. Chlorine is the most commonly used disinfectant among public water suppliers to kill bacteria and viruses that could cause serious illnesses. Filtering the water is a proven treatment to remove organic matter and thereby

reduce the formation of HAA5 compounds. Long-term exposure to high levels of HAA5 has been linked to an increased risk for cancer.

If approved, the proposed filtration plant would be located on land that is currently part of Westchester County Airport. The approximate cost of the facility is \$100 million.

"This is the most effective method of protection for WJWW to provide safe, clean drinking water," Kutzy said. "The plant will not only provide a current solution, but will ensure WJWW's water supply is well-positioned to meet future demands."

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State Lifts Nursing Home Restrictions; Citizens Health Course Available

By Martin Wilbur

New York State has lifted most of the severe restrictions on nursing home and assisted living facility visitation after some residents hadn't seen their relatives face to face for a full year.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office announced late last Thursday that all nursing home residents will be allowed to have visitors effective immediately except for unvaccinated residents in areas of high community spread and lower resident vaccination rates, residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection or those in isolation or quarantine.

Facilities must still follow all infection control practices.

"We now have three effective vaccines that are leading to significant decreases in long-term care COVID cases and a robust staff testing system to limit community

spread from entering a facility," Cuomo said in a prepared statement. "Now is an appropriate time to take the next step and safely reconnect this community with their families."

Despite recent upticks, COVID-19 cases have decreased close to 80 percent since the post-holiday peak in mid-January, allowing the state to ease restrictions. Thursday's announcement comes just over a month after guidance issued on Feb. 23 that required a nursing home to be COVID-free for 14 days.

"We understand the emotional toll that this community has experienced by being separated from their loved ones during a particularly challenging year," said state Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. "We're confident that these facilities can continue strong infection control practices that will allow for the safe visitation they have dearly missed."

Lisa Newcomb, executive director of the

Empire State Association of Assisted Living, said the past year has been extraordinarily difficult for everyone, but those with loved ones in facilities had it particularly hard.

"The vaccine is the game changer. The overwhelming majority of our residents are fully vaccinated," Newcomb said. "Due to the pronounced efficacy of the vaccines in preventing COVID-19, the New York State Department of Health has given residents and providers the much-needed green light to reopen their doors and provide for a more active lifestyle for the seniors in our care."

Citizen Health Training

New York State has arranged for all residents to be trained for a public health crisis by offering a free online course with the goal of preventing and responding to future emergencies.

Registration opened last Thursday for the Citizen Public Health Training Program, which will not only help people during the remainder of the COVID-19 pandemic but in any future crises, Cuomo said.

The curriculum was developed and is being offered by Cornell University, which has also enlisted a variety of its own professors and professors from the SUNY system. It will address topics such as COVID-19 prevention; COVID-19 vaccines; health literacy; health priorities and equity; public health improvement and community leadership; public health preparedness; and health impacts from emergency events.

Cuomo urged everyone to sign up for the 16-hour course, which is set to begin on Apr. 30.

"I think having the information and knowledge will go a long way toward reducing the anxiety that people felt now," he said. "People felt out of control – isolated and out of control."

Dr. Lorin Warnick of Cornell University will oversee the program. He said the program's goal is to increase understanding and improve public health so the general public will be better equipped to respond.

"The material will help people understand the principles needed to respond to COVID-19, including prevention and vaccination efforts, and these modules also motivate participation in personal and community health promotion, and this will in turn help build preparedness in future health emergencies," Warnick said.

While everyone is looking forward to the time when the population reaches herd immunity, Cuomo warned that when COVID-19 is done it likely won't be the last time there is a worldwide pandemic.

He pointed to how there have been public health scares over the past 25 years that had similarly threatened the global community but failed to mushroom into a pandemic. Those included the avian flu in 1996-97, SARS in 2002, the swine flu in 2009, MERS in 2012, Ebola in 2014 and Zika in 2016.

"Every few years we have been warned and what happened? We didn't really make the changes, (take) the precautions that needed to be put in place," Cuomo said.

To register for the program or for more information, visit www.ny.gov/citizenpublichealth.

P'ville Garden Club's Next Meeting Scheduled for April 8

Join the Pleasantville Garden Club at its next meeting on Thursday, Apr. 8 for the program "Combining Hardscape and Plants in the Garden."

The speakers will be Mark Greenwald and Carrie Maher Greenwald, partners in the landscape design firm of Maher & Greenwald Fine Gardens of Greenwich.

Their projects have received numerous awards and they have lectured and taught landscape design nationally.

The meeting begins at 9:15 a.m. with the presentation at about 10:30 a.m. For more information or to register to attend virtually, visit pleasantvillegardenclub.org.



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Vaccine Eligibility Expanded to 30-Year-Olds; 16-Year-Olds on Apr. 6

By Martin Wilbur

Eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccines in New York State is once again being expanded this week to include all residents who are 30 years old and up, and by next Tuesday will include everyone at least 16 years old.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo made the announcement on Monday a week after those 50 years and up became eligible for vaccinations and as vaccine availability starts ramping up.

More than nine million doses have been administered statewide with 171,419 doses in a 24-hour period on Sunday. During the seven-day stretch ending Sunday, more than 1.3 million doses were given throughout New York.

Delivery of the current week's allocation, which is expected to include increased allotments of the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, many to local pharmacies, is expected to arrive by mid-week.

Cuomo called the accelerated eligibility "a monumental step."

"As we continue to expand eligibility, New York will double down on making the vaccine accessible for every community to ensure equity, particularly for communities of color who are too often left behind," he said. "We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, but until we get there it is more important than ever for each and every New Yorker to wear a mask, socially distance and follow all safety guidelines."



County Executive George Latimer, with Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins, at Monday afternoon's COVID-19 briefing.

Newly eligible people are free to sign up for an appointment on Tuesday at 8 a.m. of the week that they become eligible.

Despite the encouraging news, the state Department of Health urges patience from the public. Demand for the state's 19 million-plus residents still greatly exceeds the federal government's supply.

For example, there are 20 million new doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for the entire nation this week, and New York will be allocated its share.

The good news for local residents is that much of Westchester's Johnson &

Johnson vaccination allotment is to local pharmacies, said Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins.

"There are many, many new pharmacies that have been added and they are using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine," Jenkins said. "That's a great sign."

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is preferred by many, particularly older residents, because it only requires one dose, instead of a booster three or four weeks later.

Through Sunday, nearly 30 percent of the state's residents have received at least one dose of a vaccine and 16.8 percent are fully vaccinated. Those numbers are similar in Westchester County.

Although there are steadily increasing percentages of people who are now inoculated, the number of active cases in Westchester and across the state and nation have been on the rise once again.

On Monday, County Executive George Latimer reported that through the weekend, the number of active cases had spiked to 5,760, up more than 500 since the previous weekend and more than 400 since Mar. 23.

The number of COVID-19 hospitalizations remains stubbornly persistent, standing at 259 on Saturday, virtually unchanged over the past few weeks with only minor variations.

Latimer said it's believed that the variants from the United Kingdom and possibly elsewhere around the globe may be playing a role in the active case increase because

those COVID-19 strains are reported to be more communicable.

"The numbers are not as encouraging as we hoped they would have been," Latimer said. "We thought we would have a downward direction and it's flattened out."

But the county executive said once a strong majority of the population is vaccinated, infections should be reduced.

"I believe we're going to see a much better late spring this year than last year, a much better summer, a big fireworks show at the oval in Tuckahoe," Latimer said. "We're going to open up Playland – no fireworks at Playland this year – but we'll see Playland back open and we're going to have things that are helpful."

The statewide positivity rate stood at 3.5 percent on Sunday with more than 267,000 tests administered. For the second week in a row, the Mid-Hudson Valley had the highest rate of the state's 10 regions, standing at 4.8 percent. Westchester's positivity rate was 4.1 percent and Putnam and Rockland each stood at 5.4 percent.

Glen Island Park in New Rochelle is reopening to the public on Tuesday for the first time in more than a year. It will be open only to county residents from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. There will be no buses or boat docking. Parking capacity will be capped at 300 vehicles.

The park was closed in early March 2020 once New Rochelle became a hot spot. The site has been used as a drive-in COVID-19 testing facility.

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Memorial Service for Late Croton Trustee Habib to Be Held April 11

By Anna Young

A memorial service will be held at Senasqua Park a week from Sunday following the sudden passing of Croton-on-Hudson Village Trustee John Habib.

The service, organized by Habib's wife Tanya, invites those to gather at his favorite park along the Hudson River on Apr. 11 from 2 to 4 p.m. to share memories and stories and honor his life.

Habib died suddenly on Mar. 11 while on vacation with family and friends. He was 57.

A cause of death has not been publicly released.

In the days following his death, those who knew him best and in the local political sector took to social media, sharing their condolences, love and memories. The civic and community leader was described as a positive and caring man who tirelessly advocated for his hometown.

"He was a very caring and passionate person, uniquely positive with a personality that could fill up a room or Zoom call," Croton-on-Hudson Mayor Brian Pugh previously told The Examiner. "It's really hard to imagine village government without him. He brought such compassion to his work."

Habib was elected to the Village Board two years ago and was gearing up to run for a second term in November. He had received the endorsement of the Croton Democratic Committee in early March.

Pugh said that Habib was someone who



There will be an Apr. 11 memorial service for the late Croton-on-Hudson village trustee John Habib, who passed away suddenly on Mar. 11.

always talked about Croton-on-Hudson and the honor it was for him to assist in the development of his hometown. In a statement from the village, officials said Habib used his unique blend of energy, humor and optimism to guide his efforts on the board.

Habib grew up in Croton-on-Hudson and was a graduate of Holy Name of Mary and Croton-Harmon High School. He earned his undergraduate degree from Colgate University and his law degree from Emory University School of Law.

Habib was described as a citizen of the world but always called Croton home. After



Habib was sworn into office following his November 2019 victory. He was planning on running for re-election later this year.

decades of accomplishment in the United States and overseas, he returned to home to help make his community the best village it could be.

"All of Croton should be grateful to John for this," village officials said in a statement.

During his 30-year professional career, Habib held several executive positions with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American Chamber of Commerce, as well as major law firms across the nation and overseas handling commercial litigation. Habib also operated his own law firm in Westchester.

Prior to his tenure on the Village Board, Habib served as chair of the Business Development Committee. While in office, he established the Croton Business Council, exercising his expertise to organize and energize the business community.

Officials attest Habib made a significant impact on the village.

"He cherished his memories of the village as a young boy but knew communities must grow and evolve to meet the challenges of today," the officials' statement read. "Its work will be a lasting tribute to John's vision and dedication."

Habib was always known for big ideas and unwavering ability to question conventional wisdom or how things could improve. Board members said they will remember his insistence to strive for excellence as they continue in the work he valued so much.

Senasqua Park is located at 2 Elliot Way in Croton-on-Hudson. The service is from 2 to 4 p.m. rain or shine. Attendees are encouraged to dress casually, with masks required.



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Mt. Kisco Planners May Make Cell Tower Determination Next Month

Martin Wilbur

The Mount Kisco Planning Board will prepare to make a determination on Homeland Towers' proposed cell tower next month despite the applicant having failed to appear before the board for the past two months' meetings.

In February, the Village Board and Homeland Towers agreed to a 60-day extension of the deadline for the board to make a decision under the federal government's Telecommunications Act. That extension expires on Apr. 14, the day after the Planning Board's next scheduled meeting.

The federal law requires municipalities to make a decision on cell tower applications within 150 days of their submission unless there is mutual consent to extend the time frame.

However, Homeland Towers, which has proposed a 145-foot monopole on less than 4,000 square feet of the 25-acre parcel at 180 S. Bedford Rd., has failed to replenish its escrow account for nearly two months, forcing the board to remove them from agendas since early February. The escrow account is used to reimburse professional consultants hired to assess the application

on behalf of the village.

Currently, the issue facing the Planning Board is whether it can accurately assess whether a proposed alternate location being considered by the applicant at 21 Linden Lane on the Bedford side of the town line is less intrusive and can address the cell service coverage gaps along the Route 172 corridor more effectively than the South Bedford Road location.

"From my perspective and having done the site visit, the applicant has provided incomplete responses to our staff and consultants and that just doesn't bode well for a full assessment of this application," said Planning Board Acting Chair Michael Bonforte.

Village Attorney Whitney Singleton said that Homeland Towers appears to be pursuing the alternate Bedford parcel with the property owner with some degree of urgency. However, Mount Kisco has failed to receive key pieces of information from the applicant, including answers to questions regarding emergency access, drive-by data and visual impacts at the alternate site, he said.

As a result, the Planning Board should list all information it is missing and be prepared to render a determination at its

Apr. 13 meeting.

"Unfortunately, without them at least partially restoring the escrow account and without them providing us with information, it's going to be very hard for your board to make a determination that addresses anything substantively, whether their proposed site is warranted and whether it's the least intrusive location or whether this alternate site is," Singleton said.

Two of the village's experts, Simon Kates, associate principal at BFJ Planning, and consulting engineer Anthony Oliveri said the alternate site at Linden Lane is promising. Kates said it could be less intrusive and there are no steep slopes and wetlands to contend with. It is also a previously developed parcel. However, much more analysis is required, he said.

"The site looked like it was doable, quite possibly within the zoning, with zoning compliance, it actually looked like less impactful in terms of steep slopes and no wetlands impacts," Oliveri said.

Planning officials said the Village Board would rather not have a decision made by default on the application.

Singleton said despite some sharp disagreements, the village is still prepared

to work with Homeland Towers.

"They've been advised that the village is willing to work with them and that in the event they were consenting to a 60-day extension of the shot clock and acknowledge they would be making payments toward their fees on a payment plan, that we would allow them on tonight's agenda," Singleton said. "They have declined those items."

The public hearing on the proposed solar farm, that would be also be installed on a different portion of 180 S. Bedford Rd., was adjourned until Apr. 13.

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Mt. Pleasant Schools Propose \$66.8M Budget, 1.8% Tax Hike

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant school officials have proposed a \$66.8 million budget for 2021-22 that adds minimal additional staff and narrowly complies with the tax cap.

Property owners are facing a 1.84 percent tax rate increase unless there are changes in the proposed spending plan, which carries a year-to-year spending increase of \$1.34 million. The budget complies with the tax cap for the 10th consecutive year, this time by about \$1,400, barely under the \$1,176,998 increase that the district is allowed for the

upcoming year. The increase is 2.05 percent, a fraction under the 2.06 percent ceiling.

“We know that there was financially a great amount of uncertainty as we made our way through the most difficult time of the pandemic,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kurtis Kotes. “We knew we wanted this to be a responsible and tax cap compliant budget as well.”

The instructional portion of the budget will see a total increase in full-time equivalent staff of 1.25 positions with a series of additions and reductions. Many of the additions are related to a continued

emphasis on literacy, Kotes said.

Additions are a .6 senior office assistant in the office of the director of technology; a .5 literacy staff developer at Hawthorne and Columbus elementary schools; a .5 reading teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School; a .2 Language Other Than English; a .55 speech teacher at Westlake High School; a full-time special education teacher at Westlake Middle School; and a full-time teacher’s aide at Hawthorne Elementary School.

The reductions are a .6 science teacher and a .5 special education at the high

school; a secondary-level special education supervisor; and a full-time English as a New Language (ENL) teacher at Hawthorne Elementary.

Kotes said there are 2.66 full-time equivalent positions that are being transferred into the budget from having previously been funded through grants. Those include a special education teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School; a full-time teaching assistant at the high school; a .45 high school speech teacher and a .21 ENL teacher at Columbus Elementary School.

On the non-instructional end, in the upcoming year, the district will complete its five-year capital maintenance plan. It will also complete all work this summer associated with the \$39.6 million referendum that was approved by voters in 2016, said Andrew Lennon, the district’s director of business administration.

Lennon said there will be a total increase of nearly \$500,000 in benefits to staff districtwide. That includes about a \$130,000 hike in contributions to the Teachers Retirement System, nearly \$20,000 more for the Employee Retirement System and \$344,000 in health insurance costs and other benefits. Those three categories account for almost \$14.5 million in spending.

Debt service is expected to decline next year by about \$119,000, falling to \$5,043,000, Lennon said.

The Board of Education is scheduled to adopt a final budget at its meeting on Apr. 20 with the statewide school board elections and budget vote slated for May 18.

Greenburgh Police Assist Woman Who Goes into Labor at Home

A Greenburgh detective sprang into action this week after a 27-year-old woman went into labor but was unable to make it to the hospital in time.

On Mar. 22 around 5:30 p.m., Greenburgh police officers and EMS units responded to a residence in the Fairview section of town for a person who was experiencing labor pains and contractions, according to Public Information Officer Lt. Kobie Powell.

Upon arrival, Detective Paramedic

Dean Annicchiarico quickly assessed the woman who was in active labor and determined that the contractions were close together and that birth was imminent. Annicchiarico then set up his labor and delivery equipment and assisted the her as she gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Powell said.

Following the birth, both the mother and baby were safely transported to the hospital without incident.

—Anna Young

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FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER

In the Matter of

ROSARIO ESQUIVEL-GARCIA
ANGEL ESQUIVEL-GARCIA

SUMMONS

Docket No. NN-07345-20
NN -07346-20

F/U No. 143336

A Children Under Eighteen Years of
Age Alleged to be Neglected by

ANGEL ESQUIVEL-MANCILLA,
Respondent.

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

UPON GOOD CAUSE, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A RESPONDENT; IF THE COURT DETERMINES THE CHILD SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM HIS/HER HOME, THE COURT MAY ORDER AN INVESTIGATION TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE NON-RESPONDENT PARENT(S) SHOULD BE SUITABLE CUSTODIANS FOR THE CHILD; IF THE CHILD IS PLACED AND REMAINS IN FOSTER CARE FOR FIFTEEN OF THE MOST RECENT TWENTY-TWO MONTHS, THE AGENCY MAY BE REQUIRED TO FILE A PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PARENT(S) AND COMMITMENT OF GUARDIANSHIP AND CUSTODY OF THE CHILD FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADOPTION, EVEN IF THE PARENT(S) WERE NOT NAMED AS RESPONDENTS IN THE CHILD NEGLECT OR ABUSE PROCEEDING.

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

TO: ANGEL ESQUIVEL-MANCILLA

The petition under Article 10 of the Family Court Act having been filed with this Court alleging that the above-named children are neglected children;

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to appear before this Court at 111 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., 3rd Floor Annex, White Plains, New York, on the **10th day of MAY, 2021, at 2:30PM**, in the forenoon of said day for the purposes of a an Inquest hearing to answer the petition and to show cause why said children should not be adjudicated to be a neglected children and why you should not be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Article 10 of the Family Court Act.

PRIOR TO YOUR COURT APPEARANCE, please contact White Plains Family Court at (914) 824-5500 for confirmation that the matter will still be heard virtually and not in-person at that time OR for further instructions on how to appear virtually.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that you have the right to be represented by a lawyer, and if the Court finds you are unable to pay for a lawyer, you have the right to have a lawyer assigned by the Court.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that if you fail to appear at the time and place noted above, the Court will moved forward with the Inquest Hearing and determine the petition as provided by law.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that Federal and State law may require the Commissioner of Social Services to file petitions to terminate parental rights when children have been in foster care for fifteen (15) of the most recent twenty-two (22) months.

Dated: March 16, 2021

BY ORDER OF THE COURT

/s/
CLERK OF THE COURT

White Plains Dems to Hold First Essay Contest for Local Students

By Martin Wilbur

If you're a high school student who lives or attends school in White Plains, there's a new essay contest that may be of interest. The White Plains Democratic City Committee is sponsoring an inaugural competition asking students that if they were just elected president of the United States, what would their vision and the goals for the country be. The essay may also include any specific proposals that they would make.

"I thought it would be great to do this

for the high school students because I think the topic is kinds of an interesting topic," said Ellen Berger, the committee's program chair. "We'd love to see what students think about and how they deal with this country going forward with all the things that we've been going through."

Eligible contestants can either live within White Plains' borders or go to school in the city, whether it's White Plains High School, Stepinac or Solomon Schechter, Berger said.

The essay has a 1,000-word limit and must be submitted by the deadline at

11:59 p.m. on Apr. 26. It is expected that the first-, second- and third-place finishers will be contacted by mid-May, she said.

The top three essayists will receive a cash prize of \$500, \$250 and \$100, respectively, and as an added bonus, will have lunch with Rep. Mondaire Jones.

Berger said the committee was hoping to involve the city's youth and hope to get them to consider topics of importance. What side they may take on an issue or what they would find important is irrelevant, she said. The judges will be evaluating the essays based on ideas and content, quality of reasoning, creativity and originality, quality of writing and structure and organization.



Rep. Mondaire Jones will have lunch with the first three finishers in the White Plains Democratic City Committee's essay contest for high school students who either live or attend school in White Plains.

"Especially in a city like White Plains, which is so diverse, I think it's great to have issues brought before our community and have good discussions about issues between all different parts of our community," Berger said. "That's what our goal is today."

She said that they reached out to Jones to see if he would want to participate in meeting the top entrants for lunch at a future time. He agreed to do so, which is an added attraction for the eventual top finishers.

In addition to the word count and the strict deadline, the essays must be the student's original work and must include their name, address, e-mail, school that they attend and telephone number.

For anyone with questions, e-mail whiteplainsessaycontest@gmail.com. Additional information can be found at www.wpdems.com or on the White Plains Democratic City Committee's Facebook page.

Earth Day Poster Celebration for K-6 Schoolchildren

State Sen. Peter Harckham invites school children in grades K- 6 to submit original posters to commemorate the Senate's annual Earth Day Celebration, which is designed to help children develop an awareness of the environment.

"This annual celebration for schools in the 40th Senate District and throughout the state is such a great way for children to learn more about the environmental challenges that we are facing," said Harckham. "Teaching tomorrow's leaders about the importance of

recycling and waste reduction benefits us all, and this celebration makes it fun as well."

This year's theme – "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" – is designed to engage students and stimulate creative problem solving on waste reduction. Students are asked to create a poster that could be used as part of the campaign.

All submissions must be uploaded to the Earth Day page on Harckham's Senate website page at nysenate.gov/eform/submit/earth-day by Apr. 19.



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Police Blotter

Croton Police Department

Mar. 12: A 27-year-old Bronx resident was arrested at 6:36 p.m. on a charge of driving with a suspended registration on Route 9.

Mar. 12: Police responded to Cleveland Drive at 10:22 p.m. after a village resident reported a bird had collided with his vehicle and the bird is now lying in the roadway. Patrol responded and disposed of the deceased bird.

Mar. 13: Police responded to Palmer Avenue about 5:34 p.m. after a resident on Farrington Road reported rocks were

falling from the property above his. Patrol located a group of juveniles who were building a clubhouse and were unaware of the rocks falling down the hill.

Mar. 14: At 5:36 p.m., there was a report of a party who had stolen items worth \$104 on South Riverside Avenue earlier in the day. An investigation is ongoing.

North Castle Police Department

Mar. 22: A caller requested assistance in retrieving her vehicle from another party at 7:40 p.m. The individual stated that her mother leased the vehicle to a

friend in her name but he is not paying the lease and would like to take the vehicle back from the other party. The responding officer assisted in retrieving the vehicle. Matter adjusted.

Mar. 25: A Nichols Road resident reported via E-911 at 6:01 a.m. that she believes someone is hacking her cell phone. Someone constantly keeps calling and hanging up. She also stated that she no longer talks to her brothers and is worried that they are listening in on her calls using a mock phone. The caller was irate and also requested a number for the FBI. The responding officer reported the complainant's accusations are unconfirmed at this time. Report to follow.

blood-alcohol content of .18 percent, more than double the legal limit. Jenkins was charged with aggravated DWI and several vehicle and traffic law violations. He was issued an appearance ticket for the Town of Philipstown Justice Court and released.

Yorktown Police Department

Mar. 15: Alexander Parker, 50, of the Bronx, was charged with fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a Class E felony, following a traffic stop on the Taconic State Parkway at about 10:40 a.m. Following an investigation, it was alleged Parker was in possession of a 2016 Tesla that had been reported stolen in New York City.

Mar. 23: Brian Bobolia, 31, of Cortlandt, was charged with criminal possession of a controlled substance and criminally possessing a hypodermic instrument after police received a call to check on the welfare of a person inside a vehicle parked at a gas pump on Route 202. Following an investigation, it was alleged Bobolia was in possession of a hypodermic needle and eight glassine envelopes containing a quantity of heroin.

Putnam County Sheriff's Department

Mar. 13: At about 10:42 p.m., Deputy Brian Neary observed a 2016 Chevrolet sedan driving erratically on Route 9D at the intersection of Route 403 in Philipstown. The vehicle was stopped and the driver, Brian K. Jenkins, 51, was found to be intoxicated after failing standardized field sobriety testing. Jenkins was transported to the Putnam County Sheriff's Office where a chemical breath test revealed

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THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

Spring "Wordrobe." Winter is over, and spring is once more upon us. The heavy coats and wool hats can be put away, and lighter and brighter clothes can come out of the wardrobe. The quiz this week will present the opportunity for some additions to your spring "wordrobe."

1. **ardor** (n.)

A) feelings of great warmth

B) a geographic region

C) a rich supply

2. **urbane** (adj.)

A) ascending

B) modern

C) refined

3. **tuffet** (n.)

A) a soft blanket

B) a footrest

C) a cluster of rocks

4. **dirigible** (adj.)

A) lighter-than-air

B) ominous

C) steerable

5. **absquatulate** (v.)

A) to give up f

B) Flee

C) restrain oneself

6. **cognoscente** (n.)

A) distinguishing sign

B) working together

C) a discerning expert

7. **ineluctable** (adj.)

A) inescapable

B) showing bias

C) too many to count

8. **coruscate** (v.)

A) to alienate

B) be brilliant

C) cut corners

4. C. Steerable; capable of being controlled or directed

5. B. To flee; to take off with somebody or something

6. C. A connoisseur; a discerning expert

7. A. Unable to be resisted or avoided; inescapable

8. B. To be lively or brilliant or exhibit virtuosity; sparkle; scintillate

1. A. Feelings of great warmth and intensity; fervency

2. C. Showing a high degree of refinement and assurance that comes from wide social experience; polished; refined

3. B. A low seat or stool to rest the feet of a seated person; footrest; footstool; ottoman

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Lawmakers Pass Stronger Ethics Code for County Government

By Rick Pezzullo

The Westchester County Board of Legislators last week approved a major overhaul of the county ethics law, designed to make the rules for good governance stronger and more transparent.

The new code explicitly covers items such as the use of county positions for personal gain, requirements related to contracts

where employees might have a material interest and prohibitions on inducements to making political contributions.

The new provisions also will make the annual financial disclosure form that is required of elected officials and other county employees easier to understand and complete.

Legislator Kitley Covill (D-Katonah), chair of the board's Legislation Committee and

a member of the county's Board of Ethics, was the measure's lead sponsor when it was introduced last year. She said the legislation has revised the financial disclosure form for elected officials so it has more clarity and is less confusing.

"This new law takes several important steps to encourage ethical behavior in government and ensures that every Westchester County employee knows what

is expected and where to turn for ethics guidance," Covill said.

The new provisions also change the way members of the Board of Ethics are appointed. Previously all seven were appointees of the county executive; now, five will be appointed by the county executive, and two will be appointed by the chair of the Board of Legislators.

Because of that change, the code will require voters to approved a referendum this November.

"Good government starts with good employees and officials committed to the well-being of the people. We have that in Westchester County," said Board Chairman Ben Boykin (D-White Plains). "But having clear ethics regulations and procedures takes it a step farther and makes it a matter of law. This new ethics code is more thorough, more transparent and more complete than anything Westchester County has had before, clarifying standards, making it easier for employees to comply and enhancing the confidence of the people in their government."

"The subject of ethics reform has been something that has been discussed for most of my time on the Board of Legislators," said Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry). "It's a complex thing not just regarding what is required but also how people are trained and how rules are enforced."

Expanded Hours, More Products at P'ville Farmers Market

Along with spring flowers and warmer temperatures, April means the Pleasantville Farmers Market is back to its normal hours and a full vendor roster after a long, cold winter.

"Spring is an exciting season for growers and markets. It'll be good to get back to sunny days in the market," said Executive Director of Market Operations Steven Bates.

"But first I want to thank our loyal customers for sticking with us through the winter months. We were gratified to see the enthusiastic response to our online ordering system, Pleasantville Farmers Market Online (PFM-O), and it was encouraging to see a strong turnout every week. I know how much our producers value the support, especially in a pandemic year."

On Apr. 3, the market returns to 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. with its familiar summer layout.

The market will be welcoming four new vendors. Starting in April, Melissa's Health

Hub will be in weekly with delicious fresh juices made from regionally sourced produce, and Merchant's Daughter will visit monthly to offer their premium hard ciders. Dobler Farms, a Long Island family farm, will come aboard in May.

Sullivan County-based Wildcraft Farms is another new vendor.

"Wildcraft grows rare and heirloom varieties of grains and mills them fresh every week," said Peter Rogovin, president of Foodchester, Inc., which runs the market. "There are very few farmers doing this in New York State, and we're proud to have them joining us, especially as more people are trying to raise their baking game these days."

All winter vendors will continue, and many familiar ones will return from last year: Buddhapesto (handmade pesto); Little Seed Gardens (organic produce); Head & Heal (certified organic CBD products); North Winds Lavender Farm (lavender products);

Orwasher's Bakery (European-style breads); SallyeAnder (handcrafted soaps); Simply Planted (flowers); and Wright's Farm (jams and pies). Harper Keehn Knife & Tool Sharpening will be in on May 1 and 8.

Pleasantville Farmers Market remains committed to the health and safety of the entire community.

"We carefully limit the number of people in the marketplace," Bates said. "And we encourage customers to move in and out of the market quickly by offering two modes of shopping – online preordering via PFM-O from Tuesday through Thursday each week, and well-designed lines and streamlined checkout processes for walk-up customers."

Mask wearing and social distancing will be strictly enforced.

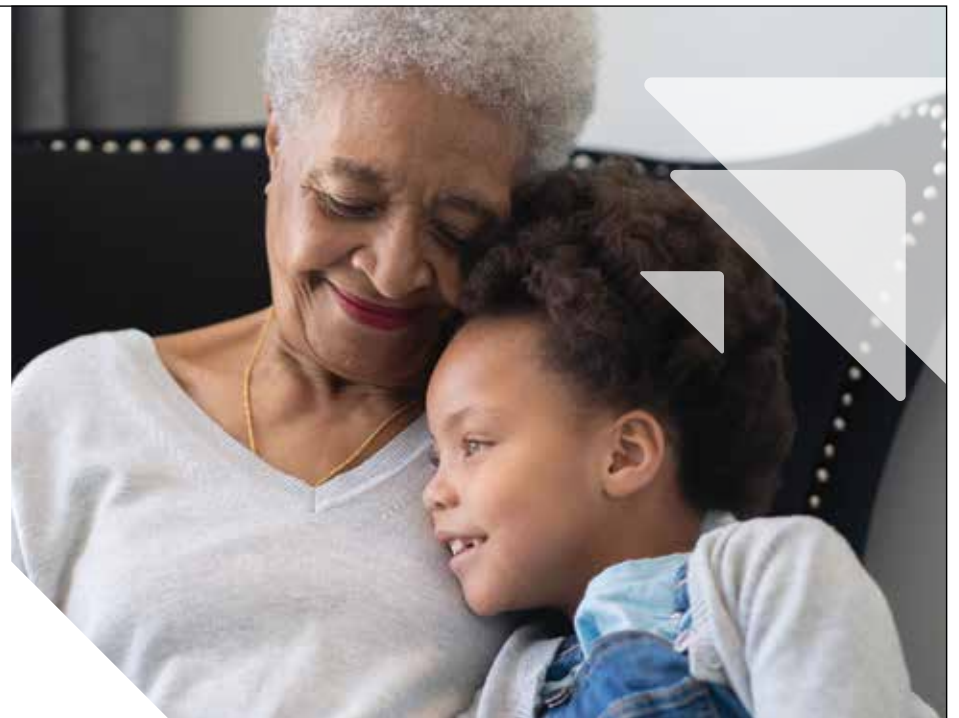
To shop online, view the participating producers and the market's COVID-related restrictions, visit pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org.

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Mount Pleasant Honors Medal of Honor Recipients



The Town of Mount Pleasant and members of the American Legion Post 112 in Hawthorne held a ceremony last Thursday afternoon for the nation's 3,507 recipients of the Medal of Honor since the military decoration was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on Mar. 25, 1863. Since then, the President may award the Medal of Honor to those in the Army who have distinguished themselves through acts of valor. The date Mar. 25 was chosen to celebrate the men who participated in the Great Locomotive Chase during the Civil War. During the ceremony, Mount Pleasant officials and Legion members raised a Medal of Honor flag onto the flagpole in the traffic circle in front of Town Hall to commemorate the day.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTOS





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Guest Column

A Plea to Dog Owners: Please Finish the Job With Your SOS

By Rick Wolff

Because of the pandemic shutting down my local gym, I've been doing a good amount of walking on a daily basis in my neighborhood. It's a quiet area, and I rarely see anything out of the ordinary. But one curious activity has caught my eye.

Well-meaning dog walkers do something I don't understand. That is, when their pooch poops, the loving dog walker will instinctively pull a colorful blue, yellow or green plastic bag from their pocket. Once the dog has finished its business, the dog owner will bend down and delicately maneuver the dog manure into the plastic bag.

When the poop is sufficiently bagged, the dog owner then secures it and its contents with a simple knot.

It all seems pretty straightforward, courteous, civilized and fairly sanitary. After all, what could be more neighborly than to curb your dog, and then to be kind enough to remove their fecal waste in a handy bag, then take it home to dispose of the waste in a discreet, proper and safe manner?

Except I have noticed on more than a few of these colorful "Sacks of ----" are simply left in the street or, in some cases, casually abandoned on people's front yards. Even

more alarming is that all of these waste bags were deposited by the very same individual who had walked their dog and who then took the time to carefully place their dog's poop in a disposable bag.

And so, instead of these kindly folks finishing the job of taking their dog-doo bags home with them, they suddenly come to the sudden conclusion that this wasn't a good idea. As a result, they then just ditch the bag of dog poop on the road or into somebody's yard.

Mind you, we all know from our middle school earth science classes that it takes years and years for a plastic bag to gradually decompose and to be absorbed into our ecosystem. In contrast, in my own observational experience, a healthy dog dump -- if left on its own in the wild and unbagged -- will break down and decompose in a matter of a few days (and even shorter if a significant rainstorm washes it away). When you get down to it, so to speak, dog-doo, while certainly not good to step in, dissolves and goes away rather quickly.

And please. Don't be misled by the advertising on the colorful bags that they are "good for the environment" because they are "biodegradable." A little online research reveals that it routinely takes several years for these "earth-friendly"

bags to decompose.

In the interim, all I see dotted all over my neighborhood are green or blue or yellow bags which are still quite obvious for all to see -- and most of these poop bags were left out on the streets last fall. In short, they made it through all the ice and snow of this past harsh winter, and these bags show very little sign of biodegrading and disappearing from the landscape anytime soon.

So, what am I missing here? If we agree that leaving a full SOS in the street, or in somebody's yard, is not healthy for anyone or for the environment, why would you even make the effort in the first place of putting your dog's excrement in a bag?

My sense is if you can train your dog to poop outside your home, then I'm also guessing you can probably train yourself to carry your SOS back home with you.

I urge you. If you feel compelled to pick up and place your dog's fecal matter in a colorful satchel, please just carry your bag containing your dog's dump back to your house and dispose of it there. Finish the job. Just leaving the bag out on the street is only getting half the job done.

Rick Wolff is a longtime Westchester resident.

Letters to the Editor

Slowly Returning to Normal Still Requires Diligence From Everyone

I continue to be excited as it relates to the reopening of our community, and looking into the not-too-distant future I can see a return to normalcy as we knew it prior to this dreadful pandemic that took so many of our loved ones and caused such disruption in everyone's daily lives.

As such I wanted to share recent guidance on the reopening process. As of Mar. 19, local restaurants and eateries have moved to an indoor capacity of 75 percent. This does not include New York City, which currently remains at a 50 percent indoor capacity.

Residential gathering guidelines have also changed. As of Mar. 22, indoor gatherings are still restricted to 10 people, but outdoor gatherings have gone up to 25 people. For social gatherings, like events and parties, we are going to be able to have a maximum indoor capacity of 100 people and a max

outdoor capacity of 200 people. It's also important to note that fitness centers will be able to resume indoor classes as well.

On Mar. 26, family entertainment centers can open at 25 percent capacity, and on Apr. 2 any events, arts, cultural or entertainment venue can reopen at a 33 percent capacity with a cap of 100 people indoors and 200 people outdoors. What is interesting is that these numbers can increase to 150 and 500 people, respectively, if there is proof of a negative COVID-19 test prior to entry.

To that end, there is also a new initiative called the New York Forward Rapid Test Program. Through a public-private partnership, it is intended to facilitate rapid testing "to support enhanced economic activity" for events and venues. How this will work is unclear and I look forward to further guidance.

Lastly, on Apr. 5, the 11 p.m. curfew will be lifted for gyms and fitness centers as well as a host of other types of businesses. On Apr. 9, outdoor amusement parks will return at 33 percent capacity. The chamber will continue to keep the community updated on new guidance as it becomes available.

Although this is all welcomed news, I want to temper this by saying that specific guidelines for each point are forthcoming. We also need to continue to be diligent by wearing our masks, continue social distancing and washing our hands. It is important that we all work together to continue this upward trend so we can all, finally, return to normal!

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town supervisor is that we all live in peace and harmony in our Cortlandt community.

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Linda D. Puglisi
Supervisor, Town of Cortlandt

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The Evolution of the Dining Room Through the Ages

In my current home, as well as the one before that, I have enjoyed having large dining rooms. But in my first apartment in Manhattan, I had only a small eating area off the kitchen containing a chrome dinette set that I had purchased for \$35 in the bargain basement of Macy's (the price of which should give you some idea of how long ago I moved to New York).

That small dining accommodation saw a lot more action than my current commodious space due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I can't remember the last time my family or friends have gathered around our large glass top dining table which comfortably accommodates six to eight people. My wife would remember; but I don't. That's just one of the ways men and women differ.

What were the origins of today's formal dining room? In centuries past, dining rooms were something of a novelty. Only the wealthy had them.

The Greeks were among the first to recognize that eating in secluded comfort reinforced status and class distinction. Elite men – and not women – gathered in rooms especially designed for feasting. These rooms accommodated couches of stone or wood, each of which accommodated one or two men. Youths sat on the ground.

Ancient Romans similarly ate their meals in a special room called a triclinium, where couches



By Bill Primavera

had evolved to accommodate women as well as men. The Romans sometimes set up their dining rooms outdoors in order to enjoy delicacies al fresco. Triclinia in Pompeii featured fountains from which water splashed and streamed from each table.

Such vivid appointments obscured a reality that was very dark. A well-to-do Roman household could include as many as 400 slaves, who did everything from choosing menus to arranging and presenting parting gifts to guests. The slightest faux pas invited brutal punishment. If, writes historian Roy Strong, "game was underdone or the fish poorly seasoned, the cook

(who actually ranked fairly high in the slave hierarchy) would be stripped and beaten."

Strong relates an instance during a dinner given by a friend of the Emperor Augustus. A cupbearer broke a crystal goblet. For this offense he had his hands cut off and hung from his neck. He was then forced to parade among the diners, and thereafter thrown alive in a fish pond as food for lampreys. Quite severe, considering that today we would just leave a bad tip.

Eventually, the nobility began to favor more intimate gatherings in parlors off the main hall. This type of dining allowed greater comfort to the diners and was well-suited to the political intrigue of the times. As time went by, the dining room evolved along with

the dining room table, and it was increasingly located farther from the Great Hall. Eventually, the Great Hall was reserved for special occasions.

In the Middle Ages, dining room tables were portable and long, made to seat everyone in the castle. Dining was done in the Great Hall, a large, multifunctional room that could accommodate the entire population of the castle. The family sat at the main table on a raised dais and the rest of the household was seated in order of rank. The dining room furniture consisted of long trestle tables with benches.

It's hard to imagine a time when a dining room table wasn't the focal point of the dining room. But throughout much of history, people dined on small tables or stone platforms rather than large dining room tables. Tables were used for writing and playing games, not for dining.

It wasn't until the 16th century that dining room tables really became popular. The word itself is derived from the Latin tabula, which means plank, board or flat piece. Although many types of tables had been around since ancient times, they were not the dining room tables we know today.

In most homes you'll find the dining room table near or in the kitchen or in the great room. However, that was not always the case.



Historically, the dining room and kitchen were far from each other, on a different floor and sometimes even in a different building.

When I worked in Colonial Williamsburg (as a waiter at the King's Arms Tavern), I found that kitchens were normally in a separate building from dining space, and the same is true with historic preservation sites we enjoy in the Hudson Valley. This makes sense, as kitchens tended to get extremely hot and were sometimes the cause of house fires.

Bill Primavera, while a writer and editor, is also a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc. (www.PrimaveraPR.com). His real estate site is www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com. To engage the talents and services of The Home Guru to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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Lighthouse Youth Theatre Ready to Relocate to Mount Kisco

By Martin Wilbur

Lighthouse Youth Theatre, one of Westchester's preeminent creative programs for children, will be relocating from its Armonk studio to the Saw Mill Club in Mount Kisco this week.

John Fanelli, Lighthouse's founder and artistic director, said as the year-long pandemic-induced closure dragged on, it became imperative to find an alternate arrangement rather than to try and hold on to the 6,300-square-foot Standing Ovation Studio. The program had operated out of the studio at 1 Labriola Court in Armonk for just over nine years.

"I just couldn't support the types of losses over that period of time," Fanelli explained. "A couple of months, maybe even six months, but a year is too much."

He said over the winter he began inquiring about sharing any available space with another theater, dance or music company, martial arts operations and gyms and health clubs to cut expenses. Fanelli had been rebuffed numerous times when he approached the Saw Mill Club, which welcomed them to their facility.

The move into the space at the site of the original club at 77 Kensico Drive is expected to be finished by Thursday, with programs ready to resume next week after the spring recess, he said. They will also hold classes at Saw Mill East at 333 N. Bedford Rd. one day a week.

"They were really happy to have us and they operate the family type of business



After being shuttered for a year because of the pandemic, Lighthouse Youth Theatre will reopen at the Saw Mill Club in Mount Kisco, ending a nine-year run at its own studio in Armonk. Pictured, at right, is one of the spaces the company will have access to at Saw Mill.

that we're running," Fanelli said of the Saw Mill Club.

Saw Mill will be Lighthouse's fifth home since Fanelli founded the youth theater program in 2006. It originally operated out of Westchester Broadway Theatre, before moving to Memorial Plaza in Pleasantville and then to Thornwood before settling in Armonk.

It still has its arrangement with the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center and that will continue, Fanelli said.

Lighthouse will also be partnering with The Studio School of Dance and its owner and operator, Vanessa Gutierrez, not only to share instructional and rehearsal space at the health club but to provide youngsters



from both programs the opportunity to cross over into dance or theater.

"Everything happens for a reason, and I get to team up with a great dance studio, called The Studio, so now my kids, the theater kids, will have a dance studio in house, and her kids, who are dance kids, will have a theater studio in house, so it makes for a full and local performing arts school under one roof at the Saw Mill Club," Fanelli said.

Last week, Fanelli was emptying out the Standing Ovation Studios, conducting a sale of sets, ballet bars, equipment and his sprung professional dance floor. The departure from Armonk is bittersweet, but despite the disappointment of leaving a facility that Fanelli spent years cultivating, he looks forward to his company's next

chapter.

"It was literally a dream realized, this type of a studio, and to have this type of a facility for my operation, was something I worked on for 25 years," he said.

The goal of Lighthouse Youth Theatre has always been to provide a creative outlet for kids and the self-confidence for them to perform with their peers.

"It's not about making Broadway stars – and we have – it's about people and it's about kids having a place to come and express themselves," Fanelli said. "It's more necessary now than it's ever been because these kids have been cooped up for a year and they haven't had a chance to be around people and to express themselves."

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State Reps Seek to Infuse Non-Profit With \$1M to Restart the Arts

By Martin Wilbur

A group of area state lawmakers pledged last week to provide ArtsWestchester with \$1 million in COVID-19 recovery funds to reinvigorate the arts as society steadily reopens from the pandemic.

Legislators said the decision to boost local artists and arts venues, including 12 independent or small theaters that show movies, concerts or live stage productions along with historical sites and museums, is not only wise culturally but a smart economic move as well.

"Who wouldn't give their right arm to sit in a theater tomorrow, to hear a poet, to hear a musician, to go to an exhibit to see paintings and sculpture and clay work and pottery," said state Sen. Peter Harkham (D-Lewisboro). "We need to nurture the soul and we also need to stimulate the economy, and funding the arts is a way to start that."

Harkham was one of five members of Westchester's state legislative delegation to converge at ArtsWestchester's White Plains home last Friday to voice their support for the ReStart the Arts initiative in Westchester and



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

ArtsWestchester CEO Janet Langsam at last Friday's press conference where five members of the state legislative delegation vowed to support the arts get back on track after a year of closures because of the pandemic.

Rockland counties.

Janet Langsam, CEO of ArtsWestchester, the largest private nonprofit arts council in the state that promotes programs and advocates for artists, said a pre-COVID-19 study revealed that the arts directly employs more than 5,000 people in Westchester and brings \$172 million of economic activity to the county. That includes impacts on ancillary businesses.

While money is needed to help sanitize and upgrade various

facilities, it's also recognizing the artists, Langsam said. It has been estimated that there is a 63 percent creative worker unemployment rate nationally because of the pandemic.

Those dire statistics seem to be consistent locally. A survey completed last year by ArtsWestchester found that 87 percent of responding arts groups were not faring well through the pandemic and about two-thirds of local artists were unemployed.

"So this is an important step,"

she said. "We call it the creative economy and the fact of the matter is because we have 5 percent of our population employed in the sub-creative businesses, whether it's photography or interior design, graphic design, we call it the creative economy, and it is Westchester that is one of the best places for people who are in these fields."

Waddell Stillman, president and CEO of Historic Hudson Valley who also serves on the ArtsWestchester board, said it will take significant resources to get venues up and running again once they reopen.

Federal Paycheck Protection Program and Shuttered Venue funding helps address payroll, leases and utility costs but won't revitalize the cultural sector programmatically. There are venues that will have to significantly revise their programming to be able to reopen, whether it's because of ongoing social distancing and capacity issues or other factors.

"It's an unusually good investment for the state of New York to value investing in the arts by investing in ArtsWestchester," Stillman said. "They are superbly good at rebranding their affiliate organizations and artists who are

ready, who are passionate, who are willing to get back to delivering the arts at a high level of quality in this community."

Langsam said the arts also is outstanding at promoting racial equity. ArtsWestchester strives equality, using the arts as a vehicle to bring people together and to provide opportunities and resources in a fair and equitable manner.

"I can't think of a better way to honor the traditions, the customs and backgrounds of our growing diverse populations and by bringing the arts to every corner of Westchester," Langsam said.

The arts also give people enjoyment and a much-needed diversion from their daily lives, said Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale).

"It is critically important that we recognize that ArtsWestchester is so important to our communities and to individuals because of what it means to our everyday lives and what it means to get back to normalcy, which we need to do after a year of this horrific pandemic," she said.

To learn more about the ReStart the Arts initiative, visit <https://artswestchester.org/speak-up-for-arts>.

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RESOLUTION CALLING THE 2021 ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING AND ELECTION OF THE BEDFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AUTHORIZING RELATED MATTERS

Para la versión en español, vaya a <https://www.bcsdny.org/Page/2404>

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Education (the “Board”) of the Bedford Central School District, Westchester County, New York (the “District”) as follows:

Section 1. That a public hearing of the qualified voters of the District for the purpose of discussion of reviewing the proposed budget and for the transaction of such business as authorized by the Education Laws of the State of New York shall be held on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, commencing at 7:00 p.m. on Fox Lane Campus, Fox Lane Middle School, Route 172, Bedford, New York.

Section 2. That voting on: (I) the 2021-2022 annual school budget, which will appear on the ballot as **Proposition No. 1**; and (II) the election of two (2) members to the Board of Education; and (III) such other business as is authorized by law, will take place at the Annual District Meeting and Election on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, within the District’s five (5) election districts, at the designated polling places therein, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., prevailing time, and that such voting shall be by voting machine.

Section 3. That except as hereinafter provided, the official Notice of the aforesaid public hearing and Annual District Meeting and Election shall be in the following form:

PUBLIC NOTICE

BEDFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, STATE OF NEW YORK NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING AND ELECTION, MAY 18, 2021

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BEDFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT will hold its Annual School District Meeting and Election (hereinafter “Annual District Meeting”) on **Tuesday, May 18, 2021**, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., by voting machine, for the purpose of voting:

1. On a **PROPOSITION** to appropriate the necessary funds to meet the estimated expenditures for the **2021-2022** school year;
2. For the election of two (2) **BOARD MEMBERS, each for a full term of three (3) years commencing July 1, 2021 and expiring June 30, 2024**;
3. For any other **PROPOSITIONS** legally coming before the voters; and

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT a copy of the statement of the amount of money which will be required for the ensuing year for school purposes, specifying the several purposes and amount for each, plus an Exemption Report showing how much of the total assessed value on the final assessment roll(s) used in the budgetary process is exempt from taxation, which will be annexed to the proposed budget along with the additional appendages required by law, together with a copy of any proposition to be presented at said Annual District Meeting, may be obtained, upon request, by any resident in said District, during the fourteen (14) days immediately preceding the Annual District Meeting, except Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, at Bedford Central School District, on the District’s internet website at, www.bcsdny.org, and at each of the following locations during the hours designated:

- Board of Education Office, Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Bedford, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Bedford Hills Elementary School, Bedford Hills, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Bedford Village Elementary School, Bedford, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Mount Kisco Elementary School, Mount Kisco, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Pound Ridge Elementary School, Pound Ridge, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- West Patent Elementary School, Bedford Hills, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Fox Lane Middle School, Bedford, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Fox Lane High School, Bedford, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT a public hearing for the purpose of discussion of reviewing the proposed budget and for the transaction of such business as authorized by the Education Laws of the State of New York shall be held on **Wednesday, May 5, 2021**, commencing at 7:00 p.m. on Fox Lane Campus, Fox Lane Middle School, Route 172, Bedford, New York.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT petitions nominating candidates for the office of Members of the Board of Education must be filed with the Clerk of the District, Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Route 172, Bedford, New York, not later than **Monday, April 19, 2021**. Each petition must be directed to the Clerk of the School District; must be signed by **two percent of the 2, 782 voters** (55 signatures) who voted in the 2019 annual election; must state the name and residence of the candidate and the residence of each signer; and must be filed in the Office of the District Clerk in the Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Route 172, Bedford, New York, between the hours of **9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on or before Monday, April 19, 2021**. Pursuant to a ballot proposition adopted by the District’s voters, vacancies on the Board of Education are no longer considered separate specific offices. Instead, all Board candidates now run at-large (i.e., compete for all available vacancies on the Board). Nominating Petition forms may be obtained from the District Clerk.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT personal registration of voters is required. No person shall be entitled to vote at the Annual District Meeting whose name does not appear on the Register of voters. A “qualified voter” is any person who is a citizen of the United States, at least 18 years of age, and a resident of the District for at least 30 days immediately preceding May 18, 2021. Any qualified voter who previously has registered with the District and who has voted at any annual or special District election within the last four calendar years **and/or** any qualified voter of the District who is registered with the Westchester County Board of Elections pursuant to Article 5 of the NY Election Law, is eligible to vote at the Annual District Meeting on May 18, 2021. All other qualified voters who wish to vote in this election must register beforehand with the District, or with the County Board of Elections.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT that, pursuant to a rule adopted by the Board of Education in accordance with Sections 2035 and 2008 of the Educa-

continued on page 24

continued from page 23

tion Law of the State of New York, any referenda or propositions to amend the budget or otherwise to be submitted for voting at such election, that are not required by law to be included in the legal notice for the vote, must be filed with the Board of Education at the Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Route 172, Bedford, New York, on or before April 19, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. (prevailing time), must be typed or printed in the English language, must be directed to the Office of Clerk of the District, must be signed by at least **88** qualified voters of the District; and must state the name of each signer. Any proposition may be rejected by the Board of Education if the purpose of the proposition is not within the power of the voters, or where the expenditure of the monies is required by the proposition, if the proposition fails to include the necessary specific appropriation.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT that voter registration for the District is ongoing until **Thursday, May 13, 2021**, in each of the schools of the District during school hours, for the purpose of preparing a Register of the qualified voters of the District for said Annual District Meeting, at which time any person shall be entitled to have their name placed upon such Register by the District's Board of Registration, provided that they are known or proven to the satisfaction of such Board of Registration to be entitled to vote at said Annual District Meeting for which such Register is prepared.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT the voter registration books (the "Register") for each of the said five (5) Election Districts shall be open for inspection by any qualified voter, at the Office of the District Clerk in the Board of Education Office, Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Bedford, New York during regular office hours on each of the five (5) days prior to Tuesday, May 18, 2021, excluding Saturday, May 15, 2021 (except by appointment) and Sunday, May 16, 2021.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT that said School District has been divided into Election Districts, which are designated as being those with borders coterminous with the attendance zones for the five (5) elementary attendance areas as follows:

- Election District No. 1** – Mount Kisco Elementary School Attendance Area
- Election District No. 2** – Bedford Hills Elementary School Attendance Area
- Election District No. 3** – Pound Ridge Elementary School Attendance Area
- Election District No. 4** – West Patent Elementary School Attendance Area
- Election District No. 5** – Bedford Village Elementary School Attendance Area

Qualified voters of **Election District No. 1** shall vote in the **gymnasium** of the **Mount Kisco Elementary School**; qualified voters of **Election District No. 2** shall vote in the **cafeteria** of the **Bedford Hills Elementary School**; qualified voters of **Election District No. 3** shall vote in the **library** of the **Pound Ridge Elementary School**; qualified voters of **Election District No. 4** shall vote in the **gymnasium** of the **West Patent Elementary School**; and qualified voters of **Election District No. 5** shall vote in the **gymnasium** of the **Bedford Village Elementary School**.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT applications for absentee balloting may be obtained at the Office of the District Clerk. Completed applications are to be returned to the Office of the District Clerk by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 11, 2021, if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter; or by 5:00 p.m., Monday, May 17, 2021, if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. All absentee ballots must be received in the Office of the District Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 18, 2021. A listing of all persons to whom absentee ballots have been issued will be available at the Office of the District Clerk during regular office hours until the day of the election.

NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN THAT Military Voters who are not currently registered to vote may apply to register as a qualified voter of the District by contacting the District Clerk at the Office of the District Clerk in the Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Route 172, Bedford, New York, by telephone 914-241-6011, or email: sspeyer3549@bcSDny.org to receive an application to register as a qualified voter of the District for the Annual District Meeting on May 18, 2021. The Military Voter may indicate their preference for receiving the registration application by mail, by facsimile or electronic mail (email). The application to register must be received by the District Clerk no later than 5:00 P.M. on April 22, 2021. The register of voters prepared and filed in the District Clerk's office shall include the names of all military voters who submit a valid military voter registration. A military voter means a qualified voter of New York State who is in actual military service and will, therefore, be absent from the District in which they are qualified to vote on the day of registration or election or is discharged from military service within 30 days of an election or a spouse, parent, child or dependent of the military voter if a qualified voter of New York State and a resident of the same school district as the military voter, or military personnel residing on a military base within a school district in New York State for a period of 30 days immediately preceding the election.

Military Voters who are qualified voters of the District may obtain an application for a military ballot by contacting the District Clerk at the Office of the District Clerk in the Administration Building, Fox Lane Campus, Route 172, Bedford, New York, by telephone 914-241-6011, or email: sspeyer3549@bcSDny.org. The application for a military ballot must be received by the District Clerk by no later than 5:00 P.M. on April 22, 2021. The Military Voter may indicate their preference for receiving the application for a military ballot by mail, by facsimile or email. Military ballots will be mailed or otherwise distributed no later than 25 days before the election. Military ballots must be received by the District Clerk (1) before the close of the polls on election day and showing a cancellation mark of the U.S. postal service or a foreign country's postal service, or showing a dated endorsement of receipt by another agency of the U.S. government or (2) by 5:00 P.M. on election day and signed and dated by the military voter and one witness thereof, with a date which is ascertained to be not later than the day before the election. A list of all persons to whom military ballots shall have been issued will be available for inspection to qualified voters of the District in the said Office of the District Clerk during regular office hours, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., prevailing time, until the day of the Annual District Meeting.

Dated: March 25, 2021

**BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE BEDFORD CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT, COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER, STATE OF NEW YORK**

Sandra Speyer, District Clerk

Trattoria Vivolo Marks 20th Anniversary in Harrison

For nearly a generation, some of the most robust Italian regional flavors in our area have been emanating from a gleaming vintage diner across from the Harrison Metro-North station.

Chef and owner Dean Vivolo of Trattoria Vivolo in Harrison is marking his 20th anniversary with a variety of tasty new specialties, dining options and enhanced al fresco.

The 60-seat restaurant is housed in a gleaming diner with counter and booths in the front and an airy greenhouse in the rear. During warm weather, a newly-planted giant herb garden and shrubs flank a seasonal outdoor patio shaded by overhead umbrellas, decorative string lights and soft, soothing music creating a delightful atmosphere.

Al fresco dining will be expanded this year with a new outdoor bar and lounge area with sofas and firepits. It's a perfect setting for socializing with friends and family. The entire restaurant has been refurbished, and in the evening the restaurant takes on a charming glow.

Vivolo, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), started his career training with his late father, Michael Vivolo, chef and proprietor of the former La Riserva Restaurant in Larchmont. Dean began busing tables and learning the ropes from his dad at age 14.

After his tenure at the CIA, Dean cooked at Il Montova Del Lago on the outskirts of Rome, under Chef Simone Cipriani. He also had an opportunity to work in the kitchens of the noted San Domenico in Manhattan under Chef Odette Fada and La Panetiere in Rye.

To kick off his anniversary season, Vivolo has premiered a new spring menu, updated the cocktail menus and wine list and expanded weekend hours. Customers are encouraged to lounge over a glass of wine or cup of espresso at the counter, share one of the tasty thin-crust pizzas in a booth or take in a full meal in the rear greenhouse.

The menu at Trattoria Vivolo specializes



By Morris Gut

in regional Italian cuisine using nothing but the best ingredients from throughout Italy. Specials are updated daily, and special requests are accommodated with advance notice. Gluten-free options are offered.

Current seasonal specialties include Insalata Di Mare (octopus, calamari, shrimp, scungilli, fennel fronds, pickled red onion, celery, crushed red pepper, lemon and extra virgin olive oil); Asparagi Gratinati (broiled asparagus, speck and parmigiano cheese); Insalata Di

Cavoli (chopped kale, roasted beets, fennel, ceci beans, red onion, pistachios and goat cheese); Cippone, a thin-crust pizza with spicy sausage and red onion; Aragosta e Capesante (Italian stir fry with lobster tail, bay scallops, mixed mushrooms, scallions, roasted peppers, pine nuts, garlic and oil); and Fusilli Calabrese (nduja, sun dried tomatoes, charred radicchio, butter and fresh herb sauce).

There's also Gnocchi Al Cinghiale, which contains gnocchi with wild boar ragu and shaved parmigiano cheese; Tonno Di Barletta (peppercorn crusted wild tuna, fennel fronds, pickled radicchio, fresh thyme and Dijon mustard sauce; Calamari Piccante (sauteed calamari, celery, onions, a touch of marinara and spicy olive oil served with garlic bread); Pollo Martini with triple sec, orange and ginger sauce; and rib-eye Marinato, a pan-seared, marinated 16-ounce rib-eye topped with crispy onions and pepperoncini.

Save room for Vivolo's desserts: There's affogato (vanilla ice cream topped with double espresso); the Vivolissimo (vanilla ice cream, strawberries, cannoli cream, shaved dark chocolate, whipped cream and crushed biscotti); and Bomba Baci (chocolate ice cream, chopped hazelnuts, crumbled chocolate cookies, whipped cream, chocolate syrup, topped with baci kisses).

A special Italian "digestive" amaro cart has been set up. Selections include 30 specialty after-dinner drinks.

Special Hint: While there, check out the black and white photos of Italy hanging throughout the restaurant. They were taken by the Vivolo family during visits to Dean's paternal hometown of Accadia-Foggia in the Apulia region of Italy.

"Most importantly, Trattoria Vivolo would not be what it is today without the love and support of my amazing wife Odelya, three children, my mother, sister and late father," Vivolo said.

Trattoria Vivolo is located at 301 Halstead Ave. in Harrison, opposite the northbound side of the Metro-North station. Lunch is served seven days from 12 to 3 p.m. Main courses at lunch range from \$10.95 to \$14.95. Dinner is served Monday through Saturday from 5 to 10 p.m. and Sundays from 12 to 10 p.m. Main courses at dinner range from \$14 to \$36. Party facilities for up to 40 guests. Seasonal outdoor seating and take-out is available. Major credit cards accepted. Free and municipal parking. Casual dress. Reservations accepted. Info: 914-835-6199 or visit www.trattoriavivolo.com.



The Asparagi Gratinati at Trattoria Vivolo, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year.



Trattoria Vivolo's kale salad.

'Cooking for a Cause' to Help the Hungry Janet Irizarry of the website Hudson Valley EATS, has launched a new season of virtual cooking classes with all proceeds going to feeding the hungry in the Hudson Valley.

The Chobani Family Cooking series will take place Apr. 13 and 27 and May 11. Noted chefs throughout the area are participating. Support will be going to nonprofit organizations such as Feeding Westchester, Food Bank of the Hudson Valley and

Dutchess Outreach. Registration is required; sponsorships are available.

For more information, visit www.hudsonvalleyeats.com.

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

Menu Movers & Shakers



The rib-eye Marinato at Trattoria Vivolo in Harrison, a noted Italian restaurant that is celebrating a milestone anniversary.

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LEGAL NOTICE - PUBLIC HEARING

2021-22 TENTATIVE VILLAGE BUDGET

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville, New York will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 12, 2021 at 8:00pm via teleconference for the purpose of hearing comments as it pertains to the 2021-2022 Tentative Village

Budget. The proposed compensation for the Mayor is \$6,000 and each Trustee \$3,500. All persons interested in speaking on this subject will be heard. A copy of the Tentative Budget is available online at www.pleasantville-ny.gov.

Eric Morrissey
Village Administrator/Clerk

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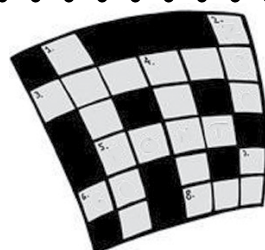
Putnam Valley Parks and Recreation is hiring waterfront lifeguards for our 2021 summer season. Please contact Theresa at 845-526-3292 or torlando@putnamvalley.com for more info.

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Oddities of Orbits and Distance Can Help Connect Us to Our World

Here's a question: How far is Earth from the sun?

Back in the dark corners of your memory, behind the list of all the state capitals and the seven times table, you probably remember what you learned in grade school – about 93 million miles.

Like most things, the truth isn't quite so simple. In 1609, the German super-genius Johannes Kepler brought the world the first of his three laws of planetary motion. It says that the planets all travel in elliptical – not circular – orbits. This puts the sun off-center, and means that orbits are

stretched out, and slightly egg-shaped.

I don't much care for the terms, myself, but when you hear the words "supermoon" and "micromoon" from time to time, it's an example of Kepler's first law. Only, it's the moon's egg-shaped orbit, and Earth is what's off to one side.

Clear Skies

In a circular orbit, every point along the path is the same distance from the sun. Every day, the sun would be 93 million miles away. With an ellipse, from one moment to the next we're a different distance away; some closer, some farther.

Earth's aphelion, its most distant point, is about 94.5 million miles and happens in July. From there, we swing closer and closer until we reach our 91.5-million-mile perihelion in January. As Earth moves between those, there are two points where Earth is at that grade-school average distance: exactly 92.96 million miles away.

Astronomers call the average distance an astronomical unit (AU). It's a handy way to measure distances to things that are, on the immense scale of the universe, nearby. It fits a nice gap between miles or kilometers, which are easy for measuring things about as far away as the moon or the solar system's closest planets, and the distances to the farthest things from us.

Rather than saying Neptune is three billion miles away, we can say it's 30 AU. It seems a little more manageable that way. On the other hand, we wouldn't say the Andromeda Galaxy, the nearest big galaxy

to our own, is 158,102,690,000 AU away. We don't even bother with miles for things that far.

If you're a fan of orbital geometry, this week's for you. On Saturday, Apr. 3, we reach that magical 1-AU point. Then, through the summer, and clear out until October's 1-AU day, you can say the distance from Earth to the sun is farther than the distance from the Earth to the sun. Trust me, no one will look at you funny.

It probably seems like just a trivial peculiarity, but maybe not. It's fun to try to imagine all this as if you're watching from some incredible distance away. Maybe you can think of all the planets looping around the sun, with their moons swirling around them, too.

As you pull your imagination out even farther, you can see our solar system traveling around the center of the Milky Way



By Scott Levine

galaxy, making a complete orbit every 230 million years.

Things like these don't directly affect our lives, but the way they can connect us to the world around us is incredible. I hope you have happy holidays, and your skies are clear tonight.

Scott Levine (astroscott@yahoo.com) is an astronomy writer and speaker from Croton-on-Hudson. He is also a member of the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, 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. Star parties are free and open to the public but attendance is currently capped at 50 people, as required by New York State COVID-19 requirements.



Last Quarter
April 4



New Moon
April 11



First Quarter
April 20



Full Moon
March 26

April's phases of the moon



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The Greater Influence on Our Palates: Taste or Smell?



By Nick Antonaccio

In previous columns, I've focused on the marvels of the human senses and their influence on our perception of wine.

It seems science has undertaken numerous studies to codify and standardize how

we interface with wine. Of our five senses, recent scientific efforts have been focusing primarily on our senses of taste and smell. These studies attempt to explain in objective, finite terms how our physiology and, in certain instances, our psychology, play a role in enhancing our innate enjoyment of wines.

There have been studies of our sense of taste, isolating subregions of our cerebral cortex that imprint, and therefore, define the sensations of our taste buds. The taste senses of bitter, sweet, sour, salty and umami occupy specific regions of the olfactory sensors on our tongue and the membrane lining in our mouth.

For example, science has isolated the sense of sweetness to the tip of our tongue and bitterness to the rear. Understanding this process enables wine tasters to enhance their appreciation of wine.

Science has further proven that our sense of smell dominates our overall experience in wine appreciation, far outweighing the influence of taste. A recent study has

'The science of the role of taste and smell is most evident when we engage in the most basic of dining rituals – pairing food and wine.'

shattered the long-held scientific conclusion that the smell receptors in our mouth and nose are able to identify 10,000 aromas (a rather overwhelming number to manage each time we sniff a glass of wine). The study has concluded that our sense of smell is capable of detecting over one million scents and aromas.

However, therein lies the rub. There are insufficient descriptive terms to specifically identify and describe each of these aromas.

Here's an experiment you can try at home to better understand the dominance of smell over taste. We all have tried one or more flavors of those gourmet jellybeans, the ones with laboratory-developed flavors such as buttered popcorn, pina colada and chili mango. The tastes are amazingly accurate. But are we experiencing taste or smell?

Hold your nose and then pop a jellybean in your mouth. What happens? Your sense of taste detects sweetness in your mouth,



but no flavor. Release the grip on your nose. Bam, the vibrant essence of the jellybean flavor floods your brain's olfactory sensors. So it is with wine. Taste provides the broad backdrop for your palate; aromas determine the core impressions in your perception of the wine.

The science of the role of taste and smell is most evident when we engage in the most basic of dining rituals – pairing food and wine. The combination of compatible tastes and aromas is critical to the enjoyment of a meal. There is certainly an art, or at least a learned trait, in creating a new sensory state when we are at the table.

The ritual begins with a sip of the wine to be paired with a food. Our sensory receptors trigger specific elements of the wine in our

mouth. The second level is tasting the food. A new set of tastes and aromas now coats our tongue and mouth, and penetrates our olfactory receptors. Our brain now has memorized two sets of distinct profiles.

After the bite of food, we sip the wine again. In the test laboratory of our mouth, we now create a third, unique taste and aroma profile. Here is where the greatest dining pleasure blossoms. A new experience is created on our palate, with a set of variables that may never be duplicated again.

Life is a series of experiments and outcomes. From each of them we learn and build the foundation of our interactive lives. With food and wine experiments, we bring to the table hundreds, perhaps thousands, of individual sensory experiences each time we drink and dine. Our learned sensory instincts hopefully guide us to an enjoyable outcome;

science increasingly explains how we got there.

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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WHICH FUTURE MAKES SENSE FOR WESTCHESTER?

Indian Point will shut down by April 2021, and federal law allows for up to 60 years for it to be dismantled and removed.

But we don't have to wait that long.

There's a smarter plan for Indian Point currently under review. It calls for major work to be completed in just 12-15 years.

The plan will provide hundreds of local jobs. It means opportunity for redevelopment of the land decades sooner. And it results in predictable tax revenue for local schools and governments.

Indian Point will close soon after operating for nearly 60 years. We don't have to wait another 60 years for it to be dismantled.

Learn about the smarter plan at **indianpointdecommissioning.com**

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

Indian Point Energy Center



For United It's Business. For Us It's Personal.

For nearly 130 years you have entrusted your care to us. Our doctors deliver your babies, mend your broken bones, treat your cancer, get you back on your feet after surgery, and keep your heart beating.

Our only mission is to care for you. As such, we care about you, because over the years and for many generations, we've built relationships with you and your family.

Unfortunately UnitedHealthcare is jeopardizing these relationships and making it financially difficult for our patients to see the doctors they trust. On January 1, 2021, UnitedHealthcare dropped the Montefiore Health System, including White Plains Hospital, White Plains Hospital Physician Associates and Scarsdale Medical Group, from its network.

As your hospital and your physicians, **we want nothing more than to come to an agreement with UnitedHealthcare** and are confident that we have done everything in our power to negotiate in good faith with them. On February 11, however, UnitedHealthcare rejected our proposal which would have immediately restored in-network access to our patients. While United has been unwilling to reach an agreement, we have been able to successfully renegotiate new, long-term contracts with the three other major insurers in Westchester: Aetna, Empire BlueCross BlueShield and Cigna.

As a community member and past, current or potential patient, **you have every right to be frustrated. We are frustrated too.** It devastates us to say that, at this moment, the only way for UnitedHealthcare customers like you to guarantee in-network access to White Plains Hospital and the doctors you trust is to switch to a different insurance provider. While your choice of coverage may be up to your employer, you do have options. Remember, you will always have in-network access to our Emergency Department in case of emergencies. **Visit wphospital.org/united to find out more.**

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