

**Celebrate  
Mother's Day...  
pages 12-15**

# The White Plains Examiner

Covering White Plains, Greenburgh, Harrison

**COVID-19  
Breakdown: (Active)**

White Plains: 7,350 (202)  
Greenburgh: 4,701 (117)  
Harrison: 2,782 (67)  
Scarsdale: 1,144 (27)  
Elmsford: 754 (25)

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April 27 - May 3, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 11, Issue 506

## Innovative Truck Puts White Plains Preschooler in Driver's Seat

By Rick Pezzullo

Cerebral Palsy of Westchester's (CPW) United Preschool Center (UPC) welcomed high school junior Leo Rosen to campus last week to present an F-150 retrofitted tiny truck to a student with special needs.

Rosen, a resident of Purchase, handed over the keys to a four-year-old student recipient who has a disability that affects his mobility. Joined by family, CPW and UPC Staff on April 21, the boy had the chance to test drive his truck for the first time, which was built to satisfy his specific OT/PT needs, allowing him to move around easily by way of this battery-powered ride.

The event was a culmination of a process that started last summer when Rosen

reached out to CPW looking for a child who could benefit from such a car or truck. Rosen had received a donation of several trucks from the Connecticut GoBabyGo! Collaborative (Hamden, CT), which takes donated Fisher Price ride-on toy vehicles and outfits them for young children with disabilities, providing them the opportunity to move around independently.

With oversight via Zoom from an engineer who has experience with GoBabyGo! modifications, as well as insight from the United Preschool's occupational therapist Rosemary Kuttivara, Rosen was able to modify the truck in his family's garage, adapting the vehicle to fit the specific needs of the child. In addition, Kuttivara helped

*continued on page 2*



PHOTO BY ANGELA LICHT

Front row (L-R:) Leo Rosen with preschool student; Paul Montes, the student's father; Rosemary Kuttivara, UPC Occupational Therapist. Back row, L-R: Candelaria Cabanas, the student's mother; Ana Martinez, UPC; Leslie and Alan Rosen (Leo's parents); Stephanie Russo Pastilha, CPW Associate Executive Director; Marcy Weintraub, UPC Director.

## United Way Helpline Awarded \$2M



The NYS Legislature awarded \$2 million to the state's 211 Helpline network, operated by the local United Ways, to ensure that the call centers can continue to connect individuals with health and human service needs with the right resources. The call volume in 2020 was up 153% over 2019. Senator Peter Harkham (District 40), pictured second from right with Toyae Liverpool, director of programs and services for 211 Hudson Valley, Lini Jacob, chief information and referral officer for 211 Hudson Valley, and Tom Gabriel, president and CEO of United Way of Westchester and Putnam, sponsored the bill.

## Man Who Created a 'Kill List' Charged for Wrecking MTA Vehicle

By Anna Young

A Dobbs Ferry man who repeatedly rammed his car into an MTA vehicle, threatened police officers, and kept a "kill list" naming various public officials was taken into federal custody last Thursday.

Nicholas Skulstad, 33, was charged in White Plains Federal Court with destruction of a motor vehicle employed in interstate commerce, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years, according to U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York Audrey Strauss. The alleged assault happened in Ossining.

"As alleged, Nicholas Skulstad used his vehicle as a weapon, repeatedly ramming it into an occupied MTA vehicle, then shattering the driver's window," Strauss

said. "When police officers responded, Skulstad allegedly charged at and threatened them, and had in his car a notebook page titled 'List - To Kill,' with names of public figures."

On April 5, Skulstad allegedly crashed his black Jeep repeatedly into an MTA vehicle driven by a Metropolitan Transportation Authority employee in Ossining, damaging the car and forcing it off the road, according to the complaint. Skulstad subsequently exited his vehicle, approached the MTA car on foot, and banged on the drivers-side window until he shattered it.

When Ossining police officers arrived at the scene, Skulstad yelled at an officer, "I'm Jesus Christ! You are going to die today! Are you ready to die?"

*continued on page 2*

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# Several Million Dollars' Worth of Narcotics Seized in Westchester

By Rick Pezzullo

Several million dollars' worth of opiates and other narcotics, including what is alleged to be fentanyl, was seized last week in Mount Vernon following a joint investigation by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) New York Drug Enforcement Task Force (NYDETF), New Jersey State Police and the Westchester District Attorney's Office.

According to District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah, approximately 25,000 pills alleged to be fentanyl, many marked "M30," and an estimated 38 kilograms of alleged narcotics, including heroin, cocaine, and fentanyl, were found packaged and ready for sale in an apartment in Mount Vernon.

In a search warrant executed at a

residence in Yonkers, an estimated \$35,000 in cash was seized. The substances have been sent to the DEA's Northeast Regional Laboratory for analysis.

An individual was arrested in New Jersey by New Jersey State Police in connection with the seized narcotics and was charged in Mount Vernon with two counts of Criminal Possession of a Controlled Substance in the First Degree, pending extradition to Westchester.

"Drug overdoses and overdose deaths are plaguing Westchester and our region," Rocah said. "We are committed to doing everything we can to get drugs off of our streets and out of our communities and to help fight opiate addiction."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Ray Donovan said, "Two milligrams of fentanyl



can cause death, and taking this large amount of fentanyl out of distribution has saved lives. This seizure is indicative of how traffickers are making street drugs highly potent and highly addictive by adding fentanyl. This is a warning that local traffickers vary methods of distribution, some selling only fentanyl

and some selling mixtures of fentanyl and other drugs. Therefore, drug users beware, what you may think is one drug, is really laced with something more powerful and deadly."

New York State Police Acting Superintendent Kevin P. Bruen added, "The relentless work and collaborative efforts of law enforcement at all levels has resulted in the seizure of millions of dollars in deadly drugs and the removal of a dangerous criminal who threatened the safety and security of our neighborhoods. We have zero tolerance for those who sell these deadly, illegal drugs. Together, we will continue to aggressively target and eliminate these operations and work to stop the distribution of these deadly substances and the drug-related violence on our streets."

## Greenburgh Seeking Vendors to Launch Second Farmers Market

By Anna Young

A second farmers market could be coming to the Town of Greenburgh.

Town Supervisor Paul Feiner and Town Clerk Judith Beville are collaborating with the planning department to launch a farmers' market at Greenburgh Town Hall. Feiner said it would provide residents who live in the Fairview section of town a chance to enjoy a market, socialize and purchase fresh produce.

But Feiner said this can't happen unless there are enough farmers and vendors to participate.

"Depending on the availability of farmers, this could happen on weekends (late in the afternoon or early evening) or on weekends," Feiner said. "This farmers

market, if established, will be the second farmers market sponsored by the Town of Greenburgh."

The town has sponsored a farmers' market on E. Hartsdale Avenue for the last 30 years.

Officials are currently reaching out to farmers, vendors, and musical artists about setting up the potential market in the parking lot of Town Hall. Feiner requests all interested parties reach out to the town for more information.

If any vendors or farmers who are interested in participating, contact Town Clerk Judith Beville at [jbeville@greenburghny.com](mailto:jbeville@greenburghny.com) or Paul Feiner at [pfeiner@greenburghny.com](mailto:pfeiner@greenburghny.com). You can call Beville at 914-989-1504 or Feiner at 914-989-1540.

## Man Who Created a 'Kill List' Charged for Wrecking MTA Vehicle

*continued from page 1*

Skulstad then charged at the police vehicle, throwing his body into the drivers-side door while screaming threats at an officer sitting inside, officials said. Skulstad resisted officers' attempts to subdue him before ultimately being taken into custody.

Police then searched Skulstad's vehicle and found, among other things, a shell casing and a notebook with a page entitled "List - To Kill," which listed the names of various current and former public officials and other public figures, according to the complaint. The names listed in the book were not made public.

"Skulstad's alleged targeting of an MTA vehicle, and the subsequent actions he took against police officers who arrive on scene, remind us of the threat our public servants face each and every day as they uphold their duty to protect the communities they serve," said FBI Assistant Director William F. Sweeney Jr. "Skulstad no longer poses a threat to society or, more specifically, those he included as targets on his list."

The joint investigation comprised of federal and local agencies, including the FBI's New York-based Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Ossining Police Department, the

Irvington Police Department, the Dobbs Ferry Police Department and the Croton-on-Hudson Police Department.

Additionally, the FBI's Newark-based JTTF, the FBI's Counterterrorism Division, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey, the Westchester County District Attorney's Office, the Westchester County Real Time Crime Center, and the New York State Intelligence Center also assisted in the investigation.

The case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys Sam Adelsberg and Elinor L. Tarlow will oversee the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Elisabeth Poteat of the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice's National Security Division.

"Attacks against public servants, as alleged in this federal complaint, endanger not only those who work to maintain public safety, but all of society," NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea said. "I commend our investigators in the NYPD and our partners in the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force and the United States Attorney's Office in the Southern District of New York for working closely to ensure this individual would be brought to justice."

## Innovative Truck Puts White Plains Preschooler in Driver's Seat

*continued from page 1*

Rosen put together proper operational instructions for the child's parents.

In addition to the F-150 truck recently completed, Rosen is in the process of adapting three other tiny cars, donated by the Connecticut GoBabyGo! Collaborative, to be retrofitted for other local preschool-aged children with disabilities.

"I am interested in becoming an engineer, I love to build, and I want to do whatever I can to help others," Rosen explained to United Preschool Director Marcy Weintraub.

A current high school student at St. George's School in Rhode Island, Rosen has spent much of this past year studying remotely from his home and came up with this project as a way to keep himself engaged during this year of quarantine.

Rosen is eager to outfit more cars for CPW's UPC students and is looking into obtaining slightly bigger vehicles that could be modified for older, school-aged children with disabilities.

"I love making kids happy," Rosen stated as he watched the child successfully drive around on his new power wheels.

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# Activities, Capacities Increase Along With Vaccination Rates Statewide

By Martin Wilbur

As strong progress has been made the past couple of weeks in reducing COVID-19 infection rates and increasing vaccinations, state and Westchester County officials are planning to increase outdoor activities and capacities.

On Sunday, New York State registered a 2.39 positivity rate, the 12th consecutive day that the state has been below 3 percent. This followed Friday and Saturday where the infection rate dipped to pre-holiday season levels of 1.8 and 1.9 percent, respectively.

Statewide hospitalizations from the coronavirus dipped on Sunday to about 3,100, the lowest since Thanksgiving, and the 729 COVID-19 patients in intensive care and 434 intubations also represent lows not seen since the week after Thanksgiving.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo welcomed the upbeat news, but cautioned that it shouldn't mean residents stop taking precautions, including mask wearing and social distancing, whenever possible.

"(The) 2.39 is great progress in reducing the positivity rate of COVID, but the fact that 41 New Yorkers passed away (on Sunday) also makes a point that we're not out of the woods, and people are still dying, so take it seriously," Cuomo said.

As a result of the progress made in recent weeks, Cuomo announced Monday that the New York State Fair in Syracuse will be held this year from Aug. 20 to Sept. 6 at 50 percent capacity.

He also announced that outdoor stadium capacity can increase from 20 to 33 percent; offices from 50 to 75 percent; casinos from 25 to 50 percent and gyms and health clubs from 33 to 50 percent.

At the county level, Bicycle Sundays will resume this weekend along the Bronx River Parkway from White Plains to Scarsdale from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Those will run every Sunday through October, except for May 30, July 4 and Sept. 6.

However, fireworks programs at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla on July 3 and Playland on July 4 will not take place. The popular cultural heritage festivals will also not occur this year for the second straight summer.

Similar to the state level, the decline the past two weeks in cases, hospitalizations and deaths in Westchester has been encouraging. County Executive George Latimer said Monday that active cases have fallen by nearly 1,000 for the second week in a row, down to 3,208. Since Apr. 12, cases have fallen more than 1,900, from 5,128.

COVID-19-related hospitalizations as of last Saturday were 131, and there were just four deaths during the past week, including four days where there were no fatalities, Latimer said.

He said he was hopeful that the hospitalizations will fall under 100 in the next week or so and active cases dip under 3,000.

Vaccinations across Westchester continue to surge, although there is some concern that vaccination rates will plateau at a number that will not enable the county or the state to reach herd immunity. The state continues to loosen requirements for the vaccine. Last week Latimer and Cuomo appeared together in Yonkers to announce

that people at least 60 years old can show up at the Yonkers Armory for a vaccination without an appointment.

Since vaccinations began in January, 352,743 people in Westchester have completed their series, and about 490,000 have had at least one dose, Latimer said.

"We believe that is the path out of this pandemic and that is through vaccination," he said.

Latimer said there is a path to getting at least 60 percent vaccinated in Westchester given the amount of demand that remains, but will wait and see how much beyond

"There are still targeted groups that haven't been fully activated and I think that will happen," he said of the 60 percent

threshold. "We probably will be in a better position in about a month from now as we approach the Memorial Day weekend to really have a hard estimate about how far we can get voluntarily."

Over the weekend, federal health officials announced that starting Tuesday the Johnson & Johnson one-dose vaccine will be available. The Putnam County Department of Health will be using the Johnson & Johnson and Moderna vaccines at a site in Garrison on Tuesday and a clinic in Brewster on Thursday. Anyone at least 18 years old who lives, works or attends school in New York is eligible.

To sign up, visit <https://www.putnamcountyny.com/covid-19-vaccine->

information/.

"From homebound residents to college students nearing the end of their semesters, rolling up their sleeves for a single dose has helped to keep individuals safe as well as contributed to the overall vaccination rates in the county," said Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell. We are glad the processes in place to ensure vaccine safety worked and now we can keep Putnam healthy and moving in the right direction."

According to the state tracker, 48 percent of Putnam residents have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Putnam is slightly ahead of the statewide average of 44 percent.

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# Mt. Kisco Unveils Westchester's First Community Solar Storage Project

By Martin Wilbur

The Village of Mount Kisco celebrated Earth Day last Thursday by cutting the ribbon on Westchester's first municipal community solar and battery storage project on a capped landfill to help support renewable energy.

Generating 575 kilowatts, the repurposed 1.5-acre parcel at the end of Columbus Avenue, which had laid fallow for more than two decades until the 1,750-solar panel array was installed late last year, now generates energy for more than 100 customers in the village.

Mayor Gina Picinich, who hosted a wind-blown press conference at the site, said the village is happy to do its part in helping New York State reach its goal of being powered by 70 percent renewable energy by 2030.

"Everyone has a part to play, an important part in all of this, to ensure that we meet not just those goals but that we do what is right in order to ensure that we can live onward in a clean planet," Picinich said.

The village partnered with BQ Energy, a Wappingers Falls-based company that specializes in using brownfields sites and capped landfills for wind turbine and solar projects, and Sustainable Westchester, which performed community outreach and enrolled subscribers. Technical expertise was provided by the NY-Sun team at the New York State Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA), which provided about \$900,000 in solar and energy storage incentives for the initiative. The federal Environmental



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Protection Agency (EPA) performed the comprehensive solar assessment for the site. Mount Kisco is receiving \$100,000 a year in its lease agreement with BQ Energy for the land over the next 25 years, Picinich said.

Paul Curran, BQ Energy's managing director, said what has made this project unique for the company and in Westchester are the use of battery units that are able to store energy and release it when there is more demand, such as in peak consumption days in summer or if there happens to be a stretch of time when the sun isn't shining brightly. It also allows storage of excess energy for the grid.

It is a model that will be replicated across the region, state and nation with solar projects in the years ahead, he said.

"It makes renewable energy usable for the people of Mount Kisco, for people in the area, but also for the grid in general," Curran said. "It's an incredibly important landmark that can be replicated and that is something that renewable energy really needs to do."

NY Green Bank provided a \$2.27 million loan for the project.

Although many renewable energy projects slowed because of the pandemic, David Sandbank, vice president of distributed energy services for NYSERDA, said it oversaw more

projects in 2020 than in any other year. He said turning a landfill that was no longer of value to anyone provide energy, help the environment and provide local governments with an additional revenue source makes it a benefit to everyone.

Another advantage is that it's community solar, said Sandbank, which can also provide homeowners who don't live in areas that are conducive to having their own panels and renters to participate.

"We're sending price signals to projects like these, and we're saying, hey, if you can produce electricity when the grid needs it the most, we're going to pay you more for it," Sandbank said. "Sometimes that's when the sun's not shining, sometimes that's when the sun goes down, so we're sending price signals to this particular project right here, and they're able to create, to generate more income just by having that battery storage, they're providing the grid with the electricity when it needs it the most."

As of last October, there were 417 renewable projects on contaminated lands across the United States under the Repowering America initiative, said Walter Mugdan, EPA acting regional administrator for Region 2, which includes New York. Of those, 245 solar installations have been placed on landfills and landfill bugger areas, he said.

In New York, the EPA has assessed nearly 50 sites, almost all of them landfills. Six are operational, including Mount Kisco, which went on line late last year, and a seventh will be running this summer, Mugdan said.

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# Mt. Pleasant IDA Approves Incentives for E-Commerce Distribution Center

The Mount Pleasant Industrial Development Agency (IDA) last week approved about \$3.8 million in sales tax exemptions for the construction of a 153,062-square-foot e-commerce distribution center located at 211 Saw Mill River Rd. (Route 9A) in Hawthorne.

The project, which received approval at the IDA's Apr. 21 meeting, represents total private investment of more than \$99 million. According to the developer, USRE Hawthorne LLC, the project is expected to create 100 full-time and part-time jobs as well as 1,000 construction jobs during the course of the building of the structure. The project will also generate additional

tax revenue on a property that has been historically underutilized.

The developer is not seeking a mortgage recording tax exemption or a payment in lieu of taxes agreement for the project.

"The IDA is pleased to provide incentives for this important project which represents a significant private investment in our town," said Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi, who serves as chairman of the IDA, said in a statement. "In addition to creating much-needed new jobs, it will also generate tax revenue for the town and school district without adding any new students and will contribute toward road improvements to Route 9A. This is win-



A digital rendering of what the 153,000-square foot e-commerce distribution center will look like on Route 9A in Hawthorne.

## *Dain's Lumber to Hold Deck & Railing Sale All Month in May*

Dain's Lumber, serving homeowners and contractors since 1848, will be holding its May Deck & Railing Sale throughout the month of May.

Vendor Kickoff Weekend is May 1-2 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Deck experts and contractors will be available to answer all of your questions. Vendors from the top-rated brands will be on-site, including Fibron, TimberTech/Azek,

Trex, Zuri, Moisture Shield and Atlantis Cable Systems.

A newly-redesigned 2,500-square-foot outdoor deck display with more than 80 colors and styles is open 24/7.

For information on the sale and show, call 914-737-2000 or visit [www.dainlumber.com](http://www.dainlumber.com). Dain's Lumber is located at 2 N. Water St. in Peekskill.

win for the town and school district."

Fulgenzi said that the facility will pay full property taxes estimated at more than \$1.5 million a year when completed.

The project will be on the site of the old Green Valley Nursery. The town's Planning Board granted site plan approval for the project last July.

The one-story distribution center, which is located on 10.475 acres, will consist of 136,214 square feet of warehouse space, 16,848 square feet of office space, 181 passenger car parking spaces, 597 van parking spaces, 12 truck-loading spaces


and 62 van-loading spaces at grade.


In addition to significant onsite improvements, the developer is in the permitting stages with the state Department of Transportation to construct a traffic signal on Route 9A at Belmont Road and a left-hand turning lane from the south, which serves both the proposed project and the existing NYSCO Products building.

The proposed road improvements will create needed traffic flow and traffic calming measures for motorists on the busy corridor.

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# P'ville Board of Education Approves Budget With Flat Tax Rate

By Abby Luby

The Pleasantville Board of Education approved the district's \$53.8 million budget for 2021-22 last week, providing homeowners with a zero percent tax increase for the second straight year and a tax levy hike of about .6 percent.

The \$53,834,774 budget increases spending just over \$1 million from last year.

The district was able to achieve another flat tax rate by factoring in some of the \$623,483 in Foundation Aid, the first part of the state funds owed the district. The remainder of the district's outstanding Foundation Aid that it is owed is expected from the state in a three-year phase-in: \$875,943 in 2022-23 and \$876,012 in 2023-24.

To maintain the flat tax rate, \$100,000 was added from fund balance.

"Some of the money from the state Foundation Aid will go directly into the budget, which we propose to use to lower the tax levy," said Tim Whipple, the district's assistant superintendent for business.

"Every year we have a portion of our total fund balance that we allocate for the specific purpose of maintaining a reasonable tax levy increase for the

community," Whipple added.

The .593 tax levy increase estimates property tax revenue of \$38,579,724.

Foundation Aid funds will also go toward hiring two new full-time instructional staffers and one full-time certified teaching assistant. At last week's board meeting, Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter said the district already had a blueprint of how to spend the additional money because of guidance from the public, the district's instructional teams, the board's goals and Pleasantville's strategic plan.

"We are certainly looking at instructional enhancements that protect our instructional core but allow us to have more options, more opportunities and to have a greater impact on others," Fox-Alter said.

Of the two new academic and extended learning support teachers, one will work with students in grades K-4 and the other with grades 5-8. The certified teaching assistant with a bilingual background will help high school English Language Learners.

The Foundation Aid increase to pay for the new positions will add \$280,406 to the budget to cover employee salary and benefits. Another \$220,845 was added to pay for additional counseling from Student Assistance Services (SAS) five days a

week, up from one day a week this year, a full demographic and enrollment study, and middle-school ventilation improvements.

Next year's proposed budget also includes other program enhancements such as funds to support staff development for teachers during the summer; more summer school opportunities to help close student learning gaps; Tru-Touch Displays in all classrooms; additional portable devices for grades 2-4; and ClassLink software – Single Sign-On technology for multiple applications.

Last week, school officials briefly discussed using the funds for student health and mental services, a summer learning program, an after-school program and an in-depth study of student needs. The monies could also be used to repair and replace HVAC systems and replace about 13 unit ventilators at the middle school.

The decision of how to use the federal funds will be decided by the wider school community and the public at a later time.

The mandatory public hearing on the budget is May 4, followed by the public vote and Board of Education election on May 18.

## Area Board of Education Races

Pleasantville will have a contested school board race next month. While

President Lawrence Boes will be leaving the board, Vice President Emily Rubin Persons will see re-election. Challengers Michael Busch and Sara Hukkanen will also be on the ballot in the face for two seats.

Other contested races are in Bedford and Chappaqua. Bedford has four candidates for two available seats, including current incumbent Michael Bauscher. Namasha Schelling, Steven Matlin and Robert Mazurek are the challengers. President Collette Dow will be retiring from the board.

In Chappaqua, the candidates are Ellen Exum and Cailee Hwang for one available seat. Vice President Holly McCall is running for New Castle supervisor and will leave the school board.

Mount Pleasant and Byram Hills will see uncontested races. The three incumbents in Mount Pleasant, Michael Griffin, Michael Horan and President Colleen Scaglione Neglia are the only candidates on the ballot for three seats.

Byram Hills incumbent Scott Levy seeks a third term on the board and will be joined on the ballot by Petrie Verma. Incumbent Michael Sanders will not run for re-election.

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# Obituaries

## Florine Eisele

Florine "Peggy" Eisele, 98, entered the Lord's kingdom at the Vermont Veterans Home surrounded by her family on Apr. 13.

She was born to Julian and Lena "Dixie" (Ward) Smith in Norfolk, Va. The family moved to Peekskill. After college in New York City and the beginning of World War II, she answered the call to service and joined the U.S. Navy. In 1942, Peggy attended the Naval War College in Rhode Island and went on to serve as a cryptographer stationed at Pearl Harbor for which she was awarded a commendation for her service with the U.S. Naval Communications Intelligence Organization. Peggy was always proud of her military service.

After the war, she met and married Edward Eisele, also of Peekskill. Peggy and Ed raised their family in Millwood. She was employed at the post office and Bankers



Florine Eisele

Trust in Chappaqua. In retirement, they relocated to her second love, the Adirondacks, making Piercefild, N.Y. their home. Wherever Peggy lived, she enjoyed people. She was the consummate hostess and often entertained family, friends and neighbors in her home.

Peggy enjoyed her Adirondack senior hiker's group, playing bridge and traveling. She lived many years at Saranac Village at Will Rogers in Saranac Lake. During those years, she attended the dedication to the World War II Monument as well as flying to Washington D.C. with the North Country Honor Flight. When independent living became too difficult, she moved to Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington, Vt.

Left to treasure her memory are her children, Edward (Donna), Polly and William (Patricia). She has six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Peggy was predeceased by her husband and parents.

Funeral arrangements are in care of the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home, 20 Church St., Saranac Lake, N.Y. 12983. There were no calling hours. Peggy was a member of St. Luke's the Beloved Physician Episcopal Church in Saranac Lake. A funeral service will be held on Saturday, May 1 at 1 p.m. at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home with Reverend Andy Cruz-Lilligard officiating. Peggy will rest next to her husband in the Gale Cemetery in Piercefild immediately following the funeral service. COVID-19 safety protocols are in effect. All guests are required to wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be sent to the Tri-Lakes Humane Society in care of the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home, 20 Church St., Saranac Lake, N.Y. 12983. Family and friends can also leave condolences and sign the online guest book at [www.fortunekeoughfuneralhome.com](http://www.fortunekeoughfuneralhome.com).

## Katherine Weisman

Katherine Grace (Rounds) Weisman, 55, of Mount Kisco passed away on Apr. 20 with family by her side after a heroic and difficult battle with multiple myeloma.

Katie was born Sept. 24, 1965, in Bloomington, Ill. She graduated from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, and worked as a technical designer before becoming a full-time mom

and autism advocate, most recently in her position as assistant to the chairman at the Children's Health Defense.

Katie is survived by her wonderful husband, Doug Weisman; her three beautiful sons, Nick, Alex and Don; her mother and father, Elaine and Richard Rounds, of Brandon, Man.; her brother, Jon; sister-in-law Carla (Rafael) and brothers-in-law Lawrence (Amanda) and Roger.

Katie meant so much to all of us, touching each of us in her own unique way. She was

nothing short of exceptional when it came to advocating not only for her sons, but endless children and young adults on the autism spectrum. She singlehandedly changed the lives of many families, encouraging them to look at autism as a different and wonderful way to approach life, not as something tragic.

Katie was passionate about her work with the Children's Health Defense and fought endlessly for vaccine safety and the vaccine injured. She was an active member of our community, especially within the Bedford Central School District, Special Education Parent Teachers Association (SEPTO) and Bedford Autism Spectrum Support (BASS). She loved her town, Mount Kisco,

and took great pride in being a part of the Beautification Committee. The flowers that will bloom in front of the library this spring are thanks to her efforts.

Visitation was at Oelker-Cox & Sinatra Funeral Home in Mount Kisco on Apr. 24. A memorial service will take place at a later date.

The Weisman family kindly asks that in lieu of flowers, a donation be made in Katie's name to the Children's Health Defense at <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/annual-fellowship/>. There is also a GoFundMe page set up to assist the family at <https://gofund.me/f849c9b3>.

*B.F.*

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## Monsignor Dermot Brennan

Monsignor Dermot R. Brennan, pastor emeritus of St. Patrick's parish in Yorktown, died Apr. 18. He was 90.

Born May 22, 1930, in New York City, Brennan was pastor of St. Patrick's from 1985 until his retirement in 2005, when he became a resident at the John Cardinal O'Connor Pavilion of the St. John Vianney Priests Residence in the Bronx.

He also served as pastor of Our Lady of Victory parish in Mount Vernon (1980 to 1985) and was a former vicar of northern Westchester and Putnam counties.

Last year, a surprise birthday car parade was held May 22 for Brennan. About 150 cars joined the afternoon caravan in Yorktown. Parade participants came from St. Patrick's and other area parishes Brennan had served.

He was a parochial vicar of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish (1970 to 1980) and St. Peter's in Liberty (1956 to 1958). He was a weekend associate of St. Margaret of Cortona and St. Gabriel, the Bronx. He served on the faculties of Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx and Bishop Dubois High School in Manhattan. He also served at the Juilliard School of Music.

Brennan earned a bachelor's degree from St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers and a master's from Teachers College of Columbia University in Manhattan. He was



Monsignor Dermot Brennan

ordained by Cardinal Francis Spellman at St. Patrick's Cathedral on June 2, 1956. He was named a monsignor in 1990.

Brennan enjoyed performing magic tricks and penned a book, "Homilies Kids Can See."

Visitation will be held on Tuesday, Apr. 27 from 4 to 7:30 p.m. and on Wednesday, Apr. 28 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. at St. Patrick's Church, 137 Moseman Rd. in Yorktown. A mass will be held on Tuesday, Apr. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the same location.



# Pleasantville Rotary to Hold Virtual Tasting This Saturday for Charity

By Martin Wilbur

For the second straight year, the Pleasantville Rotary Club was unable to hold its biggest fundraising event, Hudson Valley Fermented, a celebration of some of the region's finest craft beer, spirits and wine.

In 2021, however, the club is able to present a virtual event that promises to be fun for those who participate and raise critically important funds for local organizations that could use the help to support its programs.

Instead of holding Hudson Valley Fermented, which in 2019, raised about \$45,000, Pleasantville Rotary is presenting Virtually Fermented, where two-thirds of the proceeds from sales of a mixed four-pack produced and distributed by Captain Lawrence Brewing Company will go toward the organizations. For every \$30 four-pack that is sold, \$20 will go toward the Rotary's charitable causes that have been designated for the event.

Pleasantville Rotary President-elect Henry Leyva said two years ago the club was able to help more than a dozen organizations covering a variety of causes locally and internationally. Regular recipients have included Feeding Westchester, the Pleasantville Fund for Learning, the Community Scholarship Fund, Hope's Door, which helps domestic violence victims, and many others.

"We're not the only ones affected by COVID in that way," Leyva said. "It just completely interrupted our fundraising

process, so these organizations, especially the smaller ones, don't get a lot of attention. Boy, the checks that we write for a thousand, \$1,500 really makes a difference to them."

To participate in the virtual tasting, people can register online and order the four-pack for \$30. The pack will feature Hop Commander IPA, Jam Juice Hazy IPA, Orbital Tilt NEIPA and the Classic Lager. Deliveries can be made for \$5 for anyone in Westchester with at least a \$40 purchase.

For those who don't want to pay extra for delivery or who only order one four-pack, they can pick up their order at Captain Lawrence's main location in Elmsford. The four-packs are not available at its Mount Kisco location that opened last fall.

The virtual tasting is scheduled for 4 p.m.

Levy said the club is also partnering with Second Mouse Cheese Shop in Pleasantville, where its owner, Ivy Ronquillo, is putting together platters to pair with the four craft beer selections. Anyone interested in that, can also place their order on the Hudson Valley Fermented website.

The idea for the virtual tasting came about after the Rotary held its annual holiday fruit sale last year online, which took in more than \$4,000. With Fermented not only being the biggest fundraiser but the most anticipated, the club wanted to find a way to hold a version of it this year, he said.

"It's the first time we're doing it this way," Leyva said. "We've been marketing the heck out of it but we don't know what it will turn into. But the main thing is just trying to make



Incoming Pleasantville Rotary President Henry Leyva and outgoing President Janet DiBenedetto pictured before the 2017 Hudson Valley Fermented. Instead of missing the important fundraiser for the second consecutive year, the club will hold a virtual tasting this Saturday.

people aware that the event's happening, that they can go to Captain Lawrence Brewing Company and purchase their beer to have it delivered to their house or they can pick it up at Captain Lawrence prior to the event on May 1.

After a difficult 13-plus months, Virtually Fermented could give people an opportunity to gather with family or a few friends outdoors

in the yard, kick back and enjoy, Leyva said.

"It will be a great opportunity for folks to get together with friends and family in backyards, driveways or wherever they're comfortable and enjoyed some delicious beer and help us raise money," Leyva said.

To learn more about the event or to purchase the four-packs, visit [www.hvfermented.com](http://www.hvfermented.com).

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# Letters to the Editor

## Property Tax Circuit Breaker Was a Long Time Coming for Homeowners

There are many important provisions in this year's state budget, including record funding for our schools, our environment and our health care system. I want to highlight a budget provision that has not gotten much attention: the property tax circuit breaker, totaling \$382 million this year and helping more than one million middle class families.

As chair of the Assembly's Real Property Taxation Committee, I know that too many families are struggling to keep up with rising property taxes. While we have programs like STAR and the property tax

cap, they do not go far enough to provide relief. That is why, beginning in 2006, I introduced a property tax circuit breaker to relieve our tax burden. After 15 long years I can finally say this program is now law.

The credit will be available when you file your 2021 taxes next year. Qualifying individuals must reside at their current address for at least six months in the current tax year, enrolled in or eligible for the STAR program, spend more than 6 percent of their income on property taxes and make less than \$250,000 in

income. Credits will be up to 14 percent of the remaining property tax obligation, depending on income. Credits will be between \$250 and \$350. As this program is implemented, the state Tax Department will provide more information.

While this is a far cry from enough, it is a beginning. I am proud to have fought for this property tax relief and I know we can enhance the program in the coming years.

**Assemblywoman Sandy Galef**  
95th Assembly District

## Why Buchanan Intervened in Entergy's Sale of Indian Point to Holtec

When the Indian Point closure agreement was made in January 2017, there were three men in the room – the governor, Riverkeeper and Entergy. The host community, the Village of Buchanan, had no say. There was no one in that room protecting or looking out for the interests of the village.

With the sale of Indian Point to Holtec, it was imperative that the Village of Buchanan had a seat at the table. It was all about protecting the village's interests. In the River Journal, it was reported that "Trustee Murray criticized the village's expenditure of more than \$27,000 to file for intervenor status," and that "for a small village it was a waste of time and money."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Because the village had a seat at the

table, it will be receiving \$1.2 million, which will give us certainty in next year's budget. Also in the agreement are provisions related to the maintenance of local roads and expedited release of portions of the IPEC site and more.

It certainly is a great return for the time, effort and money for being an intervenor. Holtec would have definitely benefited if Buchanan wasn't an intervenor and the village was left out in the cold.

My administration was accused of having lost our way with no plans for the future. Once again, nothing could be further from the truth. Since the announcement of the closure, we were laser-focused and had many discussions on what the village needed to do to survive. Now all that hard work is coming to fruition.

Although trustees Murray and Capicotti will have the opportunity to vote on the agreement, I would like to thank trustees Funchion, Zachary, Jackson and Pasquale who were on the board since the announcement and had the vision of what was needed to be done.

Also, don't forget we were the first in the nation to get legislation passed that allows taxation of spent fuel casks. We are starting to see all the planning and hard work come to fruition. There are many more good announcements to come.

Since the announcement of the closure, my motto has been "Make it Happen." We sure did.

**Theresa Knickerbocker**  
Mayor, Village of Buchanan

## Pleasantville Pharmacy Has Been a Godsend for Village, Seniors

For the past year with the COVID-19 pandemic, the police, the firefighters, the doctors, nurses and health care workers gave unselfishly of their time and efforts to help us and we use the moniker "heroes" when acknowledging them.

However, I think we have some unsung heroes who are also worthy of our gratitude. Here in Pleasantville, there is a consensus that Sal DiLeo, Ira Schwartz and the entire staff at Pleasantville Pharmacy on Wheeler Avenue are also true heroes.

Anytime you visit or call they go out of their way to assist you treating each individual with courtesy and patience.

During the pandemic they stayed open, following all the safety guidelines, making deliveries and Mr. DiLeo even came to the senior housing complex to administer the vaccine to the housebound seniors.

Regardless of how many times you called with queries regarding the vaccine they answered your call completely unfazed with the constant interruptions. If you needed something they did not carry, they would order it for you within a day or two.

I have dealt mostly with Mr. DiLeo. He has caught mistakes my doctors have made prescribing a drug that has ingredients I am highly allergic to, has given me valuable

advice about over-the-counter medications, and most importantly, has given me the confidence of knowing I am dealing with a true professional who knows my medical history and is genuinely concerned about my well-being.

Kudos and a heartfelt thank you to Pleasantville Pharmacy, which is such an integral part of our village!

**Sylvia Anna Nomikos**  
Pleasantville

## McConville Would Do a Great Job as Putnam County Sheriff

It is clear there is only one qualified candidate with the needed and prior experience for the position of Putnam County sheriff, and that is Kevin McConville.

Kevin has the experience, training and knowledge of running a law enforcement agency, understands how to manage a budget and exemplifies what volunteerism means and how to accomplish things without costing the taxpayers more money.

Kevin was the chief of the MTA police, managing nearly 800 members, with a 50-member K-9 team, detectives,

emergency services, counterterrorism, highway and homeless units.

This police department had a budget of over \$100 million. The department he was in charge of was many times larger than the Putnam County Sheriff's Department with much more complexity than you can imagine.

These are the facts and information that are supported, as demonstrated during Kevin's leadership of the MTA police. Kevin created great relationships with law enforcement agencies in 14 counties as its chief.

I trust him with all my being and am supporting Kevin McConville for sheriff of Putnam County and ask all of my friends and family to do the same.

We need experienced leadership at the helm of our Sheriff's Department. That is Kevin McConville.

I know that Kevin will do a great job for all the citizens of this county.

**Michael McDonald**  
Carmel



## Guest Column

### Economic Growth Has Sustained Cortlandt Over the Past 30 Years

By Linda D. Puglisi

I have always felt that balancing open space with economic growth is critical in the evolution of a community.

Businesses, current and new, small and large, employ many residents and provide full-time and part-time jobs. Also, businesses bring in tax revenue to our town's coffers and help to offset tax increases for residential property owners.

Businesses provide interesting shopping experiences, dining, grocery stores, delis, catering venues, professional services and, of course, commercial or industrial.

Cortlandt has about 200 small businesses. I have attended many ribbon cuttings over the years giving out proclamations and have welcomed in new businesses to be part of our business family – hair salons, restaurants, medical offices, insurance businesses, realty offices and many more.

Our largest taxpayer and employer, of course, was always Indian Point and the two operating nuclear plants currently owned by Entergy, Inc. It is located in the Village of Buchanan, and in the Town of Cortlandt, as well. These plants will be permanently closed at the end of this week and will be dismantled and decommissioned by a new company for 20 to 60 years. Only about one-third of the 900 jobs will remain and significantly reduced revenue will result.

Due to this closure and the challenges it brings, the town is seeking new businesses with the help of an economic consultant to offset the loss of revenue. We work closely with the Village of Buchanan, the Hendrick Hudson School District, which will also be affected, and with residents on our local task forces.

During the past 30 years there was a large expansion of our major shopping mall called the Cortlandt Town Center on Route

6, which we call the Cortlandt Boulevard. It doubled in size, brought in additional tax revenue, many new jobs and exciting new stores, restaurants and a movie theater. This took place in the late 1990s.

More recently, across from the Town Center, a smaller but lovely shopping mall opened named Cortlandt Crossing, with a clock tower that I insisted be included for aesthetic purposes. This produced more jobs and revenue and a greater variety of shopping for our residents.

Some national or regional stores recently closed in these malls, but I am in constant communication with the mall owners and they tell me new stores and restaurants will replace them soon.

We have worked with our local contractors, builders and developers to build new housing areas (apartments, affordable units, condominiums, townhouses and subdivisions), which adds to our growth as well. I was instrumental in lobbying Metro-North for a new state-of-the-art Cortlandt train station, which opened in 2000, where many of our residents and business owners can commute, if need be, to New York City. The fact that we are only one hour from midtown Manhattan is important to a company or a business looking to locate in Cortlandt. Along with our economic consultant, board members and staff, we

have many exciting possibilities for future economic growth.

The town has a new brand, which is a trademark called "Where Life Works." We believe this logo and brand tells our successful story in Cortlandt.

Each spring we host a month-long emphasis on Shop-Dine-Do Business event to showcase our many businesses. Incentives from the small businesses are given out to our residents, their consumers. It's a lot of fun. However, I always say every day of the year, everyone should shop, dine and do business in our wonderful community.

We also have an expanded hospital center recently purchased by NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, bringing in additional medical services and jobs of all kinds to our community. We've also seen expanded nursing homes and soon will have a senior living complex in town. All add to our overall economic and service-oriented story.

I am very proud of our economic growth during my 30 years as town supervisor. We have a vibrant and healthy economy and we have also assisted our smaller businesses navigate the pandemic by giving them information and guidance.

*Linda D. Puglisi has been the supervisor for the Town of Cortlandt since 1992.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Peekskill Officials Should Approve Ginsburg's Proposed Mixed-Use Project

I want to urge the Peekskill Common Council and other agencies involved to approve the proposed Martin Ginsburg mixed-use project. The area needs a serious facelift. Is the expression, "don't look a gift horse in the mouth" appropriate? When a developer like Ginsburg offers a booster shot for the whole city, we should all work toward that goal.

He is even proposing to redesign and upgrade infrastructure and roads with his passion for detail, as well as making a more positive statement for our train station.

Ginsburg has a proven track record in Peekskill and can work with any rational

concerns about the proposed project's design. He has already contributed to affordable housing at the Gateway on Main and has maintained fair market rates for rentals and hotel space. His Abbey Inn and Spa, along with this new project, will help make Peekskill a destination resort. The people of Peekskill will benefit by tourism and that will lead to more business downtown.

Let's root for Mr. Ginsburg to make a big splash near the train station and waterfront in Peekskill.

**Robin Goldsand**  
Lifelong Peekskill resident

### Crossling Has Done an Exemplary Job on the Ossining Board of Education

I am writing to express my support for Katherin Crossling for re-election to the Ossining Board of Education. I am an Ossining School District resident with three children. I am also a frontline health care worker.

Katherin was elected to the Ossining school board in 2018. During her first term on the board, I watched her consistently contribute to important issues in a thoughtful, respectful and meaningful way. She relies on her analytical training and background as an attorney to navigate challenging issues. She is not afraid to ask tough questions or voice her concerns. Her driving force is the well-being of families and children in our community and ensuring that all viewpoints are heard.

When faced with the challenges of navigating the district through a global pandemic she became a true leader on the board. She passionately advocated for robust live virtual instruction for our students. She helped ensure compliance with complex state Education Department, Department of Health

and CDC guidelines. She deftly reviewed budgeting and expenditures. She helped to ensure all students had access to appropriate technology. She was sensitive to the concerns of our teachers, administration and staff. She was fully engaged in every aspect of managing the reopening of our schools and worked tirelessly to ensure the needs of families were met in both an in-person and virtual environment. She also sought wraparound services to families in need were a priority and not an afterthought.

Stability on the board, as we see this pandemic through to the end, is critical to the success of our families, children and community.

Trustee Crossling is a true asset to the Ossining Board of Education and she has my vote in next month's election.

**Kelly Milano**  
Briarcliff Manor and Ossining School District resident

## A Spiritual View

By Fr. Nils Chittenden

In the Christian tradition, one of Jesus' disciples is known as "Doubting Thomas." Indeed, this moniker has become part of everyday language, used as a byword for someone who seems to be lacking in faith.

Thomas gained this reputation because he refused to believe that Jesus had bodily risen from the dead before he'd had empirical evidence, since he had been away on the day when the risen Jesus appeared to all the other disciples. In the end, he got the evidence he sought, but the name stuck.

I've always thought that was a bit unfair on Thomas. It's easy for us to say that he ought to have had more faith without needing physical evidence, but would we have been any different in the same circumstances? And it's not like the other disciples were any less imperfect; yet, for instance, Peter has not been labeled by history as "Peter the Denier."

If you've ever been in, say, a

group meeting and someone says something you don't understand, are you reluctant to ask for clarification for fear that everyone else already knows the answer and you'd end up looking foolish? Well, I wouldn't mind betting that when the other disciples heard

Thomas say that he wouldn't believe without proof, they'd privately felt the same way as him but hadn't had the courage to voice their doubts out loud the way Thomas did.

I think it's time to rehabilitate Thomas. Instead of calling him Doubting Thomas, let's call him "Courageous Thomas." It takes courage to ask questions and voice doubts. If you ever have doubts about faith, don't worry, it's natural to have them, and it's good to question things. It's the only way to grow and mature.

*Fr. Nils Chittenden is rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Armonk and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Congregation B'nai Yisrael, Hillside Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.*





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# Reiki Practitioner Opens Etsy Store Combining Home Décor, Positive Energy

By Anna Young

After spending nearly 15 years as a registered nurse providing those in need with relief and rehabilitation, Putnam Valley resident Nicole Taylor was motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic to help people find solace in other ways.

As Taylor continued her six-year stretch working with disadvantaged youth at Lincoln Hall in Somers last year, she began to experience anxiety and was looking for outlets to relieve it during high-stress moments.

Growing up in an environment where holistic medicine was an acceptable alternative, Taylor found comfort falling back on her roots to ease her mental health.

But in the process of managing her mind and soul, she realized how much she wanted to help others who could be experiencing similar bouts.

"I've always been interested in holistic healing, and with my aunt a Reiki master, I always grew up around crystals and Reiki and I was always intrigued by it but never knew how I could apply that," Taylor said. "This past year when COVID hit, I thought this was the perfect opportunity to take Reiki courses."



Nicole Taylor found relief from the difficult days of the pandemic by producing and then selling some of her handmade products that are designed to bring a sense of peace and tranquility.

In late August, Taylor took online courses and became a Certified Reiki Practitioner.

Taylor said Reiki, a healing technique based on the principle that the therapist can channel energy into the patient by means of touch to activate the natural healing processes of the body and restore physical and emotional well-being, provided her with a new outlook on life and a sense of peace she had been missing.

"The anxieties disappeared, and it's given me a whole new way to cope with it," said Taylor, who explained how she can practice Reiki on herself as well as others. "I've learned a lot about myself in the last year as far as how to relax and that maybe things aren't so heavy as long as you know how to cope with them."

With the ability she received and was able to perform on friends and family in need of relief, Taylor also started using healing crystals to create an array of suncatchers as a form of meditation. But what started as her selling a few of her homemade items on Facebook Marketplace and Instagram for fun quickly took off.

This led Taylor in October to launch her own website and Etsy store called The Charmer Boutique.

"I felt I needed to open up a platform so people can make orders," Taylor said. "It's become a beautiful thing for me and a beautiful way to cope with the world. It's meditative for me to craft these items for people who can appreciate them. It's very flattering."

While all of Taylor's pieces are handmade with the purpose of bringing a sense of peace and tranquility to those who purchase them, she also infuses each piece with Reiki healing

power. Additionally, she cleanses and blesses them with sage or Palo Santo to remove all negative energy before shipping them.

"Hopefully, the rightful owner can feel that energy when they receive the piece," Taylor said. "Everybody just needs a little hope these days with everything going on in the world, and if you can believe in that and it is a healing piece, it can help."

Taylor added that her pieces offer a little protection and reminder that everything is going to be OK.

The Charmer Boutique Etsy page, which has generated about 560 sales since October, offers about two dozen designs, including crystals, crystal air plant holders and simple suncatchers. Prices range from \$12 to \$70.

Taylor added she's always coming up with new designs and pieces to provide those in need.

"With this year making people more aware of their mental health, putting this out there and hopefully making mental health and Reiki less of a stigma will do some good, this is just another alternative," Taylor said. "People are always looking for ways we can heal, and we need all the help we can get at this point."



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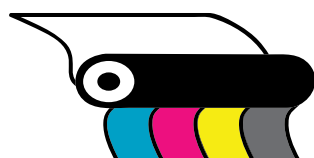
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# Unwelcome (Mostly) Poisons in the Garden

Spring has sprung, and many who have gardens will be getting their green thumb ready to dig in the dirt. Others may just be enjoying being outdoors, but we must remember that not all of nature is people- friendly. Case in point: The itch of poison ivy or poison oak. (Note: What is the difference, you might ask. Poison ivy generally has hairy, or fuzzy-looking, vines, looks similar to ivy and has smooth almond-shaped leaves. Poison oak, on the other hand, has leaves that look like oak leaves, is generally a duller green and has leaflets that have hair on both sides. Both, once contracted, can drive a person crazy.)

When I was a bachelor living in Manhattan, I had an acquaintance who would occasionally visit friends living in "the country" over the summer weekends. Maybe I was a little jealous about not knowing anybody outside the reaches of the steamy city because I found myself having little patience when he called me one day to complain at some length about having contracted a case of poison ivy in his friends' garden during his last visit. I just didn't want to pay much attention to his whining.

The next day he called again and this time he upbraided me for not showing any sympathy about his itchy plight. Instead of apologizing and showing some concern, I made the mistake of marginalizing his condition by saying that I had frequently



By Bill Primavera

had poison ivy before moving to the city and that, while I found it uncomfortable for a day or two, I would just address it by taking a hot shower, then treating it with calamine lotion. Was it really that big a deal, I asked?

From there, the tone of the conversation degenerated rapidly when he asked, "Would it make any difference to you to know that I even have it on my (two crude words for male genitals)?" At that point, I couldn't stifle an urge to laugh, but not before venturing a guess about what kind of activity might have brought that situation about. It was his response to that bit of careless banter that put me

on notice that it was time for a very serious apology which I offered with great sincerity.

Not long after that incident many years ago, I married, moved to the country and since that time, have had countless opportunities to suffer the effects of poison ivy myself, regardless of the care I take in recognizing the plant and trying to avoid it.

Living for some years on a property that had been gardened since the early 18th century, I had been aware that it was riddled with poison ivy, but I never did a thing to discourage its growth. Call me crazy, but I rather liked its dark waxy leaves growing on vines in the areas of my property that were not cultivated, and, from what I understand, although I don't remember from which source, it may have served some useful



purpose to bind together the mortarless stone walls our forefathers built to delineate properties and contain livestock.

About two out of three people are allergic to poison ivy and its relatives, poison oak and poison sumac. For some, the reaction can be severe enough to require hospitalization. Treatment for poison ivy is most effective if addressed immediately after exposure. Invariably I always got it on my wrists and lower arms. When I did, I would wash the affected area with strong soap and very hot water, and then apply

calamine lotion for relief of the itching. Literature suggests applying rubbing alcohol, but I've never tried that. It is also suggested that clothing that has been worn when poison ivy has been contracted be washed separately from other laundry but, very honestly, I never found that it was that finicky an issue. Perhaps that would apply to individuals with extreme sensitivity to the allergens.

As a side note, I looked for anything that could justify God's plan for placing something so nasty in Earth's garden, if not in the Garden of Eden, and I found it!

According to a report in Weed Science and subsequently reported in The Wall Street Journal, poison ivy has gotten much nastier since the 1950s in leaf size and oil content, but at the same time, it was reported that the plant absorbs much more than its fair share of CO2 in the atmosphere. With CO2 having increased 33 percent in the environment in the past half century, poison ivy has risen to the challenge as Earth's friend in helping to combat climate change. So, leave it stay, I say. There IS something to love about poison ivy!

Bill Primavera is a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester ([www.PrimaveraPR.com](http://www.PrimaveraPR.com)), specializing in lifestyles, real estate and development. To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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# Fox Lane Senior Day a Big Hit



It turned out to be quite a celebration last week for Fox Lane High School's varsity football team. The team celebrated its senior day with a come-from-behind 26-16 win over Port Chester on the gridiron on Apr. 20. Before the game, the senior football players, cheerleaders and dance team members were honored in a ceremony that recognized each of the team's seniors where they walked out to midfield with parents and other family members.



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# Soft-Shell Crab Season Has Arrived: Here's Where to Enjoy Them

The season for fresh soft-shell crab runs through September and there are legions who crave this delicacy simply sautéed or deep fried with some lemon and butter (and perhaps some capers). Of course, there are other recipes, too.

There's nothing like a crispy soft-shell crab sandwich with the proper condiments. They have been showing up at area markets. Here's where to seek them out for take-out, delivery or dining at restaurants.

**La Mer Seafood**, 407 Main St., Armonk. This market has been serving the area for 30 years. A sign on the window says soft-shell crabs have arrived. Info: 914-273-1766 or visit [www.lamerseafood.net](http://www.lamerseafood.net).

**Seafood Market Grill**, 49 Wheeler Ave., Pleasantville. Brand new spot in town for fresh seafood and soft shells in season. Info: 914-495-3261.

**Conte's Fish Market**, 448 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. The patio is open as is their retail market. Info: 914-666-6929 or visit [www.contesfish.com](http://www.contesfish.com).

**La Piccola Casa**, 410 W. Boston Post Rd., Mamaroneck. Chef-owner Walter Ricci, who cooks across from blossoming Harbor Island Park, personally shops the Hunts Point Fish Market during the wee hours of the



By Morris Gut

morning, and he was clued about the arrival of soft shells from one of his valued seafood purveyors. He does a flavorful job with them. Info: 914-777-5766 or visit [www.lapiccolarestaurant.com](http://www.lapiccolarestaurant.com).

**Riverview**, 45 Fair St., Cold Spring. Jim Ely and company have kept this picturesque spot bustling for 20 years. They offer soft-shell crabs in a variety of styles. Take-out and delivery. Info: 845-265-4778 or visit [www.riverviewdining.com](http://www.riverviewdining.com).

**Fin & Brew**, 5 John Walsh Blvd., Peekskill. Right on the banks of the Hudson at Charles Point and part of the Factoria complex, Fin & Brew serves a fine soft-shell crab sandwich with a River Outpost Brew from La Factoria. Info: 914-788-4555 or visit [www.finandbrew.com](http://www.finandbrew.com).

**X20 Xavier's on the Hudson**, 71 Water Grant St., Yonkers. Chef Peter X. Kelly and company do a fine job with soft-shell crab every year. Enjoy them along with expansive views of the Hudson River. Take-out and delivery. Info: 914-965-1111 or visit [www.xaviars.com](http://www.xaviars.com).

**3 Westerly Bar & Grill**, 3 Westerly Rd., Ossining. A seasonal crab cake sandwich is on the contemporary American menu. Available for dine-in, al fresco, take-out and delivery. Info: 914-762-1333 or visit [www.3westerly.com](http://www.3westerly.com).



A tray of soft-shell crabs at La Mer Seafood in Armonk, one of a variety of locations throughout Westchester and Putnam to find them.

**The 808 Bistro**, 808 Scarsdale Ave., Scarsdale. Chef Salvatore serves soft shells with creamy polenta and cheese and spinach-stuffed tomatoes on the side. Sounds yummy! They will also be on hand at their other space, El Barrio in Scarsdale. Info: 914-722-0808 or visit [www.the808bistro.com](http://www.the808bistro.com).

**Holy Crab**, 32 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains. This seafood spot serves fresh Cajun-style seafood as you would see in New Orleans. Steamed in sous vide bags, too. Info:



The Sunday farmers market at Muscott Farm in Katonah has reopened for the 2021 season.

914-948-3888 or visit [www.holycrabny.com](http://www.holycrabny.com).

**Purdy's Farmer & the Fish**, 100 Titicus Rd., North Salem. Located on a farm where herbs are harvested and produced for the restaurant kitchen. Seasonal soft shells are a specialty. There is a rustic farm market on site. Info: 914-617-8380 or visit [www.farmerandthefish.com](http://www.farmerandthefish.com).

**Farmers Markets Reopen in Westchester**

*continued on next page*

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# Lifting Up Westchester Announces Student Essay Contest Winners

Lifting Up Westchester, a nonprofit agency committed to helping individuals restore their independence, announced the winners of its fourth annual Student Essay Contest.

Open to all Westchester students in grades 7-12, students were invited to explore the changes and challenges they have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and reflect how those experiences might be the same or different for individuals who are homeless or low-income.

The essay contest was established in 2017 in memory of Beth Massey Rubens, a 40-year Scarsdale resident and a lifelong teacher, tutor and mentor who had a love for language arts.

Students were asked to reflect on how the pandemic impacted them personally and what it has exposed about economic and social inequities in the United States; what they learned about the importance of connection; where they have seen resilience or adaptability during this crisis; what values are more important or less important to them today than a year ago; and what can be done to change inequities in social justice that the pandemic exposed.

Students related their essays back to Lifting Up Westchester's response to the pandemic and the agency's core mission.

The organization received essays from 441 students representing 76 middle schools and high schools throughout the county, with many students sharing deeply personal stories about how the pandemic affected them, their families, their friends and their community.

"This year's essay contest topic clearly struck a chord," said Anahaita Kotval, CEO of Lifting Up Westchester. "Students wrote about disappointment, loss, loneliness and social inequality. But they also expressed a sense of renewed hope and how the lessons they learned could be a powerful force for all of us to move towards a better future."

A panel of 61 judges reviewed the essays to select the winners.

Students will be honored during a May 2 awards ceremony conducted over Zoom. Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano will present awards to winning students. Eileen Gallagher, chair of the English Department at Keio Academy of New York, will join to present awards to ESL students.

First-, second- and third-place and honorable mention cash prizes were awarded in three grade groups: seventh- and eighth-graders, ninth- and 10th-graders and 11th- and 12th-graders. A category was added this year for students who speak English as a second

language.

Here is the list of winners for the 2021 Student Essay Contest:

## Grades 7-8

First Place: Sofia Mejia, School 5, Yonkers  
Second Place: Zoya Nabeel, Seven Bridges Middle School, Chappaqua  
Third Place (tie): Moiko Martin, Ardsley Middle School  
Third Place (tie): Sophie Brennan, Hommocks Middle School, Larchmont  
Honorable Mention: Fakhri Salim, Valhalla Middle School

Honorable Mention: Sophia Suiiu, Fox Lane Middle School, Bedford

## Grades 9-10

First Place: Janira Martinez, Peekskill High School  
Second Place: Kristen Luther, Woodlands High School  
Third Place: Joseph Berger, Briarcliff High School

Honorable Mention: Shweta Nadagouda, Harrison High School

## Grades 11-12

First Place: Alyssa Lee, Yonkers Middle/High School  
Second Place: Drew Burnham, Rye High School  
Third Place: Janette Martiena, The Ursuline School, New Rochelle  
Honorable Mention: Eli Makaron, Briarcliff High School

## ESL

First Place: Yoshiaki Shimizu, Keio Academy of New York, Purchase  
Second Place: Haruka Tsutsumi, Keio Academy of New York, Purchase  
Third Place: Yoshihisa Ono, Keio Academy of New York, Purchase  
Honorable Mention: Eita Yamazumi, Keio Academy of New York, Purchase

## Soft-Shell Crab Season Has Arrived: Here's Where to Enjoy Them

*continued from previous page*

It is nice to hear that Muscoot Farmers Market, part of Muscoot Farm on Route 100 in Katonah, has reopened for the season. There are safety restrictions in place in keeping with the times. Shoppers must also adhere to all COVID-19 safety protocols. The Muscoot farmers market will operate every Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. through November. Free admission. Info: 914-864-7283 or visit [www.muscootfarm.org](http://www.muscootfarm.org).

**White Plains Farmers Market:** A welcome sign of the new season, the popular outdoor market is in full swing on Wednesdays. New hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The public is asked to follow proper safety protocols. Masks and gloves are encouraged. Check their website for details. It takes place on Court Street between Martine and Main streets. Info: Visit [www.whiteplainsfarmersmarket.com](http://www.whiteplainsfarmersmarket.com)

**Pleasantville Farmers Market:** It fully re-opened on Apr. 3 after operating on a more limited basis through the winter. The market will continue at 10 Memorial Place every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. through November. Parking at the Metro-North parking lot. New restrictions in place. Info: Visit [www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org](http://www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org).

**Cold Spring Farmers Market:** This popular market has moved to the historic Boscobel House and Gardens in Garrison. A lovely setting. It takes place every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info: Visit [www.csfarmmarket.org](http://www.csfarmmarket.org).

**Farm Market at John Jay Homestead:** Will run every Saturday through October from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. First pick for members each week from 9 to 9:30 a.m. John Jay Homestead is located at 400 Jay St. (Route 22), Katonah. Info: Visit [www.johnjayhomestead.org](http://www.johnjayhomestead.org).

**Ossining Farmers Market:** The



A wide selection of produce can be found at farmers markets throughout the area. Nearly all of the outdoor markets have reopened for the 2021 season.

Ossining Summer Down to Earth Farmers' Market is located at the corner of Main and Spring streets and operates year-round Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info: Visit [www.downtoearthmarkets.com](http://www.downtoearthmarkets.com).

**Peekskill Farmers Market:** The 2021 season will kick off on Saturday, June 5 and run through Nov. 20, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rain or shine. Located at 1 Bank St. Info: 914-737-2780 or visit <https://discoverpeekskill.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 greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591 or at [gutreaactions@optonline.net](mailto:gutreaactions@optonline.net).*

## Saw Mill Club's Spring Tennis Returns to Bedford Parks

Spring tennis is back in the parks!

This is the 11th season that the Saw Mill Club has managed the program for the Town of Bedford providing clinics and private lessons for children and adults. There is no substitute for fresh air, so its great to get on the court after a long winter.

There are 29 hours of clinics six days per week at Bedford Hills, Bedford Village

and Katonah parks. Tennis participation has increased in the U.S., and because of this trend most of the clinics are full for this session.

For more information, contact Charles Lacy-Thompson at [clacythompson@sawmillclub.com](mailto:clacythompson@sawmillclub.com) or Director of Tennis Zuka Mukhuradze at [zuka@sawmillclub.com](mailto:zuka@sawmillclub.com).

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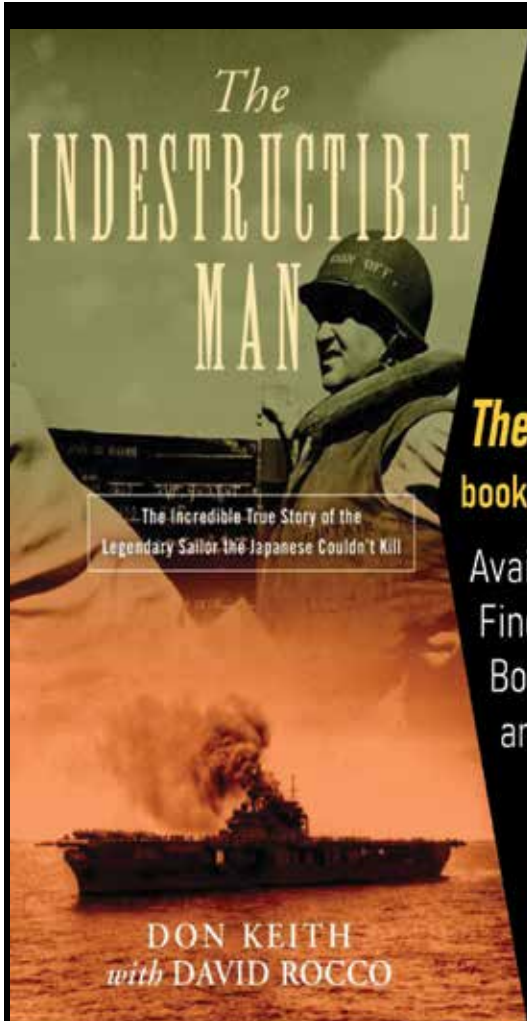
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David Rocco is an artist member of ArtsWestchester.



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## THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

**Poets' Corner.** National Poetry Month, launched in 1996 by the Academy of American Poets, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month. National Poetry Month "reminds the public that poets have an integral role to play in our culture and that poetry matters." In honor of National Poetry Month, the quiz this week focuses on poetic terms, forms and techniques. If you find yourself inspired, Poem in Your Pocket Day takes place on Apr. 29 this year.

- 1.allusion (n.)

A) rhythmic pattern

B) a grouping of lines

C) passing reference
- 2.hyperbole (n.)

A) extravagant exaggeration

B) a play on words

C) hidden meaning
3. What is the name of a three-line poem which contains seventeen syllables?

A) Haiku

B) Limerick

C) Sonnet
4. caesura (n.)

A) a dramatic monologue

B) a pause

C) a comparison
5. litotes (n.)

A) free-verse poetry

B) poetry about nature

C) ironic understatement
6. lament (n.)

A) a poem set at night

B) poem expressing grief

C) a lyric address
7. What is the name of a poem composed entirely of lines from poems by other poets?

A) Enjambment

B) Persona Poem

C) Cento
8. Ars Poetica (n.)

A) a poem about poetry

B) a non-narrative poem

C) a poem of tribute

**ANSWERS:**  
A. Extravagant exaggeration; exaggeration for emphasis  
B. A break or pause in the middle of a verse line in the 1st line, 7 in the 2nd, and 5 in the last line  
C. Irony understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by the negative or its contrary (e.g., you won't be sorry, meaning you'll be glad)  
A. A poem about poetry  
B. A poem or song expressing personal loss and grief  
C. Cento, a form also known as a collage poem and composed entirely of lines from other poets  
A. A poem about poetry, examining the role of poets, poets' relationship to the poem, and the act of writing  
B. A poem expressing grief  
C. a lyric address  
A. Haiku, a 3 line poem which contains 5 syllables in the 1st line, 7 in the 2nd, and 5 in the last line  
B. Persona Poem  
C. Cento  
A. a dramatic monologue  
B. a pause  
C) a comparison  
A) free-verse poetry  
B) poetry about nature  
C) ironic understatement  
A) a poem set at night  
B) poem expressing grief  
C) a lyric address  
A) rhythmic pattern  
B) a grouping of lines  
C) passing reference

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*continued on page 24*

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# Watching the Months and Seasons Change By Looking at the Stars

Every season, and even every month, have their own feel. Spring is different than summer, and there's a certain indescribable difference between July's and August's muggy heat.

The same is true in the skies. There are bright lights that dominate winter. While, in the summer, other stars take over the night.

The skies don't change the instant a new season comes along, though. There's a slow but steady hand-off that happens over weeks and weeks, like with the weather here on Earth. Depending on where you look as April hands the night to May, we're treated to the skies of three seasons, all in one night. If we want, we can even use the stars to look back on our lives.

As our skies dim these days, some of the first stars we see are in Orion, which are in the west now, starting the night in the setting half of the sky. His belt stars – Alnitak, Alnilam and Mintaka – stand out against the early evening's glow. Thanks to the same optical illusion that makes a rising full moon look enormous, Orion looks positively gigantic, hovering above the distant hillsides.

As you look off into the twilight, consider that those stars have been with us since around Halloween. Night after night since, as we crossed the winter, they crossed the sky. Before long, they'll vanish into the dusk until the trick-or-treaters come back.

Now, high toward the south and east, are the stars of the Spring Triangle – Arcturus, Regulus and Spica. Reddish Arcturus, which is a short way off the curve at the end of the Big Dipper's handle, is an old, giant star that's similar to the type our sun will grow into billions of years from now. So, in a way, looking at it is like looking at our own future.

These stars return to the night every February, when we need them to remind us that warmer weather and good things are on their way. Even when things are at their darkest and most difficult, they're always a small bit of optimism.

And they're right. Summer always seems to find a way. Another turn to the left brings us to the brilliant, blue Vega, which is just starting to make its way into late April's nights, far toward the northeast. As these things go, Vega is one of the closest bright stars to us, only about 25 light years away. It's kind of fun to try



By Scott Levine

to imagine where you were when its light left for your eye.

Vega is part of a group of stars called the Summer Triangle, along with Altair and Deneb. Watch them as the weeks move along and let your mind drift to s'mores and cannonball contests. In July's sticky nights, Vega crosses the dome almost directly overhead. Amazingly enough, these will stay with us until January, when they sink into the twilight, too, and hand the night back to Orion.

With May just about here again, the skies give us a chance to have another look at where we've been and where we're going. We've been through a lot, but little by little good things are coming. I hope you're well, and will look up this month.

Scott Levine ([astroscott@yahoo.com](mailto:astroscott@yahoo.com)) is an astronomy writer and speaker from Croton-on-Hudson. He is also a member of the Westchester Amateur Astronomers, who are dedicated to astronomy outreach in our area.

For information about the club including membership, newsletters, upcoming meetings and lectures at Pace University and star parties at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, visit [westchesterastronomers.org](http://westchesterastronomers.org). Star parties are free and open to the public, but attendance is currently capped at 50 people, as required by state COVID-19 requirements.

## Clear Skies



Last Quarter  
May 3



New Moon  
May 11



First Quarter  
May 19



Full Moon  
May 26

The phases of the moon for the month of May.

## PEEKSKILL ROTARY 4<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL & PLANT SALE

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

Indian Point Energy Center





# Plenty of Contenders to Choose From in Wide-Open Kentucky Derby

By Charles Palombini

Yes, even the 2020 Kentucky Derby had to take a back seat to national health concerns caused by the dreaded coronavirus.

Last year's first Saturday in May had to go without the traditional kickoff of horse racing's famed Triple Crown at Churchill Downs in Louisville. The Derby joined the Masters golf tournament, college basketball's March Madness, the delay and modification of professional baseball's schedule and a host of other sports and events that had to rearrange their seasons because of COVID-19.

The Derby was ultimately run later in the year (Sept. 5) but without the usual fanfare that accompanies the nationally-renowned event. It kind of became another race on another day of a rotten year. Do you even remember who won the race? It was a horse named Authentic.

Well, put that all behind you because the Kentucky Derby is back in its rightful place on the calendar! Prep the mint juleps, dust off those beautiful hats and ready the roses to crown the race winner on the first Saturday in May. Yes, the 2021 thoroughbred racing season is about to kick into high gear with the 147th Kentucky Derby starting the quest for horse racing's Triple Crown.

During the points qualifying era that started in 2013, Derby results have become remarkably consistent. The post time favorite has been a significant factor in the finish of the race, with the winner usually racing as part of the early pace. Every winner has had a victory in one of the 100-point qualifying races.

So, let's look at the field of possible starters at the time of this writing. In the last 15 years I've never seen a Kentucky Derby field with so many serious contenders.

The projected field, as it currently stands, has 20 horses that are listed below in order of earned Derby qualifying points. This list includes the recap of potential starters, according to Horse Racing Nation, a thoroughbred racing website.

**Essential Quality:** Essential Quality checks all of the boxes of a potential Kentucky Derby winner – undefeated with a victory in a 100-point race and races close to the pace. He won his debut race at Churchill Downs and has the advantage of familiar surroundings as he will race from his own stall. A worthy Derby favorite.

**Hot Rod Charlie:** With his Louisiana Derby victory, Hot Rod Charlie lived up to the promise he flashed as a two-year-old when he ran second as a long shot in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile. He used his speed to convincingly win the Louisiana Derby's 100-point qualifier, which was run at 1 3/16 miles. Thus, Hot Rod Charlie is a winner at a distance longer than any other horse in the field. Win contender.

**Super Stock:** Super Stock got a perfect trip in his Arkansas Derby victory when he saved ground in the early going as he tracked a fast pace. He swung outside and ran by the five other competitors to win easily. No horse gets a trip like that in the 20-horse Kentucky Derby field. Toss.

**Like the King:** This runner began his career at Belterra Park in Ohio, where he broke his maiden in his second start. It was



on the Tapeta surface at Turfway Park that he found his own with two wins and a second. Yes, his sire Animal Kingdom did win the Kentucky Derby after a win on an artificial surface at Turfway, and it seems that Like the King has been better than expected. A real maybe.

**Known Agenda:** Known Agenda leads the four Todd Pletcher-trained horses as he looks to win his third Derby. This son of Curlin is an improving three-year-old and his stalking running style will serve him well in the 1 1/4-mile test. Win contender.

**Rock Your World:** Led the Santa Anita Derby every step of the way as he made his first start on dirt after winning his first two on the grass. He's 3-for-3 in his career, all as a three-year-old, and he has a victory in a 100-point prep race. Win contender.

**Bourbonic:** Even trainer Todd Pletcher was surprised by Bourbonic's victory in Aqueduct's Wood Memorial at 72-1. The son of Bernardini did have two wins at Aqueduct. The Wood was run slowly and he got a perfect trip making it a soft win. Toss.

**Medina Spirit:** After all is said and done, Medina Spirit will be the lone Bob Baffert-trained horse in the Derby. The large field and the extra distance certainly don't seem to suit this colt who won the Robert B. Lewis with a front-end effort. Toss.

**Midnight Bourbon:** This consistent colt picked up 66 points with a win in the Lecomte Stakes in January and then with a third and a second in the other Derby prep races at the Fair Grounds in New Orleans. Midnight Bourbon was second in the Louisiana Derby going 1 3/16 miles and pressing the pace of Hot Rod Charlie. He could get trainer Steven Asmussen another top three finish in the Derby, but not a win. Use for second and third if you like him.

**Mandaloun:** He was the impressive winner of 50 qualifying points in the Risen Star Stakes at Fair Grounds as the 2-1 favorite. He headed into the Louisiana Derby as the 6-5 favorite and came up empty to run sixth, which was the first off-the-board finish of his career. It's hard to dismiss that kind of performance from a horse who has always shown up and run well. Toss.

**Caddo River:** The third of three Brad Cox-trained runners to make the Derby field. His valiant second-place finish in the Arkansas Derby secured enough points after his disappointing performance in the Rebel. Toss.

**Highly Motivated:** Gets high marks for coming within a neck of defeating Essential Quality in the Blue Grass after setting all of the fractions. In defeat, however, he was far ahead of the rest of the field, which shows the quality of his performance. This son of Into

Mischief joins the long list of horses that want to be part of the early pace. Use for second and third.

**Helium:** Like Rock Your World, Helium has a career record of 3-for-3, but there is a huge difference in their odds. Helium will try to win the Derby with only one start as a three-year-old. It was a late-running win in the Tampa Bay Derby, when he closed from 10th to win at 15-1. There will be plenty of pace to set up his closing move. Possible winner.

**Soup and Sandwich:** After winning the first two races of his career, this second Mark Casse-trained Derby horse burst onto the scene when he ran second in the Florida Derby at 12-1. There is a long list of horses with similar running styles, which will make it hard for handicappers to separate them. This son of Into Mischief might have room for further improvement, but not enough to hit the board. Toss.

**Dynamic One:** The third Pletcher runner in the field, he faced tough fields in his early maiden races. In his fourth try at Aqueduct, he got what is currently his only win. In the Wood Memorial, he made a closing move, took the lead in the stretch and looked like a winner until his stablemate caught him at the wire. He will have plenty of horses out front to set the table for his closing move. Contender.

**Sainthood:** Pletcher's fourth runner in the field and, in a way, might be the most interesting. On the dirt, he was second in his debut at Gulfstream Park and then broke his maiden on the main track at Fair Grounds. Pletcher put him in the Jeff Ruby on the Tapeta at Turfway Park, where at 10-1 he encountered traffic in the stretch, had to check and lost all momentum. He recovered quickly, got clear and closed a lot of ground to finish second, beaten only a length. Back on the dirt in the Derby, this guy will come with big odds and a chance to rally into the exotic wagers. A must use for the minor awards.

**Hidden Stash:** Passed tired horses in a trio of Derby preps to earn points in all three. However, he never got the job done and will likely not get it done in this very competitive field. Yawn.

**Dream Shake:** Listed as possible for the Derby by Churchill Downs, but right now he is part of the field of 20. Won't matter if he gets in; he still gets thrashed! Toss.

**O Besos:** Two victories for O Besos, but they only came in a maiden special weight and an allowance at Fair Grounds. He stayed in New Orleans for the final two Derby preps and ran fourth in the Risen Star and third in the Louisiana Derby. Double yawn.

**Get Her Number:** Two key stops on the Derby trail at Oaklawn yielded only a seventh in the Rebel and a fourth in the Arkansas Derby. Toss.

So, there you have it, a rundown of the most competitive Kentucky Derby field in over a decade. My picks?

I will bet a four-horse trifecta box using Essential Quality, Hot Rod Charlie, Helium and Sainthood.

I will use the same four in an exacta box and hope for one of the long shots to finish in the first or second position.

Don't get crazy. This is a wide-open race.

Good luck!

Charles Palombini is a Cortlandt resident and an owner of thoroughbred horses.

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# The Consequences of Man's Evolving Farming Practices



By Nick Antonaccio

Consumers are increasingly aware of the nutritional and health values of unprocessed ingredients. They are seeking out products grown, raised or prepared as they were for centuries before the industrialization of food products, before the era of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, and yes, before GMO products.

Before the Industrial Revolution, Nature dominated the production of food. Man reluctantly accepted that a portion of the annual crops would be sacrificed in the name of the balance of Nature. Foraging birds and other wildlife were in symbiosis with man in sharing resources. Nature provided insect control and crop fertilization; Man grudgingly shared his harvest with Nature.

With the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th century came the introduction of petroleum-based products that changed the landscape, and economies, of our planet. New industries emerged that catapulted nations and societies into a new era of urbanization, innovations in manufacturing and the obsession with corporate bottom lines.

Farmers, including vineyard owners, seeking to optimize their cash flow, reverted to low cost practices and enhanced financial returns. Man-made chemical fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides and pesticides became the norm.

By the 1960s, many farmers had succumbed to a profit-over-safety mentality.

Years later, American consumers became aware that pesticides such as DDT and chlordane could be unhealthy, thus outweighing the economic benefits touted by manufacturers. Eventually, these chemical fertilizers, in addition to causing long-term deterioration of soil fertility and tilth, were ascertained to be dangerous to humans and were banned.

The 21st century has brought another revolution – one that is consumer-led. Technology has created a vast, thriving, industrial food complex, at times fraught with health risks. In the face of this juggernaut, consumers have become highly educated, and vocal, in demanding disclosure of product ingredients and processing. Concepts such as natural, organic and sustainable have entered the lexicon as the underpinnings for making healthy food choices.

Today, when the growing numbers of informed and diligent consumers prepare a meal of the most

## You Heard It Through the Grapevine

healthful foods found in the marketplace, they sit at table proud of their choices. They may celebrate their meal with a glass of wine. Ah, peace of mind that the industrial food complex has been successfully sidestepped.

But perhaps not.

The recent introduction of GMOs has raised concerns over the long-term negative health effects on humans. Compounding this uncertainty is a consumer's inability to identify such products, which are proliferating in several agricultural markets. Over 80% of all corn and soy grown in the United States today is from genetically engineered seeds.

Another battle between Man and Nature being waged in farms and vineyards today is the impact of the unintended consequences of the industrial food complex. New studies have been conducted to determine the impact of synthetic agricultural products on naturally maintained farms and vineyards. The results are not promising.

Natural winemaking has grown significantly over the last few decades, with popular support for the health of vineyards and the atmosphere. Here's the rub: natural forces may adulterate and affect grape crops regardless of Man's effort to insulate himself from the influences of industrial behemoths.

Examples abound:

- Shifting winds that carry air-borne pesticides and herbicides from non-organic vineyards and other farmlands to organically sustained vineyards;

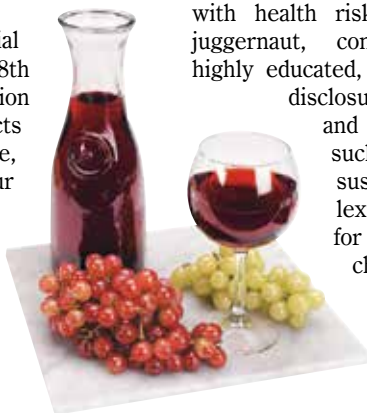
- Higher-than-normal rains that carry atmospheric-trapped contaminants across a wide swath of vineyards;
- The run-off of contaminated water from multiple sources into organic properties and water sources.

The dangers of industrial herbicides and pesticides are well documented. Several years ago, a French laboratory tested 92 bottles of wine and found small (non-lethal) traces of pesticides in all 92 bottles, a number of which were organically produced. Another, unrelated, laboratory test of 300 bottles found pesticides in over 90% of them.

The results of another study were equally alarming. An activist group sent a sample of ten anonymous bottles of wine produced from prime northern California vineyards to a laboratory for testing of glyphosate, the active ingredient in the chemical pesticide Roundup. All ten wines, including those that were produced organically, tested positive.

In the 21st century, is Man in harmony, or at war, with Nature? Unfortunately, given the long-term influence of the industrial food complex, only future generations may find out.

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted numerous 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](mailto:nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com) or on Twitter @sharingwine.



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