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December 20 - December 26, 2022

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 592

## WP Schools in Partnership to Produce Traveling Museum Exhibit

By Martin Wilbur and Rick Pezzullo

It may have seemed a bit out of place that a White Plains High School classroom last Friday was the site of a photo shoot by top New York City photographer Bayeté Ross Smith.

The effort was a partnership between the White Plains School District and Common Circles, a nonprofit organization that strives to use innovative technology, the arts and storytelling to increase empathy, reduce bias, build communities of belonging and help people of different views and backgrounds get to know each other better.

Therefore, it was fitting that the school hosted a wide array of community members, from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca to White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach

and the head of school security, among many others, who took turns being Ross Smith's models.

The more than 40 subjects that were photographed will produce a traveling museum exhibit that will be called "We Are White Plains." Its focus will be on "identity, bridging, belonging and building community" that is scheduled to open in mid-March at the high school and move to Highlands and Eastview middle schools during the final months of the current academic year.

"One of the reasons why there's an emphasis on engaging with young people is the simple practicality of getting people when they're younger and more impressionable so they don't grow up to be adults who are susceptible to bias and bigotry, said Ross

*continued on page 2*



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Award-winning New York City-based photographer Bayeté Ross Smith photographs White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, one of more than 40 people he used from the city and the White Plains School District for the "We Are White Plains" exhibit. The exhibit is part of an effort to reduce bias and build understanding.

## Shop Local for the Holidays



Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins joined local leaders to encourage Westchester residents to shop small and shop local this holiday season.

## Greenburgh Restricts Sales of Tobacco, Weapons Near Schools

By Rick Pezzullo

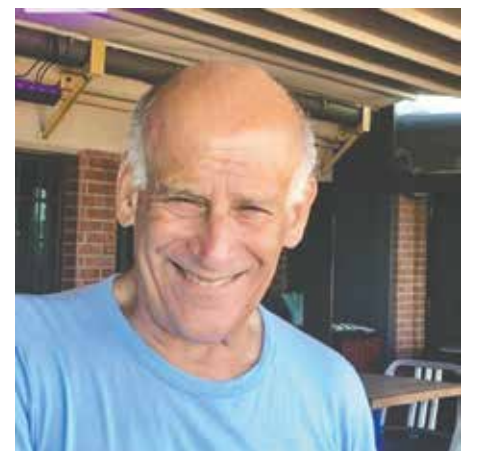
The Greenburgh Town Board last week approved two new local laws restricting the sale and marketing of weapons and tobacco products near schools and parks.

"We don't want to the shops to target our youth," said Greenburgh Supervisor Paul Feiner. "These products are often housed under the same roof and tend to target younger audiences."

On Dec. 14, the Town Board created a new Chapter 472 in local law entitled "Weapons, Prohibition of Specified Sales, Display and Advertising of Weapons."

A second related local law also adopted Dec. 14 created a new Chapter 453

*continued on page 2*



Greenburgh Supervisor Paul Feiner

## Westchester's Diamond Store



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## Grandpas United Named as Program of National Distinction

Generations United has announced that Grandpas United has been selected to receive the prestigious Intergenerational Program Certification. These programs are all creatively and effectively engaging younger and older people in activities that strengthen relationships between the generations.

"We congratulate Grandpas United for earning this distinction and their dedication to high-quality intergenerational practices," said Donna Butts, Executive Director of Generations United. "Achieving this recognition is a major accomplishment. The International Program Certification is the only U.S. 'seal of approval' for intergenerational programs and the application and review process are rigorous."

Grandpas United, associated with the

White Plains Youth Bureau, was one of 11 selected programs that received the Program Distinction designation, which recognizes that the awarded program met the highest standards.

Generations United launched the Intergenerational Program Certification in 2010 to recognize excellence while celebrating the rich diversity among intergenerational programs.

Grandpas United has grown from a handful of grandfathers in 2018 to more than 125 grandfathers across Westchester County, with chapters in five municipalities: White Plains, Port Chester, New Rochelle, Peekskill and Ossining.

*This is a press release provided by the organization. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.*

## WP Schools in Partnership to Produce Traveling Museum Exhibit

*continued from page 1*

Smith, who also teaches at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts.

Images for "We Are White Plains" will be part of a larger ongoing series that Ross Smith has undertaken over the past few years called "Our Kind of People." His subjects are of different races, ethnicity, age and gender and his photos capture them with the same neutral expression and same background and lighting in up to six different outfits.

Its purpose is to challenge people's preconceived notions. For example, a Black male is often viewed more favorably when dressed in a suit and tie rather than a sweatshirt, but the opposite is often true for many white males, he said.

"We create a situation where people are forced to question their pre-existing beliefs," Ross Smith said who has used the concept in exhibits around the world. "So when we see all the different versions of someone, we get to reflect on what we associate with a certain type of face and certain thinking and that deals with the intersection of race, gender, social class, ethnicity, age as well, and even fashion sense."

Marla Felton, who co-founded Common Circles with Sue Spiegel, said the organization hopes to be able to help people learn more about themselves and others through art and communication. She hopes the "We Are White Plains" exhibit can be a game-changer surrounding work on diversity and inclusion.

"Young people have been making their voices heard and calling for a more accepting world," Felton said. "Teens, like adults, can have difficulty engaging in uncomfortable

conversations with others from different backgrounds, but this museum experience is a way to make those experiences easier and more productive."

Russell Frederick, a Brooklyn-based photographer who assisted Ross Smith for the shoot, said although the White Plains exhibit involves the school district, the larger effort is to expose it to all ages and venues, even abandoned buildings and billboards.

White Plains schools became involved in the effort when 50-year city resident Ellen Berger heard about Ross Smith's series and lobbied the district to become involved. Her daughter is also friends with Felton, she said.

"My children went to school here, my grandson graduated from here and I really find that this is a great city, great because of the diversity," Berger said. "That's why we moved here."

"More than ever, we need to support each other and protect our communities from the insidious toxicity of bigotry and hatred," Ricca said. "As community members, we have the power to break down barriers of division and replace them with bridges to understanding and mutual respect. Our partnership with Common Circles has allowed our children and our community the opportunity to elevate their voices and shared commitment to each other."

Felton said Common Circles sponsored a logo contest for the exhibit, inviting White Plains students to enter. The winner, announced on Monday, is freshman Aden Wesley Hadi. His winning entry will serve as the conceptual backbone of the exhibit's logo, Felton said. He will receive \$250 and his logo will be displayed on social media and wherever the exhibit is housed.

## Helping with Food Insecurity



U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand joined food bank executives last week at Feeding Westchester to package food for students ahead of the holidays. Karen Erren, President and CEO of Feeding Westchester, helped Gillibrand pack breakfast bags for students dealing with food insecurity. Feeding Westchester provides food for 71,000 children in need each month through partnerships with local schools, daycares, libraries, and other organizations.

## Greenburgh Restricts Sales of Tobacco, Weapons Near Schools

*continued from page 1*

entitled, "Tobacco Products and Smoking Paraphernalia, Prohibition of Sales, Display and Advertising of Specified Tobacco Products and Smoking Paraphernalia."

Feiner said the zoning amendment followed a public hearing on Nov. 9, coordinated SEQRA review, and input and research conducted by members of the community, including members of the Edgemont Community Council.

Under the law, the sale or offering to sell the products or weapons is prohibited within 750 feet from any school, which has students below the age of 21, or a public

park. The advertising or display of any specified products or weapons is prohibited within 1,500 feet from any school or public park.

Any business found to be operating in violation of these chapters would be fined substantially and could be put under review for closure by the Town Attorney's office. For businesses that are lawfully selling, at the time of the enactment of these local laws, specified tobacco products and/or smoking paraphernalia or weapons, such sales may continue for a period of one year from the date that the laws are filed with the Secretary of State.

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# Report: Fox Lane Administrators Botched Bathroom Photos Investigation

## Principal Reassigned, Will Leave District

By Martin Wilbur

An incriminating independent report into last March's incidents of bathroom photos and video being taken of special education students at Fox Lane High School drew condemnation from Bedford School District community members Wednesday night.

The 57-page report from Kroll Associates, a Manhattan-based investigative and risk consulting firm retained by the district in June, was made public last Tuesday evening by the district. It detailed glaring deficiencies of the school administration's handling of its investigation, including failure to take any contemporaneous notes and dispensing inaccurate or misleading information to members of the school community.

It also cited the district's lack of a formal parental notification policy when students are either accused of or victims of misconduct.

Fallout from the mishandled school investigation resulted in Fox Lane High School Principal Dr. Brett Miller being reassigned to the business office effective Thursday, it was announced at Wednesday evening's board meeting. He will either resign from the district no later than June 30 or leave before then if he has found



Fox Lane High School where several special education students were filmed and photographed in a boys' bathroom.

employment elsewhere. Former Mount Kisco Elementary School and Fox Lane Middle School principal Sue Ostrofsky will take over as interim principal starting Monday.

Director of Pupil Personnel Services Dr. Edward Escobar has been placed on leave "for the foreseeable future," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Glass said.

"The last several months have been incredibly difficult for the Bedford School

community and it's going to take time to rebuild trust and heal," said Glass, who arrived in the district on July 1 following the retirement of former superintendent Dr. Joel Adelberg. "We are committed to improving through our action, our commitment to the well-being of all of our students. This is a very hard time for everyone in our community."

Well over 100 people filled the theater at Fox Lane Middle School last Wednesday night, some of whom expressed outrage at

the incidents and how the district's culture of dismissing concerns from families of special education students contributed to the failure. Karen Close, the parent of one of the victimized students, said Fox Lane's administrative team seemed more focused on lies and avoidance than on taking the proper action.

"My goal is the same as it's always been, I want no other family ever to have to endure this pain," Close said while fighting back tears.

Another parent, Paul Harney, said he wasn't surprised after reading the report because there's been a lack of accountability for years.

"This heinous incident, this criminal incident that needed to rise to the top to get all of our attention on what is a series of patterns that has gone on for years and that is an inability to really drive oversight, ask the tough questions and the challenge the status quo," Harney said.

While the report, which had multiple portions redacted to protect the identities of students, commended the high school's special education staff for quickly reporting the incident to their superiors, it outlined how school administration botched the investigation into the lewd images.

The Mar. 11 incident occurred at about 1:40 p.m. between eighth and ninth periods in a second-floor boys' bathroom. A student of special education teacher Mary Downes reported to her confidentially that certain

*continued on next page*

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# Report: Fox Lane Administrators Botched Bathroom Photos Investigation

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students were taking photos and videos of two special education students in the boys' bathroom, according to the report.

By the following week, after word began circulating in the community that photos might exist, the parents of the victimized students called the school and filed a report with the Bedford Police Department, which launched an investigation.

On Mar. 21, two students admitted in written statements to school personnel that they each took a photo of a special education student in the bathroom the previous year, but no disciplinary action was taken, the report mentioned. The following day, the parents of the victims were notified but Miller did not mention the two admissions.

During a Mar. 30 Board of Education executive session, a board member asked Adelberg about the incident, the same day a parent posted on social media a \$1,000 reward for anyone with information that could help the investigation. It was the first time the board was informed of the incident.

The following morning, after a meeting with school staff, four students, including the two who had written admissions, were suspended the maximum five days pending a superintendent's hearing. In all, at least four students had their pictures taken.

When the board held another executive session on Apr. 8, Miller again did not advise the board of two of the suspended

students' admissions.

"The relevance of the admissions made on March 21st was that they each independently confirmed the misconduct at the heart of the Whistleblowers report was not mere 'rumor' or a 'vague, ambiguous report'" as school administrators had described it, the Kroll report stated. "The March 21st admissions confirmed the misconduct alleged by the Whistleblower had actually happened."

The principal also failed to mention the admissions to Adelberg, the former superintendent, in a meeting with him on Mar. 22, the report stated.

The Westchester County District Attorney's office last summer announced there would be no charges filed against the student perpetrators. Since some of the perpetrators were younger than 16 years old, the matter falls under the jurisdiction of the County Attorney's office and Family Court, not the district attorney's office and criminal court.

It was unclear last week whether any of the victims' families will consider civil litigation. Two families had retained an attorney last spring to ensure the district released the results of the independent inquiry to the public.

As part of its report, Kroll recommended that district personnel receive training on how to conduct effective investigations and how to effectively communicate findings to key constituencies. The report noted that Miller, Escobar, Assistant



Principal Brett Miller has been reassigned to the district office and will leave the Bedford Central School District once he finds another job or by the end of the current school year.

Principal Jason Spector and two deans conducted the school investigation but no one appeared in charge.

The absence of a formal parental notification policy, which is used by at

least 22 Westchester school districts, also contributed to the missteps, the report concluded.

Glass said that steps are already underway to correct the shortcomings in the near future. Training on investigations and communication will be provided by Feb. 1 and the district's parental notification policy may be ready for board review as soon as this Wednesday's meeting.

"Let's mark this incredibly painful moment as a time where we all say we can do better," Glass said.

Board President Edward Reder, who commended the students and staff that did the right thing, said the report highlights a breakdown in trust, which is unacceptable. That trust must be earned back by meaningful change.

"Nothing we say here tonight can change what occurred, but we can hope that our honest and heartfelt sympathy is heard by the victims and their families," he said. "We are all horrified by these incidents and how it affected the victims and their families."

Board member Steven Matlin said one of the reasons why he ran for the board was that the district seemed to be mired in talk but would often fail to follow through.

"Nothing's going to change if it's all talk and no action," Matlin said. "In my opinion, the action's got to start tonight, and through (Dr. Glass's) leadership I'm hopeful that we will get there."

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# Latimer Vetoes Flavored Tobacco Ban Bill; Pledges Education, Enforcement

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer vetoed the Board of Legislators' recently approved bill banning the sale of flavored tobacco products last week and pledged to step up education and enforcement efforts to further curtail smoking.

While Latimer applauded the efforts of lawmakers to address the harmful effects of smoking and tobacco use, particularly on teens, he said concerns raised in the Black and Arab American and Middle Eastern communities as well as objections from various unions contributed to his hesitancy to sign the bill.

"None of these communities is monolithic in their opposition, but there exists a significant number of objections, having been raised, that cannot be brushed aside," Latimer said during his comments leading to his first veto in nearly five years. "The cultural objections raised must be forthrightly addressed, and where possible, remedied."

Residents from a portion of the county's communities of color, both at the public hearing for the bill and in other forums, argued that it would increase interaction with police and heighten the chances of unnecessary encounters with law enforcement with potentially deadly results. Among those who spoke was Gwen Carr, the mother of Eric Garner, who died at the hands of police in Staten Island in 2014 for selling loose cigarettes.

About 80 percent of Black smokers use

menthol cigarettes, which would have been banned under the legislation, a much higher percentage than their white counterparts.

Opponents of the legislation said investment in education and smoking cessation programs would be more valuable and equitable.

Furthermore, Latimer said Westchester County has the lowest percentage of adult smokers – 7 percent – of any county in the state, according to an August 2021 state Department of Health study.

The Board of Legislators approved the bill on Nov. 28 by an 11-6 vote. County Legislator Jewel Williams Johnson (D-Greenburgh), the chair of the Health Committee who introduced the bill, said a veto override vote is not being considered at this time. It would take 12 votes to reverse the veto.

"My disappointment cannot be put into words," Johnson said. "The County Executive indicated the significant number of objections raised that cannot be brushed aside, and I counter with the tremendous advocacy in support of this ban that should not be discounted. Westchester County may have the lowest percentage of adult smokers in the State of New York, but this ban was meant for those disproportionately targeted by Big Tobacco."

Before announcement of the veto, Latimer outlined a strategy that will make a \$3 million investment in public education efforts to strengthen tobacco cessation and anti-addiction programs, including a grant program for community nonprofit organizations.



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

Gwen Carr, mother of the late Eric Garner, was one of the members of the Black community that opposed the flavored tobacco ban for Westchester County.

Another part of the county's effort would be a campaign under the direction of Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins to find ways to stiffen enforcement to ensure that no one under 21 years old can buy tobacco products, Latimer said. A committee that includes law enforcement, legal experts, businesses and representatives from youth organizations will be brought together to develop a plan to prevent tobacco products from being obtained by minors.

One of the main arguments from proponents of the measure was that banning the sale of flavored tobacco, such as candy and fruit-flavored products, would make smoking less enticing to teenagers.

Johnson said that the county health department would have enforced the law and

not the police. However, Latimer mentioned the law cannot predict every consequence.

"There are questions of enforcement that cannot be dictated by the provisions of this bill alone," Latimer said. "Law enforcement entities are tasked by state law with enforcement of this and all statutes, which may come out of violations of this law that involve unlicensed cigarette selling. The intersection between making certain products illegal to sell at the same time we are allowing cannabis products to be legally sold, creates a societal concern that must be more fully researched and addressed."

Johnson said the \$3 million investment in education and cessation programs is appreciated but it is a pittance compared to the billions that will be lost because of smoking-related health issues.

It's also hurts because a similar ban approved by the state of California was recently upheld by the Supreme Court after it was challenged.

Board of Legislators Chair Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining) also expressed her disappointment with Latimer's veto. She said she was proud of the effort that the board and public health advocates put forth, applauding Johnson for the legislation. She is also encouraged by the \$3 million commitment for a new Westchester Tobacco-Free Program.

"The announcement of this program shows that we have moved the needle forward," Borgia said. "We will continue to work for a healthier Westchester."

Kevin O'Flaherty, director of advocacy  
*continued on next page*

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## Latimer Vetoes Flavored Tobacco Ban Bill; Pledges Education, Enforcement

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for the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, plasted the veto. Thousands of children today under 18 will die prematurely because they will become addicted to tobacco, including flavored products, he said. It also will hurt Black communities, which are "relentlessly targeted" by the tobacco industry, O'Flaherty said.

"With this veto, County Executive Latimer missed a tremendous opportunity to take an important step towards protecting the health and safety of young people and communities of color in New York," O'Flaherty said.

One organization that commended the decision to veto was the New York Association of Convenience Stores. Its representatives argued that the ban would have hurt hundreds of merchants and would have increased the black market for cigarettes, including those with menthol, exponentially.

Kent Sopris, president of the association, said education and enforcement is a far better alternative.

"Prohibition never works as public policy and this bill would have jeopardized small business owners without providing any substantive health benefit," Sopris said.

## P'ville's Emanuel Lutheran to Host Blood Drive January 5

The Emanuel Lutheran Church hopes to help replenish blood supplies in the region by sponsoring a community blood drive on Thursday, Jan. 5 from 1 to 7 p.m. at the church at 197 Manville Rd. in Pleasantville. Whole blood and red cells units will be collected from qualifying candidates.

To thank you for making the time, each person who registers to donate during that week will be entered into a New York Blood Center sweepstakes to win either an Apple or a Google watch.

Although this drive makes it convenient for Pleasantville residents to participate, blood donors from all towns are welcome to come to lend their help.

For questions regarding eligibility, call 800-688-0900. To make an appointment, call 800-933-2566 or visit [www.NYBloodCenter.org/donate-blood](http://www.NYBloodCenter.org/donate-blood). A direct link to the Jan. 5 appointment schedule can be found at

[https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive\\_schedule/302021](https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/302021).

## Mount Pleasant Shuts Down Second Vape Shop Within a Month

For the second time in recent weeks, the Mount Pleasant Building Department last week shut down a vape shop in town that had opened illegally less than two days earlier.

Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said that within the past month a shop across the street from the Walgreens in Thornwood and another on Elwood Avenue in Hawthorne both illicitly began operation. Both were shuttered within 48 hours of opening, he said.

"We don't allow vape shops," Fulgenzi said. "That was (included) in the town code a few years ago and they're not allowed."

Several years back as vaping became more prevalent communities had to grapple with whether they should allow the retail shops to operate in their jurisdiction. Residents and officials believed it could entice teens to use the products, which could become a gateway to smoking cigarettes. Some municipalities

wrote stringent zoning regulations to effectively prohibit the shops from opening, such as not being able to operate within a certain distance of a school, park or house of worship.

In Mount Pleasant, there had been concerns from community members who learned of the illegal vape shops that the establishments could have been selling marijuana and/or paraphernalia associated with its use. However, Fulgenzi said there didn't appear to be any evidence of that.

Many municipalities in the area opted against allowing dispensaries and/or lounges where someone could legally use marijuana.

"We're not looking to promote the paraphernalia for marijuana and stuff like that," Fulgenzi said. "The Town Board voted against marijuana, selling it in Mount Pleasant, so we don't need anything that entices people to buy paraphernalia."

—Martin Wilbur

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# Obituaries

## Harold Waters

Harold G. Waters, a Croton-on-Hudson resident, passed away on Dec. 10. He was 85 years old.

Harold was born on Feb. 28, 1937, in Peekskill to the late Harold and Irene Waters. Harold grew up in Croton-on-Hudson and graduated from Croton-Harmon High School.

Harold owned and operated Honey's Bar and Restaurant with his brother since the 1950s. He served in the U.S. Navy where he was honorably discharged on Nov. 8, 1961. He was a lifetime member of the Croton-on-Hudson firehouse, where he also served as a firefighter. He was also a lifetime member of the Croton Yacht Club. Harold had many friends who loved him dearly. He will be missed by all those whose life he touched.

He is survived by Barbara Post, Cassie Post, his good friend, Alfred, as well as his cousin, Donna.

He was predeceased by his parents and his brother, Robert.

Visitation was held on Dec. 14 at Holy Name of Mary Church, 110 Grand St., Croton-on-Hudson. A funeral Mass was celebrated on Thursday, Dec. 15 at Holy Name of Mary



Harold Waters

with burial following at Bethel Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the V.A. or Holy Name of Mary Church in his name.

## Anne Moroney

Anne C. Moroney died peacefully on Dec. 17. She was 95.

Until her recent weeklong illness, Anne had lived in the town where she and her brothers and sisters were raised, having moved back to Pleasantville in 2008 from her beloved Manhattan.

Anne dedicated her life to working with poor and orphaned children throughout her 50-plus-year career with Catholic Charities of New York, with an early and brief period with Catholic Charities of Boston. Anne was a graduate of Fordham University in the Bronx and of St. Augustine Eagle Park High School in Tarrytown.

Anne is survived by her nieces and nephews, Kathryn Moroney Graziano, and her children and grandchildren, Thomas Moroney, Susan Moroney, Patricia Moroney and her children and grandchildren, and Terrance Moroney (Teri). Anne was predeceased by her parents, James and Mary Ellen Moroney (nee Burke); her brothers and sisters, James Moroney, Dr. Jean Moroney, Lt.

Col. Ellen Moroney Liewer, Claire Moroney and Thomas Moroney; and Anne's longtime partner, Timothy Dowling.

Loyal, generous and always game, Anne will be greatly missed.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Save the Children, 501 Kings Highway East, Suite 400, Fairfield, Conn. 06825 or to St. Jude's Children's Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, Tenn. 38105.

## Police Blotter

### Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

**Dec. 8:** Patrols responded to the Croton-Harmon train station at 4:48 p.m. to assist MTA police with the arrest of a female who refused to pay for a train ticket.

**Dec. 10:** Patrols and the Croton Fire Department responded to a Maple Street residence on a report of an electrical fire at 10:31 a.m. The residents of the home extinguished the fire prior to the arrival of authorities. The scene was turned over to the fire department.

**Dec. 12:** Patrols and Croton EMS responded to a South Riverside Avenue business at 4:28 p.m. on a report of a carbon monoxide alarm activation and a person feeling nauseous. After being evaluated, the patient was transported to Phelps Hospital by Croton EMS.

### Kent Police Department

**Dec. 13:** Michael Selca, 60, of Hopewell Junction was arrested at 11:30 a.m. and charged with felony DWI, his third offense, after he and his car were found off the roadway and in the woods on Horsepound Road near Route 52. The responding

## Meron Austin

Meron Heather Austin (nee Allan), 88, of Pleasantville and formerly from the Bronx, passed away on Dec. 1.

Born May 30, 1934, in Yonkers, she was the daughter of the late John Allan and Florence Finnie Allan. She was the beloved mother of four children, Debbie Cwiek (Ed previously deceased in 2022), June Franzese (Michael), Russell Austin and Darryl Austin (Andres Espinosa).

After her divorce, she worked two jobs to ensure a roof over their heads and food on the table. Meron was blessed with eight grandchildren, Michael Franzese II (Erin), Laura Mendez (Hector), Christopher Franzese (Allison), Donna Dempsey (Scott), Eddie Cwiek (Colleen), Michelle Parvez (Maj), Danny Cwiek (Stephanie) and Jillian Austin. She was doubly blessed to have 14 great-grandchildren and was affectionately known as "Nini" to all.

Meron was an only child. Friends were very important to her, and she had a wide circle of women she kept in touch with as well as friends from grammar school. She was an active member of her church and enjoyed the many activities that enabled her to be part of the social aspect of the church. She had been in charge of arranging for the weekly flowers on the altar and volunteering for various fundraising events.

Meron held the position of executive secretary at River Bay Corporation (Co-op City) in the Bronx and worked her way up to executive manager. After leaving River Bay, she held several different positions at various companies until her retirement.

Meron loved to travel, and in addition

to touring places in the United States, she visited China, England and Scotland and was extremely proud of her Scottish heritage. The beach was her happy place. Among her favorite beaches were Jones Beach, Fire Island, the Jersey Shore and the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

She was an avid reader and enjoyed knitting and participating in the bell choir at Trinity Lutheran Church. Bingo was a highlight of her week when she gathered with her fellow bingo lovers at the local senior center. She also enjoyed playing Rummikub and asked the senior center to have an afternoon of playing the game with others who shared her interest.

Never one to forget a birthday or special occasion, Meron kept Hallmark in business with the many cards she would send. Meron was a prolific poem writer and over the years must have written over 100 poems. Whether it was a special birthday, baby shower, bridal shower, anniversary or wedding, her poems would always add a festive note to the occasion. Meron loved when the family all got together, and for many years took her family to a Broadway show for Christmas. It was a wonderful family memory that everyone looked forward to each year.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Trinity Lutheran Church or to the Autism Society of America at [www.Autismsociety.org](http://www.Autismsociety.org).

There will be a memorial service on Saturday, Jan. 14 at Trinity Lutheran Church, located at 292 Elwood Ave. in Hawthorne, at noon.

officer observed an open Coors Light in the cupholder of the vehicle as well as the suspect's bloodshot eyes, slurred speech and a strong odor of alcohol. He was arrested after field sobriety tests and transported to police headquarters for processing. He was issued an appearance ticket to appear in town justice court at a later date.

### Pleasantville Police Department

**Dec. 13:** A 22-year-old Bronx man was arrested at 1:18 a.m. and charged with third-degree unlawful fleeing of the police after failing to stop after an officer attempted to pull him over on Manville Road.

**Dec. 15:** Report of harassment at Pleasantville High School at 7:41 a.m. No further information was provided by police.

**Dec. 16:** A 53-year-old Pleasantville man was arrested at 11:50 a.m. and charged with driving with a suspended driver's license after being involved in an accident on Grant Street.

### State Police/Cortlandt

**Dec. 12:** State police from the Cortlandt barracks, in conjunction with the Putnam County Sheriff's office, arrested Harrold J.

Mann Jr., 42, of Cortlandt, and charged him with four counts of second-degree burglary, a Class C felony, and fourth-degree criminal mischief, a Class A misdemeanor. During an ongoing investigation of multiple burglaries stretching back to October in Philipstown, Putnam Valley and Cortlandt, troopers responded to an address near Gallows Hill Road in Cortlandt for a report of a burglary. With the help of the Putnam Sheriff's Department and a state police K9, Mann was tracked down and arrested. Further investigation revealed Mann was sought in connection with multiple burglaries in the area. He was arraigned in town justice court and remanded to the Westchester County Jail in lieu of \$75,000 cash bail, \$200,000 bond or \$400,000 partially secure bond.

### Yorktown Police Department

**Dec. 14:** A 32-year-old Peekskill man was charged with second-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, an unclassified misdemeanor, after being pulled over on Route 6 at 7:10 p.m. for driving with an inoperable headlight. A check showed his driver's license had been suspended.



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# Group Issues Report on EV Charging Infrastructure in Region

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress last week released a new report that examines the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) across the region and strategies to install the public charging infrastructure that will power transportation in the future.

This research will be used as part of a public education campaign in 2023. Researchers and planners will teach the Hudson Valley about EV charging, the proper siting of charging infrastructure and the funding sources that can help to pay for charging stations.

The research will help community leaders and businesses understand where the infrastructure should go.

“Our transition to electric vehicles is one of the most substantial changes to transportation in many generations,” Pattern CEO Adam Bosch said. “The Hudson Valley must be smart and strategic about the installation of public charging stations, which are quickly becoming essential infrastructure.

Charging stations are necessary for people who live in the region, visit our communities and travel along our highways.”

Pattern’s research found that more and more people are adopting EVs across the Hudson Valley. In 2016 there were only about 1,000 fully electric vehicles on the road across the Hudson Valley. That number has grown to more than 15,700.

The broad adoption of EVs will require an expansive network of public charging stations that allow drivers to recharge their cars during long trips. A reliable charging network is also needed for drivers to be confident about purchasing EVs. There are currently about 400 public charging stations in the nine counties served by Pattern. Of those, 349 are Level 2 chargers that provide about 25 miles of driving range for every hour of charge.

Level 3 chargers – also known as direct-current fast chargers (DCFC) – can charge 80 percent of a vehicle’s battery in less than 30 minutes. Their speed makes them especially important for highway corridors, downtown parking lots and other locations.

In addition to data about EVs and charging stations across the Hudson Valley, Pattern’s research includes four in-depth guides on topics that are important for the installation of charging infrastructure across the region. These guides include:

**Guide to Funding:** There are more than \$1 billion in federal, state and utility funding available across the state for the installation of charging stations and their associated electrical infrastructure. The federal government has allocated \$175 million to help New York build its charging network along specific highway corridors and after that, within local communities.

Electric utilities also provide funding for the installation of circuitry, conduit, high-capacity wires and other electrical infrastructure that is necessary to power the stations. Some communities are eligible for 100 percent reimbursement under the utility program. Pattern’s guide to funding includes an exhaustive list of all the funding sources that are available to our communities.

**Guide to Planning with Utility Companies:** EV charging stations require a greater electric load than you might think. An EV fast charger draws the same amount of electricity from the grid as a 1,000-unit apartment building. That load of electrons does not exist everywhere. That’s why communities and businesses must work collaboratively with their electric utilities to plan and install EV charging stations.

Many charging projects require utilities to install new wires, transformers, and circuitry. Some even require the utilities to increase the capacity of local substations.

**Guide to Best Practices and Policy Recommendations:** Pattern compiled a list of best practices to help communities understand where to site charging stations, how to future-proof charging locations and how to collaborate with the private sector on installation and maintenance. Pattern also wants to encourage smart policy changes that improve the roll-out of EV charging.

**Model Zoning Ordinance for Multi-Family Dwellings:** Although Pattern’s study focuses on public charging stations, it is important to acknowledge that most EV drivers charge their cars at home. That raised an important question: What happens when you live in an apartment building or townhouse, and you do not have the authority to install your own charging station?

Pattern worked with municipal lawyers to design a model zoning ordinance that would require developers to install charging stations at multiunit residential projects in the future. Charging at these residential locations is a potential barrier to the wider adoption of EVs across the region, especially in our cities, villages and hamlets.

MATT  
SLATER

FOR NYS ASSEMBLY

Thank you!

It's been my honor and a dream come true to lead our town for the last three years.

I'm proud of everything we have accomplished and confident about the strong foundation we have created for Yorktown's future.

I am grateful for the trust Yorktown voters placed in me as Town Supervisor and, now, as our voice in the New York State Assembly.

From our family to yours, we wish everyone in Yorktown a Merry Christmas and a Blessed Holiday Season.

Matt Slater

Paid for by Friends of Matt Slater



THE SLATER FAMILY:  
MATT, CHARLIE,  
ELIZABETH AND KELLIE

TRANSFORMING YORKTOWN

First town tax cut in 30 years

Cut or froze Town taxes each year

Solar Law and Food Scrap Recycling Center that earned Yorktown Climate Smart Community designation

Attracted Trader Joe's and Uncle Giuseppe's expansion

Safest Towns in America award

Initiated playground safety audits

Overlay district law to attract economic growth called a model for the rest of the state

Transformative projects at the Yorktown Green, Soundview Preparatory, the Field House and attracting New York's largest EV bus dealership



# Letters to the Editor

## Democrats Have Done Plenty to Add to Our Nation’s Incivility

With regards to Michael Gold’s essay “How to Destroy Democracy in a Few Easy Steps,” (December 6-12) though he decries the toxicity and lack of civility in this political climate he seems to at least inadvertently play into the hands of those who seek to divide and polarize us.

For example, he brings up the recent gubernatorial election in Arizona in which he labels GOP gubernatorial Kari Lake as an “election denier” because she questions the results of the election. Well, here’s the thing: Lake’s opponent, Katie Hobbs, is the secretary of state for Arizona; as such she supervises and certifies the election results. She should have resigned as secretary or recused herself in the voting process. To say that this is a conflict of interest is a vast understatement.

Also, the fact that a good number of printing and voting machines just happened to break down on Election Day in Maricopa County might be cause for valid criticism and concern over the election process. Incidentally, the one who will succeed Nancy Pelosi for the Democrats’ House leadership, Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, is an “election denier” in that he denied the legitimacy of the 2016 Presidential election. And let’s not forget that a Democratic presidential candidate called a good percentage of Americans “deplorables.”

He mentions Rep. Marjorie Taylor-Greene as making wild and outlandish allegations, but fails to mention that Democratic members of Congress, Maxine Waters, Rashida Talib, Ilhan Omar and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, have made just as outlandish and outrageous statements in the past. And President Biden’s speech made on Sept. 1 was very divisive and polarizing with the dark red backdrop.

Somehow Mr. Gold forgot about that. When Joe Biden was elected as President, he promised that he would unify the country but, in fact, turned out to be arguably the most divisive and polarizing President we’ve ever had.

I don’t question Mr. Gold’s sincerity and his love for this country, so I’m not going to accuse him of selective cherry picking and ideological bias. I simply give him the benefit of the doubt and assume he must have forgotten about these facts and details. But such omissions can only end up undermining his argument and case.

Bruce Kelly  
Mahopac

## Year-Round Free Bee-Line Service is an Outstanding Idea

Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner recently published a letter in the Northern Westchester Examiner proposing year-round free bus transportation (“Westchester Should Consider Offering Year-Round Free Bee-Line Service,” December 6-12). I cannot agree more. Mr. Latimer did a great service to residents by waiving the Westchester Bee-Line fare during the summer and now during the holiday season. Mr. Feiner outlined all the benefits to such a proposal, including decreased congestion, fewer accidents and environmental considerations.

As a side note, I also urge the county not to reduce the number of stops on the #14 and #15 Bee-Line routes as has been proposed. Northern Westchester residents rely on those routes and stops. If the purpose of the service changes is to enhance and expand ridership, then eliminating stops seems counterproductive.

To Mr. Feiner, I say thank you for expressing what I have thought for months. To the county, I say “Free the Bee!”

Daniel Grossman  
Peekskill

## Yorktown Town Board’s Selection for Vacancy Must Rise Above Politics

With Yorktown’s Matt Slater winning his Assembly election, Councilman Tom Diana is set on Jan. 1 to assume the role of supervisor. I wish him success. The vacancy on the Town Board will be filled by a consensus vote of the remaining members – not the most democratic method. I hope it doesn’t wind up being just a popularity contest among the same old revolving-door politicians and party partisans. A breath of fresh air would be welcomed.

Going forward, Diana’s tenure as supervisor will be judged as to whether he can rise above politics, and the pick for a replacement on the Town Board will speak volumes.

Stephen Brown  
Yorktown

### Calendar Submissions

We’re happy to help spread the word about your community event. Please submit your information at least three weeks prior to your event and include the words “Calendar Submission” in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to Robert Schork at [happenings@theexaminernews.com](mailto:happenings@theexaminernews.com).

## Galef Thanks Public for Support, Suggestions Over the Past 30 Years

After 30 years as a member of the state Assembly, I will be retiring from office at the end of 2022. I want to say thank you to my constituents and other residents throughout Westchester and Putnam for giving me the opportunity to be in elected office and to represent you in Albany. Your support on election days as well as your constant input on state issues that mattered to you made a real difference in what I could accomplish on your behalf.

I believe so strongly in our democratic process and the important role of government in our lives. We always need to express our views even if we differ with others but in a respectful way.

May the new year be a good one for our local, state and federal representatives and for each of you.

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef  
95th Assembly District

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# Column

## Ossining Church Provides a Christmas Lesson to Two Governors

The governors of Texas and Florida decided to give themselves early Christmas presents by shipping thousands of immigrants from Latin America to New York, Massachusetts and Washington D.C. earlier this year.

Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas claimed in September that he had sent 10,000 migrants on buses to the Northeast. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis put 50 immigrants on a plane to Martha's Vineyard in September.

These Christmas-in-September gifts are exceptional in that they are among the cruelest pieces of political theater we've ever seen because Governors Abbott and DeSantis shipped people rich only in desperation more than 1,000 miles across state lines, by bus and plane, as if they were cargo, using them to score political points and thrill the governors' supporters.

Did their tactics work in helping solve the immigration crisis on our border, an enormously complicated problem that a series of U.S. Presidents have been unable to solve (including one who promised in 2016 to build a big, beautiful wall that would keep them all out)? Not at all. But it did help them get lots of publicity.

Ossining Pastor Jeniffer Rodriguez condemned the governors' small-minded stunts, as part of the Presbyterian Church's



By Michael Gold

Synod of the Northeast's Hispanic/Latino Ministry. The caucus agreed on a resolution in October in reaction to the migrant shipments that cited the Bible's admonition to "love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

The Synod plans to send the letter to all Presbyterian churches, as well as the two governors, "stating what they're doing is unjust and unfair," Rodriguez said.

The Synod's resolution was an effort to reclaim the humanity of the immigrants from the prejudicial stereotypes that Gov. Abbott tagged them with – in his mind, equating them with drug traffickers and weapons smugglers, instead of terribly poor people who are hungry and terrified of the violence being visited upon them and their communities in their home countries, often by armed drug gangs. It's easier to treat the immigrants badly if you see them all as criminals, I guess.

I recently visited Rodriguez at the First Presbyterian Church of Ossining, to talk about immigration, along with two other members of her congregation.

I asked the pastor what she wanted to say to immigrants during the Christmas season.

"Even though society sees you as invisible, you are visible to the eyes of God," she said. "They are loved by God. There is a community here that supports them and will

always be there for them."

One of the members of the church, named Adrian, is of Greek heritage. Her parents left Greece in the 1950s and came to America. Her father worked for General Motors in Tarrytown and held down two other jobs. Her mother worked for Reader's Digest. She said that she and her brother were snubbed in school for a few years before being accepted.

Her parents saved their money and bought a building to rent out. Adrian went to college and worked as a schoolteacher in the Bronx for 30 years. It's a classic story of immigration success.

Now, Adrian says, it's much harder for immigrants to settle in America. She told me about some Greek friends of hers who had doctorates in computer science and came to New York to do project work for a major technology company. They couldn't get citizenship when their visas expired, and they had to return to Greece.

"We have an extremely nativist attitude these days," Adrian said. "Most immigrants work very hard, harder than most Americans, to get ahead."

Another church member, Mickey, was born in Puerto Rico and is the son of Lutheran ministers. His father was Puerto Rican, and his mother was German and Jamaican. He has been employed as a musician, manual laborer and attendance officer and class aide at a local school.

One time in Mickey's school job, "two teachers said the Spanish kids were not as smart as the white kids. There's a mentality that an immigrant is different," he said.

Mickey's mother was not allowed to join a sorority at the Midwestern Lutheran college she attended, but she persevered in her career.

"My mother didn't listen to people who discriminated against her," he said.

Many years later, the girls in the sorority sent his mother an apology.

"You put a title on a group, you see them as a herd. I can't categorize anybody," Mickey explained. "We have to look at people as people from God."

The pastor pointed out, "We need to follow God's light and open hearts so we can see the reason why we are here on Earth. Jesus himself was an immigrant. We're all part of this world because we are children of God. We're part of creation."

That's a Christmas lesson Gov. Abbott and Gov. DeSantis would do well to absorb.

*Pleasantville-based*

*writer Michael Gold has had articles published in the New York Daily News, the Albany Times Union, The Virginian-Pilot, The Palm Beach Post, other newspapers, and The Hardy Society Journal, a British literary journal.*

## On the Street

## Thank You to All in Yorktown for Making the Town the Best it Can Be

By Matt Slater

On Jan. 1, I will begin a new role representing Yorktown – in addition to neighboring communities in Westchester and Putnam counties – as your voice in the New York State Assembly. While I will be representing you in Albany, I will also have a strong local presence with my district office in Brewster, and, of course,

my home in Yorktown.

For the past three years as town supervisor, I had the honor to lead the community where I grew up and continue to live, and where my wife Kellie and I are raising our family. During this time, our town faced significant challenges. Working together, our community successfully navigated the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating consequences. Through

it all, we exemplified the Yorktown way, showing great strength and care as a community, and that is something in which I will always take pride in.

Working in a bipartisan fashion with the last two town boards, we have put Yorktown on a transformative trajectory. Beyond our COVID-19 response and recovery, our accomplishments are significant and show what can be done when we work together.

We cut spending to balance the town budget and delivered the first (and second) town tax cut in more than a generation. Yorktown was recognized by New York State as a Climate Smart Community and, thanks to the great work of the Yorktown Police Department, we were named one of the safest mid-size communities in the nation.

The Business Council of Westchester hailed Yorktown's economic development plan as a model for the rest of the state and country. From the new Trader Joe's and Uncle Giuseppe's to exciting new projects that will transform the Yorktown Green, Soundview Preparatory School and the Field Home, the results are apparent.

These last three years we also focused on important quality-of-life issues for our neighbors, making significant investments in our parks and ensuring safe and accessible playgrounds for our kids. Working with Highway Superintendent Paganelli, we slashed the town's paving

schedule and tackled critical road infrastructure projects. We also created several new committees giving a voice to our veterans, youth and vulnerable neighbors with disabilities.

All of our successes required a team mentality and passion for the town we all love.

I have always believed in Yorktown's unlimited potential. We have dedicated and talented employees who I know will continue the good work of these past three years. While we have emerged as a regional leader in the Hudson Valley, I still believe our best days are ahead of us because of the great people who call our community home.

It is difficult to put into words how grateful I am to have the distinct honor of leading this wonderful town. On behalf of my wife Kellie and children, Charlie and Elizabeth, we are deeply thankful for the confidence that you have had in me and we have done our best to honor that trust.

While I am looking forward to our next chapter of service to our community, I will always be proud to call Yorktown my home.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you Yorktown. I'll see you around town.

*Matt Slater has served as Yorktown supervisor for the past three years and is the Assemblyman-elect for the 94th Assembly District.*

## Letter to the Editor

### Help Caregivers Who Are Helping a Loved One Through Dementia

Alzheimer's disease is devastating for the more than six million Americans living with the disease and the 11 million family and friends serving as caregivers. The caregiving needs for someone living with Alzheimer's are extensive and increase over time – on average four to eight years following a diagnosis. New York State caregivers are often stretched thin. Many are overwhelmed. Most could use help.

Care partners and caregivers are the saving grace for the person they care for, but lose themselves in the supporting role they play.

Take time to support a caregiver you

know. Run errands, help with a household chore, give caregivers a break by spending time with the person with dementia and educate yourself about the disease. Reach out to the Alzheimer's Association Chapter to learn more and get involved. These small gestures can make a big difference and offer well-deserved support to those who give so much.

**Meg Boyce**  
Vice President of Programs and Services  
Alzheimer's Association  
Hudson Valley Chapter



# Obituary

## Shirley Ann Griggs

Shirley Ann Griggs of Chappaqua passed away on Dec. 17. She was 91.

She was the daughter of Cecil and Ann Griggs. Griggs attended Grosse Point, Mich. public schools, graduating from Dominican High School in 1949. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Michigan in 1953, her master's degree from Northwestern University in 1956 and her Doctor of Education degree from Columbia University in 1967.

Griggs began her career as a teacher, counselor and then assistant principal in the Detroit Public Schools. From 1963 to 1998 she was a professor of counselor education at St. John's University in New York. She published extensively in professional journals, and authored and edited numerous books on counseling and learning styles. She has funded scholarships at St. John's University for graduate students in counselor education.

Griggs was a member of The Church of

Saint John and Saint Mary in Chappaqua and served on the Parish Council and as a eucharistic minister for the homebound. She volunteered at Twigs Thrift Shop, was a docent at the New Castle Historical Society and was a member of the Mohegan chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. With her sister, Dorothy Griggs, they traveled the world, visiting numerous countries on seven continents.

Griggs was predeceased by her mother, father and sister Dorothy.

A Mass of the Resurrection will be celebrated at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 22 at The Church of Saint John and Saint Mary, 15 St. John's Place in Chappaqua. Visitation will be at Beecher Flocks Funeral Home, 418 Bedford Rd. in Pleasantville on Wednesday, Dec. 21 from 2 to 8 p.m. Interment will be in Resurrection Cemetery, Clinton Township, Mich.

Donations may be made to The Church of Saint John and Saint Mary or your favorite charity.

## New York Blood Center Appeals for Donors to Ensure Stable Blood Supply

The New York Blood Center is calling for blood donors amid the "triple-demic" of RSV, flu and COVID-19 and the upcoming holidays season, threatening an already unstable blood supply.

The Blood Center is celebrating the holidays by providing socks to every presenting donor at all 19 area donor centers. The promotion will be available from now through Wednesday, Jan. 4 as a way to thank all of the generous donors.

Every December, school breaks, family vacations and travel all contribute to making blood donations less of a priority. The increase in cases of RSV, flu and COVID-19 are creating new concern, as fear of getting sick is causing donors with upcoming appointments to cancel, creating extra volatility in the blood supply.

Hospitals and patients rely upon a steady flow of volunteer donors to receive life-saving blood donations, but the past two years have brought chronic blood shortages nationwide. The region's blood supply currently stands at a one- to three-day level, which is well below the ideal level of five to seven days.

"The winter months are always a difficult time to maintain our blood supply, but new challenges like rising RSV, flu and COVID-19 cases is making

the need to build our inventory even greater," said Andrea Cefarelli, senior vice president at the New York Blood Center. "We are encouraging all eligible, and especially first-time donors, to come out and spread holiday cheer with the greatest gift of all, life-saving blood donations. We'll even throw in a pair of socks to say thank you!"

Donating blood is easy and only takes one hour. Extra precautions are being taken to help prevent the person-to-person spread of COVID-19. As always, people are not eligible to donate if they're experiencing a cold, sore throat, respiratory infection or flu-like symptoms.

People can donate blood regardless of vaccination status. Additional information on donor eligibility and COVID-19 precautions is available at <https://www.nybc.org/donate-blood/covid-19-and-blood-donation-copy/>.

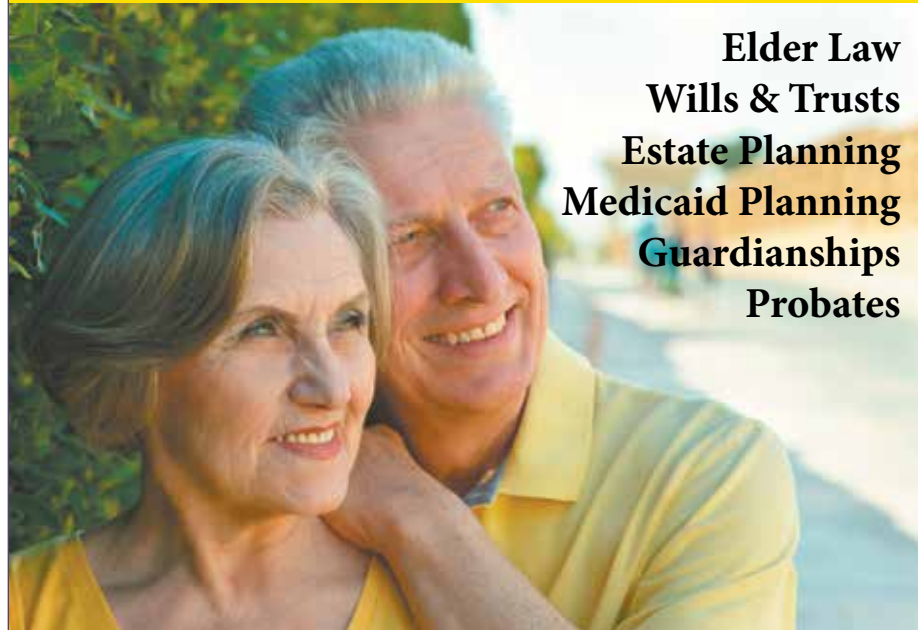
To make an appointment, donors can call 1-800-933-2566 or visit [www.nybc.org](http://www.nybc.org).

If you can't donate blood, you can still support the Blood Center's mission by texting NYBC to 20222 to donate \$25.

This is a press release provided by the New York Blood Center. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.

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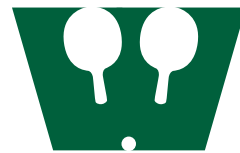
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# Proposal for Armonk's Former MBIA Property Receives Major Overhaul

By Martin Wilbur

A proposal to redevelop the former MBIA property in Armonk has been significantly altered with plans now calling for 125 fee simple townhouses and 50 age-restricted apartments.

Airport Campus, the applicant for the project at 113 King St., and its representatives returned to the North Castle Town Board last week, pitching its latest iteration for the 38.8-acre site. The previous proposal, last debated in 2021, featured a 125-room hotel and 170 housing units along with maintaining 100,000 square feet of existing office space; however, it was soundly criticized by some members of the Town Board for being too dense with a potential negative impact on local roads, schools and emergency services.

Attorney Anthony Veneziano said the townhouses would not be age-restricted, but "age-targeted," geared more toward a somewhat older adult population. Those would be three bedrooms and each unit average around 2,800 square feet each. It would be located on the larger 33-acre northern portion of the site.

The 50 age-restricted apartments would be located in a repurposed office building and would require at least one resident in each unit to be 55 or older. Those residences would be on four to five acres on the southern end of the property, Veneziano said.

A new two-story, 60-space parking structure would be part of the plan, he said.

Rezoning would be sought to Residential

Multifamily Housing for the townhomes and Multifamily Residential Senior Citizen Housing for the apartment.

Last Wednesday, the updated proposal received a more favorable reaction from the board, although there were still some concerns voiced by officials. Councilman Matt Milim said the large number of fee simple units makes it a better project for the town along with using the existing office building to house the apartments.

"I think this is substantially improved and I think that having the 125 townhomes as fee simple but age-targeted is a really good solution for, I think, the taxation concern that I have, but also the concerns that (Supervisor) Mike (Schilero) discussed before about aging in place," Milim said.

Councilman Jose Berra said the property would be "a great site for development" and the switch to fee simple would be a major advantage for the town and its taxpayers. However, the development's proposed density could still pose a problem, and he worried whether it could change the character of the town.

"There's a lot of units right next to each other or close to each other, and essentially except for one square that you have there, one road," Berra said. "I want to think about that."

Also, if a proposed 456-unit housing complex across King Street in Greenwich were to get built it could overload the area, he said. There is no access to the Greenwich site from Connecticut, only via King Street.

Feedback from Byram Hills school officials

will also be crucial to help guide the board, Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto said. While the fee simple taxation on the surface would appear to benefit the various taxing jurisdictions, an upswing in school enrollment could negate that advantage or hurt the taxpayers, she said.

"What I want to be really certain of is that I'm not going to see my school taxes go up because of all of the uncertainties that I can't predict and you can't predict," DiGiacinto said.

Veneziano said understands the key issues, including impact on the schools, but believes the concerns can be addressed.

"This is not that dense, it's four units per acre, its 40 acres," he said. "You're talking about the character of the community; this looks better than Whippoorwill Hills. I don't get that, and this is almost out of town."

There would be a total of 18 affordable units at the to comply with the town's ordinance. Both the townhouse side of the parcel and the apartment building would each contain a 10 percent share, Veneziano said.

The applicant will revise its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and once that is ready, will submit it to the Town Board for referrals to the appropriate boards.

## Remembering the Servicemen

Putnam County commemorated Wreaths Across America Day last Saturday with a ceremony and wreath laying at Raymond Hill Cemetery in Carmel. Veterans and squadron cadets of the Putnam Civil Air Patrol participated in the ceremony before they and members of the community fanned out across the cemetery to place wreaths on the graves of 384 deceased service members.

MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO



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# Fair Street USA: Wishing Everyone A Holiday

As 2022 wraps up, the City of White Plains looks forward to keeping the spirit of Fair Street USA alive. Fair Street USA is a 3D, immersive, interactive arts exhibit focused on exploring fair housing challenges. Housing discrimination derails dreams. Fair Street USA aimed to change that course. Ten community organizations joined forces with artists to envision a community where fair housing reigns. Visitors to Fair Street USA learned about fair housing choice, impact of housing discrimination on communities, and how to recognize and report fair housing concerns. The exhibit premiered on the White Plains library plaza and later remained on display in the library gallery.

In October, the exhibit inhabited Court Street at the Serious Fun Arts Festival. White Plains Mayor Tom Roach stated, “Fair housing education is essential to eliminating housing discrimination in communities. Each community must do their part to educate stakeholders about how to identify and combat these deleterious practices so that every person has equitable access to housing.” Mayor Roach continued, “Thank you to the city staff, community organizations and artists that collaborated to bring Fair Street USA to the City of White Plains. “Every person should be treated with dignity and respect and should be able to live where they choose.”

### History of Fair Housing

Community Group: Westchester Residential Opportunities.

Artist: Moira Trachtenberg



The history of fair housing is paved with problematic practices. Redlining: the discriminatory practice of denying services to residents of certain areas based on their race or ethnicity. Restrictive Covenants: covenants that prohibit racial, ethnic, and religious minority groups from buying, leasing, or occupying homes; these became common after 1926 after the U.S. Supreme Court validated their use. Blockbusting: manipulating homeowners to sell or rent their homes at a lower price by falsely convincing them that the neighborhood's socioeconomic demographic is changing because of new groups of people moving in and that this shift will affect the value of their home. Steering: influencing a buyer's choice of communities based upon one of the protected classes.

### Promoting Fair Housing

Community Group: Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

Artist: Taeesha Muhammad

We all have a role to play in promoting fair housing and realtors have a special opportunity. “Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS® believes in Equal Opportunity for all. Fair housing laws are a cornerstone of community. As REALTOR® members, we have both the opportunity and responsibility to increase efforts to support diversity and inclusivity in the real estate market. It is our commitment to uphold fair housing laws and offer equal professional service to all in their search of real property.”



### Protected Classes

Community Group: White Plains Library.

Artist: Jennifer

Jane is a Muslim woman who wears a hijab. Jane enters an apartment building leasing office because a sign in the building's window advertised several available units. Jane speaks to the leasing officer, who says there are no units available. Jane asks to be put on the waiting list but she never receives a call. Jane files a complaint with HUD because she suspects that the leasing officer doesn't want to rent to her because she is Muslim.

### Reporting Discrimination

Community Group: Westchester County Human Rights Commission.

Artist: Taeesha Muhammad

The Westchester County Human Rights Commission combats discrimination by implementing and enforcing the County's Human Rights Law and Fair Housing Law and by empowering the community through its education and outreach efforts regarding discrimination and hate-related issues.



If you have experienced or witnessed discrimination or a hate-related incident in Westchester County call the Human Rights Commission at (914) 995-7710 or email the Commission at [humanrights@westchestergov.com](mailto:humanrights@westchestergov.com)

### Future of Fair Housing

Community Group: WP Mayor's Youth Council.

Artist: Moira Trachtenberg

Our youth are our future, and the young people who envisioned the future of fair housing envision housing in its broadest sense with access to healthy food, green space, recreational activities, Wi-Fi, mental health services and supports and so much more.



### Protected Classes

Community Group: The

Artist: Taeesha

John, who is a Black man, speaks to a landlord leasing an apartment. The landlord says



contacted for a reference. John files a complaint with HUD because he suspects the real reason he was denied was because of his race. Joe, who is an Asian man, meets with a broker purchasing a house for his family. When Joe is interested in the house, the broker steers him to a neighborhood where there are more "desirable" residents of the neighborhood appear to be of a certain ethnicity because of his race.



# Day Season Free of Fair Housing Challenges

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, and familial status, and protects residents who feel they have experienced discrimination in housing,” said Alicka Ampry-Samuel, HUD Regional Administrator for New York and New Jersey. “HUD provides funding for fair housing education and enforcement to local governments and organizations that assist residents. I am pleased that the City of White Plains, stakeholders, and artists came together to create this innovative exhibit.”



White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach, HUD Regional Administrator Alicka Ampry-Samuel, Westchester County Human Rights Commission Executive Director, Tejash Sanchala, and Artist Rebecca Mills in front of the house representing discrimination on the basis of sex and gender.

**Protected Class: Religion**  
Community Group: Interfaith Committee.  
Artist: Jennifer Levine



**Protected Class: Race/Color**  
Community Group: Thomas H. Slater Center.  
Artist: Aisha Muhammad

John meets with the landlord in person, the landlord's attitude is entirely different. Later, John receives a letter saying that his application was denied because of a negative reference from his current landlord. John is surprised because he never had problems with his landlord, and his landlord swears she was never a complaint with HUD because he was because he is Black. John meets with the landlord in person, the landlord's attitude is entirely different. Later, John receives a letter saying that his application was denied because of a negative reference from his current landlord. John is surprised because he never had problems with his landlord, and his landlord swears she was never a complaint with HUD because he was because he is Black.

**Protected Class: Sex/Gender**  
Community Group: The LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Center.  
Artist: Rebecca Mills



When Jane falls behind on her rent she asks her landlord if he will give her more time. He says yes but only if she will go out with him. Feeling she has no choice, Jane agrees. Jane's landlord tells her that if she does not go out with him again he is going to evict her. Jane files a complaint with HUD because sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. A realtor refuses to show houses listed for sale to a potential buyer because the buyer is transgender. A housing provider refuses to rent a house to a same sex couple because of their "family composition". A maintenance worker employed by a housing provider subjects a female tenant to pervasive harassment because she is a lesbian. A tenant is evicted after the housing provider discovers the tenant has dated persons of the same sex and identifies as bisexual. A same-sex couple asks a realtor to see rental units throughout the city but is only shown rental units in a part of the city known for having many LGBTQ residents. All these examples constitute a form of sex discrimination.

**Protected Class: National Origin**  
Community Group: El Centro Hispano.  
Artist: Jennifer Levine

John recently moved to the United States from Mexico. One day, John sees that there is a new tenant in the apartment next to his, so he welcomes her to the building. John's neighbor comments on how nice everyone in the building seems, especially the building manager who offered to waive her security deposit. John is surprised because the building manager was short-tempered with him and said that John's accent made him hard to understand. John later finds out that the building manager has waived fees and deposits for other tenants he likes, but not for John or other persons from Mexico. Providing different terms and conditions to tenants because of national origin is illegal discrimination.



**Protected Class: Familial Status**  
Community Group: Lifting Up Westchester.  
Artist: Rebecca Mills



John has three teenage children. John's building has a patio with picnic tables, and John's children decide to have lunch there. John receives a notice from the homeowners association informing him that the building rules say that the patio is for adult use only. Building rules that discriminate against children are a form of familial status discrimination.

Jane & John are filling out an application for a mortgage at their local bank. Their loan officer notices that Jane is visibly pregnant and asks whether she will be taking maternity leave. When Jane says yes, the loan officer informs the couple that they either have to apply without Jane's income or wait until she returns from leave. They file a complaint with HUD because the bank's policy discriminates based on sex and familial status.

**Protected Class: Disability**  
Community Groups: WP Mayors Advisory Council for People with Disabilities and MHA Westchester.  
Artist: Moira Trachtenberg

Jane has a developmental disability and needs assistance managing her finances. Jane tells her building manager that her mother will be paying her rent and asks if all notices relating to her rent can be sent to her mother. The building manager says that the management company will only send notices to residents, no exceptions. Jane gets an eviction notice because her mother did not know that Jane's rent increased. Denying a reasonable accommodation is disability discrimination.

John, a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair, views a condominium he is hoping to purchase in a new building. When John arrives, he finds there are no accessible parking spaces in the building's parking lot. Inside the unit, the thermostat and light switches are all too high for him to reach. The building has a fitness room, but the only way to get to it is to go up steps. Failing to comply with accessibility requirements is a form of disability discrimination.



The project organizers are solely responsible for the content.



## A Christmas Miracle and the Art of Communication

You'd never know it to meet me today but I was born with some kind of neurological condition that resulted in my reaching the age of five without speaking a word.

That was in the days before autism spectrum disorder had been diagnosed and certainly there was no treatment available for kids like me who were non-social, withdrawn and didn't verbalize.

But from what my mother tells me, I recovered from whatever that condition was completely and miraculously on the final day of a nine-week novena she made – leading up to Christmastime at that – at St. Donato's Roman Catholic Church in West Philadelphia. After hearing this story, I never questioned reports of miracles, because I haven't shut up since.

While I was able to speak, I still had to challenge myself to become more socially interactive in school. I debated and wrote for the school newspaper. Once out of college, my first job was as a newspaper reporter and, after that, a public relations practitioner, all requiring verbal communication.

But only when I ventured into real estate did I find myself talking all the time. And from what industry pundits say, that's a good thing.

It has been reported that the chief "irk" that sellers and buyers have with realtors is all about communication. Specifically, we're



By Bill Primavera

told that the most common real estate situation that negatively impacts realtors' clients is inadequate disclosure. We realtors know that potential home buyers and sellers need to have frequent heart-to-hearts with us to know as much as they can about the whole process, particularly what is likely to happen next.

In defense of myself and my fellow real estate practitioners, I would say that out of self-preservation we're way ahead of the game. I've never heard any group of people who talk as much as realtors do in their mission to inform their clients.

The real estate purchase or sale process is so complex and so all-encompassing a discipline that the totally unexpected or unknown can happen at any time. And it's the realtor who can get blamed for lack of disclosure on the matter.

There are the standard disclosures which sellers and realtors sign when taking a listing: the disclosure of agency that identifies the relationship of the realtor to the seller, a lead disclosure if the house was built before 1978 and the affiliated business disclosure, so that sellers can be aware of the other businesses which the realtor's company owns.

The big disclosure that most buyers and sellers relate to is the property condition disclosure in which the seller identifies all the known defects of a house to its buyer.



While it is required in many states, such as California where the code is particularly stringent, in New York, the seller may choose not to issue such a disclosure, but rather pay \$500 at closing to the buyer. The overwhelming majority of sellers choose this option, rather than risk being liable for serious house defects.

But above and beyond these expected disclosures are those that require a simple explanation before the fact, rather than after. Nobody likes surprises or hearing, "Oh, by the way," when it may be too late to be informed.

This is best accomplished by the realtor preparing a list of frequently asked questions, including whether I need a lawyer and who pays the commission?

Besides asking such questions, it is suggested that realtors also present a list of what sellers or buyers can expect along the way, such as: Realtors who make appointments to show your home will

sometimes be late or not show up; know that the HGTV shows are scripted; expect that the closing date will be delayed; and expect that you won't know until the last moment how much money you must bring to the closing.

The more realtors paint a futuristic picture, especially accompanied by stories of personal experience, the better sellers and buyers will feel empowered to make informed decisions. That kind of clear and open communication is what helps avoid problems in the form of misunderstanding, missteps and/or unlawful acts.

Recently I was in Philadelphia and happened to pass the very church where my mother told me I was miraculously granted my ability to speak. I looked at the granite steps leading to the impressive church doors and could recall walking up and down them, holding my mother's hand, all those years ago.

It brought a lump to my throat, nudging alongside my voice box that has had a lot of practice in recent years as a realtor who blabs on and on to clients about what's going on.

Bill Primavera is a residential and commercial realtor associated with William Raveis Realty, as well as a publicist and journalist writing regularly as The Home Guru. For questions about home maintenance or to buy or sell a home, he can be e-mailed at [williamprimavera@gmail.com](mailto:williamprimavera@gmail.com) or called directly at 914-522-2076.

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# Putnam Courtroom Named for Beloved Late County Judge

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) and Assemblyman Kevin Byrne (R-Mahopac) announced Monday that their bill to name a courtroom in the Putnam Supreme and County Court after the late Judge James F. Reitz was signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The newly enacted law designates Room 301 at the court as the Judge James F. Reitz Memorial Courtroom. Reitz passed away in the courthouse from a heart attack in June 2019 at the age of 57. His wife, Barbara Reitz, was in the state Senate chambers when the bill passed in May.

“Judge Reitz was a beloved figure, whose professionalism, integrity and compassion on and off the bench brought him renown from around the state,” Harckham said. “His remarkable service to his community and love for his family stand as an example to us all, and I am very happy to know that his memory will live on in the Putnam Supreme and County Court.”

It was Byrne’s idea to name the courtroom for Reitz, and he thanked Hochul for supporting the legislation and for Harckham to carry the Senate bill. Retiring Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) co-sponsored the bill in the Assembly.

“Having known Jimmy and what he stood for, there is a special personal significance to this legislation, and it seems fitting that it is the last law I will pass before leaving the legislature to serve in a new role closer to home in county government,” said Byrne, who becomes Putnam County Executive on Jan. 1.

“Judge Reitz was a wonderful human being and a great friend who dedicated much of his

life assisting those in need and giving back to the place he called home,” he continued. “He believed in giving people second chances and holding people accountable, but also providing them an opportunity to learn and grow.”

Byrne was sworn into office for his second term in the Assembly by Reitz in December 2018.

A lifelong Putnam County resident and graduate of Carmel High School, Reitz received a bachelor’s degree from Mercy College and his law degree from Western Michigan University’s Thomas M. Cooley Law School. He worked as a lawyer in private practice from 1991 to 2006.

He also served as a Carmel Town Justice from 1996 to 2006 before winning election as a Putnam County Court judge in 2007.

Reitz also served as an acting justice with the state Supreme Court. One of his many achievements included instituting his own Drug Treatment Court in Putnam County, which gave residents an innovative way to get a second chance in the judicial system. The drug court’s success made it a model for similar courts around the country and was featured in an Emmy Award-winning documentary.

A third-generation life member of the Mahopac Falls Volunteer Fire Department, Reitz was also a Rotarian in Carmel.

Along with his wife, he is survived by his children Alyssa, Jaime and Michael, six grandchildren and numerous family members.

A Senate Memorial Resolution that Harckham introduced notes that Reitz “in every capacity in which he served, and through every program he developed, has left

his permanent mark on the criminal justice community, and will forever be remembered as a determined, innovative and genuinely concerned expert in his field.”

His wife, Barbara, said that every day since her husband’s passing, someone shares a story of Jim’s kindness and compassion and how he helped countless others.

“This honor goes beyond any legacy of any one person I will ever know,” Reitz said. “Jim’s lifetime journey centered in Putnam County and most specifically the county seat of Carmel. His lifelong friendships became strong family relationships, and that spirit endures right here in the community that he loved so much.”

## Honoring Student Writers

An event to honor the Student/Writer of the Quarter was held on Dec. 6 at the Brewster Elks Lodge 2101. There were 12 students from Henry H. Wells Middle School who were selected by their teachers for their achievements. The Elks prepared dinner for the students and their families and the students were presented with framed certificates.



Pictured, front row from left, are Sienna Verrone, Emma Hoffer, Juliana Lala, Charleigh Scott and Peyton Wiafe, and back row, from left, Exalted Ruler Harry Sherblom, Henry Naughton, Lachlan Mitchell, Hayden Dela Cruz, Alen Damaso Lemus, Odin Wong and Youth Activities Chairman Peter Priolo. Not pictured are Marysia Stypulkowski and Jared Parodi.

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## Greeley Student Club Commemorates Human Rights Day

Last Wednesday evening, students from Horace Greeley High School's Education Now on Understanding Genocide and Hate (E.N.O.U.G.H.) Club and the Town of New Castle Holocaust & Human Rights Committee held the third annual Human Rights Day program at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center.

The event featured three Westchester County residents who shared their experiences as refugees. Panelists included Anuja Joshi, a New Castle resident and a town Holocaust & Human Rights Committee member who fled Uganda during the Ugandan Asian Expulsion in 1972; Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi who, along with his parents and siblings, fled Kosovo in the early 1990s; and Ukrainian refugee Svitlana Kolobova.

During the program the co-presidents of the E.N.O.U.G.H. Club, Jack Rosenberg and Elliott Saiontz, shared remarks from Chappaqua residents President Bill Clinton and Secretary Hilary Clinton. As the need to advocate and protect human rights for all individuals is more important than ever, the Clintons' heartfelt words resonated with the community.

E.N.O.U.G.H. members Eliza Elbaum, Robyn Keiles, Joshua Lungen



The panelists who participated in last week's Human Rights Day program at the Chappaqua Performing Arts center, from left, Svitlana Kolobova, Anuja Joshi and Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi.

and Ben Prober posed questions to the panelists throughout the program. Town Supervisor Lisa Katz spoke of the importance of welcoming everyone to the local community.

Saiontz thanked the panelists for



Members of the Horace Greeley High School Education Now on Understanding Genocide and Hate (E.N.O.U.G.H.) Club at the Chappaqua Performing Arts Center last Wednesday. The club held its third annual Human Rights Day program, which featured a panel of three immigrants and current Westchester residents.

participating in the discussion and hoped the challenges they faced could be looked upon as an inspiration.

"It is my hope that we will take their stories to heart and change both our community and country into a place ready

to supply refugees with the American Dream that Anuja, Westchester County Legislator Vedat Gashi, Svitlana, my ancestors, and many of yours, I imagine, came to America desiring," he said.



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# Fox Lane Softball Parents Continue to Press for Athletic Gender Equity

By Martin Wilbur

A group of Fox Lane girls' softball parents submitted a letter to Bedford school officials on Friday, detailing the steps they believe the district should take in order to deliver gender equity.

In the letter, parents claim the district is in violation of Title IX, a federal law that bans gender discrimination in education programs or activities, including scholastic athletics that receive federal funding.

The district has already prepared a bond plan that includes investing about \$880,000 toward upgrading the current dirt softball field, which is tucked away behind the middle school.

But the parents believe the current location of the field, and the level of investment for softball upgrades, fall short of what's needed to elevate the softball program to achieve support that is on

par with boys' baseball, or generally what should be afforded to the female student-athletes.

The parents listed a dozen "asks" of school officials, and emphasized how they wanted the district to reconvene the bond committee to review options and also hire a Title IX consultant.

"Because of the district's limited knowledge and failure to engage the appropriate professionals, we are asking the board to reconvene the bond committee and hire a Title IX consultant to review the current plans before construction, as well as perform an audit of our entire athletic department for Title IX compliance," the letter stated.

In addition to the field relocation and the turf request, the parents cite equivalent training amenities, fan seating and locker room access among their list of requests.

The parents also said they're concerned

about what they characterize as school officials seeming not to have total command about Title IX rules at recent meetings.

"The Athletic Director and Committee members admittedly lacked complete understanding of the Title IX Federal Law requiring equivalence in athletic programs, and they failed to seek guidance during their planning process from a compliance professional," the letter said. "Throughout this process we have reached out to the two BCSD Title IX compliance officers on multiple occasions with one brief response, more than two months after our initial question submission, merely stating that district lawyers were reviewing."

Board of Education President Edward Reder said the money set aside in the bond for the softball field is just for upgrades to the surface out of more than \$7 million that will be spent on fields throughout the middle school and high school campus. In total, there will be about \$1.6 million in work done around that field.

Furthermore, the field will be dedicated just for softball during the season and not used for middle school physical education classes as is now done with the current surface, Reder said.

School officials and the parent group have met twice during the past month to discuss the issues and try to resolve as many as possible, he said.

"We've been working very collaboratively with the parent group," Reder said. "I'm glad to see they're

engaged, I'm glad to see them expressing their voice, and the district's going to do everything it possibly can to meet or exceed most, if not all, of their concerns."

However, Reder said it is likely that scope of last spring's \$62.3 million bond is set because it has already been approved by voters and sent to the state.

Bedford schools do have a Title IX coordinator, but Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Glass is receiving feedback from the parent group and will be examining whether the district is doing everything it can with respect to athletic equity, Reder added.

Last month, in an Examiner article about the softball equity conversation, Athletic Director Adam Lodewick stressed his support of addressing the broader issues.

"Making sure all of our teams and programs are treated equally and are provided with the best environment, and the best opportunities for a positive and successful experience has been and always will be my number one priority," Lodewick said. "There is an absolute need for the softball field to be upgraded and renovated. I am confident all the current issues will be addressed with the new upcoming bond project and give the coaches and student-athletes a state-of-the-art facility and one they can be proud of."

The softball parents may address the issue at the Board of Education's next meeting this Wednesday evening.



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# Fordham Westchester Launches Brewing Institute With Local Experts

Fordham University’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies (PCS) at Westchester is pleased to announce the newest addition to its academic offerings: courses in brewing beer.

Beginning this week, Fordham Brewing Institute is open for registration, offering classes for the novice and the experienced brewer.

“Beer Brewing 101: The Ultimate Beginner’s Guide” will be held at the Fordham Westchester campus in West Harrison on Feb. 25. “Practical Brewing (Intermediate/Advanced)” is a three-part program that will take place at Broken Bow Brewery in Tuckahoe in March.

For those who have thought about making their own beer but don’t know where to start, Beer Brewing 101 will provide an introduction to home brewing. Students will learn about the different beer styles and the ingredients needed, plus get a walk-through of the step-by-step process of extract brewing in a friendly, hands-on format.

The class is taught by John Fix, a home brewer with nearly 30 years of experience. No equipment is necessary for the two-and-a-half-hour course. The class is \$80. The Brewshop at Cornell’s in Eastchester, which Fix created, will offer a discount for students who need home equipment to hit the ground running.

“This is a great introduction to what may become a lifelong hobby, or even a career in the booming craft beverage industry,” said Fix. “And at an affordable price, the course



Registration is now open for the first two courses at the Fordham Brewing Institute in West Harrison this February and March.

makes a great holiday gift.” The Practical Brewing program is designed for people who have experience home brewing or for those who have worked in a brewery and want to advance. Students will benefit from a deep dive into the ingredients, process and subtleties in the craft of brewing beer.

Upon completion of the three-session

course, students will better understand the brewing’s chemical process, ingredient profiles and flavor characteristics, plus how to avoid the most common pitfalls. Students will create their own craft beer using the all-grain method, under the instruction of the president and head brewers at Broken Bow Brewery, receiving expert advice on perfecting its flavor.

No equipment is needed, with class demonstrations using a professional pilot system. The course, totaling eight hours, costs \$550.

“We’re so excited to partner with Fordham to share the all-grain brewing method with hobbyists,” said Michael LaMothe, president

and founder of Broken Bow Brewery. “It’s the purest form of beermaking and the method by which you can greatly influence the outcome of the finished product – the perfect beer.”

For more information about the Fordham Brewing Institute, visit <https://www.fordham.edu/school-of-professional-and-continuing-studies/academics/continuing-education/fordham-brewing-institute/>

*This is a press release provided by Fordham University’s School of Professional and Continuing Services. It has been lightly edited and is being published by Examiner Media as a public service.*

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THERE’S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

**Not That Workshop.** This time of year, much attention is paid to a certain workshop located far to the north, and possibly staffed by elves. However, the quiz this week is based on a different workshop, specifically the book “Vocabulary Workshop” by Jerome Shostak. Remember to check your answers twice. Happy holidays, and to all, a good night!

1. An agnostic will likely say

A) “I believe”

B) “I don’t know”

C) “I’m running late”

2. A figment usually develops in

A) an orchard

B) the wild blue yonder

C) the human mind

3. If you temporize when a decision is called for, you are

A) acting decisively

B) stalling for time

C) losing your temper

4. The motif of a play refers to its

A) basic theme

B) financial backing

C) cast of characters

5. Histrionic behavior is best suited to

A) the stage

B) the museum

C) the classroom

6. You would be well advised not to give credence to

A) your friends

B) a reliable witness

C) a habitual liar

7. The best definition of the word celerity is

A) propriety

B) promptness

C) propinquity

8. The word chary most nearly means

A) benign

B) bestial

C) wary

4. A. Motif (n) a principal idea, feature, theme, or el-

decision; procrastinate

8. C. Chary (adj) extremely cautious, hesitant, or

action; promptness; speed

7. B. Celerity (n) swiftness; rapidity of motion or

confidence

6. C. Credence (n) belief; mental acceptance; trust;

techniques; theatrical; melodramatic

5. A. Histrionic (adj) pertaining to actors and their

ement; a repeated or dominant figure in a design

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# P'ville Author Creates 'True History' Series for Young Readers

By Jessica Jafet

If history is indeed dynamic and our interpretations of past events continue to evolve, then it is essential to investigate issues that have often been left out of the traditional school curriculum in order to illuminate long-overlooked truths and tell a fuller account of our collective story.

Such was the logic and motivation for Pleasantville resident Jennifer Sabin. An author and former broadcast journalist, Sabin was determined to create a series of non-fiction books that provide thorough historical accounts and additional factual context so that young readers could be thoughtfully introduced to a more nuanced picture of how our nation came to be.

"Some of these truths can be difficult to grapple with, but that doesn't mean they should be ignored or downplayed," Sabin said.

Confronting these subjects "would help empower (students) to be the next generation of changemakers," she added.

During the pandemic, when her young adult children were at home, Sabin's family had many discussions about the events of the day, including the Black Lives Matter marches and a documentary that they watched together called "13th." The film explores the legacy of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution (which abolished slavery "except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted") and the history of racial inequality and mass incarceration in the



Jennifer Sabin, an author and former journalist who created a series of non-fiction books written for students that delve into nuanced, complicated and multilayered subjects in American history. Above inset: The book that Sabin wrote for the True History series.

United States as long-lasting repercussions.

"My daughter went to an excellent high school and college and just didn't know so much of this. It made me realize that there is a lot of history that is not taught in this country," Sabin said.

She pitched the chapter book idea to Penguin Workshop, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers, which blossomed into a series called "True History." The publisher has already launched four titles

for readers about 10 years old and up: "The Founders Unmasked," written by Sabin, "The Legacy of Jim Crow" by Clarence A. Haynes, "A New History of Immigration," by Jaclyn Backhaus and "Indigenous America," by Liam McDonald.

Each book attempts to uncover hidden histories by presenting material in straightforward language that is accompanied by short glossaries, profiles, timelines and color inserts. Sabin hopes it is done in a way that will spark conversations and expose events from a multitude of perspectives, "giving students information and tools to ask their own questions."

As a news writer and editor for almost two decades at ABC News, and then having earned a graduate degree in creative writing, the author understands the power of words and stories to shape ideas.

In "The Founders Unmasked," the title itself was worded in a more inclusive way (omitting Fathers), Sabin explained, in reference to the architects who created the United States government and codified its principles. The author describes the reality of who these men were – their amazing accomplishments and goals they set for the country, along with practices that often contradicted the core beliefs they professed to hold.

Without concluding whether the founders are heroes or villains, the book attempts to present the full range of their characters and personal lives, as well as to highlight the stories of other people who played a role at the time rather than merely as footnotes to the men.

For example, Thomas Jefferson, a revered founder and the third president of the United States who penned the words "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence, is presented with the complicated legacy he left, as an owner of enslaved people. A chapter is devoted to Sally Hemings, a woman who was enslaved by Jefferson and bore at least six children fathered by him.

Through "interviews and documentation, perspective and context," the creator said the new book series aims to "point out some of the half-truths and lies we are taught as children and to present history through a more critical lens."

It's a deeper dive that Sabin believes is important.

"I feel really strongly that young people especially can take in all of this information and still love their country and still feel very connected to it; but they should know the truth about it," Sabin said. "The bottom line is that it is all part of American history and sometimes it is really messy and complicated. All I am interested in is educating young people so that they understand the full scope as much as possible. History needs to keep being updated."

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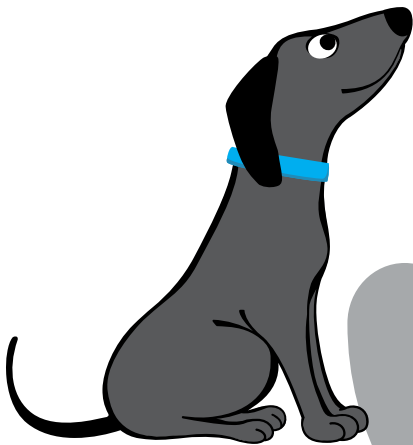


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## Enhancing Dining Experiences Through Our Senses of Taste and Smell



By Nick Antonaccio

In last week's column, I focused on the marvels of the human senses and their influence on our perception of wine. I received a number of reader comments on the overlapping relationship between our senses of taste and smell. Herewith, I'm reprising an earlier column addressing these comments.

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

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

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

Science has further proven that our sense of smell dominates our overall experience in wine appreciation, far outweighing the influence of taste. A recent study has shattered the long-held belief that the smell receptors in our mouths and noses are able to identify 10,000 aromas (a rather overwhelming number to manage each time we sniff a glass of wine). The study has concluded that our sense of smell is capable of detecting over one million scents and aromas.

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

Here's an experiment you can try at home to better understand the dominance of smell over taste. We all have tried

one or more flavors of those gourmet jellybeans, the ones with laboratory-developed flavors such as buttered popcorn, pina colada and chili mango. The tastes are amazingly accurate. But are we experiencing taste or smell?

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



but no sense of flavor. Release the grip on your nose. Bam, the vibrant essence of the jellybean flavor floods your brain's olfactory sensors.

So it is with wine. Taste provides the broad backdrop for your palate; aromas determine the core impressions in your perception of the wine.

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

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

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

After the bite of food, we sip the wine again. In the test laboratory of our mouth, we now create a third, unique taste and aroma profile. Here is where the greatest dining pleasure blossoms. A new experience is created on our palates, with a set of variables that may be difficult to replicate again.

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

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

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# My Favorite Culinary Encounters of 2022

I enjoyed many fine culinary experiences this past year. Here is a short list of dining venues and favorite dishes you should try not to miss in 2023.

## Trattoria Vivolo, Harrison

Owner Dean Vivolo serves a wonderful Paglia e Fieno con Funghi, with its dreamy mix of mushroom ragu, scallions, crispy prosciutto and pecorino cheese. The linguine vongole is not to be missed. We enjoy it with a side of tender broccoli rabe.

Vivolo's robust regional Italian cuisine is served out of a restored diner just across from Harrison's Metro-North station. Sit at the counter, tuck into a booth or take a table in the rear greenhouse and enjoy the surprising contemporary and traditional flavors emanating from his kitchen: tasty thin-crust pizza; fresh old-fashioned meatballs and sausage; crostino di polenta, topped with wild mushrooms, gorgonzola and tomato sauce; lasagna Bolognese al forno; osso buco (tender braised veal shank); and the roasted porchetta.

## Maria, New Rochelle

Three-time winners of Michelin's prestigious Bib Gourmet Award, brothers Peter and Giovanni Cucullo have been causing a stir in New Rochelle, drawing patronage from all over the county to their flavorful riff on Italian/global cooking.

Named after Mama, Maria's has become a regular haunt for me. Love their happy hours from 3 to 7 p.m. when they offer some favorite beverages and small plates that are loaded with flavor. I am hooked on such eclectic dishes as glazed pork ribs, truffled green beans, grilled sausage with sweet and spicy Peruvian peppers, meatballs, cauliflower fritters and roasted shishito peppers. Special mention must go to their baked rigatoni and tender baby lamb chops.

For dessert, the cannoli are an indulgence. There's a pleasant dining room and bar filled with artifacts from home. Good networking



By Morris Gut

spot.

## Prime Pub, Somers

Dynamic proprietor Simi Polozani, founder of Prime Pub gastropubs in Somers and Danbury, opened his latest last January on Route 202 at the entrance to Heritage Hills.

The freestanding building sits at the edge of a large pond, which can be seen through large picture windows, a seasonal fireplace highlighted with wood and stone, an attractive

dining room with well-spaced tables and contemporary lighting and a semi-enclosed bar and lounge for schmoozing and munching. Best of all, the staff are all about hospitality from the moment you enter.

Check out menu specialties honey goat cheese flatbread, the blast-from-the-past beef stroganoff, braised short ribs and decadent Burrata Burger. Located across from DeCicco's Market. Open seven days a week for lunch and dinner. There's also a Sunday brunch, selections of craft beer, happy hours and a kid's menu.

## Tesoro D'Italia, Pleasantville

Heading the day-to-day operation is host and owner Peter Lucaj who had been general manager of Ciao Ristorante in Eastchester. Peter, Mark and Don have done a stellar job growing this expansive Italian restaurant and catering house.

The restaurant is divided into a main dining room for 100 guests, a semi-private fireplace room for up to 40 guests and a lovely glass-enclosed wine room seating up to 25. A

spacious banquet room can accommodate 130 guests for all types of parties and private events. There is an inviting tiled bar and lounge for networking and spirited conversation and casual dining, too. A dramatic wine wall highlights the dining room along with smoked glass dividers and white tablecloths.

Look for the black linguine pescatore, chicken payard and Chilean sea bass. The weekday lunch special is served from 12 to 3 p.m. for \$24.95. Happy hours are 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the bar only. Live entertainment on Friday evenings. Ample free parking.

## Tandoori Taste of India, Port Chester

Bharat Patel, proprietor of the long-running Tandoori Taste of India, has moved his restaurant into a new location along Westchester Avenue. They are now offering a generous all-you-can-eat buffet on Sundays. The dining room and bar are separated. Light grey walls are highlighted by modern industrial fixtures, lighting and colorful Indian artifacts.

At a recent sitting, we enjoyed a dramatically presented stuffed dosa with masala spiced potatoes, served with coconut chutney and sambar. An order of chicken curry was an herbal delight. Marinated salmon cooked in the tandoor oven was juicy and delicious.

The same management team operates Indi Q in Armonk.

## Freebird Kitchen and Bar, White Plains

During my visits here we have devoured fried calamari, meaty racks of baby back



The all-you-can-eat Sunday buffet is a treat at Tandoori Taste of India.



Fresh branzino is one of the delicious specialties at Briarcliff Manor's Dive Oyster House.

ribs, Cobb salad, spicy chicken wings, crispy Brussels sprouts, a good pimiento cheese burger, shrimp and grits and braised short ribs. The cooking is highly satisfying, and all done with a friendly Southern theme. Portions are ample and shareable. There is rooftop dining in good weather, Sunday Night jam sessions and a sprawling bar with craft beers.

## Jack's Bar & Kitchen, Eastchester

Marking its first year, Jack's is the new kid on the block, and a darn good one, too. Owner Shane Clifford and his staff have been drawing a fine crowd. The space has been remodeled and offers a robust Irish-American tavern menu.

Generous specialties coming out of Chef Brendan Donohoe's kitchen include a refreshing harvest green salad; the double-stacked smash burger; decadent short rib mac and cheese; Jack's meatballs; seared scallops; chicken curry; shroom pizza out of the wood-fired oven; Berkshire pork chop; and grilled lamb sliders. The staff could not be more friendly. Open daily with indoor and outdoor seating and TVs. Municipal parking is free in the evening.

## Macelleria Italian Steakhouse, Armonk

This high-end establishment with locations in Pelham and Armonk serves classic cuts of prime beef and chops along with a hearty

helping of Italian-American specialties. Tony Lala and his crew will take good care of you.

Be seated in the handsomely renovated dining room or bar and lounge and peruse the menu over a good glass of wine. Enjoy diver scallops, steak tartare, spaghetti carbonara, pappardelle with short rib ragu, zuppa di pesce, even a classic burger. Carnivores should consider the lamb chops, veal chop, New York strip steak or porterhouse for two. There's a stellar wine list as well. Open seven days for lunch and dinner.

## Dive Oyster House, Briarcliff Manor

Marking their first year, proprietors Kenny and John have a strong kitchen serving a laudable seafood-themed menu. A tray of pristine oysters is a good way to start your meal, or perhaps share a shellfish platter. A whole grilled branzino was a pleasing recent indulgence of mine. There's also fine linguine with white clam sauce, two-pound lobsters, a seafood tower, delicious parmesan-crust chicken and lobster rolls.

Open seven days for lunch and dinner. There's also Sunday brunch.

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



Macelleria Italian Steakhouse in Armonk has many mouth-watering dishes, including the meatballs and ricotta.



# Bedford Schools Plagued by Culture Problem; New Super Seeks Solutions

I had a different column written, and even published briefly online, for just a few minutes on Sunday.

In the piece, I made the mistake of being overly generous to the administrators who gravely mishandled the investigation into incidents of bathroom photos and video being taken of special education students at Fox Lane High School.

My inclination is to try and extend a reasonable benefit of the doubt, and I'm especially sympathetic to those working in public education.

But thankfully, a reader contacted me pointing out certain flaws in my premise, and I realized a rare rewrite was in order. While I'd never abandon an opinion under undue pressure, it's also important to accept and act on legitimate criticism.

Although I unambiguously argued in the piece how the right decision was made with last week's personnel moves, and detailed the significance of the failures, I also emphasized some wrong points, in highlighting the importance of redemption and the problems with cancel culture in education.

Sure, redemption is important. But it's too soon for that talk.

## Prime Time

Before diving deeper, a quick primer:

An incriminating report into last year's botched investigation of the bathroom incidents was followed by immediate action last week.

Fox Lane High School Principal Dr. Brett Miller being reassigned to the business office. He'll either resign from the district no later than June 30 or leave before then if he finds other employment.

Meanwhile, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Dr. Edward Escobar has been placed on leave "for the foreseeable future."

The 57-page report from Kroll Associates, a Manhattan-based investigative and risk consulting firm retained by the district in June, detailed glaring deficiencies of the school administration's handling of its investigation, including failure to take any contemporaneous notes and dispensing inaccurate or misleading information to members of the school community.

When you have a prominent and important job, and you seriously mishandle a highly public and sensitive situation, it's more than reasonable in the public or private sector, at a school district or a newspaper or anywhere else, to expect consequences.

## Culture Club

In reading the report, I was struck by a couple of the especially damning conclusions. And both speak to a (rectifiable) culture problem within the district, inside the high school in particular.

The idea that the administrators neglected to take notes in their investigation illustrates not necessarily just laziness or carelessness, although it's impossible to defend.

To me, it seems incredibly strange and suspect (especially in the litigious world of suburban public school education) that the default mode for multiple officials was to take a casual investigative approach. That's partially a culture problem.

I spoke to various and unconnected local



By Adam Stone

public school educators over the past few days in the aftermath of the report's release. And they were all just stunned that note taking wasn't the immediate reflex of the administrators.

In other school buildings, in other districts, for better and for worse, that just "isn't a thing," as one source described it. And no, for those that know me personally, I didn't just speak to my wife! (She's a local second-grade

teacher and corroborated the view voiced by others.)

## Stranger Things

The report also rightly concluded how an administration decision to not communicate findings with the parents of the victims (and a failure to alert the superintendent, their boss) highlighted a strange departure from common sense, let alone best practice, on the part of Miller, Escobar and others.

Without a smoking gun, the administrators seemed to believe the parents of the victims should be temporarily kept at bay, until at least the investigation was finalized.

In fact, even after getting confessions from multiple student perpetrators, administrators believed it was premature to update the parents or the superintendent with that key detail because, in part, the confessions involved prior incidents and not the incident that prompted the probe. (Most other area school districts have clearly-stated parental notification policies; Bedford lacks similar guidelines, as the report points out. But you shouldn't need a policy to avoid reaching that almost nonsensical or confused judgment around parental notification in this case.)

Let's face it, this was a situation serious enough for the Westchester County District Attorney's office to review following a police investigation. The public affairs director confirmed for us that the office consulted with the families involved in the case where the office had jurisdiction; the office did not file criminal charges and closed its investigation. And at the moment it remains unclear, to me anyway, what separate civil legal jeopardy might (or might not) exist for the district, or how the report could impact that potential piece of the puzzle. (But we have calls in on that front, and will report any updates on the notice of claim previously filed by victim families.)

*In an email on Monday, the district attorney's office also pointed out how because some of the individuals involved in the alleged conduct were under the age of 16, "that alleged conduct falls under the jurisdiction of the County Attorney's Office and Family Court, not the DA's Office and the criminal court."*

Karen Close, the parent of one of the victimized students, said at last week's emotional board meeting that Fox Lane's administrative team seemed more focused on hiding the truth than on taking proper action.

"My goal is the same as it's always been, I want no other family ever to have to endure this pain," Close said while fighting back tears.

Your heart breaks for Close and the other impacted families.

## Rights Fights

Advocates for the victims also stress how accountability in this case didn't come without



Fox Lane High School

a fight and ample public pressure.

Returning to Kroll, just think about two of the most devastating lines of the report:

"Miller was in possession of evidence the students had taken compromising photos and video of special education students in the boys bathroom and circulated them to others, although not definitively on March 11th," Kroll stated. "As a result, Miller should not have been making statements to key consistencies after March 21st that the administration had no evidence misconduct had occurred in the boys bathroom."

Former Bedford Board of Education member Pam Harney, an outspoken critic of the district, and an advocate and friend of victims' families, said how action was only taken because "the parents obtained evidence on their own and were able to force the board..."

It really is hard to imagine any of this reckoning occurring absent the public pressure.

"Many, many parents in BCSD have been aware for years – decades even – that the district as a whole tends to look upon parents as a nuisance to be kept at arm's length," said Harney, who was among a contingent of parents who pushed hard for accountability. "There is a long history of bullying and other issues being swept under the rug, ignored, etc. What was outlined in the Kroll report doesn't just happen by accident; it's the result of years of mishandling investigations of all kinds."

While it's tempting to want to set all the politics aside, we live in the world we live in, and can't be naive to its realities. Granted, it's incredibly important to resist unreasonable public pressure to make any wrongheaded decisions. But it's just as important, of course, for policymakers in a democratic setting to consider public sentiment when taxpayers do indeed have the facts on their side.

A high school principal operates best and most effectively for students when he or she enjoys the confidence and support of the community. In the aftermath of Kroll, way too much confidence (on the merits) has been vanquished.

Keeping secrets from victims' parents just can't and shouldn't be defended.

## Silver Lining

I do think there's a very significant silver lining in all this, and it comes in the person of Dr. Rob Glass, Bedford's new superintendent this year.

Glass's messaging to the school community seems to emphasize the importance of addressing cultural problems within the district. He sends that message amidst a mood

at the high school where some authority figures appear to just sort of shrug their shoulders at bad behavior, according to accounts of the school culture described by several sources. (As a district parent myself, it's also important to stress how many fantastic teachers and programs populate the building.)

Even a small (not so small) gesture Glass made when he first started with Bedford told me something. The new schools' chief made a point of telling Examiner Editor-in-Chief Martin Wilbur to call him directly when issues arise, providing an outlet and game plan for open communication.

In today's world of canned comments and school boards sometimes speaking as one contrived voice with media outlets, Glass's offer to Martin was no minor thing, as other area superintendents sometimes refuse to even take phone calls.

Importantly, in a message to the school community last week, Glass noted how the special education teachers involved in the outset of the incident performed beautifully, taking all the right steps. Don't take my word for it; you should read the Kroll report yourself, if you haven't already.

## Devilish Details

Glass detailed for the community three key steps already taken to address systemic problems:

Upcoming training of all administrators on investigative protocols, note taking and documentation by the district's legal firm on Feb. 1.

An incomplete district policy is being revised to include a one-day notification provision to families. The revised policy may be addressed by the Board of Education this Wednesday.

While fixing the culture can be vaguer and more amorphous in nature, the district will aim to objectively benchmark efforts to tackle the very real issue.

"The road to success ahead is about being reliable, accountable and rebuilding trust all around," Glass stated in his Dec. 16 letter. "Rebuilding trust will not happen by accident. It will require commitment, structures, dialogue and engagement. As painful as this moment is, it is our opportunity. We must look forward as we learn from the past, asking what we can do individually and collectively to chart a new course."

While thoroughly investigating past mistakes can be a gut-wrenching process, it's the best way to learn and become better.

That learning and betterment process, under Glass's leadership, is hopefully underway in Bedford.

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