



White Plains Composer's Song Nominated for a NY Emmy

By Bailey Hosfelt

Infected with COVID-19, White Plains resident, composer and singer-songwriter Donald Stevens was about to give up on his dreams.

"A lot of people don't know this, but the virus almost left me for dead," Stevens said. "That experience really messed me up mentally and put me through a depressive moment, but I heard this voice that said 'just be still, everything's going to be okay.'"

Stevens grabbed onto that moment, waking up to his true talent for songwriting and staying optimistic about his physical recovery.

Fast forward to now, Stevens' song "You Can Change the World," which was first produced as the opening theme for the award-winning show "Date While You Wait," has been nominated for a New York Emmy in the Entertainment – Short Form Content category.

"It's one of those things that you dream about and hope for," Stevens said, recalling sitting in his living room watching the Emmy announcements on TV with his kids. "We were yelling and screaming."

Using the idea that one conversation with a stranger can change the world as a launching point, Stevens wanted to write an uplifting song about the power of connection.

"With [the pandemic], we've kind of lost touch with that type of connection because of masks and the fear of getting COVID-19," Stevens said. "In the song, I say, 'it's a good time to say hello.'"

The song, which draws inspiration from The Greatest Showman and Rocky IV soundtracks, shares the message of hope — a theme in all of Stevens' music.

"Hope is the expectation that something good is going to happen," Stevens said. "I always say, don't allow your circumstance to define what you're still expecting because, if you believe it, then you can see it happen."

Stevens wanted "You Can Change the World" to have an uplifting vibe and a timeless feel for people to enjoy while listening. While writing "You Can Change the World," he wanted people to be able to take away something meaningful from the song's message while also getting the catchy hook stuck in their heads.

"I want to be able to get the message out

continued on page 2



White Plains resident, composer and singer-songwriter Donald Stevens.

Two Shows Filmed in Westchester Get 14 Emmy Award Nominations

When Emmy Award nominations were handed out last week, Westchester County took a bow as 14 went to productions that filmed in the county during the past year.

Among the shows honored with nominations is the HBO Max comedy, "The Flight Attendant," which features actress Kaley Cuoco as the airline employee whose life unravels after she wakes up in a hotel room next to a dead man with no memory of what happened the night before. The show received a nomination for "Outstanding Comedy Series," with acting nods going to Cuoco and Rosie Perez.

The show also received production design, casting, and directing nominations. Several scenes were filmed in Westchester, including at the Motel 6 in Elmsford, The Galleria in White Plains, and a private residence on Buckout Road in West

Harrison.

This year's nominees also include the Netflix drama, "Halston," starring Ewan McGregor in the story of the rise and fall of America's first celebrity fashion designer. The show's producers selected the W.B. Thompson Mansion (Alder Manor) in Yonkers as the backdrop for an episode set in Versailles, France. Additional scenes were filmed in White Plains.

"These nominations spotlight our film-friendly communities and diverse locations," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. "With our beautiful and spacious parks, historic Main Streets, rural landscapes and bustling urban areas we provide interesting backdrops for feature films, episodic shows, and commercials. Congratulations to all of the creative talent behind this year's nominees; we'll be

rooting for you in September."

Westchester County Tourism & Film Director Natasha Caputo added, "We're thrilled about the nominations and seeing a real uptick in film activity in 2021. Westchester County is attractive to the industry because of our diversity of locations inside the New York film zone. We can also stand in for almost anywhere in the world and any point in time – as seen in one of this year's nominees, 'Halston.'"

Latimer said the nominations represent just a fraction of the success the county has had with the film and television industry, which in 2019 generated \$45 million in economic impact in Westchester."

The 73rd annual Emmy Awards, hosted by Cedric the Entertainer, will take place September 19 on CBS and Paramount Plus at 5 p.m. PT/8 p.m. ET.



Kaley Cuoco stars in The Flight Attendant.

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Paulin, Reichlin-Melnick Early Intervention Children's Bill Passes

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin and Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick were joined last week by state, county and local government officials, child health advocates and providers, and good government advocates to discuss the millions in savings to taxpayers and huge improvements to Early Intervention children's services created by their co-sponsored bill that passed the State Legislature on June 10. The bill now awaits the Governor Cuomo's signature.

Under current law, when an Early Intervention provider renders services, they must bill the insurance company first. In recent years, private insurers have only paid approximately \$12 million out of \$80 million in Early Intervention claims, rejecting approximately 85% of claims.

In New York State, Early Intervention services are guaranteed for children under the age of three by state law, so any claims unpaid by insurance companies are ultimately paid by New York State and local counties which split the cost.

This process can take weeks, months, or even years to sort out, and often means that providers do not receive reimbursement in a timely manner. This also results in counties and municipalities footing the bill for tens of millions of dollars in services that are ultimately paid for by the local taxpayer.

This bill has Early Intervention services put into the category of "Covered Lives" – which is an existing mechanism under State law which requires health Insurance companies to direct money into a fund for specific health care programs. This bill creates a \$40 million Covered Lives fund specifically for Early Intervention services, and alters the way that providers are reimbursed. Instead of sending claims to insurance companies, bills for Early Intervention Services would be sent directly to the State for payment out of this fund. This not only makes it easier and quicker for providers to get reimbursed, but it also shifts the costs of Early Intervention services to health insurance companies, saving counties, New York State and taxpayers millions.

"Early Intervention Programs have been shown to significantly improve the lives and future prognosis of babies and toddlers with developmental delays," Paulin said.

"This legislation is a massive step forward in reforming and strengthening the state's Early Intervention program so that more children can get the help they need, when they need it. It will ensure that commercial health insurers contribute their fair share to the Early Intervention program, will assure good stewardship of state and local tax dollars and, most importantly, will allow Early Intervention providers to focus on the critical services they provide to children and families."

"Early intervention services provide life-changing help to children under three years old, but far too often parents face lengthy delays in getting these critical services for their kids. These delays are caused by the current dysfunctional system of paying providers, and we have a responsibility to solve it," Reichlin-Melnick said. "Our bill will save counties around the state \$28 million while creating a reliable fund for early intervention service providers, funded by the health insurance industry. This is a critical step in ensuring that children receive the care that they need as soon as possible."

The bill increases funding for Early Intervention services and streamlines the reimbursement process to providers. The current system has caused extensive delays in reimbursements to providers, leading many Early Intervention service providers to shut their doors and causing a lack of available providers throughout the state.

"Effective early intervention is crucial to the future of infants and toddlers with special needs. Every day of delay endangers their progress," said Assemblymember Tom Abinanti. "This bill is a remedy to the failed funding structure which is hampering the timely delivery of early intervention services."

"Early Intervention fundamentally changes the trajectory of a child's life for the better," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer. "Thanks to Assemblywoman Paulin and Senator Reichlin-Melnick's leadership, this law would provide additional funding for these life-changing services. When we know a program works, it should be a no-brainer to increase its capacity – our children's lives are too important."

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to everyone that there is still hope and to not fall back on your dreams," Stevens said. "It might sound cliché, but I feel like people have to hear it on a consistent basis because we're hearing negativity all the time."

A self-taught musician, Stevens has been playing instruments since he was two years old. Growing up in the church, he watched his father play the drums and piano and sing and was inspired to do the same.

"My whole family's musical," Stevens said. "Music just runs in our blood."

As a music therapist at the Music Conservatory of Westchester, Stevens combines his love of music with his love of working with people. For more than 10 years, Stevens has worked with the special needs community, specializing with children with autism.

"Music is that vehicle to help them express themselves," Stevens said.

Stevens and the students he works with have performed at Radio City Music Hall, Madison Square Garden and the Westchester County Center.

With the success of "You Can Change the World," Stevens is now working on a full-length album called The Hope Project.

He is collaborating with H.E.R. backup singer Malik Spence and Al Hemberger at the Loft Recording Studios in Bronxville, who has recorded and produced music with Rihanna, Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake

and NSYNC.

"The Hope Project is all about inspiring and encouraging people," Stevens said, sharing that his next single, "It's Time to Breathe Again," will be out in early September.

"That song really speaks to what the whole world has been through with masks and social injustice," Stevens said. "It's time to come out of that place and become alive again."

In June 2020, Stevens received an award from Mayor Tom Roach for creating positive changes in White Plains.

Stevens continues to bring the message of hope not only through his music but also in his local community.

"Don Stevens has been an active part of the White Plains community for years," Roach said. "He cares about this city and its residents. He expresses that through his music, his faith and through his participation in important city initiatives."

Most recently, Stevens served on White Plains' Police Reform Committee.

"He brought intelligence and thoughtfulness to the work of that committee, as he does in all of his endeavors," Roach said. "We are lucky to count Don Stevens as a resident of White Plains."

Stevens will be performing at Gardella Park in White Plains on August 15 for Family Day. The New York Emmy Awards ceremony will be held in the fall.

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COVID-19 Infections Continue to Rise Throughout the Area

By Martin Wilbur

COVID-19 infections throughout Westchester continue to rise, with the number of active cases having more than doubled in the past three weeks as numbers of newly vaccinated people have slowed to a trickle.

By Sunday, Westchester had seen an increase to 460 active cases, up from 295 last week and 185 from three weeks ago. On June 18, that number stood at 257.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said it is likely that the Delta variant has played a role in increasing the caseload among the unvaccinated locally.

"So our concern is that the unvaccinated portion of our population is subject to a more highly contagious variant of the disease, and that's why we're seeing jump ups in the number of positive infections," Latimer said during his weekly briefing on Monday.

In mid-June, the number of daily infections dropped to a low in the single digits, but over the weekend there were 51 new infections on Saturday and 55 more on Sunday, Latimer said. Westchester had an infection rate of 1.2 percent through Sunday on the seven-day rolling average.

In Putnam County, there were four positive results from 213 tests.

The Westchester vaccination rate has nearly stalled at 78.3 percent of adults 18 and over who have received at least one dose. On June 27, that number stood at 76.6 percent.

On Sunday at the County Center in White Plains, there were only 68 vaccine doses administered, down from a high of 2,200.

"It tells you we have reached almost exactly the point where almost everyone who is eligible for a vaccination and wants a vaccination has received a vaccination and these people who have not yet been vaccinated, the 21 percent or so, are those who apparently choose not to be vaccinated," Latimer said.

The County Center will remain open for vaccinations seven days a week but Sunday hours will be reduced to 8 a.m. to noon. The hours for the remainder of the week continue to be from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The encouraging news, at least for now, is that the recent sharp uptick in cases has not resulted in additional hospitalizations and deaths in Westchester. Countywide COVID-19-related hospitalizations stood on Sunday at 12, which compares favorably to the 19

people who needed that level of care in mid-June, Latimer said. There has been only one COVID death in the past three weeks and four in the past month, he said.

Statewide, the positivity rate was 1.2 percent on July 18 and 1.3 percent on the seven-day average.

Latimer said he has no plans to make mask wearing mandatory and doesn't see a need to take other measures at this time.

However, county officials are trying to focus on communities with low vaccination



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

rates, he said. There are some zip codes in lower Westchester where the vaccination rate is just above or slightly under 50 percent, according to the county's vaccination

tracker.

"We are trying to customize strategies around specific municipalities that have low turnout numbers," Latimer said. "We have a number of communities with very high turnout numbers, well above 80 percent. So we're targeting those communities that generally are more urbanized that have a high percentage of people who are poor, and

at the other end of the spectrum, we have people who are in a somewhat more rural setting and are also seemingly less willing to get vaccinated."

Latimer said for anyone who had doubts about the vaccine, there is a clear correlation between the rise of vaccinations and the drop in the number of infections.

"Someone should really give me a strong reason why you shouldn't be vaccinated because I haven't heard it yet," he said. "This vaccination is the difference between being sick and not, living or dying in some cases, and (there are) people all around the world who would gladly take the unused vaccines we still have in our possession."

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Armonk Keeps an Eye Out for Repeated Sightings of Black Bear

By Martin Wilbur

It's hasn't gotten to the point where it's unbearable, but officials in portions of Connecticut and New York have alerted local residents to take precautions because of a black bear that has made himself a frequent visitor.

The animal, Bear 211, has been seen mostly in communities in Connecticut, but over the past few weeks there have been multiple sightings in Armonk. It has pink tags on its ears and was given the number 211 by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection earlier this year. Bear 211 even has its own Facebook page.

"It's pretty comfortable around town, so if you do see this bear, please don't attempt to feed it or become friendly with it," said North Castle Councilman Barry Reiter.

In the town's police blotter, there have also been multiple sightings, of a black bear on the afternoon of June 30 on Meadow Lark Lane. The next day, another sighting occurred on Round Hill Road, where it was reported that the bear had tags on its ears, and a third sighting from a caller on Long Pond Road. In that location, the bear was seen swimming across the pond before entering the woods on Pond Lane.

Budd Veverka, a wildlife biologist and director of land management at the Mianus River Gorge in neighboring Bedford, said if anyone encounters a bear along



A photo of Bear 211 during one of its many sightings in Connecticut.

a trail, for example, they should avoid turning their back to run away. Instead, it's recommended to back yourself away slowly and appear as large as possible.

"Most people aren't paying attention because they're on their phone or they have their earplugs in or they're running," Veverka said. "If you get close to the bear, if you encounter it, you start to back away

from it but you don't want to turn your back. Let the bear know you're there. Make yourself look big and let the bear know you're there."

There was one report to town officials that Bear 211 went into a town resident's swimming pool. On its Facebook page, it also went for a swim in a backyard pool in Weston, Conn.

If a bear comes into your yard or onto your property more than once, chances are there is a food source, Veverka said. Bears return where they know where they can have repeated access to food, including bird feeders.

"If a bear comes into your area, if it's in the yard at a feeder or something like that, you don't want to just let it do what it's doing," Veverka said. "It's basically a kid in a cookie jar."

Banging metal, such as pots or pans, should also be enough to signal to the bear he's not welcome in the area.

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the leading cause of bear complaints in the state is getting into garbage or bird feeders. Leaving pet food outside or a messy grill can also attract bears.

Spring and summer are the most likely time of year to see or encounter them, the DEC materials stated.

For more information about black bears in New York State, visit <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6960.html>.

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Special Use Permit for Farm Approved at Former Swim and Tennis Club

By Martin Wilbur

The New Castle Town Board approved a special use permit last week that will allow for the operation of a farm on the grounds of the old Twin Oaks Swim and Tennis Club.

Rockledge Farm would be a regenerative organic operation on the 38-acre parcel at 348 Whippoorwill Rd. in Chappaqua, said Madeline Wachtel, the farm manager and daughter of property owner William Wachtel. The farm would include two llamas, eight goats, eight sheep, a coop with 126 chickens and specialty flowers would be grown, she said.

The farm will be environmentally mindful, with minimal till, no use of tractors and rotational grazing, which would see the animals moved from one portion of their pen to another to allow for rest and regeneration of the land that is used.

Aside from Wachtel, there would be just two other people helping with the farming most of the time.

"Just in terms of scale, I think it's important to note it's a pretty small operation," she said.

William Wachtel said during a New Castle Town Board meeting last month that he bought the property in late 2013 for \$2 million from Twin Oaks, which was having financial difficulties at the time. Under the agreement between Wachtel and Twin Oaks,

the organization was to pay the \$400,000 it owed to a bond and use the remaining \$1.6 million to improve the grounds.

It was Wachtel's hope that after improvements were made, the Chappaqua School District would accept the property so students wouldn't have to travel out of town for swim and tennis competitions and that there would be a place for children enrolled in the town's summer camp to go swimming. There is no municipal Har-Tru tennis court or municipal pool in the town.

However, the school district never took over the property. Wachtel said they were left owning a parcel that they had no use for. It was then Madeline Wachtel's suggestion to turn the land into a farm, her father said. A graduate of the Cornell School of Hospitality, she has been active in environmental protection efforts.

"I can assure you that if we are successful part of the ultimate success is that it will be a laboratory and a learning experience and an opportunity for kids to have farming literally right down the block," William Wachtel said.

During a previous Planning Board meeting, its members had expressed concern about runoff containing animal manure since there is a slight downhill slope on the property.

However, Madeline Wachtel said the waste from the animals is dry manure, has



The entrance to the old Twin Oaks property on Whippoorwill Road in Chappaqua, which will be the site of Rockledge Farm.

no odor and would be used to help fertilize the planting beds.

Another concern had been from the Chappaqua Fire Department, which recommended a secondary road to be built at the site in case of a fire. There are a few small structures on the property, but with a limited number of people that would go into and out of the property, the Town Board determined that a second road

wasn't necessary.

Acting Supervisor Jeremy Saland said last week that the farm would be a major improvement to the property.

"I think it's a great idea and it'll be a great thing for the community and it would be wonderful to see it grow, this farm, and you folks have put your sweat into it to make it a reality," Saland said.

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State Supreme Court Dismisses Legion of Christ Suit Against Mount Pleasant

By Martin Wilbur

A civil rights lawsuit brought by the Legion of Christ against the Town of Mount Pleasant accusing the municipality of religious discrimination has been dismissed in state Supreme Court.

The Legion of Christ sued the town after it determined that the Legion's undeveloped, 161-acre property in Thornwood was taxable. The Roman Catholic order, based in Cheshire, Conn., had sought a tax-exempt status as a religious group.

The July 6 decision followed a court ruling last year that the property was fully taxable.

"I'm pleased that the Supreme Court continues to uphold the town assessor's determination of the taxability of the Legion's 161-acre vacant property," Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said in a statement. "This was never about religious discrimination. The two decisions are an enormous benefit to the taxpayers of the town ensuring that our institutional properties are paying their fair share of property taxes so that the property tax burden of our residents is mitigated."

The Legion bought the former

conference center in 1996. It consisted of two parcels, a 164-acre unimproved area and a contiguous 97-acre parcel that contained the conference center. In 1997, the Legion applied to the Town for tax-exempt status for the unimproved parcel, which the Town denied, beginning years of litigation.

The Legion of Christ no longer owns the former conference center. In 2017, EF Academy opened a private boarding high school on the property. The Legion still owns the unimproved parcel and efforts to sell the property to a developer have failed so far.

This isn't the first time the Legion has landed in court related to its Mount Pleasant properties. Baker Residential was in contract to buy the unimproved parcel and build about 73 homes as part of a cluster subdivision, but went to state Supreme Court after the Legion failed to convey the property.

Eventually, Baker Residential, which had received town approvals to build the project, decided against moving forward.

Earlier this year, Fulgenzi said that Chappaqua-based Wilder Balter Partners has expressed interest in the property to possibly build senior housing.



Feeding Time

Hudson Valley Beta Kitchen held a grand opening last Saturday of its first kitchen at 163 Grand St. in Croton-on-Hudson. The innovative commissary kitchen will allow artisanal food producers, caterers and food truck operators to produce food products in a commercially certified space in accordance with health regulations so that they can then be sold legally in off-site locations. Attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony was County Executive George Latimer, Richard Becker, Jim Creighton, Debbie Carter and Kimberly Ragazzo from the Cortlandt Town Board, Croton-on-Hudson Mayor Brian Pugh and village Trustee Len Simon.

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Proposed Indian Point PSDAR Meeting Announcement

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a public meeting on July 29 in Tarrytown, NY, to discuss the Post-Shutdown Decommissioning Activities Report, or PSDAR, for the Indian Point Nuclear Generating, Unit Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (IPEC). The PSDAR, which includes the site-specific decommissioning cost estimate (DCE), provides an overview of Holtec Decommissioning International, LLC's (HDI) planned activities, schedule, projected costs, and environmental impacts for the decommissioning of the IPEC. The public will have an opportunity to offer comments at the meeting.

The meeting will be held from 6-9 p.m. at the Sleepy Hollow Hotel and Conference Center (previously the DoubleTree Hotel), located at 455 South Broadway, in Tarrytown, NY. IPEC consists of three pressurized-water reactors located in Buchanan, NY, in Westchester County, all of which are permanently shut down.

HDI submitted on Dec. 19, 2019, its PSDAR, which had been contingent upon the transfer of the plant licenses to HDI. The IPEC license transfer transaction closed on May 28, 2021. Accordingly, the NRC is holding a public meeting in the vicinity of the IPEC to discuss the PSDAR's content and receive comments. Written comments on the report can be submitted using Docket ID NRC-2019-0142 on the Regulations.gov website. Comments can also be submitted, using the Docket ID, via mail to: Office of Administration, Mail Stop: TWFN-7-A60M, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, D.C. 20555-0001, ATTN: Program Management, Announcements and Editing Staff.

The deadline for submitting comments on the report is Oct. 22, 2021.



Obituary

Thomas Creamer

Thomas Chase Creamer of Somers passed away peacefully on July 4 after a courageous battle with cancer. He was 72.

Tom was born on Dec. 20, 1948, in New York City to Janet Oman Watters and Thomas Fishback Creamer, both deceased. His brother, George Creamer, and sister Deane Close predeceased him. He is survived by his wife, Patricia Creamer, and his sisters, Constance Sheppard (Les), Elizabeth Vinton (John), Jane Plank (Jeff) and Anne Hogeland (Andy). Tom leaves behind a daughter, Christine E. Creamer, and sons Thomas C. Creamer, Robert M. Creamer and Michael W. Creamer.

Tom was raised in Chappaqua and spent many happy days at his family home in North Pomfret, Vt. He attended Horace Greeley High School and graduated cum laude from New England College. He was employed by the MTA right after college and five years later moved on to work for Chase Manhattan Bank for 13 years in various financial roles. After leaving the bank, Tom pursued a successful 20-year career in financial services as an agent with MassMutual, obtaining numerous financial designations. His clients became friends over the years.

Tom was considered a larger-than-life person with his happy smile and an infectious laugh. Tom will be missed by his many friends and family. He loved to cook, loved to sing loudly along with all types of music and



Thomas Creamer

loved sport cars. He was an avid Yankee fan all of his life and will be remembered for his "dancing" on the jumbotron at the old and new stadiums.

Private cremation services were held earlier. Family and friends are invited to attend a Memorial Mass to be celebrated at St. Joseph's Church in Somers on Saturday, Aug. 21 at 11:30 a.m.

Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

July 5: Patrol responded to an area on Brook Street at 12:30 a.m. on a report of fireworks being set off on the street. The resident was advised and ceased the fireworks display for the night.

July 6: Report of a bear sighting at an area along Route 129 at 12:45 p.m. The area was canvassed with negative results.

July 9: Patrol located spray-painted graffiti to a commercial area on Elliot Way at 10:18 a.m. A report will be filed.

July 9: Patrol received a report from a village resident at 4:50 p.m. who reported fraudulent activity had occurred on accounts between herself and her husband for about the past four to eight weeks. The resident informed police that the purchases made were more than \$9,000. The resident advised their respective banks. A report will be filed.

July 11: The department's marine patrol was notified at 2:14 p.m. of a distressed kayaker on the Croton River. The individual was located and given a courtesy transport along with his kayak to the end of the Croton River where a friend was going to pick him up. The party refused medical attention.

North Castle Police Department

July 10: A female caller reported at 6:55 p.m. that a male party on Windmill Place was stung by bees multiple times and his hands and feet are swelling. Police notified 60 Control for EMS dispatch. The responding officer reported that the party was taken to Northern Westchester Hospital.

July 10: A caller reported at 9:35 p.m. that an injured fox was in the roadway on southbound Route 22 near the firehouse. The responding officers reported that the animal is deceased and on the side

of the road. The state Department of Transportation was advised.

July 11: An officer reported that he is out with a disabled vehicle on North Broadway at 10:09 p.m. The car owner was originally having a private tow company come out due to the fact the car was a Lamborghini; however, the tow company couldn't respond. The vehicle owner requested we assist him with having a tow company respond. Little Pete's Towing ultimately removed the vehicle from the roadway.

July 13: At about 10:35 a.m., a man entered a bank on Main Street impersonating a Brinks armored security employee and attempted to pick up money deposit bags. The responding officers reported that depositions were secured. A hotline message was broadcast to all units.

July 13: A Nichols Road resident reported at 4:38 p.m. that a vehicle is parked in her neighbor's driveway and someone is breaking into her residence. The caller stated that multiple items are missing including a set of car keys and a tank top-style shirt. She believes that the party that has taken these items was in her residence all night. Officers responded and reported speaking with the complainant.

Yorktown Police Department

July 16: Lee Madoian, 51, of Yorktown, was charged at 4:14 p.m. with assault, harassment and criminal contempt stemming from a domestic incident on Feb. 28. It is alleged he violated a temporary order of protection obtained by his sister. He allegedly harassed his sister and assaulted his father.

July 16: Juan Morales, 35, of the Bronx, was charged at 8:40 p.m. with speeding and driving with a suspended license after being stopped on Route 6 for traveling at 82 miles per hour in a posted 45-mile-per-hour zone.

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Harckham Calls for State of Emergency to Fight Overdose Epidemic

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro), chair of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse, called on President Joe Biden and Gov. Andrew Cuomo last week to declare a state of emergency in the United States and New York, respectively, to fight the overdose epidemic.

"Over four times the number of people died last year from drug overdoses than from gun violence in the United States, which is why I am calling on President Biden and Gov. Cuomo to each declare a state of emergency to address this public health crisis," Harckham said.

"We need to marshal every public health resource possible to stop the frightening increase in overdose deaths occurring every day in our cities and villages," Harckham added. "Federal and state officials have to act with utmost urgency and work together to save the lives of our friends and neighbors here in New York and around the country."

Harckham's request follows the release last week of a report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that more than 93,000 people in the U.S. – an average of about 250 people a day – died of a drug overdose in 2020. In comparison,

19,380 lives were lost last year to gun violence, according to The Washington Post.

Last week, Cuomo declared a state of emergency regarding gun violence and committed over \$135 million to counter the alarming rise of shootings around the state. Also, President Biden recently convened a meeting of top law enforcement officials and others to discuss a plan to reduce gun violence.

"Where is our moral outrage regarding the latest overdose statistics and the lack of insistence that the overdose crisis be met with a massive response?"



State Sen. Peter Harckham

State Comptroller: 2% Tax Levy Growth for Local Governments Next Year

Property tax levy growth will be capped at 2 percent in 2022 for local governments that operate on a calendar-based fiscal year, state Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli announced last week.

This figure affects tax cap calculations for all counties, towns and fire districts, as well as 44 cities and 13 villages. It is the third time in the last four years for local governments to be allowed the full 2 percent under the tax cap.

"As the economy recovers from the pandemic, local governments have seen some revenues rebound and have benefited from one-time federal financial assistance," DiNapoli said. "At the same time, the risk of inflationary cost increases and the need for investments that will stimulate economic growth and fund essential services may lead to challenging budget decisions ahead."

The tax cap, which first applied to local governments and school districts

in 2012, limits annual tax levy increases to the lesser of the rate of inflation or 2 percent, with certain exceptions, including a provision that allows municipalities to override the tax cap.

The 2 percent cap for the 2022 fiscal year is the third time since 2019 that municipalities with a calendar year fiscal year (Jan. 1-Dec. 31) had their levy growth capped at that amount. In 2021, the allowable levy growth was 1.56 percent.

Harckham said.

"It is as if these lost lives simply do not matter, and the specter of future lives lost matters even less," he said. "When it comes to the overdose crisis, we are truly in a state of emergency. It's now time to officially declare it so and begin to provide all the resources possible to save lives."

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Letters to the Editor

Community Risk Management a Must After Surfside Building Catastrophe

The Surfside, Fla. building collapse has offered up for view several areas of responsibility: the condo board, a consulting engineer's report, various city officials, plus someone identified as a chief building official who in November 2018 apparently stated that, irrespective of any engineer's report, the building appeared to be "in very good shape."

I am not in any position to comment on who is or is not at fault here. And actually, that is my point: fault will be found and accountability brought to bear, but something else – not someone else – needs the light of day. I'm pointing to the system of accountability.

There are real benefits to using a community risk management process, not as offered by some paid consultant, but as a part of local government. (Dear God, not another meeting!) A risk management meeting that brings together representatives of local government departments who select an issue of concern – for example, pedestrian safety to identify the specific parts of concern (risk factors) such as vehicle speed, intersection design and signage – prioritize those factors in terms of potential impact and then propose

changes that offer the greatest gain for the least loss, which can also include financial costs.

The goal is to fix a problem by identifying and prioritizing the things that cause the problem and, starting with the highest priority risks, considering changes to mitigate or eliminate them. And to do this within a group process so no one is left out and no one single voice dominates, providing a more level playing field. That's risk management; it's simple, costs little if any money and can result in savings of, if not money, perhaps pain.

One can only wonder what such a group meeting might have been like while reviewing the problems of the Champlain Towers – had the meeting consisted of city trustees, consulting engineers, condo board representation, fire, police and other government representatives. Identifying and prioritizing the risk factors could have more clearly pointed to the problems that could (and did) bring about a crisis, and solutions that, though perhaps unpopular, would at least be supportable as well as deemed necessary.

Oh, to have been that "fly on the wall" for such a meeting. Local community

governments can do more than be a fly.

And now the question: Woulda, coulda, shoulda such a meeting prevented such a catastrophe? Would it have? Possibly. Could it have? Yes. Should it have? Who knows?

The negative side of reducing risk can be cost, of which it appears there was plenty to add up. The cost of any remediation for any issue is a factor that should be considered – as measured against the severity and likelihood of harm being caused. Another variable is assessing severity and likelihood of harm; at some point, deliberations often call for at least somewhat of a subjective opinion, expert or not.

One outcome is certain: a risk management meeting would have helped make clear exactly what the risks were, how significant each was and what it could take to remedy the most significant. Another is that risk-managed decisions that are made occur within group discussions, rather than independently, one entity to another, like the telephone game.

Alan Pakaln
Croton-on-Hudson

Subdivision at Pocantico Lake Park Would Degrade a County Jewel

One of Westchester County's great treasures, Pocantico Lake Park, is a 164-acre park that sits adjacent to the Rockefeller Preserve in the Town of Mount Pleasant. The county park includes the 27-acre lake and surrounding wetlands in addition to trails and wooded grounds.

Mount Pleasant elected officials were instrumental in establishing the park when they recognized its value to our quality of life in the 1980s. Local officials worked with county and state officials to purchase the lake and park at taxpayer expense.

Millions of taxpayer dollars have transformed this land into a pristine wildlife preserve that draws residents from all over the county. Fisherman cast their lines in all four seasons, families enjoy the trails and runners dash through the woods. The birds and wildlife became increasingly important as more residents sought out the trails during the pandemic.

A proposed new 31-home subdivision along the lake that is currently before the Mount Pleasant Planning Board threatens the beauty of the park, the quality of the water

and the wildlife and its habitats. Pocantico Lake is part of the Pocantico River, a major nine-mile tributary of the Hudson River, and runoff from this development would pollute the lake and river.

The developers propose removing more than one million square feet of forest. They will turn a pristine lake and unparalleled view into a visible McMansion development, ruining the beauty and recreational enjoyment of the park.

The area was designated a Critical Environmental Area in 1990, and is home to wetlands, wildlife habitat and an array of birdlife that awes daily visitors: bald eagles, osprey and blue herons, to name a few. We cannot remove their habitats.

We have no grievance with the developer, but we believe this is the wrong development in the wrong place for residents of Mount Pleasant and Westchester County.

We ask the following of the Mount Pleasant Town Board and Planning Board:

1. Require a full state Environmental Quality Review (SEQR), currently under consideration, before taking any further

action on this project.

2. Do not approve variances allowing overdevelopment on this environmentally sensitive site.

We ask the Westchester County Board of Legislators to enter into good-faith negotiations with the developer to purchase the land and completely protect the lake from further development and approve a countywide watershed protection act to prevent further degradation of Westchester's treasured and valuable watersheds.

Trustee David Vinjamuri
Village of Pleasantville and
Democratic candidate for Westchester
County Legislator, 3rd Legislative
District
Joe Bonanno
Candidate for supervisor, Town of
Mount Pleasant
Francesca Hagadus-McHale
Former councilwoman and candidate,
Mount Pleasant Town Board

U.S. Should Provide Temporary Extensions of Expired Passports

The United States Passport Agency is stressing out many American citizens. Vacations, wedding plans outside the country, business trips are all being impacted negatively because the Passport Agency does not have the staff or resources to timely process expedited passport applications.

American travelers who do not have valid U.S. passports can't travel overseas this summer because of the significant backlog of more than a million applications. The wait time for expedited applications

are 12 weeks. That means that anyone who applies for an expedited passport today won't get their passport till sometime this fall – messing up the summer.

A suggestion: Since there's such a backlog of renewals and not enough staff, why doesn't the agency issue a temporary extension of expired passports? If my proposal is enacted, citizens who have passports that expired sometime in 2020 would be able to go to any local post office, show them the expired passport and get an extension that would last until the end of

this year.

This suggestion would enable Americans who would like to enjoy the summer by traveling out of the country to have a great summer. The suggestion would help the airlines, the travel industry, taxi drivers who transport people to airports, and most important, would make people very happy and less stressed.

Paul Feiner
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

Guest Column

Fixing Old Appliances Can Help Limit Ozone Layer Damage

By Miriam Gold

A few of the culprits helping to harm the environment are sitting inside our homes and yet many are unaware of it.

Old air conditioners and refrigerators are harming the ozone layer, which we depend on for our lives.

Ozone depletion is the thinning of Earth's protective blanket that shields all life from UV radiation, which is responsible for causing many illnesses and even death in humans and animals.

Ozone depletion is often confused with global warming. It is mainly caused by chlorofluorocarbons, also known as CFCs. CFCs are composed of carbon, chlorine and fluorine. They are used to manufacture aerosols, solvents and refrigerator and air conditioner fluids.

Since the 1930s, CFCs have been released into the upper atmosphere and broken up by ultraviolet radiation. As CFC molecules break apart, they release chlorine and bromine. These gases then destroy ozone in the stratosphere.

Since these chemicals are destroying ozone faster than the atmosphere can create it, ozone levels have dramatically decreased over the years.

The ozone layer has been depleted about

5 to 6 percent in the middle latitudes since the late 1970s, according to NASA. This may not sound significant, but this amount of depletion has caused increases in skin cancer, eye cancer and cataracts.

Ozone depletion causes mutations in plants, which harm their ability to survive. Additionally, excessive exposure to UV radiation in phytoplankton, fish and other marine animals has greatly weakened their early stages of growth.

Ozone is crucial to the survival of almost all life on Earth because it prevents excessive ultraviolet light from reaching the surface of the planet. Exposure to ultraviolet rays can cause melanoma, lymphoma, cataracts and skin cancer, damage the immune system and result in genetic mutations.

In a 2014 study conducted by Stanford Medical School, UV radiation has caused a mutation in a gene known as KNSTRN. KNSTRN is a gene that assists cells in equally distributing DNA during the stages of cell division. The KNSTRN mutation may be the cause of millions of skin cancers, the study finds.

Contrary to popular belief, ozone depletion is the thinning of the ozone layer, not simple holes in the ozone layer.

There is also a misconception that ozone

depletion and global warming are related or stem from one cause, although that is far from the truth. Ozone depletion is the thinning of the ozone layer, threatening the life and well-being of many organisms.

There is a worldwide consensus that ozone depletion needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Global warming is the gradual process of increasing atmospheric temperatures due to greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

According to NASA, the two phenomena may be confused with one another since CFCs are greenhouse gases. However, compared to carbon dioxide, CFCs have a lesser presence in the atmosphere. Some scientists believe global warming is responsible for some thinning of the ozone layer, but the impact of warming on the ozone layer is minimal.

There have been a multitude of successful efforts by countries to reduce ozone depletion. The Montreal Protocol, completed in 1987, aims to prevent additional production and use of chemicals that thin the ozone layer. It has been signed by 197 countries.

As a result, virtually every country has banned the production of CFCs and used hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) as a substitute. But it was found that

HFCs also harmed the ozone layer. The production of HFCs was halted in 2001 and the use of HFCs to repair equipment was banned in 2015.

However, despite the banned production of CFCs and HFCs, we still use appliances that emit these harmful gases.

CFCs were used in appliances and equipment up until 1995 and HFCs were used as a replacement until 2001. So, equipment such as refrigerators and air conditioners that emit CFCs and HFCs are being used to this day and are harming the ozone layer.

Air conditioners manufactured before 1995 emit CFCs when they malfunction. Replacing an old air conditioner or refrigerator or getting it professionally repaired can limit the CFCs it produces.

The dangers of ozone depletion have been acknowledged and substantial actions have been taken to alleviate the threat around the world, but there is much more to be done in order to allow the ozone layer to fully recover and prevent further damage to our atmosphere. The protection of ozone is pivotal to the survival of planets, animals, and most importantly, us.

Miriam Gold is a rising sophomore at Pleasantville High School.

Letters to the Editor

Putnam Democratic Party Chair Got it All Wrong at Legislature Meeting

When Scott Reing, chair of the Democratic Party for Putnam, spoke at the full county legislature meeting, I was surprised to hear my name invoked as an example of so-called disrespectful treatment by fellow Legislator Neal Sullivan, and doubly so when he reiterated the example in his letter to the editor found in five newspapers.

It is a revelation to me that when a colleague agrees with my statements, it is considered disrespectful and rude to me. Not only did Legislator Sullivan agree with the point I made regarding a small wording change to the charter, but he reiterated the point, since unbeknownst to me, my microphone was not working.

While I appreciate Mr. Reing looking out for my well-being, I am perfectly capable of defending myself against "friendly fire" meant to clarify and defend my point. Maybe in the future, Mr. Reing will call out a bully when he actually sees a bully on the legislature, like when a member throws out all the rules of order to take over the chamber for political purposes.

Amy Sayegh
Putnam County Legislator, District 8

Federal Support for Public Transit is a Top Accomplishment

The success of public transportation can be traced to one of the late President Lyndon Johnson's greatest accomplishments, which continues benefiting many Americans today.

On July 9, 1964, he signed the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964 into law. Subsequently, this has resulted in the investment over time of several hundred billion dollars into public transportation.

The Putnam County public transportation system has benefited with more than \$112 million in grants from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (previously known as the Urban Mass Transportation Administration), going back to the 1970s. A majority of the Putnam County bus capital program, including buses, paratransit vehicles, bus garages, fueling stations, fare collection equipment, bus shelters, bus stop signs and other support equipment necessary to run the system were all paid for primarily with federal funding.

Millions of Americans today utilize various public transportation alternatives. They include local and express buses, ferries, jitneys, light rail, subway and commuter rail services. All of these

systems use less fuel and move far more people than conventional single-occupancy vehicles. Most of these systems are funded with public tax dollars, thanks to President Johnson.

Depending upon where you live, consider the public transportation alternative. Try riding a local Putnam County transit bus.

The ability to travel from home to the workplace, school, shopping, entertainment, medical appointments, the library, etc., is a factor when moving to a new neighborhood. Economically successful communities are not completely dependent on automobiles as the sole means of mobility.

Seniors, students and low- and middle-income people need these transportation alternatives. Investment in public transportation today contributes to economic growth, employment and a stronger economy. Dollar for dollar, it is one of the best investments we can make.

Larry Penner
Great Neck, N.Y.

Westchester to Host Spanish-Language Seminar for Business Owners

After a successful virtual seminar last month, Westchester County will host another Spanish-language seminar this Wednesday, July 21 at 1 p.m. Information will be provided to Spanish-speaking business owners on how to obtain a small business recovery grant.

"The number of Hispanic-owned businesses has grown exponentially in Westchester County and we want to make sure business owners are aware of the funding opportunities that are available to them," said Bridget Gibbons, director of the county Office of Economic Development.

New York State has selected Lendistry, a financial technology institution, to administer the grant program with a focus on reaching businesses historically underserved and disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Lendistry will be making a presentation to show business owners how to apply for the grant.

The county is partnering with the Westchester Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Yonkers Mexican Chamber of Commerce.

To sign up for the seminar, e-mail mlopez@westchestergov.com.

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Yorktown Grange Fair to Feature Exciting Musical Entertainment

From Sept. 10-12, the Yorktown Grange Fairgrounds will be buzzing with great entertainment.

The fair, which will return this year, will feature a wide assortment of local bands and music to be part of what promises to be a great weekend.

"We are so excited to welcome crowds back to the fairgrounds for live musical entertainment," said Fair Entertainment Director Betsy Ackerman. "This year is going to be special in so many ways."

Fair organizers stressed that as they searched for entertainment options, the goal was to entice local citizens to "Get Out and About at the Fair," appreciate being a

part of such a wonderful community.

While the fairgrounds will be full of festival fun throughout the weekend, the main stage will be the hub for musical acts. On Saturday evening, from 7 to 10:30 p.m., catch The Dude of Life band, featuring Phish songwriter and White Plains native Steve Pollack. He co-wrote "Suzy Greenberg," "Crimes of the Mind" and several other Phish hits.

On Sunday from 4 to 6 p.m., get ready for a little "Uptown Girl" and "Piano Man" from Billy Joel cover band River of Dreams. This amazing group will get you in a "New York State of Mind" with their authentic version of a Billy Joel live performance.



On Saturday and Sunday afternoons, the Grange Fair stage will feature participants from last year's Virtual Fair Battle of the Bands. These groups were huge living room hits and will now take the stage to perform live. Fortuna is scheduled for Saturday from 3 to 5 p.m. and Alien Paradox will take the stage on Sunday from 12 to 2 p.m. A special surprise kids entertainment option for Saturday morning is also in the

works.

On Friday evening from 8 to 10 p.m., a local Yorktown band, No Option, will take the stage to kick off the fun.

The 2021 Yorktown Grange Fair will be held at the Yorktown Grange Fairgrounds, located at 99 Moseman Rd. in Yorktown Heights. For more information, visit <https://yorktowngrangefair.org>.

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Members of Dad Band Rekindle Love of Playing Music Together

By Martin Wilbur

It's common for groups of adult friends to get together for a guys' or a gals' night out. A chance to enjoy one another's company for a couple of hours after work or a long week.

For seven Chappaqua dads, their weekly night out is spent playing music.

The members of the septet – Greg Renza (keyboards/vocals), Seth Corwin (bass/vocals), Glen Carnes (guitar/vocals), Jason Asch (drums), Mike Liebowitz (guitar), Jordan Saletan (saxophone) and Eric Negrin (guitar/vocals) – make up The Station Agents, who perform classic rock and pop hits of the 1970s and '80s.

"We are sort of all in a similar situation," Renza said. "We're all dads in Chappaqua, we all have kids in school and we're all professionals and we've all in a past life played instruments, and so through certain situations we got together and knew one another. All of a sudden, we found ourselves together playing music and we're all energized."

While they've performed locally at several local bars, fairs and church events as well as at a Battle of the Bands at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center, next Wednesday evening, July 28 at 7 p.m. will be their biggest engagement to date – the Town of New Castle Recreation & Parks summer concert series under the gazebo at Recreation Field in downtown Chappaqua.

They hope that local residents will come out to hear a fun mix of Springsteen, Mellencamp, Billy Joel and some singalong staples, such as "Brown Eyed Girl" and "Sweet Caroline."



The Station Agents, comprised of seven husbands and fathers, practice inside Chappaqua Transportation's garage during a recent rehearsal. They will perform at the Town of New Castle's summer concert series on July 28.

The Station Agents' ever-growing song list is now more than 50 tunes long. They've been preparing a set of about 25 songs for next week's concert.

"We want people to sing along at our shows," Saletan said. "We'll play some obscure classic rock songs that are for us, but those are few and far between. We make sure our set are songs that people can sing along to."

Everyone in the band, which formed about three years ago, has been friends with at least one other member. They all had been in a band in high school or college and decided it would be fun to recapture that feeling they had as youngsters.

An early problem was that there were too many guitar players, so Renza switched to

keyboard, which he also had played previously, and Corwin transitioned to bass.

The Station Agents' first gig was at the old O'Connor's Pub in Pleasantville. Saletan recalled that that the bar owner told them that if they brought 50 people, they'd be paid \$300. The band gathered their friends and family to get 50 people to attend, were paid the \$300 and hit with a \$350 bar tab, he said.

As the rehearsals became more frequent, the band needed a permanent place to practice. If the weather was good enough, they'd play in one of their backyards, but they couldn't consistently rely on that. When the pandemic hit, they were forced to practice on their own and meet virtually.

"But we kept in touch," Liebowitz said. "We

kept the momentum going."

After everyone got vaccinated by early spring, Corwin, the owner of Chappaqua Transportation, opened up his bus garage on Hunts Lane for the weekly evening rehearsals. The band's logo, of course, is a bus.

Before the pandemic, Renza would come off the train in Chappaqua and hear the music coming from the field on Wednesday evenings in the summer. The band first inquired in 2019 about what they needed to do to play the series and started lobbying the Recreation & Parks Department to be included in the concert lineup.

They were told earlier this year that they were scheduled for July 28.

"Not many people have been able to go to concerts yet, so hopefully we'll get nice weather and we have a really nice crowd," Liebowitz said.

The band has no illusions about stardom.

"Our sweet spot is a 50-year-old's birthday party," Renza joked.

Their reward is having the chance to play music together, something each one of them loves to do, while hoping that people enjoy listening to them.

"We have lives, but I think the important thing for us, as middle-aged men, is we found something for us because we do so much for our families and our kids, that it's like this is for us, and we need it," Renza said.

For more information on The Station Agents, visit their Facebook page or e-mail stationagentsband@gmail.com if you are interested in booking the band.

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Food Donation Day on Tap at P'ville Farmers Market This Saturday

Shoppers visiting the Pleasantville Farmers Market this Saturday, July 24, can help food pantries ease food insecurity in the region by purchasing extra items of produce and allocating those items to go to area residents in need.

Farmers (and bakers too) will have collection bins at their checkout stations. Items can also be donated at a tent staffed by representatives from The Pleasantville Community Garden and Hillside Food Outreach, a local charity that provides meals for thousands of residents in Westchester, Putnam and Fairfield counties each year.

"This is a situation where complementary efforts have come together, we're each other's missing pieces," said Peter Rogovin, president and chairman of Foodchester, Inc. "The garden has volunteers and contacts with food pantries. Hillside Food Outreach provides a system to deliver nutritious food to those in need. The market has generous shoppers and vendors with fresh food, and we seek to support community organizations."

Held twice a year to highlight an opportunity for shoppers and farmers to contribute, the donation totals collected are inspiring. In previous events, shoppers have purchased and donated more than 650 pounds of fresh fruit and produce. Another

150 to 300 pounds of fruit and vegetables are often contributed by farmers and vendors at the end of the market as well. That's over 900 pounds of fresh, nutritious food immediately donated to Hillside Food Outreach and other local pantries.

Every week, volunteers from The Pleasantville Garden grow produce in local gardens and collect donations from the market's generous farmers, with over 2,000 pounds of fresh vegetables and fruit collected to date this year.

"Donations by shoppers on July 24 will help us celebrate the weekly generosity of our farmers and food artisans, who have really partnered with us in this cause," said Steven Bates, executive director of market operations for the Pleasantville Farmers Market.

"The Pleasantville Farmers Market program has been an essential part of our organization and the amazing generosity of the farmers every weekend has allowed us to greatly expand and donate thousands of pounds of incredibly fresh vegetables," said Ashly Juskus, farmers market manager.

For more information or to subscribe to market news, view vendor lists or an interactive map of the market or get directions and more details, visit www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org.

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Blood Drive to Be Held Friday to Honor P'ville Boy Fighting Leukemia

By Martin Wilbur

Last May 31, Melissa Feola thought that her then-four-year-old son Owen had injured his pinky. It was swollen and red, prompting his doctor to prescribe an antibiotic.

But the medication didn't help ease the swelling or the discomfort. Feola, a Pleasantville resident, took Owen to the emergency room to try and ease his pain.

It was there that a simple blood test changed the life of everyone in the family. Owen was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia, a type of blood and bone marrow cancer that affects white blood cells and the most common of childhood cancer.

"I think it flipped our world upside down," said Feola, who also has two daughters, Adele, 7, and Charlotte, 8. "COVID flipped everyone's world upside down, and then this was news certainly was as unexpected as it gets. It was a shock. At the time, there were so many restrictions in a hospital setting, where only one parent could be in the ER. My husband and I couldn't both be present at the same time."

So far, Owen's treatments, which have included chemotherapy and more recently about a dozen blood transfusions, have been progressing well. While not out of the woods, Feola is hopeful that Owen will be able to make it to kindergarten this fall at Coman Hill Elementary School.

Mount Pleasant resident Josephine DiConstanzo, a family friend, helped to



Owen Feola, with his parents and sisters, has successfully fought leukemia for the past 14 months. A blood drive in his honor will be held at the Thornwood firehouse this Friday.

organize a blood drive, scheduled for this Friday afternoon and evening at the Thornwood firehouse at 770 Commerce St. in Thornwood in Owen's honor. It will be held from 2 to 8 p.m.

"It's sort of one of those helpless situations as parents where we're just very thankful that our son is getting the care that he's getting, but kind of learning more about the blood shortages across our country and how dependent our son has been on transfusions over the past few months," Feola said.

DiConstanzo, who has been friends since

with Owen's paternal grandmother since childhood, said that she was looking for any way to pay tribute to those who've given blood for his transfusions. With blood donations down since the start of the pandemic, it made sense to hold a drive in Owen's honor.

"This was a way for me as a lifelong friend of my girlfriend, in some small way, to try to do something pleasant," DiConstanzo said. "I'm a cancer survivor, a two-time cancer survivor. I can't give blood anymore...so this is a great thing to organize. I was happy to do it."

While blood supplies typically lag during the summer when people are on vacation, the shortage this year is particularly acute, said Elizabeth Hernandez, business development manager for the New York Blood Center. For the New York metro area, a seven- to eight-day supply in blood inventory is sought, which amounts to about 10,000 units. Currently, there is only a two- to three-day supply.

Many organizations and houses of worship haven't scheduled their blood drives this year because of COVID-19, and those that have held one are seeing low turnout, she said.

"That is contributing to the low amount of donors at our blood drives," Hernandez said. "In addition to that, the traditional groups that host blood drives for the most part are not allowing us to come back with a blood drive."

The universal blood types of O positive, O negative, A negative and B negative are the most sought after but anyone who is eligible may donate, Hernandez said. To donate, you must be at least 16 years old, weight at least 110 pounds and not have donated in the last 56 days. For 16-year-olds, they must have parental permission.

Feola said she is grateful that DiConstanzo, the fire district and the New York Blood Center were able to come together and help others who face life-threatening situations and need blood transfusions like Owen.

To make an appointment to donate at Friday's blood drive, call 800-933-2566.

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Yorktown Resident Offers Yoga Therapy to Address Health Needs

By Susan R. Eisenstein

Yorktown resident Marta Gil is bringing a new kind of yoga business to northern Westchester.

While the practice of yoga is considered an ancient art, yoga therapy is a relatively new field.

"As a yoga teacher, I could offer my clients a feeling of overall well-being," said Gil, who has launched Yoga Therapy With Marta Gil. "As a yoga therapist, I can customize the practice that addresses specific health goals and conditions based on the client's ability, lifestyles and available time."

She said yoga therapy is provided in private sessions or small groups where a common condition is shared. Gil works with clients in virtual and in-person settings, teaching them how to use yoga and mindfulness techniques to manage pain, stress, anxiety and autoimmune conditions.

Gil helps clients suffering from depression, lack of connection, insomnia, cancer, low energy, grief, weight loss and problems with focus. Often, she works in tandem with the client's primary care doctor, physical therapist or other health professional.

Gil dreamed about opening her own yoga therapy practice full-time. She knew that she had the training, the knowledge and the passion and was keenly aware that her service was needed.

But her participation in a Westchester County business accelerator program,



called Launch 1000, was the catalyst to taking that entrepreneurial plunge.

"Suddenly I found myself among hundreds of people exactly in the same place where I was, passionate about an idea, convinced that their vision has the potential of positively changing people's lives," said Gil, who was born in Poland and moved to the U.S. in 1999.

Participation in Launch 1000 gave her a fantastic community, resources and the guidance of coaches. The county is offering the program in response to the significant economic disruption last year. The goal is to enable 1,000 Westchester residents to start a business or develop an income

stream for themselves and their families.

Now Gil's yoga therapy business isn't a dream anymore.

When working with clients, she is mindful of traumas that they may be going through. Gil sets goals with them and emphasizes that she is a guide. She also wants clients to know that while yoga can be therapeutic, it is not yoga therapy. She provides clients with the knowledge and tools, and her yoga therapy classes are designed to give them the ability to improve their own health.

Gil and her husband also run a house painting company. Her daughter was born in Westchester and the family enjoys Yorktown and the friendships that they



Yoga therapist Marta Gil has brought a different type of yoga experience to the community.

have made. They also love the hiking trails, parks and farms.

Gil said she appreciates how Westchester takes care of its residents.

"I had the honor to teach yoga classes to senior citizens in Yorktown and Peekskill," Gil said of what she did before the pandemic. "The classes were free for them."

Now, she is excited for clients to know about her new yoga therapy business in Yorktown.

For more information or to schedule a yoga therapy appointment, contact Marta Gil at 914-685-6859 or visit MartaGilYoga.com or Facebook.com/martagilyoga.



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Q: How is skin cancer treated?

A: Traditionally, skin cancers have been treated either with Moh's surgery, in which the cancerous tissue is removed, or by conventional radiation. Both methods offer success rates of 96 to 99 percent. However, now a third option – High Dose Rate Brachytherapy (HDRBT) – offers a unique cosmetic benefit that's particularly valuable for skin cancers the face, head and neck.

Q. What's so unique about this new type of treatment?

A. With a Moh's procedure, the cancer is cut out, leaving behind a hole which is filled with skin from somewhere else on your body. This forms a scar.

With *conventional* radiation for skin cancer, not only is the tumor radiated, but so are its "margins," or edges. As a result, a wide area is radiated – sometimes causing the skin to thin or break, to get a bit darker or lighter, to develop red streaks, or to appear scarred or wrinkled. If this happens on your face, it is often highly visible.

By contrast, *HDRBT* involves radiating much smaller margins around the tumor. If we're treating a tumor near the eye with conventional radiation, its wider field of radiation creates the risk of blindness, or of

damaging the lens, or of the breakdown of surrounding tissue. But with concentrated HDRBT, these risks significantly diminish. Also, it's fast. After just two weeks of fifteen-minute treatments with HDRBT, treatment is complete. In fact, the treatment itself takes only three to four minutes!

Q. Who is the ideal candidate for this type of treatment?

A. The cosmetic benefit is especially valuable if you have skin cancer near your lips, nose or eyes. With this treatment, there is minimal to no scarring. This new radiation therapy is also great for elderly patients who might not tolerate surgery. In Westchester County, we have a high population of older community members with skin cancer – this treatment has worked really well for them.

Q. Is there anything else you'd like to say about HDRBT?

A. Currently, Northern Westchester Hospital is the only community hospital in Westchester offering HDRBT for skin cancer. There's this myth that community hospitals can't provide the most advanced cancer care. But that's simply not the case. Here, patients experience the warmth of a community hospital, yet receive a level of cancer care that's first-rate.

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'Love Letters' to House Sellers May Be a Thing of the Past

I will soon be listing a home for sale for a couple who is moving out of state to be close to their children.

They thought that they had found their ideal retirement home in that location, but informed me that they had lost out in a bidding process because of a "love letter" sent by another buyer.

"We even included an escalation clause in the offer, but still lost out," the wife told me.

An escalation clause states that if a competing offer is made on the property, the bid will automatically increase by a certain amount of money to surpass the new offer.

However, the seller told my clients that she was influenced by a personal letter received by a competing bidder that "touched her."

Such love letters may soon be a thing of the past. A new law in Oregon states that house hunters are prohibited from submitting a love letter to try to convince sellers to accept their offers. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown signed a bill into law that says sellers' agents must reject such communications from buyers to sellers that contain information outside of the traditional offer. Oregon is the first state to make such letters illegal in a real estate transaction.



By Bill Primavera

The use of love letters by buyers has become a common tactic to help make a buyer's offer stand out. Buyers may write to sellers about how much they love the home, how they can envision their family living there or how they'll spend the holidays.

But the National Association of Realtors (NAR) has been warning its members to be aware of the potential risks involving love letters.

"While this may seem harmless, these letters can actually pose fair housing risks because they often contain personal information and

reveal characteristics of the buyer, such as race, religion or familial status, which could then be used, knowingly or through unconscious bias, as an unlawful basis for a seller's decision to accept or reject an offer," NAR recently warned on its Fair Housing Corner blog.

Further, the NAR released a statement in response to Oregon's action banning the letters outright.

"Although we are not aware of instances in which these letters have led to lawsuits or legal action elsewhere in the country, we continue to stress that all parties in a real estate transaction should consider only legitimate, non-discriminatory criteria when making business decisions,"



the statement read. "Failing to do so, could also leave Realtors® in a compromised position. We also recommend that our members explain potential pitfalls to their clients while stressing the importance of sticking to objective criteria in order to adhere to federal and state Fair Housing laws."

However, in today's market, the practice of using love letters has remained popular as buyers face fierce competition for housing and have been desperate to make their offer stand out. Bidding wars are not uncommon.

These letters may seem harmless on the surface. But when a letter comes in, if it describes the family situation or circumstances, whatever that may be, or indicates or gives a clue to a religious or any other protected class, there's always the risk that a seller could be accused of making a decision based upon inappropriate factors.

NAR's Fair Housing Corner blog offers the best practices to help protect real estate agents and their clients from fair housing liability stemming from love letters.

Realtors are advised to educate their clients about the fair housing laws and the pitfalls of buyer love letters. Further, we are advised to refuse delivering such buyer love letters to clients and they not be accepted as part of the MLS listing.

We are also advised to remind our clients that their decision to accept or reject an offer should be based on objective criteria only.

And finally, we are advised to document all offers received and the seller's objective reason for accepting an offer.

I have personally experienced a love letter situation only once, and it was a somewhat off-putting situation. The buyer prospects, a same-sex couple, assumed the sellers' orientation (which the sellers resented), actually sending a letter stating that "we obviously have so much in common in all our preferences, including that we both own MINI-Cooper cars."

And then they made a really lousy offer.

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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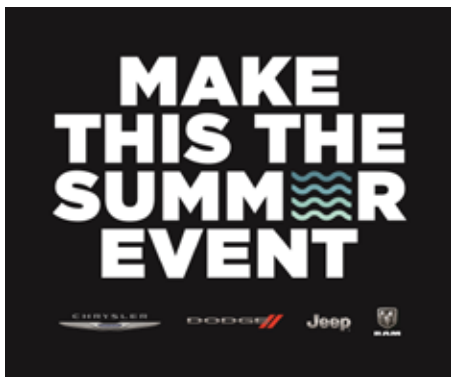
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Jacob Burns Film Center Names New Executive Director

The Jacob Burns Film Center announced last week it has hired a new executive director who will take over leadership of the Pleasantville arthouse theater and education center at the end of the summer.

Mary Jo Ziesel, a veteran in the field of nonprofit arts, will assume the post on Sept. 7.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mary Jo Ziesel as we celebrate our 20th anniversary," Jacob Burns Board Chair Lynn Sobel said. "We are extremely fortunate to have someone of Mary Jo's caliber at the helm as we launch our third decade. She is an accomplished, passionate arts and culture executive with a long tenure of successful leadership within premier arts organizations and higher education institutions."

Ziesel led the American Ballet Theatre (ABT) for more than two decades, developing a thriving \$7 million center of innovation serving more than 20,000 students and ultimately launching summer intensive programs, the ABT National Training Curriculum, the ABT Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and William J. Gillespie Schools, a national network of ABT certified schools and an ABT/NYU master's degree.

During the pandemic, she pivoted the theater's programming toward online initiatives that reached thousands of students and teachers in 49 states and 46 countries. Additionally, she led ABT's efforts to ensure a continuing online presence with its public and private school partners and expanded its community

engagement offerings to include the Fresh Air Fund, Rockefeller Center and Lincoln Center Accessibility.

Ziesel has been instrumental in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at ABT.

She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, as well as a master of arts in performing arts administration/nonprofit management from NYU.

Ziesel said early priorities will include engaging with Jacob Burns board members and staff and the community, as well as launching special programs and events during the film center's year-long 20th anniversary celebration.

She will also oversee the refurbishment of the Burns' three original theaters, an initiative made possible by donors and a New York State grant.

"After more than 25 years in the field of nonprofit arts, I continue to stand in awe of the transformational power of the arts to ignite curiosity and empower audiences to think critically, discover and learn new cultures and nurture empathy and tolerance," Ziesel said. "As a passionate film lover who was new to the area, my pre-pandemic visits to the Jacob Burns Film Center left me feeling grateful to have discovered this artistic wellspring in the Hudson Valley."

Ziesel added that she is also motivated by the film center's commitment to artists and organizations that celebrate and further the art of filmmaking.



Mary Jo Ziesel, a longtime executive in the field of nonprofit arts, will become the next executive director of the Jacob Burns Film Center.

Fireworks to Continue at Playland on Friday Evenings

After being closed for the 2020 season due to COVID-19, fireworks over Long Island Sound will take place every Friday through Labor Day weekend. There will also be a final fireworks show on Sunday, Sept. 5. All fireworks begin at 9:15 p.m.

For the season's full schedule and admission prices, visit www.PlaylandPark.org or call the park at 914-813-7010. Parking is \$10.

Playland is located in Rye and can be reached via Playland Parkway, Exit 19 off of I-95.

Since opening in 2001, millions of people have enjoyed the best of current American and foreign cinema, unique film series and special events at the five-screen theater complex.

A pioneer in visual literacy, the Burns offers educational experiences for students of all ages at its state-of-the-art Media Arts Lab, including curricula for public schools and a fellowship and residency program for professional filmmakers.

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Consider These Factors When Buying High-end Wines



By Nick Antonaccio

In last week's column we delved into the world of high-end wines and the exorbitant prices they command. My focus was on the La Romanée-Conti Grand Cru bottling, produced by the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti,

most commonly known by its acronym, DRC, and perennially the most expensive wine sold.

The availability of DRC is severely limited. A small amount is produced each year and little is available in the retail market. A small portion is offered for sale at public auctions, many years (even decades) after its initial release. The price? The value a willing buyer and a willing seller arrive at. The vicarious pleasure of owning one of these bottles? Priceless?

Predictably, a buyer will have a difficult time finding and purchasing this wine.

Herein is the perfect opportunity for bidding wars – at auctions (public and private) and the underground markets of questionable source and authenticity.

One might ponder if DRC, and other rare wines, are susceptible to those nefarious individuals who troll the winosphere for

'For those few who are able to afford rare wines there is no certainty that your purchase is genuine.'

gullible consumers. Ponder no longer. In examining the attributes of the wine and the producer, I did not mention the allure this wine has with the dark side of the marketplace for rare and expensive wines.

I present several considerations facing buyers when purchasing DRC or any scarce, rare or one-of-a-kind objet d'art (or objet d'vin).

1. Price. Scarcity drives up prices. It is generally perceived wines from the Bordeaux region of France command the highest prices, in particular a bottle of Petrus. However, the preferences of collectors

(old line and the newly minted aristocrats) are wines from the Burgundy region of France, in particular DRC.

The most recent vintage available of Petrus costs \$3,000 per bottle. This wine also has the distinction of being the first wine to travel, and age, in the International Space

Station, returning to earth a few months ago after its 14-month journey.

By comparison, the current release of DRC commands a per bottle price of more than \$15,000. As for older vintages, there seem to be quite a few willing buyers. At an auction held in Hong Kong several years ago, a single bottle of 1945 DRC sold for \$558,000, a record price. A second bottle was auctioned immediately after. It commanded an equally staggering price of \$496,000.

However, a few bottles of the space-aged Petrus are being auctioned, which will certainly challenge the DRC record-setting price.

2. Provenance. For those few who are able to afford rare wines there is no certainty that your purchase is genuine. The DRC wine market is rife with shady characters lying in wait for enthusiastic buyers. A few years ago, I reported that Rudy Kurniawan, a prominent wine collector, was arrested on counterfeit charges. He affixed fraudulent DRC labels to bottles filled with unidentified cheap wine and sold them in the high-end wine markets.

In a separate instance of fraud, European police, informed of counterfeit DRC wines being sold in the private (black) market, conducted a sweep in 10 countries, raiding 20 homes and companies. Over \$2.7 million in fraudulent profit is believed to have been realized.

3. Blackmail. Owners of the winery producing the most expensive wine in the world have been targets of nefarious



blackmailers. In 2010, a father and son attempted to extort \$1.4 million from the owners of DRC, threatening to destroy their vineyard. After much anguish, the owners contacted the authorities, who intervened and subsequently arrested the culprits.

Fear not if you are unable to find, or afford, that special gift of rare wine for yourself or someone special. Living vicariously through the adventures – and wallets – of others is a noble diversion. It may even enhance your enjoyment of lesser-priced wine.

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

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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Chappaqua Bistro Le Jardin is Always a Treat to Eat

It was mid-afternoon, pre-Bastille Day, when I stopped in at Le Jardin Du Roi on King Street in Chappaqua. It had been quite a while since I ate there.

Joe Quartararo and Christian Larsen have been operating this bustling bistro in the heart of the downtown for the past 20 years. I took a quick look inside and it was the same cozy interior that I remembered.



By Morris Gut

I sat down on the pleasant tented outdoor patio and looked over the menu with surrounding garden flowers in full bloom. I knew exactly what I wanted: the signature Burger du Roi, prepared medium with bacon, Swiss cheese and sunny side egg on top.

To my memory, Le Jardin was one of the first to “throw an egg on it,” before the culinary concept became so commonplace. The large platter came with French fries and fresh chopped salad. (Ask for extra salad dressing on the side.) My burger was oozing decadence, deliciously so. The fries were nice, too.

For dessert, I had Le Jardin’s popular warm bread pudding. On this day it was prepared with blueberries resting on a shallow pool of vanilla sauce with some powdered sugar. A delight! Nothing like a good bistro meal.

Le Jardin Due Roi is located at 95 King St. in Chappaqua. Open daily. Free parking. Check ahead for hours. Info: 914-238-1368 or visit www.lejardinchappaqua.com.

Bistro-Style Roasted Chicken

In recent weeks I’ve had the pleasure of eating at two more favorite French bistros. Le Diplomate in Washington, D.C., always busy and delicious, and Café D’Alsace, a bustling spot on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. I have always been fond of the French way in the kitchen.

On Bastille Day, my companion decided to surprise me with a home-cooked bistro meal. It turned out very well. We shared a roasted chicken she found on sale at Fresh Market in Scarsdale, a tasty tapenade accompaniment and fresh corn salad. For dessert, we had a classic cherry clafoutis with fresh cream. Thank you, dear.

The Dog Den Expands

Hot dog mavens find their way to The Dog Den, located at the former bus depot at the White Plains Metro-North station on Bronx Street, all day long this time of year.

Hot dogs are an ode to the ultimate comfort food, according to dynamic owner and founder Dennis (Big Dennis) Rubich. On this beautiful late afternoon, the 7-foot-1 Rubich (he once played professional basketball in Europe) was chatting with customers as they ate their dogs and sides with gusto. The seating area has been expanded.

There are all sorts of combinations and toppings on the menu along with alternative bites galore. The Dog Den uses Sabrett all-beef certified gluten-free dogs and Martin’s long potato rolls.

On this visit we tried the Bernie Mac n’ Cheese, wrapped in bacon and loaded with decadent macaroni and cheese topping.

The other, The Cool Beans, was topped with bacon bits and baked beans. We ordered a pile of crinkle cut fries, too.

On previous encounters, I consumed The Cali Double Dog, with bacon strips, guacamole, tomato, ranch dressing and celery salt. Also, The Chili Willy, which contains chili, nacho cheese sauce and chopped white onions. Both were well-assembled by the eager staff and delicious.

There are free half-hour parking spaces. Seating is well-spaced. According to Big Dennis, who is leasing the space from the county, there are plans for a breakfast menu and beer and wine service.

The Dog Den is located at 1 Main St. in White Plains at the Metro-North train station. Open Tuesday through Sunday. Info: 914-328-3288 or visit www.thedogdenwhiteplains.com.

Utica Pie Co. Returns

The Utica Pie Co. has reopened on White Plains’ Mamaroneck Avenue after closing during the pandemic. The space, two stores down from the old Francesco’s, now offers indoor and outdoor seating. Its signature tomato pie is one of the specialties. Owner Sal Torchia said the Italian-style eatery is now in full operation.

Torchia was nice enough to show off some of the menu items during a recent visit. There was the Utica Pie, UPC knots and veggie pie. Desserts included the lemon meringue pie, chocolate cream pie and banana coconut cream pie. I’m looking forward to a tasting down the line.

The Utica Pie Co. is located at 594 Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains. Open daily. Info: 914-948-5600 or visit www.uticapieco.com.



Summer is always a great time to take in a hot dog at The Dog Den, near the White Plains train station.



French bistro Le Jardin’s signature Burger du Roi, with bacon, Swiss cheese and sunny side egg on top, and the restaurant’s popular bread pudding.



Some of the tasty specialties at the reopened Utica Pie Co. in White Plains.

Mt. Kisco Restaurant Week

The Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce has launched its first-ever Restaurant Week, starting this Friday, July 23 and running through Aug. 1. More than 20 eateries are participating. Each restaurant will be serving its own unique dish or menu during the program.

The good news is that Mount Kisco restaurants offer a lot of tasty diversity. This would be a fine way to give a few a try. For the latest information, visit www.mtkiscochamber.com.

Jack Knife Will Keep You Sharp!

There was a huge uptick in home cooking during the pandemic. Novice and pro cooks were busy honing their skills.

So how do you keep those knives and kitchen utensils sharp? You may want to catch up with Jack “Knife” Martin, U.S.

Navy veteran and owner of Jack Knife Sharpening in White Plains. Martin has become a regular at the Wednesday White Plains Farmers Market and at markets across Westchester and Connecticut. He works with professional chefs as well as home cooks, offering blade sharpening and restoration services for knives, scissors or garden tools. Gift cards are available.

For information and rates, call 914-434-0522 or visit www.jackknifesharpening.com.

Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-65491 or gutreactions@optonline.net.

Irish Reunification, or Even Further: Pipedream or Possibility?

I recently read "Good Friday: The Death of Irish Republicanism" by Anthony McIntyre, who as a member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) spent 17 years imprisoned in the notorious Long Kesh Prison.

McIntyre, incarcerated in his teens, raises some tough questions about the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which ended the 30-year-long "The Troubles" and brought a fragile peace to Northern Ireland. Brokered by the United States under President Bill Clinton, it was signed by two parties, then more diametrically opposed than any in the world.

Power in Northern Ireland, part of the United Kingdom (U.K.), would be shared by the Irish nationalist party Sinn Féin (Gaelic for Ourselves Alone) and their previously staunch opponents, the pro-British Unionists, who bitterly opposed any discussion of a united 32-county Irish nation. The agreement saw an end to a war in which thousands had died, and 10 IRA hunger strikers in 1981 led by Bobby Sands, who gave their lives for recognition as political prisoners, as opposed to common criminals.

McIntyre spent his time in prison well.

He earned a college degree, and ultimately a doctorate, and went on to become one of Ireland's most insightful commentators on the aftermath of The Troubles. The premise of his book is that too much was given up by the Sinn Féin leadership, ostensibly

championing the long-held dream of a united Ireland, in exchange for some measure of political power and buy-in to the "establishment."

In return, that leadership effectively abandoned the long-held dream of a united Ireland. Whatever one's beliefs, the book is an intriguing window on the politics surrounding the Good Friday Agreement and the unheralded price paid for it.

Now, enter Brexit. A major topic at the recent G7 meeting, it elicited a pointed warning by President Joe Biden to British leader Boris Johnson that he had better work soon to prevent the reversal of the Good Friday Agreement in light of its impact on a critical flash point between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland – the 305-mile-long border between them.

That border, for more than two decades virtually unseen, was a major turning point during The Troubles. I crossed a section

of it a year after the 1998 agreement was reached, and was told by locals if I had been there a year earlier, I'd have been detained for a day or two of questioning by British military wondering what I was up to.

But with the U.K. leaving the European Union (EU), that quiet border now becomes the only land border between the U.K. and the rest of Europe, a situation the EU insists must be addressed in order to perform customs checks and inspections.

One solution is to have a sea border between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland and do inspections there. To Unionists, this is unacceptable, as it would force recognition that the six counties that they cherish are really more part of Ireland than the U.K. That could fracture the fragile peace the Good Friday Agreement brought, and bring a return to the years of sectarian fighting in which at least 3,500 perished.

In a perfect world, might not Brexit push Unionists toward a realization that a united 32-county Ireland be an acceptable outcome after all, in light of the benefits that continued membership in the EU would bring? Brexit threatens to render the



By Brian McGowan

U.K. a backwater as the EU pursues greater economic might.

A vote in neighboring Scotland to leave the U.K. might alter everything even further. While the last referendum on Scottish independence was narrowly defeated, that was pre-Brexit, which a large majority in both Scotland and Northern Ireland opposed.

Some envision a political union of Scotland and Ireland, both North and South, with a capital in either Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow or Edinburgh. Call the new nation the Republic of Dalriada, paying homage to just such a union that once existed long before the current fault lines of sectarian strife kept good people on both sides of the road from seeing past their noses.

Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx and is a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. Reach him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com, or on Twitter (@Bmcgowan52M). He is the author of two books, "Thunder at Noon," about the battle of Waterloo, and "Love, Son John," about World War II. Both are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Irish Eclectic

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THERE'S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

Round and Round. The recently concluded 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee, won by 14-year-old Zaila Avant-Garde from New Orleans, featured several "Word Meaning" rounds in addition to the usual spelling rounds. The quiz this week is adapted from the multiple-choice vocabulary questions used in the Bee.

1. Another word for staid is:

- A) stale B) serious C) unsteady

2. If a victory is Pyrrhic, it is achieved:

- A) at excessive cost B) by deception C) quickly

3. What is another word for educand?

- A) student B) teacher C) school

4. If something has been nucleated, it has been:

- A) reduced to ashes B) urged into action C) clustered together

5. What is a heath?

- A) a vital center B) a tract of wasteland C) a circle of stones

6. Trenchancy is the quality of being:

- A) a hearty eater B) a trendsetter C) keenly articulate

7. Something described as invidious is:

- A) hateful B) unassailable C) firmly established

8. Something that is xylotomous, is able to:

- A) produce flowers B) bore through wood C) change shape

ANSWERS:

1. B. Serious
2. A. At excessive cost
3. A. One that is to be educated; a student
4. C. Clustered together
5. B. A tract of wasteland
6. C. Keenly articulate
7. A. Hateful
8. B. Bore through wood

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Orchestra 914 Appoints Music Director to Lead Rebranded Ensemble

Orchestra 914, formerly known as the Chappaqua Orchestra, last week announced the appointment of Russell Ger as its music director.

Co-executive Directors David Restivo and Amy Harter are thrilled to begin working with Ger, whose artistic energy encompasses Orchestra 914's goals and vision for its future. Ger's long-term experience will bring a collaborative approach to an inclusive and unexpected array of classical music, with the highest level of artistic integrity in mind.

"It is with great anticipation that I begin this new journey leading Orchestra 914," Ger said. "I am looking forward to making some wonderful music and sharing it with our audience in new and exciting ways."

Since 2016, Ger has been music director of the Greater Newburgh Symphony. He will remain in that capacity while he serves as music director for Orchestra 914.

Ger's broad repertoire spans orchestral, operatic and choral music, which he has conducted across North America, Europe and his native country of Australia. He has toured North America with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman, performed at the Hollywood Bowl with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and at the Barclays Center for an audience of 6,000.

Ger received a master of music in orchestral conducting at The Boston Conservatory. In 2013, Ger was one of four finalists from around the world

for the prestigious 2nd International Chicago Symphony Orchestra Sir Georg Solti Conducting Apprenticeship. As a proud alumnus of Symphony Australia, the leading conductor training program in that country, he had the opportunity to work with Australia's top orchestras. Ger is committed to nurturing the next generation of musicians, and regularly works with young people to promote classical music.

The Chappaqua Orchestra was created in 1958 in an effort to bring high-quality classical music to northern Westchester. Over the years, the orchestra has had many incarnations, from a mix of professional and local amateurs, to what is now a fully professional orchestra. It has had several conductors, many of whom have gone on to national recognition.

To find more information about Orchestra 914, visit www.orchestra914.org. The 2021-22 season schedule will be announced within the next few weeks. The new season will include family and classical concerts in Pleasantville, Tarrytown and Peekskill, as well as other communities in Westchester.

Russell Ger was named the music director of Orchestra 914, formerly The Chappaqua Orchestra.



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Six Things You Should Be Asking Your Pharmacist But Aren't

An estimated 4.5 billion prescriptions will be filled this year in the United States, with about half of consumers taking at least one prescription medication over the past 30 days.

"You'd think we would be better at communicating with our pharmacists – just as we do with our other health care providers, like doctors, nurses and dentists," said Susan Peppers, vice president of Pharmacy Practice at Express Scripts Pharmacy. "Unfortunately, it's just not the case."

In fact, a JD Power study shows that only 10 percent of people talk to a pharmacist when ordering or receiving their medications. Pharmacists at Express Scripts Pharmacy were asked what are the top six questions patients should be asking their pharmacists, but don't.

Their answers offer insights into why we should take the time to ask these questions and why pharmacists play an important role in our health care.

- Could this medication interact with my vitamins and supplements? Non-prescription medications and supplements can interfere with your prescription or cause unnecessary side effects. Talk to a pharmacist about all the medications you take, especially when you are prescribed any new medication.
- I'm taking multiple meds. What do I need to know? If you are on multiple



medications for one or more chronic conditions you should speak with a pharmacist any time there is a change to your medication regimen to check for potential drug-drug interactions, medication overlap or gaps in care.

- What should I do if I forget to take my medication? Always consult with your prescriber on what to do if this happens. Having access to your pharmacist 24/7 is particularly important when you

forget to take a dosage at the scheduled time. He or she can help you get back on track so that you get the full benefits of your medication. Having access to your pharmacist from the privacy of your home is another great reason to look for this 24/7 convenience.

- Could this prescription make me unsteady on my feet? Some medications can make you dizzy or drowsy, and there are other hazards in the home that can

cause a fall, especially as one ages and needs to get up frequently during the night. A pharmacist can provide home safety tips to avoid an accident.

- I sometimes forget to take my meds. What's a reminder that works? Taking medications regularly can help avoid complications. When having trouble remembering to take your medications, turn to pharmacists who can suggest tech solutions that will work for you, such as reminder apps. They can also help you manage side effects that you may be having and identify alternatives that you can discuss with your prescriber, when needed.
- Is there a more affordable option for my prescription? If you are having trouble affording your medication, your pharmacists can help with more affordable options and recommendations, such as generics or less expensive formulary options.

For more tips and resources, visit www.esrx.com/AskYourPharmacist.

"When it comes to whole-person care, pharmacists play a major role in the equation," Peppers said. "Communicating with your pharmacist regularly can help reduce the chance of complications related to your medications."

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Chappaqua Library Unveils New Furniture, Equipment

The Friends of the Chappaqua Library, a nonprofit organization and the fundraising arm of the library, has approved more than \$60,000 to pay for new furniture and technology tools for the renovated Chappaqua Public Library, located at 195 S. Greeley Ave.

The Friends fundraise year-round to support initiatives for the library that are above and beyond the operating budget. The current construction has been going on since 2018, as part of the bond for all the Chappaqua school buildings. The library building is a school district building, but it is run independently.

The furniture requests from the library staff started last October, as construction was completed on the building while planning to reopen post-COVID-19. The final request was approved at the last board meeting of the Friends of their fiscal year, on June 9.

The Friends board meet 10 times a year and is staffed by volunteers. The team remained busy during COVID-19, meeting via Zoom, and even without regular fundraising events.

The funding included more than \$35,000 for the new Children's Room, including the custom service desk, two built-in benches and reupholstered two couches and a chair.

"The children's room staff are so



delighted to sit at our beautiful new service desk in our light-filled room, thanks to the Friends," said Robbin Friedman, head of children's services. "With refurbished couches and a brand-new window-seat bench, we look forward to seeing the community enjoy our new space as much as we do."

Additionally, the Friends funding



Above: The mobile Google Jamboard in the Chappaqua Public Library's Teen Room, one of the many pieces of technology and furniture paid for through money raised by the Friends of the Chappaqua Library.

Left: Two reupholstered couches in the Children's Room.

covered \$15,000 of technology for the new Teen Room, including eight new Chromebooks, three drawing pads and two Google Jamboards (identical to the tools used at the middle and high school).

Cathy Paulsen, head of teen services, said "The teens and I are thrilled with our new Teen Room. It has everything we could ever have imagined. Thank

you so much."

The remaining \$10,000 was allocated to new study room furniture, including a conference table, eight chairs and a glass whiteboard. The new study room is adjacent to the Teen Room, and the furniture is in the process of being ordered.

With more and more patrons wanting to sit outdoors, the Friends also funded four new outdoor tables and 16 new chairs, along with a rented tent for the courtyard for July and August. The new outdoor furniture arrived in late June, and the tent arrived on July 8. Now all library programming can occur inside or outside as needed.

The gated courtyard is open to all library patrons, and access is available from the library gallery.

The Friends are back to active fundraising, with a virtual author event this week on Tuesday evening featuring "The Cellist," Daniel Silva's new spy novel; and a pop-up book market in the train parking lot on Aug. 7 from 9 a.m. to noon, weather permitting.

The Friends' annual Book Sale is also returning next Apr. 25, promising more than 30 miles of used books to purchase.

The library is open to the public Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Examiner Sports

Wolves Howling on 12U GHVBL Scene Mahopac Tops Putnam Valley, 8-0



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTO

Mahopac Wolves 3B Orion Ortiz awaits throw as Putnam Valley's Matt Quinn slides in safely in the Wolves' 8-0 win over the host Tigers last Tuesday in 12U Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League action at Union Field where the surging Wolves improved to 9-3 while the Tigers fell to 5-7. Visit www.ghvbl.com for standings... see Focus on GHVBL

Sports

FOCUS ON LAKELAND SUMMER SOCCER LEAGUE

Yorktown, Byram Hills, Somers Among Top Challengers



Somers' Hyugo Todo sends a pass against Eastchester in 1-0 Tusker loss to Eagles.



Somers' Liam Healy gets tangled up as he looks to maintain possession in 1-0 Lakeland Summer League loss to Eastchester.



Somers' Jack Van Tassell keeps his eye on the ball as he heads up the field in 1-0 loss against Eastchester in Lakeland Summer League contest.



Yorktown's Tristan Santos sends it up the field in Huskers' 8-1 summer league rout of Valhalla in Lakeland Boys Soccer Summer League action last week.

Sports



Byram Hills' Derek Araki-Kurdyla possesses along the sideline while Briarcliff's Atti Smith defends in 1-1 Lakeland Summer League tie last Tuesday.



Briarcliff's Ethan Klar sends a pass at midfield while Byram's Lorenzo Amorosino defends in 1-1 Lakeland summer League tie.



Yorktown's George Popovic leads a break in Huskers' 8-1 win over Valhalla.



Briarcliff's Daniel Satran heads the ball in Bears' 1-1 tie with Byram last Tuesday.



Byram Hills' Owen Fleischer looks to make his move against Briarcliff last week in a Lakeland Summer League game.



Valhalla's Lucas Signes looks to pass to a teammate in Vikings' summer league loss to Yorktown last Tuesday.



Valhalla's Eddie LoPresti looks to clear the ball out of the defensive end against Yorktown in Lakeland Summer League action.



Somers' Noak Saks leads a break in 1-0 Lakeland Summer League loss to Eastchester.

Sports

Baseball Notebook

FOCUS ON GHVBL

Mahopac Handles Put Valley, White Plains Falls, 2-1



Mahopac IF Orion Ortiz readies to score run in Wolves' 8-0 win over host Put Valley in 12U GHVBL action.



Mahopac C Jake Cotter tracks his shot to center in Wolves' 8-0 win over host Put Valley in 12U GHVBL action.



Mahopac's Johnny Keeney raps a single in Wolves' 8-0 win over host Putnam Valley in recent GHVBL 12U action.



Putnam Valley P Eli Pierce shows solid form despite taking loss to Mahopac Wolves in 12U GHVBL action last week.



Felix Morales of WP Hit-N-Run looks to escape a rundown last Thursday in 2-1 loss to Fairfield Co. Captains in 15U GHVBL action.



Putnam Valley 1B Dylan Morales makes close put-out on Mahopac's Max Sorrentino in Wolves' 8-0 win in 12U GHVBL action last week.



Hit-N-Run pitcher Sam Mendez was the hard-luck-loser in 2-1 setback against the Fairfield County Captains last Thursday at WPHS.



The 7-1 NW Thunder 9U celebrate a 4-1 win over previously undefeated Mt. Pleasant after Cristian Ormazabal singled home the go-ahead run.

Sports

Lakeland Summer Leagues Serving Vital Purpose for Area Youth



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
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Folks in our neck of the woods have no idea how fortunate they are to have people like Lakeland educators/coaches Sharon Sarsen and Tim Hourahan providing a summer outlet for field hockey preps and boys' soccer players, respectively. Seriously, you have no idea. Every single summer Sarsen -- the most decorated field hockey coach in state history (probably the country) -- and Hourahan -- among the most dedicated soccer coaches in NYS -- provide Section 1 athletes with the chance to play competitive, well-organized, off-season sports in an effort to get them ready for the fall season.

The Lakeland Summer Soccer League and Lakeland Summer Field Hockey League provide a one-of-a-kind opportunity for local communities from Rye (lower Westchester) to Mahopac (Putnam County), and all points in between, to gauge their programs and see what they have returning in September. Not only does it allow local coaches to see their own players in action, it gives them a glimpse of what they're up against once the Section 1 seasons begin in earnest. From the top teams in the league, to those that may be struggling, everybody gets a shot to see what they have and what they need to improve upon.

"I'll tell you this," Hourahan said. "Class A soccer is absolutely loaded again, and the top teams are all playing summer league."

This year, the league added a bunch of teams and has 15 programs playing summer soccer at Lakeland.

"These Class A teams are good and I would be shocked if one of the 10 teams playing in this league from Class A are not in the sectional finals come the end of October, if not two teams," Hourahan said.

Section 1's recent boys' soccer champions return some of the top players and rosters going into 2021. Rye, Byram Hills, Somers and Yorktown all will be considered legitimate title contenders in Class A and all have shown great level of play already in summer league. Eastchester is an up-and-coming team in Class A and has the goods to beat any team this fall on any given day, including summer league wins over Somers and John Jay EF this July.

"There is always a team in Rockland in Class A to contend with, too, and recently it has been Pearl River," Hourahan said, "but I am hearing a bit about Tappan Zee and even Clarkstown North, who just dropped down from AA. There is always Greeley as well, who remains in A, so with 30 total teams it will be one of the most competitive classes in any section in New York. That is for sure, and we have some of the very best getting after it already in our summer league."

If it weren't for coaches like Sarsen and Hourahan, this opportunity would likely not exist, and since my own daughter competes in the summer field hockey league I'd like to take this opportunity to say thanks! Thanks

for going out of your way every single season to do right by our kids. Folks have no idea how fortunate we are to have coaches like these two kicking butt and showing up for all of us...

You wanna know how crazy it's gotten out there when it comes to local sports lunacy, helicopter parents and cuckoo coaches? Sure ya do, because we're almost immune to these yarns about knuckleheads that can't contain their emotions at 8/9U baseball games. These wackadoos think nothing of the fact that a coach in Putnam Valley was tossed for inappropriate behavior against an opposing coach and refusing to leave a field. (This actually happened in a recent Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League game)

Did you hear about that incident between Somers and Putnam Valley? The one where the opposing coaches had to be separated at home plate after exchanging F-bombs; right in front of the impressionable players. (Again, this actually happened in yet another Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League game in early July and these guys are still coaching)

I don't seek these stories out, they find me... but I've seen them first-hand and can attest to the fact that many of these young kids are disgusted by parents' and coaches' behavior and have reached the tipping point in some cases. And it's only going to intensify after the recent rulings regarding NCAA athletes being able to make money by selling the rights to their Name, Image and Likeness, or NIL for short. This new frontier -- thanks to a decision granted by the U.S Supreme Court and the states that are supporting it -- will have a trickle-down effect that could make coaches and parents even nuttier as they attempt to find ways to generate revenue from Junior's likeness.

I recently asked an 11U kid I like, "Hey, where's your dad?" "He's over there," he said, pointing to a distance. I said, "Oh, there he is. I didn't 'hear' him like I usually do." We laughed, and the kid said, "That's because I told him I'm tired of his B.S. and told him to shut up at my games."

Oh, from the mouth of babes. To his credit, the dad actually listened.

Why can't today's parents be more like my parents were in the wee '80s; invisible or silent as night? It is rare, though refreshing, to meet and chat with someone with an old-school mentality.

"My son is learning how to pitch BEFORE he becomes a pitcher; form, release point, follow through... every single thing about the art of pitching," the father of a 12U GHVBL player told me Friday. "This way, when he's strong enough to throw 80-85 pitches, he'll know how to do it. I'm not just going to throw him out there at 12 and tell him to throw the ball as hard as he can to blow dudes away. Learn the ropes first, get stronger along the way, develop good pitching habits, respect your coaches, be a good teammate and then have at it."

With tongue planted firmly in cheek, I replied, "But how can your kid earn a college scholarship with a dad that puts the well-being of his child before his own delusions

of grandeur?"

The well-being of our kids, mentally and physically, is what it's all about. Teaching them how to deal with adversity and how to bounce back from it are the important lessons parents and coaches should be teaching over berating umpires and fellow coaches, so we ALL need to understand and appreciate that it's not about us... it's about the kids. So, pipe down, y'all, and provide an experience that's fun for all and free from negativity.

What we really need is more events like the Brew Crew 12U Invitational, recently sponsored by the Brewster Crush and Brewster Little League. The host Brewster Crush Orange edged the Mahopac Wolves, 3-2, for the title, but it wasn't just about baseball for the organizers, including Coach Mike Subin.

"Our goal was to promote the local baseball communities that are representing their towns proudly with the help of volunteers and local businesses to make an event centered around a sport we consider to be the best in the world," said Subin, the co-director along with Rich Anderson. "We strived to have an event that is positive, fun for parents, players and siblings. We had food trucks, dunk tanks, a home run derby and a live national anthem sung to kick off the event. We invited classy teams and programs; who understand what the true spirit of youth sports is and are helping pave a path forward for boys to become strong,



ROB DIANTONIO PHOTO

Yorktown's Peter Tinaj gets set to rip one of his four goals in Huskers' win over Valhalla last Tuesday in a summer league game.

independent men."

Mahopac Wolves Coach Paul Cotter called the Brew Crew Invite, "The best coaching experience I've had in all my years coaching. Our kids and coaches loved it."

Here, here! #MoreOfThatPlease!

BREW CREW



Members of the Brewster Crush Orange celebrate with their first-place trophies after winning the Brew Crew Invitational Sunday, July 11, including players Mikey Subin, Kaden Anderson, Joey Gileno, Troy Vazquez, Troy Ruggerio (home run derby champ), Beckett Grutzner, Todd Ottly, Aidan Fisher, Mike Connolly (championship game MVP), Alessandro Velardo, Nico Corrado and coaches Mike Subin, Rich Anderson, Al Vazquez and Joe Gileno.

15U Hit-N-Run Club Falls to Fairfield Co., 2-1, in GHVBL



ROB DIANTONIO PHOTO

Hit-N-Run first baseman Matt Davitt makes the catch for the out in 2-1 loss to Fairfield County Captains in 15U Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League action last Thursday at White Plains High School where Jack DiMaggio (8) and bat-chucking Christian Sanchez (inset photos) put some good licks on the ball but could not convert Hit-N-Runs (6-3) chances into more than a single run against the 6-4 Captains... see Focus on GHVBL