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SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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Excluded Workers, Advocates Protest Fund Eligibility Requirements

By Samuel Rowland

An alliance supporting workers excluded from federal stimulus money demanded last week that the state rewrite recently released regulations for workers to access money from a \$2.1 billion fund approved by the state this spring.

The Fund Excluded Workers (FEW) Coalition rallied outside the New York Department of Labor's White Plains offices on Bloomingdale Avenue urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo and state Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon to institute more realistic documentation standards in order to claim funds.

The Excluded Workers Fund provides 50 percent of lost income up to \$15,600 before taxes for Tier One recipients and up to \$3,200 under the less stringent requirements needed for Tier Two.

One of the organizers of the rally, Peekskill Councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo, who is also manager of member engagement in the Hudson Valley for the New York Immigration Coalition, said the level of documentation that is being requested from day laborers and

those who work in the cash economy by the state Department of Labor is unattainable.

The department released its regulations earlier last week in advance of this week's opening of the application process.

"We need regulations that acknowledge these nuances and work to ensure that all workers...have access to the relief they so desperately need and deserve," Agudelo said.

Agudelo estimated that there may be about 20,000 excluded workers who were presumed to be eligible for help in the Hudson Valley alone and as many as 290,000 statewide.

Key issues that the FEW Coalition is contesting is a requirement that applicants must prove a 50 percent income loss, a threshold more restrictive than unemployment insurance, onerous employment documentation and an overly narrow set of documents to prove prior employment, identity and residency.

Janet Rondon, representing the Community Resource Center, said many of those who need the money the most are

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ANDREW COURTNEY PHOTO

Workers gathered outside the state Department of Labor's White Plains office last Friday to protest the stringent regulations that the agency released for applicants to access money from the \$2.1 billion Excluded Workers Fund approved by the legislature in the spring.

Ballard-Durand Funeral Home Unveils 'The White Plains Wall'

By Rick Pezzullo

Ballard-Durand Funeral Home in White Plains unveiled an interactive installation Friday at its Maple Avenue location as a sign of appreciation to the community.

"The White Plains Wall" is a three-panel display designed by local artist Sabrina Crowley to remind residents of their personal strengths and weaknesses.

"This past year has been difficult for everyone, and we've all faced a lot of uncertainties," said Matthew Fiorillo, president and owner of Ballard-Durand. "Uncertainties of identity, of purpose, of capability and other things have all left us feeling weighed down. We wanted to do something to uplift our community and remind them that they are amazing in so many ways."

Two side panels from the piece bear the

prompts "I AM" and "WE ARE." Visitors are encouraged to add to the prompts with descriptions of themselves that make them feel proud, such as their occupation or an adjective or an attribute. Participants can write on a white board and take photos of what they came up with or with the art on the center panel where it states, "You are Amazing."

The wall is available for residents to visit and interact with 24 hours a day through the summer. Visitors are also encouraged to post their photos in front of the wall to Instagram, Facebook or Twitter with the hashtag #whiteplainswall.

"We are so proud to be part of this community, and we hope the wall can be a symbol of just how amazing the people of not only White Plains but all of Westchester County are," Fiorillo said.



The White Plains Wall at Ballard-Durand Funeral Home on Maple Avenue.

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White Plains Hospital Honored as a 'Best Regional Hospital'

By Rick Pezzullo

White Plains Hospital has once again been recognized by U.S. News & World Report as a Best Regional Hospital for 2021/22 – the only hospital in Westchester to receive the accolade for three consecutive years (2019-2021).

In addition to earning Best Regional Hospital, White Plains Hospital ranked as “High Performing” for an array of advanced specialties, including: back surgery, colon cancer surgery, lung cancer surgery, and care for conditions like COPD, diabetes, heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure, pneumonia, and stroke.

“As we learned during the pandemic, having access to advanced medical care close to home is critical in Westchester,” said White Plains Hospital President and CEO Susan Fox. “To once again be honored as a Best Regional Hospital confirms our commitment to supporting the full spectrum of healthcare for the community we serve.”

Fox further noted, “With the opening

of our Center for Advanced Medicine & Surgery in June and the expansion of our cardiac program to include open heart surgery in the fall, White Plains Hospital remains at the forefront of complex care in Westchester County.”

The ratings are based on a rigorous U.S. News methodology that factors in a hospital’s performance in areas such as patient survival and care-related factors such as nursing, technology and patient services, as well as reputation.

White Plains Hospital is a member of the Montefiore Health System. The hospital is a 292-bed not-for-profit health care organization with the primary mission of providing exceptional acute and preventive medical care to all people who live in, work in or visit Westchester County and its surrounding areas. It also has outpatient medical facilities across Westchester, including multispecialty practices in Armonk, New Rochelle, Somers and Yorktown Heights; and Scarsdale Medical Group locations in Harrison and Scarsdale.



Greenburgh Board Declines to Waive Penalties on Late Taxes

By Rick Pezzullo

The Greenburgh Town Board voted last week not to reduce or waive penalties for residents who paid their taxes late because they did not receive a tax bill in the mail because of a computer glitch from a vendor the town hired.

The glitch resulted in more than 1,000 taxpayers not receiving their bills. Supervisor Paul Feiner requested the board take action

to help residents, but board members differed on whether state law allowed local governments to waive penalties.

Feiner said many taxpayers complained to him about being hit with a 5% penalty.

“I am extremely disappointed in the decision,” Feiner stated. “As a result, those who are late in paying their tax bills will continue to see their penalties increase each month unless the bill is paid in full.”

Feiner noted Town Attorney Timothy

Lewis agreed with him the board had the legal right to waive penalties if the waiver was in the best interest of the town, but board members Francis Sheehan, Diana Juettner and Gina Jackson maintained taxpayers were responsible for paying taxes whether they receive bills or not.

Councilman Ken Jones recused himself from voting since he had to pay a late fee

himself.

Feiner asked Lewis to investigate whether the town had any legal leg to stand on against the vendor. In the future, Feiner said the town will order signs that will be placed at key locations reminding taxpayers taxes must be paid by the end of September, January and April.

Excluded Workers, Advocates Protest Fund Eligibility Requirements

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likely to be turned down.

“It is not fair to put higher standards on a fund that has been long waited for,” Rondon said. “It’s not fair that at this point, days from the program to be launched, we are now struggling to produce documents that we’re not able to have access to, not because we don’t want to, it’s because employers don’t produce employment letters, it’s because employers don’t want to acknowledge that they hire immigrant workers.”

State Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers), a supporter of the bill that created the fund, attended and spoke at the rally. She said the Department of Labor last week released the list of documents needed to be considered to recover money from the fund, with each document assigned a point value. Eligible excluded workers must accumulate a certain number of points in certain categories to qualify.

For example, a passport is valid document but a letter from a consulate is not.

Mayer said she and other lawmakers are trying to convince Department of Labor officials to rework the regulations, which were intended to exercise prudence to prevent fraud but also provide flexibility.

“They’ve made rules that are too strict and are not justified by what we did,” Mayer said. “We know what we were fighting for –

excluded workers. Excluded workers cannot be excluded from the Excluded Workers Fund by rules that are too strict and don’t reflect the reality of your work.”

Roberto Zumba, worker center and outreach coordinator for Neighbors Link, said thousands of workers would be shut out from the funds unless changes are made.

Several workers spoke during the rally about their experiences trying to provide for themselves and their families through the pandemic. Cecilia Sanchez, a single mother of two children from Port Chester, said she will likely be excluded.

“I am here to represent all those women that are here in Westchester that couldn’t clean up the houses that they were cleaning because no one wants us to be in their houses,” Sanchez said. “We lost our jobs. We lost our food to feed our family. And most of us have to live in another place because we couldn’t afford our rents. So please help us.”

The Excluded Workers Fund passed by the legislature was a compromise from an initial proposal that was on par with the maximum \$600 a week supplement to unemployment benefits. In early June, representatives from immigrant rights organizations staged a 23-day hunger strike involving about 70 New York residents before the legislation was approved.

Martin Wilbur contributed to this article.

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Cuomo Urges Local Gov't, Private Businesses to Slow COVID Spread

By Martin Wilbur

Gov. Andrew Cuomo urged local governments on Monday to institute a mask-wearing policy and for private businesses to run a vaccine-only establishment for admittance in many circumstances in hopes of stopping an explosion of COVID-19 infections.

Fueled by the Delta variant, COVID cases in New York State quadrupled from July 1 to Aug. 1 and virus-related hospitalizations more than doubled from 349 to 788 in that same period.

Cuomo was adamant that local governments should set policies for masks patterned after the latest guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for their employees and visitors to municipal grounds before the situation becomes more serious.

"Local governments, you should adopt that CDC mask guidance," the governor said. "Learn the lesson from last year. Don't deny the reality. Better safe than sorry."

He then said it is likely that a mask mandate will be inadequate and that at some point a vaccination policy would have to be considered.

Cuomo applauded the MTA and Port Authority of New York and New Jersey for requiring that all of their New York employees get vaccinated or take a weekly COVID-19 test by Labor Day. The state government has already introduced the policy and called on local governments to follow suit for all public-facing employees, Cuomo mentioned.

He also strongly recommended that school districts act similarly, requiring teachers to get vaccinated or get tested regularly, particularly if the district is in a high-risk area as defined by the CDC.

"School opens in one month," Cuomo said. "If you don't set a policy today, you're going to have chaos when school opens because it will be impossible for a teacher to get the two shots done (in time)."

With the state of emergency having expired on June 24, Cuomo is unable to mandate any of these potential steps except for state employees and facilities. State-run hospitals also require vaccinations of all employees who work directly with the public.

Instead, the state legislature would have to come back into session and approve a law that would once again declare a state of emergency or provide the governor with powers to make those decisions.

The jump in cases comes as 75.5 percent of New York's adult population 18 years old and up have received at least once vaccine dose, according to the latest figures from the state's vaccine tracker.

On Sunday, the state's 10 regions as defined on the COVID-19 tracker ranged from the lowest positivity rate of 2.4 percent in Western New York to a high of 4.4 percent in Central New York. The Mid Hudson region, which includes Westchester and Putnam County, was at a 2.6 percent infection rate.

The seven-day rolling average saw the North Country with the state's low of 2 percent while the Capital Region registered a high of 3.6 percent.

Port Authority Executive Director Rick Cotton said the agency is ramping up its efforts

to get all employees vaccinated. Management is consulting with the Port Authority's unions on how best to convince those who have yet to be vaccinated to get the shot, he said.

John Lieber, chief development officer for the MTA, said that it is imperative that all of its employees are vaccinated. There have been 168 MTA workers who died from COVID-19, overwhelmingly in the early months of the pandemic. Currently, just under 70 percent of its workforce is vaccinated, he said.

"At the MTA, we have no higher priority than the health and safety of our workforce,"



CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Lieber said. "The new vaccination and testing mandate is being introduced to make sure that our employees are as protected as possible from the Delta variant as

the city's and the region's economy picks up speed."

Passengers on all public transportation are required to wear masks in order to travel.

Cuomo said private businesses, particularly restaurants and bars, should welcome the vaccination, calling it "in your business interest to run a vaccine-only establishment." Radio City Music Hall has required vaccinations since it reopened in

June and has had few, if any, problems, and the state's sports stadiums and arenas were able to open its doors, he said.

The governor said health officials will continue to monitor the rise in cases and act accordingly. He cited statistics that it is more than four times more likely for an unvaccinated person to be infected than someone who is vaccinated and that 1.25 cases per 100,000 unvaccinated people land in the hospital compared with .19 per 100,000 vaccinated individuals.

"Everything should be on the table, and we should start talking about it now because if these numbers rise and they start to rise quickly, it can't be that we're not ready to do more," Cuomo said.

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Social Media Sensation Bear 211 Dies After Being Hit By Car

By Martin Wilbur

A black bear that shuttled between towns in Connecticut and Armonk in Westchester County this spring and summer was hit by a car early Monday evening and had to be euthanized.

Bear 211 was struck by a vehicle on Route 136 near Wilson Road in Easton, Conn. at about 6:19 p.m. on July 26, the town's police chief, Richard Doyle, stated in a release the following day. When officers responded, they found the bear was suffering from serious injuries, which forced authorities to put him down.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) was notified and responded to remove the bear. The vehicle involved in the accident left the scene before the officers' arrival.

There had been multiple sightings of Bear 211 on both sides of the New York-Connecticut state line. It had been tagged by DEEP earlier this spring and was seen wearing a pink tag on each ear with the number 211. Doyle said the bear weighed about 125 pounds.

Over the past two months, Bear 211 had collected a large online following, even having his own Facebook page created with more than 6,000 followers to track his whereabouts and share stories of sightings.

Posters expressed their condolences on the page following the news. Some blamed his demise on the driver while



A photo of Bear 211 during one of his many sightings. He was hit by a car on July 26 in Easton, Conn. and had to be put down.

others criticized their neighbors' refusal to take down their bird feeders, one popular source of food for bears in this region, and allowing him to be acclimated to humans.

"Our friend has gone on to another world," said poster Daniel Dwyer, who said he had visited his house four times despite yelling and tossing a watering can at him. "Let's not waste time blaming each other,

the driver that hit him or anyone we think is partially at fault for this unfortunate chain of events."

Fairfield, Conn. resident Allison Stein wrote on the page that the bear visited during a party for her son's fourth birthday last Saturday, where he played on a splashpad in the backyard, chewed a flip-flop and climbed into the hammock.

"Truly amazing experience - he is definitely humanized," Stein wrote on the page on Monday before the accident. "When I first spotted him, he was about 30 feet away from my kids who were on the splash pad. He kept sauntering up and wasn't phased (sic) by my yelling/running towards the kids to get them inside."

A few weeks ago, officials in North Castle had cautioned the public after multiple sightings in late June and early July to remove all sources of potential food, including bird feeders and pet food, and to make sure to properly cover trash cans.

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Masks Required for Westchester Office Buildings, Parks and Pools

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said Monday that everyone who enters a county office building will be required to wear a mask and in most situations at Westchester's three public beaches and four swimming pools.

"When we look at where we are in comparison to where we were a month ago, it's clear that this is a steady rise and we know that these numbers will continue to go up unless we take certain efforts and certain activities," Latimer said.

However, while he called mask wearing in county buildings "a necessity" given the sharp recent rise in COVID-19 cases, Latimer stopped short of mandating vaccinations for the county workforce. He explained that making the vaccine compulsory will do little to convince those who have yet to get the vaccine even though demand for the shots have slackened.

The county will survey its workforce to get an idea about what percentage are vaccinated and to convince the hesitant and resistant to change their minds.

"We understand that some people may not want to tell us one way or the other," Latimer said. "We have to treat them as if they're unvaccinated."

Latimer made the announcement as



Westchester County Executive George Latimer has taken the step of requiring people entering county buildings, beaches and pools to wear face masks as active cases mushroom.

active COVID-19 cases have jumped to 1,225 in Westchester through Sunday, up from 196 on July 1.

The encouraging part of the latest is that there are currently only 28 virus-related hospitalizations throughout Westchester and that figure has yet to exceed 30 on any given day, he said. In early July, there were just six hospitalizations, the lowest since the start of the pandemic.

Throughout the entire month of July there were three fatalities in the county from the coronavirus.

The mask mandate for county buildings also comes as the county officially hit the 80 percent vaccinated level as of Monday. Eight out of 10 adults at least 18 years old have received at least one vaccine, joining Manhattan and Nassau County in reaching that threshold.

County the entire population, including children, 67 percent of Westchester residents are vaccinated. Children under 12 still cannot be vaccinated and youngsters between 12 and 18 years old can only receive the Pfizer vaccine.

In addition to county buildings, Latimer said the other facilities where they will be required when entering, leaving or circulating at the Playland, Croton Point Park and Glen Island beaches, which Westchester owns and operates, and at the Saxon Woods, Sprain Ridge Park, Tibbetts Brook Park and Willson Woods pools.

If patrons at any of those facilities are sitting in their blanket or chair with family

or friends or in the water, they are not required to wear a mask. Otherwise, they must wear a face covering.

Face masks are not needed at the six county golf courses or at any of the other more passive parks, trails or nature centers, Latimer said.

No decision has been made about whether to mandate masks at Playland amusement park. Employees at Playland are required to wear masks, but over the weekend enough patrons had voluntarily put on face coverings where currently it is not an issue, Latimer said.

Latimer cautioned that while to some residents, returning to wearing masks in certain situations may there is currently no plan for more stringent measures.

"The fear that we're going to see big closings of businesses or reducing the number of people that can go to work or enjoy other activities is not where we are today," Latimer said. "So, let's be clear, we have not reached that point of crisis that warrants that type of severe measures."

Latimer mentioned that on Monday, the county resumed its conference calls with the county's school superintendents to review how districts are faring. Most schools reopen early this year on or about Sept. 1.

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School Bus Cameras Explored to Prevent Drivers From Passing Illegally

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi hopes to have cameras affixed to a limited number of school buses serving the Valhalla School District in hopes of deterring motorists from passing the buses when discharging and picking up students.

During a recent forum with residents, Fulgenzi said several parents noted the high frequency of impatient drivers looking to move around the buses when stopped, particularly on the routes that include Columbus Avenue.

Fulgenzi said he is meeting with the town's police department and will speak with Stotz Garage, which provides the transportation for Valhalla schools, about installing a stop arm camera on a few buses. He said only buses that use Columbus Avenue would only need to be equipped with the device.

"That's the area that we have a concern with, a lot of different areas there with kids getting off the school bus, or people using mass transportation there," Fulgenzi said. "There are a number of crosswalks there and people seem to be disregarding them, not paying attention."

He said it's unclear whether the perpetrators are area drivers who believe they have license to violate the law because of the width of the street or whether there are other factors involved.

The supervisor is hopeful that if word



gets out that school buses on Columbus Avenue would be equipped with a camera that it could discourage drivers from the illegal and dangerous practice.

Dennis Spinelli, a longtime driver and mechanic at Stotz Garage, said the problem of motorists passing stopped school buses has reached near epidemic proportions. There are as many as 50,000 occurrences of drivers passing stopped school buses throughout the state each school day, he said.

Drivers are accustomed to rolling

through stop signs and ignoring other rules of the road so it figures that this would be a problem as well, Spinnelli said.

He said he has noticed that the yellow lights and stop sign that swings out from a bus is seen 200 to 300 feet away but as a driver gets closer it becomes less apparent.

"When you're close to the bus, you're looking straight ahead, you're not looking up in the air to look at these things," he said.

Spinelli said the cameras, which he

estimates cost about \$1,000 each, are generally placed on the edge or in the middle of the stop sign that protrudes from the bus when the driver opens the door. It could help capture evidence showing which vehicles are involved in the incidents, but the fines are too light in many jurisdictions, he said. In Yonkers, for example, it's a \$50 ticket.

In one incident, Spinelli said he has a video of a driver that went up onto the sidewalk to get around a stopped school bus.

He said the technology is relatively new but there have been some drawbacks, including trying to install it on older buses.

"It's one thing if it comes as an option on the bus, but if you have to put it on after your bus is already in the yard, that becomes a problem," Spinelli said.

He would prefer school bus drivers be allowed to stop on a road's double yellow line on certain streets and for the back of buses to be reconfigured so drivers can more easily recognize that a bus is picking up or discharging passengers.

Fulgenzi said he hopes to confer with the town's police department and reach out to Stotz Garage to see if it's feasible. If it is, he would like to see the cameras installed this upcoming school year.

"If it can prevent one incident it will be worthwhile," Fulgenzi said.

Messages left with the Mount Pleasant Police Department were not returned.



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Putnam Health Dept., Cornell Cooperative Extension Partner on Composting

Backyard composting is an easy way to reduce household trash, save money and improve the environment.

In as little as 10 minutes a week, kitchen scraps and yard waste can be turned into a useful soil addition and a garden can be enriched without chemical fertilizers. There is no one way to accomplish this.

But now the Putnam County Department of Health and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam are partnering to make it easier, offering residents easy-to-follow instructions and a reduced-price Earth Machine model compost bin to boot.

"If you have ever considered backyard composting and didn't know where to start, we are here to help, to make it easier and more affordable for you," said Jen Lerner, a longtime Cornell Cooperative educator and experienced composter herself.

"A quick-start guide for composting is available on our website and we are happy to answer any questions that may come up," Lerner added. "Composting is good for the environment and your pocketbook, because you don't need to spend money on expensive fertilizer."

The county Health Department, working with Cornell Cooperative, is offering the Earth Machine compost bin for sale at a reduced cost of \$65, compared to similar compost bins that normally retail for \$80 to \$100. Compost bins can be ordered online at www.putnamcountyny.com/recycling.

"Moving this food waste out of the



Composting is simple biology, the managed decomposition of organic matter. The composter creates a healthy place for microorganisms to do their job.

garbage and into a backyard composter not only reduces household trash, but it also protects the environment in multiple ways," said Jane Meunier, who works at the Health Department and coordinates solid waste management, an estimated 20 percent or more of household garbage is food.

"On top of a reduction in fertilizer use, there are lighter loads for garbage collection, less energy needed for incineration, and

lower levels of greenhouse gases coming from food waste that would end up in a landfill."

Personal home benefits include odor-free trash and cost savings for trash bag purchases.

Victoria DiLorenzo, the Health Department's recycling educator, said composting isn't very difficult.

"It involves balancing 'greens,' 'browns'

and moisture," she said "Greens are kitchen scraps like fruit and vegetable peels, coffee grounds, eggshells and dry grains, as well as green yard trimmings. Browns include dried leaves, small twigs, sawdust and shredded newspaper."

Once assembled, the decomposing organisms get to work. To learn more about the basics, get a copy of the quick-start guide for composting at putnam.cce.cornell.edu/gardening/compost-resources. Finished compost can then be used in flower or vegetable gardens. Mixed in with soil or laid on top like mulch, compost provides nutrients for plants and improves the texture of the soil.

For those who would first like to see composting in action, there is an opportunity to visit and view the Earth Machine and garden on the western perimeter of the building at 1 Geneva Rd., home to Cornell Cooperative of Putnam, the Health Department and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

At that location, employees compost lunch food scraps. The flower and vegetable garden, found just off the DMV parking lot, is nourished by the rich compost created in the Earth Machine.

Anyone with questions can e-mail putnamrecycles@putnamcountyny.gov or call 845-808-1390 for the Health Department or 845-278-6738 for Cornell Cooperative Extension.

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ESTOPPEL NOTICE

On June 14, 2021, the Board of Trustees of the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York (the "Village") adopted a Bond Resolution, a summary of which is published herewith, and the validity of the obligations authorized by such resolution may be hereafter contested only if such obligations were authorized for an object or purpose for which the Village is not authorized to expend money or the provisions of law which should have been complied with as of the date of publication of this notice were not substantially complied with, and an action, suit or proceeding contesting such validity is commenced within twenty (20) days after the date of publication of this notice, or such obligations were authorized in violation of the provisions of the New York State Constitution.

Summary of Bond Resolution

1. Objects or Purposes - the reconstruction and improvement of Manville Road, including sidewalks, curbs, gutters, drainage, landscaping and grading or improving the rights of way, with flexible pavement of a type described in the Local Finance Law Section 11(a) (20)(c), including surveys, preliminary plans and detailed plans, specifications and estimates required in connection therewith at a new maximum cost of \$4,000,000 of which \$1,400,000 is authorized by the Bond Resolution herein summarized.

2. Period of Probable Usefulness - fifteen (15) years, computed from the date of the first bond anticipation note issued in anticipation of the Bonds or the serial bonds or bond anticipation notes authorized pursuant to the Bond Resolution of the Village adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Village of July 22, 2019 (the "Original Bond Resolution"), whichever date is earlier.

3. Maximum Amount of Obligations to be Issued - the maximum amount of obligations to be issued for the objects or purposes described above is \$4,000,000 of which \$2,600,000 was previously authorized by the Original Bond Resolution and \$1,400,000 is authorized by the Bond Resolution adopted June 14, 2021.

The Bond Resolution herein summarized shall be available for public inspection during normal business hours for twenty (20) days following the date of publication of this notice at the office of the Village Clerk of the Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York.

The Bond Resolution was adopted subject to a permissive referendum. The period of time has elapsed for the submission and filing of a petition for a permissive referendum and a valid petition has not been submitted and filed.

Alyssa Hochstein, Deputy Village Clerk
Village of Pleasantville, Westchester County, New York

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Obituary

Catherine Devlin

Editor's Note: This obituary is being reprinted upon request of the decedent's family.

Catherine Flynn Devlin Jr., a longtime Mount Kisco resident, died Jan. 28 after a long illness. She was 79.

Affectionately known as "Cappy," she was born on Nov. 6, 1941 in the Bronx to Robert H. Devlin Sr. and Catherine Flynn Devlin. Cappy graduated from Manhattanville College with a bachelor's in economics, where she continued to be an active alumna.

Following her graduation, she held various positions in public relations and journalism at Reader's Digest and Ticketron. A three-month trip to Europe inspired her to establish Cappy's Travel and Cappy Devlin International, Inc. in Mount Kisco and Manhattan in 1973. Her motto and passion was "The world is open to you. Experience it." She was well known for her entrepreneurial skills, which enabled her to operate her travel business for over 40 years while navigating a changing industry – including developing a patented travel kiosk, building an online travel business and hosting a live travel radio show in her 70s. She relished bringing the joy of travel to clients.

In 1973, she co-founded Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, a pioneering international travel and exchange program for youth, which is still in operation today. Highlights include gaining admission to communist China with Brown University



Catherine Devlin

choral students and meeting Mother Teresa in India, who remained a lifelong inspiration for her.

Cappy enjoyed spending time with friends and family. Although self-described as "shy," she was always the life of the party with a love for music, dancing and champagne.

She was predeceased by her parents, her sister, Loretta (Robin), and her brother, Robert (Rick). She is survived by her brother, Dennis, many nieces and nephews, friends and former colleagues.

A memorial funeral Mass will be held at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Mount Kisco on Saturday, Aug. 14 at 11:30 a.m.

Police Blotter

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

July 22: Patrol received a report from a village resident at 7:52 p.m. who reported they were scammed out of more than \$3,000 in a retail shopping scam. The resident joined a secret shopper program where you keep a portion of the fee. The company, named True West, sent her two checks for her transactions. Then they were told to cash both checks, keep a portion for themselves and then use the remaining funds to purchase eBay gift cards at local CVS and Walgreens.

Once they purchased the gift cards, she was to scratch them off and send pictures of the numbers to the company who sent the check. The company who "hired" her told her that they were doing this on behalf of eBay, because it wanted to see how their cards were displayed at these stores and how staff was treating customers. Report to be filed.

July 23: Patrols responded and canvassed areas near the Croton River at 10:17 p.m. after another police agency was notified of a missing person out of their jurisdiction. The parties had told a family member they were going kayaking in the Croton River. The parties were located outside of the village.

July 25: Patrols responded to an area on South Riverside Avenue after receiving

a report of a party panhandling in front of a commercial establishment at 9:51 p.m. The party was found to have three bench warrants out of another Westchester jurisdiction. Patrols took a 63-year-old homeless resident into custody. He was released to the originating police agency.

North Castle Police Department


July 27: A party walked arrived at headquarters at 10:45 a.m. to report that he had previously spoken with the Westchester County district attorney's office regarding a matter. Party stated that an attorney that had been responsible for a trust in his mother's name stole about \$44,000 after his mother passed.

Yorktown Police Department

July 24: Omar Abulteen, 32, of Yonkers, was arrested at 9:41 a.m. and charged with petty larceny after allegedly leaving the CVS on Commerce Street without paying for merchandise he had in his possession and leaving the scene in a vehicle.


July 24: Destiny Diaz, 30, of Peekskill, was served with a criminal summons for harassment at 10:20 p.m. in connection with a June 29 incident at Underhill Plaza. She allegedly spit at, punched and slapped a victim in the face and head.

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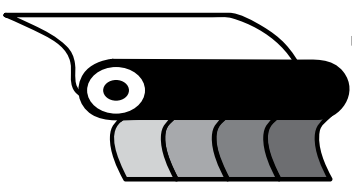
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NRC Hears Concerns on Indian Point Decommissioning Plan

By Rick Pezzullo

The federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) held a public meeting in Tarrytown last week to receive comments on a decommissioning report for the closed Indian Point nuclear power plant in Buchanan.

Holtec, which took over ownership of the facility in late May, submitted a Post-Shutdown Decommissioning Activities Report on Dec. 19, 2019, but the NRC only began a formal review of the plan two months ago.

The report details Holtec's immediate dismantlement approach and anticipated completion of the process within about 15 years.

Located on the former 240-acre site of an amusement park in Buchanan, Unit 1 first went into service in 1962. Unit 2 took over in 1974 before being shut down last year, while Unit 3 had operated since 1976. Unit 3 permanently closed on Apr. 30.

In 2017, Entergy, New York State and Riverkeeper stunned local officials when they announced the two operating nuclear reactors at Indian Point would close. In November 2019, Entergy and Holtec filed an application for license transfer with the NRC.

Then in January 2020, the NRC announced that it was considering approval of an application by Entergy to transfer the Indian Point license – and the facility's trust funds to pay for decommissioning – to Holtec to implement the facility's decommissioning. The NRC approved the sale last November.

Bruce Watson, chief of the reactor decommissioning branch of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, told the audience of about 50 onlookers at the Sleepy Hollow Hotel and Conference Center on July 29 there was currently \$2.4 billion in a decommissioning trust fund that Holtec could tap into.

"Holtec can use the site for whatever purpose after decommissioning ends, except for where the dry cask storage is located," Watson said.

Watson also maintained the thin-walled cannisters used to store the spent nuclear fuel rods on the property were designed to withstand the impact of an airplane crash.

Manna Jo Greene, an Ulster County legislator and environmental director for

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, questioned why thicker cannisters that are used in Europe were not being planned by Holtec and suggested indoor storage be explored.

Cortlandt Councilman James Creighton urged the NRC not to allow Holtec to scale back security protocols.

"We only have one shot to get this right," Creighton said. "Security has to be permanent. We have to plan and be prepared for every scenario. You have to assure that no corner is cut."

Several other elected officials, including Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi and state Sen. Pete Harkham (D-Lewisboro),

addressed the NRC at a government-to-government session earlier in the day.

Puglisi suggested a 24-hour hotline be established to allow local officials, oversight boards and residents to file complaints about decommissioning activities. She also criticized the NRC for not scheduling a public forum before Holtec was chosen.

Indian Point was the largest employer in the Village of Buchanan and Town of Cortlandt. In a few years, Buchanan stands to lose 46 percent of its operating budget, about \$4 million, while the Hendrick Hudson School District will lose \$24 million annually (33 percent of its budget).

Other affected entities are the Town of Cortlandt (\$800,000), Westchester County (\$1 million), the Hendrick Hudson Free Library (\$394,110, 28 percent of its budget) and the Verplanck Fire District (\$372,703 or 64 percent of its budget).

Holtec has agreed to provide job opportunities for more than 300 of Entergy's current employees at Indian Point and honor the collective bargaining agreements that apply to all the workers at the facility.

Residents have until Oct. 22 to submit comments to the NRC about the decommissioning plan.

Mount Pleasant IDA Approves Incentives for 16-Unit Building in Hawthorne

The Mount Pleasant Industrial Development Agency (IDA) voted at its July 29 meeting to approve financial incentives for the construction of a three-story building with 16 apartments and underground parking located at 500 Commerce St. in Hawthorne.

The residential project, which received preliminary approval at the IDA's June 2 meeting, represents total private investment of \$7.3 million. The project, which is considered an important step toward the revitalization of Commerce Street between Hawthorne and Thornwood, is expected to create 40 construction jobs.

In addition, it will generate significant tax revenue for the Mount Pleasant School District and town.

The IDA approved a sales tax exemption estimated at \$290,000.

The project, which is located near the Hawthorne Metro-North train station, is being built on the site of the former Victor's Bar & Grill. The building will enhance the streetscape along Commerce Street with the addition of new sidewalks.

The three-story, 36,275-square-foot multifamily building is being built by local developer John Piazza. It will contain four one-bedroom units and 12 two-bedroom units.

"This development perfectly aligns with our Master Plan for revitalizing the



An architect's rendering of the proposed project for 500 Commerce St. in Hawthorne. It will feature 16 apartments and underground parking.

Commerce Street corridor," said Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi, who also serves as IDA chairman. "People have been talking about creating a revitalized and walkable corridor along Commerce Street. Now with this exciting new project we are taking significant and meaningful steps toward making that a reality."

The Town Board will reconvene the

public hearing to hear comments on the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) for the Form-Based Zoning Code and Comprehensive Plan at its meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 10. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. at Town Hall located at 1 Town Hall Plaza in Valhalla.

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Letters to the Editor

State Must Allow Municipal Boards the Flexibility to Meet Virtually

The spread of the Delta variant and reports of breakthrough infections have vaccinated and non-vaccinated people feeling nervous. For the non-vaccinated the risk of death or hospitalization is high.

Local governments, including Greenburgh, are doing what we can to encourage people to get vaccinated. Greenburgh started the VAXUP Westchester initiative months ago – a follow up to the nationally acclaimed Covid Angels program –

helping people get vaccinated. I have found that many people still do not take COVID-19 seriously. I attended an event sponsored by a private organization a few days ago that was held indoors. Only a few people out of a few hundred wore masks. No one asked anyone if they were vaccinated or not.

One way for the state and local governments to highlight the seriousness of

the Delta variant would be to act differently. Over a month ago, the governor directed that Zoom meetings of municipal boards (town, city, village, school boards, planning and zoning boards and other advisory boards) be held live, not remotely.

I believe that the governor and/or state legislature should authorize local governments to continue Zoom meetings if they desire. Some board members might want to meet at the municipal buildings. Others might feel more comfortable meeting remotely via Zoom.

Many of our boards include volunteers – some of whom have medical issues. Allowing these board members to meet via Zoom would encourage their participation.

Paul Feiner
Greenburgh Town Supervisor

Pocantico Lake Park 31-Home Subdivision Would Be a Mistake

As wildfires engulf communities, water sources run dry and haze reaches as far east as Westchester County, my peers and I are grappling with grief. It's a grief built on concern for the natural spaces we love and feel powerless to protect.

In our 20s, as we make steps toward creating a future for ourselves and our friends, it's a grief magnified by blurring visions of our loved ones being able to lead healthy lives – now and in the future.

When I heard about the potential real estate development on the shores of Pocantico Lake ("Proposed Subdivision at Pocantico Lake Park Would Degrade a County Jewel"), my heart sank. If even our beloved local parks are under threat, will any life-sustaining ecosystems be

protected? I urge all of our elected officials, at all levels of government, to make forward-thinking choices and to protect the natural spaces your constituents cherish. This starts by demanding a full and complete environmental review of the proposed 31-home subdivision.

To my friends and neighbors, I urge you to take a walk or jog along the shore of Pocantico Lake sometime this week. Join me in efforts to protect this beautiful spot, for the health of Westchester residents and wildlife alike.

Charlotte Hill
Pleasantville

There Have Been Inexcusable Abuses Against Many Groups of People

Over the last several weeks there have been many letters and articles concerning Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) in our communities and school systems.

The history of the world as we know it is fraught with actions that we should not be proud of.

Slavery was and is not solely a U.S. institution. Slavery continues today in many areas of the world. In the Americas, slavery was also condoned in Mexico, Central America and some of the South American countries. It must be pointed out that in African nations, tribes held in slavery members of other tribes as well as selling prisoners, slaves to slavers, who transported these purchased slaves to other parts of the world. Some Native American tribes in North America enslaved members of other tribes as well as people of African ancestry.

Discrimination was also widespread. In the U.S. during our continuing history there has been discrimination against

immigrants from Ireland, Italy, eastern Europe, China, East Asia, Africa, Central and South America and the Arabian Peninsula, etc. There has also been discrimination in various parts of our world against Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, etc.

Let us not forget about the Chinese laborers who suffered interminable cruelty in the west building the railroads or the oppression foisted upon the Native Americans, including the Aleuts.

We can search history and find intolerable abuse against most ethnicities and religions. Perhaps we should look to the future. If not, based on what I have read, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion should be redesignated Diversity, Equity & Exclusion except for one race and Critical Race Theory should be redesignated Critical Singular Race Theory.

Jay Kopstein
Yorktown Heights

Maria Fareri to Hold Bike Safety and Helmet Check Event

Maria Fareri Children's Hospital will hold a bike safety and helmet checkpoint to educate families on the proper fit of bicycle helmets at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla on Tuesday, Aug. 10 from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Injury prevention experts will answer questions about proper use of bike helmets and will share other bicycle safety tips. Riding without a bicycle helmet or with an improperly fitting one significantly increases the risk of

sustaining a head injury in the event of a crash, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

At this free community event, experts from Maria Fareri Children's Hospital will demonstrate proper bicycle helmet use and fit. No appointment is required. Children of all ages and their parents or caregivers are welcome.

A limited supply of free helmets will be available. In case of rain, the event will be postponed.

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Open Door to Give Students a Fresh Start for the New School Year

Open Door Family Medical Center, in collaboration with MVP Health Care, will celebrate National Health Center Week by providing free backpacks, notebooks and pencils to all schoolchildren who come in for a visit next week.

The celebration and back to school giveaway will take place at its health centers throughout Westchester and Putnam counties.

The giveaway will take place Aug. 9-14 at Open Door's medical and dental sites in Ossining, Mamaroneck, Mount Kisco, Port Chester, Sleepy Hollow and Brewster and at its school-based health centers in Ossining and Port Chester.

Open Door hopes the week will encourage families to bring children in for their medical and dental visits, immunizations, important health and developmental screenings, COVID-19 vaccines (for children 12 and up), sports physicals and more.

"This is an opportunity to celebrate the work of community health care centers here and around the country that provide a safety net for their patients, but also a time to support the children in our local communities who have experienced so many challenges over the past year because of the pandemic," said Grace Battaglia, marketing director at Open Door.

"We recognize that during the past year many children were forced to miss out on regular health screenings, where wellness visits lapsed, where schools, a place where many of our young patients depend on not

only for their education but also for their meals and physical activity, were open for in-person learning one day and remote the next," she added. "We want to kick off the new school year by getting the kids in our communities excited for what we hope will be a happy, healthy 2021-2022 school year."

MVP Health Care Medical director and pediatrician Dr. Kristen Navarette said community health centers are an essential cornerstone to supporting the health and well-being of children.

"The pandemic has undoubtedly left a gap between the care kids need and the care they are receiving," Navarette said. "We are so proud to partner with Open Door to help them celebrate National Health Center Week and to shine a light on the high-quality services that health centers can provide to families and children ahead of a return to school this fall."

Since the nation's first health centers opened in 1965, expansion to more than 1,400 organizations have created an affordable health care option for more than 29 million Americans. Health centers help increase access to crucial primary care by reducing such barriers as cost, lack of instance and language for their patients.

The National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) was founded in 1971 to promote efficient, high quality, comprehensive health care that is accessible, culturally and linguistically competent, community directed, and patient centered for all.

Chappaqua Swim & Tennis Raises \$71G for Cancer Research

Ninety-two swimmers, including Nicole Weyne, 11, left, and Reilly Winnegar, 10, made waves against cancer by helping to raise more than \$71,000 at the 10th annual Swim Across America pool fundraiser at Chappaqua Swim & Tennis on July 18. In the past decade, the swim and tennis club has raised over \$500,000 for cancer research and support services. Proceeds from the swim will support the Swim Across America research lab; Dr. Luis Diaz and the MSK Kids Department of Pediatrics at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; pediatric oncology research at Morgan Stanley Columbia University Medical Center; and patient services with the Cancer Support Team.



Prostate Cancer: The News is Good

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Ask the Doctor

Warren Bromberg, MD, FACS

Chief, Urology Division

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Northern Westchester Hospital

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Q: Am I at risk for prostate cancer?

A: Approximately 15 percent of men develop prostate cancer – one to two out of 10. Its prevalence increases with age. Risk factors include family history, obesity, smoking, a diet high in animal fats, and being of African-American descent.

Q: What symptoms should I look out for?

How are men diagnosed?

A: Most men with early-stage prostate cancer have no symptoms. The only way to detect the disease in its earliest and most treatable stage is through a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test. The higher the amount of PSA in a man's blood, the greater the likelihood prostate cancer is present. Through the PSA test, we are finding earlier and less advanced prostate cancer. As a result, far fewer men develop the advanced stage of the disease with metastasis (spreading). At-risk men should start getting tested annually at age 40; all others should be screened annually from ages 50-70 and then selectively thereafter.

Q: What happens if prostate cancer is found?

A: For low risk prostate cancer (based on the aggressiveness of the cancer) about 40% of men can begin a program of active surveillance, which involves close monitoring with PSA, exams and at times, MRI

imaging. When the cancer is of intermediate or high risk, robotic surgery to remove the prostate or some form of radiation is advised. Robotic surgery is performed under general anesthesia with a few small incisions, an overnight stay in the hospital, and return to normal activities in a few weeks.

Recent advances in radiation allow treatment to be administered daily for just one to four weeks. SpaceOAR hydrogel may be temporarily implanted between the prostate and the rectum before radiation to reduce the side effects of treatment.

Q: What about the possible side effects of prostate surgery that many men worry about most – incontinence and erectile dysfunction (ED)?

A: While national rates for post-surgery incontinence are 10 to 20 percent, rates at NWH are one to two percent. As for ED, nerve-sparing surgical techniques can preserve the crucial nerves needed for normal sexual function in the majority of cases. But if ED occurs, the good news is, it's treatable.

Learn more about Dr. Bromberg, visit nwh.northwell.edu/Bromberg

Mt. Pleasant to Host National Purple Heart Day Observance This Weekend

By Martin Wilbur

Ask someone randomly when National Purple Heart Day is and there's a pretty good chance you won't get the correct answer.

Hawthorne American Legion Post 112 is trying to change that along with honoring many of the local Purple Heart recipients.

This Saturday afternoon, Aug. 7, it will commemorate National Purple Heart Day with a celebration at Mount Pleasant Town Hall in Valhalla. In fact, Post 112 Commander Peter Fiumefreddo has turned the event into a full weekend observance to honor those who served the country, and especially those who sacrificed to earn the Purple Heart.

"They really don't get the recognition," Fiumefreddo said. "August 7 is Purple Heart Day, but they should be honored. They were all in combat. So, like the Medal of Honor, they should be honored."

Originally, he and the Legion had included a parade from to kick off at about noon on Saturday that would stretch from the Community Center in Valhalla to Mount Pleasant Town Hall. However, the parade had to be canceled after the Legion announced it wouldn't be supplying military band personnel for various parades, Fiumefreddo said.

Still, the weekend will start on Friday evening with a Mount Pleasant Purple Heart dinner dance at Westchester Manor



Caterers in Hastings-on-Hudson at 7 p.m. Then on Saturday afternoon, the events will continue with a get-together of food and music performed by actor and singer Louis Vanaria and Joann Robertozzi on the grounds of Mount Pleasant Town Hall. The public is invited to attend.

On Sunday at 11:30 a.m., the weekend will conclude with a Mass at Holy Rosary Church in Hawthorne to bless Medal of Honor and Purple Heart recipients.

Vietnam veteran Eugene Parrotta, the CEO and executive director of the downstate chapter of Purple Heart Homes, an organization that builds and fixes residences for veterans, said working on scheduling the events for this weekend with Fiumefreddo, reminds him that there are people who put the uniform on and bled and died for the country.

For those who didn't serve, it may seem like ancient history, he said.

"We're trying to reach out to people who don't know," Parrotta said. "We have to keep reminding people that this is what happened because the farther you get away from that foundation of this is why we put the uniform on, this is what happens, this is why we did this."

Fiumefreddo said he and Parrotta are trying to get a better handle on all of the Purple Heart recipients throughout the area. He is asking anyone who would like to be included in future events, to contact him at 914-424-2283.

"We want to come to Town Hall to honor and respect the people who received Purple Heart," Fiumefreddo said. "We hope the tradition carries on throughout Westchester County."



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Westchester Crime Rates Nosedive During the Past Four Years

By Martin Wilbur

Incidents of serious crime in Westchester County have fallen 11 percent over the past four years, statistics from the state Division of Criminal Justice Services and Westchester County Department of Public Safety revealed Monday.

County Executive George Latimer pointed to the figures to show how Westchester is bucking the current trend of rising crime rates in many jurisdictions, including in New York City and other major metropolitan areas.

In the time period of 2017 through 2020, violent crime has decreased in the county by 18.8 percent, property crimes have been reduced by 9.4 percent and violent crimes with the use of a firearm has diminished 22.3 percent.

"All of these numbers that are down represent the hard work not of an administration, per se, but the hard work of the men and women in the police world and also those that represent us in the area of prosecution," Latimer said.

The index crimes cover seven major categories of crime – murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny and motor vehicle thefts. The numbers showed that there were 11,580 crimes making up those categories in 2017, followed by drops to 9,842 in 2018, 9,663 crimes in 2019 before moving back up to 10,306 last year.

The downward trend in serious crime continued during the first four months of 2021. In that same time period in 2020, there were 3,322 incidents report compared to 2,681 through April of this year. Every type of crime category that

comprise index crimes was lower during the first one-third of this year as opposed to last year.

Terrance Raynor, the county Department of Public Safety's deputy commissioner, credited the help of the more than 40 local police departments as well as the emphasis on the Pistol License Unit, which saw a 370 percent increase in securing firearms whose licenses had expired or whose owners had passed away or had become disabled.

"When communities work well with their police departments and when

those agencies work well with their law enforcement partners throughout the county and throughout the state, you have safer communities," Raynor said.

When a gun owner fails to renew a permit by the time a license reaches its expiration date, the Pistol License Unit immediately notifies the permitholder and is instructed to surrender their firearms to a local police department of the county police. If the permitholder cannot surrender the weapon, a responsible family owner will be asked to bring the gun to a police agency.

"These actions help prevent firearms

from becoming abandoned, lost or placed in the hands of unlicensed civilians where those firearms may injure or kill our residents," Raynor explained.

The unit also works closely with the county attorney's office when serving court orders upon firearm license holders, seizing and securing firearms pursuant to such orders.

"Law enforcement is part of the community and it is only when we work together that we can succeed," said Public Safety Commissioner Thomas Gleason.

FASNY Convention is First Major Westchester Business Event Since COVID

Westchester County will welcome the Fireman's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) to the Sonesta White Plains Downtown for its 149th annual convention later this week.

With hundreds of volunteer firefighters, EMS personnel and their families from around the state expected to attend the three-day convention that begins on Thursday, the event is among the first major business events in the county since the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the global meetings industry in 2020. It is estimated to generate \$800,000 in economic activity for the region.

FASNY has also committed to return to Westchester for its 150th anniversary event next year. The largest gathering of volunteer firefighters in the state, the annual event brings together members from every corner of New York with renowned speakers and three days of training, presentations and information sharing.

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State PTA, United Way Team Up to Offer Early Literacy Program

The New York State PTA and the United Way of Westchester and Putnam have partnered with Learning Ovations, an Irvine, Calif.-based early literacy support company, to launch a statewide program that encourages reading skills development at home.

Reading Checkup is designed for children in grades K-3. The program allows a child to complete two online quizzes, then parents and caretakers receive evidence-based recommendations for specific reading skills to focus on at home, while choosing from targeted activities that meet the child's needs.

"(The) New York State PTA is committed to supporting all children...and we know that literacy continues to be the key to student success," said state PTA President Dana Platin. "We are thrilled to work with United Way of Westchester/Putnam and Learning Ovations to bring this family-based literacy program into every New York State home."

Reading Checkup uses breakthrough applications to provide students with reading instruction customized to their individual needs. Backed by almost 20 years of research funded by the U.S. Department of Education and The National Institutes of Health, Learning Ovations' early literacy school-based program, called A2i, has 90 percent of participating



Representatives from the United Way of Westchester and Putnam and local PTAs along with elected officials announced a partnership with a California-based company last week to start a statewide early literacy program called Reading Checkup.

students reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

"Our research shows that there are two critical elements in supporting a child's reading development: you must know

what their individual instructional needs are and then precisely match the type of instruction and the time spent to those needs," said Jay Connor, CEO and founder of Learning Ovations.

"For this age group, having parents or caregivers actively engaged in supporting their child is powerful," Connor added. "So much better than just plopping them in front of a screen. And Reading Checkup makes it fun for both – shared activities and a shared sense of accomplishment."

The year-long literacy program costs \$16 per child throughout the partnership. Scholarships will also be available to cover program costs for high-need families. The program is offered in both English and Spanish.

"Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed and helping them to read on grade level by the end of the third grade puts them on the right track," said Tom Gabriel, CEO of United Way of Westchester and Putnam. "By working with New York State PTA and Learning Ovations we are able to offer a resource to help children continue learning outside of the traditional classroom setting."

This program will join the state PTA's current literacy programs, including the statewide and longstanding Pick a Reading Partner Program (formerly Parents as Reading Partners).

Families interested in Reading Checkup can sign up directly on the new state PTA Reading Checkup web page at <https://nyspta.org/learning-ovations-reading-checkup/>.

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Local Accordion Player Completes Salute to Health Care Workers

By Abby Luby

They say music can heal body and soul and Montrose resident Don Simons has actively proved that adage for 500 days.

During the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic, Simons was, like the rest of us, amazed at the resiliency and dedication of first responders and health care workers as they risked their own health to help people suffering from the virus.

Simons was initially inspired by New York City residents banging pots and pans from their terraces and open windows for first responders during the pandemic's earliest days. He grabbed his accordion, stepped out on his driveway on Tommy Thurber Lane and started playing.

Last Thursday, Day 500 was the last of his live music tribute. Accompanied by three other musicians for the final performance Simons serenaded the neighborhood with polkas, torch songs, waltzes and rock 'n' roll.

As skies darkened from an incoming storm, Simons set up music stands and amplifiers inside his garage. A drizzle didn't stop about 20 people from sitting under two canopies or in their cars with the windows open to hear him play.



Don Simons playing his last of 500 consecutive evening concerts last Thursday honoring health care workers and first responders in the garage of his Montrose home.

"Maybe I should play 'Stormy Weather,'" he said.

Simons, 81, grew up in South Dakota and began learning the accordion when he was 10. A retired computer engineer, he and his wife, Dagmar, have five children and 14 grandchildren.

For about the last 25 years, Simons and a fellow accordionist have played at nursing homes and local celebrations. When the pandemic put a halt to those concerts, Simons was driven to play



ABBY LUBY PHOTOS

Montrose resident Don Simons played with son Rich Simons and drummer Phil Battison.

for his homebound neighbors to show support for those on the front lines.

Simons posted a sign at the end of his driveway that said "Salute!! To Care Givers and First Responders. 6 p.m. daily."

Those very first accordion notes rang out in the neighborhood on St. Patrick's Day 2020.

"When I played, some would drive up and park along the curb to listen before driving on," Simons recalled. "People a couple of blocks away would come for the evening serenade. Some would come from the nearby park."

Inspiration kept Simons going, especially on bitter cold days when it snowed, forcing him to turn on two small heaters in his garage and put up a makeshift barrier to keep the snow out.

"Some days I didn't feel like playing because it was too cold," he said. "But all I had to think about was at that very moment somebody was going on a work shift where they didn't know what they would encounter but knew it wasn't going to be pleasant. I wanted to let them know we care for them."

Joining Simons last Thursday night was Phil Battison on drums

and harmonizing vocals; Otto Stierli, vocals and guitar; Simons' son, Richard, who is conductor of the Mid-Hudson Community Orchestra and Cortlandt Chamber Orchestra, on bass; and Simons' grandson Phil Simons on keyboard.

Simons credits his wife Dagmar for motivating him to play every day.

"She has supported me all the way," he said. "I likely would not have made it this far without her."

The daily performance gave Simons a certain focus during the pandemic.

"I always knew where I would be and what I was going to be doing at 6 o'clock."

Simons is not without a sense of humor. Between songs he'd joke around with quips such as "I'm almost 82 and I'm still squeezing. So ladies beware."

Members of the American Legion came to listen and there was a surprise visit by the Cortlandt Ambulance, whose members flashed lights and sounded their siren to thank Simons for his 500 days of music. When Simons was finished playing, he ceremoniously removed his sign.

"This has always been a tribute to caregivers and first responders," Simons said. "God bless them all."



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Community Events Return in September After Pandemic-Induced Break

By Martin Wilbur

Several local popular events that were canceled last year due to COVID-19 will return this September as local residents welcome back some of their communities' favorite experiences.

After a one-year hiatus, the Armonk Chamber of Commerce is bringing back its Cider and Donut Festival at Wampus Brook Park that will also feature Jamie's 5K Run for Love, a shorter one-mile race and a dash for children along with the Byram Hills Preschool Association carnival on Sunday, Sept. 19.

The day before, the Rotary Club of Chappaqua will once again hold New Castle Community Day at the Chappaqua train station from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Community Day includes entertainment, food and refreshments, rides for children, music, informational booths for community organizations, vendors, service providers, volunteer corps and wellness events.

And on Sunday, Sept. 12, the Mount Pleasant Chamber of Commerce will hold the Mount Pleasant Day Street Fair on Elwood Avenue between Cross and Commerce streets between 2 and 7 p.m. A Sept. 26 rain date for the fair has been set.

Armonk Chamber of Commerce President Neal Schwartz said this year will be the 10th annual Cider and Donut Festival, which has evolved over the years to combine a few events into one day at Wampus Brook Park. The carnival and the assortment of activities going on during the festival attracts people of all ages.

"It's a big draw for younger families and it's just fun," Schwartz said.

There will be a few tweaks this year to the schedule compared to previous renewals of the event, he said. The 5K will be run first at about 9:15 a.m. followed by the kids' dash. The start of the carnival will be later in the morning instead of beginning shortly after the races end at about 10 a.m.

Another change this year is a musical performance will conclude the event in the evening, Schwartz said.

But Beascakes Bakery & Breads will be on hand with their donut-making machinery and hundreds and likely thousands of donuts will be sold.

Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto said one of her neighbors moved to Armonk from Yonkers several years ago after visiting the festival.

"It's become a real sort of a kickoff for



What's a cider and donut festival without lots of donuts? The Armonk Chamber of Commerce's Cider and Donut Festival will make its return on Sunday, Sept. 19 at Wampus Brook Park.

the fall, this festival," DiGiacinto said.

In Mount Pleasant, the Chamber of Commerce's street fair will feature food, music, vendors from town businesses, rides and a fire department demonstration.

For more information or to register as a vendor, call the chamber at 914-359-4166 or visit <https://www.mtpleasantchamberofcommerce.org/sponsorship>.

[mtpleasantchamberofcommerce.org/sponsorship](https://www.mtpleasantchamberofcommerce.org/sponsorship).

For more information about New Castle Community Day or to request forms to apply as a vendor or sponsor, e-mail Marlene Canapi at ChappaquaCommunityDay@gmail.com.

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Blue Ribbon Opportunities for This Year's Yorktown Grange Fair

As summer continues to blaze on, many are starting to look ahead to cooler days and the excitement of the 2021 Yorktown Grange Fair to be held from Sept. 10-12.

Preparations are underway at the fairgrounds and it's time to begin planning submissions to be entered into the many contests at the fair. There is a plethora of opportunities for families, individuals, children, adults...and animals!

Nothing compares to the feeling of pride

that comes along with your hard work being admired by thousands at the Yorktown Grange Fair. So pick a contest and get started because there are so many options.

New for the 2021 Grange Fair is the video contest. Awards will be given for the best video from each day of the fair. Budding videographers can visit, enjoy, capture the essence of the fair, edit, submit and hopefully win a blue ribbon.

Bakers can get into the mix by submitting



A baking contest is one of many competitions at this year's Yorktown Grange Fair, to be held from Friday, Sept. 10 to Sunday, Sept. 12.

Mt. Kisco's Bicycle World Wins Prestigious Industry Award

Bicycle World NY in Mount Kisco has been awarded the 2021 Bicycle Retailer Excellence Award by the National Bicycle Dealers Association (NBDA).

The National Bicycle Dealers Association is a nonprofit organization established in 1946 that promotes the interests of cycling and specialty bicycle retail across North America.

The NBDA has certified Bicycle World NY as being among the top local bicycle retailers in the United States. Fewer than 200 qualified for the honor.

Key to certification is a lengthy application survey that quantifies key elements found in successful retail operations of all kinds. Retailers are also evaluated through phone and e-mail contacts, website appeal and accuracy and

marketing expertise. The process of going through the application and the outside perspective of the NBDA staff have created a program in which every shop has the opportunity to recognize their strengths and weaknesses and become the very best retailer they can be.

The Bicycle Retailer Excellence Award requires not only great shopping experiences and expert leadership and staff but also support for its local community and national cycling advocacy. Each retailer awarded fits these criteria and more.

The local bicycle retailer is not only a store, but also a pillar of a community. By being given this award, Bicycle World NY has proven that they exemplify this ideal.

homemade baked goods, jams, pudding, candies or many other tasty and savory treats. Prizes will also be awarded in decorating, so if your canvas is a cake then get your plans and your icing ready.

The flower show has many options, from bouquets to photos of your home garden, theme displays and everything in between.

The fan favorite rabbit show is back with options for the cutest rabbit as well as the cutest rabbit in costume.

Other contests include art, Lego show, livestock show, needlework, photography, poultry and waterfowl, produce and woodwork. Many of the contests have multiple divisions based on age groups as well as various sections within the contests. All the details are in the contest

booklets on the Grange Fair website at YorktownGrangeFair.org/contests. Check them out and start getting submissions ready to be a part of the fair.

The entries submitted to the various contests from community members are what makes Westchester County's only true country fair so special. To walk through and see all the amazing work is a testament to the talent and diversity of local citizens.

The Yorktown Grange Fair will be held from Sept. 10-12 at the Yorktown Grange Fairgrounds, located at 99 Moseman Rd. in Yorktown Heights. Whether you decide to enter your work in a contest or come and check out all the exhibits from talented neighbors, make sure you get "Out and About at the Fair." See you in September!



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How Color Can Expand the Horizons of Your Home

As a realtor, I have learned much of what I know as The Home Guru from my buyers and sellers.

One example, learned early in my career in real estate from my early buyer clients Jennifer and Tim Nelson, was how the use of color can dramatically change the character of a home.

Not long after I represented them when buying their home in Yorktown Heights, they invited me over for coffee and cake and to show me what they had done with their house since moving in. Other than a gorgeous new kitchen, slate flooring and new bathrooms, I was amazed at what Jennifer had done with color to completely update the house.

She loves brown and had carried that color theme throughout her 2,500-square-foot, four-bedroom split, from the entrance foyer, painted in deep chocolate, to the living room done in medium brown and the dining room in a shade darker than that.

In taking that one bold step with color, the house was visually unified, expanded and modernized. Judging from the interior, one would never know that their "new" home had been built in 1955.

I smile to myself as I think about how I was influenced at that time in my own choice of color when it came time to switch the color palette of my historic home from deep, rich colors to basic off-white on all woodwork and doors. I also went with shades of white or



By Bill Primavera

pale pastels on the walls, most of which had been stripped of wallpaper.

What brought me back to white years after having abandoned it, except for ceilings? Maybe it reminded me of the enforced white-only code of my early life.

When I first arrived in New York City and rented an apartment in a new building, I was given only two choices – pure white and antique white. Why couldn't I have something a little more colorful, I asked? Maybe a bright yellow or a deep burgundy?

The sales agent winced and repeated that I could have only the shades of white offered.

When I married and moved into another new apartment, my wife and I were a little more assertive and received permission to change the wall color from white while we lived there, but would be required to restore it to white when we left. Well, who wanted to go through the trouble and expense? So again, I lived with white.

When my wife and I bought our first home in Brooklyn Heights, there was not a drop of white to be found. We painted the façade of the house mauve, the only "pink" house in the community. And inside, every room was either a bright color or wallpapered.

While we were experimenting with every color of the rainbow, our best friends moved to Leona, N.J., and when they invited us to their home, they proudly showed us that



they had removed wallpaper from every room and painted every wall pure white. Oh, how dull, I remember thinking – and the wife was an artist!

Her excuse was that she wanted the walls to provide a neutral background for her colorful paintings. Okay, I bought that. Soon after in The New York Times, it commented on a gallery that was "painted whiter than white." I guess that's the norm for museums and art galleries, to have walls serve as a blank canvass for the paintings that are displayed on them.

When we moved to Westchester and found that nearly every room in our "new" antique house was pure white and only the woodwork and chair rails were painted in pastel colors, I proceeded to either paint bright colors or wallpaper every room.

But when it was time to move, more than 40 years later, white was back in my life – Decorator White and Linen White – accompanied by new white flooring and

countertops in the kitchen and bathrooms. What prompted this turnaround that seemed to happen spontaneously without any real forethought? Perhaps it occurred to me that white would have the greatest appeal to the greater majority of people. There was nothing to like or dislike about it.

After we had the place totally repainted, I took time to research the psychology of white and found the following analysis of its choice: "White may indicate the completion of a cycle in your life – you may find you have a desire for white in your surroundings at a time when you are moving in a new direction."

Well! What further evidence did we need that we were ready to move on to the next housing choice in our lives, simply by choosing white?

My wife thinks I carried the theme a bit too far when I had our powder room painted entirely in Decorator White, both the woodwork and the walls. We also had a white marble sink and white flooring.

"It feels like an operating room," she said. "Well, it's the powder room, right?" I responded. "Isn't powder white?"

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

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An Evening That Will Blow Your Mind – and Help a Local Pantry

By Martin Wilbur

COVID-19 has placed a spotlight on the role that food pantries play in local communities, even in seemingly affluent enclaves of Westchester County.

At the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, demand skyrocketed shortly after the pandemic-related shutdown in March 2020 as thousands of local residents lost jobs, businesses and income nearly overnight.

The need to help families put food on the table has waned some, the number of families who still require assistance hasn't returned to pre-pandemic levels, said Laura Desmarais, a member of the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry board.

Since the start of the pandemic, the pantry has distributed roughly 700,000 pounds of food, she said. Typically, the Mount Kisco pantry had served about 300 families a week. When the pandemic struck, it exploded to about 500 families, and that number has more recently hovered around 440.

"The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, like our sister pantries locally and across the nation, was put under an extremely challenging situation, and taking into account the 18-plus months of living under COVID, our numbers have leapt 50



The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, which operates out of the United Methodist Church in the village, has scheduled an evening with mentalist Oz Pearlman for Sept. 30. The event will serve as a fundraiser for the pantry.

percent," Desmarais said. "And our at-home delivery program has quadrupled in size."

As a way to gather more funds as well as highlight awareness about Hunger Action Month in September, the pantry has scheduled a fundraiser for Thursday, Sept. 30 at the Bedford Playhouse. It is an evening with mentalist Oz Pearlman. Pearlman is one of the most sought-after mentalists in the world. While also billed as a magician, the former

2015 "America's Got Talent" third-place finisher is best known for his ability to seemingly read minds.

Desmarais said some of the volunteers at the pantry had previously seen Pearlman perform and wondered whether there was a chance to book him for one of their fundraisers. The board reached out to the Bedford Playhouse for help and to suggest the idea. How he will be performing locally at the end of next month.

"We were mindful that the

Playhouse, like any other venue in northern Westchester, also was affected by COVID-19, and it's just such a lovely place right in our community," she said. "We were speaking to somebody who was just there, who was saying how much people love mentalists and magicians. It got us thinking, I wonder if this might be a fun, family-friendly way to gather in northern Westchester in a particularly lovely and treasured venue. It just seems like a perfect match."

It also was near the heart of the area that the pantry serves. While much of the pantry's clientele live in Mount Kisco, Desmarais said it serves residents in about 20 communities, including Bedford, Armonk, Chappaqua and all the way down to Tarrytown, among other locations.

The fundraiser also appeared to be a good way to reach a wider audience about the crucial role the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry plays in the community.

"One of the things we'd like to do is maybe engage new folks, folks who maybe aren't aware that the food pantry exists in Mount Kisco, that we're doing the work that we're doing," Desmarais said.

The pandemic forced the pantry to change the way it operated, she said. It ramped up its home delivery


service, particularly to seniors who were afraid to go out, and launched a drive-through with pre-packaged selections in the parking lot of its home at the United Methodist Church on East Main Street in the village.

Desmarais said that in addition to fundraisers and donors making cash contributions throughout the year, the pantry receives thousands of pounds of donated food from the public as well as from its 13 sponsor houses of worship in and around the village.


"I don't think anybody ever expects to need a food pantry, which is why it's so essential that we be here and that we work together as neighbors to support folks that are struggling with food insecurity," Desmarais said.

Tickets for the Sept. 30 performance are \$75. For the VIP cocktail hour, which also features a meet and greet with Pearlman, tickets are \$125. The VIP hour begins at 6:30 p.m. and the show starts at 8 p.m. Complementary soda and popcorn will be served.

To purchase tickets, donate and or to learn more about the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, visit <https://www.mountkiscofoodpantry.org/2021-hunger-awareness-events>.




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Popular Horsefeathers Pub Marks 40 Years in Tarrytown

More Summer Bites and Pieces

The storied towns and trails that make up the Sleepy Hollow area of Westchester certainly have their share of fables and tales. There are certainly some taverns and dining venues dotting the landscape along the Hudson River that bring out the best of it.

One must certainly be Julia McCue's popular Horsefeathers on Route 9 in Tarrytown, a pub and restaurant that has been part of the local scene since 1981.

Walk past its outdoor patio with brightly colored umbrellas and into the dining room and bar and you are greeted by a convivial staff ready to serve you.

Take a look around. The vintage metal-topped wooden bar area is lined with cozy mini booths. The larger dining area is highlighted by a large wall mural depicting a cross section of our most famous authors from Hemingway to Vonnegut, with readings



By Morris Gut

from each. There is a see-through divider between the two.

The menu offers a copious selection of more than 100 specialties. I decided on The Knickerbocker, their 10-ounce burger topped with "rolled in" caramelized onions and horseradish cheddar all on a soft bun, served with hand-cut steak fries. My partner had their Cobb salad with chicken, cheddar, bacon, tomato,

hardboiled egg and croutons, served with a side of blue cheese dressing. (We shared.) The burger was really satisfying; the combo worked. The salad was a refreshing crunchy way to go, too.

A special thumbs up to the restaurant for creating A Moveable Feast fundraiser during the height of the pandemic. Proceeds went to help staff and essential workers in the area.

Horsefeathers is located at 94 N. Broadway in Tarrytown. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Weekend brunch is also served. Free parking in the rear. Info: 914-631-6606 or visit www.horsefeathersny.com.

Emma's Ale House Reopens

After a 14-month closure due to COVID-19, Casey Egan, founder and owner of Emma's Ale House on Gedney Way, recently reopened the restaurant for dinner on Wednesdays through Sundays at 4 p.m. Plans are to add hours in coming weeks, according to longtime manager Catherine DeLuca. Great news for the dining public.

Since its opening more than a dozen years ago, I have always considered Emma's one of the best gastropubs in the county. Right from the start, Egan elevated his kitchen and cuisine while keeping the ambiance casual and friendly.

Glad to see some of the long-running house specialties on hand again: house-made pretzels served with mustard; crispy chicken lollipops; the Emma's burger with choice of toppings; Murray's brick chicken; Emma's country-style chophouse salad; deconstructed chicken pot pie; and weekly specials such as meatloaf and mashed potatoes and classic roast turkey. There is a fine selection of brews and wines as well.

Emma's Ale House is a longtime ode to his favorite yellow lab who is pictured on the logo and on illustrations inside.

Emma's Ale House is located at 68 Gedney Way in White Plains. Municipal parking available, which is free during the evenings. Reservations accepted. Info: 914-683-3662 or visit www.emmasalehouse.com.

The Reading Room Returns

To the delight of their many followers, Gretchen Menzies has reimagined and reopened The Reading Room on Edgemont Road in Katonah. Walk through the blossoming patio and up the stairs and enter the multifaceted shop that is a library and a café with a daily take-out menu of fresh prepared light foods and popular ice cream concoctions from the former Little Joe's,



Above: The Knickerbocker burger at Horsefeathers in Tarrytown and, left, the delicious Cobb salad.



The shrimp Romano at Chazz Palminteri Italian Restaurant.



Emma's Ale House in White Plains, one of the best pubs in Westchester, has a delectable variety of house specialties on the menu.



The Reading Room, a favorite for many in Katonah, has reopened.

which had been around the corner.

Rotating specialties may include a build-your-own salad option; baked goods; Veggie Banh Mi; curry chicken salad; turkey brie wrap and more. The daily menu is posted on the website.

The Reading Room is located at 19 Edgemont Rd. in Katonah. Open daily. Info: 914-334-8019 or visit www.katonahreadingroom.com.

Tasty Pizza and Shrimp at Chazz's

Finally had a chance to taste a few menu selections at Chazz Palminteri Italian Restaurant in White Plains. One afternoon

I asked managing partner Tony Sinanaj to pick out a favorite appetizer for me. He obliged.

Out of the kitchen came shrimp Romano, featuring giant sauteed shrimp with spicy peppers in a creamy gorgonzola sauce over garlic bread. Plenty of decadent flavor.

On another occasion, I visited during their new happy hours from 4 to 7 p.m. and ordered one of their signature tartufo pizzas, with mushrooms, fresh mozzarella, mixed herbs and truffle oil. It was a delicious crusty share.

By the way, meatballs are back for fans of the prior establishment, Anthony's Coal Fired Pizza, which used to feature them. There are oysters for \$1.50 each as well.

We were told the official grand opening will take place right after Labor Day.

Chazz Palminteri Italian Restaurant is located 264 Main St. in White Plains.

Menu Movers & Shakers

Info: 914-600-8430 or visit www.chazzpalminterianyc.com.

Putnam Wine & Food Fest

The 10th annual Putnam County Wine & Food Fest will take place this weekend at Mayor's Park in Cold Spring. Wineries, distilleries, cider makers and food vendors from all over the region will be on hand. There will be arts and crafts, live entertainment and games. \$25 for tasters; \$10 for non-tasters.

Fortickets,directionsandmoreinformation, visit www.putnamcountywinefest.com.

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

Continuing to Explore the Growing Influence of Women Winemakers



By Nick Antonaccio

Significant strides have been made in the last quarter century by women in the American wine industry who have been given the opportunity to ply their trade. These women have been able to infiltrate the industry based on their proven skill and talent.

However, in Western Europe, in many instances, women have attained success not through talent but through the fickle finger of genealogy or marriage.

In Western Europe, the culture and ideology concerning wine differ greatly from that in the United States. It is highly political and rooted in ages-old tradition. The role of women in wine has been steeped in subservience at worst and happenstance at best. Women have been relegated to raising families or assisting male winemakers in the field and cellars. It is a culture that is difficult to modify, although, ironically, happenstance is playing a growing role in tilting the scales.

The wine culture of small wineries in western Europe is steeped in a tradition of male inheritance and female discrimination. There are wineries that have been owned

‘Women winemakers produce a number of the most prestigious and highly regarded wines in Western Europe.’

and operated by the same family for centuries. In each successive generation, the mantle of winemaker has been passed down to the first-born male.

The irony is that women may be equally, or better, suited for winemaker roles than men.

First, they tend to think differently. Popular psychology generally ascribes to women a right-side-of-the-brain thought

process (creative, intuitive and sensory), compared to men’s left-side-of-the-brain thought process (objective, analytical and detail focused).

If one accepts this mapping, women tend to be more focused on producing an ethereal

finished product that comes together in the final stages of its creation, rather than one whose individual components have been meticulously crafted by a male in lockstep from the vineyard to the aging cellar.

Second, fine wine is the result of a winemaker’s ability to identify the nuances of the aroma and flavor components of a

wine as it is being crafted. Studies have shown that women have a greater sensitivity to smell and taste than men due to more sophisticated olfactory senses and greater numbers of taste buds. With these innate tools, women are more likely to identify individual components of a wine and create a more sophisticated and complex wine.

The end result? Women winemakers produce a number of the most prestigious and highly regarded wines in Western Europe.

Of course, these factors tend to pigeonhole men and women winemakers and can create stereotypical expectations for gender wines. This is far from the truth. Great wines are crafted by great people, but all need equal opportunity, which has been sorely lacking for women in Western Europe.

The barriers for women are being weakened with each passing year, as the old-line discriminating male winemakers cede control to the more open-minded next generation. Not to mention entrepreneurial women who are venturing on their own to start up new wineries. (Did you see Stanley Tucci’s Italy series on CNN in which he interviewed the young Sicilian winery

owner/winemaker Arianna Occhipinti?)

Thankfully, there are a growing number of success stories. However, many of these are the result of women thrust into situations brought about by family deaths or by male siblings who surreptitiously walk away from a family winery.

Examples include:

1. Veuve (the Widow) Clicquot, who took over her husband’s Champagne business upon his death in 1805 and single-handedly made it one of the most revered wineries in France;
2. Lalou Bize-Leroy, who, in 1975, inherited and then catapulted Domaine de la Romanée-Conti in Burgundy, France, into becoming one of the most famous wineries in the world before being forced out and starting her own (very) successful winery; and
3. Francesca Planeta, currently the 17th generation winemaker – and first female – of the highly regarded eponymous Sicilian winery.

Other success stories abound and I will present a cross section across Europe and the New World in upcoming columns.

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

**You Heard It
Through the
Grapevine**

Bring Your Taste Buds to Putnam Wine & Food Fest This Weekend

By Michael Gold

Wine, whiskey and song are yours for the asking.

Plus, apple brandy, cider, jerk chicken wraps, key lime macarons and other foods to delight the taste buds.

They can all be found at the Putnam County Wine & Food Fest, which will be held this coming Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 7 and 8, at Mayor’s Park, located at 61 Fair St. in Cold Spring.

The festival opens at 11 a.m. on Saturday and closes at 6 p.m. for that day. On Sunday, the festival runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Festival-goers can sample spirits, wines and ciders from all over New York State, as well as a diversity of interesting foods, from olive oil and curried goat to cherry tart health tonics, hot dogs and dessert treats.

Additionally, you can visit vendor booths offering jewelry, home remodeling products and services and bath fittings, among other products.

Visitors will enjoy great views of the majestic green mountains of the Hudson Highlands, as well as music from a crew of bands featuring several different styles, from reggae and blues to rock and country.

Activities for children will include bean bag tossing, hula hoops and face painting, said Lauren Drummond, founder and



Food, wine and fun resumes this weekend in Cold Spring with the return of the Putnam Wind & Food Fest.

organizer of the festival.

“The scenery is beautiful. Festival-goers will see vendors showcasing their wines, ciders, spirits and foods,” Drummond said. “We’ll have music. As an added bonus, you can see the Village of Cold Spring, with its antique stores and shops. Cold Spring is gorgeous.”

This is the festival’s 10th year. It wasn’t held in 2020 due to the pandemic. This year’s festival will operate under COVID-19 guidelines. Attendees will

be asked to provide vaccine proof and undergo virus checks. Those without a vaccine will be asked to wear a mask and stay socially distanced six feet apart from others.

All vendor booths will be outdoors, similar to a farmers market.

Visitors can park at the Haldane High School parking lot at 15 Craigsides Drive in Cold Spring. Free shuttle buses will take attendees from there to the festival site. Parking will also be available at the Metro-

North station lot.

Those coming by train can take Metro-North’s Hudson line to the Cold Spring station and walk to Mayor’s Park from there.

Festival-goers may want to bring a blanket or chair to sit on the lawn and listen to the bands or enjoy the view.

Tasting tickets are \$25 each. Designated driver non-tasting tickets are \$10. Children under 16 years old get in free, Drummond said.

The festival is seeking volunteers to help spread the word about the event, distributing flyers, posters and yard signs in the region, using social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or blogging.

Volunteers are also needed for vendor set up and registration, checking in and scanning visitors, checking photo IDs, handing out glasses in the wine tent and cleaning up the site after festival hours.

Volunteers who work four hours can earn a free \$10 non-tasting ticket for a guest, Drummond said. Volunteers working six hours can get lunch, she said.

The festival’s media sponsors are Hudson Valley magazine, Hudson Valley Wine magazine, Hamlet Hub and WAG magazine. Other event sponsors are Metro-North, Putnam County, PartyTime Tent Rentals, T-Mobile and Yelp.

For more information, visit www.putnamcountywinefest.com.

Support Connection Seeks Community Ambassadors for Annual Walk

Support Connection is seeking community ambassadors for its 2021 Annual Support-A-Walk, scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 3.

Community ambassadors are volunteers who help spread the word about the Support-A-Walk in their own communities. The event is Support Connection's most important annual fundraiser. Proceeds provide funding for its year-round breast and ovarian cancer support services, which have helped thousands of people since the organization was founded in 1996.

Once again this year, the Support-A-Walk theme is "Walk With Us, Wherever You Are." Support Connection's programs serve people nationwide, and this enables people nationwide to participate in the walk.

As the walk draws closer, there will be updates on the possibility of an in-person gathering at FDR State Park in Yorktown. But either way, people are still welcome to walk where they are, near and far. No matter where you live, you can join Support Connection and work together for a common cause.

In keeping this theme, community ambassadors are being sought in communities across the Hudson Valley and the country. There is no specific



time commitment to be a community ambassador, and there are many ways to help. Share walk info and materials in your community, encourage friends and family to participate or donate and raise funds. Support Connection will provide guidance and materials for anyone interested in helping.

Support Connection does not receive funds from any national cancer organizations including Relay for Life, Susan G. Komen or Making Strides. By participating in or donating to the Support-A-Walk, community members can make a positive difference in the lives of women and families facing the challenges of a breast or ovarian cancer diagnosis.

To learn more about the Support-A-Walk or to volunteer, donate or raise funds, visit supportconnection.org/support-a-walk, or contact Support Connection at 914-962-6402 or walk@supportconnection.org.

One of last year's community ambassadors and team in the annual Support-A-Walk, which was conducted in locations across the United States. The walk, Support Connection's biggest fundraiser of the year to help women who are diagnosed with breast and ovarian cancer and their families, is scheduled this year for Sunday, Oct. 3.

Byrne Completes First Round of 'Trailblazing' in Yorktown

Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac) completed his fourth Trailblazing with Byrne event earlier this summer on June 26 in the Town of Yorktown.

The event took place at the Yorktown Heights Trailhead behind Town Hall, which is part of the Westchester County Trailway and the larger Empire State Trail.

Byrne met with constituents in-person for more than an hour Q&A before taking a walk along the Empire State Trail to continue the discussion, promote healthy living and take in the natural beauty.

The discussion included several important topics concerning local and state issues, which included traffic congestion along state roads, the history and importance of the parkways and parks, and legislation that Byrne authored to provide Yorktown the ability to bring in additional solar power and revenue.

Additionally, Byrne and residents spoke about pressing concerns surrounding our schools, including some controversial proposals that could impose versions of Critical Race Theory in some school districts.

The event had a number of local residents, concerned parents and local officials in attendance, including Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater and Councilman Ed Lachterman. Yorktown Chamber of Commerce President Sergio Esposito and former Peekskill City Councilman Joe Torres attended as well.

"Thank you to everyone who participated in our fourth Trailblazing with Byrne event



Assemblyman Kevin Byrne speaks with Yorktown residents during the finale of his four Trailblazing With Byrne events where he speaks to constituents on issues while walking area trails.

this year," he said. "These forums help to provide an additional opportunity for me to engage with members of our community. Not only did we get the chance to discuss a wide variety of important issues, but we got some fresh air, exercise and enjoyment from viewing the beautiful scenery along the trail."

Additional forums will be scheduled for Putnam Valley and Patterson, Byrne said. Forums were already held in Mahopac/Carmel, Southeast and Somers.

WCC Enters New Transfer Agreement With SUNY Potsdam

Westchester Community College (WCC) has signed a new transfer agreement with SUNY Potsdam enabling students who have earned either an associate's in science degree in environmental studies or health and human performance to pursue their bachelor of arts in Environmental Studies or bachelor of science in Exercise Science, respectively, at SUNY Potsdam.

Students who graduate with a minimum 2.0 GPA will be guaranteed acceptance to SUNY Potsdam and will transfer with junior status. Students who participate in this program will have up to 64 credits applied toward completion of the articulated SUNY Potsdam bachelor's degree program.

Students will need to complete a minimum of 45 upper-division credits, of which 15 must be in the major, to satisfy SUNY Potsdam's baccalaureate degree requirements. Transferring students with a cumulative college GPA of 3.0 or higher are encouraged to apply for transfer scholarship money.

"This articulation agreement is

an exciting new pathway for our students to advance their academic career in high-demand fields," said WCC President Dr. Belinda S. Miles. "SUNY Potsdam provides our graduates with the opportunity to seamlessly transition to an excellent four-year institution where they can prepare for a career that will help themselves, their families, and their communities."

"We are thrilled to partner with Westchester Community College to offer new pathways for students to further their studies in two of our most hands-on majors – environmental studies and exercise science," said Dr. Bette Bergeron, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs at SUNY Potsdam.

"WCC graduates are well prepared to succeed in our baccalaureate programs, and we know they will thrive here at Potsdam and in their future careers,"

Students interested in learning more about this transfer opportunity should visit www.sunywcc.edu/sunypotsdam-transfer

How To Improve Your Golf Game While Avoiding Back, Shoulder Pain

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have turned to the golf course as a way to get outdoors for a safe and socially distanced form of exercise.

Over the last year-and-a-half, there has been an influx of new golfers. The sport has also seen a dramatic change in how it is played.

On tour, players are hitting the ball further and harder than ever before, often sacrificing accuracy in attempts to hit the ball as hard as they can. This change in thinking has not only changed how the game is played, but also how we train for golf-specific movements.

As golfers attempt to tap into more distance and more swing speed, the risk of injury also increases. Injuries occurring from overuse are common for golfers of all skill levels, particularly the crop of newer golfers, whose swings have yet to be refined and mastered.

Common overuse injuries include the low back, hip, elbow and wrist. Studies have found that during the golf swing, ground reaction forces can be 6.5 to eight times your body weight immediately after

impact. This force, combined with the repetitive and unilateral rotational forces throughout the golf swing, are what often lead to injury.

However, with an appropriate screening and training program, injury risk can be reduced and performance can be improved. The key to success, however, is identifying an appropriate training program for each golfer.

Titleist Performance Institute (TPI) has been recognized as the leader in golf fitness and golf health. The founders of TPI have created a program that is used among physical therapists, trainers, chiropractors and golf professionals to speak the same language regarding an athlete's physical limitations and how they correlate to a variety of swing flaws.

Recent major winners such as Jon Rahm (2021 U.S. Open champion) and Phil Mickelson (2021 PGA champion) have both credited their

work with TPI in helping to improve their game. In the case of Mickelson, he has attributed his work with TPI in helping to provide career longevity, which has helped allow him to keep up with today's younger golfers, becoming the first person to win a

major at 50 years old.

The key to a TPI evaluation is understanding how each athlete's body moves. There is not one correct way for everyone to swing a golf club. The importance in utilizing a TPI program is to help make a golf swing that is most efficient for each individual. This means identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each athlete and developing a program to address these areas.

For some golfers this may mean focusing on improved rotation or mobility from the hips, while for others it could simply be a lack of strength or core stability. Without a comprehensive examination, however, it is impossible to identify which areas to focus on.

Understanding how your body moves is an important aspect in improving your golf game and limiting injury risk. Whether working with a golf professional, a trainer or simply going to the driving range or watching YouTube videos, it is important to understand what movements your body



Dr Benny Salanitro

is capable of achieving. A golfer can watch a video of Tiger Woods swinging his driver and spend hours trying to recreate his swing, but if that athlete's body is not physically capable of moving that way, he or she will never be able to achieve that swing pattern.

For all golfers looking to improve their game and reduce injury risk, consider utilizing the help of a physical therapist, golf professional or TPI certified specialist. In

addition to a full body exam to identify where your body moves well and any limitations you may have, a specialist can help to develop a comprehensive program to emphasize these strengths and target any deficiencies.

Dr. Benny Salanitro is a licensed physical therapist at ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropractic in Armonk. He is an orthopedic certified specialist (OCS) and is Titleist Performance Institute (TPI) certified. Salanitro can be reached at 914-202-0700 or at bsalanitro@proclinix.com.

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Meteor Showers an Annual Treat During Second Half of Summer

If you need any more proof that summer is fleeting, as July becomes August we're already in the last full month of summer.

Maybe you've noticed that we've been slowly and steadily losing daylight since June's solstice. By the first weekend of the month, the sun sets before 8 p.m. for the first time since May.

This also brings us to what amounts to the start of meteor shower season. By late July, the Perseid shower has already started. This is the first of about 25 showers of at least moderate brightness that happen through the end of the year. The Perseids' famous meteors tend to be frequent, bright and easy to spot. Plus, even though the dark night comes late, the weather is generally agreeable and many of us have some extra free time.

Meteor showers happen when Earth, as it travels in its orbit, catches up with and plows through clouds of pebbles left over by another object that passed through long ago. In the case of the Perseids, we're looking at small fragments, most the size of grains of sand, of the comet Swift-Tuttle, crashing into our atmosphere and burning up about 100 miles above us.

This year, the shower is expected to peak on the night of Aug. 11-12, though you can look any night



By Scott Levine

through the end of August. All you need to do is find a clear patch of sky and look up. Any part of the sky will do, but most meteors will appear to come from the direction of the constellation Perseus, in the north or northeast. Bring a lawn chair, someone you love and some bug spray and enjoy the night.

The night of the 11th will be particularly good for watching, though, because the moon will be a young crescent, which sets hours before we reach the deepest overnight darkness. If things go well, you could see as many as 60 meteors streak above you each hour!

That's not all, though. On the night of Aug. 19, Jupiter reaches a point called opposition. In truth, it's Earth that reaches opposition with Jupiter, as we race past it on the shorter, speedier inside track of our orbit. Jupiter's about five times farther from the sun than we are and takes about 12 Earth years to orbit once.

Opposition is the spot where an object appears directly opposite another as seen by a viewer between. It's the same arrangement when it's a full moon. So, that night will have a bright "full Jupiter" but 500 million miles away.



If you point even a regular pair of binoculars at the giant planet – low in the south – you can see its four giant moons. As you look, try to imagine what it must have been like to be Galileo Galilei, when he first saw them through his small telescope in 1610. Could he have imagined that the biggest, Ganymede, is bigger than the planet Mercury and has an enormous ocean with more water than Earth does? Or that there were at least 75 other moons there that he couldn't see?

These are great times to turn toward the skies. I hope you will this month!

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

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What Workers Can Expect Upon Returning to the Office

As life returns to normal, many companies and organizations are heading back to the office using a hybrid model or are beginning to talk about doing so.

Under these plans, employees split their time between working in person and working from anywhere, and if your employer has announced this will be happening soon, you may be feeling apprehensive about the transition. Here are a few things to expect.

- **Flexible workspaces.** With fewer employees coming to work in person at any given time, your company may reduce the size of the physical office as a cost-saving measure. Whereas you may have previously been assigned a personal workstation, you may now find your company “hot-desking,” in which workstations are shared and used by different employees at different times.
- **New tech tools.** Employees can expect to see new tech tools enter the picture, according to experts. “Tools that provide business leaders with insights, not oversight, and build out on the tools your company already uses, are going to smooth out communication, collaboration and workflow issues during the transition,” said Michele Havner, director of marketing at Eturi, the maker of Motiv, an app for small- and mid-sized businesses.



ANDREY POPOV/ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS PHOTO

In the case of Motiv, a mobile dashboard that delivers important productivity metrics to CEOs, managers and leaders, the tech integrates with Google Workspace and Microsoft 365. Because team leaders are provided with information like conference call activity

and email summaries, they are able to more effectively manage their hybrid workforce. Available through the iOS App Store and Google Play Store, you can learn more by visiting motivapp.com.

- **Watercooler talk.** Some people will

return to the office ready to pick up right where they left off, scheduling lunches, coffees and happy hours with their colleagues, whom they consider friends. For others, the in-person socialization that was once a staple of office life may take longer to adjust to. Know that everyone will have their own feelings about returning to the office and try to be empathetic to others, wherever they stand on the issue.

- **Additional change.** As your employer learns what is and isn’t working with the new hybrid model, they may make additional adjustments in the weeks and months ahead. Whether it’s introducing a new rule that all staff members be in the office every Monday, or the addition of a weekly team meeting every Wednesday morning, being prepared for such potential changes can help you avoid being thrown off guard in the future.

After more than a year of working from home, the prospect of returning to the office can be exciting, nerve-racking or both. Knowing how and why things may look different from pre-pandemic office life can help you prepare for the new, new normal.

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THERE’S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

The “O”-lympics. The delayed 2020 Summer Olympic Games, hosted by Tokyo, Japan, are winding down. To help celebrate the XXXII Summer Games, all the words in the quiz begin with the letter “O.” No matter how you do on the quiz, feel free to give yourself a standing O.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. overt (adj.) | A) past one’s prime | B) not hidden | C) overly sensitive |
| 2. oscillate (v.) | A) to swing back and forth | B) become inflexible | C) make contact |
| 3. overweening (adj.) | A) extremely large | B) very upset | C) conceited |
| 4. obesance (n.) | A) an essential part | B) deference | C) a refusal to change |
| 5. odeum (n.) | A) an ancient story | B) something leftover | C) a concert hall |
| 6. octothorp (n.) | A) the eighth in line | B) a musical scale | C) the symbol # |
| 7. obelize (v.) | A) to mark as doubtful | B) be controlled | C) witness |
| 8. oxter (n.) | A) the underarm | B) a strong belief | C) a slip-on shoe |

- ANSWERS:**
- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. B. Open; not hidden; expressed or revealed in a way that is easily recognized | 4. B. A deep bow or other body movement indicating moderate |
| 2. A. To swing back and forth with a steady rhythm; to fluctuate or waver; vibrate | 5. C. (Especially in ancient Greece or Rome) a building used for musical performances; a concert hall |
| 3. C. Conceited; presumptuous; excessively im- | 6. C. The symbol #; another term for the pound sign |
| 7. A. To mark as doubtful or spurious; to question if something is authentic or fabricated | 7. A. To mark as doubtful or spurious; to question if something is authentic or fabricated |
| 8. A. The underarm or armpit | 8. A. The underarm or armpit |

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continued from page 24

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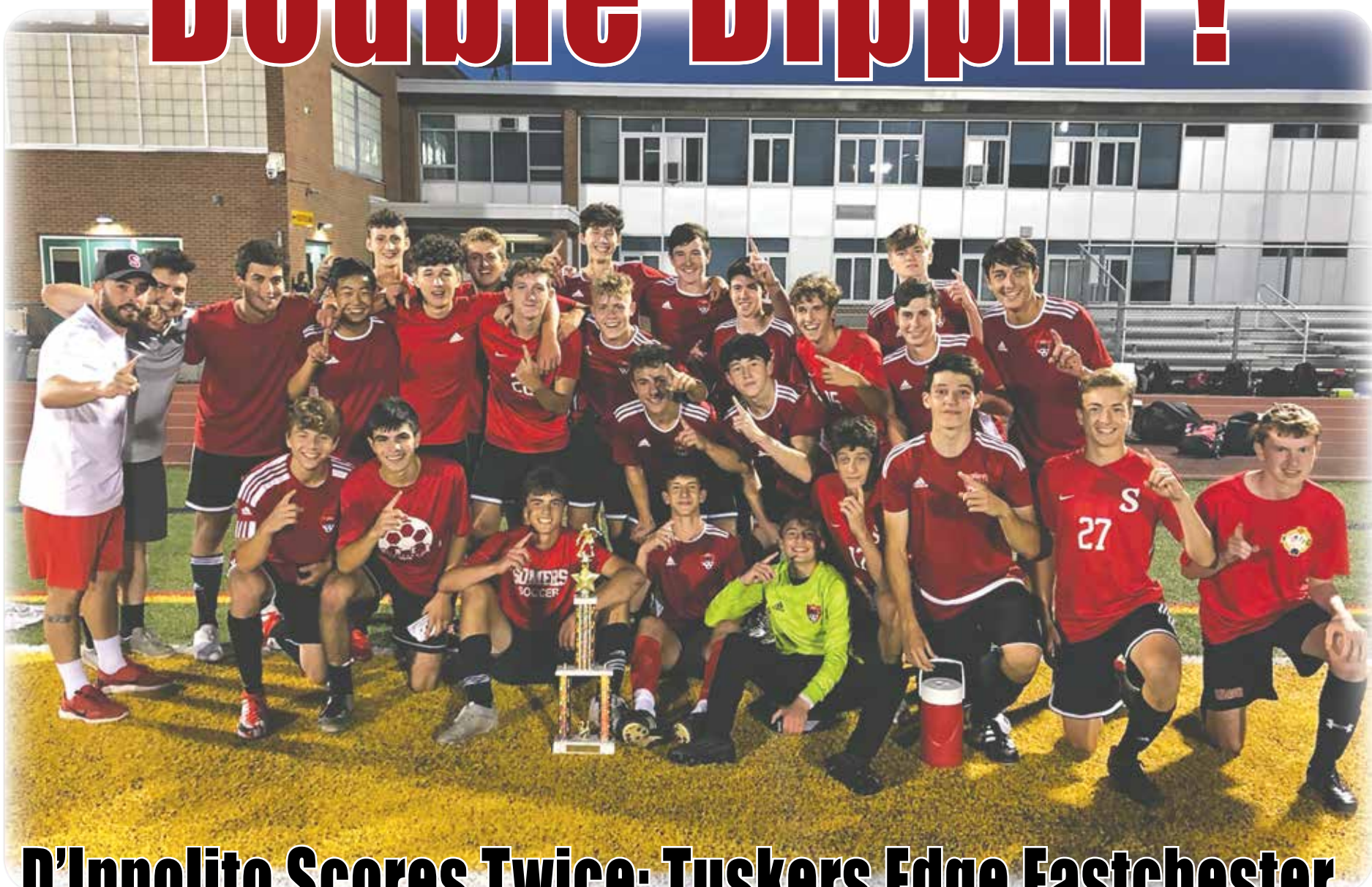
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Examiner Sports

Double Dippin'!



D'Ippolito Scores Twice; Tuskers Edge Eastchester, 2-1, for Lakeland Summer League Crown

PHOTO TIM HOURAHAN

Somers senior standout Daniel D'Ippolito put up a pair of tallies in the sixth-seeded Tuskers' 2-1 upset of top-seeded Eastchester in Friday's championship round of the Lakeland Summer Soccer League playoffs where things came together down the stretch for the mighty Tuskers (above), who won the summer league crown for the second time since 2017. Somers -- with a proven background in exceptional soccer, including two of the last four Section 1 titles and a state jewel in 2016 -- served notice to the rest of the section that it might be the team to beat this fall after defeating the up-and-coming Eagles in the finals, plus perennial powerhouse John Jay EF, 2-0, in the semis behind a goal and assist from the Big Dipper, who set up senior teammate Bennet Leitner. "Daniel and Bennett are very special players," Somers Coach Brian Lanzetta said, while also acknowledging sophomore keeper Matt D'Ippolito, Dan's kid brother, who was named MVP of the summer league. "Some of the boys were away at nationals in Colorado representing FC Somers, our youth club, alongside some other great local players in Section 1. The young guys did an amazing job all summer to hold it together, but when the seniors came back they really took it to another level for us."

by Ray Gallagher

Sports

FOCUS ON GHVBL

Somers 10U Knocks off Put Valley; Hit-N-Run 11U Nips Carmel Cubs; P'Ville 12U Ousted



Carmel 2B Ryan Schwartz can't get tag down in time on Hit-N-Run's Luca Fugarino in host Cubs' 2-1 loss in 11U GHVBL action to Hit-N-Run.



Carmel P Brody Scaperotti slaps tag on Hit-N-Run SS Luca Fugarino to erase a run in Cubs' 2-1 GHVBL 11U loss Sunday at Ryan Memorial Park.



Red Storm third baseman Braden Valderrama tags out Parker Flynn of the Putnam Valley Miners in Somers' 6-2 10U GHVBL playoff win on Saturday at Reis Park.



Red Storm 2B Bret Kennedy turned in several spectacular defensive gems in 4-2 GHVBL 13U quarterfinal playoff win over Bethel Saturday.



Hit-N-Run SS Luca Fugarino was ruled to be late with tag on Carmel's Vinny Palazzo in H&R's 2-1 GHVBL 11U playoff win over host Cubs Sunday.

Sports



Carmel's Willy Melikian rejoices after cracking double in 2-1 GHVBL 11U playoff loss to Hit-N-Run.



Connor Martin of the Putnam Valley Miners takes a rip in 10U GHVBL playoff loss at Somers.

Spartans Still Slugging



The Yorktown Spartans won the Sports at the Beach (July 23-25) "7th Inning Stretch" 11U tournament in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. The Spartans went 5-1 and beat the Arlington VA Arsenal Blue 16-11 in the championship game. Jake Sgobbo led the offense with two HRs in the 16-11 win and had a total of five HRs in the tournament. The Spartans also captured the "Triple Crown" of tournaments as they won Baseball Heaven, Diamond Nation and Sports at the Beach in the last six weeks, quite a run by a town team, which includes Lucas Velardo, Ryan Stevenson, Christopher Lanza, Jayden Nunez, Jaden Renzo, Nico Masillo, CJ Velardo, Louis Peduto, Christian Maratos, Jake Sgobbo, Emmitt Rice, Vincent Straface.



Hit-N-Run 2B Charlie Palefski lifts clutch single that led to a run in 2-1 win over Carmel in 11U GHVBL playoff action Sunday.



Down 2-0 in the 5th, Somers' Matthew Mignardi delivered a key two-run single to tie game before Red Storm won 4-2 in GHVBL 13U playoff.



Kevin Cooke Jr. of the PV Miners slides safely into second after ripping an RBI double in 6-2 loss to Somers in GHVBL 10U action.



Carmel's Willy Melikian is nabbed at 3B by Hit-N-Run's Billy Siegrist in Cubs' 2-1 loss in 11U GHVBL action Sunday.



Somers' Colin Biolsi slides safely into third base before the tag by Rocco Scrocca of the PV Miners in 10U GHVBL action.



Somers Red Storm pitcher Leo Keimig, who fired four effective innings, throws to first for the out in 13U GHVBL 4-2 playoff win over Bethel.

photos continued on next page

Sports

photos continued from previous page

FOCUS ON GHVBL



Somers Red Storm 1B Evan Murolo makes catch for out before PV Miners' Parker Flynn can touch the bag in 6-2 Red Storm 10U win.



Luke Delfico pitches in relief for the Putnam Valley Miners in 10U GHVBL playoff game vs. Somers at Reis Park.



Red Storm shortstop Chris Azimi tags out Johnny DiMichele of the PV Miners in Somers' 6-2 playoff win.



Members of Putnam Valley Miners 11U team pose with NYEB tournament champion banner after knocking off Hudson Valley Renegades, 8-7, in Saturday's title game at Newburgh.



Red Storm's John Barbagallo races to third base after drawing a crucial walk for go-ahead run in Somers' 4-2 13U GHVBL playoff win over Bethel.



John DeVito breaks out of the box in team's 6-2 10U GHVBL playoff win over the Putnam Valley Miners.

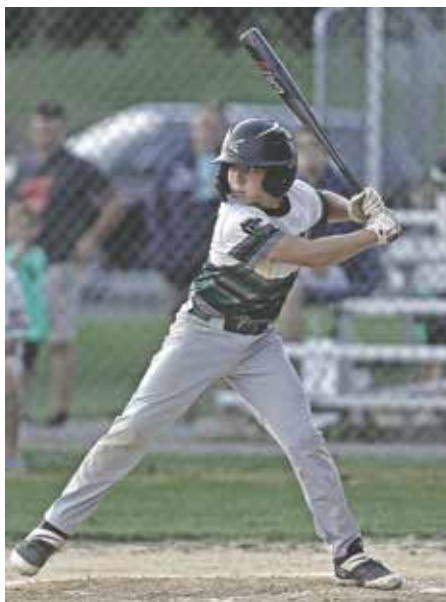


Somers' Max Haran (pictured) got the start and went three innings while Evan Murolo pitched the final three in Red Storm's 6-2 playoff win over PV Miners in 10U.



12U Pleasantville 3B Theo Leyva is too late with the tag in the Panthers' 10-1 GHVBL playoff loss to host Poughkeepsie on Friday night.

Sports



Pleasantville slugger Reed Supranowitz awaits a pitch before smacking a double in Friday evening's GHVBL 12U playoff game against host Poughkeepsie.



Infielder Zach Lefkowitz awaits a late throw to second base during the Pleasantville 12U team's GHVBL playoff loss at Poughkeepsie's Spratt Park.



Pleasantville 2B Grant Collins comes up clean in the Panthers' 10-1 GHVBL playoff loss to the 12U Poughkeepsie Lightning.

Apologies if I Ruffled Feathers a Few Weeks Back



By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
Editor @Directrays

Okay, so I got enough emails and texts last week to confirm that I might have ticked off some local baseball coaches/parents for some of the sweeping "generalizations" I might have made before we made off for exit 63 on the Garden State Parkway #LBI for 10 glorious days. Look, I'm sorry if I pinched some nerves when I said the things I said about the behavior issues of SOME parents and SOME coaches on local baseball diamonds, but when I get the sense that young kids are being affected negatively by people who should know better, I get a little sensitive and somewhat testy on THEIR behalf.

We just need to figure out a better way to relate with one another because, as I've

been saying since something like 1996 (about seven years after I began this gig and times began to change): We're taking youth sports way too seriously, and the kids are seeing and hearing things they shouldn't be exposed to at such a young age. They grow up from 8U on thinking it's normal for SOME parents to gripe at their own coaches and for SOME coaches to carry on with opposing coaches and umpires, who are doing the best they can; whether that meets your standards or not. I've umpired for over 45 years now and I dare some of you "arm-chair experts" to get behind a catcher and have at it #NotEasy.

"Why don't you just retire," a parent screamed at an umpire at an 11U game I was at this weekend (P.S. he later issued two warnings to kids for sub-par behavior but had the good sense to not toss either player). It won't be long before that cat does retire, and eventually we'll have a shortage of men/women willing to umpire when the

tomfoolery accelerates to Level 10.

All that said, I know that every coach, every kid and every parent enters into every game with the best of intentions, but keeping that good will and composure through seven innings is a harrowing experience, almost impossible, because we ALL love our kids to death and don't want to see them cheated out of anything.

I'm just saying we need to do better around the kids (from 8U to 18), and I'm terribly sorry if I went overboard two weeks back and shone a couple of local communities in a negative light, but accountability is among the most important things we should be teaching our kids and that starts at the top of every chain.

Let's remember that as things ramp up and we head into championship weekend for the Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League, one of the best things we have in this neck of the woods to get our kids through the dog days of summer #NothingButLoveFolks!

Direct Rays

8U NW Thunder Storms Past L/M Tigers

It may have taken two days, nine innings and almost five hours to earn the win, but the 12th-seeded NW Thunder Red 8U team battled, leaving everything out on the field Friday evening and pulled off a stunning upset over the No.5 Larchmont/ Mamaroneck Tigers, one of the stronger programs participating in the GHVBL.

On Tuesday, Montana Gonzalez was on fire for three innings when he took the mound, completely neutralizing the big Tiger bats, backed by exceptional defensive play in the infield.

The bats broke out, with each team delivering runs and Tigers gaining late momentum, setting up a dramatic showdown in the bottom of the 6th inning. With the game on the line and the opposition cheering loudly, Jake Zissu shut the door with a quick no-run inning, followed by Eric Esquivel doing the exact same in the seventh. Then, the game was postponed due to darkness.

When the game resumed on Friday, Thunder Red bats exploded with a 3-run top of the eighth inning. Niko Pappas, Alexander Warner and Jake Zissu all scored, with Montana Gonzalez driving 2 of the runs home with a big two-out hit.

Tigers fired right back in the bottom of the eighth, matching the three-run output.

In the top of the ninth, the Tigers made an incredible defensive play to get a critical out at home, but Matteo Giandalone and Niko Pappas delivered huge hits and Niko hit what turned out to be the game winner and brought Matteo home.

In the bottom of the ninth, Emry Wetzel had the bases loaded with one out and a 3-0 count on the batter; tying run at third, winning run at second. Emry (who is still 7U age) showed MLB composure, firing three-straight strikes to get the huge out. With two outs and the bases still loaded, a hard hit ground ball was hit to Jake Zissu at shortstop, who came up clean and immediately pivoted to throw to Montana Gonzalez at 3B for the final out of the game, as pandemonium broke out around him. The NW Thunder advanced to the next round.



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Hit-N-Run Escapes Carmel with 2-1 Win

**White Plains-Based 11U
Team Advances to Semis
in GHVBL Playoffs**



RAY GALLAGHER PHOTOS

Despite just getting three hits all game, the White Plains-based Hit-N-Run 11U baseball club celebrated its 2-1 triumph over host the host Carmel Cubs Sunday afternoon at Ryan Memorial Park in Kent where Coach Steve Fugarino's team advanced to the semifinals of the Greater Hudson Valley Baseball League playoffs by eliminating a very good Carmel club, coached by Rob Pallazo, who had some encouraging words for Hit-N-Run P Noah Feit (inset) after he reached his pitch limit in the top of the sixth. Feit pitched out of a couple of jams by whiffing seven Cubs to earn the win over hard-luck loser Brody Scaperotti, who fanned eight over six frames... see Focus on GHVBL