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May 11 - May 17, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 11, Issue 508

Congressman Jones Visits Greenburgh to Promote Universal Child Care

By Rick Pezzullo

Congressman Mondaire Jones (D-NY) visited the Lois Bronz Children's Center in Greenburgh Friday to emphasize the need for universal child care.

On April 27, Jones, along with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), reintroduced the Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act, a comprehensive bill that will ensure every family has high-quality, affordable child care and early learning opportunities.

New York is one of the 10 least affordable states for center-based infant care, center-based toddler care, and center-based care for four-year-olds. In Westchester County, in particular, center-based care for an infant costs \$21,000/year -- nearly the entire annual income of a family living at the federal poverty line.

"Our child care system is deeply broken, and those who can least afford it are paying the highest price as a result," Jones said.

"In Westchester and Rockland, there are too many families paying tens of thousands of dollars a year, and many more that simply cannot afford to pay that kind of money."

"As we work to rebuild our economy, affordable child care is essential," said Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. "Parents, and especially women, as we are seeing will continue to leave the workforce, if we don't address this issue. I thank Congressman Jones for reintroducing the Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act, because expanding quality affordable child care will create jobs, help support our lowest income families, and ensure no family is put into debt paying for child care."

The Universal Child Care and Early Learning Act would fund a system of locally run, affordable, and high-quality child care programs inspired by the bipartisan Comprehensive Child Development Bill of 1971, which was vetoed by President

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ArtsWestchester's Gallery Reopens in WP after COVID Closure

By Rick Pezzullo

State legislators gathered with ArtsWestchester Friday to celebrate a \$1 million award that will be regranted to arts groups in Westchester and Rockland counties through a new ReStart The Arts Grant Program to be administered by ArtsWestchester to help organizations recover from the COVID-19 pandemic recession.

It was the first day the gallery in White Plains was open to the public in more than a year. The launch features the new art exhibition "Together apART: Creating During COVID," showcasing the artwork of more than 220 Hudson Valley artists.

"Like us, many of our affiliate arts and cultural venues have been shuttered for more than a year operating virtually but with closed doors. They now require an enormous—and costly—effort to reopen safely," said ArtsWestchester CEO Janet Langsam. "I'm profoundly grateful to our state legislators for understanding the

urgent need for these recovery grants. The new funds will help arts and cultural groups restart their public programs and make a comeback in the Hudson Valley in 2021."

The \$1 million allocation in the 2021-22 state budget will allow ArtsWestchester to help local organizations reopen or resume their programming.

A 2020 survey completed by ArtsWestchester found that 87% of responding arts groups reported that they were not faring well through the pandemic and two-thirds of local artists were unemployed. The 2020 national creative worker unemployment rate was estimated at 63%.

"The Westchester arts community has been hard hit by social distancing and lockdown measures at the height of the pandemic. This is why I, along with my Senate colleagues, fought for \$1 million in funding for ArtsWestchester to ensure our local arts community emerges from this pandemic with the resources needed to

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Westchester Partners with Knicks to Encourage Teens to Get Vaccine

By Rick Pezzullo

Westchester County has launched a new campaign to encourage teens and young adults to get vaccinated for COVID-19.

The campaign, "I kicked COVID-19 to the curb!," includes a PSA with New York Knick and Ossining native Obi Toppin and teammate Immanuel "IQ" Quickley.

Along with the New York Knicks PSA, the county is also launching an aggressive social media campaign, hosting a youth town hall May 13 to answer questions young people might have about the vaccine and is partnering with local schools, libraries and more to directly get the information in the hands of the young

people and their parents.

"It's been a long time since I was a teenager, but I remember what it was like. When I was a young man I thought I was invincible, and in some ways you are when you are young, but when it comes to COVID-19 you are not," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. "Get vaccinated. Don't let anything impact or threaten the very bright future you have ahead of you. It's a simple, quick shot and it will help protect you and the people you love."

Rich Constable, MSG Sports head of Social Impact, said: "The New York Knicks and MSG are proud to work with Westchester County on this important

initiative to encourage young people to get a COVID-19 vaccine shot. As the CDC has said, the available COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective and will allow all of us to get back to enjoying many of the activities we love – like playing basketball. We encourage everyone who has not yet been vaccinated to get their shot."

Early on the county's vaccination efforts were focused on the most vulnerable members of the population—older people and those with severe health issues. Now, the focus is on those 16 to 25 years old. Currently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized the emergency use of a Pfizer vaccine to prevent COVID-19 for people 16 years of

age and older. For those 18 years old and older Johnson & Johnson and Moderna are also approved. There is no vaccine approved yet for children under age 16.

- To schedule an appointment at Westchester Community College in Valhalla, visit: [Westchestergov.com/health](https://www.westchestergov.com/health)
- To schedule an appointment at a New York State operated clinic, visit: covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov
- To locate clinics, pharmacies and other locations that offer the COVID-19 vaccine, use the Vaccine Finder Tool: vaccinefinder.org/search
- For more information, please call the Westchester County Department of Health at (914)-995-7425.

SPCA Seeks Info on Dog Found Trapped in Garbage Bag in Elmsford

By Anna Young

The SPCA of Westchester has launched an investigation after a Chihuahua was found inside of a tied-up garbage bag and trapped inside a sealed container in Elmsford for nearly 17 hours.

The Briarcliff organization is currently working with its Humane Law Enforcement Unit to seek information on the individual(s) responsible for committing animal cruelty.

On April 29 at approximately 2:30 p.m., employees of a local animal rescue group in Elmsford noticed a blue plastic storage container at their front entrance. When they opened the secured container, they found a small, brown, female Chihuahua inside, according to the SPCA.

The dog, now named Rue, had chewed and scratched her way through the tied-up garbage bag, breaking some of her nails in the process. She avoided suffocation after nearly 17 hours trapped.

A video camera captured someone leaving the container on April 28 at about 9:30 p.m., according to the SPCA.

After she was discovered, the SPCA's Human Law Enforcement was called in and brought her back to the SPCA's animal care campus where she received veterinary care and will soon be placed up for adoption.

"It's inconceivable that someone could do something so cruel to an innocent animal and we can't imagine

how frightened Rue must have been," Executive Director Shannon Laukhuf said. "We are so grateful that she was found before it was too late and that she is now getting the love and care she needs at the SPCA of Westchester."

Laukhuf said the person responsible for the intentional act of cruelty must be found. The SPCA is seeking the public's help and is imploring anyone with information to call the confidential hotline at 914-941-7797.

Congressman Jones Visits Greenburgh to Promote Universal Child Care

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Nixon. The lawmakers' proposal builds on the successes of both the federal Head Start program and the U.S. Department of Defense military child care program.

Specifically, the bill:

- Ensures universal access: This legislation provides a mandatory federal investment to establish and support a network of locally run Child Care and Early Learning Centers and Family Child Care Homes so that every family, regardless of their income or employment, can access high-quality, affordable child care options for their children from birth to school entry.
- Guarantees affordability: Families below 200% of the federal poverty line (about \$53,000 for a family of four) could access these child care options at zero cost. Families with higher incomes would pay a subsidized fee on a sliding scale based on their income, as in the military child care program. No family would pay more than 7% of their income for these public child care options.
- Invests in childcare workers: The legislation ensures parity by requiring that wages and benefits for child care workers be comparable to those of similarly credentialed local public school teachers, and invests in worker training and professional development modeled after the military child care program.
- Includes pre-Kindergarten educational services: The network of Centers and Family Child Care Homes would provide pre-K curriculum and educational services for children before they enter kindergarten. This legislation would also

incentivize states and cities to expand their investments in early childhood education.

- Builds on existing programs: The legislation builds on the successful federal Head Start program to create a universal system for families that cannot access Head Start services, while preserving the Head Start program for families eligible for those services. It also maintains the Child Care and Development Fund to help low-income families access other care options, including extended hours and afterschool care for children up to age 13.
- Establishes Universal Child Care without increasing the deficit: After accounting for the economic impacts of this legislation, Moody's Analytics estimates that the program would cost the federal government approximately \$70 billion per year or \$700 billion over 10 years. Senator Warren's proposed Ultra-Millionaire Tax is projected to raise more than four times that amount of revenue over the same period. Consequently, if Congress funded this program using revenue from Senator Warren's proposed Ultra-Millionaire Tax, the program would not increase the deficit.

Jones, 33, serves New York's 17th District. A product of East Ramapo public schools, he was raised in Section 8 housing and on food stamps in the Village of Spring Valley by a single mother who worked multiple jobs to provide for their family. He later graduated from Stanford University, worked at the Department of Justice during the Obama Administration, and graduated from Harvard Law School.

ArtsWestchester's Gallery Reopens in WP after COVID Closure

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come back stronger than ever. Today marks the start of that comeback," said Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

The "ReStart the Arts" initiative in Westchester and Rockland counties is an effort led by the Affiliate Committee of ArtsWestchester, a group of arts leaders who serve as ArtsWestchester board members.

"Right now there is a critical need for assistance, specifically for Westchester and Rockland Counties arts communities, which represent one of the State's most artistically vibrant areas outside of New York City. Westchester and Rockland's economy cannot recover unless we restart the arts," said Dave Steck, founder and executive director of Yonkers-based YoFi Fest.

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State's Public Colleges to Require Vaccinations; MTA to Host Pop-up Sites

By Martin Wilbur

The state is ramping up efforts to vaccinate as many residents as possible by requiring students who attend the state's public university systems to be vaccinated in order to return to in-person classes in September.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo made the announcement as part of a recent ongoing drive to provide motivation and enticements to eligible members of the public who until now have not gotten inoculated against COVID-19.

He also announced that starting this Wednesday and continuing through Sunday, the MTA, including Metro-North, the Long Island Rail Road and the New York City subway system, will provide free rides if anyone gets vaccinated at one of its designated pop-up vaccine sites. The MTA is setting up sites at some of the highest traffic transportation hubs within the three systems.

For people in Westchester and Metro-North commuters, the Ossining train station was named as a hub along with Grand Central Station. Anyone who gets the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccination at either of those sites will receive the equivalent of a free round-trip ticket to anywhere within the Metro-North system.

Vaccination times at Ossining will be from 3 to 8 p.m. while shots will be administered at Grand Central from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. It will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.

The same deal is being offered on the Long Island Rail Road while anyone who gets vaccinated at a designated New York City subway station will receive a free seven-day Metro card that entitles the commuter to unlimited rides in that time period.

"We have to get the vaccination rate up, and in this situation, we've always handled this as a community," Cuomo said. "Everyone should be doing everything they can to get people vaccinated."

Cuomo said for students who will be attending a State University of New York (SUNY) or City University of New York (CUNY) school in the fall, in order for them to attend live classes, they must be fully vaccinated. The state's private colleges and universities will also be encouraged to follow suit, although not mandated, Cuomo said.

He implored college students not to wait until the last moment and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

"Let's make a global statement, you can't go back to school in September unless you have a vaccine," Cuomo said. "That will be a major motivation for people to get the vaccine, and if you have to get it by September, you might as well get it now. Why wouldn't you get it now?"

Monday's developments follow Cuomo's pitch last week with representatives of the Yankees and Mets that vaccines will be available at Yankee Stadium and Citi Field on game days. Anyone who gets vaccinated at either stadium will get a free ticket to a future game.

While 60 percent of the state's residents 18 years old and up have now received at least one dose, the vaccination rates statewide have been slowing. The seven-day rolling average for doses on Apr. 12 reached

a high of 227,320. As of Sunday, it had fallen to 135,017.

"This is not a New York phenomenon, this is a national phenomenon," Cuomo said.

More than 16.8 million vaccines have been administered statewide, and 7.8 million people are fully vaccinated, or 48.9 percent of people 18 years old and up.

Cuomo said he's keeping up the pressure because in the past month there has been a direct correlation between falling positivity rates and percentage of the population vaccinated. As of Sunday, the statewide positivity rate was 1.43 percent down just over 80 percent since the Jan. 4 peak of 7.94 percent.

Statewide hospitalizations for COVID-19

have fallen to 2,016, the lowest since Nov. 15. Fatalities have also fallen, down to 27 on Sunday.

In Westchester, active cases have dropped to 1,352, down more than 700 in the past week, after average weekly declines of roughly 1,000 cases for each of the previous three weeks. County Executive George Latimer said on Saturday and Sunday, there were 62 and 57 new COVID-19 cases, respectively, a highly encouraging sign.

Hospitalizations have fallen in the county to 74 as of Saturday and there were no fatalities from Friday night through Sunday night, Latimer said.

As of Sunday, 68 percent of Westchester residents at least 18 years old have received

one dose of the vaccine.

"I think you're seeing more people interact in society on the basis of the confidence that they get from being vaccinated and believing that it's less likely they will get the disease, and should they contract it, it will be a less severe version of it," Latimer said.

This week, two groups of high schools will hold vaccination drives for students 16 years old and up who want the shot. On Wednesday, Pelham High School will join with neighboring districts while Westlake High School will partner with Pleasantville and Valhalla on Friday. Only the Pfizer vaccine has been approved at this time for 16- and 17-year-olds.

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Putnam Health Department: Rabies Threat Increases in Spring

Warm weather, longer days and more plentiful food are some of the reasons that wild animals tend to give birth in the spring.

Sometimes these baby animals stray from their mothers and wander alone into backyards, onto porches or into more wooded, secluded settings where well-meaning wildlife lovers think they need to be rescued. That is a mistake.

When people interfere with wildlife in their natural habitats, they often do more harm than good. They also put themselves at risk of exposure to fatal diseases such as rabies, even from a cute, small animal who appears healthy.

The Putnam County Department of Health receives reports from residents every spring about these intended "rescues," and their environmental staff reminds everyone to leave the animals alone and not to even feed or touch them. Most young animals are simply hiding while awaiting their parents' return from foraging nearby. They are not abandoned and their best chance for survival is being raised by their parents.

"These 'rescues' are made with good intentions, but young animals do not need rescuing and are prepared to survive without human intervention," said Marianne Burdick, associate public health sanitarian, who supervises the rabies control program at the Putnam County Department of Health.

"People that feed, touch or remove

wildlife from their natural environment are actually causing them harm. If there is a potential exposure to rabies because a person was bit, scratched or exposed to the animal's saliva, they are costing the animal its life. The only way to ensure there was no rabies exposure is by testing the animal, which requires it to be euthanized. This is not an outcome anyone wants, so please leave wildlife, especially babies, alone."

Rabies can affect a wide range of mammals, including raccoons, skunks, bats, foxes, woodchucks, opossums, feral cats and, of course humans, and their pets, Burdick said. Last year the health department conducted more than 400 rabies investigations, including those connected to dog and cat bites, she said.

After a bite from a rabies-infected animal, the virus travels to the brain eventually causing a host of neurological symptoms. Health Commissioner Dr. Michael J. Nesheiwat describes the symptoms that initially may be similar to the flu while including a prickling or itching sensation at the bite site.

Other more serious symptoms associated with cerebral dysfunction occur, such as anxiety, confusion and agitation, followed by delirium, hallucinations and abnormal behaviors, Nesheiwat said.

"Seeking medical attention after a bite is essential," he said. "Unfortunately, once these clinical symptoms occur, the disease is nearly always fatal and only supportive treatment available. This is why we must

treat a person promptly after a bite, sometimes without even knowing for certain that the virus has been transmitted. The risks are just too high."

So, what should a person do if they discover an animal that they think is injured or may need help? The best plan is to call a wildlife rehabilitator. These professionals are licensed and trained to assess the situation and care for orphaned or injured wildlife.

The state Department of Conservation (DEC) provides wildlife health information online and a database to search for local wildlife rehabilitators, depending on what type of animal is in question. Visit www.dec.ny.gov/animals/261.html for more information.

In addition to resources available from the DEC, the health department works with Putnam AdvoCats to coordinate county efforts to reduce the numbers of feral cats who can also carry rabies. While educating the public about these animals, their efforts center on "TNR" – trapping, neutering and releasing the cats after rabies vaccination.

In 2020, 264 cats were captured and homes were found for nearly 50 percent of them. People interested in volunteering or donating to the Feral Cat Task Force, can call the health department at 845-808-1390 ext. 43160. Information on Putnam AdvoCats is available at www.putnamadvocats.org/.

While raccoon and skunk bites represent

a portion of rabies treatments, the main source of rabies in Putnam remains bats. Safely capturing the bat is an important way to avoid the unnecessary treatment, which is a series of shots over a two-week period. A popular instructional video on how to do this is on the department website at www.putnamcountyny.com/how-to-capture-a-bat.

To protect residents' health, all animal bites or contact with wild animals should be reported promptly to the Health Department at 845-808-1390. After hours or on weekends or holidays, call that number and press "3" for the environmental health hotline. A representative will promptly return your call. The Health Department should also be called promptly if a family pet encounters a wild animal. Rubber gloves should be used for any immediate handling of the potentially exposed pet.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board, is to improve and protect the health of the local community of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education.

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Westchester, Suffolk Partner to Convert Vehicle Fleets to Electric By 2030

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester and Suffolk counties are partnering on a shared services plan that will lead to the electrification of their entire vehicle fleets by 2030 in order to cut carbon emissions to zero.

County Executive George Latimer was joined by Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone Monday afternoon in White Plains where each official signed an executive order that commits their departments to the conversion to an electric vehicle fleet by the end of the decade and to submit a plan to the Department of Public Works within 90 days detailing how that will be accomplished.

The plan must also include the addition of any charging stations that would be needed, Latimer said.

Latimer and Bellone agreed to enter a joint procurement process that is expected to make the purchases cheaper than if each county went out on its own.

"This is a significant effort to combat climate change. But it doesn't come without leadership from individuals, and I have to say much of what we've done in Westchester that patterns the idea of shared services comes from following Suffolk County's lead in the creation of a portal in a number of other areas," Latimer said.

Bellone said the shared services plan is consistent with an executive order signed by President Joe Biden to cut carbon emissions nationwide by 50 percent by 2030. Having suffered from disasters in the last decade



Westchester County Executive George Latimer announces Monday the shared services agreement with Suffolk County that will help to economize the conversion of the two counties' vehicle fleets to electric. Looking on is Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone.

such as Superstorm Sandy and Tropical Storm Isaia, which many scientists believe were fueled at least in part by climate change, it's time to take action, he said.

Transportation-related issues may be the biggest factor in trying to reduce carbon emissions, according to Bellone, making this effort of critical importance. He expects that municipalities or other counties may eventually join the agreement.

"You cannot address climate change, you

cannot address this profoundly important issue if you are not dealing with transportation," Bellone said. "Transportation represents the biggest impact on emissions, and so this announcement is actually critical to our joint efforts to protect the environment, reduce emissions, reduce our carbon footprint, and I think this provides a model for municipalities around the state."

This isn't the first time that Westchester and Suffolk have partnered on a regional

basis. The two counties had a previous shared services plan when they joined together to buy police cars, which helped to hold down the price for each.

They also recently formed a regional coalition with Nassau County to pressure the state's congressional contingent to help lift the \$10,000 limit on state and local tax deductions.

While the conversion to an all-electric fleet will take money, Latimer said federal funds related to the pandemic, including the proposed American Job Act, could help the two counties get a significant portion of the investment needed. Latimer mentioned that there is currently bipartisan support for the bill in Washington, although how extensive an infrastructure bill Congress would agree to pass is still to be determined.

"How widespread a bill, what it will cover has yet to be known, but there is support on both sides of the aisle to do infrastructure and we think this is appropriate infrastructure for that purpose," Latimer said.

The county is also prepared to contribute money when needed, he said.

Bellone also said he expects some type of federal commitment, but the initiative will benefit everybody.

"The more we can do to push more quickly to a clean energy future, at the same time do it in a way that is saving taxpayers money, that is a win-win situation and that's why I think this announcement today is very important," he said.

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Mt. Kisco Holding Out Hope for Fire Department Parade This Summer

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Kisco is hoping to resume its Fire Department Parade this year, but a host of variables related to the coronavirus and guidance from health officials and the state will determine whether that can be achieved.

The department has requested permission from the Village Board to hold the parade on Friday, July 19. It would be one of the first large gatherings in the area since the pandemic shut down society

in March 2020. Last year's parade, similar to virtually every other public event, was canceled last year.

Mayor Gina Picinich and the village trustees encouraged the fire department last week to submit a plan detailing how it hopes to spread people out along the route to ensure social distancing. In previous years, hundreds of residents have lined the sidewalk along the parade route in good weather.

The parade, which has been

held annually on a Friday evening in July for years, has typically started at Moore Avenue and East Main Street, before proceeding up East Main and onto South Moger Avenue, where it concludes.

Picinich also asked the fire department to reorganize or curtail some of the post-parade festivities that its volunteers usually engage in following the parade. There is also the possibility that it might have to be canceled depending on guidance and what is transpiring with the virus.

"There is going to need to be some understanding about how certain parts and pieces are going to be done this year based on what the guidance is at the time," Picinich said.

When the board discussed the matter last week, the state guidance allowed for up to 200 people at an outdoor event, she said. As of Monday, up to 500 people can attend an outdoor event if there is proof of vaccination.

With infection rates steadily declining over the past month and the percentage of the population that has been vaccinated climbing, it is possible for guidance to be revised over the next two months.

The board agreed that the village will look to hold the parade knowing that there is also



The Mount Kisco Fire Department Parade is one of the most popular events in the village each year. Officials are hoping to hold the parade depending on guidelines and a workable plan from the department.

the possibility the event will be different this year.

"I think it makes sense to be optimistic and hope that this can happen," said Trustee Peter Grunthal. "If it does happen and we're fortunate enough for it to happen, that due care is taken in every respect, but at least to start the planning."

Trustee Karen Schleimer said it would be great to resume one of the most popular events on the village calendar but safety comes

first.

"I think there's no question that we would all love to see it happen, but the safety of everybody, including our fire persons, is critical here," Schleimer said. "So, I would just like to see what they have in mind and to see if it seems at all doable."

The board directed the fire department to provide a safety plan as soon as possible to Village Manager Ed Brancati.

Mt. Kisco to Hold Leaf Blower Public Hearing on Monday

The Mount Kisco Village Board will open its public hearing on leaf blower regulations at its next meeting this Monday, May 17. The meeting will be broadcast on the village's Facebook page.

Since the local legislation was first proposed in March, there have been revisions to the bill, including focusing on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers rather than and adjusting times

of operation and fines.

Trustee Peter Grunthal has proposed commercial landscapers to operate Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and residents to operate the machines from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sundays and holidays. Gas-powered blowers would be prohibited from May 1 to Sept. 15.



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Rebranding Effort Simplifies Tompkins Mahopac Bank Name

Tompkins Financial Corporation has announced plans for a rebranding effort that will better align its four banks in New York and Pennsylvania under the Tompkins corporate umbrella.

Tompkins Mahopac Bank, headquartered in Brewster, will be known simply as Tompkins. The three other affiliated banks – Tompkins Trust Company, headquartered in Ithaca, Tompkins VIST Bank in southeastern Pennsylvania and Tompkins Bank of Castile in western New York – will also become Tompkins.

All existing banking products and services will be unchanged and will continue to be offered in all markets under the Tompkins brand. Tompkins Financial's two other affiliate companies, Tompkins Insurance Agencies and Tompkins Financial Advisors, will keep their respective names and are

otherwise unaffected by the change.

Stephen S. Romaine, Tompkins financial president and CEO, said that over the next year, customers will see signage changes reflecting the new name; however, none of the local leadership is changing, nor is the local Board of Directors.

"Tompkins' unique community banking value proposition, which is centered around local decision-making, relationship-based products and services, deep community engagement and a values-driven, collaborative, empowered culture, will be unaffected by the rebranding and name change," Romaine said.

The alignment of bank names is made possible by a consolidation of four existing bank charters to one; therefore, also reducing duplicate regulatory and legal processes.

"It just makes good sense and is well-



Tompkins Mahopac Bank President & CEO Gerald J. Klein Jr.

timed," Romaine said. "Becoming one Tompkins in name not only more closely aligns our Tompkins family, but in fact brings additional advantages which support the company's ability to maintain its commitment to sustainable excellence."

Tompkins has been serving the Hudson Valley region since 1927 and has been a part of Tompkins Financial for more than 20 years.

The changes are expected to take effect later this, subject to regulatory approval. Other than a slight change to the bank's brand name, the process and resulting single charter are expected to be a seamless and not expected to impact customers.

State Senate Passes Bill to Improve Hospital, Nursing Home Staffing

The state Senate advanced a legislative package last week that outlines hospital and nursing home staffing standards and protocols.

The legislation requires every hospital to establish Clinical Staffing Committees to develop and oversee the implementation of annual clinical staffing plans for nurses and non-nurse support staff at each hospital in the state.

Additionally, the legislation will mandate the commissioner of health to publicize the new regulations that would require every

nursing home to meet specific hours per resident day of care for certified nurse aides, registered nurses and licensed practical nurses.

"This new legislation continues the Senate's wide range of efforts in safeguarding our residents," said state Sen. Peter Harchuk (D-Lewisboro) "By establishing staffing standards and enhancing staffing levels, we will see an improvement in clinical outcomes for our loved ones."

The package builds on legislation approved passed in March by the Senate to

better support and protect nursing home residents. In the 2021-22 state budget, the Senate required nursing homes to spend at least 70 percent of their revenue on direct patient care and 40 percent on resident-facing staffing, and included \$64 million for increased staffing.

The Senate also held joint statewide public hearings during the past year on residential health care facilities and COVID-19 to discuss various issues and concerns directly with the public.

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Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

Apr. 26: Patrol responded to the area of Cleveland Drive at 2:31 p.m. on a report of several youths fighting. Patrol checked the area but could not locate the youths.

Apr. 27: A caller reported at 1:18 p.m. that a blue Subaru was speeding on Route 9 near the area of the southern border with Ossining. Patrol responded and located and stopped the vehicle on Route 9 near the northern border with Cortlandt. Patrol spoke with the operator and issued a verbal warning.

Apr. 29: A Benedict Boulevard resident reported at 7:09 p.m. that his son left and did not return home. Patrol checked several locations but could not locate the youth. The youth was later located outside of the village.

Apr. 30: Patrol responded to Croton Point Park at 6:24 p.m. to assist Westchester County police with a domestic dispute occurring inside the park.

May 2: Patrol responded to the Croton-Harmon train station at 9:48 p.m. on a report of a male who had fallen onto the tracks. MTA police also responded. Upon arrival, officers reported the male was lying on the tracks and refusing police

commands to get up and off the tracks.

Patrol officers reported having to get onto the tracks to bring the subject onto the platform. The man was combative and refusing all police commands. Patrol officers attempted to calm him and send him by ambulance to the hospital for evaluation. He then became more combative and a physical struggle ensued. Village and MTA officers were able to restrain him and bring him into the ambulance. Croton EMS transported the male to the hospital with MTA patrol officers assisting.

North Castle Police Department

Apr. 30: Report of a larceny from the Stop & Shop on North Broadway at 3:33 p.m. The party is described as a Black male, about 25 years old, 6-foot-4 and wearing all black clothing with a red t-shirt underneath a black hoodie and black sunglasses and holding a black umbrella. The responding officers canvassed the area with negative results. A witness deposition was secured and a report followed.

May 1: A complainant reported at 7:28

a.m. that her ex-boyfriend is sending her mother erratic and unwanted text messages.

State Police/Cortlandt

May 6: State police, in conjunction with the Peekskill Police Department, arrested Miguel Pillacela, 38, of Peekskill, for first-degree rape, a Class B felony. A joint investigation by the two departments determined Pillacela forcibly raped a victim in the Town of Cortlandt. Pillacela was arraigned before Cortlandt Town Justice Fugaro-Norton and remanded to the Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$100,000 cash or bond bail.

White Plains Police Department

May 2: Police responded to Robertson Avenue on a report of a large group fighting. Two individuals were arrested and charged with third-degree assault, a misdemeanor. One of the two individuals was also charged with fourth-degree criminal mischief, also a misdemeanor.

Obituary

Paul Slader

Paul B. Slader passed away on Monday, Jan. 18 at the age of 90.

A beloved husband, father, grandfather and Korean War veteran, Slader was born on Nov. 13, 1930, in New York City. He graduated from Milford High School in 1948, before finally settling down in Pleasantville.

In 1951, Paul volunteered to serve his country with the 7th Infantry Division in the strategic Iron Triangle of North Korea. Paul was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge for "excellent performance on duty."

Paul was dedicated to a better life for

his family, never missing a day of work. He loved vacations in Vermont, selling antiques, line dancing, but most of all his family. He will always be known for his quick wit, his infectious smile and his kind and compassionate spirit. Uncle Paul was a favorite among his nieces and nephews, always making everyone laugh.

Paul is survived by his wife, Mary; three children, Rose Mary, David and William; and 10 grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Holy Innocents Church on May 7. Interment followed on May 8 at North Milton Cemetery in Milton, N.Y.

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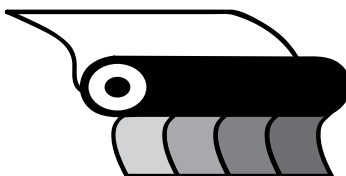
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Proposed Substance Abuse Facility in Cortlandt Sent Back to ZBA

By Rick Pezzullo

The almost six-year saga of a proposed luxury substance abuse facility on Quaker Ridge Road in Cortlandt took another twist last week.

On advice from counsel, the Cortlandt Planning Board referred Hudson Ridge Wellness Center's 92-bed residential treatment center project back to the Zoning Board of Appeals for "legal issues."

The move was chastised by Robert Davis, an attorney for Hudson Ridge, who vowed it would subject the town to legal action.

"This is a travesty to refer this back to the ZBA," Davis fumed. "It's an outrage. It's absolutely absurd."

Hudson Ridge purchased the 20-acre property in 2010 for a reported \$1.15 million and began restoring the seven existing buildings. The site was once used as a hospital for people suffering from substance abuse. Hudson Ridge also owns 28 adjacent acres that are planned to be undisturbed.

In August 2015, Hudson Ridge submitted an application for a special use permit with a site plan to establish a high-end specialty hospital. Those plans were then stalled by a nine-month moratorium imposed two months later by the Cortlandt Town Board. Hudson Ridge sought to obtain hardship status from the Town Board from the moratorium, but were denied. Several legal challenges have subsequently delayed the project.

Hudson Ridge is seeking a variance that requires the hospital to be constructed on a state roadway. The town's ZBA is unable to

make a ruling on that request until the Planning Board completes the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process.

The project has drawn staunch opposition from neighbors who have raised concerns about water pressure, traffic and the effect of the hospital on the character of the community, including residents from the neighboring municipalities of Ossining, New Castle and Yorktown.

"This will be a tragedy in the making," resident Carol Evans maintained during last week's public hearing. "What we don't need is more traffic; 120 cars per day is shocking."

An attorney for Citizens for Responsible Hudson Institute Site Development, which includes residents of Cortlandt, Ossining, New Castle and Yorktown, outlined many other concerns in a 14-page letter to the Planning Board in late March.

Brad Schwartz, of Zarin & Steinmetz, urged the Planning Board to deny the application or issue a positive declaration, claiming the 38,560-square-foot building was not large enough to accommodate all the clients, staff and services promised.

Schwartz noted the Betty Ford Clinic in California, which Hudson Ridge has been compared to, is more than triple the size of what is proposed in Cortlandt.

"This matter is not about an experienced applicant coming to the town with a proven track record of successfully operating substance abuse disorder treatment programs in Westchester or elsewhere," Schwartz said. "If it were, this would be a very different letter. Instead, there are many alarm bells going off."

"The applicant acquired a site that very clearly did not meet the town's baseline requirements for the type of project intended. Nor did they reach out to the community or relevant government agencies," Schwartz added. "The application is riddled with inconsistencies, and the narrative shifts depending on the audience. Most important is the clear fact that the program put forth by the applicant simply cannot be accomplished within the building footprint that currently

exists as the applicant has promised."

During last week's hearing, Rich Pearson, a consultant for Hudson Ridge, said the treatment facility would generate less traffic than other permitted uses, such as religious, school and government buildings, and would draw as much traffic as a 20- to 24-lot residential subdivision.

"There will be no potential for any significant adverse traffic impacts on the neighborhood," Pearson said.



Hitting a Grand Slam

Members of the Stepinac High School varsity baseball team, which organized a successful fundraising campaign to benefit the Pediatric Brain Cancer Foundation. The team raised about \$8,500, more than \$3,000 above its goal. The proceeds will help fund child life programs in local hospitals, financial assistance funds for families experiencing a pediatric brain tumor diagnosis and groundbreaking research to cure pediatric brain tumors, the deadliest disease affecting children in the United States.

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Hayworths Commemorate NWH Relationship With Generous Gift

To commemorate their longstanding relationship with Northern Westchester Hospital (NWH), Dr. Scott Hayworth and the honorable Dr. Nan Hayworth, two of Westchester's most prominent physicians, have donated \$2.5 million to transform the hospital's Maternal Child Health Unit.

Upon completion, the Hayworth Family Maternity Center's physical environment will be an appropriate setting for the high-caliber programs offered to women and families during every stage of pregnancy, birth and postpartum.

"Together, Drs. Scott and Nan Hayworth have dedicated almost a half-century to Northern Westchester Hospital," said Derek Anderson, the hospital's executive director. "They understand the importance of the hospital's Maternal Child Health Unit as a gateway for new families entering the community. We are very grateful for their generosity, their commitment to ensuring the delivery of person-centered care and for the appreciation this gift demonstrates for the entire care team at Northern Westchester Hospital."

The gift will be allocated toward a major transformation of the unit, including renovation of the labor and delivery rooms; creation of two new triage rooms; the expansion of three existing recovery bays; and renovations to all 25 postpartum rooms.

"A transformative gift of this nature not only makes these important capital improvements possible, but it is also emblematic of the generosity of people in our community who make Northern Westchester



Dr. Scott Hayworth and Dr. Nan Hayworth recently donated \$2.5 million toward Northern Westchester Hospital's Maternal Child Health Unit. The two physicians have had long and distinguished careers and have had longstanding relationships with the hospital.

Hospital the critical community asset that it is. We are most grateful that they have

chosen to invest in us," said Keeva Young-Wright, the hospital's foundation president.

The team delivers about 1,600 babies a year and provides care to the hospital's tiniest patients in the Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, which is equipped to stabilize and treat life-threatening emergencies and illnesses in newborns who are as small as one-and-a-half pounds at birth.

The hospital also offers a Level III Perinatal Center and special services such as a Mother-Baby Navigator program, which helps new parents navigate every issue related to pregnancy and birth.

"This community is not only where we live and have raised our family, but also where we've chosen to practice medicine," Scott Hayworth said. "We're so glad to have, through this gift, an opportunity to say thank you, honor the incredible teams at Northern Westchester Hospital and recognize the outstanding care they provide."

Nan Hayworth said she, her husband and their family have benefited enormously from having a first-class hospital that has a talented and dedicated team that treats everyone well.

"It's wonderful to be able to honor these great people with a gift to help the hospital continue to grow and transform its services in the 21st century," she said.

Scott Hayworth is the president of the Optum Tri-State Region, comprised of CareMount Medical, ProHEALTH NY and Riverside Medical Group, with 2,250 providers at 380 locations and serving more than 2.5 million patients.

For more than 20 years he has also served as president and CEO of CareMount Medical, (formerly Mount Kisco Medical Group, PC). He began his career at Mount Kisco Medical Group in 1988 and he served as an attending OBGYN at NWH until 2015, including one memorable year in which he delivered four sets of triplets. He has also served on numerous NWH committees, including the Board of Directors of the NWH Foundation.

He is a clinical assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell and he advises and serves on the boards of many investment firms and businesses, including as a senior adviser at Arsenal Capital Partners and Amulet Capital Partners.

Nan Hayworth is the first female physician ever elected to a full term as a member of the House of Representatives, serving New York's 19th in 2011-12. She practiced ophthalmology for nearly 20 years in Mount Kisco and she was an attending physician at NWH throughout that time.

Now a strategic business development adviser for Pilot Growth Equity, Nan Hayworth is also chairman of the board of directors of ConservAmerica, an organization promoting economically-sustainable conservation and environmental protection, and a member of the boards of the Independent Women's Forum, the Goodman Institute for Public Policy Research, Public Agenda and United Way of Westchester and Putnam.

The Hayworths live in Bedford

File Taxes Before May 17 to Receive Child Tax Credit Payments

Congressman Mondaire Jones (D-White Plains) urged all families in New York's 17th Congressional District to file their taxes before the upcoming May 17th

deadline to ensure they benefit from the expanded, fully refundable and cash-advanced child tax credit payments they are entitled to.

As part of the American Rescue Plan, which Jones supported, eligible families can receive monthly payments of up to \$300 per child beginning as soon as July. The best way for eligible families to ensure they receive their payments is to file a 2020 tax return – even if they don't have earnings to report or don't normally file – because the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) needs information from tax returns in order to calculate and issue advanced monthly payments.

In the 17th Congressional District:

- 64.8 percent of children, about 122,000 children, will benefit from the expanded and fully refundable child tax credit
- About 34,900 households will

receive an average benefit of \$3,300.

- Families with children in poverty will receive \$5,800 on average.
- An estimated 11,700 children will be lifted out of poverty, including 4,100 under the age of six.
- Another 1,500 children will be lifted out of deep poverty, meaning living in a household with a total cash income below 50 percent of its poverty threshold.

"Thanks to the American Rescue Plan, which I helped pass, we are cutting child poverty in half in America by expanding the child tax credit while making it fully refundable and cash advanced," Jones said. "This will be life-changing for families in my district and across the country. But expanding the child tax credit cannot be a one-time thing; we need to make it permanent. No child in the richest nation in the world should be living in poverty. We have the power to end child poverty in America and we must do so. I'll continue fighting to make this child tax credit expansion permanent."

The American Rescue Plan expanded the child tax credit to up to \$3,600 per child for children from birth to five years old and \$3,000 per child for children ages 6 to 17.

It also authorized advance monthly payments of the child tax credit through December 2021. Beginning as soon as July and running through December, qualifying families can receive up to \$300 a month per child for children from birth to five years old and \$250 a month per child for children six to 17 years old.

Families will get their remaining expanded child tax credit when they file their 2021 tax return.

Families will qualify for a full credit if their income is below \$75,000 for single filers, \$112,000 for people filing as head of household or \$150,000 for people who are married and filing jointly.

To be eligible, children must have a Social Security number; live with a parent for at least half of the year; be under 18 years old as of Dec. 31, 2021; and be claimed on your tax return.

Children are also eligible if they are your children, adopted children, stepchildren, half-siblings, foster children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews or certain other relatives. The adult filing the taxes must have a Social Security number or an individual taxpayer identification number.

Free tax preparation services are generally available until the tax filing deadline. Families should file their taxes before the May 17th deadline even if they do not have earnings to report or do not normally file because the IRS needs information from tax returns in order to calculate and issue advance monthly payments.

Families can file taxes for free online through the IRS Free File program at <https://apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile/>.

Where the parent or caregiver is 50 and up, they can use the following AARP tool to find free tax help near them at <https://secure.aarp.org/applications/VMSLocator/searchTaxAideLocations.action>.

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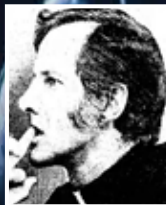
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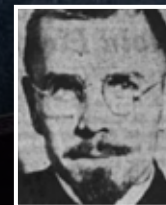
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Letters to the Editor

Celebrating Pete Seeger Was a Joy for Musicians and Festival-Goers

On Sunday, May 2, more than 200 people attended the fifth annual Pete Seeger Festival, a concert at Tompkins Corners Cultural Center in Putnam Valley to celebrate what would have been Pete Seeger's 102nd birthday. The free, family-friendly event was held outdoors on the lawn, with COVID-19 guidelines in place.

Pete and his wife, Toshi, and their family lived in Beacon from 1952 until Toshi's death in 2013 and Pete's passing in 2014.

Most of the musicians who sang and played were Pete's friends who performed with him and sailed with him on the sloops

Clearwater and Woody Guthrie and worked with him at the Beacon Sloop Club. In addition to singing Pete's songs and their own, they reminisced about the man who inspired so many people in the course of his 94 years.

After a year's confinement and isolation, people were so thrilled to be able to get out and enjoy the music and each other's company. And thanks to the generosity of the concert-goers, we are able to make sizable donations to Clearwater, the Beacon Sloop Club and River Pool at Beacon, the three organizations that Pete founded and

nurtured.

We will be presenting many more outdoor events throughout the spring and summer and the listing can be found on our website, www.tompkinscorners.org. We look forward to welcoming our community back to celebrate and enjoy the visual and performing arts that are such an important and necessary part of our lives.

**Judy Allen
Linda Thornton
Producers**

Bauscher is the Best Fit to Continue on Bedford Board of Education

As a Mount Kisco resident since 2006 with children at Mount Kisco Elementary and Fox Lane Middle School, I write to express my strong support to re-elect Mike Bauscher to the Bedford Central School District Board of Education. Mike is a neighbor and friend, and we are lucky to have his leadership on the board, especially during these uncharted times.

Mike has the perfect combination of experience and temperament for the board. He is a successful lawyer with strong analytical

skills, has three years of service on the board and prior service on the Budget Advisory Committee. Equally important, he is one of the calmest, even-keeled and good-natured people that I know. He does not let politics or external pressures sway him, and he takes a thoughtful approach to his decision making.

I have been continually impressed with Mike's dedication to do the right thing and his desire to hear all sides of an issue so that he can make an informed decision that will benefit the entire district. Mike is also committed to

inclusion, diversity and equity, which has never been more important than it is now.

Mike's presence in our community extends beyond the many hours he serves on the board. He coaches baseball and soccer and is always that person to lend a hand when needed.

Our district benefits daily from his leadership. I urge you to join me in re-electing Mike on May 18.

**Amy Justiniano
Mount Kisco**

Levenberg Has Provided Tireless Leadership for Ossining Residents

Dana Levenberg has proven to be an accomplished town supervisor, working tirelessly on behalf of all Ossining residents. Dana not only has the vision to move the community forward with sustainable improvements, she is a trustworthy steward of our financial and physical resources, upon which we can build a future.

One project completed during Dana's tenure was the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) culvert project at the intersection of routes 9A and 134, in which a culvert and drainage pipe beneath the roadway were replaced to eliminate flooding. This long-planned project was completed more quickly by collaborating with the DOT rather than

relying on the Highway Department alone.

Another project that was crucial to our health and safety but easily overlooked or taken for granted was the installation of back-up generators for our sewer pump stations, ensuring the pump stations remain operational during a blackout. Replacement of aging trucks and machines in the Highway Department and the maintenance of guardrails, signage and a wall along Old Albany Post Road increase efficiency for our work crews and enhance safety for motorists. You may not know that the road improvements currently underway on Morningside Drive are funded through grants, as were numerous improvements to the town park facilities for everyone's comfort

and use. An example of building on what we already have for the future is the repurposing of two former underutilized buildings at Cedar Lane Park to house the new Cedar Lane Arts Center.

It takes considerable foresight and skill to bring the appropriate groups together to get the job done and keep taxes down. We need Dana's experience and knowledge to continue our way to a better Ossining. Please cast your vote for Dana Levenberg in the June 22 primary.

**Franco Mesiti
Ossining**

Ragonese Has All the Qualities to Make an Impact on Lakeland School Board

Marisa Ragonese is exactly who we need on the Lakeland Board of Education. She has more than 16 years of experience mentoring teens at a teen center she started in Astoria, Queens, and then later, as a director for a county-wide civic engagement program for Westchester's teens and preteens.

What separates Ms. Ragonese's mentoring style from the rest includes her ability to encourage and empower students.

She is passionate and specifically skilled in cultivating leadership skills, critical thinking skills, self-advocacy and confidence in young people, which is key to individual success and happiness in life.

As a mother of two and a volunteer and mentor of young people myself, I know just how important these skills are. Further, Ms. Ragonese holds a bachelor's degree from NYU, a master's degree from Rutgers, has

served as a graduate fellow and research assistant, taught graduate-level students and is currently a candidate for her doctorate. She is also a mom and an active PTA member at George Washington Elementary.

Please vote for Marisa Ragonese for Lakeland Board of Education on May 18.

**Jennie Sunshine
Yorktown**

Indian Point Would Be the Ideal Location to House a Solar Farm

The Town of Cortlandt had years to prepare for the shutdown of Indian Point and only was able to secure \$3.5 million in money for economic stimulus. The town is using money, plus \$3.5 million in matching funds for a total of \$7 million, to develop land next to Indian Point for a soccer stadium, restaurant and a water park. All are

dependent on large groups of people visiting, which would call for more money spent on infrastructure.

The Town of Cortlandt should spend money on a solar farm. Then they could offer lower electrical rates to small business and residents alike. The closing of Indian Point could not come at worse time, with the

demand for electricity growing greater every day. I would hate to see this opportunity for the town's leadership to miss this chance to help all residents and business weather these new challenges.

**Chris Vargo
Verplanck**

Letters to the Editor

To Help Every Student, Vote Mazurek, Matlin for Bedford Board of Ed

Without question, the Bedford Central School District (BCSD) has an incredibly diverse student body consisting of thoughtful, caring and exceptional individuals, an amazing staff of teachers that put each student's individual needs first and a community of involved families that want every student to succeed.

I am writing this letter in support of Rob Mazurek and Steven Matlin for the Bedford Board of Education. I view their vision for the district as one of inclusivity for all.

Some highlights of their campaign

include but not limited to:

- An understanding of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) discussion that needs to be had and approached the right way to help all of our students and teachers succeed, not in a way that will harm our children with radical teachings and divisive ideas.
- Extensive financial and legal experience, each currently serving on the district's Budget Advisory Committee.
- They are parents of children in our elementary, middle and high schools.

- An acute understanding the board needs to allocate more funds to address our children's social and emotional loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- They are vocal in their support of all students with disabilities and making sure parents' voices are heard and necessary services are provided.
- A desire to increase support of the arts, music, athletics and enrichment programs to help improve each student's overall experience in our schools while also focusing on closing the learning gap created by the

pandemic.

Finally, our students' mental, emotional and academic health has been severely impacted this past year. Rob and Steve understand this and will focus on a budget and policies that will help every student.

Please join me in casting your vote for Rob Mazurek and Steve Matlin for the BCSD Board of Education on May 18. We need them and our kids need them.

Chris Kramer
Pound Ridge

Bauscher Serves Bedford Schools With Integrity and Leadership

Despite a 15-year career in education, it wasn't until my own child entered kindergarten during a pandemic that I truly appreciated the impact of good leadership.

The transition into kindergarten is bittersweet at any time, but this year's intrepid five-year-olds faced a challenge that brought with it more than a little anxiety for parents. Would my child be safe? Was remote instruction or in-person learning better for our family? Would she get a quality education? Would her teachers have the resources to do their jobs well despite impossible circumstances?

As the school year comes to an end, I look back with gratitude for all the Bedford Central School District (BCSD) community has accomplished. Thanks to the work of the school board, families were able to opt in to the learning model that best served their needs. All students had access to Chromebooks to meet the challenge of learning in a pandemic.

In his first term on the board, Mike Bauscher was part of the team that met this crisis head on. Mike listens to the needs of the community, and together with the board, made data-informed decisions that have, in my mind, positioned Bedford as an exemplar district when it comes to its pandemic response.

In addition to his steady leadership through the pandemic, Mike has also demonstrated

fairness and integrity in his first term on the board. The board has significantly improved the district's fiscal health over the last few years, with the state comptroller concluding that Bedford has no fiscal stress for the first time in years.

Mike is an advocate for a challenging and well-rounded education for all children in the district. He is able to achieve these things because he truly listens to all stakeholders. He is committed to collaboration with the community to best serve the entire district.

Importantly, candidates Mike Bauscher and Namasha Schelling see the diversity of BCSD as its strength. They are committed to equity and inclusion, and are dedicated to a future in which all students and staff feel a sense of belonging. This work takes listening, resources and strategy, and I am encouraged by this commitment to anti-racism in BCSD.

As I look ahead to next school year, the anxiety I felt this time last year is replaced with fortitude and pride thanks to leaders like Mike. On Tuesday, May 18 I'll be casting my vote to re-elect Mike Bauscher to the Bedford Board of Education.

Lisa Mitchell, Ed.D.
Bedford Central School District
parent and resident

Bauscher is the Best Choice for Bedford Board of Education

I am pleased to write in support of Michael Bauscher's candidacy for the Bedford Central School District Board of Education.

I have been a Mount Kisco resident since 2006 and have had two children in the school system since 2016. I've experienced the diversity and strong community bonds as a parent who has had children enrolled in both West Patent and Mount Kisco elementary schools, and I feel that we are lucky to be part of such a wonderful and welcoming school district and community.

I first met Mike when he was the coach of my son's tee-ball team about four years ago. As a Mount Kisco Little League coach (where we now coach together), he immediately struck me as a trustworthy person who genuinely cares about the development of our children. We got to meet his wife and two children, and our

boys became good friends while in the same class at Mount Kisco Elementary School. This is where I got to see the fruits of Mike's and the board's labor of implementing the Dual Language Bilingual Education program and school of choice as an option for all in the school district.

Our district has done an amazing job balancing the safety of our students, teachers and staff with meeting the educational needs of its learners. Mike is hard working, dedicated, an effective communicator and fully invested in our education system. His willingness to listen to all viewpoints and his record of making sound judgments for the best outcome for all is why I'll be voting for Mike Bauscher on May 18.

John Pappas
Mount Kisco

Levenberg Possesses the Skill Sets to Lead Ossining Into the Future

I am writing in support of re-electing Dana Levenberg as Ossining town supervisor. While Dana has a long list of accomplishments and credentials that make her outstanding at her job, I want to relate my observations of Dana's performance from the vantage point of someone who sees her every day at the municipal building while performing my role as receiver of taxes.

Dana is a positive force, full of energy and ideas, and she works hard to solve problems as part of a team. Dana utilizes all resources at hand, consulting town committees, Town Board members and experts at the local, county and state levels of government to ensure she has all the facts and "opinions," so she can confidently plant her feet and make the difficult decisions that she and the Town Board need to make.

As I often share with my friends and neighbors who discuss matters with me, "not all issues are so easy to solve – if they were, the job of supervisor would be easy, and you should apply." Dana is a leader who stands tall among her municipal counterparts in the county. I have attended

many county and state meetings with leaders that know Dana. She is clearly respected and has an enormous number of contacts that are anxious to work with her.

Dana is always willing to attend functions and to do the work. She leads by example. Dana co-founded the Ossining Micro Fund in 2004, which provides interest-free loans to help community members through emergency situations. Founding this type of organization and growing it as needs arise speaks to the character of a person who wants to help people in need.

I respect Dana's integrity, professional presence, skill set, intellectual capacity and heart. Please join me in voting for Dana Levenberg for Ossining town supervisor in the Democratic primary on June 22.

Holly Perlowitz
Receiver of Taxes
Town of Ossining

COVID-19 Vaccination is to Protect Others and Not Only Yourself

On Monday of Holy Week, I received my second COVID-19 vaccination shot. Timing wasn't the best, given my profession, but it was when I was assigned. While I suspect I have a good immune system, when I do catch something significant that slows me down, I usually feel it intensely. Approximately 12 hours after being injected, I was faced with extreme chills and nausea; six hours after that, I was in the ER. Yet, I do not regret being vaccinated.

I have missed worshipping communally and giving and receiving hugs and handshakes. Face masks have protected from air particles but have not enabled clarity in discussion. Communion, the central sacrament of worship, was suspended or modified. I missed the normalcy of all pre-COVID.

But greater still, my faith compels me to care for my neighbors. If there is a sacrifice

that is in my willpower to do for those in need and I neglect to do it, I feel I am missing the point of Holy Scripture. There are many who can't get vaccinated, whether because of age, allergy, immune-compromised systems or legitimate religious concerns; my vaccinated body protects them and the sacrifice of a few hours of discomfort ultimately promotes community wholeness.

There are still many on the fence or looking for incentives. My incentive was to my neighbor in need; my action was one of faith. If you choose to get vaccinated, too, let me know and you will be in my prayers for health and thanksgiving.

Rev. Kevin O'Hara
Emanuel Lutheran Church,
Pleasantville

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WHICH FUTURE MAKES SENSE FOR WESTCHESTER?

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

But we don't have to wait that long.

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

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

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

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

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

Indian Point Energy Center



CHURCH OPENS BOLD NEW CHAPTER IN LEGACY OF CARE

Solar Power Proposed for Gate of Heaven Cemetery

The Catholic church in the Archdiocese of New York has a 200-year history of meeting the spiritual and physical needs of people from all walks of life. Throughout that time, the church has been an innovative leader in education, health care, social service, and charitable outreach.

In recent years, Catholic parishes and schools have answered Pope Francis's call to "care for our common home, the earth." They have reduced their carbon footprint through energy efficiency measures. And working with Con Ed Solutions, a solar developer, they have generated renewable solar power for use both onsite and in the community.

This month, the Trustees of St. Patrick's Cathedral is asking the Town of Mount Pleasant for permission to install a solar array in an unused portion of Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne. It's a forward-thinking approach to meet the area's growing need for sustainable energy.

The proposed "Community Solar System" will produce 7,200,000 kilowatt hours of clean energy each year and reduce both greenhouse gas and carbon emissions.

It will also provide energy bill discounts to 200 local residents or small businesses and new revenue to the Town of Mount Pleasant as an annual payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT).

The site will be screened from view by more than 150 evergreen trees and include native and pollinator-friendly plantings.



Proposed Solar Field Site

Please support the proposal by

- Attending the May 17 public hearing at the Town of Mount Pleasant Planning Board
- Send a letter of support to the Town of Mount Pleasant Planning Board to csaracino@mtpleasantny.com
- Visit Gate of Heaven Cemetery link to register your endorsement
<https://calvaryandalliednyc.com/new-initiatives/>



Being Outside is the New Place to Be – Even at Home

When I was an adolescent, I had a loyal little mutt named Satin (because her coat was so shiny) who would go wild, leaping up and down when I asked if she wanted to go outside?

Since the COVID-19 pandemic fell upon us, outside has become the operative word to everybody, denoting a safer environment in which we can breathe mask-free. Restaurants in particular have been promoting the availability of outdoor dining so that patrons can feel safer when not wearing a mask in order to eat.

But I have always been the advocate for moving activities outdoors, from dining to front lawn games – especially outdoor dining.

When I first moved to Westchester, I bought an antique home, built in 1734 as a small cottage and later expanded with two additional wings. As the house expanded, it formed a back patio area that was behind the main house and made more private by the two wings that extended from the structure. That configuration created an ideal spot for a private patio for socialization. Once the weather permitted, we would consume every dinner in that space, which conveniently was directly off the back kitchen door.

That patio provided such a gratifying experience as a do-it-yourself project because it was so easy to create. I just had a truckload of course gravel delivered, which I spread out



By Bill Primavera

evenly across the space to provide drainage. Then I topped it with sand, which I again evened out.

As I would lay sections of brick on top of the sand, I would cover them with sand and then spray with a hose to have the sand fill in all the empty slivers of space between the bricks. Rather than a complicated pattern such as basketweave or herringbone, I chose just a linear pattern where each brick met with the middle of the bricks next to it. The final product was without a doubt the most utilized feature of the entire property.

My backyard effort was so successful that we subsequently created a front-of-the house terrace

overlooking our lawn that sloped slightly downward. This time, I utilized 30-inch by 24-inch slabs of bluestone, each surrounded by a one-brick-wide brick frame. It was our favorite spot to linger and relax after dinner each evening.

For many years we had a friend who served as the entertainment editor for the Daily News. When we visited her home, we were delighted to find that she had created not one but many areas in the back of her house for outdoor entertainment. Those closest to the house were the best appointed with paving squares and outdoor furniture, but they diminished in size and furnishings until the last location, which was a two-foot by two-foot outpost with a gravel floor and two folding chairs.



After that, my wife and I created several other outdoor spaces for dining and relaxation, dedicating each of them to our dear friend who guided our thinking about all the ways to enjoy the great outdoors, right outside our back door.

The big payoff came when we could afford a large inground pool in the shape of a pond with a patio that became our favorite spot for outdoor entertainment, not only for us, but for our friends and daughter's friends.

Now I live in Trump Park in Yorktown, a five-story building with no direct access to the outside from my unit, but we do enjoy a communal, large outside patio area and

wonderful walking paths to a quarter-mile track and around a picturesque lake. I may no longer be able to dig in the dirt, but there is an excellent maintenance staff that does that for us, beautifying the grounds.

All we have to do is enjoy stepping outdoors, with no work required.

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

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Student Helps to Stock Food Pantry for Those With Allergies

By Martin Wilbur

Jared Saiontz has had to carefully watch what he's eaten his entire life because of 26 life-threatening food allergies.

With thousands more people forced to use area food pantries during the pandemic, the seventh-grader at Chappaqua's Robert E. Bell Middle School asked his mother, Stacey, at dinner one night whether pantries provided allergy-safe food for people who have those dietary restrictions.

Last fall, they reached out to the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry at the United Methodist Church, which is within walking distance of Bet Torah, where the family attends synagogue, and inquired whether there was a need for donations for the food allergic.

"We asked them and they said they didn't have food allergy protocols but they were excited for us to help them create them," Jared Saiontz said.

Over the past six months, Saiontz has been on a mission to help fill the pantry for clients and their family members that suffer from the most common food allergies with gluten-, nut- and dairy-free products. He has created laminated posters written in English and Spanish with photos referencing the main allergens – dairy, eggs, wheat, fish and shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts and soy.

The FASTER Act, which Congress recently approved and which was signed by President Joe Biden, makes sesame the ninth major allergen and requires food packaging

to contain information about ingredients that most commonly cause anaphylactic food reactions by 2023.

This week, which is Food Allergy Awareness Week, Saiontz and fellow Chappaqua students at Bell and Seven Bridges middle schools and Grafflin Elementary School, which he attended, are bringing in allergy-safe foods that will be donated to the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry. Collections will continue for the remainder of the month, Saiontz said.

Bet Torah and Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester in Chappaqua are also collecting food to donate.

Roberta Horowitz, the pantry's director of operations and programs, said Saiontz's efforts have made a difference for those who need to be careful. While only a handful of families out of the roughly 420 clients who use the pantry each week require special food for a household member, she said the pantry is building awareness among its clientele and there could be more who need the special products.

In addition to the poster, Saiontz created fliers that the pantry is now putting in each bag letting recipients know there are products that are safe for those suffering from food allergies.

Making the process more challenging is that since the start of the pandemic volunteers must pre-pack the food for pickup, rather than having families browse the pantry, Horowitz said. Staff has to know in advance whether clients need allergy-safe



Jared Saiontz, 13, a seventh-grader from Chappaqua, has gotten his current and former schools to donate food to the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry for those with allergies. He is pictured with pantry Director of Operations and Programs Roberta Horowitz.

food. However, the pantry is now addressing a need in the community that had gone unmet.

"It makes me very happy that we can do that and I really applaud Jared for bringing it to our attention and wanting to do something," Horowitz said. "It's such a part of his life."

Stacey Saiontz said from the time Jared was a baby his body was covered with hives and he

would vomit after a feeding. She had a feeling something was wrong because Saiontz's older son had none of those symptoms.

When he was four months old, she brought him to an allergist, and while testing for allergies before a child turns a year old may not always be reliable, it was determined that he had multiple food allergies, Saiontz said.

Jared's latest work to help people with food allergies is critical for families that would have trouble affording allergy-safe food because it is typically much more expensive. He has also been instrumental in having legislation mandating schools in New York State have a supply of epinephrine available as allergies have become more prevalent and allow school bus drivers to administer shots.

Saiontz said it was important for him that he was instilled from a young age to do what he can to help others.

"He can make a difference, he can make everybody's life better," Saiontz said. "He shouldn't feel sorry for himself."

Jared Saiontz said helping the pantry has been a gratifying experience.

"Not only is it good for me, like I feel happy, everyone else will be happy, too," he said. "It's less problems for them and it makes life easier."

Anyone interested in helping to stock the Mount Kisco Food Pantry with allergy-safe food donations, see the list of food at <https://tinyurl.com/mb3n6yz3>. For more information about the pantry, visit www.mountkiscofoodpantry.org.

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Local Author Recalls the Heroic Yet Tragic Story of Ace Pilot Dixie Kiefer

By Alexa Jindal

Dixie Kiefer was the first person to fly a plane off a moving ship at night, the recipient of 10 medals earned in both World Wars and a man with as many service-related injuries.

Yorktown Heights resident David Rocco honors the tragic, yet heroic story of the commodore in "The Indestructible Man," a book he co-authored with war historian Don Keith. It was a story he stumbled upon several years ago.

Rocco, a retired carpenter who suffered a work-related injury in 2001, could have descended into idleness. Instead, he has become involved in numerous projects over the past 20 years, beginning in 2001 with the Hudson Walkway in Poughkeepsie, stating he had "too much to offer just to sit around."

He then found another calling, the original inspiration for the Kiefer biography, through the Mount Beacon Fire Tower restoration, a community project he led. One of the participants had been hiking Mount Beacon and told Rocco about his discovery of a crash site. After hiking the mountain, he was stunned to learn there had been a Navy plane crash on Nov. 11, 1945, Armistice Day, which is now Veterans Day.

Rocco began investigating the fate of what has become known as the Mount Beacon Eight, a group of six sailors who died in that crash, and two others who perished in a different Navy transport flight crash 10 years earlier along the Hudson River in Fishkill, Dutchess County. He received the files he had requested from U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's office, which included a large stack of documents on Kiefer, who was killed in the 1945 crash.

Having had both grandfathers serve in World War I and his father, a World War II veteran who survived a kamikaze attack, something Kiefer experienced twice on the USS Ticonderoga, the story drew Rocco's



Four years after Yorktown Heights resident David Rocco co-authored a book on famed Navy pilot Dixie Kiefer and the tragedy of the Mount Beacon Eight, he continues to work tirelessly to have the men recognized.

attention.

He compiled the information and enlisted Keith to work with him. He found there were connections between some of Keith's books and portions of Kiefer's story.

"It's like a building block, one thing leads to another... sometimes you get lucky, and sometimes it's a roadblock," Rocco said.

Kiefer was one of the Navy's best-known and well-regarded figures in World War II. When Rocco and Keith's softcover version of the book was released in 2017, people from all over the country were calling him with connections.

"There was a guy who reached out to

me and said his father was on line one day, on the Ticonderoga, and Dixie Kiefer came up to him and said, 'Can I buy you an ice cream?' To this day, it still makes my father smile, that Dixie Kiefer wanted to buy me an ice cream."

It was those stories that helped people view Kiefer as a father figure.

"You could still see how much these guys loved this man," said Rocco.

Kiefer was kind and treated everyone equally, despite living in a time when segregation was rampant.

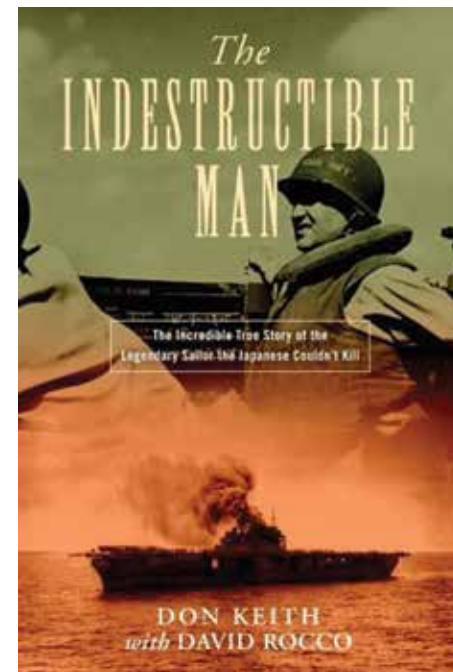
Before the night of the crash, Kiefer took a couple of the young officers to an Army-Notre Dame football game at Yankee Stadium. One of those men was Clarence Hooper, an African American man Kiefer had been advocating for to receive pilot training.

Hooper was the only one of the Mount Beacon Eight whose grave, as Rocco discovered, was unmarked. Rocco had been to the graves of the seven others; four are in Arlington National Cemetery, one in New Jersey, one in Connecticut and another in Massachusetts. He didn't have plans to fly to Greensboro, N.C., but he called up the cemetery hoping to receive a photograph for his records. Three days later, he was informed of Hooper's unmarked grave.

Rocco made a few calls and had a headstone placed last Memorial Day weekend. They haven't had an official ceremony because of COVID-19 restrictions, but when they do "I'm gonna go down for it because to me, of all the things I've come across, that is probably one of the more important things that I feel proud of in being part of this whole thing," he said.

"That it's not just a piece of grass anymore, it's that this guy was recognized and is being honored," Rocco added.

Rocco has conducted hikes up to Mount Beacon since 2015, raised money to put a historical marker at the crash sites and



placed flags there as well. Much of this has been completed with the help of his group, Friends of the Mount Beacon Eight.

Kiefer helped the U.S. to victory in the Battle of Midway, earned the distinguished service medal for his key role in the Battle of Coral Sea and died at 49 years old, still not fully healed from his wounds.

Rocco has worked tirelessly to get the men who perished that night more than 75 years ago the recognition they deserve. He also hopes to turn "The Indestructible Man" into a documentary.

"It's a story that needs to be told," he said.

"The Indestructible Man" is in hardcover, published by Stackpole Books, and is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble's websites.

Jehovah's Witnesses Find Way to Spread God's Word Locally and Globally

By Martin Wilbur

Robert Hendriks doesn't take offense when people look askance at him or utter commonly repeated misconceptions about the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Since he was baptized at 15 years old, Hendriks has been a Jehovah's Witness, perhaps the most misunderstood denomination of Christianity.

"In our society, I think generally speaking, we don't take offense to the fact that most people don't know who we are because generally speaking people know who they are, they know who they're familiar with," said Hendriks, U.S. spokesman for the Jehovah's Witnesses.

"There's great misunderstanding of each other in our society, and so we try to foster an understanding of who we are by being very open with our neighbors, by generally speaking in the past 100 years, except for the last year, actually going to them and talking to them," he continued.

Since early last year that has been made more challenging because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced the Jehovah's Witnesses to suspend their door-to-door

meetings and in-person preaching for the first time in a century. But it hasn't stopped their commitment to help educate others about who they are and what they believe in.

In Westchester and Putnam counties there are an estimated 8,700 Jehovah's Witnesses who belong to one of 97 congregations across the two counties. The first congregation in White Plains dates to 1951, Hendriks said. The first congregation in New York State was established in 1908.

In Rockland, there are almost 2,000 Jehovah's Witnesses associated with 20 congregations.

The more than 10,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in the three counties are part of an estimated 1.3 million Americans that belong to the denomination. Hendriks explained that unlike many other faiths and Christian denominations, being born into a family whose parents or grandparents are Jehovah's Witnesses, as he was, doesn't make the children Jehovah's Witnesses.

Instead, you must be baptized, which only happens when you are old enough to accept the responsibility of actively preaching and spreading the word to others, he said. For



JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES PHOTO

Pascual Feliz, of Loundonville, N.Y., a Jehovah's Witness, is one of thousands who spends time spreading the word about his faith to others by writing letters and making phone calls instead of knocking on doors because of the pandemic.

many, that means waiting until adulthood. For others like himself and his sister, they were 15 and 18, respectively. Hendriks said it's a very personal decision whether to make that determination and when to make it.

"Looking back on my life, I was so blessed," Hendriks said. "I was born into a family that had this faith. For me, I think it made my life a lot better than it would have been. But I had to make my own personal

continued on next page

A Seafood Market Grill is Pleasantville's Latest Catch

By Sophia Spiegel

Pleasantville residents just reeled in a great new catch with the arrival of A Seafood Market Grill at 49 Wheeler Ave.

Owners Yuliia Aquije and her husband, Pablo Aquije, source seafood daily from the Fulton Fish Market and sell a variety of fresh fish and shellfish as well as a full menu of prepared foods for those who may not know how or have the time to cook seafood themselves.

A Seafood Market Grill's offerings combine traditional seafood and Asian fusion with items ranging from fried fish fillet and crab cake sandwiches to seafood salads, soups and rice-noodle bowls topped with a choice of seafood. The market has a full lunch menu, which also offers burgers and pulled pork sandwiches.

With more than 25 years of experience working in the seafood industry, Pablo Aquije has learned the nuts and bolts of running a successful business. He worked as a seafood manager for major franchise markets such as ShopRite, Whole Foods, DeCicco & Sons and others along with working with his wife at C-Town Supermarket for the past six years. They then decided to create a business of their own.

"We wanted to have something independent so that we could be able to



express all of our ideas and plans for the future," Yuliia Aquije said.

Opening the business was no easy feat, and the pandemic only increased the challenge. The previous tenant of the Wheeler Avenue store was a dry cleaner, which required an extensive renovation to transform the space into a working seafood market. The Aquijes had hoped to open during the holiday season late last year, but due to the pandemic, construction was delayed six months and they were forced to wait until Easter to have their grand opening.

When they were searching for locations



The clean and bright interior of A Seafood Market Grill in Pleasantville, which opened around Easter.



The storefront at A Seafood Market Grill on Wheeler Avenue.

for their store, the couple, who live in Hawthorne, looked in the Chappaqua and Mount Kisco area Pablo Aquije noticed the empty storefront when he went to get his bicycle fixed one day in Pleasantville.

The Aquijes work tirelessly to maintain the market and provide only the highest quality fish and customer service. From waking up at 1 a.m. to filling orders to the extensive time they spend cleaning the premises, the Aquijes have proven that hard work and dedication pays off.

The couple has been able to turn their vision for the market into reality. They plan to include outdoor seating for customers

once social distancing guidelines permit them to do so.

"We put a lot of effort into cleaning everything every single day so customers feel good about eating the fish here," Yuliia Aquije said.

A Seafood Market Grill is open Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sunday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Customers can purchase food for takeout, curbside pick-up and through UberEats. Find them on Instagram @a_seafood_market_grill and on Facebook @ASeafoodMarketGrill. For more information, call 914-495-3261.

Jehovah's Witnesses Find Way to Spread God's Word Locally and Globally

continued from previous page

decision and that's (the case) with every Jehovah's Witness."

Despite considering themselves Christians, many who are part of other faiths and denominations don't look upon the Jehovah's Witnesses as a mainstream religion. Hendriks said the biggest misunderstanding is that its members don't believe in Jesus, something that he has heard repeatedly throughout his life.

"It's a very difficult thing to hear because not only do we believe in Jesus, we try to follow in his footsteps and we try to believe he is our savior, so without Jesus there is no salvation," Hendriks explained. "That's how we feel and that is a typical belief of Christianity, right?"

Rather, there is a misconception that they believe in Jehovah rather than Jesus. But to Jehovah's Witnesses, Jehovah is God's name, and the original writings mentioned it nearly 7,000 times, Hendriks said. The rest of Christianity believes that God and Jesus are one; while Jehovah's Witness do not.

"Our understanding of the Bible is that Jesus is a created being, that he is God's son, that he is the king of God's kingdom, that he is our savior," he said. "But we do not believe that he and his father are one person, so that really is the distinguishing element between Jehovah's Witnesses and Christianity overall."

Other differences that separate Jehovah's Witnesses and the remainder of Christianity Hendriks said is that they believe God has not abandoned his original purpose for the Earth just because two people, Adam and Eve, sinned.

Yet another difference is that Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe that either everyone goes to heaven or winds up in eternal torment, he said.

What may be puzzling to many, Jehovah's Witnesses don't celebrate Christmas because Christmas is not a Christian celebration, but rather a pagan celebration, Hendriks said. They are also certain that Jesus was not born on Dec. 25.

They celebrate only one holiday, the day of Christ's death, Hendriks said.

While their beliefs have gone against the grain of other Christian denominations, Hendriks said it's important for Jehovah's Witnesses to be honest with others about what they believe in.

"It's very important for us to be open about who we are, to be transparent of who we are and to be able to look back what we say," Hendriks mentioned. "What we say is what we preach – we preach love of our neighbor. So if we love our neighbor, then we're going to be open to them and make sure we are participating in the community in a very real way. That's what we try to do all over Westchester County."

Before the pandemic, their freedom halls were always open to the public and collections are never taken during their meetings, and that will continue when it is safe to meet again. The website, www.jw.org, has no paywall so the Jehovah's Witnesses may be open to people of all backgrounds. They have printed their bibles in 200 different languages.

Like nearly all faiths, the emergence of COVID-19 last year profoundly impacted the Jehovah's Witnesses. They switched to online meetings and much of their

outreach was virtually or by phone. For the Jehovah's Witnesses, as distressing as it was to suspend in-person contact, there was no other choice, Hendriks said.

"We say that life is sacred, but we'll go to your door and put you at risk?" he said. "No, we have to be consistent."

But the upside is that more people have attended Jehovah's Witnesses' meeting than ever before because the reach was greater, Hendriks said. During the past 14 months, millions of phone calls around the

world have been made.

It was 41 years ago as a teenager that Hendriks made the decision to follow in his parents' footsteps and be baptized as a Jehovah's Witness. So why does he believe he has been so blessed?

"They taught me who God is and who his son is and it's a gift that's greater than life because it's allowed me to use my life in a way that is so much better than if left to my own devices," Hendriks said.

Harckham Sponsors Successful Sleepy Hollow Blood Drive

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) partnered with the New York Blood Center (NYBC) last Saturday to sponsor a successful blood drive in Sleepy Hollow, with donors supplying dozens of units of the precious life-saving fluid.

"This blood drive is a great example of how community members help each other in need, and I want to thank our generous donors, the NYBC and Sleepy Hollow officials for their generosity and support," Harckham said. "The need for blood donations remains high, which is something we should not lose sight of."

This was the third blood drive he has hosted this year. Last Saturday's effort was notable because more than half the donors were walk-ins. The NYBC estimates that three lives are saved with each donation.

At the blood drive, donors were required to wear a mask or face covering, and all had their temperature taken during onsite registration.

"This was a successful blood drive, and even though the weather was not great, we still collected enough blood to help many people who need it," said Felicia Sheppard-Brown of the NYBC.

The Preakness: Read This Article at Your Own Risk

By Charles Palombini

Before we get started on evaluating Saturday's middle jewel of the Triple Crown, I can give you two good reasons you shouldn't even bother to continue reading.

First, it involves Baltimore, the U.S. city I most detest. Not since Johnny Unitas was at quarterback and a guy named Brooks played third base, has Baltimore made any worthy contributions to its storied history as one of America's founding cities. The Preakness Stakes might be the only thing that saves its reputation as a city of distinction.

While Baltimore hosts the second jewel of the Triple Crown, it does so without offering any of the glamour that the other two hosting cities bring to the sport. It certainly lacks the culture and sophistication of Louisville, home of the Kentucky Derby, where mint juleps, fashionable hats and southern hospitality make it a gem. Nor can the Preakness be compared to the Belmont Stakes, where New York puts on its formal tails and showcases the glamour and wealth that brand New York as the city that never sleeps.

The second, and more important reason you may want to stop reading, is because I'm the same fool that wrote the article about this year's Kentucky Derby. Yes, I'm the guy who after handicapping the Derby, dismissed this year's winner (Medina Spirit) as an also-ran in the race. That's right, I dismissed him. I threw out the horse that was being ridden by one of America's top jockeys and trained



by America's leading trainer. Ugh!

I should have given him a nod as a contender by default. Instead, I second-guessed the decisions of the sport's leading trainer and one of America's top jockeys to race and ride this colt in the Kentucky Derby. I wrote him off as an ego-driven entry. Doesn't take a lot to figure out that the jockey and trainer might know a little more about horse racing than me.

But like any other addicted handicapper, I will claim I was robbed and tell you why my pick, Essential Quality, obviously should have won the race. And like any other horseplaying fool, I will move on to the next race with the same bravado and confidence that is bound to send me to the poorhouse.

So, let's take a look at what proves to be a mess of a race taking place. I call it a mess

because of all the recent events surrounding the race. First, and certainly most important, is the fact that the Kentucky Derby winner, Medina Spirit, tested positive for having a banned substance in his system. What? A possible doping of the Kentucky Derby winner? Yes indeed, and it won't be the first time that trainer Bob Baffert has been cited for using an illegal substance.

If you remember, last year he had an outstanding three-year-old (Charlatan) who was one of the pre-Kentucky Derby favorites. After Charlatan won the Arkansas Derby, he was disqualified for testing positive for a performance enhancing drug. Because of the positive test, Charlatan never made it to the starting gate at Churchill Downs.

And here we are again, with another Baffert horse, this time the Derby winner,

testing positive. If the test results hold up, Medina Spirit will have to forfeit his Kentucky Derby win. It is unlikely, however, that a conclusion will be reached prior to the start of the Preakness, thus allowing Medina Spirit to enter the race. And if he does, rest assure that the Maryland racing authorities will watch the horse very carefully making sure no illegal drugs are administered prior to the race.

That leaves the betting public to guess if Medina Spirit will run back to his Derby form or will he be hindered by the absence of a visit from the old chemistry set. To make the race even more complicated, the trainer of Essential Quality, the Derby favorite, has decided to skip the Preakness. Derby runner-up Mandaloun has also opted to skip the Preakness. The additional defections of third-place finisher Hot Rod Charlie and fifth-place finisher O Besos make the race a pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey extravaganza.

The only notable new entry will be another Baffert horse named Concert Tour who will surely be a factor in the outcome of the race. Yes, Concert Tour is that good!

Other than Concert Tour I can only recommend you take a look at Midnight Bourbon, a very good horse who had a horrible trip in the Derby but still managed to make a decent showing.

So, who should we bet? It's easy, pick a number, bet the paycheck and meet me in the poorhouse!

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

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A Spiritual View

By Rabbi Joshua Strom

As the warm weather of spring seems to have finally arrived and the coldest winter in decades thankfully behind us, we hopefully find ourselves outdoors more, back in the natural world created for us, perhaps even more deeply appreciative of what we have likely taken for granted. We're reminded of the incredible, almost unfathomable beauty – of sunsets among the treetops and over the lakes and hills, flowers of every color blooming and blossoming, the warmth of the sun and the blessing of a cool breeze.

The portion of Torah we read from last week reminds us that the Earth, in

all its wonder and glory and splendor, belongs to all of us, and yet, somehow, also belongs to none of us. It is a gift granted into our temporary care that will long – we pray! – outlast us.

May our gratitude for and appreciation of the beauty of the world we are blessed to inhabit for however long we have, inspire us to take care of it, to “till and tend it,” as the Scripture says, so that it may be so for our children and their children and their children.

Joshua Strom is the rabbi at Congregation B'nai Yisrael in Armonk

and is part of the Armonk Faith Alliance. The alliance also comprises Hillside Church, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, St. Patrick's RC Church and St. Nersess Armenian Seminary.



48 Shades of Yellow, or How I Arrived at a Jaundiced World-view

By Brian Kluepfel

I am woefully behind the times, so much so that when humankind goes extinct, the news will take five or six years to reach me, somewhere on a Peruvian mountaintop watching the last DVD player in the world (but it will be solar-powered).

Speaking of DVD players, in our house we're watching the three-disc set of *Shetland*, a detective series set in – aren't they clever? – the Shetland Islands, about halfway between the northern tip of Scotland and Norway.

We birders (the royal we, I think in this case) were delighted when Episode Two featured a strange old man and his pet raven. But imagine our surprise when Episode Three's plot centered around a team of ornithologists studying the bird life on Fair Isle (part of the Shetland archipelago). And with subtitles on to account for the Scottish burrs, we even managed to follow the plot.

Basically, in this episode there's a lot of sexual and academic sex going on among the scientific team, running amok on Fair Island like a pack of bonobos in Gore-Tex. When a murder happens (they always do, in this show) one guy uses this excuse: he slept outside overnight near the cliffs in hopes of spotting some vagrant icterine warblers. He tells the detectives that not only did he see these rare birds in the



dawning light, but he also happened to drop his suspicious backpack off the cliffs and into the ocean below. (Quick, what rhymes with pants on fire, class?)

Okay, so we know cheaters never prosper, so you can guess what eventually happens to this mendacious scientist. But I was struck by his clever alibi and looked up the icterine warbler. The show's researchers did well. The bird does exist.

Hippolais icterina is a migratory warbler, breeding as far north as Norway and making its wintering grounds in sub-Saharan Africa, sometimes below the equator. It does pass through Britain

and Ireland on its migration path, and sometimes breeds in Scotland, though not often. In 2009, two pairs of breeding "ickies" represented just the fourth and fifth national records of the species. So the writers of *Shetland* got it right. Bravo, boys and girls!

Now, icterus – the word comes from icterina, or the Greek word for jaundice – whose victims assume a rather yellowish-green hue. Jaundice generally means something is messed up with your liver or biliary tract. Nasty business. There's too much bilirubin – not to be confused with Billy Connolly, a famous Scotsman – in your blood, and bilirubin is yellow-orange in color. You sort of turn into an off-tone Oompa Loompa.

The bird, however, is pretty as a picture and we assume most don't have liver disease.

This took me on my next leap down the internet rabbit hole, where the various hues of yellow were listed – 48 in total. So the icterine warbler is, if we were to take a rather jaundiced view of the world, just another yellow warbler!

But I suppose the point here is that ornithologists make strange bedfellows, and you should never lie about seeing rare species, because if eBird doesn't catch you, surely Detective Inspector Jimmy

Perez will.

Brian Kluepfel is a correspondent for *Lonely Planet* guidebooks, traveling the Americas in search of rare birds and tasty street food. He's a member of *Saw Mill River Audubon* and strongly encourages you to join them in their many activities involving the preservation and appreciation of our natural world, particularly in Westchester County. You can see many shades of yellow warblers here now on their migratory or nesting missions. Portions of this column appeared previously on www.birdmanwalking.com.

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Plenty of Hearty, Friendly Fare at The Barley House

A warm, friendly greeting from Erin, the bartender, and Rob, the manager, was a welcoming start to my lunch at The Barley House on Commerce Street in Thornwood.

The wraparound bar area, with its barnwood accents and high tops, looked inviting. It was early in the lunch period, so seats were easy to come by.

There is a good craft beer selection, some of which were posted on the wall in artsy fashion.

I settled on an 18-Watt IPA from Singlecut as I looked around the restaurant. There is another dining room on one side of the freestanding house and an open-air deck that the staff was setting up for a larger group.

After watching several dishes emerge from the eclectic American kitchen, it gave me pause. Portions were very generous, and nicely plated as well. A couple near me ordered a giant homemade soft pretzel with dipping sauce. That was just for starters. A bowl of mussels steaming in their shell was compelling. Then there were those overstuffed sandwiches.

I ordered a pastrami Reuben with Swiss, coleslaw and Russian dressing on rye, served with fries. It was decadence on a plate, and I enjoyed every bite. Next time I might check out their signature Wicked Tuna sandwich with sesame-wasabi mayo. Their burgers are prepared with a blend of short rib, brisket and chuck, served on a croissant-brioche bun. Sounds good, too.

Owner Bobby Harris also operates The Barley Beach House in Rye and Barley on the Hudson in Tarrytown.

The Barley House is located at 665 Commerce St. in Thornwood. Open seven days. Free parking. Info: 914-495-3333 or visit www.thebarleyhousesny.com.

Village Creamery Ready for the Season

While walking down Broadway in Valhalla, I stopped to gaze at the most colorful shop in



By Morris Gut

the hamlet. Village Creamery & Sweet Shop owners John and Kristen Caldarola have done an outstanding job decorating their shop's frontage. It was decked out in a palette of color highlighting all their tempting homemade ice cream, soft serve, Italian ices, crepes and waffles, candy, espresso, latte and coffees. There are acai bowls now, too. There are a few tables out front. It's a good place to cheer up, relax and cool off in the coming months.

Village Creamery & Sweet Shop is located at 32 Broadway in Valhalla. Info: 914-421-1300 or visit www.villagecreamerysweetshop.com.

Trader Joe's Coming to Yorktown

After years of rumors, local officials have confirmed the pending arrival of Trader Joe's. According to Yorktown Supervisor Matthew Slater, the grocery chain will be opening a new 12,500-square-foot market in the Lowe's Shopping Center on Route 202 in Yorktown Heights.

The closest Trader Joe's are miles away, in Hartsdale, Larchmont and Danbury. The highly popular specialty market should be a boon to the area. As of this writing, they are targeting a fall opening.

Kentucky Fried Chicken and the Derby

Well, we brought home our iconic eight-piece bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken, extra crispy, as we watched this year's Run for the Roses on May 1. We surrounded the chicken with some good baked beans and our own coleslaw. Turned out well, better than the horse bets we made; Soup and Sandwich and Midnight Bourbon both lost.

Chicken Wing Prices Rise

Another pandemic supply chain shortage? If you crave chicken wings at home or at your favorite tavern, you may be paying a higher price for them soon. Industry insiders are saying suppliers could not keep up with demand during the pandemic and getting workers back to the plants has been difficult.

So, no matter whether you like them Buffalo-style or with honey mustard, get ready for a sharp rise in price. At one local market, chicken breasts were nearly half the price. A recent article in Newsweek www.newsweek.com/chicken-wings-shortage-us-1585923 explained the situation further.

Karaoke in Harrison

Live entertainment has been making a comeback, and Westchester's newest Indian restaurant, Curry on Purdy, now offers karaoke every Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. The vintage bar and lounge that dates back to the 1940s makes for an interesting venue.

Curry on Purdy offers a large selection of meat and vegetable curry dishes along with specialties from throughout regional India. There is a Purdy special goat curry, classic chicken tandoori out of the clay pot, a rack of lamb seared in the clay oven, saffron shrimp tikka and vegetable biryani.

Don't forget the wonderful house-baked Indian breads like garlic nan or onion kulcha. Great for dunking into those delicious sauces and gravies. For dessert, try the special kheer or the gajar ka halwa.



The Village Creamery & Sweet Shop in Valhalla is a colorfully decorated shop and a great place to stop for a delicious dessert in warm weather.



The craft beer wall at The Barley House in Thornwood, which advertises the American restaurant's intriguing selection.

Curry on Purdy is located at 7 Purdy St. in Harrison. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Info: 914-600-8500 or visit www.curryonpurdy.com.

Restrictions continue to be lifted at area restaurants and markets, so go out and enjoy. Stick with the COVID-19 protocols and stay safe!

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

White Plains Farmers Market Open Every Wednesday Through November

The City of White Plains, in partnership with Bensidoun USA, has welcomed back the downtown farmers market. The market is open every Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Court Street, between Main Street and Martine Avenue, through Nov. 24.

To provide the safest possible environment for customers and vendors, the White Plains farmers market requires that masks be worn by vendors and customers; that vendor booths will be appropriately distanced; and customer

traffic will be managed within the market to eliminate congregating and to promote social distancing.

All of the market's produce vendors come from local farms located in upstate New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania. By purchasing their produce, customers help support the network of local farmers. Additionally, farmers who sell their produce at farmers markets are able to pick their produce at the very peak of its flavor. The result is fresher and even more delicious produce.



The delicious pastrami Reuben served with fries is a mouthwatering dish at The Barley House.

Camp Poco Returns for its 65th Year This Summer

Pocantico Hills Day Camp returns for its 65th anniversary summer, with old favorites like the Bubble Bus and Harlem Wizards and new activities like corn hole and Halloween Day in July.

The six-week program will take place on campus, with special health and safety precautions due to the ongoing pandemic, after a virtual program last year. The camp welcomes resident and non-resident campers.

“It certainly looks a bit different than it did 65 summers ago, but overall, I think there are so many things that look the same,” said Camp Assistant Director Kerry Papa, who is running the program with Director Ryan King. “It’s still kids having fun, developing friendships, being outdoors, building community. Those kinds of things were at the heart of camp when it started and they still are now.”

Camp registration is online on the district’s website and closes on Friday, May 28. The camp is from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays starting Monday, June 28 through Friday, Aug. 6. It is closed on July 5 in observance of Independence Day. The pricing is the same as last year.

To comply with state and local health department regulations, campers will be organized in pods, by rising grade, each with a maximum of 15 campers. Campers will not be able to cross pods for activities. Pods at several grades have already filled.

“We are very lucky that we have such a



Campers at Pocantico Hills Day Camp can take swimming lessons, among other activities. It will return to in-person camp this summer for a six-week program following state health and safety protocols.

sprawling campus and so we have made a conscious shift to move whole-group gatherings to the field,” said Papa, a Pocantico Hills third-grade teacher. “Each pod will have its own tent and those tents will provide the distancing between pods that we have to have in place.”

Pocantico Hills Day Camp is shifting as much of its programming outside as possible.

Arts and crafts traditionally have been held inside, but it will be moved outside under a large tent. Studio and culinary will be a hybrid of inside and outside activities.

“We’re really consciously thinking about being outdoors as much as possible,” Papa said.

The school building is available for rainy days, she said.

Specialists in wilderness, primary athletics, upper athletics, studio, culinary and arts and crafts are returning this summer. For swimming, the camp is partnering with Rivertown Aquatics again. The current guidance is for the pool to operate at 50 percent capacity, but that could change.

Masks are mandated for all campers and staff, in accordance with the state mandate. The exceptions are when children are swimming or eating. Lunch will be outdoors, under the individual pod tents, so campers are shaded and protected from the sun. Children will be in their respective tents for camp-wide events.

All staff are eligible for the vaccine and are encouraged to get it if possible. Although the pods will be slightly smaller than the groups in the past, the camp will maintain its camper-to-staff ratio. The high-quality supervision allows for the children to be engaged with counselors and supervised in a safe manner.

“People are excited about camp this summer,” Papa said. “They’re excited about the return to campus and they’re really looking forward to it. I think it’s a much-needed return to fun and the true feeling of summer.”

To register, visit the camp page at https://www.pocanticohills.org/groups/4846/pocantico_hills_summer_camp/summer_day_camp. For more information, contact Ryan King at rking@pocanticohills.org or Papa at kpapa@pocanticohills.org.

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THERE’S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

How Does Your Garden Grow? The month of May finds flowers in bloom, and people tending to their gardens. This week the quiz is based on horticultural terms found on the Modern Farmer web site. While this quiz will most likely not help to grow your garden or flowers, it should help to grow your vocabulary.

1. aerate (v.)	A) to spread compost	B) remove spent blooms	C) introduce air to soil
2. variegated (adj.)	A) unpalatable	B) multi-colored	C) deer-resistant
3. habit (n.)	A) manner of growth	B) an essential nutrient	C) well-drained soil
4. deciduous (adj.)	A) aggressively spreading	B) losing foliage	C) evergreen
5. bolt (v.)	A) to sow seeds	B) flower prematurely	C) pass through soil
6. humus (n.)	A) a complex soil substance	B) a humid environment	C) a weedy grass
7. mast (n.)	A) soft green stalks	B) a pruning tool	C) a crop of nuts
8. tilth (n.)	A) measure of soil quality	B) a shallow trench	C) a miniature greenhouse

growing season

5. To flower or produce seeds prematurely

6. A complex soil substance that results from the decomposition of organic matter

7. A crop of nuts; nuts on the ground, especially considered as a food source for wildlife

8. A qualitative measure of soil quality

1. To loosen the soil to introduce more air and improve drainage

2. Having multi-colored foliage

3. Manner of growth; examples include upright, spreading, dense, and open

4. Shedding or losing foliage at the end of the

ANSWERS:

Using Play to Combat Your Child's Stress and Loneliness

With the pandemic continuing to disrupt routines, you may have growing anxieties about how the extended crisis will affect your child's social and emotional health long-term.

A new survey conducted by OnePoll on behalf of The Genius of Play, a national movement to educate parents and caregivers about play's vital role in child development, examined the concerns of parents with children ages 2 to 18. Here are some of the findings, along with tips to counteract the negative effects of quarantine.

Social Skills

Seven in 10 parents believe spending a year in quarantine will have a lasting effect on their child's growth and development. Among those parents, the top concern is that it'll be more difficult for their child to connect with people in person in the future (52 percent). Tied for second and third were concerns that it'll be more difficult for their child to play (44 percent) or make friends in the future (also 44 percent) after being separated from their peers.

"There are numerous playtime activities that boost communication and social skills, which can be adapted to this new reality," said Anna Yudina, senior director of marketing initiatives at The Toy Association.

During a period when travel is limited, Yudina suggests playing "international menu" to help kids learn about the world. To play, pick a location and discuss its local dishes. Then, give kids Play-Doh to create

them.

Have kids play restaurant with their new DIY meals. Using action figures and toys, try other role-play games that encourage interaction and communication skills that kids may not have practiced for some time. Classic board games with questions and answers – like Guess Who? – can also help children build and retain their social skills.

Loneliness

Four in 10 parents worry about their child's mental health as a result of the pandemic. What's more, 72 percent of respondents say they believe that during 2020 their child was lonelier than ever before. That's a feeling extending to parents themselves; 58 percent said they, too, were lonelier than ever.

"Whether building a furniture fort, solving a puzzle or using a science kit, collaborative play gives us an opportunity to connect and combat loneliness while keeping children happy and entertained," Yudina said. "Playing together also offers parents insights into their child's world and what may be causing their stress and anxiety."

An arts and crafts session presents an opportunity to connect with friends and family who your child may be missing. Break out the paper, stickers, markers and safety scissors to create cards to send to loved ones.

Be sure to organize virtual playdates, too. The latest apps are making it easier for children to read, draw, act out plays and



FIZKES / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS PHOTO

watch movies virtually with friends.

The Bright Side

Despite its difficulties, parents indicated that this period has had silver linings. When asked what positives have resulted from spending more time at home over the past year, the top response was being able to spend more time playing with their child (46 percent).

To get inspired to fill in all those additional hours with play, visit thegeniusofplay.org, a

great online resource for parents offering tons of play ideas.

"The long-lasting effects of the pandemic are yet to be determined," Yudina said. "In the meantime, all this extended time at home is an excellent opportunity for families to connect and play, keeping both kids and adults social and active."

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Wine's Footprint, From the Soil to the Atmosphere



By Nick Antonaccio

The impact of global warming, and its effects on the environment, continues to attract worldwide attention every day (whether embracing, doubting or refuting the headlines).

Changes are afoot in our perception of global warming and climate change, be it short-term (cyclical) or long-term (the end of the world as we know it). Being "green" has impacted our daily lives.

As we are all well aware, one of the major culprits contributing to this trend is the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Of the six greenhouse gases, the one that contributes the most to global warming and the resulting climate changes is carbon dioxide. The greatest source of the increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are fossil fuel combustion and deforestation, which have caused an alarming 30 percent increase in CO2 levels since the advent of the Industrial Revolution.

Science and the popular media have coined a very precise phrase to measure the impact of the multiple CO2-emitting human activities we engage in during the course of our daily lives: carbon footprint. This is simply the number of pounds of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere by a particular product or process. Americans

are the worst offenders, with an average carbon footprint of 20 tons annually, compared to a worldwide average of five tons.

As the focus of this column is wine-related, what is the correlation of global warming to the wine industry? Wine is a rather natural agricultural end-product.

But consider the carbon producing aspects of wine, from the vineyard to the winery to the retailer. Fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, labor, wooden barrels, glass bottles and various forms of transportation all have a definable carbon footprint.

The good news: according to a study commissioned by the American Association of Wine Economists, the overall impact of wine on the atmosphere is minor. In fact, wine is relatively eco-friendly and green (relatively being the operative word).

The bad news: there still exists a larger than expected overall footprint.

Let's break wine's carbon footprint down into its primary elements. According to the study, the highest footprint in the entire growing-to-delivery chain is not at the beginning or middle of the chain, but at the end. Ironically, the footprints of 1) organic and biodynamic growing methods versus more conventional chemical-based methods; 2) the production of glass; and 3) the oak felled for barrels were not very significant. Surprisingly, the carbon footprint is more pronounced in the transportation of the wines – from the truck, ship and/or airplane that is utilized



for transportation.

In the study, three bottles of wine of equal weight – one each from California, France and Australia – were virtually tracked from the vineyard to a retail store in New York.

The California wine was shipped to New York by refrigerated truck from the winery to the retailer; the French wine was shipped by truck from the winery to a French shipping port, transported to New York by refrigerated container and then by truck to the retailer. Similarly, the Australian wine was trucked to an Australian shipping port and eventually trucked to the retailer.

Which had the greatest carbon footprint? The footprint of the French bottle was 2.9 pounds of carbon emissions. The Australian footprint was slightly higher. The footprint of the California bottle was 5.7 pounds – nearly double the emissions level of the French bottle.

The reason is clear – if you can see it through the smog. It's not necessarily the miles in transporting goods, it's the means.

Shipping emissions are less than half those of over-the-road trucks. (Even worse are airplanes, which generate a footprint four times greater than trucks.)

If you are eco-conscious then I suggest you consider carbon footprints in your purchasing decisions for all consumer products. Here's a thought: drink local wines from Long Island or upstate New York.

Step up to the challenge and reduce your 20-ton carbon footprint. Your eco-waistline will appreciate the effort.

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

**You Heard It
Through the
Grapevine**

Critical to Care for Athletes Physically and Psychologically After an Injury

Athletic trainers are health care professionals that provide preventative services, emergency care, clinical diagnosis, therapeutic intervention and rehabilitation of injuries and medical conditions.

Although athletic trainers primarily provide rehabilitation and therapeutic interventions for physical injuries, they are also faced with the emotional and psychological stress that many athletes experience upon sustaining an injury.

Student athletes experience high levels of stress due to rigorous academic and athletic demands, competitive pressures and public scrutiny. They are also expected to perform at high levels of intensity multiple days a week throughout the year. These physical demands place high levels of stress on the body, which increases muscle tension and increases an athlete's risk of injury. Once an athlete is injured, other stressors in their life may become magnified.

Although exercise promotes physical and mental health and well-being, excessive amounts of high-intensity exercise can have detrimental effects. Negative psychological responses to injury can trigger severe mental health concerns such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance use and suicidal ideation.

Anxiety and depression share common

symptoms including fatigue, impaired concentration, irritability, sleep disturbance, nervousness, worry and restlessness. These psychiatric disorders can negatively affect even elite athletes. It was previously thought that athletes should be tough and "suck it up." This prevented many of them from speaking up and seeking the help they needed.

Depression and anxiety can have detrimental effects on the quality and speed of an athlete's rehabilitation process, and more importantly, their quality of life.

Therefore, when an athlete sustains an injury, it is important to create a rehabilitation program that includes psychosocial strategies to ensure the he or she is progressing physically and psychologically. If mental health concerns, such as anxiety and depression, are not addressed properly during rehabilitation, the resulting frustration and anger may affect the athlete's behavior and attitude during rehabilitation.

Psychological strategies such as goal setting, meditation, imagery, positive self-talk and relaxation strategies have shown to be beneficial tools for reducing anxiety, stress and pain and increasing self-



By Allison Serraro

efficacy, self-esteem, motivation and rehabilitation adherence.

Although we have made significant improvements through research, technology, medicine and recognition, there is still room for improvement with mental health awareness, prevention, interventions and treatment when athletes recover from sports-related injuries. Recently, more and more professional athletes have shared their experience. Professional athletes such as Kevin Love and Andrew Luck have bravely spoken out about their personal struggles with mental illness, giving

younger athletes the hope and confidence to speak up as well.

Athletes have a higher chance of sustaining injuries due to physical demands their bodies undergo. Therefore, it is imperative that the sports medicine team and other health professionals are ready to help an athlete through the rehabilitation process both physically and mentally following an injury.

Allison Serraro is a certified athletic trainer at ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic in Pleasantville and is also the head athletic trainer at Pleasantville High School. For questions regarding this article, call or e-mail Allison at 914-202-0700 or at atc.pville@proclinix.com.

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