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June 14 - June 20, 2022

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 565

Amendments to Allow Solar Energy Systems in White Plains Debated

By Bailey Hosfelt

Members of the public expressed both support and criticism for proposed amendments to White Plains' zoning ordinance during a public hearing at the White Plains Common Council meeting on June 6.

The proposed amendments, which were initially detailed during a work session in late April, would establish regulations for the installation of solar energy systems city-wide, including solar parking canopies and rooftop solar panels.

The amendments seek to codify specific definitions and dimensional standards for all solar energy systems, establish a new special permit for solar parking canopies and assign approval agencies by installation type and scale.

"[Solar energy systems] are something

that hasn't been defined in our Zoning Code, but it's something that's already in the city and all over the region," Commissioner of Planning Christopher Gomez said, noting the city's award-winning solar portfolio.

"There's obviously going to be fear... but I assure you that this ordinance was put together holistically looking at the city and not to accommodate a particular project," Gomez added.

Within the proposed amendments, solar parking canopies would only be permitted above an already existing impervious surface such as a parking lot or atop a parking structure or garage. Ground-mounted solar farms and pole-mounted solar arrays are not permitted in the proposed updates.

In a One and Two-Family District, solar parking canopies under 1,000 kilowatts must be on a minimum lot area of two acres and have 30 feet minimum setbacks from all

lot lines. Current setbacks required by city zoning for accessory structures range from a minimum of five to fifteen feet.

"In some cases, we're doubling or even tripling the required setback," Gomez said. "Any of the proposed canopies in these districts would be quite a bit further away from neighboring properties than a garage or other outbuildings."

For solar parking canopies over 1,000 kilowatts, there must be a minimum lot area of five acres and a 175-foot setback from the front yard and an additional 50-foot side and rear yard setback when adjacent to a One and Two-Family Zoning District, in addition to current regulations.

Solar canopies in residential districts can have a maximum height of 15 feet. In a non-residential district, they can be up to 25 feet.

Gomez identified 32 privately-owned parcels with existing parking areas that meet the five-acre minimum. In One and Two-Family Zoning Districts, there are 11 privately-owned parcels with two to five acres, many of which are religious institutions.

Gomez estimated that once all required setbacks are taken into consideration, the number of eligible parcels will be lower.

Solar canopies that are under 1,000

kilowatts would require site plan approval by the Planning Board, and anything over that would require both site plan and special permit use approved by the Common Council.

The proposed amendments also set forth specific decommissioning procedures for solar energy systems that have not produced energy for a 12-month period, are damaged or are where the existing land lease ends.

Michael Romita, President and CEO of the Westchester County Association, voiced his support for the proposed amendments to the ordinance, citing their forward-looking nature.

"It's well-conceived, and it's the result of significant study following community outreach and input from environmental and technical experts, including input from NYSEDA," Romita said. "The ordinance has clear regulations and guidelines and will encourage more of the right kind of development in White Plains."

Romita added that, in a broader context, it will be virtually impossible for New York State to act on its ambitious climate agenda without proactive steps taken at the local level, including in White Plains.

Solar canopies, he said, should be

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Juneteenth Parade in White Plains



Zeta Nu Omega Chapter members were among the groups that participated in the White Plains Juneteenth Heritage, Inc. parade in White Plains Saturday.

U.S. Attorney Sues Harrison for Discrimination, Sexual Harassment

By Rick Pezzullo

The United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York has filed a lawsuit against the town and village of Harrison and its fire department for allegedly discriminating against a female firefighter by creating a hostile work environment and terminating her employment after she reported a male senior firefighter had harassed and stalked her.

The lawsuit was filed in federal court in White Plains by Damian Williams on the

basis of sex and retaliation in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

"Sexual harassment in the workplace is abhorrent. All employers, including government agencies, must ensure that sexual harassment is prohibited—not ignored or followed by illegal employment actions against victims, as we allege occurred at the Town of Harrison," Williams stated. "This suit seeks to remedy the civil rights violations committed by the Harrison Fire Department and the Town of Harrison, and

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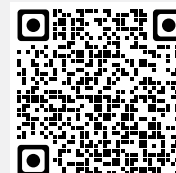
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White Plains Teachers' Association Signs Four-Year Agreement

By Bailey Hosfelt

The White Plains Teachers' Association (WPTA) and White Plains City School District have concluded this year's bargaining session with a new four-year successor agreement.

Some highlights within the agreement include a two percent increase on the salary schedule every year for four years, no increase to employees' health premium and a pilot of paid planning time for elementary instructors. Additionally, there have been some shifts in language from the previous 2019-2022 agreement.

"We're really pleased to have concluded this negotiation session with a successor agreement that we believe is not only sustainable and fiscally responsible but also speaks to the respect so well-deserved by our professional staff," Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca said.

Kara McCormick-Lyons, President of the WPTA, said that in a time of economic uncertainty, having a health premium that will remain at 15 percent and not increase over any of the four years is significant.

"That's something we feel really good about," McCormick-Lyons said.

McCormick-Lyons also commended the paid planning time included for elementary school teachers.

"We all work hard, but they work hard in a different way," McCormick-Lyons said. "It was really nice to recognize and provide that planning time for them."

Ricca and McCormick-Lyons said the negotiation process was highly collaborative.

"If there's something that needs to get done, we come to the table and have conversations collaboratively to work on shifts that work for everyone so we can serve the kids in White Plains," McCormick-Lyons said.

Both highlighted that the working conditions for teachers and administrators are the instructional conditions for students.

"When we're supporting the folks in the classrooms, we are ensuring that we're going the very best to create an outstanding educational experience for our kids," Ricca said. "We work hard collaboratively to maintain that, so this agreement continues to speak to those goals."

"It's always a pleasure to work with Kara and her team," Ricca added.

In the Driver's Seat



On June 6, Cerebral Palsy of Westchester's (CPW) United Preschool Center (UPC) welcomed High School Senior Leo Rosen, a resident of Purchase, to campus to present an F-150 retrofitted tiny truck to a student with special needs, his third such donation. Rosen handed over the keys to a five-year-old student recipient who has a disability that affects his mobility.

Amendments to Allow Solar Energy Systems in White Plains Debated

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straightforward and not controversial.

"This is an investment in infrastructure that is good for the property owner but also good for the environment and the community," Romita said. "These kinds of ordinances will be increasingly important on a statewide level, and by passing this one, White Plains and Westchester County will be out front in a positive way."

White Plains resident Jane Eger underscored how crucial the move toward renewable energy, including solar, is given the current climate crisis.

"I think the presentation tonight was marvelous. I understand objections, but sometimes we [need to] change our view of what's beautiful," Eger said, noting that others disapprove of how solar looks.

"I think they look great," Eger said. "Maybe there's some change that could take place within the hearts of people who feel like it would be an eyesore and they could shift to [thinking] 'Hey, we're going something that's really good and important for our children and grandchildren who are going to be in really deep trouble.'"

Charles Calloway, of Solar Uptown Now Services in New York City, echoed similar sentiments in voicing his support for the proposed amendments.

"I think it's a fantastic plan, understanding it's not always about beauty but about efficiency and making sure communities of color and the entire state of New York get to benefit," Calloway said.

Matt Siegel, who previously spoke against the proposed solar carport at 1133 Westchester Avenue last year, disagreed with Gomez's statement that there is a rational basis for the proposed amendments.

Siegel expressed concerns that homeowners who live near locations where solar canopies could be installed would see decreased property values.

"I appreciate the indirect benefits to folks, but I see zero direct benefits to White Plains residents," Siegel said, adding that solar canopies are not attractive to look at.

Michael Matarese, of Old Oak Ridge Residents Association, said that while White Plains residents have a vested interest in trying to preserve the environment, they also want to preserve their own

neighborhoods.

"Having structures that are eyesores, impinge on our residential areas or homeowners, I don't think is what we moved here for or what any of us want," Matarese said. "Nobody wants the environment to be destroyed, we all want clean energy, but there has to be a context or consideration for the residents who live here."

Mark Laloo, a member of IBEW Local 3, encouraged the city to use local labor on future solar projects should the updates to the zoning ordinance be made.

"The highest quality work will be done by members of my union who live in this community," Laloo said. "We'd love to do solar projects here in White Plains. It's good for the environment and the economy."

The proposed solar carport at 1133 Westchester Ave., which was determined to not be a permitted use under the city's current Zoning Ordinance in February, was set to reappear as a public hearing before the Common Council on June 6. However, it was adjourned until Aug. 1.

Throughout the public hearing, some speakers voiced concerns that the proposed

amendments were being suggested to accommodate 1133 Westchester Ave.

However, Gomez underscored in his presentation before the Common Council that the proposed amendments were not conceived to align with any one development but rather to take advantage of safe, renewable, non-polluting energy; decrease the cost of electricity; increase employment and business opportunities and mitigate any potential impacts of systems.

Currently, White Plains is seventh in the nation for solar installations.

Jack Waxman, of Scarsdale, commended White Plains for its preexisting solar installations and encouraged the city to continue being a leader in renewable energy.

"Your grandkids and great-grandkids are going to be asking, 'What did you do to address it when you were a councilman or councilwoman?'" Waxman said. "I think if you say to them, we didn't do something because [some people think] the solar panels looked ugly, that's not going to be a good answer."

"Our planet, our climate deserves more than that," Waxman underscored.

U.S. Attorney Sues Harrison for Discrimination, Sexual Harassment

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ensure that Harrison protects its employees' rights in the future."

According to Williams, in 2015, Angela Bommarito joined the Harrison Fire Department and in her first month on the job, a senior firefighter, Henry Mohr, allegedly pressured her with unwanted sexual advances. Mohr later also harassed and stalked Bommarito, including by repeatedly following her and calling her on numerous

occasions. Further, Mohr allegedly used sexually demeaning expletives to describe Bommarito in front of other firefighters.

Williams said Harrison officials and the Harrison Fire Department failed to take any action against Mohr when learning about the alleged harassment. Bommarito then filed a report with the Harrison Police Department.

In response, Harrison's former police chief told Mohr, in a recorded interaction, that Bommarito's presence at the firehouse was a "temptation," which was "hard to

resist sometimes," and the chief "want[ed] to broker a deal with the town to make sure this whole thing dies" so that he could get Mohr "out of this situation."

Bommarito subsequently signed a resignation letter prepared by the police chief after he allegedly threatened to arrest her and report her other relationships to Harrison's Fire Commissioners. Soon after, Bommarito attempted to withdraw the resignation, but the fire department proceeded with the termination of her

employment.

Following Bommarito's departure from the Harrison Fire Department, Mohr continued to harass and stalk her. Mohr was eventually arrested for his harassment of Bommarito and pled guilty to harassment in the second degree. A family court judge also entered an order of protection against Mohr.

Williams' complaint seeks declaratory and injunctive relief, as well as compensatory damages on behalf of Bommarito.



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Westchester to Host Full Slate of Summer Events as COVID Cases Wane

By Martin Wilbur

Active cases of COVID-19 have been steadily dropping over the past two weeks giving Westchester County the go-ahead to have a full schedule of summer events in the next two-and-a-half months.

As of Sunday, active cases in the county stood at 3,284, nearly flat from the previous week and down more than 1,500 from a month earlier on May 12, County Executive

George Latimer said.

Over the past few weeks, the caseload has dropped precipitously in the county, down from 5,711 on May 21. The last time Westchester had a one-day percentage of positive cases at or above 10 percent was May 30. On Sunday, the positivity rate was 6.4 percent, and 7 percent on the seven-day rolling average.

Latimer said unless there is another flare-up, life will continue with some

common-sense precautions for residents to take. The high rate of vaccinations helps to make that possible, he said.

"We don't see it as the octopus strangling every other area of public policy," Latimer said Monday. "We have vaccinated at a much higher rate than most or all of our neighboring counties and most other counties in New York State. We have seen some diminution in infection. We know that the infection is never going to go completely disappear and until and unless it explodes again, as it has in a couple other surges, we're going to try to be as practical-minded as we can."

The only places where there is a mask mandate in the county is on Bee-Line buses. There is still a state mask mandate in place for most healthcare facilities.

Statewide, the infection rate on Sunday was 5.6 percent, representing a steady decline since the start of the month. The last time the statewide rate reached double figures was on May 31, according to the New York State COVID tracker.

The seven-county Mid-Hudson region clocked in on Sunday with a 7.2 percent infection rate, but the seven-date average stood at 5.4 percent.

Putnam County had the highest positivity rate in the region on Sunday, standing at 10.1 percent, nearly three points higher than its 7.4 percent seven-day figure. There were 20 positive tests returned in Putnam on Sunday out of 219 tests.

As a result of the area learning to manage through the COVID era, Westchester

is opening all its beaches and pools this summer. Residents will also see the return of the traditional Fourth of July fireworks and musical program at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla on Sunday, July 3.

Latimer said since the start of the Memorial Day weekend the beaches at Croton Point Park and Glen Island have been open on the weekend. Starting June 24, those facilities along with the four county pools, Saxon Woods in White Plains, Willson Woods in Mount Vernon and Tibbetts Brook Park and Sprain Ridge in Yonkers, will be open daily, weather permitting.

"We're very happy to have all six of the entities open this year," Latimer said. "There are no particular COVID restrictions this year. We will make sure we sanitize surfaces and to the greater extent try to maintain normal, intelligent social distancing."

Returning for the first time since 2019 is the July 4 celebration on the eve of the big holiday at Kensico Dam Plaza. Pre-concert entertainment begins at 5 p.m. with a guest DJ, followed by the FDR Drive Band, a cover band, at 7 p.m. Fireworks will follow at about 7:15 p.m. with the historic Kensico Dam as the backdrop.

Admission and parking are free but carpooling is suggested. Concert-goers should bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating as well as a picnic supper.

The full schedule of ethnic festivals at Kensico Dam Plaza with a few scheduled in Hartsdale have already begun.

A Helping Hand

Westchester County honored Department of Emergency Services Communications Specialist Matt Hollis, second from left, on Monday, 11 days after he dictated instructions to a nervous husband in Tuckahoe while the man's wife was in labor. Hollis provided instructions to the expectant father on how to assist his wife with the imminent birth of their baby girl, who was delivered successfully. As Hollis coached the new dad through the process, Eastchester EMS was dispatched and arrived on the scene. This was the third time in the past three years that Hollis provided those instructions over the phone.



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'Enough is Enough': March for Our Lives Rally Calls for Gun Legislation

By Martin Wilbur

Peekskill High School students organized Westchester's only March for Our Lives rally last Saturday morning, urging leaders locally and around the nation to pass gun control measures as a result of the recent mass shootings.

The rally was one of more than 300 gatherings around the country to highlight the issue and call for legislative action. The students were among several hundred community members, including teachers and representatives from the New York State United Teachers and educators from local unions, who marched and spoke passionately about how new legislation must be passed to stem the tide of unnecessary deaths.

"We are here to say enough is enough," said Angeline Carlos Caceres, completing her junior year at Peekskill High School and the lead organizer of the event. "What will it take to create safe communities? Everywhere we look gun violence is decimating our families and communities, whether it's the mass shootings in shopping malls, concerts, schools and places of worship, the retaliatory gun violence in urban neighborhoods, haunted by the legacy of economic disinvestment, racism and poverty or the solitary suicides committed nationwide with increasing frequency. Gun violence adds up."

Those who attended the rally first completed about a 25-minute loop around downtown that started and ended in front



MARTIN WILBUR PHOTO

The student-led March for Our Lives rally in downtown Peekskill drew several hundred community members last Saturday morning, including many educators and students. They demanded that Congress pass sensible gun measures to curb the rash of gun-related deaths, including recent mass shootings.

of the Field Library on Nelson Avenue. The crowd intermittently chanted slogans such as "End gun violence, stop the silence" and "What do we want? Safe schools. When do we want it? Now?"

Another student, Alexis Fernandez, read the names of the children who were gunned down at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn. nearly 10 years ago. She and her classmates were also in first grade

during that shooting and will be graduating high school next June.

Similarly, she read some of the names of the students killed in Parkland, Fla. in 2018 and Uvalde, Texas last month. They will never experience the things in life that most take for granted, Fernandez said.

"The damage cannot be reversed, and while my plans are set to change, gun laws still have not, and the question still remains – children or guns?" she said. "The answer is painfully evident and yet the decision has not been made by our legislative officials."

Some speakers called for Congress to pass measures that will make getting access to guns more difficult. Safe storage laws, red flag laws to keep firearms out of the hands of those with mental illness and eliminating the ability to buy guns with credit should all be considered, protestors said.

Kara McCormick-Lyons, president of the White Plains Teachers Association, said it was important for her colleagues from throughout the region to support the students pleading for change because they represent the future. She said this time there must be action because many teachers and students now think about the dangers of being in school on a regular basis.

"It's in our collective psyche and it's in the collective psyche of our kids," McCormick-Lyons said.

Tom McMahon, a Mahopac School District teacher, said children being shot to death in schools is a uniquely American

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'Enough is Enough': March for Our Lives Rally Calls for Gun Legislation

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problem. Other countries have criminals, people suffering from mental illness, the same video games and music, which are all reasons that some gun supporters cite for the mounting tragedies, he said.

What is different is the proliferation of guns, particularly assault-style weapons such as the AR-15.

"Their children aren't mowed down by gunmen every school year," McMahon

said. "Our country offers thoughts and prayer and ideas like arming teachers, making Kevlar backpacks for our kids, turning schools into fortresses, and every other crazy idea you could imagine, all to prevent actually addressing assault weapons. Let's be clear – it's the guns. They are what needs to be legislated."

Several speakers noted that the rally was on the eve of the sixth anniversary of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando,

Fla., which killed 49 people and wounded 53. But similar to after Sandy Hook, Las Vegas, Parkland and other shootings, nothing changed. Since Dec. 14, 2012, when 20 first-graders and six teachers and staff members were killed at Sandy Hook, there have been 948 school shootings in the United States, said Ariana Okoth, a Peekskill High School junior who helped organize the rally.

Peekskill resident Sol Miranda said

those who are tired of the carnage must vote and get rid of all the elected officials who have promised change but have failed to deliver.

"Rage has taken me hostage because even though there are more people marching and engaging in this cause, the mass shootings are increasing," Miranda said. "Where's the change?"

Rose Rowland, a former chapter president of Brady: United Against Gun Violence, said she is tired of the deaths, those who believe that arming teachers will be effective and thoughts and prayers. She is also fed up with those who have pledged to help but have failed to accomplish anything.

"I am tired of candidates and politicians who say the right things when they are running, and when they get (into office), they cave," Rowland said.

While children should be enjoying the experience of going to school and having teachers and administrators enjoy their progress, too much time is spent on securing schools from intruders and potential attackers, said Peekskill Superintendent of Schools Dr. David Mauricio.

"We are in front of a library. I would rather be here fighting for books in our classrooms than fighting what we're asking for – the very simple ability that our children need to come home," Mauricio said.

Rocah Announces Comprehensive Gun Safety Plan

Westchester County District Attorney Mimi Rocah announced a comprehensive gun safety plan last week following passage of state and local legislation strengthening New York's gun laws in the aftermath of the Uvalde and Buffalo shootings.

"As a mother of two school-aged children here in Westchester, I feel the same fear so many parents experience each day when they send their kids off to school," Rocah said. "Recent events around the country have made it clear that we cannot let our guard down anywhere, including here in Westchester County, to keep our children and families, our teachers and first responders, our neighbors and communities safe."

Last Wednesday Rocah unveiled a five-point plan to highlight what her office is doing to ensure the state's gun safety laws are used as effectively as possible.

The plan looks to get guns off the streets

through coordinated operations with law enforcement at the local, county, state and federal levels; gun buyback programs; tracing origins of seized guns used in crimes and the launch of investigations and prosecutions whenever possible; and intelligence and data sharing between federal, state and local law enforcement.

Prosecution is also a key focus. Rocah said her office will continue to aggressively investigate and prosecute crimes involving guns and gun violence, including violent gang cases and firearms trafficking.

A third initiative is promoting safe firearm storage and red flag law education. During the last 17 months, the Westchester D.A.'s office has proactively worked with partners across Westchester to increase community awareness about gun safety, including the launch of the Safe Storage Program with Moms Demand Action and Westchester

school districts.

Another critical component is early intervention and mental health, Rocah said. Together with the county Department of Community Mental Health and other community partners, there will be a focus on diversion and treatment for first-time, non-violent misdemeanor offenders, expanding the successful Fresh Start initiative countywide this month. The office is also working with the court system to launch a misdemeanor mental health court in Westchester later this year.

The final piece is fighting extremism. Continued training for law enforcement to ensure they have the information they need to understand extremism when they see it. The county's Crime Strategies Center will work with law enforcement to monitor extremism on social media.

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Surging Prices Put Sustainable Westchester's Energy Program on Hold

By Martin Wilbur

Consumers' electricity bills typically spike in the summer due to heavy air conditioning use during hot weather.

For about 92,000 customers who signed up for the Westchester Power Community Energy Program through Sustainable Westchester during the past six years, there will be another reason for a hike when they receive their bills next month.

Sustainable Westchester announced last Thursday that the program will be paused as of July 1 for customers in the Con Edison territory who signed up for either the 100 percent renewable option or the standard electricity supply, said Dan Welsh, director of the Westchester Power Program. They will have their service revert to the utility's supply.

Surging energy prices coinciding with the end of the current 18-month contract for the 24 communities in the Con Edison area left little chance for the program to continue uninterrupted, Welsh said. Inflationary pressures made worse by the war in Ukraine has conspired to lift the price per kilowatt into the stratosphere.

"We're just looking at a market now where there's no daylight in sight," Welsh said. "Normally, you would say (prices are) coming and going and there are ebbs and flows, but now with this pressure from the war, and we were already seeing it last

year."

For the 18-month contract that began on Jan. 1, 2021, Con Edison customers who signed up for the program were locked in at 7.4 cents per kilowatt for the 100 percent renewable option, he said. However, the agreement had an initial "not-to-exceed" target of 12.5 cents per kilowatt, which was later revised upward to 13.9 cents, according to Welsh.

Recently, the price per kilowatt has been in the range of 15 to 16 cents, scuttling any chance that a new contract could be negotiated and agreed to by all 24 municipalities by next month.

Local communities that are part of the program include Croton-on-Hudson, Ossining, Mount Kisco, New Castle, Pleasantville, Peekskill and White Plains.

The stable prices, which helped save consumers perhaps 10 percent on their monthly bill, were achieved because there were multiple communities bidding.

The skyrocketing energy rates could cost consumers signed up for the program \$5 a month for every penny the price per kilowatt rises, Welsh said. The typical single-family home in southern Westchester uses an average of about 500 kilowatts a month. However, there are some homeowners in the northern half of Westchester who use twice that amount.

Welsh said the sudden rise has been at an unprecedented pace, breaking all historical

norms.

"A few years ago, we would have been talking in terms of a few tenths of a cent, up and down, you would sort of know where things are," he said. "Now things move by pennies in short order."

For customers that are part of the program, there will be no interruption in their electricity service once July 1 arrives. They are expected to receive a notice in the mail from Sustainable Westchester this week. Another notice from Con Edison will arrive to confirm the switch to its supply.

Nina Orville, Sustainable Westchester executive director, said the global disruption in energy markets has impacted the organization's ability to execute a new contract.

"We are taking this opportunity to consider how the program can be administered to still capture and provide the same benefits, but to allow for more nimble procurement, which is necessary in these volatile times," Orville said in a statement. "We understand that the pause in the program will cause uncertainty and stress for many participants and we are working diligently to restore the service to participating municipalities as soon as possible."

The pause will not affect the program's NYSEG customers, who are locked into their contract at 10.2 cents per kilowatt, for the remainder of the contract which runs

until November 2023. The City of Yonkers, which is also in Con Edison territory, has its own agreement with the utility, also until November 2023, at 8.7 cents.

Welsh is hopeful that Sustainable Westchester will resume the service by the end of the year.

"We'll get that ceiling and then take bids for it and hope that we don't run into the same situation," he said.

For anyone with questions, they may contact Sustainable Westchester at 914-242-4725 or e-mail westchesterpower@sustainablewestchester.org.


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Police Blotter

County Police/Mount Kisco

June 5: Officers responded to Main Street and Gregory Avenue on a report of an erratically driven car in the area. Officers located the vehicle on Gregory Avenue, and after additional investigation, charged the driver with DWI, a misdemeanor. Luis Pimentel, 29, of Mount Vernon was booked at the Green Street precinct and released pending a June 16 appearance in Mount Kisco Justice Court.

June 7: A motorist reported at 7:44 a.m. that his vehicle was damaged by a passing car while he was parked at the curb on North Moger Avenue. The motorist said he opened the driver's door to exit the vehicle when it was struck by the passing car, which then drove off at a high rate of speed.

June 7: Officers responded to Northern Westchester Hospital at 9:01 a.m. to assist staff with locating a patient who left the hospital against medical advice and before being properly discharged. Upon arrival, officers learned that the patient had voluntarily returned.

June 8: Report of a gas leak at a business on Radio Circle at 6:06 a.m. The Mount Kisco Fire Department and Con Edison crews responded. Gas service was turned off until Con Ed conducted an inspection and determined it was safe for employees to re-enter the premises.

June 8: Officers responded at 7:15 a.m. to the Independent Fire Company on Lexington Avenue on a report of a dispute between a firefighter and motorist who was blocking the driveway. The firefighter reported that he asked the motorist to move his car because it was preventing a fire truck from backing into the fire station. The motorist became irate, got out of his car and shoved the firefighter before driving off.

June 9: Officers arrived at Barker Street at 11:18 a.m. to assist a 92-year-old man who was injured in a fall. The Mount Kisco Volunteer Ambulance Corps also responded.

June 10: A Barker Street resident reported at 7:30 a.m. that the catalytic converter on his car was stolen sometime overnight while the vehicle was parked in his building's lot. An officer determined that surveillance video may have captured the incident. An investigation is continuing.

Croton-on-Hudson Police Department

May 31: A walk-in complaint reported at 3:45 p.m. being scammed by someone claiming to be from Con Edison. The victim sent \$1,500 via Zelle before realizing that it was a scam. A report was filed and an investigation will follow.

June 2: Patrols received a report of an offensive sticker at a South Riverside Avenue business at 8:25 a.m. An investigation will follow.

June 3: Patrols responded to southbound Route 9 at 2:02 p.m. on a report of a dog that appeared to be hit by a car. Patrols located the owner who reported that the dog jumped out of the car window while he was driving. The dog and owner were escorted to the animal hospital by the dog warden.

June 5: A Grand Street caller reported at 1:55 p.m. that a male on his property was throwing rocks at his political flag. Patrols responded and issued a verbal warning.

New Castle Police Department

June 3: A resident called to report that a woman he met online via a dating app was attempting to extort \$3,000 from him. He explained that she had threatened to send compromising photos of him to all his contacts if he did not send the money. The resident sent a smaller amount of money and then blocked the person on all social media accounts. It was later discovered that he had never communicated with a woman and had been targeted for this scam.

June 3: A Hights Cross Road resident reported a landscaper using a gasoline-powered leaf blower in violation of the town ordinance. An officer advised the landscaper of the violation, verified that he had not been warned in the past and gave him a verbal warning.

June 6: The owner of a local bus company reported that five buses had their catalytic converters removed during the early morning hours. Detectives are investigating.

June 6: The U.S. Postal Service reported that one of its trucks also had its catalytic converters removed. Detectives are reviewing local security camera footage.

June 9: A resident reported that five checks placed in their residential mailbox in May had been altered to defraud them of about \$20,000.

North Castle Police Department

June 3: A Banks Farm Road resident reported at 12:03 a.m. that a vehicle was stuck in the mud off the roadway. The responding officer requested a tow. Armonk Garage was dispatched and removed the vehicle. The officer then requested Armonk Fire Department ambulance be dispatched for the operator experiencing an apparent altered mental status. The party was taken to Northern Westchester Hospital.

June 8: A School Street resident reported at 5:33 p.m. that debris is in the roadway. The responding officer stated that cardboard boxes are in the roadway. The officer was able to clear the debris from the road and dispose it.

Pleasantville Police Department

June 4: A Meadow Lane resident reported an electric bike was stolen from in front of his home at 9:52 a.m. The matter remains under investigation.

June 7: A 54-year-old Cold Spring man was arrested at 8:50 a.m. for violating an order of protection that was in place to help a Pleasantville woman.

June 9: Report of a larceny of used cooking oil from Tesora D'Italia Restaurant on Marble Avenue at 12:52 p.m. An investigation is continuing.

June 9: Used cooking oil was reported stolen from the Pleasantville Diner at 1:26 p.m.

Putnam County Sheriff's Department

June 3: Deputies were dispatched to a motor vehicle accident on Peekskill Hollow Road near Nashua Road in Putnam Valley about 12:50 a.m. Upon arrival, the deputy located a vehicle off the roadway that had struck a tree and was engulfed in flames. The driver, a 38-year-old Kent resident, was unconscious and still in the vehicle. With the assistance of another motorist who had stopped to help, they were able to get the driver out of the vehicle and

began lifesaving efforts, including CPR. The victim was transported by ambulance to Westchester Medical Center, but did not survive. An investigation is continuing regarding cause of death. The Putnam Valley Fire Department assisted on the scene with the vehicle fire and traffic control.

June 4: Report of a multivehicle accident on Route 6 near the Westchester County border at 8:30 p.m. An investigation revealed that a vehicle being operated by a 43-year-old Mahopac man was traveling southbound on Route 6 when an unidentified vehicle pulled out of Baldwin Place Road causing him to brake suddenly, resulting in the vehicle behind him, operated by a 74-year-old Mahopac woman, to collide into the rear of his vehicle. Then a motorcycle, driven by a 56-year-old Tuckahoe man, struck the rear of the second vehicle and the operators was ejected from the motorcycle. The driver of the second vehicle was transported to Putnam Hospital Center because she had difficulty breathing while the motorcycle operator was taken to Westchester Medical Center for a possible concussion.

State Police/Somers

June 7: Police began investigating a shooting incident at 7 a.m. that took place at Pepsi Way in Somers. Several gunshots were heard in the area and an employee working in the facility was subsequently struck by a bullet projectile in the parking lot. The victim was taken to a local hospital and evaluated. Investigators are seeking information to identify who may have been involved in the incident.





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Bedford Schools to Form New Task Force on Safety and Security

By Martin Wilbur

Bedford School District officials have formed a Safety and Security Task Force to make sure students are free from danger as nationwide outrage grows over the mass killing of 19 elementary school students last month in Texas.

As of last week, more than 50 parents and staff members had signed up to be considered for the committee, said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joel Adelberg. Adelberg has recommended its creation to incoming Superintendent Dr. Robert Glass, who will begin his service in Bedford on July 1.

“This is to bring more people to the table in a more robust way so those who want a voice can have a voice,” he said. “There’s nothing more important than the safety of our students and staff.”

Adelberg said following the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre in December 2012, there were some members of the community who were concerned but interest is currently at its peak. Application forms can still be submitted until Wednesday.

In a June 6 letter to the community, Adelberg said he expects the task force to convene over the summer. Its key objectives would be to gain an understanding of safety and security in the district; discover best practices from safety experts; explore best mental health practices for students; and submit a report containing recommendations to the Board of Education and the superintendent.

Board of Education member Jessica Cambareri said there has been confusion

among some residents in the community who believed that there was already a task force. While the existing group meets regularly, including the day after the Uvalde, Texas shooting, Adelberg said the district should explore refreshing its safety and security plans.

“This incident touched a nerve,” he said of the Uvalde shooting, “and we should be responsive as a community.”

Board Hires Investigative Firm

The board last week approved retaining Kroll Associates of Manhattan to conduct an investigation into the picture-taking incidents of naked special education students in the Fox Lane High School bathroom.

Paul Barger, the attorney for two of the families whose children were victimized earlier this school year when those photos were circulated on social media, said his clients are pleased at the hiring and that the company has a long history of conducting inquiries.

However, the district “has made no effort” in keeping the families informed, Barger said. They only learned of the hiring by watching the June 8 board meeting.

He said the goal is to make sure the investigation is conducted properly and reaches a conclusion that is made public.

“We are less concerned about timing and far more concerned about making certain this is an effective, thorough and truly independent investigation,” Barger said. “We also hope all the findings are shared with the public regardless of whether they may be damaging to the board. We continue to hope

Kroll and the board will keep the families updated throughout the investigation.”

There were no responses to questions posed via e-mail to Board President John Boucher regarding specifics of the arrangement with Kroll Associates, including how long the investigation may take.

In March, parents of the special education

students that were victimized went public with information about the incidents, demanding answers as to how officials could have allowed additional incidents to occur.

The matter was investigated by the Bedford Police Department and has since been referred to the Westchester County District Attorney’s office.



History in Song

Jim Keyes and Carla Lynne Hall, an award-winning pair, will perform “This Man’s a Spy!” this Friday night at the First Presbyterian Church of Yorktown, a program that will commemorate the town’s role in the American Revolution. The concert will present songs inspired by the encounter between American General Benedict Arnold and British Major John Andre. The free concert begins at 7:30 p.m.

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Letters to the Editor

Abinanti’s Advocacy for Vaccines for the Disabled is Deeply Appreciated

I write to support Assemblyman Tom Abinanti for re-election.

His legislative accomplishments speak for themselves. Assemblyman Abinanti has sponsored and passed over 150 meaningful bills in the legislature touching on all aspects of our lives. You can see this for yourself on his Assembly website.

However, his advocacy for access to vaccines for people with disabilities during the pandemic is not as well known. While nursing home residents and healthcare workers were prioritized when vaccines became available (as they should have

been), people with disabilities living in group homes, quarantined and equally vulnerable to the virus by staff and each other, were not. Through his relentless advocacy for this vulnerable population, vaccines were made available resulting in more than 90 percent of residents in group homes being vaccinated. Undoubtedly, this prevented many from serious illness, hospitalization and death.

He also voted with his colleagues for extra money to distribute vaccines, to allow pharmacists and EMTs to administer them and for extra time off for employees to get vaccinated.

While many of us make our voices heard with our elected officials, it is important not to forget those that don’t or can’t. I am proud to support an elected official who fights for all of us and I know will continue to do so.

Francesca Hagadus-McHale
Pleasantville

Good to See Change of Heart From Chappaqua Form Based Code Opponent

I was shocked to see the letter from Scott Le Vine actually supportive of building new housing in Chappaqua (“In Support of New Castle’s Proposed Housing Law,” June 6, 2022).

Mr. Le Vine is a board member of “Residents United to Save Chappaqua Hamlet” (RUSCH), founded when Chappaqua debated the adoption of the Form Based Code (FBC) to allow new apartment building construction on a dilapidated downtown block. RUSCH scared residents with specious predictions of greedy developers, overwhelmed schools, crazy traffic jams and uncontrolled taxes. Le Vine protested the FBC at Town Board meetings and in letters to The Examiner. When the Town Board seemed close to approving the FBC, Le Vine berated and bullied a board member publicly at a meeting. Hoping to prevent a quorum for a vote, he demanded the board member’s recusal.

Flash forward a few months and Chappaqua learns that the anti-FBC Unite New Castle slate, which won last fall’s Town Board election, was funded heavily by two developers. RUSCH refuses to reveal how it received thousands of dollars to pay for its expensive misinformation campaign and energetic support of Unite New Castle. The new Town Board is suddenly considering four-story apartment buildings, and Mr. Le Vine is now a big fan of new housing, both without the FBC constraining developers.

I welcome Le Vine’s sudden change of heart. So do the developers.

Chandak Ghosh
Chappaqua

Resident Should Not Have Access to Mount Pleasant’s E-mail List

I gave my e-mail address to the Town of Mount Pleasant for their specific use and purpose to keep me informed, not to give away, sell or be used by anyone else for any reason.

Mr. James Russell’s attempted acquisition of this information is just another attack on our privacy, which is already being compromised six ways from Sunday with unwanted phone calls, mail, etc.

If he is in possession of information critical for the populace to know he can go to a Town Board meeting, take out an ad in your paper, do a mailing or avail himself of other means to disseminate such information.

His attempt to use my e-mail for his own purposes is an affront to privacy and I want him to cease and desist in his efforts to obtain this information from our town.

Susan M Cassone
Thornwood

Astorino’s Record Makes Him Well-Suited to Serve as Governor

Rob Astorino served as county executive of Westchester County for two terms. During that time, he created 44,000 new private sector jobs by reducing taxes and regulations. He cut the property tax levy or kept it flat for eight consecutive budgets, reduced his own staff, froze his pay for eight years, adopted term limits for legislators and created STEM initiatives for students.

These weren’t empty promises, these were actions with great results. It’s a no-brainer to elect Rob Astorino as New York governor.

Marielaina Phelan
Yorktown Heights

Regardless of Description, the AR-15 is a Menace to Society

I concede Mr. Kopstein’s point that I made a technical error in describing the AR-15 in my column (“Who Are the Men Behind the Guns That Result in All These Deaths?” May 31-June 6).

It also doesn’t matter. Nineteen little children and two adults in a Texas school are dead because of the capabilities of the AR-15. Mr. Kopstein can debate me all he wants on this little detail, while school kids and educators around the nation are exposed daily to potential death or catastrophic injury because the AR-15 is still legal, despite the long legacy of blood, pain, death and grief left by a gun that can shoot 45 bullets per minute (source: checkyourfact.com), each bullet coming at you at more than 3,000 feet per second, three times the speed of a bullet from a handgun, ripping through your vital organs and leaving an exit wound the size of an orange.

Michael Gold
Pleasantville

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Columns

Chappaqua Treatment Center Helps Clients Ascend Mountain of Hope

For people suffering from substance use disorder, Jana Wu wants to tell them, "You are worth living the life you want."

Wu, a licensed clinical social worker, licensed alcohol and drug counselor and program manager at Mountainside Treatment Center in Chappaqua, is dedicated to helping people change their lives.

Mountainside welcomes clients from Westchester, mostly, but also Greenwich, Manhattan and even Brooklyn, about 50 to 60 people on average a month. About 65 percent of the clients consist of men.

"There are barriers to women getting treatment," Wu said. "They have childcare and household management issues. Many of them are working. Also, women struggle with cultural and societal expectations."

The people she sees are "overwhelmed and demoralized with their use," Wu said. "A lot of people are feeling regret and shame about their behaviors."

Alcohol, marijuana and prescription drug misuse disorders are the most common among Mountainside clients, Wu stated.

"Clients are drinking a lot at home," she explained. "They're hiding bottles in shoeboxes or ceiling panels. They're lying about what they're doing. One person kept a spreadsheet of all their lies."

"Most of our clients are well-dressed and highly educated," Wu said. "They're intellectual and smart, but they can't manage their drinking."



By Michael Gold

Wu describes alcohol use as "slow and painful. It's mentally exhausting." Some clients are stay-at-home mothers who hide their drinking from other family members.

"The way they feel inside is horrible," Wu explained.

Concerning marijuana, to clients, "it's fun at first, they enjoy it. Then they're smoking it throughout the day, in a way that's causing problems for them with

work or relationships and they're getting irritable when they don't have it. They have trouble keeping their jobs. A lot of these kids are college graduates."

Some clients are consuming edible cannabis products, such as gummies and cookies. An internet search of cannabis edibles found the drug being sold in everything from chocolate bars, peanut butter cups and cinnamon mints to popcorn, soda and cold brew coffee.

"Cannabis kills their motivation and organization," Wu said.

Wu identified factors that contribute to substance use disorder, including trauma, anxiety and depression, even the use of technology.

Relationships can contribute to trauma. Various difficult situations, such as someone in the family suffering an accident, parents struggling to connect with their children, kids not fitting in at school or living with a parent struggling with alcohol or prescription drugs in the past or present

can all lay the groundwork for substance use disorder.

"Many of our clients have lost friends or family members to substance abuse," Wu said.

Concerning computers and phones, Wu explained that when we're on our screens, "we're not moving enough. The use of technology keeps people enervated. We're not that much in our bodies. We need to be present for ourselves and others."

During the three-hour group sessions at Mountainside, Wu and the other counselors start with what she calls a mindful moment, typically with about 12 clients, which might last 15 minutes. The clients are asked to relax their bodies and work to be present in the here and now. The counselors ask questions about how the participants in the group are feeling physically, mentally and spiritually.

They then discuss if they are going to be exposed to high-risk situations soon, where others might be consuming alcohol or drugs, such as at a party. Another trigger for substance use is seeing a parent or family member intoxicated at home.

"About 50 percent of our clients have family members with substance use disorders," Wu said.

Mountainside provides psychological education to clients, to help them understand why someone gets addicted, such as having friends who drink or take drugs.

"We talk about how to build a network of

people in sobriety," Wu explained.

The counselors help clients learn how to build boundaries with others and with oneself.

"Say no to people, places and things that will not be good for your sobriety," she said.

Mountainside educates clients about how to prevent an overdose. More than 107,000 people in the U.S. died of drug overdoses in 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control. More than two-thirds of all overdoses were from synthetic opioids, mostly fentanyl, the CDC found.

"We work on gratitude," Wu said. "Find something you could be grateful for. Write it down. Say it. Show up as the person you want to be in service of your values."

"The most important thing," Wu continued, "is to know that there is help. You can live in a way in which you are not in bondage to these substances. Many people struggle. They feel

they're alone. We have medication-assisted treatment, that helps with cravings. People don't know these things. We work on creating healthy attachments to the group. We work to get rid of the stigma and shame of addiction. We help form compassion for others and yourself."

Pleasantville resident 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

Republican Officials: Keep Your Politics Out of Our Schools

By the Yorktown Democratic Committee Executive Committee

Local Yorktown Republican political figures have disregarded a time-honored practice of keeping politics out of the local school board elections.

They seem to be marching to the orders of Trump supporters such as Steve Bannon who claim the "path to save the nation is very simple – it's going to go through the school boards." And our local school boards have felt the attack.

Republicans have added to the book of

Big Lies. In addition to the fantasy that the 2020 election was stolen, they claim that Critical Race Theory is being taught in the public schools, which is not true. They claim that masks cause more harm than good, which is not true. They believe that books, which have been selected by expert educators and placed in school libraries, should be banned.

To foster these lies and beliefs throughout the country, groups such as Save Our Schools and Moms for Liberty were founded. Go to the Save Our Schools Westchester website and you'll find former

Republican Yorktown supervisor Michael Grace on the Board of Directors and there had been, until recently, a photo with Matt Slater, Kevin Byrne, Ed Lachterman and Sergio Esposito as proud supporters.

If you've attended or read about local school board meetings in the past year, you know how disruptive these groups have been. They have been casting racial slurs, threatening superintendents, school trustees and residents, and constantly interrupting parents and students when they speak.

This agenda of bullying, anger and hate has been promulgated by the Republican Party hierarchy from organizations like the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, and the American Legislative Exchange Council, which produces model bills on Republican causes about nonexistent threats.

"It's not community centered, it's centered on political thought and theory and things that don't connect to education," said Sonja McKenzie, a member of the board of directors of the National School Boards Action Center, which advocates for public education. "The things that have been politicized – reopening schools, mask wearing, Critical Race Theory – a lot of these are above and beyond the purview of what you do as school boards."

Above and beyond the purview of political candidates, officeholders and parties is endorsing candidates for the Board of Education. This means that when Kevin Byrnes, chair of the Yorktown Republican Committee, and Sergio Esposito, town councilman, send e-mails and post or advertise on Facebook telling followers which candidates to support for the local school board positions, they're way out of line, even if there is a flimsy "disclaimer" within their promotional material.

Because we respect our schools, our teachers, administrators and, most of all, our children, we call out this flagrant disregard by the Yorktown Republicans of time-honored traditions and practices, and we are delighted that the residents of the Yorktown Central School District and the Lakeland Central School District voted resoundingly against their chosen candidates.

School board elections must NOT be another venue for nakedly partisan conflict!

The Yorktown Democratic Committee's Executive Committee is comprised of Co-chairs Mark Lieberman and Marni Rabin Marron, Vice Chair Marcia Stone, Secretary Sheila Schraier and Treasurer Robert Kearney.

Bicycle Sundays to Continue in July

Keep your bicycle tires pumped and your helmets out. Bicycle Sundays will continue in July.

The Westchester County tradition will extend its season for four additional Sundays – July 10, 17, 24 and 31 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is no Bicycle Sunday on July 3.

During Bicycle Sundays, a portion

of the Bronx River Parkway is closed to cars for the exclusive use of bicyclists, joggers, walkers, scooters and strollers. The course runs from the Westchester County Center in White Plains, south to Scarsdale Road in Yonkers, 13.1 miles round trip.

Student Assistance Services Rolls Out New Anti-Bullying Resources

By Nora Lowe

Students, parents and school personnel have another resource to seek out to help combat the scourge of bullying.

The Tarrytown-based Student Assistance Services (SAS) Corporation, a nonprofit organization that provides various programs and support for students, launched a new suite of resources on June 1.

SAS' new Adolescent Counseling and Bullying Prevention Resource Center, the first of its kind in Westchester, provides direct support to students, parents and educators seeking advice on how to properly resolve a bullying situation. There are over-the-phone and in-person consultation options available.

The resource center is accessible to public, private and charter schools in the county, and registered SAS counselors who are stationed at many schools are available to help.

The program is free for Westchester County residents. It is being funded by a two-year \$125,000 grant from the Phelps Community Corporation.

Services include a new anti-bullying hotline and queries may be e-mailed as well.

Angela Alvarado, the SAS counselor at Fox Lane High School said the center will help spotlight the critical issue of emotional well-being.



GETTY PHOTO

"The helpline will be a great resource for teens, families and schools," Alvarado said.

The center also offers professional training and staff development opportunities where participants can learn about bullying and cyberbullying as well as helpful tips to remedy various situations.

Bullying Prevention and Mental Health Coordinator Kara Santucci said "every student, has the right to feel safe, valued and respected at school." When that sense

of security is breached, students, parents and educators are all free to reach out to SAS.

"Let's say a parent knows that their child is being bullied and they see a change in behavior. Their child becomes withdrawn, and they're not sure really what to do," Santucci said of one example of when the resource center can be contacted.

If an educator isn't sure how to resolve a teasing situation without drawing too much

attention to the pupil in question could be another situation. Staff at the resource center are trained to offer assistance in dealing with complex dynamics, she said.

Plus, the center is meeting a critical need, especially in the aftermath of a pandemic.

"Students feel isolated, they've missed out on opportunities to socialize and they really do need to feel connected," Santucci pointed out.

She said that assistance isn't just for the victims. Counseling is also open to witnesses and those exhibiting bullying tendencies. Many perceived aggressors are actually struggling with personal challenges, provoking problematic behavior, Santucci said.

Therefore, by addressing bullying now means preventing potentially worse threats down the road.

"Students who are targets of bullying... are more likely to engage in riskier behavior," Santucci said. "They are at a higher risk for substance abuse... depression, anxiety."

Anyone in need of assistance can call the helpline at 662-855-9464 or e-mail bullyinghelpline@sascorp.org from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Anyone seeking help can expect a response within 24 hours. The center's website is expected to be unveiled shortly.

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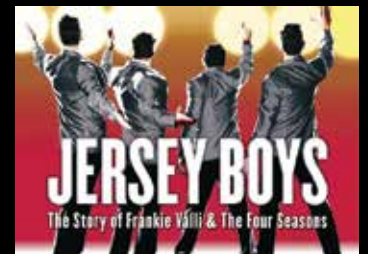
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Two Scouts From All-Girl Mt. Pleasant Troop Achieve Rank of Eagle

Mount Pleasant Troop 125, an all-girl troop within Scouts BSA, held its first Eagle Court of Honor on June 4 at Holy Rosary Church honoring their first two members who recently achieved Eagle Scout, scouting's highest rank.

Eleanor Dempsey of Hawthorne and Jane Olszewski of Thornwood were the first two young ladies to earn the Eagle rank in Mount Pleasant.

Dempsey's project enhanced the auditorium at her school, Westlake High School, where she spent many hours on stage since sixth grade, and which is in constant use by the high school, middle school and the community.

Coordinating about two dozen volunteers, she led the painting of a mural on the auditorium wall and renovated a central display case outside the theater. Dempsey also worked with the community to research the history

of past Westlake shows and lined the walls of the auditorium with enlarged, framed playbills from musicals performed in the space since 1969.

Dempsey will be attending Northwestern University in the fall.

Olszewski undertook the herculean project of organizing and modernizing the costume storage area at Westlake High School, which she also attends, to benefit the theater program she has performed with since middle school.

Olszewski designed and implemented a computer-based inventory and organizational system for the costumes. After recruiting and leading a team of volunteers to catalogue and organize thousands of costume pieces, users can now search for costume pieces by size, style and era, helping hundreds of student thespians look their best on stage.

She will be attending SUNY Potsdam in the fall.

Nationally, about 6 percent of scouts complete the rigorous requirements to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout.

County Legislator Margaret Cunzio presented Dempsey with a declaration declaring June 9, 2022, as Eleanor Dempsey Day in Westchester County. Cunzio also presented Olszewski with a declaration declaring June 10, 2022, as Jane Olszewski Day. Their names appeared in lights on the message board at the County Center in White Plains on their respective days.

Mount Pleasant Troop 125 was founded on Feb. 1, 2019, the first day that girls were allowed to join Scouts BSA. The troop was one of the first three all-girl troops founded that day in Westchester County, and the first all-girl troop in the Mohican district.



Eleanor Dempsey and Jane Olszewski became the first two members of the all-girl Troop 125 in Mount Pleasant to become Eagle Scouts at a ceremony on June 4.

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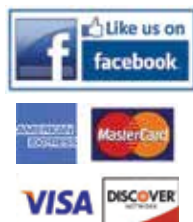
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Oh, the Changes I've Seen in Homes Over the Years

It's been nearly 50 years since I purchased my first home, and I must say that the experience of acquiring and maintaining a home over the past half-century has changed in so many ways, some obvious and others subtle.

The most obvious change is size. In 1950, the average home size was 983 square feet; by 1970, the average size home had increased to 1,500 square feet and this year the average size is 2,400 square feet.

Style preferences veered from the traditional Cape Cod, to the raised ranch and split level, to today's preferences for Colonial and contemporary.

Layouts changed to an open plan. No longer was the kitchen treated as a separate dungeon for some kind of unsightly work to be done. Rather, its doors were removed and combined with the family room so that a parent could be with her children while preparing food. (By the way, the family room was literally invented in 1945 with the publication of a popular book called *Tomorrow's House*.)

For a period after World War II, kitchen appliances were offered in colors, some, like mustard, quite ugly. Now, only stainless steel seems to prevail.

I had never heard of a "center island" when I was a kid. Kitchens just weren't big enough to accommodate them. Formica was all the rage for countertops, but who would use that today?

There was also a long stretch when wall-to-

wall carpeting was the cat's meow, but today consumers seem to prefer hardwood flooring, complemented by area rugs.

Deader than a doornail is wallpapering. When I was a newlywed, my wife and I bought an old house built in 1826. The plaster walls were in horrible shape, but I soon discovered that wallpaper, especially if it had a busy pattern, hid a thousand sins and I used it throughout the house. By the way, one of my favorite quotes is from Oscar Wilde, who on his deathbed said, "This wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. Either it goes or I do."

Anyway, I haven't heard of anybody wallpapering anything in many years. Now we prefer less busy environments in which to live our more casual lifestyles.

Most of us of a certain age grew up in homes with only one bathroom, and it didn't even have double sinks. Today, we have an overabundance of bathrooms. I live in a two-bedroom condo today and I have two full baths and a half bath.

Before glass windows were insulated, colonial homes had small windows to reduce drafts in the house, which led to darker interiors. But today, entire walls are made of insulated glass to bring the outside in.

Outside features that came to prominence with a more casual lifestyle were decks and patios, all but doubling living space in



moderate weather. Again, when I bought my suburban home, it came with an outdoor entertainment space that was covered in gravel. My first major house project was to replace that gravel with a brick surface, a major undertaking but very satisfying. Brick was a material that offered ease of handling for a do-it-yourself project, laying the bricks on sand one by one, rather than utilizing concrete, which would have required professional installation.

My biggest change in lifestyle came with the ability to have an inground pool installed – the very first in my neighborhood. It made my daughter very popular among her school friends. When I was a kid, I got wet by hanging out at the corner fire hydrant when it was opened. Today, I live in a condominium with both an outdoor and indoor pool. As a child, I never could have conceived of the concept of an indoor pool.

In retrospect, I'm glad I lived long enough to experience all of our modern conveniences and technological advances. When I think of the former owners of the old homes I owned and what they had to go through to keep those structures functioning, I believe I would have been a total bust.

But then again, maybe I would have risen to the occasion and learned the skills needed to live without today's conveniences. If my great grandfather managed to do it, why not I?

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

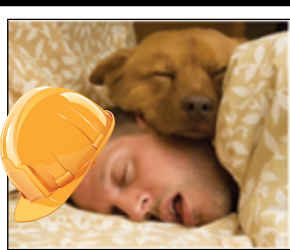


By Bill Primavera



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PLA033-3

Local Author Releases New Horror Novels That Are to 'Die For'

By Nora Lowe

Most afternoons found a young Ed Perratore and his best friend Jack Cotter watching "Dark Shadows: on television. That, coupled with old horror, sci-fi and psychological thrillers like "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" and "Hush... Hush, Sweet Charlotte" left Perratore with persistent nightmares.

Despite those terrifying dreams, today, Perratore, a longtime Mount Kisco resident with several children and grandchildren, wouldn't change a thing. His penchant for horror is as strong as ever, leading him to author and recently release two horror novels of his own: "Hindred Spirits" and "The Coven Tree."

"All these nightmares that I had helped inspire the novels I later conceived," he said.

To Perratore, horror is more than a genre. It's a space you can enter.

"I can...know that I'm where I am and go into this other place, appreciate it, enjoy it and then get back out," he explained.

It's made horror writing less spooky than one might think – and maybe even a bit therapeutic.

One intriguing aspect of horror for Perratore is that there are certain rules, a type of morality to it where you can find the characters and get caught up in them.

"Hindred Spirits" imagines a reality in which children who face abuse can leave their bodies at nightfall and enter a spirit world, which is free of pain. However, when the protagonist is suddenly unable to re-



Mount Kisco writer Ed Perratore has written and released "Hindred Spirits" and "The Coven Tree," delving into the world of horror writing.

enter her body, she finds herself trapped in this other realm.

In "The Coven Tree," a couple purchases a gorgeous wooden highboy for what they think is a bargain, but the deal is too good to be true. The chest is hosting a dozen evil souls, who begin to relentlessly torment the family.

Both novels, Perratore explained, are not "COVID novels." They were written over a six-year period in the 1990s, and he let them sit for about 25 years while raising his children and alternately freelancing and working for publications like Consumer Reports. When



the pandemic hit, his wife Elena, who also served as his editor, suggested completing the works and marketing them.

With that, Perratore conducted a "sweeping revision and update," seamlessly integrating contemporary ideas such as smart home products. You'll find no mention of the pandemic in either book, though, the rationale being that horror should serve as an escape from current events.

He counts Dean Koontz, Peter Straub, F. Paul Wilson and Brian Lumley as inspirations. As an English major in college, George Eliot and William Wordsworth left a big impression about attention to detail.

Perratore said reading should be a sensory experience.

"I wanted touch there, I wanted scent, I wanted sounds of the area," he said.

For "The Coven Tree," he "wanted to capture all the flavor of the Adirondacks," going so far as to research flora and fauna to ensure any references made to them align with the setting. He also did weeks of

research to capture the souls' 18th century dialogue.

From reading John Steinbeck, he learned about evoking dynamic emotion instead of just fear. Perratore seems to have nailed that on the head. One Amazon comment for "Hindred Spirits" reads, "It brought tears to my eyes at the end."

Another thing that sets Perratore's writing apart is brief moments of humor.

"I think that there can be some interplay (between horror and humor) because...it helps now and then to have a lighter moment just to let the reader take a breath and even chuckle," said Perratore, who also writes a humor blog called The Fog Bell.

Perratore did his best to avoid clichés, joking, "Anytime someone says to another character, 'I love you,' you know that person is about to die. It's like every time I hear that, 'Okay, nice knowing you.'"

Those who have read Perratore's contemplative nonfiction book, "One Man's Journey: A Walk on The Croton Aqueduct Trail," might be taken aback by his pivot to horror writing.

"Why would someone who we've only known as this kind of person write something to scare the pants off people?" he imagines readers asking. He quipped that he's simply reframing the term "to die for."

"Hindred Spirits" and "The Coven Tree" are available for purchase on Amazon as paperback or Kindle. They can also be ordered from nearly any independent bookstore.

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Abinanti, Shimsky Square Off in Intriguing Democratic Primary

By Bailey Hosfelt

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) is seeking a seventh two-year term in the 92nd Assembly District, a position he has maintained since winning the seat in 2010.

But Abinanti will have to defeat County Legislator MaryJane Shimsky (D-Dobbs Ferry), who is challenging the veteran public servant in the June 28 primary, to have that shot. The winner will face Republican Carlo Valente of Hawthorne in November.

Currently serving her sixth and final term on the Westchester County Board of Legislators, Shimsky said she has the experience and enthusiasm to make the move to Albany.

Having snagged endorsements from the Westchester County Democratic Committee and New York Working Families Party over Abinanti, Shimsky said district voters are ready for a change in their elected representative.

"My opponent has done some good things, but he's been in elected office 35 of the last 40 years, and sometimes you don't hear people anymore," Shimsky said. "I'm a firm believer in field trips and calling all stakeholders to the table."

On the campaign trail thus far, Shimsky has criticized Abinanti's opposition to extending the eviction moratorium and failure to help Westchester obtain state resources to mitigate flooding over the past decade, saying he has "sat on the sidelines."

Abinanti has countered that while he voted



Tom Abinanti

for the eviction moratorium twice, extending it a third time was unnecessary and damaging to the local community.

"The third moratorium, which I voted against, resulted in a lot of hardships for small one-, two- and three-family mom and pop landlords who rely on this money and were unable to force their tenants to pay," Abinanti said.

Abinanti added that he was the county legislator who drafted Westchester's Master Plan to address flooding issues, which was approved in his last days in office in 2010 prior to leaving for the Assembly. Former county executive Rob Astorino opted for the Reconnaissance Plan after he left, which is



MaryJane Shimsky

now outdated.

"The Board of Legislators has done nothing on it since," Abinanti said. "This is not the state function. My opponent is just trying to deflect from the failures of the Board of Legislators."

Endorsed by the Mount Pleasant Democratic Committee, Abinanti said he has the seniority, strong record and energy to continue serving his constituents.

"I have the courage to stand up and do what's right against all odds, no matter who's on the other side," Abinanti said. "I have a record of accomplishment far exceeding that of my opponent's."

Key issues top of mind for Abinanti are

the high cost of living, gun control, climate change, support for New York's disabled community and abortion access. Currently, Abinanti chairs the Committee on People with Disabilities. He is also a member of the committees on Health, Judiciary, Codes and Environmental Conservation.

Shimsky's campaign is focused on rebuilding and modernizing the state's aging infrastructure, fighting climate change and keeping communities strong through policy priorities including sound public health, quality child care, protections for the workforce and fair access to opportunity.

Currently, Shimsky is chair of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation and serves on the committees for Budget and Appropriations, Health, Law and Major Contracts, Legislation and Parks and Recreation. She has also chaired the Infrastructure Committee for two terms and has been chair of the Saw Mill Watershed Advisory Board since 2011.

Speaking on housing and the high cost of living, Shimsky underscored that much of the county needs significantly subsidized and affordable housing.

"We have to make sure we get more affordable housing units built and think about where housing for a broader array of income levels can be built where it would not be as expensive," Shimsky said.

She added that Good Cause Eviction must be seriously considered by state legislators.

"We have no choice," Shimsky said. "People can't live on the street. We have to

continued on next page

Agudelo, Levenberg, Smith Ready for Democratic Assembly Primary

By Rick Pezzullo

Three familiar faces in local government will be squaring off June 28 in a pivotal Democratic primary for the 95th Assembly seat being vacated by Sandy Galef, who is retiring at the end of the year.

Vying for the key ballot spot to represent residents in Peekskill, Cortlandt, Ossining, Philipstown and Kent are Ossining Town Supervisor Dana Levenberg, Westchester County Legislator Colin Smith and former Peekskill councilwoman Vanessa Agudelo.

Levenberg served as Galef's communications director and later chief of staff prior to being elected supervisor in 2015 and has been endorsed by her former boss. She also served nine years on the Ossining Board of Education. She has been endorsed by former Peekskill mayor Andre Rainey, who was forced out of the race when his petitions were challenged by Smith, and Cold Spring Mayor Kathleen Foley, among others.

"Voters who want a representative with the experience, knowledge and skills to hit the ground running on Day One and deliver results should choose me," Levenberg said. "For progress on all the issues voters in this district care most about – climate action, economic recovery, affordability, women's rights, gun reform and so on – you need an effective legislator."

"My approach is very different from that of my opponents," she continued. "I am an active and engaged leader; I'm the type to attend every meeting, ask lots of questions and pore over details. I also surround myself



Colin Smith

with people who complement my knowledge and skills and build strong relationships and collaborations that endure over time and produce results."

Smith won his second term on the Board of Legislators last November. He previously served on the Peekskill Common Council and the Peekskill Board of Education. He has been endorsed by the Cortlandt Town Board, along with the Westchester County Corrections Superiors Officers Association and the Officers Benevolent Association.

"Having dedicated my career to giving voice to the voiceless and standing up for everyone from all walks of life, I'm equipped to win this election because my story resonates with voters," Smith said.



Dana Levenberg

He was the first Democrat elected to his county legislator seat and would be the first person of color to serve the 95th Assembly District. Smith, who is biracial, was raised in Peekskill in a union home.

"Like many of our neighbors, my parents worked hard to make ends meet and afford me the opportunities to get a quality education," he said. "When it comes down to it, Westchester and Putnam counties deserve a representative that is willing to roll up their sleeves and address real, everyday issues that directly impact our neighbors."

Smith said his service on the Board of Legislators has prepared him to tackle the challenges in Albany. During his time in office, he has helped to establish an office of police



Vanessa Agudelo

accountability, sponsored a bill to increase penalties for trespassing and verbal attacks on women at abortion clinics, helped keep community hospitals open during the height of COVID and worked with local officials to electrify the county bus system.

Agudelo made history in 2017, at the age of 25, as the youngest person ever to be elected to the Peekskill Common Council. She made her presence felt by sometimes clashing with her Democratic colleagues on local, regional and global policy issues.

A first-generation Colombian-American, Agudelo is the New York Immigration Coalition's Hudson Valley member engagement manager. She boasts some star

continued on next page

Abinanti, Shimsky Square Off in Intriguing Democratic Primary

continued from previous page

get our act together on these things.”

Abinanti said he and fellow state legislators have worked to control the high cost of living by eliminating taxes on gasoline, cutting taxes for the middle class, finding alternative resources for local governments to cut property taxes and allowing Westchester to increase its sales tax.

“We’ve got to decrease the cost of living for people at this very expensive time,” Abinanti said.

To combat flooding along the Saw Mill and Bronx rivers, likely made worse by climate change, Shimsky said the county government will need support at the state and federal levels on a consistent basis.

“Given the degree to which the problem is going to become more pervasive and severe, county government can’t do it alone,” Shimsky said. “We are going to need help from the larger levels of government.”

Abinanti stressed that he, along with the Environment Committee, has set targets to tackle climate change that are superior to anywhere in the country and are in the process of passing laws to make them a reality.

“I am the sponsor of the entire package set forth by the environmentalists to combat climate change,” Abinanti said.

Additionally, Abinanti said he is working on legislation to set up a state Department of Water. In 2020, Abinanti received an endorsement from the New York League of Conservation Voters.

Both Shimsky and Abinanti support the

\$4.2 billion Environmental Bond Act, which will be on the ballot in November.

Shimsky said she has dealt with many of the government agencies that will likely disperse bond funds, such as the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Department of Transportation (DOT).

Having that familiarity, she said, will better allow her to help communities get the resources they need to withstand the onslaught of future extreme weather events.

“The to-do list is a very long one,” Shimsky said. “If local governments are ready to move ahead on anything on that list (with Bond Act funds), I will be very happy to act as an advocate.”

Abinanti is optimistic the Bond Act will pass comfortably, and he is encouraging local governments to make sure the county’s plans for stormwater management take them into account.

Regarding the Saw Mill Parkway work, Shimsky expressed a level of disappointment in the interaction between the DOT and local communities. Shimsky said during previous projects such as the reconstruction of the Ashford Avenue Bridge and Ravensdale Bridge, DOT sought input from residents and took it into account.

Abinanti said the DOT hopes to re-channel the water in Pleasantville so that the parkway and the neighboring homes do not flood.

“They set up a catch basin and assured us this will hold back the water,” Abinanti said, explaining that the next step in the process is the Elmsford area.

“I brought together DOT and DEC with Elmsford and Greenburgh officials, and

they’re talking to each other about how to best deal with the flooding problem,” Abinanti said. “But all of this requires county supervision and county effort to engage in a plan directing toward improving the Saw Mill from top to bottom.”

While the state has committed to fully funding foundation aid, Shimsky said the 92nd Assembly District has an appreciable number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, as well as an increasing number of English language learners in Elmsford, Greenburgh and the Tarrytowns.

“We need to make sure they are getting all the resources they need,” Shimsky said. “We also need to make sure it’s not just about operating dollars but capital funding as well.”

Abinanti said he’s working with other members of the Westchester delegation to ensure the educational needs of all students are met, including people with disabilities.

“We’ve brought back record amounts of money for our suburban schools, and we’re going to continue to work,” Abinanti said.

Abinanti stressed that Westchester is in a unique circumstance being seen as the wealthiest community in the state.

“We are seen as people who do not need state aid, which could not be further from the truth,” Abinanti said. “Special education, schools, textbooks and transportation are far more expensive in Westchester than anywhere else in the state.”

“We’ve got to change the formulas to account for the high cost of living in Westchester,” he added.

Addressing the ongoing pandemic, Shimsky said it’s crucial that the state

ensures it has sufficient supplies on hand, including vaccines and boosters, anti-viral medicine, masks, tests and PPE in case hospitals get overwhelmed again.

“It’s going to be critical, especially with the federal government being out to lunch at this point,” Shimsky said. “We’re going to have to keep everything up. We may get less federal assistance, but we have to do it.”

Abinanti highlighted that he voted to continue pandemic aid, replenish funds for businesses badly affected by the pandemic and authorize and distribute vaccines.

“I’ve distributed 5,000 COVID tests, and I’ve used robocalls, e-mails and social media to promote vaccines, masking and testing,” Abinanti said.

Shimsky said she is known as someone who does her homework, works collaboratively and collegially and cares about her constituents.

“I don’t shrink away from contention, I know how to disagree agreeably and I’ve been able to get a lot done,” Shimsky added. “I would love the opportunity to take my act up to Albany.”

Abinanti underscored that he is running on his record and has demonstrated his ability to make the district a better place for people to live while in office.

“I’m making a difference on behalf of the people of the state of New York in our communities,” Abinanti said.

In 2020, Abinanti won by 2,000 votes in a surprisingly-competitive primary race against political newcomer Jennifer Williams before winning a sixth term in November without opposition.

Agudelo, Levenberg, Smith Ready for Democratic Assembly Primary

continued from previous page

power in her endorsements, having been backed publicly by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and progressive activist and “Sex and the City” star Cynthia Nixon. She has secured the Working Families line in the November election.

If elected, Agudelo would be the first Latina woman to serve the Hudson Valley in the state legislature.

“I’m the best candidate to face the challenges facing our district head on because I’m the one with a record not just of progressive policies, but years of bold progressive action,” Agudelo said. “I came into this work as an activist after years of watching our communities be exploited, endangered and polluted for the sake of profit, all the while working families like mine struggled to make ends meet.”

Agudelo said she fought against the militarization of police, demanded community benefits from developers and affordable housing and helped passed the city’s first tree ordinance.

An immigrants’ rights organizer, Agudelo said she helped write state policy and organize statewide campaigns to pass transformative legislation like the Green Light Drivers Licenses expansion, Protect Our Courts Act and NY Heroes Act. “Last year I led a successful statewide fight for the largest investment for excluded workers in the country, a historic \$2.1 billion investment to provide pandemic relief for those left out of the current unemployment safety net,” she

said.

As a city councilmember, Agudelo said she used every available tool to advocate for issues impacting communities at every level of government. That included testifying at state and federal hearings, convening lobbying meetings with state and federal officials, organizing protests and town halls with experts on a topic and those directly impacted.

“As leaders, we must leverage our power and platform to help move important legislation forward as well as rapidly respond with collective action when the time calls for it,” Agudelo said. “After years of organizing as part of a statewide movement working to build a safe future where all families can live with dignity and thrive, I believe our campaign is the best positioned to usher in the kind of change working families need in this urgent moment.”

She said her campaign is also part of a larger effort to take back Albany and ensure government functions for the benefit of the people, not wealthy corporate interests. “Not only has our campaign been endorsed by eight progressive state senators and Assembly members ready to work with us on Day One, but our campaign is also rejecting donations from real estate developers, fossil fuel executives and corporate PACs in order to remain accountable to the working people,” Agudelo added.

Each candidate was asked what they considered the top issues facing the 95th Assembly District.

Levenberg: “Everything I do is part of my mission to build healthy communities in every sense of the word – environmentally, economically, mentally and physically, all through the lens of equity. I list the environment first for a reason. Because the 95th is largely composed of river towns, combating climate change and promoting environmental resiliency must be a top priority for our next representative.

“And it is not enough for that representative to be able to describe the problem; they also need to be able to work productively with other legislators to get things done. I am best positioned to deliver results in this regard. Economic recovery, affordable housing and healthcare are also critical issues that need to be addressed. For all of these things, and more, we need a legislator who will be effective on day one.”

Smith: “I’m running for Assembly to bring my progressive values and results-driven approach to Albany. I’ll work with my colleagues to provide necessary funding and broadband access to our schools, fight for high-quality healthcare for all New Yorkers and generate sustainable jobs to help our workers and environment.

All of these issues have an important thread that ties them together: they are focused on preparing New Yorkers for our future. In a polarized nation amongst an increasingly competitive global economy, we owe it to our children to give them the best possible foundation. For me, that means a high-quality education, access to doctors and

medical facilities, a planet they can live and thrive on.”

Agudelo: “Our district, and the entire Hudson Valley, is facing the brunt of many overlapping crises: increasingly unaffordable housing and gentrification pushing working families out of their neighborhoods; the reckless greed of dirty energy companies threatening our climate, drinking water and beautiful natural landscape; and the need to overhaul a broken healthcare system whose injustices and inefficiencies have been illuminated for us all during the COVID-19 pandemic.

None of these crises are put into context, though, without recognizing the conditions that enable the growing gap of income inequality in one of the richest states in America. Whether you are a renter or a homeowner, the costs of living are becoming impossible to manage. While people making hundreds of millions or billions of dollars get away with paying very little in taxes every year, the middle and lower-income class are being forced to carry the brunt of running society. The wrong people are being taxed and to change this we need bold leaders in Albany who are not beholden to corporate interests, and that will fight to center the needs of the people and our climate.

We must reform our outdated tax system, close unfair tax loopholes and make the ultra-wealthy pay their fair share to ensure the prosperity in our state is shared by all.”

Examiner Green Machine Delivers Third Mt. Kisco Baseball League Title

The Examiner green machine delivered the franchise's third Mount Kisco Little League baseball championship with Saturday's 7-5 win over M&R Deli.

Coach Josh Elder commended his team, saying the squad's performance Saturday was its best of the 2022 spring season.

"Today was a great day for Mount Kisco Baseball," Elder said. "M&R is a very talented team and played extremely well. We played our most complete game today and it speaks to how hard our players worked during the season and just kept improving with each game. Today was a culmination of their effort and dedication to getting better – as coaches it was great to see a true team effort."

Pitcher Jack Frisbie dominated on the mound, delivering with late-game poise in the fourth, fifth and sixth innings. He also scored a run in the top of the sixth to give The Examiner an insurance run.

Emry Wetzel also provided solid starting pitching while performing well at the plate with two RBI.

Hailey Martinez wowed the crowd at the finish with a game-ending play at second base to secure the win.

Elder praised Brayden Lopez and Tyler Mann, saying the duo "combined to catch a great game for our pitchers."

The Examiner-sponsored green team in Mount Kisco Little League Baseball's eight- and nine-year-old Minor League division also triumphed in 2020, winning the organization's second title at the time.

Green's first championship came in its magical 2016 campaign, with an undefeated 14-0 record.

After Examiner beat M&R Deli for the "AAA" championship on Saturday, Cassidy-Flynn Funeral Home beat Shapiro Gettinger Waldinger & Monteleone, LLP later that afternoon in a nail-biting 2-1 triumph for the "Little League" championship.



ART NELSON PHOTO

Examiner green won the Mount Kisco Little League championship hardware last Saturday. Pictured are Examiner players Zach Elder, Tyler Mann, Brendan Sullivan, Emry Wetzel, Carter Fuentes, Kwesi Chambers, Jack Frisbie, Hailey Martinez, Oliver Patino, Brayden Lopez and Griffen Cino along with coaches Josh Elder, Brian Sullivan and Dave Mann.

Hudson River Chain Topic of Van Cortlandtville Historical Society Talk

The background story of the iron chain in the Hudson River that thwarted the British and saved the colonies will be the topic of an historical program this Saturday, June 18 at 2 p.m. at the Little Red Schoolhouse in Cortland Manor.

The program, which is sponsored by the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society, is free and open to the public.

Doc Bayne, an environmental educator and historian, will present an eye-opening PowerPoint picture program – Forged for Freedom: The Chain That Saved the Colonies. He will tell the intriguing story of how he discovered the forge that made the "Great Chain" in Sterling Forest – and how it was almost lost in history.

He will also relate the history of the iron industry that started there in 1736, the story of Peter Townsend who manufactured The Chain for the Continental Army and

how it was designed to stop the British invasion of the New England colonies during the Revolution. Bayne will also talk about why it was placed across the Hudson River at West Point.

This will be a return appearance for Bayne to the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society. He was a guest speaker seven years ago with his program The History & Mystery of Iona Island.

A retired New York State park ranger, he is president of the Friends of Sterling Forest State Park, where he has been an environmental educator and historian for many years. Through his many lectures on the environment and ecosystems of the region, he has exhibited his vast hands-on experiences and historical knowledge of the woodlands and wildlife of the Hudson River Valley with a focus on the Native American inhabitants and the era of the

American Revolution.

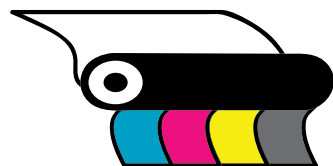
One of his concentrations of expertise is the iron history of New York State. He has been acclaimed for his program: How Iron Ore is Made: The Forging of Iron in the Hudson River Valley during the American Revolution. When he was awarded the New York State Archaeological Association Meritorious Service Award in 2014, he was referred to as a "walking encyclopedia" of archaeology finds and recognized as a "passionate researcher and educator who has the ability to feel the history of the land and transmit it to the people."

The Little Red Schoolhouse is located at 297 Locust Ave., at the north end of the street next to Historic Old Saint Peter's Church and Cemetery on the hill just south of Oregon Road in Cortlandt. Off-street parking is available atop the schoolhouse driveway or below in the cemetery parking lot. Masks are encouraged and seating may be limited.

For more information, call 1-914-736-7868 or visit www.vancort.net.



Historian Doc Bayne will be presenting a program at the Van Cortlandtville Historical Society this Saturday on the iron chain that helped stop the British forces in the Hudson River during the American Revolution.



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Remembering Those We've Lost on Hummingbird Wings

By Brian Kluepfel

When I moved to Northern California in 1990, everything was shiny and new. A year later, in a new apartment, I asked the landlord if I could turn the unused cement bed next to our driveway into a garden. He said yes, and I was off to the races.

I filled it with drought-resistant plants that would accommodate Berkeley's semi-arid climate: two kinds of lavender (English and French!) and lobelias. A cute landscape gardener/neighbor with long blonde hair and a drinking problem helped me choose the plant life and we gave them cute names like Lanny Lantana (a yellow and red flowering shrub) and Lolly Lobelia.

One early Sunday morning when I was watering the garden, a hummingbird flew right into the spray, creating a naturally radiant waterfall. Man, for a boy from the suburbs of New York, that was really freaking far out. A miracle in the days when it was easy to believe in them.

Eventually my idea of drought-tolerant turned into benign neglect, and the garden faltered. A man named Mark, a friend of the landlord's family, moved in and gave it more water. But Mark had AIDS and died a year or two later.

Enter George Luna.

Luna was a former jockey who still trained racehorses at Golden Gate Fields

race track and he ran a tack shop (all the leather goods horses require, like saddles, etc.) next door to us. When Mark died, George moved in, and among his myriad of dawn-to-dusk activities was bringing that garden to life. Boy, did he ever.

George and I became friends and shared many a conversation over his driveway barbecues. He was a worldly man who loved to learn and was always talking about new ideas or trips, including sailing boats up and down the California coastline and as far as Hawaii. He was the renaissance man, and though of small stature, in constant motion. Like a hummingbird.

Two weeks ago, I got the news – as one often does these days, via email – of George's sudden passing. He died of food poisoning in his native Mexico. I broke down and cried on my chair while reading the e-mail. I had been in frequent contact with him over the past year, reading his semiautobiographical stories of a jockey on the B-level tracks in Canada and the western U.S. Like George, the stories were funny, no-holds-barred honest and touching. Hearing that he died was like a punch to the solar plexus; it took me an hour to get myself together.

We had been planting a proximation of a garden out on our porch in New York because we don't have a formal yard, so it's planter boxes for us. We also went to



STEVE RAPPAPORT PHOTO

The ruby-throated hummingbird.

family that one's soul becomes a bird when we give up our human bodies. It's as valid a credo as any. My niece Elizabeth, we're certain, lives on in the American robin, so we all salute these birds whenever we see them. My mom June chose a stately female cardinal to inhabit in her next life. They are classy, beautiful creatures, as was my mother.

So I'm certain that the ruby-throated hummingbird, which passed through our porch/garden was George, saying hello in his high-speed, energetic way, and letting me know he was OK. I know it like I know my own soul.

Gracias, amigo, que te vaya bien.

I put a sign on the garden yesterday that said "George Luna Garden," with images of the Mexican and U.S. flags and a silhouette of a jockey. I'm sure George doesn't need the sign to find his way back, but it makes me feel better.

Note: You can plant a hummingbird and butterfly-friendly garden, too. For more information, visit <https://www.audubon.org/news/10-plants-bird-friendly-yard>.

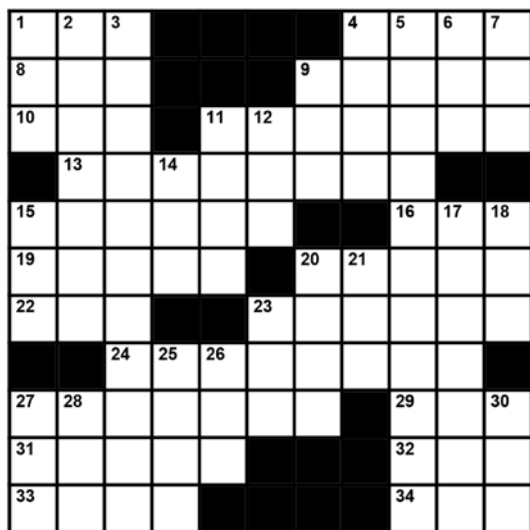
Ossining resident Brian Kluepfel is a member of Saw Mill River Audubon and encourages you to support their activities (see ad below). He also writes for the Lonely Planet travel series, Westchester Magazine, and Birdwatching Daily. His next venture will be to St. John's, Newfoundland.

For The Birds

Crossword

Across

1. Flight challenged bird
4. People in charge, abbr.
8. Potter pal Weasley
9. All Black rugby player
10. Vienna's land, abbr.
11. Soft leather
13. This Putnam lumber yard will set you on the right "track", Mahopac _____ Tie
15. Overtures
16. "Delicious!"
19. Thomas Jefferson, religiously
20. 007 actor, Daniel
22. Surgery sites, for short
23. Concert pianos
24. This restaurant is a "fountain" of good food in Katonah, Le _____
27. "Stop procrastinating!" - 3 words
29. "... silk purse out of a sow's ____"
31. Aegean vacation locale
32. Q followers
33. Venetian island
34. Canonized mlle. Down
1. Chapter in history
2. Griever
3. Not content
4. Famous literary bear
5. Polite behavior
6. Hosp. picture, abbr.
7. "'Taint" comeback



9. Infamous Chinese politico
11. Congeal, as blood
12. Store posting (abbr.)
14. Form 1040 org.
15. Altar avowal, 2 words
17. Palestine's locale
18. Classic sports cars
20. Stick in one's _____
21. International Bollywood star (last name)
23. Hot car
25. _____ Klemperer
26. Compass direction
27. Roman 650
28. Tolkien dwarf
30. U.S. 101, e.g., abbr.

Answers on page 26

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continued on page 24



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Enjoying More at Caramoor

Caramoor President and CEO Ed Lewis discusses the venerable music venue's return to normal post-COVID and previews this summer's season of performances.



By Abby Luby

You are reading this week's print excerpt of an article from our Examiner+ newsmagazine-style email newsletter. To read the entire article and others like it, subscribe at www.examiner-plus.com to receive all of our bonus content.

When Ed Lewis became Caramoor President and CEO just one year ago, he had always admired the cultural mecca at the verdant, old estate as a venue for a wide variety of live music performances. Lewis' background and the mission of Caramoor are a perfect fit. As a professionally trained musician, he moved seamlessly between the world of music and the performing arts fundraising arena. For more than two decades, Lewis worked in nonprofit

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CARAMOOR

Caramoor President and CEO Ed Lewis

management and fundraising in Washington, D.C. Before that, as Vice Chancellor for Advancement at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, he created a multi-award-winning fundraising program supporting new, innovative programs, student scholarships, faculty endowments, facilities improvements, and community engagement. From 2015 to 2021, Lewis grew the school's foundation from \$35 million to over \$70 million. As Senior Director of Development at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center at the University of Maryland, Lewis headed up a campaign for all performing arts on campus, raising over \$42 million as part of the University of Maryland's first \$1 billion comprehensive campaign.

Lewis' in-depth knowledge and love for music and the arts feed his belief that all performing art forms are a positive societal need. He trained as a violist, holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Northwestern University, a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan, and completed a Doctoral Program at the University of Maryland School of Music, where he studied chamber music with the infamous Guarneri String Quartet. An accomplished and professional musician, Lewis performed with the Dallas Opera Orchestra, the Dallas Chamber Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica, the Toledo Symphony, Spoleto Festival Orchestra, and Aspen Chamber Symphony, among other known ensembles.

We spoke to Lewis recently, right after Caramoor's new season was first rolled out.

He shared his views on the importance of live music performance, especially for youngsters, and his ideas on keeping Caramoor sustainable.

Examiner Media:
When was the first time you visited Caramoor?

Ed Lewis: Actually, the

first time I was at Caramoor was when I was interviewed in February 2021. But I remember listening to the live radio broadcasts from Caramoor in the 1990s and was always intrigued by the name and by their high-caliber performances. When I came to Caramoor to be interviewed, it was winter. Although everything was covered in snow, I could see how incredibly beautiful it was. It's especially wonderful to have art and history all in one place.

E+: You mentioned that you play the viola and have higher education degrees in music. How did music shape your youth?

Lewis: Music was and is an important part of my life. I grew up in a family that listened to all genres ...

To read the rest of this article, and others like it, subscribe at www.examiner-plus.com. We hope you've enjoyed this week's excerpt from our Examiner+ newsmagazine-style email newsletter. We love honest feedback. Tell us what you think: examinerplus@theexaminernews.com



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continued from page 22
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Clearwater Festival on Pause as Organization Reimagines Event's Future

By Em Stangarone

For over half a century, folks have gathered to sing, dance and raise awareness about protecting the Hudson River at the Clearwater Festival.

Historically held on Father's Day weekend at Croton Point Park, the Great Hudson River Revival is on pause as Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Inc.'s board voted against holding the event this year.

Organization representatives explained that it didn't have the funds required to plan and carry out a 2022 festival, citing various risks, including COVID-19 precautions, as important considerations. The festival was held virtually in 2020 and 2021, but due to decreasing participation in online events at this stage in the pandemic, the virtual format was scrapped for this year.

The organization has, however, approved and released a dedicated plan, rooted in financial sustainability, that calls for the re-envisioning of the festival's future. The Strategic Plan was devised after it received a \$10,000 grant in 2020 from the Hudson River Foundation, a group that relies on science-based approaches to protect the river, which allowed Clearwater to collect feedback, evaluate challenges and develop an internal assessment to create the Strategic Plan.

"Public access to and engagement with our shared waterways is hugely important," said Hudson River Foundation Communications Manager Sara Harrison. "It's a really important way to get people invested in caring for shared resources and connecting to the land and the places they live."

In accordance with the Strategic Plan, a subcommittee of board members and community members has been formed and is in the early stages of reimagining the festival as well as other music-based community events in the future. The organization looks forward to sharing its plans for future festivals as those are developed.

The Clearwater Festival started as a "folk picnic" in the 1960s by Pete and Toshi Seeger and their friends in response to the longtime pollution of the Hudson River that left its ecosystem devastated. In 1978, the event found its permanent home in Croton Point Park, where it would grow to become one of the oldest and largest annual environmental celebrations in the country, featuring activists, musicians, storytellers and artists.

Money raised by the revival helps



After holding a virtual festival the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, representatives of the organization that has held the Clearwater Festival for more than 50 years canceled it for this year to retool the festival for the future.

Clearwater continue its research, education and activism with the goal of protecting the

Hudson River and the communities that call it home.

Chappaqua Children's Book Festival Back in Full Swing This Fall

By Nora Lowe

This year, the largest annual children's book festival in the tristate region is expected to be "bigger and better than ever," according to its founder and Executive Director Dawn Greenberg.

On Saturday, Oct. 15, the ninth annual Chappaqua Children's Book Festival will return to full strength with about 160 authors and as many as 8,000 visitors expected. The event, scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Chappaqua train station parking lot, has garnered such high involvement due to the "incredible word of mouth in the author community," Greenberg said.

This year's theme will be "A Walk Through the Woods," and the day will include author readings, special presentations, illustrator demos, book sales and signings. There will also be food trucks on hand.

The festival has grown considerably since its debut in 2013. COVID-19 is likely to continue being a factor but organizers are seeking to make everyone who attends as comfortable as possible, Greenberg said.

In 2020, the festival was canceled

because of the pandemic. Last year, it returned but with about half the number of authors. The festival was moved from the grounds of the nearby Robert E. Bell Middle School to a portion of the train station parking lot which enabled the authors and visitors to be sufficiently spaced.

"We expect our authors and volunteers to be fully vaccinated and masked," Greenberg said. "We ask the general public to be masked when interacting with our authors and to be respectful of allowing space when in lines."

Acclaimed authors scheduled to be in attendance will include Dan Gutman, (creator of "The Genius Files" series and the graphic novel "My Weird School"); Mike Curato, (author of graphic novel "Flamer"); Torrey Maldonado ("What Lane?"); Chris Barton (author of nonfiction picture book "Dazzle Ships"); Christina Gonzalez ("The Red Umbrella"); Lisa Fipps ("Starfish"); and author and illustrator Hudson Talbott ("A Walk in the Words.")

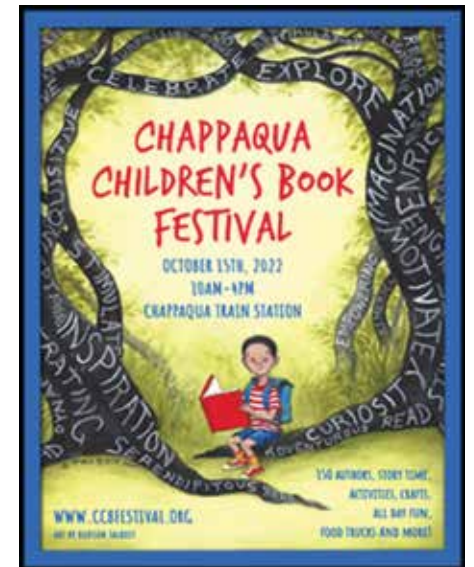
A percentage of the proceeds will be donated to literacy programs throughout Westchester and the metropolitan New

"The Clearwater Revival Festival has been a cherished event in the Hudson Valley for generations," said Tracy Brown, president of Riverkeeper, an environmental organization that works alongside Clearwater to protect the Hudson. "It's a wonderful opportunity to bring people to the river and inspire deeper and lasting connections to its beauty and to our role as its stewards."

"The Great Hudson River Revivals of the last decade looked very different from those held in the 1970s, and it is time to reimagine music and celebration in a post-COVID world," Hudson River Sloop Clearwater's Executive Director David Toman said.

While the particulars of the festival may shift and evolve, the musical heart beating at Clearwater's core will remain, with song incorporated into every one of the organization's programs, meetings and events.

"Music and the power of song have always been one of the ways that Clearwater connects communities to the Hudson River and inspires all of us to protect and preserve this vital natural resource," Toman said. "That is not going to change."



York area. Admission and parking are free, and the event will be held rain or shine.

For more information on the Chappaqua Children's Book Festival as the event draws closer, visit www.ccbfestival.org.



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RICK PEZZULLO PHOTOS



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		13	R	A	I	L	R	O	A	D							
15	I	N	T	R	O	S					16	M	M	M			
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22	O	R	S					23	G	R	A	N	D	S			
				24	F	O	N	T	A	I	N	E					
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Wines Direct to Your Dinner Table in a Flash? If You Choose



By Nick Antonaccio

More wines, from more wineries, from more regions have been introduced into the market in the last five years – and for the most part, they're all palatable.

Until recently, most of these wines were marketed through three traditional channels: wineries sold to, wholesalers (distributors or importers) who in turn were the exclusive source for and retail wine shops.

With the acceptance of the internet as a basic means for many individuals to communicate, socialize and shop, this rigid and government mandated and regulated three-tier distribution system is being challenged at every level. The sale of wine directly to consumers is beginning to proliferate as never before. Pressure on traditional brick-and-mortar neighborhood wine shops has never been greater.

This internet-based pressure comes in many shapes and sizes. I've categorized these new business models into four categories.

1. Wine clubs have been around as snail mail offerings for decades; internet subscriptions have grown geometrically in the last five years (e.g.,

Wall Street Journal Wine Club).

2. Small- to medium-sized wineries are embracing the internet as a means to better reach out to consumers and sell their wines directly to their e-mail lists of present and future loyal customers. Choose your own adventure when considering these wineries.

3. Traditional online retail websites have had a difficult time sorting out the vast regulations mandated by the three-tier system, but most have survived. A number of web-based sites have attempted to intrude on this space, including the dominant player in all things consumer-related – Amazon – but none have been able to master (circumvent) this system. Score one for old-school product distribution.

4. A number of retailers and marketers have created "flash sales" sites, appealing to consumers focused on The Deal, above all. These sites' business model is to a) send periodic emails to customers while b) offering small quantities of wine c) at steep discounts and d) for a limited time – a perpetual Black Friday from the convenience of your computer or mobile device.

Let's focus here. Flash sales sites are based on two models: brick-and-mortar retail wine shops that have created alternative, web-based sales channels to

offer their existing inventory at discounted prices and marketers without traditional



retail licenses that have created websites that serve as a conduit for producers and distributors to sell their wines.

Using technology, both have revolutionized the way wines are being sold. Most significantly, they are skirting the draconian three-tier distribution system by marketing directly to consumers. And the impact of these sites has been growing at compound rates.

A typical sales pitch: We have secured a very limited supply of Three Tier Buster, a 90-point-rated red wine blend available exclusively to e-mail subscribers for the next 24 hours or until sold out. Retail price: \$50. Lowest published price: \$39.99. Act now for \$23.99, a 48 percent discount; minimum purchase is three bottles (free shipping on four bottles).

How does this appeal to those in the food chain?

1. Consumers: It's the thrill of The Deal, an opportunity to purchase "highly rated wine" at a steep discount that retail shops rarely offer.

2. Producers and distributors: Flash

sales sites provide an opportunity to sell wine through a new channel while building their mailing list. The wines may be current popular offerings, excess inventory or previous vintage leftovers.

3. Retailers: A new competitor and a threat to in-store sales. However, several have joined the enemy. Virtual stores have popped up to supplement their brick-and-mortar footprint. In our area, www.RyeBrookWines.com is very popular.

Several current popular sites are worth visiting: www.WinesTillSoldOut.com (backed by a brick-and-mortar retailer), with wines sourced by Westchester importer Serge Doré Selections, among other importers; www.ReverseWineSnob.com (Internet marketer only); www.LastBottleWines.com (BMR); www.WineShopper.com (BMR); www.SommSelect.com (IMO); and www.WineAccess.com (IMO). One of the quirkiest sites is www.Garagiste.com (IMO). Check out its eclectic marketing approach.

Will flash sites become a flash-in-the-pan industry, an of-the-moment novelty that is here today and gone tomorrow? Or will they survive simply because consumers are always chasing a "great deal"?

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

You Heard It Through the Grapevine

How We Can All Live a Meaningful Life Without Going to the Gym

"There is something infantile in the presumption that somebody else has a responsibility to give your life meaning and point? The truly adult view, by contrast, is that our life is as meaningful, as full and as wonderful as we choose to make it."

Richard Dawkins

Spring is a season of rebirth. Suddenly, after a dismal winter, we find trees and flowers in bloom. The days are longer and filled with a refreshing and scented breeze.

This is a well-needed respite from navigating two years of COVID that has taken its toll on us physically and mentally.

Spring is also the time when we become more conscious of those additional ounces of weight we put on over the long winter, where we find ourselves back at the gym to work those "ounces" and inches away. And we can buy all those miracle creams to wash away our wrinkles of time, not to mention the pills and gadgets claiming to make us look and feel younger.

We often forget that our birth certificate doesn't lie. All we need to do is look ourselves in the mirror to stare at our grimace as we have the epiphany that we have a bad case of the *butwhatifits*, the uneasy feeling of realizing that maybe despite all our effort and work we might have actually had it all wrong.

Basically, the whole thing you built your whole life around is stacked on a faulty

premise. It's that queasy feeling that you will never get your life project right.

We all know that exercise is good for us and should be a part of our weekly routine. We should spend an equal amount of time working on our interior self – the existential treadmill – to ask ourself if we are living our life solely to achieve validation from our friends and peers at the expense of our interior self-happiness?

Children do not have a monopoly on peer pressure. Are we equally narcissistic inside and out? Do we find our happiness in the eyes of others and following the herd while failing to grow into the best person we can be?

The ancient stoics believed when we stop growing, we start dying, making us more vulnerable to the swings of fate. Some existentialists believe we should love our fate – Amor fati! – though we at times need to make the right choices to impact our fate, to some degree, for the better.

"Man cannot endure his own littleness unless he can translate it into meaningfulness on the largest possible level."

Ernest Becker

Our jobs and professions are central to maintain our sustenance, and often times a sign of where we stand in the hierarchy of life. This may satisfy our physical needs and external character, though it often fails

to appease our interior mental health.

Many of us have found ourselves in good paying professional jobs with benefits and bonuses, though over time we find ourselves becoming jaded, cynical and bored with our jobs, placing our internal self to living in a xeric state of regrets as we age. Basically, finding ourselves with a terminal case of

For some, author included, many respect their job while viewing it more as a side hustle rather than the center of our life. Yes, life exists beyond our cramped cubicles that seem to mock our credentials and knowledge. Our philosophies of life should not be regulated to scraps of time between our job and other obligations.

We all know people who have prepared themselves financially for their retirements while neglecting to plan for it mentally, never spending much time on the existential treadmill to plan for their next project. They become angry and alienated in retirement by believing they no longer have a purpose in life.

I was first introduced to existentialism by reading the works of Soren Kierkegaard



By Richard Cirulli

while taking the train into the city in my 20s. That influenced me to look at my profession as a side gig in life. Since that time, I have spent much time on the existential treadmill to forecast my life project. I became a professional student, spending much time with my young family at the time while also planning for retirement financially and making the plans to live out my senior years as an artist, author

and playwright. Now I live a rewarding life free of the constraints of a job with snarly bosses, making new and interesting friends in my long-planned new career.

I'm indebted to Kierkegaard who set me upon the existential treadmill that offered me a prescription that would afford me a life that is as meaningful, as full and as wonderful as I choose to make it. And, to boot, I don't have to get sweaty at a gym.

Be well. Be safe. Be happy. Be nice. Amor fati!

Dr. Richard Cirulli is a published author, playwright and retired professor. His body of works can be viewed at www.demitasseplayers.com. He looks forward to your comments and can be reached at profcirulli@optonline.net.

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