Mount Pleasant Voters to Decide $9M Fields Bond

By Martin Wilbur

Mount Pleasant School District voters will decide on Tuesday, Mar. 31 whether to appropriate just over $9 million toward improving the outdoor athletic facilities at the Westlake High School and middle school campus.

The Board of Education last Wednesday voted 5-0 to schedule the referendum one year after a special forum was held to first discuss publicly desperately needed improvements to the fields.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kurtis Kotes said administrators and trustees wanted to make sure that if the district asked the community for its support officials would have to offer a manageable proposal. The $9,085,366 bond would cost a taxpayer with a home value at the district average of about $854,000 an additional $106 a year for the 16-year bond.

“We believe that this is something that would improve our facilities, improve access for our students, and believe that this is a quality presentation to put before the public for their consideration,” Kotes said.

A key piece of the bond, accounting for more than $3.3 million of the cost, would be major improvements at the main multipurpose field on the campus.

FAA, County Airport Reps Address Airplane Noise With Public

By Martin Wilbur

Area residents impacted by what they argue is escalating noise from aircraft flying into and out of Westchester County Airport had a chance last week to address questions and concerns to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and airport officials.

Several hundred residents packed the New Castle Community Center in Chappaqua last Wednesday evening to speak directly to more than a dozen airport and FAA representatives. The two-hour forum allowed the public to visit a series of stations each manned by an aviation expert rather than hear a conventional presentation followed by questions from the audience.

FAA Regional Director Jennifer Solomon said the goal for last week’s event was to help the public understand the air space near where they live and the many variables that go into the decisions made by the agency and air traffic controllers to make sure that the skies around the airport are safe.

“We work with communities to figure out continued on page 2

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Mount Kisco to Get $360K Break on Firehouse Expansion, Renovation Fees

By Ed Perratore

The architectural and engineering firm retained to renovate and expand Mount Kisco’s three firehouses will make up for last year’s miscalculated estimates which required village officials to ask taxpayers for an additional $4 million bond referendum last November.

But the Village Board isn’t in complete agreement that H2M architects + engineers has done enough to restore trust.

Voters approved an initial bond in November 2017 for $10.25 million for extensive work, including enlarging the bays, bringing the three facilities up to code and complying with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), making the structures energy efficient and adding office space and training areas.

But H2M told the board last February that it had grossly miscalculated the square footage. Between the error and cost escalations, the original scope of work would have cost $18.25 million.

After consulting with Mount Kisco’s fire companies and commissioners, village officials subsequently scaled back the project continued on page 4
Mt. Pleasant Voters to Decide $9M Fields Bond

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Artificial turf would be installed along with a resurfaced running track, which has come to the end of its useful life, said Erik Boe, director of civil engineering at LAN Associates.

The full track resurface would cost $541,000 while infill at the ends of the field to accommodate some of the other track and field events would run about $744,000, he said.

Field C, the upper field, would have similar work done, which would cost about $947,443.

Field B, referred to in the district as “the patch,” would be expanded to regulation dimensions for soccer, football and lacrosse, have fresh sod and irrigation installed as well as a scoreboard. That would cost an estimated $941,871.

Field D, used for softball, would have irrigation and a full drainage system installed along with improvements to the grass field for about $121,000.

Additional work would be lights for night games, a new press box at the back of the bleachers and a new scoreboard.

Field E, also used for softball and some baseball, and Field F which the varsity baseball team uses, would have drainage system and irrigation installed, plus bullpens, dugouts, new bleachers and an area for track and field events such as discuss and shot put, which could damage an artificial surface, Boe said. That work is projected to cost $947,443.

Paul Touzzi, president of Arris Contracting Co., said if the proposition is approved by voters, the district would then need state Education Department approval. The tentative timeline would be to start work in spring 2021 and complete work at all fields by the end of summer 2022.

Voting on the proposition will be held at the Westlake High School gymnasium on Mar. 31 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

FAA, County Airport Reps Address Airplane Noise With Public

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Michael Wold, manager of Westchester County Airport’s traffic control tower, said one of the biggest changes over the past several years is the increase of the use of Runway 16 for landings. Runway 16’s approach to the airport is from the north and flies over a portion of Chappaqua and Pleasantville, he said.

It is typically used when the winds shift from a southeasterly direction, he said. In recent years in the summer that happens most afternoons, Wold said.

During the five-year period from 2013 to 2018, he estimated a 17 percent increase in the use of Runway 16.

“The aircraft are getting quieter every year, they’re flying at the same altitude they always have, they’re not any lower or faster and there’s a sharply greater traffic flow to the southeast,” Wold said. “The prevailing wind direction in the afternoon has been out of the southeast day after almost every day in the summer.”

While a first report from consultant HMMH, retained by the county last year to study issues connected with the airport, cited a decline in overall airport operations, Chappaqua resident Gina Maccoby is one of many local residents who have said that hasn’t translated into quieter conditions.

Living in the same residence at Chappaqua Ridge for the last 28 years, she has noticed a change for the worse the past few years, she said.

The noise is particularly problematic in the warm weather months, when Maccoby said she is outside much more frequently or has her windows open. She called on decision-makers responsible for the flight patterns to spread the concentration of noise to other locations.

“There must be days when it’s pretty still, and on those days, flights should be shifted to a different path or to a different runway,” Maccoby said. “I don’t know but we can’t all bear the brunt of it.”

Conversely, another local resident who attended the open house, Anthony Szuozzi of Mount Pleasant, said he hears the plane traffic overhead but he’s much more disturbed by other noise, most notably neighbors’ use of leaf blowers.

New Castle Councilman Jeremy Saland, who attended the forum, said one unknown is how much the FAA and the airport factor in noise and air pollution as opposed to concerns regarding safety. He also mentioned he didn’t see solutions offered last week to having a more equitable distribution of air traffic in the area.

Saland, who was grateful that the county scheduled the meeting, said it served as a valuable educational tool for some attendees but frustrated others unable to get adequate answers to questions.

A county spokesperson said there will be follow-up in the near future to determine what the next steps will be in addressing the issue.

The Most Common Sexually Transmitted Disease: HPV

What you need to know about keeping yourself and your children safe

Q: What is the human papilloma virus (HPV)?
A: HPV is a sexually transmitted virus. There are approximately 150 strains of the virus and nearly 40 affect the genital area. Most HPV infections are asymptomatic, which means that you may never know you were exposed. The majority of HPV strains do not cause any issues and will eventually go away on their own. Some strains, however, can cause genital warts, cervical cancer, anal cancer and other cancers, including head and neck cancers.

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Q: Who is at risk?
A: Studies have shown that almost everyone gets exposed to HPV at some point in their lives. Some studies have shown that up to 96% of college-aged men and women have been exposed to HPV. If you’re dating someone and they say they’ve been “tested,” please know that men cannot be tested for HPV. The virus hides from our immune systems, so it will not show up on a blood test. Women can be tested for HPV by getting a pap smear, but there’s no test for men.

Q: What’s the best defense against HPV?
A: Condoms are the best defense against HPV, but even with condom use, the virus can still be transmitted to others. There is no cure for HPV, only prevention.

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Eisen Relishes Chance to Take on Democrat, Succeed Lowey

By Martin Wilbur

Don’t tell Josh Eisen that he doesn’t have a chance to capture the 17th Congressional District seat this fall and succeed 16-term incumbent Nita Lowey.

Eisen, 48, a Harrison Republican, said he was prepared to take on Lowey even if she hadn’t announced her retirement in October because no one from the GOP challenged her in 2016 and 2018 and also because of his concern that Democrats have veered too far to the left.

It’s a sentiment he believes many Democratic voters hold in Westchester and Rockland, and Eisen is banking on winning some of their support in November, against whomever his Democratic opponent may be.

“They are Democrats who believe in the good old-fashioned ideal of dignity and labor, that if one works, they should not have to go to the government for a handout,” Eisen said. “They believe in choice in healthcare; they do not believe in Medicare for all. Many of them are union people who come from union backgrounds and no union person wants Medicare for all.

I just think that the left wing of the Democratic Party betrayed a lot of those people who are registered as Democrats and I don’t think there’s a better example of that than the ones who live in Westchester and Rockland.”

Eisen, a businessman who has operated his own companies mainly in the background checks and language services fields, said he is also looking to improve the lives of all residents in the district.

One way to do that is to maintain private health insurance. He argued that as a business owner he has seen those expenses skyrocket since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, mainly because insurance companies don’t like uncertainty.

Eisen argued that the private sector and the government should incentivize citizens who make healthy, responsible choices, such as eating well and exercising regularly.

“We need to focus on good living, healthy living and we need a nation of citizens who are in good health and take care of themselves, and it’s in the national interests to incentivize that living, especially for left-wingers who want to talk about Medicare for all,” said Eisen, who grew up in Queens, graduated from Queens College and has an MBA and a doctorate in religion from Columbia University.

Having been in the background checks business, Eisen is a proponent of universal checks for gun ownership. He said the process is archaic in many areas of the country and the proper use of technology could exponentially speed up that waiting period.

However, Eisen strenuously opposes attempts to takes guns away from law-abiding citizens. He said individual states have the latitude to make laws as their residents see fit, but as a child of Holocaust survivors, that is one of the first steps toward the loss of liberty.

“If people on the left don’t like the Second Amendment, they can try to put together a constitutional convention and we can open up all the amendments,” he said.

On immigration, Eisen said he believes that law-abiding people who have been in the United States for years and whose children and even grandchildren are citizens should be allowed to stay and no longer live in the shadows. The same is true for the roughly 700,000 DACA recipients in the United States.

“A certain number of people just need to be legitimized because that’s the best, pragmatic thing to do and they’re paying taxes, they’re in the system, so it’s much better to go that step,” Eisen said.

He also believes that the law should be changed to allow those seeking asylum to do so on economic grounds since so many refugees flee impoverished nations.

Eisen called limiting the state and local income tax in the 2017 tax bill “a money grab” on the part of states that take more federal dollars, He said he would fight to at least raise the threshold. Eisen also said the government should operate on a balanced budget rather than continuing deficit spending.

Eisen, who is currently the only officially declared Republican to be running in the race, criticized the impeachment process, blaming the Democrats for pressing forward with no bipartisan support. For his part, he called the Clinton impeachment in the late 1990s equally poor.

He declined to answer which Democrats he might like to oppose in November, preferring to focus on the task in front of him.

“I’m going to have to earn it,” Eisen said. “I’m going to put myself in the best position.”

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Mount Kisco to Get $360K Break on Firehouse Expansion, Renovation Fees —

continued from page 1

back by eliminating the offices and training space, but keeping everything that affected firefighter safety. That move lowered the estimate to $14.25 million, and taxpayers would have to scale back even further before we go out to bid.”

However, not every trustee was satisfied. “Aside from whatever cost benefit that is provided in this amendment,” said Trustee Karen Schleimer, “there are a lot of other issues that we may want to revisit in light of (H2M’s) poor performance the first time around, so that we don’t find ourselves, should there be a problem going forward, in the same soup that we were in before.”

“These are real big numbers and a major project for us,” Schleimer added. “We should take the time to make them better; and I think we owe our constituents the diligence to make that happen.”

One of her concerns is that if Mount Kisco cut its ties to H2M, the architectural drawings would belong to the architect, not the village.

Trustee Peter Grunthal disagreed, pointing out that despite H2M’s blunder, the fire department itself is urging the board to continue the relationship and stick with the planned design.

“If we were to go ahead, at this stage, with another firm of architect, we would not necessarily get a better architect, but we would get a fee probably about 7.5 percent, on something like $14 million,” Grunthal said. “We’d be back to $1 million in fees instead of about $700,000.”

Were the village to switch architects, Picinich said, it would be starting from scratch.

“Had we had the original documents, the original drawings, they would be absolutely no use to us; we’d need to do a complete redesign,” she said.

Village Manager Edward Brancati concurred because no architect or engineer would put their stamp on another firm’s work.

The board appeared ready to approve the amendment but decided to hold off until legal review by Village Attorney Whitney Singleton. Changes he expected to make would require no renegotiation of the deal but would indemnify the village in the event that any party involved failed to fulfill its part of the agreement.

“There’s no provision that says, in the event that party X or party Y fails to perform under this, then the village shall retain its rights that it originally had prior to entering into this agreement,” Singleton said. “That should be in there.”

Once the village approves the amendment, the plan is to have bids available by the end of March for the Green Street firehouse, home of the Union Hook & Ladder Co. and Mount Kisco Fire Rescue Palace, Picinich said. Officials also plan to settle on the lowest responsible bid by early June.

Bids for the other two engine companies, the Mutual Hose and Engine Co. on Main Street and the Independent Fire Co. on Lexington Avenue, should come in soon after.

According to village estimates, the average homeowner with a current home market value of $413,000 would see a $122 increase in Fiscal Year 2020-21, or about 3.52 percent from the bond alone. The following two years would see increases of about 2 percent, or roughly $72.

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No. Castle Awaits Downtown Armonk Parking Report After Survey

By Martin Wilbur

A recent monthlong survey to evaluate downtown Armonk’s parking needs was recently completed and its results will help the North Castle Town Board decide whether there should be more parking in the business district.

There were 273 town residents, merchants and shoppers who responded to the online survey from Dec. 18 through Jan. 19, said North Castle Director of Planning Adam Kaufman. The responses will be reviewed by the town’s parking consultant, Nelson/Nygaard, which will present a report to the Town Board within the next month or two, he said.

The survey was done in conjunction with the firm’s visit to Main Street during a business day earlier this month where they observed and collected data about existing parking demand and spoke to merchants and shoppers.

“We have some insights from that data, we had the survey and then the consultant is going to take into consideration the future development proposals that we have and they’re going to create a model for us and give us some feedback on existing parking shortages or concerns potentially in the future, and we’ll take all that information and give that to the Town Board so they can base their land use decisions on that as well,” Kaufman said.

Among the issues for the board to consider is how significant any parking problem is, what should be done to solve any shortage and if more parking is needed how many spaces would be sufficient, he said.

Supervisor Michael Schiliro said the report will help guide the board on those issues.

The town increased its downtown parking inventory in the last couple of years by adding more than 40 spaces at the Hergenhan Recreation Center on Maple Avenue. However, there is ongoing concern about parking downtown because there are certain peak hours where motorists have trouble finding spaces.

Also, there are several downtown development proposals in the pipeline, most notably the 43 residential units at the old Mariani Gardens on Bedford Road and the Eagle Ridge hotel and residential plan on North Castle Drive. Then there still is the approved plans for 36 residential units at the old lumberyard on Bedford Road and 16 units at 470 Main St., which haven’t been built.

“I look at this as a wonderful problem to have because we have a lot of people that are shopping here and we want to continue to shop here but have an easier time of parking,” Schiliro said.

He said the town has also been exploring the feasibility of adding or reconfiguring parking on the west side of Main Street to increase its capacity.

The visit by Nelson/Nygaard was originally supposed to be done last spring but a fire knocked out Bagel Emporium and Broadway North Pizza for several months, two businesses that draw considerable traffic to Main Street.
Chappaqua School Officials Favor Single Point of Entry at Greeley

By Abby Luby

The Chappaqua Board of Education heard strong recommendations last week to install a single point of entry at Horace Greeley High School to ensure student safety and security.

The district’s Safety Task Force, created last February, extensively surveyed the community, school staff and students not only about the school’s entrances, personnel and procedures but its K-8 infrastructure and procedures and the social and emotional health of all students.

Survey results were presented in July at an open meeting. In September, the Greeley Single Point of Entry Task Force was established and led by Principal Andrew Corsilia. During the fall semester the task force visited a school in the Katonah-Lewisboro School District with single-point entry and pursued feedback from security experts as well as the community, staff and students.

The culminating research and analysis was presented at the Jan. 22 board meeting. “We saw by the survey that the community, families and faculty were receptive to a single point of entry,” said Superintendent of Schools Dr. Christine Ackerman. “They felt strongly that vetting our visitors and mitigating people who shouldn’t belong at the school would make the building more secure.”

Ackerman added that among security decisions already made was installing interior cameras in all buildings by fall 2021. The high school campus contains 11 buildings, multiple athletic fields and a tennis court. About 1,300 students attend the school.

The Greeley Single Point of Entry Task Force came up with five options to bolster security at the high school: close the front completely; build a fence around the perimeter; build a wall or fence between the main office and cafeteria, close off the courtyard and adding guard booths; add a guard booth at the pole barn and install a wall or fence; and add guard booths at the tennis courts and three other locations and build a wall or fence. “All the options increased security beyond what we’re already doing, but in the end only one, the full closing off of the front with a single point of entry, will enable us to shut the doors, to lock down and vet every single student and adult coming into the school after arrival,” Corsilia said.

Corsilia said students at Katonah-Lewisboro enter through multiple entrances that are staffed by security and personnel. Bus drivers also drop off students at various entrances and school personnel is in communication with one another, he said.

Projecting how a single point of entry would work at Greeley, Corsilia said front doors would be open for student arrivals. “We wouldn’t vet every single student that comes in but we may have staff on hand watching everybody entering as a security measure,” Corsilia said. “There is a large volume of students coming in and it’s the same at the end of the day when students start leaving. Between those times, the doors lock and every single visitor coming in is vetted by the security guard.”

Alex Santi, a special agent with Homeland Security and a Greeley High School parent, one of two Greeley Single Point of Entry Task Force members who addressed the board last week, said a presentation by a BOCES security consultant was convincing. “The consultant said the majority of schools in Westchester either already have single point of entry or are moving in that direction,” Santi said. “For me, having Greeley move in that direction makes sense.”

Cheri Litman, the parent of two Greeley juniors, recounted how the task force reached its recommendation. “The real thought was let’s do it the right way, the best way we know how,” she said. “The data shows single-point entry is the way to go. This is a key starting point and one that’s greatly needed.”

Redesigning the front of the high school to accommodate a single-point entry offers advantages, according to the task force’s report. Among those are optimal security for controlling entry, a reduction in security guards, the permanency of the new entryway and the ability for students to safely move from class to class.

The report also mentioned a few negatives to single entry. Some, especially students, felt it would change the feel of the school while others were concerned with more congestion and increased operations and maintenance costs.

Trustees accepted Ackerman’s request to initially approve the creation of a Request for Proposal by next month to begin the process of selecting an architect to design a single-entry point.

“At the end of the day we’ve made a lot of technical advances in our schools and this makes the most sense,” said Board President Jane Kimmel Sheppardson. “What we clearly don’t want is a band-aid or piecemeal security. Everyone realizes how negatives to single entry. Some, especially..."
Chappaqua Downtown Project Expected to Cost Town $17M

By Martin Wilbur

The price tag for the downtown Chappaqua infrastructure and streetscape project is expected to reach just over $17 million when all bills and expenses are counted, about 15 percent over original estimates.

Town Comptroller Robert Deary delivered an accounting of the project’s cost last week while the New Castle Town Board was faced with approving a series of six additional change orders totaling $343,846.55.

Deary said a combination of factors, led by an unexpected amount of contaminated soil removal in several locations when excavation was done downtown, helped drive up costs. According to the latest accounting of change orders kept by the town, an extra $820,000 was associated with soil removal.

Other notable categories of overruns included in the town’s Jan. 17 expenditures report for the project was nearly $620,000 for additional paving; $166,000 when the town decided to extend the sidewalks farther up North Greeley Avenue; and $200,600 to contractor ELQ Industries for accelerating work.

Another $130,000 had to be added when culvert work wasn’t included in the original plans by design firm WSP.

Officials budgeted $14.78 million in 2017 at the outset of the project, which included $12.78 million for ELQ Industries, and another $1 million each for construction manager Boswell Engineering and WLS, Deary said.

Deary said he was confident that the final costs will be very close to the latest revised number. Officials anticipate another $300,000 of overruns on electrical work and other items related to the installation of the traffic light but that would be partially offset by an estimated $100,000 that could be saved on additional contaminated soil, kiosks and trees expenses, he said.

If those estimates hold, that would push the final bill for the project to $17,020,447.77, a 15 percent overrun from the original estimates, which also included the contingency, Deary said.

Just over $2 million of the more than $2.2 million in overruns when compared with the estimates will be going to ELQ Industries, while Boswell Engineering is expected to receive an extra $399,000 over the original $1 million.

The town has paid only $682,000 to WSP for its design work, which led to some of the cost overruns.

Deary said officials could use money from various sources to pay for the overruns, including dipping into fund balance and going out to borrow additional funds.

Chappaqua School Officials Favor Single Point of Entry at Greeley

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vital this is. We will have to see what the costs are when they come in. But this is for long-term security and safety of our school. It makes sense to explore it.”

The timeline projected by Ackerman is to select an architect by March. Meetings with the architect would be in April and May, with a final design presented at the June board meeting. Pending board approval, a referendum would be presented to voters next fall.

The community does vote to spend money on what’s important and security is a huge part of that,” said Trustee Victoria Tipp, “I can’t think of a more important issue than the security of our kids.”

Bet Torah Nursery Opens Registration for Summer Camp

Bet Torah Nursery School in Mount Kisco that registration for its summer camps is now open.

Camp Keshet is a fun-filled morning of friendship for children three to five years old. It meets from June 8 to July 31, Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. New this summer is the ability to extend the day for an extra hour. Parents may register their child for any combination of weeks.

Campers bring lunch and are served a snack each day. Early bird registration for the full eight-week session ends Jan. 31.

With a focus on learning and play through a Jewish lens, campers will share daily indoor and outdoor activities, including art, gardening, cooking, Shabbat celebration, special theme days and more.

Two by Two is an exciting outdoor morning session of fun for parents and caregivers and their toddlers, 18 months and older, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from June 9 through July 30 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Choose one or two four-week sessions.

Each morning will include art, music, playground time and developmentally appropriate activities. Special events will include theme days and water play days. There will be hands-on activities specially planned for you and your child.

For more information, contact Camp Director Amy Portnoy at 914-666-7595 or aportnoy@bettorah.org.
Group Makes its Case for Maintaining Bedford’s Five Primary Schools

By Erin Maher

A large contingent of residents and parents in the Bedford Central School District have mobilized since September to oppose the district’s potential closure of up to two of its five elementary schools due to declining enrollment.

Since Superintendent of Schools Dr. Christopher Manno e-mailed the community in September announcing that the issue would be studied, parents and residents in the district have organized opposition, showing up in force at board meetings, frequently posting on social media and sending letters to the Board of Education.

A grassroots community group, Neighbors Together for BCSD, has sprouted, the work of former trustees Pam Harney and Michelle Brooks and district parent Jennifer Kothari. They founded the group shortly after the district announced its Long Range Facilities Plan in an effort to alert the community and school officials about the potential reduction from five elementary schools to three or four and what impact that would have on the community.

Since its inception, the group has attracted more than 1,000 members to its Facebook page and created the website www.bcshfivelive.org.

“We want to provide a platform to find Board of Education documentation, facts and experienced commentary,” Kothari said. “We seek to avoid conjecture and a community feeling of being left behind.”

Neighbors Together allows community members to lodge their concerns and looks to keep residents informed through reports from Board of Education and subcommittee meetings. It also serves as a call to action for residents to attend district functions to show community in the opposition against a school closure.

A key argument against a potential closure is Neighbors Together disputing the accuracy of the district’s information in the demographer’s report, and that there is an ultimately no appreciable decline in enrollment.

The group claims that according to state Department of Health biometricians, in 2017 there were 300 live births in the district. In his initial study, Dr. Paul Seversky from the SES Study Team, a demographic and strategic planning firm, has used the number 266, based on a preliminary study from 2017 that was published early in 2018, before all data was available.

The group has continually highlighted the discrepancy to trustees. While the district has not formally commented on the alleged inaccuracies, Seversky wrote a memo, refuting the group’s claims and cited his reasons for using the preliminary number.

His conclusion is that using live births within a district is an inaccurate representation of future enrollment because not every child born in a district will go to school there.

“Bedford is faced with the likely challenge of declining enrollments K-5, having too much pupil capacity to serve the expected enrollments in 5, 8 and 10 years from now, and having too many (full-time equivalent) staff to serve future enrollments given the current program,” Seversky wrote in his memo. “Funding excess capacity and staffing given likely future enrollments usually gives no value-added to opportunities for the students of the district.”

After the memo was issued, the district published its own analysis of its statistics, using the Bedford By the Numbers report as opposed to the Bedford Enrollment numbers which Seversky cited. Both the district’s analysis and Seversky’s reports show declining enrollment.

Enrollment projections released by the district in the fall showed that by 2028, high school enrollment is forecast to drop 28 percent. There were 1,384 students in grades 9-12 in 2018 and only 997 students are anticipated in those grades by the end of that 10-year period. Districtwide enrollment has fallen from 4,367 students in 2013-14 to 3,915 last year, according to district data.

In the last five years, elementary school enrollment has plummeted an even greater percentage, the Bedford By the Numbers report showed. In 2014-15, there were 1,965 K-5 students in Bedford while this year there are 1,585. Four of the five elementary schools have seen student population drops of 18 to 29 percent over that period. Only Bedford Hills Elementary School has seen an increase of 37 students in that time, a nearly 12.8 percent rise.

Neighbors Together for BCSD cited the welfare of students as its main concern against closing any school and the negative impacts that could have on their educational experience.

“It’s simple — closing a school would result in larger class sizes, less teachers and longer time spent on a bus for our children,” Kothari said. “None of these benefit our students’ education.”

Besides compromising students’ educational experience, children moved from a closed school could experience emotional turmoil as well, said Dr. Brian Monahan, a professor of education at Pace University in Pleasantville.

“Any time a child’s school is changed and he/she is separated from friends and teachers, it is very emotional for the student and the parents,” Monahan said.

The district has also refuted the idea that class sizes would grow. According to the district’s Long Range Facilities Plan FAQ, “…the district adheres to class policy guidelines. There are no contractual limits; however the district does not determine class sizes based on contractual limits. The policy guidelines are used.”

The district’s elementary class size guidelines allow for no more than 25 students in K-1 classes and 28 students a class in grades 2-5.

Many in the community believe, including Harney, a Neighbors Together co-founder and former trustee, that money is the catalyst driving the potential elementary school contraction, although school officials have denied that motive on several occasions.

Harney said in 2016, the district’s then-interim superintendent, John Chambers, stated publicly to the Space and Enrollment Committee that he thought the district should close Bedford Hills Elementary School, which would save roughly $1 million. The issue was raised often enough where it became part of regular public discussion, she said.

However, the district’s financial standing is now in far superior condition under Superintendent Dr. Christopher Manno’s leadership through better management, staff retirements of veteran teachers, efficiencies and eliminating wasteful practices, Harney said.

“There are still areas where this can be done,” Harney explained. “And there are still potential savings if there really is a continued decline in enrollment, but the declines outlined in the demographer’s report are overstated and some key conclusions of that report are flawed.”

In January 2017, Bedford Central was listed as the third most fiscally stressed district in the state by the state comptroller’s office for the 2015-16 school year. Following the fiscal upheaval, school officials took immediate action. By last January, Bedford was removed from the distress designation list.

On Jan. 7, the board released a letter to the community regarding the Long Range Facilities Plan.

“We recognize and understand the concerns that some community members have expressed, and we are committed to continuing to engage and listen to the public as this process moves forward and recommended options are presented to us in the coming months,” the correspondence read.

The district held multiple community forums in October to receive feedback from the public, and sent an online survey district-wide earlier this month.

At this Wednesday evening’s Board of Education meeting, Interactive, Inc. will address comparative building capacity utilization and budget estimates along with analysis on community opinion.

On Feb. 10 and 11, the board will hold additional community forums and plans to reveal to the public the cost of operating an elementary school, three-year budget estimates and a report on community feedback.

District consultant Interactive Inc. plans to present its recommendation to the board in March, with plans for the board to adopt the final Long Range Facilities plan by June.

For more information on BCSD’s Long Range Facilities plan, visit www.bcshfivelive.org.

Bon Voyage

Brian M. Bennett, a junior at Binghamton University, left for London, England, last Friday to do a Study Abroad semester until May, Bennett, an English major and a 2017 Westlake High School graduate, will be studying at Florida State University, in Bloomsbury, England with other students and professors from Binghamton.
Jan. 21: Officers on patrol detained two men who were observed behind several closed stores on South Moger Avenue at 1:21 a.m. The men said they had missed the train back to New York City and were “wandering around” while awaiting the next train. They were dropped off at the station and said they would remain there until their train arrived.

Jan. 21: Staff at the Boys & Girls Club on East Main Street reported at 9:19 p.m. that an intoxicated man had come onto the premises. The man was asked to leave and did so prior to an officer’s arrival.

Jan. 22: A Barker Street resident reported at 5:25 a.m. that he was standing outside his building smoking a cigarette when a car pulled up and a female driver asked him for a light. When he approached, she took his picture and drove off.

Jan. 22: An Amuso Drive resident called police at 3:11 p.m. to complain that building management was attempting to make an unauthorized entry into his apartment. Upon an officer’s arrival, the building staff provided copies of inspection notices sent previously to the tenant by mail. The resident was advised that the dispute was a civil matter, not a police matter.

Jan. 23: Police responded to an East Main Street laundromat at 4:07 p.m. on a complaint that several men were sleeping there. The men were advised that management wanted them to leave the premises and they complied.

Jan. 23: A Mount Kisco business reported at 11:06 a.m. that it has been receiving harassing and threatening phone calls from a job applicant it did not hire. Officers contacted the man to advise him that the business would press criminal charges if he continues to call. The rejected job applicant agreed to cease making such calls.

Jan. 24: Police responded to Gregory Avenue at 9:07 p.m. to assist a 92-year-old man who was injured in a fall at home. He was transported by ambulance to Northern Westchester Hospital.

Jan. 24: A woman arrived at the Green Street police precinct at 12:45 p.m. and reported that her phone was lost or stolen in Danbury and that a tracking application indicated it was in the vicinity of Spring Street earlier in the day. The app was no longer showing where the phone might be. The woman was advised to report the lost phone to Danbury police.

North Castle Police Department

Jan. 17: Multiple callers reported a motor vehicle accident involving air bag deployment on Route 128 at 3:41 p.m. The Armonk Fire Department was dispatched and officers responded. One of the responding officers reported the vehicles were secured by Armonk Garage. The male driver was transported to Northern Westchester Hospital and the female driver was taken to Westchester Medical Center.

Jan. 18: An Old Mount Kisco Road resident reported at 8:09 a.m. that there has been an ongoing issue of heavy construction machinery being operated before the designated time. The responding officers reported that he spoke with workers on the scene and advised them to cease all construction work with heavy equipment until 9 a.m. as specified in the town ordinance. The workers agreed.

Jan. 22: Report of a verbal dispute regarding a cab fare between a driver and the complainant’s husband on Sniffen Drive at 12:12 a.m. The responding officers reported that the matter was adjusted.

Jan. 22: An employee at H.C. Crittenden Middle School on MacDonald Avenue reported a past larceny at the location at 10:40 a.m.

Pleasantville Police Department

Jan. 21: Report of a larceny from a vehicle on Wheeler Avenue at 5:31 p.m. Police did not provide more information because the matter is under investigation.

Jan. 24: A woman at the Green Street police precinct at 12:45 p.m. reported that her phone was lost or stolen in Danbury and that a tracking application indicated it was in the vicinity of Spring Street earlier in the day. The app was no longer showing where the phone might be. The woman was advised to report the lost phone to Danbury police.

Police Blotter

County Police/Mount Kisco

Arthur Woolard

Arthur Thomas Woolard, widowed husband and beloved father, passed away suddenly on Jan. 17. He was 84. Woolard was born Oct. 19, 1935, in Danbury, Conn., to the late Alexander and Margaret (Niland) Woolard. He lived in Pleasantville with his beloved wife Theresa (Andriola) for over 60 years. He worked for more than 40 years as a salesman at All-Weld Products in Elmsford. Woolard was a dedicated Yankee fan who coached many sports in the local area, including football, baseball and basketball at Westlake High School, Holy Name of Jesus and Sherman Park Little League. He was a recognized member of the YMCA for over 60 years and immensely enjoyed playing competitive handball.

Art was known for his friendliness and his wonderful sense of humor. He was dedicated to his family and will be deeply missed by many.

He is survived by his daughter, Cheryl Romano; his son David Woolard and his wife Christina; his niece, Marlene Patren; and his extended family the Andriolas. He was predeceased by his brothers, Harold Woolard and Marty and William Berry, and son-in-law Michael Romano.

Visitation was at Beecher Funks Funeral Home in Pleasantville on Jan. 23. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Holy Innocents Roman Catholic Church on Jan. 24.

Josephine Surace

Josephine Surace of Pleasantville died on Jan. 22 at her residence. She was 92. Surace was born on June 9, 1927, to the late Augustino and Virginia (nee Lamuro) Dovi in Pleasantville. She was a longtime member of the Mount Pleasant Italian American Club and the Mount Pleasant Seniors.

Surace is survived by her devoted husband, Dominick Surace, of Pleasantville; her loving children, Diane (Richard) Surace-Guido and Paul (Luanne Jennes), both of Pleasantville; her five cherished grandchildren, Jodi, Cheryl (John), Jaclyn, Paul (PJ) and Breanna; and four great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her two sisters and two brothers.

Visitation was at Hawthorne Funeral Home on Jan. 26. A funeral Mass was held at Our Lady of Pompeii Church in Pleasantville on Jan. 27 followed by interment at All Souls Cemetery in Pleasantville.

In lieu of flowers, donations to either St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital in Memphis, Tenn. or Rosary Hill Home, 600 Linda Ave. Hawthorne, N.Y. 10532 would be appreciated.

Man Arrested in Mt. Pleasant for Driving Stolen Car; Wanted Upstate

Westchester County police arrested a 20-year-old Bronx man last Tuesday for driving a stolen car in Mount Pleasant and was found to be wanted on six outstanding arrest warrants.

The suspect, Keyshawn Adams, was charged by county police with fifth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a felony, and third-degree aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle, a misdemeanor.

Police said the Real Time Crime Center at county police headquarters in Hawthorne broadcast an alert at 11:22 a.m. on Jan. 21 that a stolen 2009 Kia Spectra was traveling southbound on the Saw Mill River Parkway in Bedford. The Kia had been reported stolen in Syracuse on Jan. 6.

A patrol sergeant located the vehicle at Marble Avenue in Mount Pleasant and he and other officers stopped it at Route 141 and the Sprain Brook Parkway, according to county police. Adams and a female passenger were taken into custody. The passenger was subsequently released without charges.

While being booked, officers determined that Adams was wanted on warrants lodged by the DeWitt Police Department, Clay Police Department and the Onondaga County Sheriff’s Department. Those warrants charge Adams with fourth-degree criminal possession of stolen property, a felony, and third-degree assault, second-degree menacing, fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon and second-degree aggravated harassment, all misdemeanors.

Adams was held overnight for arraignment in Mount Pleasant Town Court on the charges lodged by Westchester County police. Following his arraignment, he was released to the custody of officers from the DeWitt Police Department to be returned to Onondaga County.

—Martin Wilbur
By Rick Pezzullo

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) last week announced his support for marijuana legalization that includes investments in substance abuse disorder treatment, mental health programs and education efforts aimed at highlighting the risks of marijuana use.

In addition, Harckham, serving his first term in the Senate, wants revenue from taxed dispensary sales following legalization to pay for increased enforcement of DUI laws.

He outlined his conditional support for marijuana legalization at a press conference last week at the New York State Capitol in Albany alongside Sen. Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan), chair of the Senate Finance Committee, who sponsored the Marijuana Regulation and Taxation Act (S.1527B).

The legislation, which was not passed during the 2019 legislative session, now includes the provisions regarding investing 25 percent of the revenue toward treatment, education and prevention. Additional resources would be dedicated to local law enforcement to enhance DUI enforcement.

“The bottom line is this: I’m for the legalization of marijuana in the state of New York,” said Harckham, chair of the Senate Committee on Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. “But it must be legalization specifically with improvements that guarantee the safety and well-being of our residents. It must be legalization specifically with improvements that guarantee the safety and well-being of our residents.”

Legislation of marijuana concerns many residents, Harckham said, because of unresolved issues related to the operation of motor vehicles while under the influence of the drug and use by high school students and the documented effect of marijuana on developing young brains. There are also legalization-related problems experienced in other states, such as Colorado and California, and a broad sentiment that marijuana leads to other riskier behaviors.

But Harckham said that his discussions with educators and law enforcement officials pointed to vaping and binge drinking as the biggest concerns for young people. In states where there has been legalization, there was not a sizable spike in marijuana use among teens and young adults, he said.

“The key point here is Sen. Krueger listened to the concerns of my constituents and others around the state, and amended her legislation as a result,” Harckham said.

The amended marijuana legislation would add more money for police to ensure that DUI is kept in check and for schools to educate young people on the risks associated with marijuana. The legislation currently allows individual school districts to make their own plans for educating their students; municipalities to opt out; and municipalities to carefully establish zoning for marijuana retailers and growers.

The legislation also ensures that the sales tax on marijuana would be invested in communities around the state, a quarter of which will be specifically earmarked for education, treatment and prevention. He called that revenue “the lifeline for our communities, our mental health programs and our residents.”

“It is obvious we are in a crisis, which we are failing to meet through disinvestment in substance use disorder treatment and community mental health programs,” Harckham said. “What I learned from dozens of hearings and meetings with stakeholders is this: the safety net for substance use disorders is in tatters, and we need to invest right now to start turning things around.”

State Sen. Peter Harckham, pictured with Sen. Liz Krueger, announced that he supports revised legislation that would legalize marijuana after lawmakers agreed that 25 percent of the revenue from its sale would fund substance abuse, mental health treatment and education programs.
January 28 - February 3, 2020 The Examiner

Submitting digital entries is Feb. 12. There is no entry fee, and the deadline for entry is scheduled for Thursday, April 2. The Mount Kisco Public Library is providing access to 200 tablets and 100 hotspots to be used at Census hubs where people can receive assistance in completing and submitting their forms. The county will be establishing these hubs throughout Westchester.

This is the first Census where responses will be arriving in mailboxes in mid to late March. Letters from the U.S. Census Bureau will be arriving in mailboxes in mid to late March. Mar. 12: Mailing 1, Letter Mar. 16: Mailing 2, Reminder Letter Mar. 26: Mailing 3, Reminder Postcard Apr. 6: Mailing 4, Reminder Letter plus Paper Questionnaire Apr. 20: Mailing 5, “It’s not too late” Postcard

Learn More About the Census, Key Dates

Public Service Announcements on video will be released every week by the county leading up to the mailing of the Census. The different videos will be geared toward Renters, the disabled, senior citizens, child advocates, Spanish speaking advocates, and young adults.

Below is the 2020 Census timeline. Letters from the U.S. Census Bureau will be arriving in mailboxes in mid to late March. Mar. 12: Mailing 1, Letter Mar. 16: Mailing 2, Reminder Letter Mar. 26: Mailing 3, Reminder Postcard Apr. 6: Mailing 4, Reminder Letter plus Paper Questionnaire Apr. 20: Mailing 5, “It’s not too late” Postcard

Third Annual Mt. Kisco Photography Exhibit is Gearing Up for Spring

The Mount Kisco Conservation Advisory Council (CAC) is now accepting entries for its third annual photography exhibition, “The Nature, Culture, and People of Mount Kisco,” to be held at the Mount Kisco Public Library from April 2-28. An opening reception is scheduled for Thursday, April 2 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Anyone, from anywhere, of any age and any level of photography experience who has taken a photograph in Mount Kisco is encouraged to participate. There is no entry fee, and the deadline for submitting digital entries is Feb. 27.

“We are looking forward to many more residents and visitors participating in this year’s exhibition,” said CAC Chairman John Rhodes. “We received an enthusiastic response last year from more than 50 people who sent in 187 beautiful shots of birds, flowers, people, and landscapes, along with some great images that captured spirited social interactions at local events.”

There is a special category for young photographers under 18 years old. Last year, four-year-old Selene Valera used her mom’s DSLR to shoot a close up of a Canada goose, and her mom used a smartphone to capture her fledgling photographer in action. The work of some other young shooters was at a near-professional level, including Madison Singleton’s shot of a guitar player in Leonard Park.

Another great image in last year’s exhibit was taken by Rob Yasinsac, who photographed the former Our Lady of Mount Kisco Retreat House through an old circular window from a nearby building on the property. “All five members of the Selection Committee voted for this photo,” Rhodes said. Special recognition is awarded to photos voted in by all five members of the committee.

Sixty photos will be selected for display at the library’s gallery, while all submissions will be displayed on the wide-screen television telecasting the event’s live webcast and online at www.KiscoPhoto.org.

Submissions in all three categories (nature, culture, and people) should be appropriate for viewing by people of all ages. Each submission must include a brief statement explaining the property of the person submitting them for exhibition.

For more information and the entry form, please send an email to KiscoPhoto2020@gmail.com. The Mount Kisco photography exhibition is organized by volunteers from the CAC, the Mount Kisco Arts Council (MKAC), the Mount Kisco Historical Society and the Mount Kisco Tree Preservation Board.

County Kicks Off 2020 Census Drive to Account for All Residents

By Abby Luby

County Executive George Latimer launched Westchester’s 2020 Census Campaign Monday at Pace University in Pleasantville, urging for the need to reach out and account for every person.

The room at the Kessel Student Center was packed with local, state and federal officials, county commissioners, members of the Census Complete Count Committee, Census advocates, community-based organizations and college students, all working on Westchester’s aggressive outreach program that started last January.

Latimer said the Census outreach effort was unlike any he had ever seen.

“This is the first time in my recollection – having lived through six or seven censuses – that there has been an emphasis and a focus on making sure we have a full and accurate account,” he said. “It’s not just [being done] by county government but by educators at all levels, the healthcare field and law enforcement.”

Latimer stressed two key areas of concern for obtaining an accurate Census count: the federal and state grant process, which is gauged by population data, and representation at the local, state and federal level.

Last year, a preliminary estimate of $880 billion in federal funding would be pared out to state and local governments for several different programs. But new research from George Washington University shows $1.5 trillion in federal funds will most likely go to 316 federal programs. The programs that will be funded will depend on the data.

Carola Bracco, chair of the Westchester County Complete Count Committee, addressed the audience in English and Spanish.

“There are tens of thousands of people that won’t be counted if we don’t ease the fears among community members, improve access to technology and provide educational outreach,” said Bracco, who is also executive director of Neighbors Link in Mount Kisco. “Now more than ever, we must make sure every community member understands their information is completely confidential and every single person in our county deserves to be counted, regardless of race, age and immigration status.”

In October, the Westchester Community Foundation awarded $50,000 to the County Department of Planning to fund the Complete Count Committee. Herberto Contreras was hired as Westchester’s census coordinator to oversee the program and volunteers and to serve as a liaison with local municipalities.

Listening to the presentation was Robert Chao, former president of the local OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates, an organization that works for immigration reform and anti-discrimination and teaches about Asian culture.

Chao said OCA has already talked about the 2020 Census to more than 35 parents of Asian students taking Chinese cultural classes on weekends.

“We’ve also talked about the Census with a Chinese-American senior group that meets twice a week at the Greenbury Library,” he said.

Latimer also announced a new partnership between the county and T-Mobile, which is providing access to 200 tablets and 100 hotspots to be used at Census hubs where people can receive assistance in completing and submitting their forms. The county will be establishing these hubs throughout Westchester.

This is the first Census where responses can be submitted online.

Latimer made a general reference to an array of problems that are extremely challenging for governments today, but the 2020 Census shouldn’t be one of them.

“This issue is one that we can do,” he said.

Greeley Senior Among 40 Finalists in Prestigious Science Competition

Last Wednesday, it was announced that Horace Greeley High School senior Holly Cheng is one of 40 finalists and the only student from the Hudson Valley selected from 1,993 highly qualified entrants in the Regeneron Science Talent Search (STS) competition.

The finalists were selected based on their projects’ scientific rigor and their potential to become world-changing scientists and leaders. The title of her project is Modulating Fetal Globin Levels Using CRISPR/Cas9 in an in vitro Mouse Cellular System.

Cheng will travel to Washington, D.C. from Mar. 5-11 where her project will be judged and compete for awards. She will also have an opportunity to interact with leading scientists, meet with members of Congress and display her project to the public.

Each finalist is guaranteed at least a $25,000 award. The top 10 awards start at $40,000 with the top competitor receiving $250,000.

“This year’s finalists are part of the next generation of brilliant minds who – through the pursuit of science and innovation – can address many of society’s most urgent challenges and help improve our world,” said Dr. George D. Yancopoulos, co-founder, president and chief scientific officer of Regeneron and a Science Talent Search top winner in 1976. “These students are joining a community of highly talented STS alumni who have gone on to make incredible contributions to their chosen fields and our society. If one, two or even a handful of these impressive young scholars make discoveries that impact our world, that could make all the difference.”

Holly Cheng, one of 40 finalists for this year’s Regeneron Science Talent Search, stands with her project at Horace Greeley High School.
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INVEST. INSPIRE. IGNITE.
Editorial

Airport Forum Was Helpful but Failed to Address Key Issues

Kudos to the county for finally helping to organize an event where members of the public could directly ask questions and engage in discussion with aviation experts from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Westchester County Airport.

It was refreshing to be able to approach a representative at an easel or display and ask the questions on one’s mind on a dense and highly technical issue. For a couple of hours, it was almost easy to forget that it took the better part of three years until the public gained access to the FAA and airport managers.

It must be remembered that it was also nearly three years of intense public pressure from residents in the communities surrounding the airport and arm twisting by New Castle town officials to get this one event scheduled.

Chappaqua, where last week’s open house took place, has become the epicenter for noise pollution and the degradation of quality of life from repeated aircraft landing at Westchester County Airport. But if the noise levels near your house have become unbearable, then unless you have been closely following the arguments and counterarguments since 2017 on this issue, it could have been very easy to be overwhelmed.

While it was understandable that the FAA and airport representatives didn’t want to take the chance of getting involved in overheated shouting matches given the issue’s volatility, there should have been relatively brief opening remarks, including how decisions regarding flight paths are made.

Then the public could have begun circulating, asking one-on-one questions of the experts on hand.

Instead, people were on their own to seek out information in the packed community center in a venue where at times it was difficult to hear the person next to you.

There were two glaring omissions from last week’s forum. First, what, if anything, can be done to more equitably distribute the noise from aircraft landing at the airport if it can be proven that descending airliners are going over one area much more frequently than others?

Second, what happens next? The open house was held, residents were able to ask questions. For those impacted the most, other than waiting for the warm weather to arrive and hearing more airplanes, now what? Will there be a subsequent session in, say, six months? Where can the residents who are suffering go to pursue their concerns?

There’s no doubt that Westchester County, including County Executive George Latimer, have a difficult tightrope to walk. Officials want to reasonably help their constituents but also know there are pressures from the business community not to jeopardize operations at the airport that are crucial to the county’s economy, not to mention the convenience for many residents.

Whatever happens next, Latimer must thread that needle to get some tangible results for impacted residents. But he cannot afford to have individual communities or parties splinter and start hiring their own consultants and lawyers, as the Town of New Castle threatened last October.

The sooner the public knows what the follow-up plan to last week’s forum, the better the chances that efforts to address everyone’s concerns will be looked upon as sincere.

Guest Column

Five Tips to Help Older Adults Lead Healthier Lives

For many, the new year is about establishing goals for the year ahead. But where should you start?

As we age, an increasing number of us link our emotional and physical well-being to our overall health. After all, you can’t do the things you’d like if you aren’t healthy.

With that in mind, Cigna and its Medicare Advantage fitness partner, the Silver&Fit Healthy Aging and Exercise Program, share these tips to help older adults get fitter and stronger and be less stressed and happier.

1. Hit the gym. Exercise is a proven way to help you get fitter and stronger, improve balance, lose weight, reduce blood pressure, improve cardiovascular health, manage pain and even be more social. Many gym offers options such as free weights, machines, pools, classes, and group classes can help you discover a new exercise, stick to a schedule and find exercise buddies. If you’re new to exercise, remember that slow and steady is the way to build good habits, avoid injury and achieve health goals. It’s always a good idea to consult your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

2. Are you set to afford a gym membership? You may be surprised to learn that many Medicare Advantage plans offer exercise programs at top fitness centers and YMCAs for no extra cost. Check your plan for details.

3. Nourish your body. For optimal health, nourish your body with healthy, energizing foods, including fruits, vegetables, grains, fish and healthy oils, such as olive oil and sesame oil. Limit pre-packaged, processed foods. Set an achievable goal. Try cutting out the unhealthy foods each month, such as sugary soft drinks or chips. Your body will love you for it! Also, stay hydrated, especially when exercising.

4. Get social. According to a 2018 Cigna survey, loneliness in America has reached epidemic levels. Nearly half of Americans report sometimes or always feeling alone (46 percent) or left out (47 percent). Loneliness has been shown to negatively impact physical and mental health. Alleviate loneliness by taking one proactive step each week. For example, call or get coffee with friends or family, join a club or volunteer. You can also connect with other active adults on social media. Check out the inspirational health and fitness posts on the @SilverandFit Facebook page and join in the conversations.

5. Practice gratitude. Happiness comes with thankfulness. Think about people and things you feel grateful for, and start a gratitude journal.

By doing your best to incorporate these five tips into your life, you’ll kick-start your journey toward a healthier year.

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Chappaqua WW II Vet’s Photos Capture Aftermath of Atomic Bomb

By Martin Wilbur

For nearly 75 years, Robert Mottola has held on to photographs he took while serving in the Pacific with the U.S. Navy during the latter stages of World War II.

The 45 mainly snapshot-size pictures were of the carnage in Nagasaki, Japan after the United States dropped the second atomic bomb.

Now 92, Mottola, a longtime Chappaqua resident, was deeply affected by what he saw when he arrived in the flattened city about 22 weeks later. That was when American military commanders decided it was safe to send personnel into Nagasaki following Japan’s surrender after fears of radiation.

Even though it had been five months, Mottola witnessed an entire city in ruins. “It was the introduction of mass killing time he came face to face with the enemy,” he said. “It was just (being) crazy.”

Milo Mottola took his father’s photographs out of the drawers and storage and created an exhibit entitled “Forget Nagasaki.” It is currently on display at the Katonah Village Library through Feb. 14.

The younger Mottola said not only does it provide others a look at the history captured by his father’s pictures, but he hoped that it would help his dad come to terms with the devastation. Having joined the Navy at 17 years old and serving on a mine sweeper in the Pacific, it was just a year later that he landed in Nagasaki.

“He’s still so very emotional about it, and he never really found some closure,” Milo Mottola said. “The only way I could play my part was to give him some sense of closure.”

In addition to the photos, some of which have been enlarged, the exhibit also features several stations where visitors can pick up a telephone receiver and listen to brief tapes of Mottola in his own voice talking about some of the images and of his time served during the war.

Ironically, the camera that he used to take the photos wasn’t even his own. Mottola’s wife of 66 years, Marjorie, said that shortly after the atomic bombs dropped and Japan had surrendered, he was part of a mission to go from island to island and clear out the remaining Japanese to secure those islands for the Chinese. At the time, his ship was docked in Sasebo, Japan, Milo Mottola said.

On one island, Mottola headed into a cave and a Japanese soldier, who was apparently holed up, came running out. The soldier left all of his belongings, including the camera that Mottola would later use to capture the photos in Nagasaki.

Mottola, who doesn’t recall which island he was on at the time, said that was the first time he came face to face with the enemy.

“Fighting in the area, I jumped into a cave, and when I did, I realized that someone was living in that cave,” he said. “I was happy to save myself; he was trying to save himself.”

Uncertain whether there was film or how many pictures he had, Mottola said he took two photos of himself and another with a dog. When he arrived in Nagasaki, he started taking the photos. Later, he had them developed in Hawaii.

His wife and son agreed that he suffered from bouts of nightmares and odd behavior they believe was likely post-traumatic stress disorder.

There was one period where Mottola, who was an electrical contractor, didn’t leave the house for about a year.

“They really didn’t have a name for it,” Milo Mottola said. “It was just being crazy. It was like seven years after and then all of a sudden you’re crazy.”

Mottola no longer has the camera or the negatives, although not long ago he bought a model on eBay that appeared similar to what he used. But for Mottola and his family, sharing the photos was most important.

“Now he knows they have value; it’s not monetary value,” Milo Mottola said.
Stand-Up Comedian Colin Quinn to Perform at Tarrytown Music Hall

By Abby Luby

Audiences are guaranteed a spirited dose of hilarity when comedian Colin Quinn takes the stage at Tarrytown Music Hall this Friday, Jan. 31 in his one-man show “Wrong Side of History.”

Quinn is famous for his charged wit steeped in social and political commentary. His comedic roots go back to his days on “Saturday Night Live” hosting the Weekend Update segment from 1998 to 2000 and his nightly Comedy Central show, “Tough Crowd with Colin Quinn” from 2002 to 2004.


Last year Quinn won rave reviews for his one-man show “Red State Blue State,” that put his satirical stamp of jocularity on politics, free speech, sex and America’s future.

Quinn said his new show, “Wrong Side of History,” focuses more on human nature.

“This show is about where we are as human beings,” Quinn said in an interview with The Examiner. “It looks at how everyone has an opinion and how they feel they are on the right side of history. But feeling superior and arguing is not necessarily who we are.”

Quinn frequently opines on the down side of online exchanges where the sense of anonymity shapes our discourse as opposed to squabbling face to face – especially from his favorite perch, the bar stool.

“We think we are evolving the more we talk about things, but its technology that’s evolving,” he said.

Quinn tackles sobering national issues in “Wrong Side of History” and is cautious about mentioning President Donald Trump.

“Trump is a double-edged sword. On the one hand he is too prevalent to ignore,” Quinn said. “He’s the elephant in the room. On the other hand, he’s the low-hanging fruit. What we don’t want to do is create Trump fatigue.”

The growing chill over free speech has not escaped Quinn’s critical eye.

“At the moment we are stuck in an Orwellian world. You have to watch what you say,” he explained. “You can see it in places like the Oscars where they are so worried what comedians might say, they no longer let them host. Says a lot about the culture.”

In 2015, Quinn wrote “The Coloring Book,” about the growing political correctness prompting Americans to tiptoe around topics of race and ethnicity. His next book, “Overstated,” due out in September, considers how the United States is headed for civil war.

“This country may be too big,” Quinn said describing the book’s premise. “Each state is like a small country with their own personality, their own way of living. It looks like they are all headed for divorce. It seems crazy but I can’t imagine what else is going on. The fact is people are not changing. That’s the way the world works.”

Quinn was inspired by infamous mid-20th century stand-up comedians who broke comedic norms by taking jabs at conventional society. They include Lenny Bruce, Richard Pryor and George Carlin.

Bruce was notorious for his “sick humor,” Pryor for his race-based humor and Carlin for his dark humor on a wide range of social taboos, he said.

“All those guys were mavericks and people were ready for them, especially Lenny Bruce. He broke it all,” Quinn said.

The future of stand-up comedy is a question mark for Quinn, who foresees a change by way of the Internet.

“People may be getting sick of long-form stand-up,” he said. “I imagine it could be more convenient to click on a certain subject and hear five comedians on that subject instead of listening to one comic on a bunch of topics.”

But for now, stimulating a live audience to laughter offers a healthy respite from our daily routines. Quinn suggested that laughter is a much more cathartic reaction to comedy than applause.

“In my opinion I feel laughter is clarifying while applause in comedy is bad,” he said. “Applause is saying yes, while laughing is such an involuntary, physical reaction. It speaks to a real truth.”

Showtime for Quinn’s performance this Friday is 8 p.m. Tickets are $30, $35 and $45. Tarrytown Music Hall is located at 13 Main St. in Tarrytown. For tickets or more information, visit www.tarrytownmusichall.org.

Royal Hanneford Proves There is Circus Life After Ringling Bros.

Ever wonder what happened to the circus after Ringling Bros. closed? Actually, the Royal Hanneford Circus is thriving as one of the few traditional three-ring circuses performing around the country.

As is their tradition, the Hannefords produce and perform in their show, which traces its roots to merry old England in 1690. Nellie Hanneford and her husband, Adrian Ponce, produce the 2020 Royal Hanneford Circus.

“Ever wonder what happened to the circus after Ringling Bros. closed?”

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The Royal Hanneford Circus is once again scheduled for a series of performances at the County Center in White Plains over President’s Day weekend.

The Royal Hanneford Circus combines history, tradition, modern touches and the enthusiasm of the younger generation to ensure that the traditional three-ring circus will remain a strong family entertainment source for the future.

The Royal Hanneford Circus is truly part of circus lore. They have performed for royalty and were brought to the United States in 1916 by John Ringling himself. The Hannefords have appeared on network TV, “The Ed Sullivan Show” and acted as technical advisers for television and feature films.

Families can enjoy two hours of this traditional three-ring circus at the Westchester County Center where the Hannefords have been appearing for over 40 years during President’s Day Weekend.

Ticket prices are family-friendly as well, costing $27 and $35. Show dates and times are February 15 and 16 at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. and President’s Day, Monday, Feb. 17, at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Tickets are on sale at the County Center box office located at 198 Central Ave. in White Plains and at Ticketmaster and ticketmaster.com.
Arc Stages Tackles Story of Complicated Trio in Latest Production

By Martin Wilbur

When the curtain rises on Arc Stages’ “Animals Out of Paper” this Friday night for the first of seven performances, audiences will be treated to a fascinating story that centers on three very complex people.

For Andy, a high school teacher, one of his personal heroes is Ilana, a master origami artist who he wants to have a deeper relationship with, but she is struggling with various issues in her life following a divorce. One of Andy’s students, 18-year-old Suresh, has suffered a tragedy in his life and needs guidance from his mentor and teacher, so Andy introduces him to Ilana.

If that sounds a bit complicated, that’s because life is complicated.

“I think that we as people are incredibly complex and we all have that inside of us,” said actor Kerri Sohn, who plays Ilana. “There’s hardly a play that I think you read and feel that ‘What, that never happened to me, I can’t possibly relate to that.’ I think we as humans naturally just relate to things. The challenge isn’t necessarily relating to it, the challenge is being vulnerable enough to let everybody else watch you go through that in a real way.”

The play was written by the acclaimed playwright Rajiv Joseph, who is noted for developing complicated characters and works, said the production’s director Ann-Ngaire Martin. It’s one of the reasons that Martin sought to present “Animals Out of Paper,” a thought-provoking story that the Pleasantville-based Arc Stages regularly seeks to bring to its theater.

She said she was fascinated by the unique combination of people that Joseph created. Also, the idea of a young person having a mentor is critical, but in this story, the young man Suresh helps Andy and Ilana explore themselves as well, Martin explained.

“You both learn something from him, you both find different places of yourself that we didn’t expect you to find, but it was from (Suresh), the youngest of the three people in this case,” Martin said.

Andy and Suresh are played by Arc Stages returning actor David Lanson and Eshan Bay, respectively.

Bay said “Animals Out of Paper” is such an appealing story not only because of the characters but there is something for everybody in the play, including teens and young adults.

“There are different things for teenagers, like my character is a teenager,” Bay said. “There’s so much for teenagers, college-age (students), who don’t always come to the theater. You don’t always get that audience because most of your audience is older people who have the time and money to get to the theater. This play would be a lot of fun to a younger crowd, too, and fun for the older crowd as well it’s so deep. There’s so much.”

After the production’s opening, “Animals Out of Paper” continues on Feb. 1, 7, 8, 9, 14 and 15. All performances are at 8 p.m. except for the Feb. 9 matinee at 2 p.m. Tickets are $28 and $36.

Arc Stages is located at 147 Wheeler Ave. in Pleasantville. For tickets or more information about Arc Stages, visit www.arcestages.org.
Tuesday, Jan. 28


DIY Phone Grip. Get the perfect selfie and add some pop to your cell phone with a DIY phone grip. For those age 12 and older. Recommended for children one to two-and-a-half years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (except Feb. 17, 19 and 21). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

Preschool Storytime. This interactive story time uses picture books, songs, finger plays, action rhymes and other activities to encourage the enjoyment of books and language. Recommended for children two-and-a-half to five years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 11 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday (except Feb. 17, 19 and 21). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

Mother Goose. Listen to stories and sing along with the librarian for a fun morning. The session incorporates picture books that focus on colors, shapes, letters and more. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 11 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

Bilingual Storytime. Sing songs and read picture books in English and Spanish. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-666-8041 or www.mountkiscolibrary.org.


People Love Yarn. Share your knowledge or learn from the group. All skill levels welcome. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: Contact Louann Rooney at rooneylm@optonline.net.

Knitting at the Library. Knitters and crocheters of all skill levels. For ages 10 and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-864-8041 or www.mountkiscolibrary.org.

Affordable Care Act Navigator. A trained navigator provided by the county Department of Health will be available to help people sign up for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and the state health marketplace. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 3:30 to 7 p.m. Free. Wednesdays from 2:30 to 7 p.m., Thursdays from 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Appointment required. English only on Wednesdays. Appointments available in Spanish on Thursdays and Saturdays. Info and Wednesday appointments: 914-336-6026. Info and Thursday and Saturday appointments: 914-336-6935.


Science Lab. Become junior scientists and learn about different science topics through stories, crafts and experiments. For children four to six years old. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.


Thursdays. Romans and Juliet. One good turn deserves another, so let’s get back to the classics with an examination of how various artists have presented the story of Romeo and Juliet in stone and pigment. Look at works by Ford Maddox Brown, Hugues Merle and Julius Kronberg in addition to peeking at art and the state health marketplace. Mount Kisco Public Library, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday (except Feb. 18 and 20). Info: 914-741-0276 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.


Mahjongg Club. Intermediates players welcome. Participants must bring their own set. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-666-8041 or www.mountkiscolibrary.org.


Lifeline Theater Music Program. An outlet for unlocking the potential of children and adults with special needs through integrated arts and life skills programs. Perform in an arena in tandem and join founder Billy Ayres as he uses singing, dancing, creating plays, artwork and gardening to help participants realize their strengths and potential contributions to their communities. Ayres has created a technique called improvisational integrated music/drama. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free. Every Thursday and Friday. Info: Visit www.lifelinetheaterinc.org/index.html.

Toddler Storytime. Finger plays, action rhymes, songs and stories to encourage the enjoyment of books and to stimulate early listening, learning and speaking skills. Recommended for children one to two-and-a-half years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday (except Feb. 18 and 20). Info: 914-741-0276 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

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People Love Yarn. Share your knowledge or learn from the group. All skill levels welcome. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: Contact Louann Rooney at rooneylm@optonline.net.

Owning a Part-Time Business While Keeping Your Job. Frank Dunne, owner of FranNet of New York Capital Region and FranNet of Westchester. Come to learn about the best of both worlds – having a full-time career plus the opportunity to build wealth and equity through franchising. This workshop will show you how to diversify your income stream, increase your equity and prepare for a healthy retirement for the next 10 years. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mount Kisco Library, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 10 to 10:30 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday. Info: 914-741-0276 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

Knitting Circle. This group is open to everyone who has an interest in knitting. Live, love, laugh, learn and have fun together during these creative journeys. Come share patterns and ideas and celebrate creative spirits together while enjoying the ancient art of knitting. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Every Monday and Thursday (except Feb. 17). Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.
The Unlikely Culinary Competitions for Super Bowl Sunday

By Nick Antonaccio

Once again, we’re in the middle of that period of football wasteland, especially with no home team to root for in the post season. Nevertheless, here comes the spectacle of Super Bowl LIV. Regardless of the long gridiron tradition, it is as anticipated for its off-field festivities as it is for its on-field combat. The season has come down to a single game and the glory and esteem it will bestow on the San Francisco 49ers or the Kansas City Chiefs.

Super Bowl Sunday brings together friends and family to indulge in the biggest junk food day of the year. Once a year we indulge guilt-free in those waist-widening, artery-clogging foods we try to avoid fasting by all means. And what better way to wash down those calories and fat than with your favorite beverage.

But what will we be enjoying this Sunday? Here are several food facts for Super Bowl Sunday from the National Restaurant Association:

There will be 48 million Americans who will order takeout food. What will we be eating? For 69 percent of us, we will be noshing on salsa, chips and dips and 63 percent will be inhaling chicken wings. In fact, according to the National Chicken Council, 1.25 billion chicken wings will be devoured. They calculate that is enough to put 572 wings on every seat in all 32 NFL stadiums.

With culinary highlights and lowlights in mind, here is my premise for this week’s column: a Super Bowl Challenge for the best food, wine and beer produced in the two rival football regions.

Food

After New York City, San Francisco is the dining capital of the United States. From the eclectic and bountiful waters of the bay, to the culinary heights of haute cuisine in the downtown area, to the ultimate Italian comfort food in North Beach, diners continually find “one of my favorite meals” in San Francisco. And don’t forget the Irish coffee at the Buena Vista Café.

Kansas City has cultivated a cult following for its pork and beef for over two centuries. Barbecue restaurants tempt locals and tourists with the wafting aromas of smoldering smoked ribs, chops and brisket. World-acclaimed steakhouses ply high-quality offerings from prized local ranches and butcher houses. Jess & Jim’s, Rye and Plaza III are standouts.

In this category the edge goes to San Francisco. Like the 49ers, it consistently delivers on what it promises, at a level far surpassing the norm.

Wine

Wine is an easy category. Just 45 minutes north of San Francisco lie two of the most famous and highly revered wine regions in the world, Napa and Sonoma counties.

But don’t sell Kansas City short. The foundation of the American wine industry must pay tribute to the Norton grape variety, first cultivated in Missouri in the early 19th century. In one year, 1880, production reached two million gallons, the highest in the United States.

Raise your glasses of Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon as you salute the underdog 49ers, facing the powerhouse offense of a Chiefs team akin to the powerful history of the Norton grape.

Beer

Craft beers are growing in popularity, a testament to the new generation of talented brew masters. Both Jimmy Garoppolo and Patrick Mahomes are stars this season. San Francisco craft beer makers like Anchor, 21st Amendment, Barrel Head and Cellarmaker have been rising in esteem since the last century.

But don’t count out Kansas City. Its high-powered football team is a reflection of the influence and might of the state’s beer success. Yes, I know, Anheuser-Busch is a juggernaut, but is it the posterchild for the shifting tide of the beer industry to craft beer? Kansas City has its share of popular craft brewers, including Boulevard Brewing, Bier Station and Torn Label.

However, San Francisco easily overshadows Kansas City in this category, even if more Bud and Bud Light will be consumed this Sunday than any other beer.

Super (Snack) Bowl Sunday is nirvana for football enthusiasts and junk food aficionados alike. Whichever camp you fall into, just kick back and enjoy the game and the camaraderie. Nick Antonaccio is a 40-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member of the Wine Media Guild of wine writers. 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

By Erin Maher

According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, millennials may be the first generation to see our life expectancies level off or even decline. Which is really upsetting news, as I plan on keeping my heart beating until I can attend an NSYNC reunion concert.

A 2019 report published by Blue Cross Blue Shield took a deep dive into millennial health, and the results were troubling. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a 30 percent increase in major depression among millennials. This increase is causing millennials to self-medicate, most notably on opioids. In October 2017, opioid use was declared a national health emergency. In 2018, Westchester County police reported 213 overdoses, 68 of which were fatal.

“I think millennials have grown up in a world that has much more uncertainty in it, and that uncertainty bombards them on a daily basis,” said Dr. Diane Urban, a psychologist and college professor, has been practicing in Westchester for close to 30 years and is also the founder of real-matters.com, a website dedicated to exploring interpersonal relationships through the lens of psychology.

Environmental factors aside, technology can also be detrimental. “Technology, social media, the availability of information, while awesome in so many respects, I think is very damaging psychologically,” Wu said.

The 24/7 news cycle can be draining. Tragic news was once confined to the five o’clock news or the print in a daily paper, but now we are bombarded with bad news regularly.

Social media also plays a large part in mental health for us millennials. Instagram has transformed what was once keeping up with the Joneses next door, to keeping up with countless jetsetters and celebrities. And no matter how many times I sing “Let’s Get Loud,” I’ll never want to hear the whisper where you should be, what you should be doing, how you should be doing things. Try changing the shoulds to needs or wants and see where it takes you.

So get up, get outside and leave your cell phone in the car. And millennials, if you’re looking for an off-line activity, may I suggest stepping away from the computer and picking up a copy of The Examiner? Heard there are excellent columns to read.

Erin Maher is a writer in Westchester County, N.Y. Find more of her musings at erinmaherwrites.com or follow her on Twitter and Instagram @erinmaherwrites.
OMG! A Crazy World of Real Estate Shorthand from AO to ZB

This week’s Home Guru is an updated column from several years ago.

You don’t have to be a realtor, as am I, to appreciate – or be perplexed by – a whole world of activities and terms in real estate that can be abbreviated to a few letters.

We’ve all grown up with abbreviations and acronyms that probably originated at sea, such as SOS (save our ship) to FOSH (port out, starboard home) and many others for everyday living that nearly everyone is familiar with. There’s VIP, RSVP and ASAP, and the important one I learned attending college in a dry state, BYOL (bring your own liquor).

Not all of us studied Gregg or Pitman, but a new shorthand developed, then exploded, with the invention of the personal computer, then the Internet. Who ever heard of LOL (laughing out loud), IMHO (in my humble opinion) and the ubiquitous OMG! (oh, my God!) before we logged on? And now that we’ve learned to text, much of what we send and receive makes it look as though we’re all secret agents.

But in RE (real estate), the world of abbreviations and acronyms frequently draws questions about meanings among realtors and blank looks from buyers and sellers as we start to automatically reference letters from the alphabet, from AO (acceptable offer) to ZB (zoning board), CMA (comparative market analysis) and CO (certificate of occupancy).

Keeping up with these abbreviations is a continuing learning process that can lead to misunderstanding, double interpretations and silly sounds. My favorite is FISBO, for sale by owner, which when I first heard it sounded to me like a digestive remedy.

This subject came to mind recently when I was having a rather uncomfortable conversation with a service provider. This provider, who installed tiling, refused to give me a solid estimate of what it would cost to have some tiles repaired and replaced at the water line of my pool.

When I shared with him that I was hoping it might be about $500, he retorted, “No way! It’s going to be a lot more than that!” When I asked how much more, he said, “I won’t know until I actually do the work and then it will all be ‘TM.’”

The only TM I knew was transcendental meditation, which I thought I would surely need when our conversation was over. When I summoned my courage to ask what TM was, he was happy to educate me: time management. When I actually did the work and it took a whole week, I was convinced it was probably more like $5000.

Not to be overlooked for confusion are those abbreviations with double meanings such as AC (air conditioning, but it can also mean acre) and FHA, which can mean Federal Housing Authority or forced mortgage. Those that definitely need explanation more carious are those interpretations and silly sounds.

Some sound either funny or crude, such as PUB (planned unit development), HOA (homeowners association), HUD (Department of Housing and Urban Development) and NOO (nonowner occupied).

Then there are all the financial terms to keep straight, such as APR (annual percentage rate) and ARM (adjustable rate mortgage).

Those that definitely need explanation the first time around may be DVAC (central vacuum), HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), and the one I’ll never remember if I live to be 100 years old, GFI or GFCI (ground-fault circuit interrupter), a special electrical receptacle that protects us from electrocution in high-risk areas such as bathrooms and kitchens.

Before I’m ready to draw a conclusion, I’ll relate an incident in which I was convinced that abbreviations, while convenient, may be taken too far.

I was in a back-and-forth e-mail conversation with a seller’s agent concerning an offer I was trying to make on behalf of my buyer client. She said she would be sure to “follow up” with the response of the seller by e-mail. Granted, it was a somewhat lowball offer, but I was initially startled when the return e-mail’s subject line said simply, “FU.”

Bill Primavera is a Realtor® with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester (www.PrimaveraPR.com), specializing in lifestyles, real estate and development. His real estate site is www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com. To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.
Teatown Hudson River EagleFest, the annual festival celebrating the bald eagle’s winter migration to the Hudson River, will soar once again on Saturday, Feb. 8 at Croton Point Park.

This year’s celebration features expanded programming including presentations by the renowned filmmaker, Christopher Peyreigne, and award-winning filmmaker Jon Bowermaster. Additionally, longtime favorites of the event, including bird experts Bill Streeter, Brian Robinson and Brian Bradley, will make special presentations of their own.

“EagleFest stands out as a community event because it is fun, inspiring and brings people of all ages together to share a very uplifting story — the comeback of the bald eagle from the brink of extinction,” said Teatown’s Executive Director Kevin Carter. “The event’s collaborative spirit comes from an outpouring of positive energy and the participation of nonprofit organizations, families, businesses, schools and government.”

Each year, thousands flock to Croton Point Park to see live bird-of-prey shows and demonstrations, and especially to see wild bald eagles and other birds of prey thriving in their natural habitat along the Hudson River. Bald eagles have rebounded as a result of federal and state protections and can now be seen nesting and hunting along the river.

The region’s foremost raptor and environmental experts will lead demonstrations and other nature-related workshops and presentations to guests of all ages.

This year’s featured presenters include: Christine Peyreigne: Peyreigne became a falconer and started hunting with her red-tailed hawk, Theron, when she was just 16 years old. She joined by her bald eagle, Aurora, among other raptors.

Bobby Horvath: A licensed wildlife rehabilitator and active-duty FDNY firefighter, Horvath will present at EagleFest for the first time with his bald eagle, Montana, as well as other raptors.

Bill Streeter: Director of the Delaware Raptor Center who has over 30 years of experience as a raptor rehabilitator, falconer and educator. Streeter will be joined by his bald eagle, Benson, and other birds of prey.

Brian Robinson: A master falconer who has been providing wildlife education programs for over 25 years. His programs focus on the resiliency of birds of prey and other wildlife across the New York State, with an emphasis on the Hudson Valley.

Brian Bradley: A falconer since 1984, Bradley now does educational programming all over the Northeast with his hawks, falcons and owls. His program, “Skyhunters in Flight,” features live flight demonstrations with his birds of prey.

Jon Bowermaster: Bowermaster is a writer, filmmaker, adventurer and a six-time grantee of the National Geographic Expeditions Council and will join the EagleFest lineup this year to show exclusive clips from his new film series “Hope on the Hudson.”

Guests will be able to enjoy selections from a variety of food trucks outside the main tent and are encouraged to dress for the weather. Food trucks and some educational activities, including wild eagle spotting and bird walks, are outdoors.

Teatown has also set an impressive goal for the 2020 EagleFest: to only produce one bag of trash. Teatown’s Community Environmentalist, Nadya Hall, is leading this effort by working with vendors and the Parks Department.

“Festivals are notorious for producing obscene amounts of trash,” Hall said. “As we reflect on our own responsibility as environmental stewards, we are excited to rise to the challenge and tackle this ambitious goal with the help of our extended family of community volunteers.”

Teatown is also bringing back EagleFest bus tours. Travel by charter bus with a Teatown educator for an in-depth view of eagles in their habitat. Tours stop at the New Croton Dam, Verplanck Steamboat Riverfront Park and George’s Island Park in Montrose. Stops may change due to weather. Tour times are 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Bus tours are intended for guests 12 years old and up. Tickets are $35 per person and do not include admission to Eagle Headquarters. To sign up for the bus tours, call 914-762-2912 ext. 110.

EagleFest 2020 will be held at Croton Point Park, located at 1 Croton Point Ave. in Croton-on-Hudson from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pre-sale tickets are $22 for adults, $13 for children (6 to 11 years old) and free for children five and under. Tickets sold at the venue on the day of the event are $25 for adults, $15 for children (6 to 11 years old) and free for children five and under. The snow date is Sunday, Feb. 9.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit teatown.org/eaglefest.

Happenings

continued from page 18

Teatown to Celebrate EagleFest Feb. 8 at Croton Point Park

Christine Peyreigne, the youngest falconer in the state of Connecticut, will be joining the EagleFest lineup this year.

350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 3:30 p.m. Free. Registration recommended; walk-ins welcome. Info and registration: 914-769-0688.


Arts and Crafts. Print, glue and color yourself something cool to take home. Each session will feature a different craft. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-5867 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

DIY Pinecone Light-up Jar. Light up the dark winter months with a decorative pinecone jar. For children seven years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Registration recommended. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

Read to Rover. Dogs love listening to stories. Come meet Rover and read your favorite story. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 5 to 6 p.m. Free. Thrusdays from 5 to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to noon. Info: 914-666-8041 or www.mountkiscolibrary.org.

Community Talk: Teen Vaping Crisis. Get the facts on vaping so you know what to say to your kids about when you approach the conversation with your child or student. Come for a panel discussion and Q&A where Northern Westchester Hospital medical experts, who have treated patients dealing with the dangerous effects of vaping, will answer questions and weigh in on the latest trends and best practices. Presenters are Dr. Richard Stumacher, chief, pulmonary and critical care medicine, Dr. Maryann Buettig-Sgouros, chair, department of pediatrics, and Jennifer Lucas, smoking cessation coordinator. Chappaqua Crossing Conference Center, lower level, 480 Bedford Rd., Chappaqua. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Free. Snow date: Feb. 6. Registration required. Info and registration: Visit vapingtalk.eventbrite.com.

Oscar Talk 2020. In a year without a single frontrunner, we’ve seen an exciting, robust mix of filmmakers working at the top of their game: from Hollywood masters ("The Irishman," “Once Upon A Time... in Hollywood") and audience favorites ("Jojo Rabbit," "Knives Out," “Us”) to directors on the rise ("The Farewell," "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood") and the international phenomenon that is "Parasite." This year’s featured presenters include: Brian Robinson: A master falconer who has been providing wildlife education programs for over 25 years. His programs focus on the resiliency of birds of prey and other wildlife across the New York State, with an emphasis on the Hudson Valley. Bradley: A falconer since 1984, Bradley now does educational programming all over the Northeast with his hawks, falcons and owls. His program, "Skyhunters in Flight," features live flight demonstrations with his birds of prey. Jon Bowermaster: Bowermaster is a writer, filmmaker, adventurer and a six-time grantee of the National Geographic Expeditions Council and will join the EagleFest lineup this year to show exclusive clips from his new film series “Hope on the Hudson.”

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For more information or to purchase tickets, visit teatown.org/eaglefest.

Passport to Fitness for Kids. Get fit and learn dance moves from around the world with a fun Zumba class. For children four to six years old. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 a.m. to noon. Free. Every Friday. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

Art Show: Bedford. The 47th annual art show features a blend of contemporary and traditional artwork in all media. The show is a fundraiser for many local non-profits. St. Matthew’s Church Fellowship Hall, 382 Cantioe St., Bedford. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free admission. Also Feb. 1 and 2. Info: Visit www.artsshowbedford.org.


Art Show: Tarrytown. The 16th annual juried artshowbedford.org.


Author Talk: “Dangerous Melodies: Classical Music in America from the Great War Through Cold War.” Dangerous Melodies vividly evokes a time when classical music stood at the center of 20th century American life, occupying a continued on page 22.
prominent place in the nation’s culture and politics. Momentous international events were intertwined with the work of renowned conductors, instrumentalists and singers. Author Jonathan Rosenberg, a Juilliard-trained musician and professor of history at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center, explores this fascinating entanglement. New Castle Town Hall, 200 S. Gleeve Ave., Chappaqua. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

Friday Night Film Series: “Crooked House.” This thriller, billed as a twisted Agatha Christie tale, features a spy-turned-private detective who is hired by his former lover to catch her grandfather’s murderer before Scotland Yard exposes dark family secrets. With Terrace Stamp, Glenn Close, Julian Sands and Max Irons. Post-screening discussion led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East and his web series “COP Show.” Quinn: The New York Story” directed by Quinn, whose face belongs on the cover of the New York Times, is a bio of renowned conductors, instrumentalists and singers. Author Jonathan Rosenberg, a Juilliard-trained musician and professor of history at Hunter College and the CUNY Graduate Center, explores this fascinating entanglement. New Castle Town Hall, 200 S. Gleeve Ave., Chappaqua. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

Westchester Photographic Society: Showcase. Members present a 20-minute showcase of their photography on any topic of their choice. For adults 18 years old and up. $15 per meeting. The College of New Rochelle, Technology Building, Room 107, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. (Use Parking Lot 1) 8 p.m. Free. Info: 914-827-5535 or visit www.cnwpphoto.org.

Colin Quinn: “Wrong Side of History.” From MTV’s “Remote Control” to “Saturday Night Live” and Comedy Central’s “Tough Crowd With Colin Quinn,” he is not one to take a hint and bow out gracefully. He’s been on Broadway with “Colin Quinn: An Irish Wake” and “Colin Quinn: Long Story Short” as well as the HBO special “Colin Quinn: Unconstitutional,” “Colin Quinn: The New York Story” directed by Jerry Seinfeld on Netflix and off-Broadway credits. Recent credits include “Trainwreck,” “Almost famous” and his web series “Cop Show.” His first book, “The Coloring Book,” is now out from Grand Central Publishing. Last January, Quinn’s newest one-man show, “Red State Blue State,” premiered to rave reviews at the Minetta Lane Theatre in New York. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St., Tarrytown. 8 p.m. $30, $35 and $45. Info and tickets: Visit www.tarrytownmusichall.org.

“Animals Out of Paper.” To close out Art Stages’ fifth season of their professional company, the Next Stage, is this funny, poignant play about the collision of mismatched people and the complicated ways we hurt, heal and love those around us. Starring Emily Sohn, David Lanson and Julian Sands and Max Irons. Post-screening discussion led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East.

Pleasantville Farmers Market. The delicious good time moves indoors for the winter. A great way to support regional agriculture and eat healthy, year-round with plenty of warm smiles and community togetherness. Pleasantville Middle School, 40 Romer Ave., Pleasantville. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please note the market is a dog-free environment. Indoor market continues through Mar. 28. Info: Visit www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.com.

Zumba Fitness. Achieve long-term benefits while having a blast in one exciting hour of calorie-burning, body-energizing, awe-inspiring movements meant to engage and captivate for life. For all fitness levels. Dance Emotions, 75 S. Gleeve Ave., Chappaqua. 10 a.m. Every Monday and Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. Drop in or weekly discount rates available. Info: Contact Peggy at 914-960-4097.

Practice Tai Chi With Larry Attille. Learn specific feldenkrais and chi kung breathing techniques for deep relaxation and freedom to move. This is a hands-on class that will be geared to the level of experience of the class and challenge all participants. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a floor mat or towel. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East. Armonk. 10:30 a.m. Free. Reserve your spot. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

Winter Wolves. Winter offers families a unique opportunity to visit the wolves during their favorite time of year. Learn about the wolf's life cycle and ecology of wolf families and discover why this season is such a magical time for packs in North America. Whether the wolves are living on the Arctic tundra or the woodlands of the southwest, wolf families are out searching for prey as their growing pups head out to explore their new world. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Alava, Nakai and Zephyr and potentially the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Enjoy hot beverages in our woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 2 p.m. Adults: $15. Children (under 12): $12. Also Feb. 2 and 23 at 11 a.m. and Feb. 22 at 2 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info: 914-666-8041 or visit www.nywolf.org.

FeederWatch. Receive assistance with any of your technology devices. PC, Google, Microsoft savvy volunteers help with troubleshooting, downloading, Overdrive, Freegal, Hoopla or any other online service. First-come, first-served. Mount Kisco Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 1 to 2:30 p.m. Saturdays from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and Tuesdays from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-666-8041 or www.mountkissolibrary.org.


Open Art Studio. All supplies are open to share models and techniques. Open to all residents in planting trees. Sponsored and Free. First Saturday of every month. Info: 914-688-0900. For eligibility Camerata’s Super Music Bowl Extravaganza. A concert that tackles a classical music playbook of winning compositions from well-known composers. Westchester Community College’s Classroom Building, Room 200, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. 3 p.m. $22. Info: 914-606-6282 or visit www.usnywcc.edu.

The Benefit of Trees. Come learn about the benefits of trees and issues related to climate and climate change. Learn about the variety of interesting trees in Nanahannak Park and the 50-50 program to assist residents in planting trees. Sponsored and presented by the Pleasantville Conservation Advisory Council. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 3 to 4 p.m. Free. Info: E0mail Helen@Loring.net.

It’s Groundhog Day! Listen to a story; learn about groundhogs and enjoy a craft in honor of Groundhog Day. For children three to seven years old with a caregiver. Briarcliff Manor Public Library, 1 Library Rd., Briarcliff Manor. 4 p.m. Free. Info: Contact Amy Kaplan at 914-941-7097 or e-mail abkaplant@gmail.com.


Irvington Folk Festival. Irvington Theater and Common Ground Concerts will present this two-night inaugural festival. This evening will feature sets by The Dustbowl Revival, an eclectic Los Angeles-based eight-piece Americana ensemble, the acclaimed singer-songwriter, storyteller and multi-instrumentalist Joe Crookston and young banjo prodigy Nora Brown. Irvington Theater, 85 Main St., Irvington. 7 p.m. VIP, $75; Standard, $60. Info and tickets: Visit www.irvingtontheater.com or www.commonmorgongroundconcerts.com.

Sunday, Feb. 2

Blood Drive. Coordinated by the New York Blood Center, all eligible donors 16 years old and up and weighing at least 110 pounds are welcome to participate. Donors who are 16 years old must submit a signed parental permission form. Donors should bring their NYB donor ID card. Refreshments provided to donors after their donation. Greenburgh Hebrew Center, 515 Broadway, Dobbs Ferry. 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments recommended; walk-ins welcome. Appointments: Visit www.nybloodcenter.org or e-mail blooddrive@gh-c.org. Info: 914-693-4260 or e-mail Dr. Andrew Goldstein at blooddrive@gh-c.org. For eligibility questions, call 800-688-0900.

Camelot’s Super Music Bowl Extravaganza. A concert that tackles a classical music playbook of winning compositions from well-known composers. Westchester Community College’s Classroom Building, Room 200, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. 3 p.m. $22. Info: 914-606-6282 or visit www.usnywcc.edu.

The Benefit of Trees. Come learn about the benefits of trees and issues related to climate and climate change. Learn about the variety of interesting trees in Nanahannak Park and the 50-50 program to assist residents in planting trees. Sponsored and presented by the Pleasantville Conservation Advisory Council. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 3 to 4 p.m. Free. Info: E0mail Helen@Loring.net.

It’s Groundhog Day! Listen to a story; learn about groundhogs and enjoy a craft in honor of Groundhog Day. For children three to seven years old with a caregiver. Briarcliff Manor Public Library, 1 Library Rd., Briarcliff Manor. 4 p.m. Free. Info: Contact Amy Kaplan at 914-941-7097 or e-mail abkaplant@gmail.com.

Monday, Feb. 3

Here We Are Together: Story Time for Children. Story time for children of all ages from newborns to school age. No registration required; brought with a parent or caregiver. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 11:15 to 11:45 a.m. Free. Every Monday (except Feb. 17). Info: 914-666-8041 or www. mountkissolibrary.org.

Belly Dancing. Learn this captivating Middle Eastern dance and enrich your continued on page 25
New Westchester County Tourism Program Launched

Not just a place to go for a hike, a meal or a concert, Westchester is a place to become immersed in memorable activities, culture and surroundings. It’s an ideal getaway, a departure from the everyday.

“Westchester County is the heart of the Hudson Valley and is a destination that generates billions of dollars in tourism revenue for the region,” said County Executive George Latimer. “Today’s launch of our new tourism campaign – “Beyond” – showcases the county to attract new visitors for a getaway – a departure from the everyday.”

Last year, the county’s Department of Film & Tourism’s marketing firm Mower conducted research with leisure travelers and meeting and event planners to gain insight on how those outside Westchester viewed the county’s strengths and appeal. The data helped the firm evolve tourism’s creative approach into a new campaign aimed at differentiating Westchester by showing the range of experiences available to all types of potential visitors – both business and leisure.

The focus groups included leisure travelers from Stamford, Conn., New York City and Marlton, N.J. and meeting and event planners within and outside of Westchester. The data from these focus groups showed that there is plenty of interest, with nearly 70 percent of respondents saying that they are likely to visit Westchester in the future. “Mower is committed to our partnership with Westchester County Tourism & Film,” said Mary Gendron, Mower’s senior vice president and managing director. “Getting to this ‘Beyond’ campaign creative has been collaborative and rewarding. That we were able to develop it based on solid, current market research has given it a strong foundation. We look forward to deploying the campaign with the goal of stimulating additional tourism, and tourism dollars, for the county.”

Westchester County, which retained Playland is one of many attractions that brings visitors from outside the county to Westchester.

Mower in late 2018, is one of the nation’s top independent marketing, advertising and public relations firms and a specialist in travel and tourism marketing. The new marketing campaign showcases striking photography by local photographer Rob D’Angelo of destinations that delight visitors and exceed traveler expectations. The tagline is “Beyond expectations.” According to a recent report, visitor spending in Westchester supported 24,360 jobs either directly or indirectly in 2018, about 5 percent of all jobs in the county. Westchester comprises 39 percent of all Hudson Valley region visitor-supported jobs. Other notable highlights:

• In total, visitor spending grew 5 percent in 2018, representing 45 percent of all visitor spending in the Hudson Valley region. This ranks Westchester County third in visitor spending in New York State behind New York City and Long Island.

• Tourism benefits many industry sectors in Westchester County with all visitor spending categories growing in 2018 to make up a nearly $2 billion record. Spending on lodging jumped 8 percent, followed by food and beverage and retail and service stations, which rose 5 percent. Recreation, transportation and spending on second homes also climbed 4 percent each.

• Travel and tourism continues to be a significant driver of the county’s economy, providing revenue to support vital county services that residents rely on. Local and state taxes generated $233 million in 2018 from the travel and tourism industry alone.

“This new tourism campaign is a commitment to make the industry stronger and boost tourism in Westchester County, said Westchester County Office of Film & Tourism Director Natasha Caputo. “Travelers have many getaway options and see lots of messages; ‘Beyond’ inspires and breaks through the noise – it’s true to what we have to offer as a destination.”
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**HELP WANTED**

HOTEL CLEANING - White Plains: T&L Cleaning is looking for housekeeping staff for various hotels. Room attendants, laundry attendants, house-persons and supervisors. Apply on-line at tcleanservices.com or call (800) 610-4770.

**LANDSCAPE WORKER AT CEMETARY** Full-Time, Year-Round Position. Excellent Pay, Health Insurance and 401K. Experience Preferred. Must have clean, valid driver’s license and own car. No public transportation to cemetery. To apply, email resume or brief work history to cemetery123@optonline.net

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is Thursdays at 5pm for the next week’s publication
There’s an excellent film I saw last year, called “Bloody Sunday.” A 2002 release, it commemorates the events of Jan. 30, 1972, when a relatively peaceful civil rights march through the streets of Derry in Northern Ireland turned tragically bloody as a British paratroop regiment fired into a crowd of marchers, killing 13 and wounding many more.

The incident was a watershed event in the most recent occurrence of “The Troubles,” lasting roughly from 1969 until the peace accords signed on Good Friday, Apr. 10, 1998. On that day a relative peace was struck between two bitterly opposed factions in the North, the largely Protestant Unionists who favor continued inclusion of the six counties of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, and the largely Catholic Nationalists who seek unification with the 26 counties of the Irish Republic to the south and west.

However shaky that peace may at times seem, it be, it has been a marked improvement over the state of affairs that existed for nearly 30 years beforehand, years which saw the tragic deaths of almost 3,500 people on all sides of the struggle. Unfortunately, the danger of sectarian violence still lies like a fault line, separating the two halves of the population.

It was the 13 deaths on that January day which sparked the flame, to borrow a phrase from a rebel song. Though quite possibly provoked by demonstrators who had turned portions of the march from peaceful protest to active violence when confronted by lines of armed British troops intent on stopping them, the majority of the marchers, numbering between 10,000 and 15,000, conducted themselves in relatively peaceful fashion.

But things rapidly deteriorated when British paratroopers, called in a day earlier, stopped the marchers from leaving a Catholic section of Derry and entering a Protestant section. Command had been issued to not let the marchers past that point. The paratroopers, already accused of often using excessive force, readily carried out the commands.

When bottles and stones were thrown by a small group of marchers who had splintered off from the main group, the paratroopers waded into the crowd of protesters and began arresting dozens. The scene quickly descended into chaos, with shots fired both into the crowd and at specific targets. Within 10 minutes, 13 lay dead. One more would die months later, bringing the death toll to 14. The image of an unarmed soldier firing at unarmed civilians engaged in what had been largely a peaceful protest, turned a potential flashpoint into an ignited powder keg.

In the aftermath, an official investigation was conducted. The Widgery Inquiry, named for its head, Lord Chief Justice Widgery, largely absolved the troops. Branded a “whitewash” from the moment it was released, this initial government response did little to calm rising tensions.

A second inquiry, pushed by then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair and led by Lord Saville, spent years coming through evidence and conducting extensive interviews on all sides. The Saville Inquiry began in 1998, 26 years after the tragic events. Its report, when finally issued in 2010, concluded that every single civilian shot had been unarmed. Most of none of them posed any significant threat to the troops and that the troops had issued no warning before indiscriminately opening fire.

The event made its way into popular culture through book, film and song. A good nonfiction account is Don Mullan’s 1987 critique of the Widgery Inquiry, “Bloody Sunday: Massacre in Northern Ireland,” in which an eyewitness pulls apart the then-official British response to the tragedy.

The song “Sunday Bloody Sunday,” written and released by Irish super band U2 in 1982, acquainted many throughout the world with the ongoing struggle for equality in Northern Ireland, a still-elusive goal.

Pleasantville resident Brian McGowan was born and raised in the Bronx. He is a second-, third- and fifth-generation Irish-American/Canadian, as his immigrant ancestors followed several paths to the New World. He has written two books, “Love, Son John,” about a relative’s experiences as a U.S. soldier during World War II, and “Thunder at Noon,” a work of historical fiction based on the Battle of Waterloo. Both books are available at Amazon.com. Reach him at brian.m.mcgowan1952@gmail.com or on Twitter (@Bmcguowan52). To see more of his writing on “things Irish,” follow his blog, “Rethinking Irish,” at www.rethinkingirish.com.
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PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the tax year 2020-2021 Tentative Assessment Roll will be filed February 1, 2020 with the Village Clerk, 80 Wheeler Avenue, Pleasantville, New York, where it may be seen and examined by any person at all times during business hours (8:00am-4:00pm). The Board of Trustees and the Assessor will meet for the purpose of completing such assessment roll and of hearing and determining grievances in relations thereto by any person(s) conceiving himself aggrieved thereby on Tuesday February 18, 2020, between the hours of 6:00pm to 9:00pm, at the Clinton Street Senior Center, 1A Clinton Street, Pleasantville, New York. The last filing date is February 18, 2020. Village of Pleasantville, Pleasantville, New York 10570, Noreen Regan Deputy Village Clerk

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Fourth-Quarter Scoring Drought Dooms the Wildcats

By Rob DiAntonio

Westlake’s boys’ basketball team has thrived in close games this season, with five of its 11 wins coming by four points or less. The Wildcats found themselves in another tight contest when they traveled to Croton-Harmon for the Hoops for Heroes Tournament on Saturday night.

The fourth quarter, however, proved to be their undoing in a 55-42 loss to the host Tigers. Westlake scored just five points in the fourth and was held without a field goal over the final 7:20.

Croton trailed 42-41 with 5:08 left, but took the lead at 43-42 and would not trail again. The Tigers hit back-to-back 3-pointers to take a 49-42 lead with 3:25 to play. Westlake was outscored 14-0 over the final five minutes.

“Two of those threes were guys who don’t shoot threes, too,” said Westlake coach Chad Charney, whose team had defeated Croton by 12 points just two weeks prior. “We haven’t seen them shoot a three so that was uncharacteristic turnovers and beating them to loose balls.

“We kind of shied away,” Charney said. “Our shots weren’t falling. They were kind of out hustling us a little bit to start the first quarter... [Turnovers] are not the usual for us. We’ve got pretty good guard play where we don’t turn it over that much. We were coughing the ball up a lot on a press that wasn’t real denial press.”

Carter Falkenberg, a junior guard, helped the Wildcats stay afloat. He converted on a 3-point play and senior Matt Martin finished at the rim on a fast break. Justin Silva nailed a corner three to cut it to 23-13. Falkenberg scored after a steal and Martin made two free throws. The crafty Falkenberg maneuvered his way to the rim to make it a six-point game with 48 seconds left in the half. Matt Pierro nailed a corner three to send the Wildcats into halftime trailing 27-22.

Mike Mancuso sparked a third-quarter surge with consecutive 3-pointers. The second one was on a designed inbounds play where he was wide open at the top of the key, trimming the Croton lead to 32-30 midway through the quarter.

Hamad Azhar secured a steal and found Falkenberg for another three the hard way to give Westlake its first lead at 33-32 with 1:40 left in the third quarter. Falkenberg finished on a fast break to extend the lead. He later scored again on another steal. The Wildcats led 37-36 after three quarters.

Croton quickly regained the lead in the fourth, but Silva’s 3-point shot put Westlake back up less than a minute into the fourth. Silva’s long-range bomb, however, was the final field goal Westlake made.

“The middle quarters were fine, it was the front and the tail,” Charney said of the Wildcats’ struggles in the first and fourth quarters. “This is a game that we should be winning. This is an emotional day for [Croton]. It’s their big event and they took it to us.”

Falkenberg, who led Westlake with a game-high 21 points, was a bright spot but had trouble finishing in the final few minutes of the fourth quarter.

“He missed a ton of shots in the fourth quarter that he usually makes,” Charney noted. “The layups and things like that. He’s pretty athletic getting to the rim. But he missed a couple that I thought he would make. But, also, the big guy was in foul trouble in the middle of their zone and we didn’t really attack him. We kind of shied away.”

Mancuso added eight points for the Wildcats, while Silva netted six points.

Westlake (11-3) was scheduled to return to action on Monday, January 27, a home game against winless Gorton. Then the Wildcats welcome Hawthorne Cedar Knolls for a 4:30 p.m. game on Jan. 28. The Wildcats conclude a busy week when they travel to Valhalla for an 11 a.m. contest on Saturday, Feb. 1.

“We can’t have these first and fourth quarters,” Charney said. “I think the middle quarters were good, but you can’t have five points in the fourth quarter and expect to win. We’ve got to finish games. We’ve done that. We’ve won a lot of one- to five-point games the last five. We’ve just got to clean some stuff up.”
Daniel Fontana of Byram Hills takes the puck across center ice in Friday night’s home loss to Nyack/Tappan Zee.

The Foxes’ Jake Wollman controls the puck along the left wing at Brewster Ice Arena.

Zach Berger of Byram Hills is pressured from behind as he skates up the ice with the puck during Friday night’s game at Brewster Ice Arena.

Byram Hills’ James Seiferheld searches for an open teammate in Friday’s 5-0 loss to Nyack/Tappan Zee.

Henry Della Penna leads a rush up the ice in Fox Lane’s home loss on Saturday evening at the Brewster Ice Arena.

Fox Lane’s Henry Della Penna sends a shot on goal in the second period of Saturday night’s game at the Brewster Ice Arena.

Byram Hills goalie Ben Sfarra keeps his eyes on the nearby puck as he and the Bobcats battle visiting Nyack at Brewster Ice Arena.

Adam Maiorano of Fox Lane moves the puck up the ice Saturday against visiting ETBE, a combo team with players from Eastchester, Tuckahoe, Bronxville and Edgemont.

The Bobcats’ Owen Fleischer stays ready while waiting for the puck to drop during a first-period faceoff on Friday night.

Fox Lane senior captain Max Rauch battles for control of the puck in the second period of Saturday night’s loss to ETBE.

Austin Carlin of Byram Hills gets ready to send a pass up the ice in the second period vs. Nyack/Tappan Zee.
Fourth-Quarter Burst Carries the Bobcats to a Win at Fox Lane

By Andy Jacobs

Just when it seemed the Fox Lane boys’ basketball team might be on the verge of its most impressive win of the season, a three-minute burst by the Byram Hills Bobcats suddenly brought an end to the Foxes’ upset bid.

With Mike Parrotta and Sam Goldman each providing a 3-pointer from the left elbow, the Bobcats went on an 11-0 spurt in the fourth quarter that carried them to a 53-45 victory over the host Foxes in front of a large and raucous crowd on Friday night. Parrotta finished with 18 points and 11 rebounds, while Goldman chipped in with 13 points as Byram Hills improved to 10-3 this season.

“Great environment, great rivalry,” said Bobcats head coach Ted Repa soon after his team had stepped up down the stretch to quell the fired-up Foxes. “Really nice atmosphere. Fans were really into it. It’s been a few years since we’ve played here, and on a Friday night, not to mention.”

Fox Lane, 5-8 after its sixth loss in the last seven games, spent most of the evening playing catch-up. But when senior guard Will Crerend, who scored a team-high 17 points, provided back-to-back baskets early in the final quarter, the contest was suddenly tied at 38 apiece, the Foxes’ student cheering section was turning up the volume and a surprise outcome seemed possible.

But moments later, Parrotta sent a high-arching 3-point shot swishing through the basket, igniting the decisive run by the Bobcats that left the Fox faithful disappointed. Matteo Sinon soon followed with a pull-up jumper from just inside the 3-point arc and Byram opened up a five-point lead.

Parrotta came flying into the lane to grab an offensive rebound with four and a half minutes to go, scoring a put-back basket that Fox Lane coach Mike Tomassi called “backbreaking.” Goldman then capped the blitz with his trey from the left wing giving Byram its largest lead of the game, 49-38. The Foxes later closed to within six points on a Crerend 3-pointer with 2:12 remaining, but then never scored another point the rest of the way.

“I thought we played really, really hard tonight,” said Tomassi. “You know, we’ve been inconsistent all year, but I think the pieces are there to be really good. We just have to bring what we brought tonight. Credit to them (the Bobcats). They’re a really good team. They’ve got a couple of really good players and they made shots. That’s it. Shake their hands and you go home.”

The Foxes’ Justin Allen scored the first two baskets of the game and Byram Hills needed over two and a half minutes to finally get on the scoreboard with a layup by Benji Hammond. That started a 7-0 run and the Bobcats built a 14-8 lead before Aidan Hicks closed the first quarter with a steal and layup that moved the Foxes to within four.

Byram extended its margin to seven points in the second quarter before a 7-0 spurt by the Foxes that started with a Chris Bodine corner 3-pointer and ended with a Crerend layup tied the game at 19 apiece. A reverse layup from Parrotta, followed by a 3-point shot by Jon Trongone just as time was expiring gave the Bobcats a 24-19 halftime edge.

Hammond connected on a 3-point shot with 2:55 to go in the third quarter to lift the Bobcats to a 31-24 lead. But two free throws by Bodine and then consecutive 3-pointers from near the left corner by Allen and Bodine provided an 8-0 run that gave the Foxes a brief one-point advantage. The fourth quarter began with the Bobcats back in front, 35-34, but with the outcome anyone’s guess.

“You know, Parrotta’s a special player,” said Repa after watching his senior forward score six points in the midst of the 11-0 spurt. “He can do so many different things and he finds a way to help us win all the time. He’s really unique in terms of his skillset, being as tall as he is, can shoot, very good inside too. So we’re very happy that we have him.”

Victory might have eluded the Bobcats had it also not been for the 10 points Goldman provided after halftime that included two key 3-pointers in the fourth quarter.

“We made a few defensive adjustments and then, obviously when you see the ball go in the basket it helps.”

Just 15 seconds into the final quarter, Goldman drained a three from the top of the key. But Crerend supplied the Foxes with two buckets in 25 seconds. His second one, a lefty layup through traffic, tied the game up with 6:53 remaining on the clock and set the stage for the big response from the Bobcats, led by Parrotta.

“You know, Parrotta’s a special player,” said Repa after watching his senior forward score six points in the midst of the 11-0 spurt. “He can do so many different things and he finds a way to help us win all the time. He’s really unique in terms of his skillset, being as tall as he is, can shoot, very good inside too. So we’re very happy that we have him.”

Victory might have eluded the Bobcats had it also not been for the 10 points Goldman provided after halftime that included two key 3-pointers in the fourth quarter.

“Sammy Goldman hit a few clutch shots,”

Byram senior Jon Trongone rises in the lane for a shot over Fox Lane’s Justin Allen and Trey DiCarlo.

Mike Parrotta of Byram Hills gets set to fire up a 3-pointer in the first half of Friday’s win at Fox Lane.

Repa said. “We’ve been waiting. The kid is super talented and hopefully this a springboard.”

Meanwhile, the Foxes’ Tomassi is hoping the effort of his team against Byram Hills is a springboard for better days ahead.

“We’re young,” he said. “If we could just bottle up what we brought tonight. I told the boys in the locker room if we lose these kind of games at least we gave our all. I think this year some of our losses we haven’t been able to say that. That’s what it’s about, just giving it everything you’ve got and hopefully come out on the winning end. Tonight we didn’t, but it’s alright. We worked, and it was fun.”

Byram Hills’ Nic Picca defends in the first half.

The Bobcats’ Benji Hammond takes the ball to the basket in Friday’s 53-45 win over Fox Lane.

Fox Lane guard Will Crerend shoots the ball from the top of the key during the second half of Friday’s home game.

Fox Lane junior guard Aidan Hicks dribbles across the court as Byram Hills’ Nic Picca defends in the first half.

Trey DiCarlo of Fox Lane tries to slip past Matteo Sinon of Byram Hills during Friday night’s rivalry game.
Westchester Knicks’ Comeback Falls Short Against the Red Claws

By Danny Lopriore

WHITE PLAINS – The Westchester Knicks made several comebacks before taking the lead late in the game, but the resilient Maine Red Claws scored the game’s final eight points to earn a 110-103 NBA G League victory at the Westchester County Center Saturday night.

The Knicks (13-15) trailed by as many as 18 points and were behind by double digits for most of the game before rallying to take a 95-94 lead with just under six minutes left in the game. Westchester, led by Ignas Brazdeikis with 29 points and Andrew White III with 16, led 97-94 before the Claws pulled out the win with a 16-6 run.

Yante Maten had 23 points and nine rebounds for the Red Claws (19-7), who won for the 10th time in their last 11 games. Tremont Waters added 21 points, six rebounds and six assists. Kaiser Gates chipped in 15 points, while Romeo Langford and Trey Davis each added 14 for the winners.

The Knicks, who began the season with a 1-6 record and had gone 12-8 before Saturday’s loss, were hampered by defensive lapses that forced them to come back from large deficits several times.

Trailing by 18 points early in the second quarter, the Knicks tightened the defense and sparked by the 3-point shooting of Brazdeikis pulled to within three points, 42-39, before the Claws extended to a 54-46 halftime lead. Brazdeikis also helped the Knicks draw closer in the third quarter but, again, the Red Claws rolled off a 10-3 run to extend their advantage to 68-55.

Down by 15 early in the final quarter, the Knicks made another big run to take possession of the lead. They outscored Maine 22-2 and grabbed a 95-94 edge when JJ Moore connected on a long 3-pointer from the right arc. Brazdeikis set up at the top of the key, dribbled between his legs and added a spin move down the lane for a bucket and a 97-94 lead with 5:59 remaining in the game.

Brazdeikis, who just turned 21, leads the Knicks in scoring with 20.1 points per game, he has made strides and could still see some action on the court at Madison Square Garden during his rookie season.

He followed up his 29-point effort against Maine with 30 points and 13 rebounds on Monday night as the Knicks defeated Raptors 905 116-110 at the County Center. Moore scored 27 points in the victory, while Ivan Rabb added 23 points and a game-high 15 rebounds.

The Knicks, who are just past the midway point of their 50-game season that ends on March 31, visit Maine for a rematch on Friday night, January 31 and then return home to the County Center this Saturday for a 7 p.m. tipoff against their local rivals, the Long Island Nets.

Ivan Rabb handles the ball at the top of the key during the first half of Saturday night’s Westchester Knicks home game.

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Faith & Grind Program Builds Youth Basketball Futures

By Danny Lopriore

Mike Buffalo’s basketball life has been about believing in himself and working hard to achieve his goals through college, a pro career and in an afterlife on the court, teaching the game to young, aspiring Westchester-area players.

Buffalo took his Faith & Grind youth basketball program players to the Westchester Knicks-Maine Red Claws G League basketball game at the Westchester County Center last Saturday, where the “Grinders” were featured in a pregame scrimmage and got a glimpse of their hopeful futures.

“My goal is to be an NBA player someday, so I want to work as hard as I can,” Sleepy Hollow 10-year-old Noah Fasulo said during halftime of the Knicks game. “Faith & Grind is helping us become better team players. We’re learning to have confidence and work hard.”

Faith & Grind got the on-court experience and had a chance to meet with some of the Knicks players. They seemed unfazed by the spotlight and understood the hard work and dedication it would take to reach their potential.

“You have to do a lot of work on skills and become a team player,” Edgemont 9-year-old Lucas Kuma said. “I’m working on becoming a better defender and to be more aggressive. Coach helps us feel confident.”

Buffalo, a Bronx-born kid who went on to play at York College in Nebraska and then tried his hand at the pro game for two seasons in England, is dedicated to giving Westchester kids a good foundation in the game. He has worked as an AAU coach at House of Sports in Dobbs Ferry and was a Junior NBA Clinician with the Brooklyn Nets before launching Faith & Grind two years ago. He took his teaching skills to China in July of 2019, where he coached a camp for kids in Beijing.

“A lot has changed with youth basketball,” Buffalo said. “I grew up in the Bronx, where I would play from sunup to sundown outside in the park. Most kids today prefer to play basketball indoor inside a gymnasium. And social media has a major effect on the game today. For example, you can find out about how a particular player actually plays through social media; whereas when I was coming up it was more through word of mouth or actually seeing the player up close and personal.”

Buffalo’s main focus in his intense 1-on-1 sessions is to identify the weaknesses that each child may have and apply remedies.

“A kid might struggle in dribbling with his weaker hand, which is sometimes the left, so performing repetitive drills is great to develop confidence and muscle memory. I also make sure to round out the session with some of the basic offensive needs such as shooting, dribbling, layups, rebounding and conditioning.”

Riyaam Ratliff, an 11-year-old from West Harrison, has been working with Buffalo for two years. Like his fellow Grinders, he uses what he has learned in his youth basketball experience.

“I love all the training, but the endurance and running are the toughest because you have to push yourself,” Ratliff said. “But when you play in games, it helps because you are strong. Also, you have to learn to use both hands in the drills.”

Buffalo, who at 28 instills the principles of hard work and self-discipline to his players and I’m getting more confidence,” the 11-year-old Irvington resident said.

“When you practice a lot and work hard, it shows in games.”

Buffalo, who seemed at ease wrangling two dozen excited players at the County Center, sees his kids playing on high school, college and even professional courts someday.

“I think the game of basketball is in great hands,” he said. “I think it’s great that the game is evolving so each generation can have their own narrative. With that said, I am going to continue to lead the next generation of kids who are aspiring to be the next future stars. Coaching is fun and I’m enjoying helping kids under the Faith & Grind basketball program.”

For more information on Faith & Grind, log on at faithandgrind.org.
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