Harckham Blasts DOT for Failing to Finish Grade Crossing Report

By Martin Wilbur

Two local state legislators whose district includes the Commerce Street grade crossing in Valhalla lambasted the state Department of Transportation (DOT) last week for failing to produce a safety report nearly three years after it was due.

State Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) called out the DOT last Friday for its inability to issue the statewide study on grade crossing safety after the legislature mandated it be completed by Apr. 1, 2017.

His comments came as the fifth anniversary of the deadly Feb. 3, 2015, accident at Commerce Street in Valhalla approached, where an SUV was struck by a northbound Metro-North train. The driver was apparently confused at the crossing during the height of the evening rush hour when a crossing gate came down on the vehicle before moving into the path of the oncoming train.

Harckham, who was joined by Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) in harshly criticizing the agency, said there has been no valid reason given for why the study has languished.

“We need to keep the pressure on them publicly that we’re not going away,” Harckham said. “We’re not coming out once every five years and saying it’s a tragedy, our neighbors passed away, what’s going on with this crossing, I mean, this is five years after the fact and this is what drives people crazy about government.”

The inertia is especially upsetting because a federal transportation report identified the Commerce Street crossing as “the most dangerous one in MTA territory,” Harckham said, which includes all Metro-North and Long Island Rail Road crossings.

The only reason he was given for the delay was that the DOT was “working through technical issues.”

DOT spokesman Glenn Blain issued a statement saying the department has been working with the MTA and reviewing data to produce a final report. No date was given for when that might happen.

“Safety is the top priority of the New York State Department of Transportation and we have an aggressive grade crossing safety program in place that includes the testing of new visual and audible technologies for use at grade crossings,” the statement read. “Together with our partners at the MTA, we are in the process of reviewing technical issues.”

Environmental Concerns Raised Over Proposed Chappaqua Code

By Martin Wilbur

Speakers highlighted several environmental and community character concerns last week at the start of public comments on New Castle’s proposed form-based code, which officials hope will eventually help reinvigorate the downtown Chappaqua business hamlet.

The Town Board, which opened the scoping session last Tuesday at Town Hall, also heard a few comments from residents who remain skeptical that a more streamlined process where the town’s Development Department plays a greater role in issuing downtown approvals would allow for adequate feedback and oversight of a project.

The board had issued a positive recommendation because of the extent of the potential rezoning that would take

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Asquith, Alvarez Running for P’ville Village Board; Lord Bows Out

By Abby Luby

Pleasantville Village Trustee Nicole Asquith is running for her second term and will be joined on the ballot by Chamber of Commerce Vice President W. Paul Alvarez for the Mar. 18 village election.

After serving two terms as village trustee, Steve Lord said he was ready to pass the torch now that his children have graduated from the Pleasantville school system.

He called the past six years of service “a great honor” and felt a strong connection to the village and its residents while on the board.

“We put a lot of good stuff in motion,” he said. “We confronted the reality of the present age and how the vibrancy of the downtown is critical to the future of this town.”

Asquith, who will again appear on the Pleasantville Civic Party line, stepped up to run in 2017, and part of her platform was to

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The report was supposed to have studied all 5,300 grade crossings throughout the state and recommend safety enhancements at locations that require them, whether that be signs and road markings or physical improvements.

"That was three years ago and this administration has totally ignored the law and the safety of its residents and pedestrians," Abinanti said. "The MTA only cares about the safety of its trains."

He urged the DOT to "follow the law, do its job and protect the people."

Mount Pleasant Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said it’s been frustrating because there is nothing the town can do to make the area safer since it’s a state road.

“They keep putting off the date for when it was to be completed, which is incredible when you’re dealing with people’s lives that it can get delayed like this," Fulgenzi said.

Harckham added that he supported congestion pricing in Manhattan because of the $10 billion that it was projected to raise, $1.5 billion of which was promised for Metro-North improvements, including safety.

Asquith, Alvarez Running for P’ville Village Board; Lord Bows Out

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The Village Facebook Page was started by Asquith and she was successful in launching Pleasantville Posts, a new village newsletter first published last fall.

Downtown development is also a key issue for Asquith.

“When I first served on the board, the Master Plan was in place. It made sense to me to have development in the village for a more vibrant downtown to bring in more foot traffic,” she said. “You have to think about what’s best for the community and encountering each other in public spaces is what that’s about.”

Asquith hopes the village explores more short-term shopper parking downtown, creates additional commuter parking, improves information about parking options for downtown employees and discourages commuters from other communities from parking for free in unregulated areas.

She also wants to work with the village’s Conservation Advisory Council to pass a tree ordinance and a wetlands ordinance.

Having high school students volunteer to see how local government works is another goal Asquith hopes to pursue.

Alvarez, 37, is entering his first political race, running on the Family First Party line. He immigrated with his family from Ecuador when he was nine years old.

"Even though I was born in Ecuador, I was raised here in Pleasantville and my family established their own business,” he said. “I’m very invested in this village.”

Alvarez’s parents opened Alvarez Cleaning and Alvarez Home Services on Washington Avenue about two decades ago. He graduated from SUNY Oneonta and worked in the family business. In 2010, he and his wife, Katie, purchased a home in the village. The couple has a three-year-old son and a six-month-old daughter.

Alvarez said change is in Pleasantville’s best interest because it attracts a wide variety of people.

“People my age and of all different backgrounds are moving out of the city to raise a family and it’s important for me as a minority to welcome them to Pleasantville,” Alvarez said. “It’s good to have a diverse board; it makes for the best discussions and the best decision-making.”

He later enrolled in and graduated from Pace Law School and is now an associate attorney practicing immigration and criminal law in Mount Kisco. Alvarez said he is concerned with how the new bail reform law has been impacting the Pleasantville Police Department.

“It’s a big issue and we all need to understand the difficulties it presents to our police,” he said. “If not enough evidence is provided, a case can get dismissed. The community needs to understand what the department needs to run efficiently.”

A co-owner of the family business, in 2016 Alvarez was recognized as the Chamber of Commerce’s Business Person of the Year. In addition to his chamber activities, he and his family have had a long history of community involvement supporting local organizations such as Pleasantville Community Television, the Pleasantville Rotary Club, the Pleasantville Community Scholarship Fund, the Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department and the Pleasantville Police Benevolent Association.

In Pleasantville, candidates compete in nonpartisan elections on lines without national political party affiliations. All seats have three-year terms.

Election Day is typically held the third Tuesday in March. Since St. Patrick’s Day falls on the third Tuesday this year, the election has been moved to the next day. The deadline for candidates to submit petitions is Feb. 12.

Ask the Doctor
Pong Wong, MS
Supervisor
Cardiac Rehabilitation
Northern Westchester Hospital

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Northern Westchester Hospital
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Q: What is cardiac rehab?
A: Cardiac rehabilitation is a medically-supervised, individualized program of exercise and education that helps you recover faster from heart disease and acquire the strength to resume a full life. Northern Westchester Hospital’s Outpatient Cardiac Rehabilitation Program requires a physician’s prescription, and besides the core training component, includes counseling in nutrition, stress management and meditation, as well as education in heart disease prevention.

Q: Am I a candidate?
A: You’re a candidate if you’ve suffered a cardiovascular event such as heart attack, bypass surgery, angiia, heart valve repair or replacement, myocardial infarction, heart transplantation, coronary stenting or heart failure.

Q: What are the benefits?
A: Perhaps surprisingly, a key benefit of cardiac rehabilitation is restored confidence. That emotion has as much impact as do medical issues on a person’s ability to resume an active, rewarding life. Some patients are initially afraid to do anything. A pain in the chest area makes them terrified that another cardiac event is happening. They’re afraid to work, to drive, to leave the area where their doctors practice. These fears typically go away after cardiac rehabilitation — indeed, even during rehabilitation, as patients see undeniable evidence of their gains in strength and stamina. Activities like walking uphill on the treadmill, riding the bike, or using the rowing machine gives them great confidence.

Q: What happens when you enter NWH’s cardiac rehabilitation program?
A: A personalized exercise regimen is designed based on your health history and your physical condition. You’ll have up to 36 training sessions, depending upon your insurance, during which you receive continuous EKG monitoring and close supervision by physician and exercise physiologists. We’re watching your heart rate and cardiac rhythm the whole time. Your blood pressure is taken before, during and after exercise. Starting off at 30 minutes, you’ll work up to between 42 minutes and an hour of training, with weight training added when appropriate.

Q: How do I choose a cardiac rehabilitation program?
A: Look for accreditation, convenient scheduling, insurance coverage, and the expertise and experience of staff. Whether you’ve had a heart attack, coronary bypass or other cardiac event, you are basically getting a second chance after your cardiac event. It’s wise to take advantage of all the benefits of cardiac rehabilitation.
Health Experts: Risk from Coronavirus Remains Low in County

By Martin Wilbur

A local infectious disease expert said that Westchester residents should have no reason to be concerned about the novel coronavirus that has swept through China despite last week’s declaration of an international public health emergency.

Dr. Debra Spicehandler, co-chief of infectious diseases at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, said there has been screening set up at major airports, including at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, and most of the large California airports. Major carriers American Airlines, Delta and United announced late last week they have discontinued flights to and from China until the outbreak is under control.

Unless someone has returned from China within the past two weeks or has had contact with someone who has, there shouldn’t be cause to worry, Spicehandler said.

“The incubation is two to 14 days,” she said. “I think we’ve pretty much been aware of this for the last couple of weeks and I think anybody who had traveled back has been screened at this point.”

The Westchester County Department of Health reported that there are no known cases of the novel coronavirus in the county and the risk to the general public is low.

However, there are routine precautions that everyone should take in the interest of protecting yourself and others from infection from viruses, including the seasonally problematic Influenza A and Influenza B, Spicehandler said. Washing hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is important. If you need to sneeze, do so into the crook of your elbow, not your hands, she added.

There is also no need to change plans for business trips or vacations to places such as Florida, California or the Caribbean or most other destinations, she said.

“I would be more concerned about those viruses (Influenza A and B) right now but I would not be so concerned about going to Chinatown or wherever,” Spicehandler said. “I have heard people say that.”

The major difference between the coronavirus and the more prevalent Influenza A and Influenza B in the United States is the inclusion of respiratory problems, she said. The typical strains of flu in the United States have most of the same symptoms – runny nose, coughs, fever, aches – but they don’t cause trouble with breathing, except for those with respiratory illnesses such as asthma or emphysema.

Spicehandler said if anyone has a reason to believe that they may have been in contact with someone with the coronavirus, to put on a protective mask and contact your doctor or an emergency room ahead of time. She said do not simply show up at a doctor’s office or hospital.

The county Department of Health issued a release stating that if there were a case of novel coronavirus, residents would hear about it from the department. Testing cannot be performed without the cooperation of the county and state Department of Health, and both departments would be involved in notifying the public and limiting the spread of the illness.

According to the Westchester Department of Health, there are seven types of coronaviruses. Four types – 229E, NL63, OC43 and HKU1 – are quite common and don’t pose a threat. The symptoms are very similar to what someone would experience with Influenza A and B. Only SARS, MERS and novel coronavirus frequently cause severe illness.

One concern about the novel coronavirus is that unlike the more typical strains it is not seasonal, Spicehandler said. The virus is initially spread from animal to humans and then from person to person.

Another concern is that the authorities in China have yet to find a way to control it spreading, Spicehandler said. As of Sunday, China’s Health Commission reported that there were 361 deaths, topping the number of fatalities from the deadly SARS outbreak about 17 years ago.

“They don’t know how to stop it or sort of control it other than good infectious control practices,” Spicehandler said. “So I think that’s what the concern is.”

For more information about novel coronavirus, visit www.westchester.gov/health.

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Environmental Concerns Raised Over Proposed Chappaqua Code

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Director of Planning Sabrina Charney Hull. That initiates a formal review under the state Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), which includes a scoping session and public hearings.

“SEQRA requires you to balance the environmental impacts with social and economic factors when you’re going to approve an action,” Hull said.

Before public comments were taken, town officials addressed the issue of building heights that the proposed code would allow in the business district. While two stories is currently the maximum in most of the downtown area with the exception of King Street, where two to three stories is allowed, Hull said the new code would allow up to four stories in most areas. King Street would remain at two to three stories.

There are select locations in the downtown where five stories would be permissible – the frontage along the west side of South Groceley Avenue between Woodburn Avenue and King Street and in parts of the train station parking lots. Currently, the parking lots are town-owned land.

“I just want to make it clear that because we’re considering zoning and increasing heights, for instance, of buildings, it doesn’t mean the town is mandating that buildings be built up to a certain height.”

Planning consultant Bonnie Von Ohlsen said the new zoning is designed to attract a variety of downtown development, including residential. That is one of the key pieces of the Comprehensive Plan that was updated in 2017, she said.

“The new zoning district is intended to provide flexibility for development with the intent to revitalize the hamlet and create a sustainable and successful mix of commercial and residential uses, taking into account both current and future real estate markets and trends,” Von Ohlsen said.

The draft scoping document listed about 15 categories where public input is sought, including land use, zoning, visual resources and community character, natural resources, parking and services.

Ridgewood Terrace resident Dan Prendivish said he was concerned that if maximum building heights were increased, most builders would want to increase potential profits, changing Chappaqua’s character.

“If I were a landlord or if I owned the property and I had the option of going two or four floors, there’s no question I would go four floors if I was interested in making a profit, etc.,” he said.

Another resident, Dan Pisicelli of King Street, said he was worried about the visual impact on his development’s residents if there are four- and five-story buildings in downtown.

““If you build a four-story (building) downtown, I’m going to be looking into somebody’s bedroom as will my neighbors, so that’s a huge concern for us,” Piscitelli said.

Orchard Lane resident Mara Van Fleet raised the issues of traffic and the potential loss of trees and increased runoff if there’s large-scale development on King Street. She said traffic is a problem now and it would be difficult to get onto her street off of King Street.

Meanwhile, Conservation Board member Victoria Alzapiedi urged the Town Board to consider what species would be impacted in vernal pools should some of these areas be developed. She also hoped the town would maintain its current character with an improved downtown.

“How do we want to market our town so it’s different and having developers who have a mindset that still want it to be this community, small-town feeling?” Alzapiedi asked.

The evening’s first speaker, Chappaqua resident Warren Gottlieb, pleaded with the board to provide a way for more public involvement for residents on downtown projects, particularly if they might get shut out from a public process if there is an extensive application.

“The Town Board really needs to do a few things to make sure the public really understands what that means,” Gottlieb said.

During the previous week’s Town Board work session, Hull listed several proposed changes to the revised code, including formal neighbor notification of adjacent property owners for any project.

Other key changes would see a reduction of the maximum height of the first floor from 22 to 16 feet if it is used for commercial purposes, reducing the distance from the curb to a building from 25 feet to 16 feet if there is a new development and maintaining the current 10-percent affordable housing requirements.

Town Board members stressed that if the town were to sell any municipally-owned property to a developer, the sale would be subject to a permissible referendum.

Under the law, officials are unable to schedule a vote but the public can force a proposition through a petition. Privately-owned property is not subject to a vote.

Supervisor Ivy Pool said officials want to address all of the public’s concerns.

“Part of what we’re trying to do here tonight is to make sure in our environmental analysis we look at and answer all of the questions that you have that would make you feel comfortable with the resulting code,” Pool said.

The board adjourned the scoping session until its Feb. 11 meeting. Written and e-mailed comments are also welcomed and can be sent to the board until Feb. 14 at noon. To read the proposed form-based zoning code, visit www.mynewcastle.org.

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Latimer, Schiliro Urge Conn. Lawmakers to Drop I-684 Toll Plan

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester and local officials urged Connecticut state legislators last Friday to abandon a proposal to include a truck toll on the 1.4-mile stretch of I-684 in Greenwich, which could be disastrous for area traffic.

During a public hearing in Hartford on Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont’s plan to introduce a dozen tolls for trucks statewide, County Executive George Latimer and North Castle Supervisor Michael Schiliro were among those who appeared or sent surrogates urging lawmakers to drop I-684 from its proposed toll locations.

In his remarks that were sent to the lawmakers, Latimer said about 85 percent of truck traffic using that stretch of road are from states other than Connecticut, with most of that volume coming from New York truck drivers. That would unfairly shift the burden of funding Connecticut infrastructure repairs to them.

“The proposed toll site on the one-mile stretch of Interstate 684 in Greenwich is used primarily by New York traffic, both trucks and passenger cars, and a toll here to benefit the State of Connecticut would be an unfair taxation of those who do not have a voice,” Latimer said.

He added that Connecticut’s plan would be equivalent to New York State placing a toll on the Port Chester side of I-95. However, Latimer said that New York doesn’t believe the benefits of truck tolls would benefit the State of Connecticut would be an unfair taxation of those who do not have a voice.

“Weakening the relationship between the two states,” Latimer said. “As Westchester officials, we are tasked to protect Westchester’s residents, and will continue to do so in the future as this proposal moves forward.”

Connecticut officials are hoping the new statewide tolls would raise about $170 million a year to help pay for a $19.1 billion improvement of the state’s transportation network, according to The Hartford Courant. However, legislators cancelled a tentatively scheduled special session early this week before the scheduled Wednesday opening of the legislature’s regular session. There is no indication when the issue may be raised again.

If the I-684 toll were to go into effect, no municipality might be more impacted than North Castle. Last Friday, Schiliro’s remarks, which were read into the record by his executive assistant Mindy Berard, pointed to the deterioration of quality of life caused by the anticipated increase in truck traffic.

Not only would Armonk be affected but trucks using I-287 could get off at the North White Plains exit and head north on Route 22 from there, he said.

Schiliro also pointed out that there is no I-684 exit or entrance in Connecticut.

“The environmental issues created by all of the additional truck traffic will be vast,” Schiliro’s statement read in part. “The large amount of truck traffic will be detoured around our reservoirs potentially polluting the local and New York City drinking water supply. Other environmental impacts include the effects on air quality and noise pollution. This combined with the significant negative impact on our residents and stress to our roads create hazardous conditions for our residents and the traveling public.”

Since 1966, the two states have had an arrangement where the New York State Department of Transportation has maintained that 1.4-mile stretch, including funding repairs and snowplowing, Schiliro added.

In December, state Sen. Peter Harckham (D-Lewisboro) threatened to introduce retaliatory tolls on Connecticut drivers on six New York State roads that lead into and out of Connecticut in the towns of Lewisboro, Pound Ridge and North Salem unless the I-684 toll was abandoned.

Originally, the proposed Connecticut plan included all vehicles but pressure within the state reduced it to trucks only. However, once installed, the technology could be changed to include non-commercial traffic at any time.
Route 120 Paving Project Set for Spring in Chappaqua, Mt. Pleasant

By Martin Wilbur

Drivers who use Route 120 between Armonk and Chappaqua can look forward to some smoother travel along that thoroughfare within the next year.

Mt. Pleasant Board of Ed Considers Interim Appointment for Vacancy

By Martin Wilbur

The Mount Pleasant Board of Education may decide this week whether to fill the vacant seat for the remainder of the school year.

Last week, trustees announced in a letter to the community that they were accepting statements of interest from district residents who would consider filling the seat. There is a series of questions that must be answered along with providing a brief narrative outlining community involvement and professional background.

A deadline of Feb. 5 at noon was set by the board for the requested materials, providing trustees time to review the potential candidates in an executive session before the board’s Wednesday evening work session. At that time, the board will determine whether or not they will fill the seat. There is a vacancy for the remainder of the school year.

The questions the board is asking prospective board members to answer to be in contention for the appointment include motivation for pursuing the seat; a person’s experience with financial documents and budgets, whether they are comfortable with numbers and is detailed oriented; the skills and expertise one would bring to the board and the experiences that helped develop those skills; and whether there’s been any involvement in district or community activities.

For those who are interested in being considered, the information must be received at the district clerk’s office no later than 12 p.m. on Feb. 5 via e-mail at mmancuso@mtplcsd.org or in person at 825 Westlake Drive in Thornwood. For more information, visit the Mount Pleasant School District website at www.mtplcsd.org.

The work is one of 95 projects that will be undertaken statewide to improve roads that have been hard hit by storms and extreme weather. Another $500,000 was approved for paving in Yorktown, to renew Route 118 between route 100 and 129.

Work is expected to begin this spring and is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year, said state Sen. Peter Harckham.

“It is crucial that we continue to make investments in renewing and updating New York’s transportation infrastructure, especially roadways and bridges that cannot be neglected any longer,” Harckham said.

“These two improvement and renewal projects will help increase workforce development and economic growth for our local communities as well, while making two key thoroughfares in Westchester safer for residents and visitors alike.”

The funding comes through the state Department of Transportation’s five-year capital plan, which is expiring on Mar. 31, he said. About two weeks ago, the Westchester contingent of the state legislature called on its colleagues and Gov. Andrew Cuomo to invest another $35 billion over the next five years in additional infrastructure repairs.

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Christine Peyreigne, the youngest falconer in the state of Connecticut, will be joining the EagleFest lineup this year. EagleFest is scheduled for this Saturday at Croton Point Park from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit www.teatown.org/eagelfest.

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Police Blotter

County Police/Mount Kisco

Jan. 26: At 8:40 a.m., a village resident turned in a wallet he found on Byram Lake Road. An officer was able to return the wallet to its owner.

Jan. 27: A 20-year-old man was arrested at his West Main Street home at 9:07 p.m. following a domestic dispute. The suspect was charged with third-degree assault, a misdemeanor, for allegedly pushing, restraining and biting another person on the neck during the dispute.

Jan. 28: A report of smoke in the hallway at 5:37 p.m. reported on Highview Terrace at 5:37 p.m. was determined that the smoke was caused by a burning candle. The responding officer secured depositions and photos. A report to follow.

Jan. 29: A complainant arrived at headquarters at 7:41 p.m. to report that while she was working earlier this date at The Bristal on Business Park Drive, she and a resident’s son engaged in a verbal argument. A witness deposition was secured.

Jan. 30: A tenant called at 10:22 p.m. The Mount Kisco Fire Department responded and determined that food burning on a stove had caused the condition.

Jan. 31: Officers served a Westchester County Family Court-issued Temporary Order of Protection to a Kensington Way resident at 7:38 a.m. The court order bars the resident from having any contact with a person named in the protection order.

North Castle Police Department

Jan. 24: Report of criminal mischief on North Broadway outside the Westchester Jewish Community Services building at 6:59 p.m. A caller reported noticing a large crack in his windshield. His vehicle has been parked in the lot since about 3 p.m. and it did not have damage at that time. The responding officer secured depositions and photos. A report to follow.

Jan. 25: A caller reported at 6:14 p.m. that he was involved in a physical altercation with a co-worker at TAUK kitchen + bar on Main Street. He stated that he is separated from the other party who is in the kitchen; the caller is waiting in the bar area. The responding officers reported that the matter was adjusted and depositions were secured.

Jan. 26: Report of a Suspicious Incident on Kensico Knoll Place at 12:26 a.m. The caller stated that someone damaged her property and that she observed toilet paper all over her front yard. The responding officer secured depositions.

Jan. 27: Police responded to Amuso Drive at 9:34 a.m. on a complaint that several apartments were without heat and hot water. Officers located a maintenance staff member who said he was aware of the hot water. Officers made contact with the elderly man who said he was not injured and did not need medical attention.

Jan. 28: At 12:18 p.m. on a report that an elderly man had fallen while getting out of his car. Officers made contact with the man who said he was not injured and did not need medical attention.

Jan. 29: A disabled vehicle on Route 22 was reported at 9:42 a.m. The responding officers stated that the vehicle was off the road and the driver was waiting for a friend to assist with a battery charging device. A check showed the vehicle’s operator had a suspended license. He was charged with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle.

Jan. 30: Police responded to Thorn Avenue at 12:18 p.m. on a report that an elderly man had fallen while getting out of his car. Officers made contact with the man who said he was not injured and did not need medical attention.

Jan. 31: A rental car company employee requested at 2:15 p.m. that police accompany him to a location on Gatto Drive to recover an overdue rental vehicle. The employee was concerned that a confrontation would occur if he went on his own. The vehicle was recovered without incident.

Jan. 28: A reports of rock on one side of Reservoir Road at 9 a.m. The responding officer reported the debris was removed.

Pleasantville Police Department

Jan. 26: A caller reported at 6:14 p.m. that he was involved in a physical altercation with a co-worker at TAUK kitchen + bar on Main Street. He stated that he is separated from the other party who is in the kitchen; the caller is waiting in the bar area. The responding officers reported that the matter was adjusted and depositions were secured.

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Jan. 28: A suspicious person was reported on Highview Terrace at 5:37 p.m. The matter is under investigation; no further information was made available.

Jan. 29: A rental car company employee requested at 2:15 p.m. that police accompany him to a location on Gatto Drive to recover an overdue rental vehicle. The employee was concerned that a confrontation would occur if he went on his own. The vehicle was recovered without incident.

Jan. 30: A report of a larceny on Iroquois Road at 5:55 a.m. A stop sign was reported missing.

Jan. 31: A suspicous person was reported on Highview Terrace at 5:37 p.m. The matter is under investigation; no further information was made available.

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INVEST. INSPIRE. IGNITE.
Republican Yehudis Gottesfeld announced last week she will be vying for the party’s nomination in the June primary.

By Martin Wilbur

The Democrats won’t be the only party that will hold a primary this June to find a candidate to replace the retiring Democratic Rep. Nita Lowey for the 17th Congressional District seat.

Yehudis Gottesfeld, a 24-year-old chemical engineer from Ramapo, announced her candidacy last Wednesday touting her “common sense leadership.” If Gottesfeld gets on the ballot for the June 23 primary, she would face Josh Eisen of Harrison.

She said she’s entering the race because too many elected officials put their own interests ahead of the public good.

“I've been finding a lot of policy, a lot of good that they’re trying to do hasn’t been able to go through,” said Gottesfeld, who has worked for the New York City Department of Environmental Protection and has conducted research in different roles at Columbia University ad City College. “A lot of politicians have their own interests and are not putting the people’s interests in mind.”

A fairer taxation system that encourages people to work, invest and save is one of Gottesfeld’s priorities. She said with Rockland and Westchester having some of the highest taxes in the nation, there needs to be support for smart trade policy that would benefit American workers.

While Gottesfeld is on Scarpino’s list. Living near the site of the Hanukkah stabbing in Monsey, she said that more emphasis needs to be placed on securing and protecting children.

Gottesfeld said she also wants to see the immigration process streamlined for new citizens while also strongly protecting the nation’s borders.

“We have all this security protecting things but we’re not protecting kids in school,” she said. “Kids are more valuable than money and I think we need to protect our children, we have to view our children as valuable.”

Gottesfeld said she doesn’t see the Democratic Refund in registration as a major impediment should she be the Republican nominee. She said that many residents of the 17th Congressional District are similar and have similar values regardless of party affiliation.

“There are a lot of local seats that are held by Republicans,” she said. “At the end of the day, it’s about the person and it’s about helping others.”

The winner of the Republican primary would face one of at least a dozen Democrats vying for the party’s nomination in the general election.

Chappaqua School Officials Hit Brakes on New Greeley Grading System

By Abby Luby

A new grading system slated to start next year at Horace Greeley High School has been delayed after district officials called for more research because of unresolved questions and that students could be unfairly impacted.

In 2017, after spending the previous two years researching and debating impacts of phasing out the grade point average (GPA), the district announced it would switch to a new grading system.

There had been growing debate among academicians about whether GPA is the best assessment of a student’s performance.

Many Greeley teachers and parents argued the GPA grading system that started in the 2016-17 school year was unfair to students, especially those with high grades. GPA scores were deciphered on a more incremental basis. For example, students with grades from 85-89 were given a 3.0 GPA; students with grades of 90-94 received a 3.5 GPA.

The new system proposed incremental grade increases, giving students with an 85 a 3.0 GPA, students with an 86 a 3.1, an 87 a 3.2 and so on.

A second conversion was scheduled to take place next fall when the 4.0 GPA scale would be converted to a 100-point scale and applied to grading academic courses.

At the Jan. 22 Chappaqua Board of Education meeting, High School Principal Andrew Corsilia, who worked with a team researching the new grading system, presented some expected challenges if the conversion was to happen.

“As we started to do a deep dive into this, what looked like would be simply removing the 4.0 scale on the transcript, actually became a lot more complicated,” he said.

Corsilia also told the board that converting the 4.0 grading scale to the 100-point scale, the cumulative GPAs weren’t equivalent.

“You wouldn’t get the exact same GPA in the conversion and it would change the value,” Corsilia said. “A number of students’ GPA scores would go down across the entire school.”

The newly converted GPA scores would especially impact juniors who are applying early to college and completing their applications in the summer.

“We would present one GPA to them in June when they are in the middle of the (college application) process and then we would present another GPA to them in September. And some of those would be lower GPAs,” Corsilia said. “And that seems like a good joke at all.”

Corsilia also told the board that converting cumulative laude and valedictorian honors using the 4.0 scale also weren’t equivalent to the 100-point scale.

“It’s not just a one-to-one conversion,” he said. “Juniors ending this year who receive cum laude or valedictorian honors based on their current performance, would see a change over the summer. Some students wouldn’t be entitled to these honors. That didn’t seem fair.”

Most high school juniors use the Naviance system that incorporates a student’s historical data to guide them in selecting colleges. Created and adopted nationwide in 2002, Naviance uses GPA and AP scores. The grid helps students determine “safe,” “competitive,” and “reach” colleges.

Corsilia said if all historical student data were deciphered on a more incremental basis. Then the 4.0 grading scale to the 100-point scale, the cumulative GPAs weren’t equivalent.

“We have all this security protecting things but we’re not protecting kids in school,” she said. “Kids are more valuable than money and I think we need to protect our children, we have to view our children as valuable.”

Gottesfeld said she doesn’t see the Democratic Refund in registration as a major impediment should she be the Republican nominee. She said that many residents of the 17th Congressional District are similar and have similar values regardless of party affiliation.

“There are a lot of local seats that are held by Republicans,” she said. “At the end of the day, it’s about the person and it’s about helping others.”

The winner of the Republican primary would face one of at least a dozen Democrats vying for the party’s nomination in the general election.

Scarpino Wins County Dems’ Endorsement; Rocah to Continue

By Pat Casey

Democratic delegates across the county selected incumbent District Attorney Anthony J. Scarpino, Jr. last Wednesday as the designated party candidate for the June 23 primary.

Scarpino also received endorsements from local Democratic Committees in North Castle, Mount Kisco, Rye Town, Somers, White Plains, Yonkers and Yorktown. He picked up endorsements from County Clerk Tim Idoni, state Sen. Shelley Mayer (D-Yonkers) and Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale).

“It is a tremendous honor to receive the endorsement of the Westchester County Democratic Committee,” Scarpino said. “I am grateful to Chairman Reggie Lafayette, his executive committee and all the Democratic District Leaders for participating in this critical process and for the faith they have placed in me to represent this party as the Democratic nominee for Westchester District Attorney.”

Scarpino is being challenged by Scarsdale resident and MSNBC commentator and former Assistant U.S. Attorney Mimi Rocah. Rocah recently held a fundraiser in Scarsdale, reportedly attended by more than 250 people, raising more than $250,000. At that event, former U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara, Rocah’s former boss, gave his endorsement. Rocah served under Bharara for eight of the 16 years she was an assistant U.S. attorney. Bharara promoted Rocah several times within the office, culminating in her appointment to run the Westchester office of the Southern District of New York in White Plains.

Rocah said she’s running to the district attorney Westchester needs to fight for the values, principles and issues that define Democrats.

“(I have) spoken out about the ‘criminal justice’ messages that are coming from Washington, and so I want to be a part now of what is on the local and state level pushing back against these policies of hate and this complete disrespect for the rule of law,” Rocah said. “And in Westchester County where we have sex trafficking and an opioid crisis – people dying from opioids every day – people have to send their kids to school because of gun violence. These are the things that I can work on and also to help push back against the Trump administration.”

The Examiner

February 4 - February 10, 2020
Jones Enhances Progressive Credentials With Warren Endorsement

By Martin Wilbur

Each one of the roughly dozen Democrats in the ever-expanding 17th Congressional District primary field have sought to differentiate themselves to the party’s voters.

Mondaire Jones, an attorney from Rockland County and the first candidate to announce his intention to run for the seat last summer, has sought to stake out the progressive lane in the wide-open campaign.

Last Wednesday, Jones was endorsed by Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a development that will likely make some voters and his opponents sit up and take notice.

“I think it’s a huge boost for the campaign,” said Jones, 32, currently a South Nyack resident. “I think it also reinforces what I and others on the ground, especially in Rockland County, have known from the beginning, which is I’m the only candidate in this race who has a clear path to victory because I can get support in both Rockland and Westchester counties.”

Jones early start to his campaign – July 8 – came three months before 16-term Rep. Nita Lowey announced her retirement, which gave him a head start. Since then, Jones has been hard at work to build a campaign infrastructure on both sides of the Hudson River, including having established his headquarters in Sleepy Hollow.

After graduating from Harvard Law School, he worked for the New York City-based law firm of Davis Polk, then joined the Westchester County Law Department as a litigator. He also worked in the Justice Department in 2009 and 2010 in the Office of Legal Policy as a non-lawyer, helping to vet candidates for federal judgeships after earning his undergraduate degree from Stanford and before going to law school.

In her endorsement statement, Warren mentioned that Jones would be best equipped to major changes that would help the average person.

“Mondaire Jones knows that we’re in a fight to put power in the hands of working families,” Warren said. “With Mondaire in Congress, we’ll gain another chance to achieve the hard-fought wins that bring us closer to big, structural change and I’m glad to stand with him.”

Some of the changes Jones is advocating for includes the Green New Deal, a wealth tax and a $15-an-hour federal minimum wage.

“We’ve really got to stand up and fight for the things we really care about as a party because these are the things that a vast majority of Americans understand, especially when they actually experience it,” Jones said.

Perhaps the biggest change he supports is a single-payer healthcare system, where the government through taxes ensures that everyone has essential healthcare.

Jones said it would require a long battle, and he would back a public option to enhance the Affordable Care Act as an interim step.

Asked how he would pay for a single-payer system, Jones responded that he would fight to repeal the December 2017 federal tax legislation that has exploded the deficit and by instituting a wealth tax. He said 40 years ago the top marginal rate on income above $10 million a year was 70 percent; today it’s 35 percent. While Jones does not want to see the top rate doubled, at least a modest increase would help fund healthcare.

Repealing the tax legislation would also put an end to the $10,000 limit on state and local income taxes, something that must be done to provide Westchester and Rockland taxpayers some relief, he said.

Jones said having grown up poor in Section 8 housing in Spring Valley and raised by a young single mother, many people, including many Republicans that he’s met, have admired his resilience even if they don’t agree with him on various policy issues.

He would also be the first openly gay black member of Congress, if elected.

“One of the two things that you recognize that I’m someone who is sincere in my candidacy on behalf of everyone, not just the affluent, but the working class and the people who can’t work for whatever reason,” he added.
State’s Lethargy on Grade Crossing Safety Study is Inexcusable

More than a year removed from the horrific Commerce Street train-car collision that claimed six lives in 2015, the state legislature logically approved a measure that required the Department of Transportation (DOT) to study all grade crossings in New York State. Later that year, Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the legislation into law.

It made sense because the tragedy at Commerce Street didn’t occur in a vacuum. There had seemingly been a rash of accidents and close calls at grade crossings on Long Island and upstate, not to mention obvious potential for trouble at locations such as Green Street in Bedford, Roaring Brook Road in Chappaqua and the other Valhalla crossings.

The study was to have been completed and submitted by Apr. 1, 2017, with recommendations on how to improve safety at crossings throughout the state. Changes are many crossings, particularly in sparsely areas of the state, weren’t going to need much work.

However, where the safety of motorists who traverse grade crossings in suburban areas like Westchester, Putnam and Long Island, action at some locations could actually save lives.

Now, almost three years after the deadline nothing has happened. Shame on the state DOT for apparently dragging its feet, almost willfully ignoring the law. Shame on Gov. Cuomo for failing to make this a bigger priority.

It’s possible that the timeline for completion was too ambitious. If so, the DOT commissioner needed to inform the public and lawmakers the reasons for the delay.

It’s understandable if the agency wants to have accurate information and sacrifices some speed, but there’s been almost nothing but silence for nearly three years. And a sanitized two-sentence statement from the DOT’s communications office that doesn’t answer some obvious questions is woefully incomplete.

What’s troubling is that this process is just the study. For crossings, that might need a critical physical improvement, that is going to take years longer, and plenty of money.

Meanwhile, drivers cross train tracks all over the state, some of them at their own peril. It’s a shame that the DOT and the governor don’t understand the urgency.

10 Tips Everyone Can Try to Eat Heart Healthy

Heart disease is a growing epidemic but eating a heart-healthy diet is the best defense in reducing your risk. CareMount Medical Cardiology providers share these tips to the public in time for February, which is American Heart Month.

1. Decrease saturated fats and trans fats. Reduce saturated fats such as whole milk, butter, fatty cuts of meat) and trans fats (e.g. fast food) and choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (olive and canola oils, nuts, seeds, avocados, soy and fatty fish) instead.

2. Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables. Aim for seven to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Choose a rainbow of colors (carrots, raspberries, plums, lettuce, peaches) to ensure a diversity of nutrients.

3. Eat more fiber. As fiber passes through the body, it affects the way the body digests foods and absorbs nutrients. Fiber also helps control blood sugar, reduce cholesterol, promote regularity, prevent gastrointestinal disease and helps weight management.

4. Substitute animal protein with plant protein. Increase plant sources of protein (beans, tofu) and reduce your intake of animal protein, which contributes to weight gain and increased heart risk.

5. Increase whole grains. Limit processed or refined carbohydrate foods (white bread, white pasta, white rice). Whole grain breads, brown rice, oats, barley, quinoa, whole wheat pasta, bread and cereals are much healthier.

6. Limit sweets, desserts and sugary drinks. Sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages should be consumed sparingly.

7. Choose low-fat or non-dairy products. Limit dairy to two to three servings per day of skim milk or 1 percent milk or nonfat yogurt and reduced fat cheeses.

8. If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. Drinking alcohol is not encouraged, but if you drink, moderation is key. This is defined as no more than one drink per day for women and no more than two drinks per day for men.

9. Control portion size. Use a small plate to help control portions. Eat larger portions of low-calorie, nutrient-rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, and smaller portions of high-calorie, high-sodium foods.

10. Do not skip meals. Small, frequent meals and snacks promote weight loss and maintenance and give you an opportunity to consume important nutrients throughout the day. Skipping meals only lowers metabolism.

Sources for this article are the American Heart Association and Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

Important Dates to Remember for Voting, Party Registration

While Election Day seems far off, there are primary elections coming up much sooner. Voting in a primary election is your opportunity to help select your party’s candidate for the general election on Nov 3.

In New York State there are two primary dates: Apr. 28 is the Presidential primary. June 23 is the primary for Congress and the New York State Assem-bly and Senate.

If you need to register to vote, you can download and print a voter registration form at elections.ny.gov. You must also use the same form in order to change your party affiliation or your address.

Here are the deadlines: New voters must register by Apr. 3 to vote in the Pre-sidential primary and by May 29 in order to vote in the congressional and state primary.

To change your party affiliation, the deadline is Feb. 14 for both primaries.

To change your address, the deadline is Apr. 8 for the Presidential primary and June 3 for the congressional and state primary.

Your vote is your voice. Make it count!

Celeste Theis
Croton-on-Hudson

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Celeste Theis
Croton-on-Hudson

February 4 - February 10, 2020 The Examiner
County Explores Expanding Food Scrap Recycling in Westchester

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County is establishing a food scrap recycling initiative where the county will haul away the material for municipalities that have their own programs while the feasibility of a long-term solution is examined.

County Executive George Latimer announced the plan last Wednesday in White Plains following the recent completion of a food waste study by consultant Woodard & Curran.

Under the steps detailed by Latimer, there would be three actions taken this year to encourage more food scrap recycling in the county. Starting in September, the county will take over the transport of food scraps for municipalities that have a single drop-off point and bring the material to a facility in Ulster County. It would be cost-neutral for the local communities, Latimer said.

Municipalities that have curbside pickup for food scraps will be responsible for taking the material to the hauler’s transfer station at their own expense, he said.

A Request for Proposal will be developed to find a hauler, Latimer said. About 20 Westchester municipalities currently have a food scrap recycling program.

Another part of the effort will see the county launch a six-week pilot program in March with a yet-to-be-determined municipality as a test run for the countywide effort by taking the scraps to the Yonkers Transfer Station. Those scraps will be transported to the Ulster County facility for composting.

Finally, the county plans to create a small-scale composting site at the Household Hazardous Material Recovery Facility in Valhalla this summer by accepting food scraps from one municipality. The compost site will also serve as an education center for residents and others in the county to learn more about the practice and provide free compost to residents and the county Parks Department.

While cost estimates aren’t unavailable for the transport of the food scraps because the contract must still be bid, the county executive’s office anticipates the Valhalla compost and education facility to cost about $450,000 while the pilot program would run between $10,000 and $15,000.

Latimer said Westchester must find ways to be environmentally responsible and reduce the amount of waste it generates. About 125,000 tons of commercial food waste and more than 85,000 tons of residential food waste are generated each year within the county, comprising about 18 percent of the waste stream.

“We have to do everything we can think of in order to push back on this issue and one of the clear reasons is to expand our recycling and do it in an environmentally sensitive way, and by dealing with the issue of food scrap waste, we are reducing the amount of garbage that we burn making it more economically feasible and a better environment,” Latimer said.

As the county launches the short-term steps, county officials will explore whether one of three longer-term solutions outlined in the Woodard & Curran report can be achieved. Potential options include installing a small anaerobic digester, which breaks down the material without oxygen, next to the county’s Wheelabrator plant in Peekskill, Latimer said. The plant would be able to accommodate only about 10,000 tons of material and is estimated to cost between $5 million and $7 million.

A second possibility would be to use co-digestion to break down the material at the Peekskill Water Resource Recovery Facility. In that operation, the county would be recycling food scraps at the same time other items are recycled.

The county could also consider building its own large composting facility similar to Ulster County. However, that would require about a four-acre site and could cost upwards of $25 million, Latimer said.

“That’s a significant amount of land and size in Westchester,” Latimer said. “We’re looking at a facility that would generate traffic because you’re going to be running product in from all across the county and the issue of odors may, in fact, happen when you have that situation.”

He said having the county assist some of the local municipalities handle food scraps might be a more palatable option.

Nadya Hall, community environmentalist at Teatown Lake Reservation, said despite the challenges it’s crucial the county do what it can to reduce its waste stream. Teatown is partnering with the Town of Ossining on a food scrap recycling program.

“I express my deepest gratitude to the county executive for taking this on and making sustainability a priority and for making these studies a priority for the county going forward,” Hall said.

Local officials whose communities have established food scrap recycling have been pleased with the effort. Mount Kisco Mayor Gina Picinich said her village started its program in November and has about 60 households participating along with the Fox Senior Center.

“It’s launched, it’s gotten started and it’s generating steam and excitement,” Picinich said.

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Benjamin Moore has just announced its color of the year: First Light, a delicate pink.

I don’t think my wife and I have ever painted any of our rooms a delicate pink, although I had always thought about it since that time we discovered a beautiful pale pink room in Historic Deerfield that we were told, as I recall, was fashioned with paint created with brick dust. Better brick dust than the red paint we discovered on the back of a closet door in our 18th century home that we were told was created with ox blood mixed with milk.

Just last week, my wife looked up from the lifestyles section of the newspaper and said, “Did you know that green is the most soothing color to paint a room? It’s been a long time since we’ve had a green room.”

As it happens, we live in a beautiful two-bedroom (and den) condo where every wall is painted off-white. I was fine with that, convinced that uniformity of color in all rooms tends to extend the feeling of space. Then suddenly I was thrown into doubt when my longtime painter, Joe Pascarelli, visited us and declared, “This place needs some color!”

I disagreed at first. Just as all the apartments I ever rented in New York City that were invariably painted an off-white, my current living environment was offered only in that color, and I had intended to keep it that way. This one-color approach works for us in that, besides expanding the space, it serves as a suitable backdrop for all the paintings and prints assembled from a lifetime of collecting.

But earlier in the month, a study about color from Zillow blew me away. It demonstrated how a fresh coat of paint in the right color – inside or out – may help sell a home for more money.

I’m not planning to sell soon, but I took immediate notice for information that I could relay to seller clients. According to the analysis, homes with walls painted in shades of blue or light gray may sell for as much as a $5,400 premium.

When the Right Color Can Mean More Money When Selling

In the Zillow article, the service’s chief economist, said, “Color can be a powerful tool for attracting buyers to a home, especially in listing photos and videos. Painting walls in fresh, natural-looking colors, particularly in shades of blue and pale gray, not only make a home feel larger, but also are neutral enough to help future buyers envision themselves living in the space. Incorporating light blue in kitchens and bathrooms may pay off especially well as the color complements white countertops and cabinets, a growing trend in both rooms.”

Safe Haven Self Storage

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For some years, I have been aware that blue is America’s favorite color. When I placed my home on the market, I painted all the walls off-white, but all the woodwork and cabinetry a soft tone of grey-blue. It made a statement, yet was not so specific to shortstop the attraction of a buyer.

I feel particularly proud of the advice I gave in the sale of an historic home where each room was painted a distinct and intensive color. After lingering on the market for almost six months, I convinced the sellers to withdraw the listing for three weeks while the interior was repainted in pale appealing colors. When relisted, the home received two solid offers in less than a month.

Selecting the right paint color is one of many factors that may affect why a home sells faster or for more money. Walls painted in cool neutrals have broad appeal and also project the message that the home is well cared for and has other desirable features.

Bill Primavera is a Realtor® associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester (www.PrimaveraPR.com), specializing in lifestyles, real estate and development. 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.
Cuomo Signs Paulin’s Limousine Safety Bills Into Law

Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale) announced Monday that three bills connected to the safe operation of limousines that she introduced were signed into law by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.

Two of the measures are related to safety improvements in the operation of for-hire stretch limousines. The third piece of legislation establishes a Limousine Passenger Safety Task Force.

Stretch limousines are the vehicle of choice for many happy occasions, from family events, to birthdays, to weddings, to the annual ritual of prom. But they also present unique challenges that implicate the safety of drivers and passengers.

Bill A712 amends the vehicle and traffic law regarding the installation of safety belts in stretch limousines. Under the bill’s provisions, stretch limousines altered after Jan. 1, 2021, would be required to have seatbelts for all seating positions.

Additionally, limousine operators will be required to post a notice in the vehicle instructing passengers to wear their seatbelts.

The third bill creates the Stretch Limousine Passenger Safety Task Force, which would conduct a comprehensive review of matters influencing the safety, adequacy, efficiency and reliability of stretch limousine transportation.

The task force will be comprised of 11 members, consisting of the commissioners of the state departments of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and Transportation (DOT), the superintendent of the state police and eight other members appointed by the governor.

Paulin, who chairs the Assembly Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions, has been advocating for improvements to limousine safety for several years. She first recognized the need for limo safety improvements following the July 2015 limousine crash in Cutchogue, L.I. that killed four people and injured four others.

There was an even greater sense of urgency when 20 people were killed – the driver, all 17 passengers and two pedestrians – in a single-limo crash in Schoharie in October 2018.

“I am very pleased that these critical safety measures have become law,” Paulin said after Cuomo signed the bills. “I thank Gov. Cuomo for his leadership on these important initiatives. Access to seat belts for limousine passengers and random drug testing for drivers are common sense and practical steps that will help ensure the safety of not only limousine passengers but for everyone traveling on New York roadways.”

She said that the creation of the task force means the state will continue to address issues regarding the safety of limousine passengers and drivers.

Club Fit Briarcliff to Hold Camp Craze Feb. 7

Do the kids have cabin fever? Bring them to Club Fit Briarcliff for Camp Craze on Friday, Feb. 7 and get a taste of summer camp to beat those winter blues.

The schedule of activities includes laser tag, games, tennis, inflatables, face painting, Zumba, martial arts, a balloon artist and more. If you’re interested in summer camp at Club Fit, you can sign up at a special discounted rate during the event to save money while the children are having fun.

The free event runs from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. To reserve a spot, visit www.clubfit.com/camp-craze. For more information, call Sara, the camp director at 914-250-2768 or e-mail sschum@clubfit.com.

Club Fit Briarcliff is located at 584 N. State Rd. in Briarcliff Manor.
Make a Mini-Comic. Did you know that with a single sheet of paper and a pencil you can draw a comic strip in just a few minutes? In this presentation/workshop, Gale Galligan, creator of three Baby-Sitters Club graphic novels, talks about the fun of making and sharing mini-comics, and then walks students through making a mini-comic of their own. For children in grades 3-6.
Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Registration requested; walk-ins welcome. Info and registration: 914-769-0548.


Teen Advisory Board. A group of teens in grades 6-12 who get together monthly and help come up with program ideas, books to purchase and things for the North Castle Public Library’s Young Adult room. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 4 to 5 p.m. Free. First Tuesday of every month. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

DIY Cell Phone Holder. Never misplace your cell phone again with an awesome holder you can create yourself. For students 12 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.

Italian Language and Culture. Mara De Matteo, bar and raised in Italy and passionate about her native language, combines lively conversation with grammatical instruction in her classes. She creates interactive lessons on the richness of Italian culture, past and present. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Free. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

Pajama Story Time. Join Miss Debbie for an evening story time that includes stories, songs and fun. Pajamas and stuffed animals are welcome. For children two to five years old and their families. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 6:30 to 7 p.m. Free. Every Tuesday through June 16 (except Feb. 18). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

Bible Study. Join the United Methodist Church of Mount Kisco for this new weekly session. Mt. Kisco Diner, 252 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 7 to 8 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Contact David Visaggio at 914-262-9973.

Legendary Tuesday Night Jam. This jam has fostered many great musicians over the years. Some have gone on to tour, win Grammy Awards and achieve celebrity status. You never know who you’ll hear. Come on down, play or listen, dance, drink and enjoy. All levels of musical talent are welcome. Lucy’s Lounge, 446 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville, 8 p.m. No cover charge. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-747-4740.


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 Lonnain Romney at rooneylm@optonline.net.

Redefining Your Concept. Do you have a creative idea that you want to turn into a profitable business? Not sure where to start? Natasha Roukou, a seasoned SCORE mentor, will show you how to sharpen your concept and target your client base, outline a marketing and financial plan and more in this interactive workshop. For those starting a service business or a product business. White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Ave., White Plains. 2 to 4 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: www.westchester.score.org.

Affordable Care Act Navigator. A trained navigator provided by the county Department of Health will be available to help people with choosing and signing up for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act and the state health marketplace. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 2:30 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. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 480 Bedford Rd. East, Chappaqua. (except Feb. 19). Info: 914-288-6026. Info and Thursday and Saturday appointments: 914-336-6200.

Valentine Cooking Demos With Chef Suzy Scherr. Learn to make sweet and healthy treats for the whole family, including whole grain double-chocolate muffins with fresh berries, all-natural strawberry milk and raspberry heart-shaped crispy treats. Afterwards, children will make Valentine’s Day cards for Northern Westchester Hospital patients. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Part of Northern Westchester Hospital’s Center for Healthy Living. Led by Suzy Scherr, in the Health Living Cooking Room at 480 Bedford Rd., Chappaqua (next to Whole Foods at Chappaqua Crossing). 4 to 5 p.m. Adults: $15. Children (six years old and up): $5. Info and registration: Visit www.northwestchesterhealth.org.


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. Registration recommended. Info and registration: 914-864-0130.

Bread, Ovarian and Gynecological Cancer Support Group. Northern Westchester Hospital at Chappaqua Crossing, 480 Bedford Rd. Chappaqua. 7:30 p.m. Free. First Wednesday of every month. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-962-6402 or 800-532-4290.

Art Series: Isabelle de Borchgrave. This incredible contemporary artist creates the most magnificent gowns and intricate paper marquetry from paper and has exhibited her marvels around the world, including in situ at the Reggia di Venaria Reale in Turin, one of the great castles of the House of Savoy. As dazzling and luxurious as the actual Renaissance costumes she creates, these models her work on each piece is a fragile, unique creation of incredible beauty. Her work will be discussed and there will be a look at some of the wonderful locations where her works have been installed. Led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

Safekeeping Stories of the Holocaust. An eight-session workshop designed specifically for family members of Holocaust survivors. Each session will focus on keeping and capturing your family’s Holocaust story in five to six pieces that include events before, during and after the war as well as your own next-generation reflections and insights. Meets eight consecutive Wednesdays, Bet Torah, 60 Smith Ave., Mount Kisco. 7 to 8 p.m. $36 for eight sessions. Info and registration: Visit www.safesafeguardingstories.com.

Thursday, Feb. 6

Pleasantville Garden Club. This month’s guest speaker is Ann Parkowski, a master gardener and owner of Lady Clippers, a garden pruning business in Bedford. Learn about pruning and maintenance of private and public gardens and estate properties in Westchester and Fairfield counties and New York City. Parkowski is also prunning instructor at the New York Botanical Garden School of Adult Education. She will be joined by Pleasantville Garden Club member Ed Impara, a horticulturist and master gardener. Pleasantville Presbyterian Church, 400 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. Meeting at 9:15 a.m. Program at 10:30 a.m. Free. Visit www.pleasantvillegardencub.org.

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We’re happy to help spread the word about your community event. Please submit your information at least three weeks prior to your event and include the words “Happenings Calendar Submission” in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to: Martin Wilbur at mwilbur@theexaminernews.com.
Latimer Pays Tribute to Westchester’s First Three County Execs

By Martin Wilbur

Anyone who’s lived in Westchester for the past 25 years is probably aware that Andrew O’Rourke, Andrew Spano and Rob Astorino were the last three county executives before George Latimer.

But can you name the first three men to serve in that capacity?

Last Friday, Latimer, the office’s current occupant, paid tribute to William F. Bleakley, Herbert C. Gerlach and James D. Hopkins for laying the groundwork for the modern Westchester with a special ceremony that included relatives of the three executives, and in Bleakley and Hopkins’ cases, members of their law firms.

Each one of the three conference rooms on the ninth-floor of the county office building, which is occupied by the county executive and his staff, will now bear their names along with a framed photograph listing the highlights of their careers.

Latimer said he has seen each of the three men’s photographs when coming to work and realized their contributions helped make Westchester County what it is today.

“Little by little, you come to understand what kind of accomplishments these people made,” Latimer said “When I look around the county, it breaks my heart that they may be forgotten.”

Bleakley, a former state Supreme Court justice, was elected as Westchester’s first county executive in 1938 after an unsuccessful gubernatorial bid two years earlier. He was faced with having to reduce the debt that had been incurred by construction of the county’s parkway system.

When he resigned in August 1941, county debt had been slashed by $16 million in less than three years in office.

Bleakley was also credited with reorganizing the county’s departments.

Gerlach, a former Ossining town supervisor and county legislator, was named interim county executive, then was elected to three terms on his own, serving through 1953. He fought for state aid to support the county’s parkways and was responsible for bringing commercial flights to Westchester County Airport after the end of World War II.

Hopkins was the third county executive following his service as a North Castle councilman from 1939 to 1943 and supervisor from 1944 to 1953. Among Hopkins’ accomplishments as county executive was acquiring the land for Westchester Community College, Dunwoodie Golf Course and Saxon Woods Pool.

Latimer said that Hopkins was the only one of Westchester’s nine county executives to lead the legislative, executive and judiciary branches after becoming a county judge.

Each of the first three executives were Republicans, but Latimer said what mattered wasn’t their political affiliation but their contributions.

“What’s important is that they served this county in their day, they had accomplishments in their day and we should remember that,” Latimer said.

Bleakley’s granddaughter, Patricia Bleakley Viger, recalled him as a distinguished man.

“We always remembered him as an extraordinarily kind and a very dignified fellow, soft-spoken and it really formed a large part of our childhood to know that he was there,” she said.

She and Fred Martin, a nephew who later became a law partner of Bleakley and Hopkins at Bleakley, Platt & Walker, a top Westchester law firm that still operates in White Plains, recalled Bleakley loving to walk, something that Martin learned from him.

Today, Martin walks three miles a day.

“I was fortunate to live two blocks away and I had plenty of chances to walk with him, which I did,” he said. “Being the oldest person isn’t bad when you have memories of a man like William F. Bleakley.”

He also called Hopkins “the finest lawyer the firm has ever had. He was an amazing man and it was a real pleasure and an honor to serve with him.”

Latimer said that in the next couple of years he plans to honor O’Rourke, the only Westchester county executive who is deceased who has not been recognized. Years ago, the county office building was named after Edwin Michaelian, Westchester’s fourth county executive.

Table Tennis Center Expands Ping Pong Parkinson’s Program

The Westchester Table Tennis Center’s (WTTC) Ping Pong Parkinson, a nonprofit organization, announced last week that it has expanded its weekly program to better serve the Parkinson’s diagnosed community in the county and beyond.

Now that the program is in greater demand than when it started three years ago, Ping Pong Parkinson’s will also offer a Monday afternoon session to better accommodate those individuals who are unable to make it to the Wednesday evening session.

Ping Pong Parkinson’s popularity is driven in large part by its founders Nenad Bach, Will Shortz, owner of the Westchester Table Tennis Center, Art Dubow, David Hill, David Hertz and the table volunteers. Since introduced in March 2017, the program has enjoyed impressive, measurable success in helping Parkinson’s-diagnosed individuals slow down the progression of the disease by playing ping pong regularly.

Bach, a world-renowned musician, peace activist and Parkinson’s-diagnosed individual, claims table tennis has been the key to regaining his ability to play the guitar and pursue his passion for music.

“I stopped playing the guitar five years after I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s, but then I started playing table tennis and I felt 50 percent better,” Bach said.

The Monday afternoon session, which starts at 1:30 p.m., will follow the format used on Wednesday evening: formal introductions, with everyone in a circle, projecting his voice (five minutes); announcements, including Parkinson’s medical news updates (five minutes); exercises (10 minutes); a ping pong demonstration and instructional block (five minutes); the main ping pong session, including singles, doubles, robot and instructional table (45 minutes); boxing bag and juggling (10 minutes); and song (10 minutes).

All individuals with a Parkinson’s diagnosis are welcome regardless of the severity of their symptoms. New participants to the Monday afternoon or Wednesday evening sessions are welcome to participate the first time they attend for free. After that, the charge is $5 on Monday afternoons and $10 on Wednesday evenings, which begins at 7:30 p.m. Ping former balls are provided for free. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes with light-colored rubber soles.

The Westchester Table Tennis Center is located at 175 Tompkins Ave. in Pleasantville. For more information about Ping Pong Parkinson’s, call Irene Silbert at 914-523-8783 or visit www.pingpongparkinson.com.
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Baby Time. A fun interactive lap-sit story time that includes songs, rhymes and a few very short stories. The experience gives babies the opportunity to socialize and parents a time to share. Recommended for newborns through 12 months old. Mount Pleasant Public 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 create beautiful crafts together while enjoying the ancient art of knitting. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Every Monday and Thursday (except Feb. 17). Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.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. Drop in anytime and join founder Billy Ayres as he shares 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 an 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 a.m. to 11 a.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday (except Feb. 18 and 20). Info: 914-741-0276 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

Storytime. This interactive story time uses pictures 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, 125 Lozza Drive, Valhalla. 11 to 1:30 p.m. Free. Every Tuesday and Thursday (except Feb. 18 and 20). Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.


Pelvic Floor Health: Beyond Kegels in the Chair. Educational and experiential, this workshop will empower women with a new awareness of their pelvic floor. Come learn the anatomy and physiology, the weakness, dysfunctions and techniques to relax, strengthen, balance and maintain optimal health. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 1 to 2 p.m. Free. Meets the second and third Thursdays of each month. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelibrary.org.

MAyhem Club. Music Master Class Series. The kickoff to this series features violinist Nicholas Cords. All welcome. Hof-Barthelson Music School, 25 School Lane, Scarsdale. 7:30 p.m. Space limited; reservations strongly encouraged. Info and registration: E-mail bhms@bhms.org.

Friday, Feb. 7

ZUMBA® With Amy. Fun cardio dance fitness workout, low-impact approach, easy learning environment. This feel-good workout is exercise in disguise. Free. 10 a.m. to noon. 

Passport to Fitness for Kids. Get fit and learn dance moves from around the world with a Palestinian twist. 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.


Westchester Photographic Society: Photo Competition 4A. Members compete in digital competitions – digital color and open mind. Critiqued by a professional judge. For adults 18 years old and up. Westchester Community College’s Technology Building, Room 107, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. (Use Parking Lot 1) 10 a.m. Free. Info: 914-627-5533 or visit www.wpsphotography.com.

Paul Reiser. Comedian, actor, television writer, author and musician Paul Reiser has been busier than usual lately. He’s currently starring in two hit shows for Netflix – “Stranger Things” and “The Kominsky Method,” the latter starring alongside Michael Douglas and Alan Arkin. This very busy year will end with the highly-anticipated return of “Mad About You,” the long-running hit comedy of the 1990s created by Reiser and co-star Helen Hunt. In addition to multiple Emmy, Goldene Globe, American Comedy Award and Screen Actors Guild nominations, “Mad About You” won numerous Emmys, a coveted Peabody and a Golden Globe for best comedy series. Also appearing will be Jeff LeBlanc. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St., Tarrytown. 8 p.m. $38, $43 and $48. Info and tickets: Visit www.tarrytownmusichall.com.

“Animals Out of Paper.” To close out “Arc Stages” fifth season of their professional company, the Next Stage, this funny, poignant play about the collision of mismatched people and the complicated ways we hurt, heal and love those among us. Starring Emily Sohn, David Lanson and Elyse van Es. Arc Stages, 147 Wheeler Ave., Mount Kisco. 8 p.m. Adults: $36, Seniors and students: $28. Also Feb. 8, 14 and 15 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 9 at 2 p.m. Info and tickets: 914-747-6206 or visit www.arcstages.org.

Twisted Valentines Festival. Axial Theatre presents this sixth annual event featuring eight original one-act plays, a mix of comedies and dramas, that probe the depths of joy, despair and everything above, below and in-between that love and lust are prone to evoke. St. John’s Episcopal Church, 85 East Main St., Pleasantville. 8 p.m. $25. Seniors and students: $20. Also Feb. 8 at 3 and 8 p.m., Feb. 9 and 16 at 4 p.m., Feb. 13 and 14 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 15 at 5 p.m. (A Valentine’s dance follows the Feb. 15 performance. Info: 914-286-7680 or visit www.axialtheatre.org. Tickets in advance at Valhalla, Scarsdale and Pleasantville, 914-643-6162 or visit www.wbnpaper.com/m/symphony/449239.

Saturday, Feb. 8

Pleasantville Farmers Market. The delicious good time moves indoors for the

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Nonprofit Brings Monthly Mobile Pet Food Pantry to Mt. Kisco

By Martin Wilbur

Many people love dogs and cats and have them for pets at home, but properly caring for and feeding an animal takes resources and information. A nonprofit organization has been holding a periodic dog and cat food pantry in Mount Kisco to help ease the financial burden a bit by providing some assistance for those that need help feeding their pet.

This Sunday, Humane Nation will be holding its next monthly mobile pet food pantry at the American Legion Hall parking lot from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It returns to the site the second Sunday of every month.

One Saturday morning every other month, the pantry also operates in the Boys & Girls Club’s parking lot on East Main Street, said Humane Nation’s founder Doriane Lucia DiFlora, To make it as easy as possible for the public to remember the date, it coincides with the Boys & Girls Club food pantry for people, which is scheduled to operate next on Mar. 7.

DiFlora said in addition to dog and cat food, there is rabbit food, cat litter, educational materials on pet care and a limited number of accessories such as leashes, flea and tick medication and dog coats that are sometimes available as well.

DiFlora said her organization, which she started in 2002, doesn’t only give away food but looks to help the public understand the responsibilities of pet ownership.

“Many people love dogs and cats and have them for pets at home, but they look to help the public understand the responsibilities of pet ownership,” DiFlora said.

When the pantry is open, the food is free to the public at large. DiFlora said she has a mentor in Florida who operates a large-scale pantry who discouraged trying to check up on whether people must demonstrate a financial need.

“The overwhelming number of people who use the pantry need the help, she said, including seniors on fixed incomes who are alone and need the companionship that their pet provides, DiFlora said.

“A lot of times, the seniors, the only thing they have left in their life is their pets and they’ve been known to go to the human food pantry,” she said.

DiFlora, a local resident, said Humane Nation receives donations of food as well as money donations, which she uses to buy the food.

Her organization’s website also outlines many other topics, including bite-prevention programs, how to properly care for your pets and information about fundraisers for animal shelters.

DiFlora said common-sense care such as reframing from leaving your dog outside around the clock sometimes eludes pet owners.

If donations increase, DiFlora said she can help promote assistance for the organization’s spay/neuter and vet bill assistance programs.

“I want to see less dogs and cats entering shelters, and whenever possible, staying with their loving owners,” she said.

When the mobile pet food pantry operates at the Boys & Girls Club, it runs from 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. After Mar. 21, the next scheduled date there is Saturday, May 30.

For more information on the pantry and Humane Nation, visit www.humanation.net.

Humane Nation volunteer Elle Olsen assists the organization’s founder Doriane Lucia DiFlora operate a mobile pet food pantry in Mount Kisco. This Sunday, the pantry is scheduled to return to the American Legion parking lot.

“When the pantry is open, the food is free to the public at large. DiFlora said she has a mentor in Florida who operates a large-scale pantry who discouraged trying to check up on whether people must demonstrate a financial need.”

Happenings

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Winter. A great way to support regional agriculture and eat healthy, year-round with plenty of warm smiles and community togetherness. Pleasantville Middle School, 10 Romer Ave., Pleasantville, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Please note the market is a dog-free environment. Indoor market continues through Mar. 28. Info: Visit www.pleasantvilllefarmersmarket.org.

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. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 10a.m. Every Monday and Wednesday at 9 a.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. Drop in or weekly discount rates available. Info: Contact Peggy at 914 960-4097.

Practice Tai Chi With Larry Atille. Learn specific feldenkrais and chi kung breathing techniques for deep relaxation and apply them to tai chi movement. 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. Every Saturday. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlelib.org.

Crafteday. Make a Valentine hedgehog to give to someone special. Come create and decorate a card as well as a hedgehog

bookmark. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Free. Info: 914-769-0548 or www.mountainpleasantlibrary.org.

Adult Salsa Class. Addie-Tude Performing Arts Center, 42 Memorial Plaza (lower level), Pleasantville. 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. $12. Every Saturday. Info: 917-215-1720 or visit www.addie-tude.com. Call or visit website because classes are subject to change.

Indoor Nature Games. Come in from the cold to play some nature games while sipping hot chocolate. Cranberry Lake Preserve, 1690 Old Orchard St., North White Plains. 1 to 2 p.m. Free. Info: 914-428-1005.

Drop in for Tech Help. Receive assistance with any of your technology devices. FC, Google, Microsoft savvy volunteers help with troubleshooting, downloading, Overdrive, Freegal, Hoopla or any other online service. First-come, first-served. Mount Kisco Public 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.mountkiscolibrary.org.

Tu BiShevat Celebration. Rabbi Frank Tamburello will lead a special Seder service including traditional food offerings and drink. He will also explain the humanistic elements of the holiday as well as the traditional ones. Hosted by the Westchester Community for Humanistic Judaism. Community Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 468 Rosedale Ave., White Plains. 2 p.m. Non-members: $10. Children (under 13): Free. RSVP required. Info and RSVP: Visit www.wchj.org or e-mail info@wchj.org.

Winter Wolves. Winter offers families a unique opportunity to visit the wolves during their favorite time of year. Learn about the mythology, biology 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 maturing pups experience their first winter season. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and potentially behold the endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. Adults: $15. Children (under 12): $12. Also Feb. 17, 22 and 29 at 11 a.m., Feb. 16 at 1 p.m. and Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit www.nywolf.org.

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. A standard-bearer of innovation and artistic excellence, this audience favorite is one of the world’s foremost chamber orchestras. Orpheus was founded in 1972 by a group of young musicians determined to combine the intimacy and warmth of a chamber ensemble with the richness of an orchestra. With 71 albums, including the Grammy Award-winning “Shadow Dances: Stravinsky Miniatures,” and 42 commissioned and premiered original works, Orpheus performs without a conductor and creates extraordinary musical experiences that enrich lives and empower individuals through collaboration, innovation and a passion for artistic excellence. This program will consist of Garfrenec’s Nonet in E-flat Major, Op. 38 and Mendelssohn’s Octet in E-flat Major, Op. 20. Recital Hall at Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Rd., Purchase. 5 p.m. $21. 25 to $77.50. Info and tickets: 914-251-6200 or visit www.artscenter.org.

Winter Howl for Adults Only: Mating and Dating. Wolves are “mono-estrus” – breeding only once a year during the winter months. Hence, Valentine’s season is an exciting time for wolves. This year there are five critically endangered wolf breeding pairs. Learn about lobo love during a special evening howl and enjoy visiting the wolves during their favorite hour – dusk. Guests will also learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolves in North America while enjoying a spread of wine and cheese. Guests will take a short sunset hike to howl with ambassador wolves Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and potentially behold the endangered red wolves and Mexican wolves, too. For adults 21 years old and up. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 5 p.m. $20. Also Feb. 14 at 6 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info and
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Three Horace Greeley High School seniors have been named one of more than 4,500 candidates in the 2020 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

The candidates, Holly Cheng, Eric Song and Alec Xiang, were selected from nearly 3.6 million students expected to graduate from U.S. high schools this year.

Inclusion in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program is one of the highest honors bestowed upon graduating high school seniors. Scholars are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.

A distinguished panel of educators will review these submissions and select about 600 semifinalists in early April. The Commission on Presidential Scholars, a group of up to 32 eminent citizens appointed by the President, will select the finalists, and the U.S. Department of Education will announce the scholars in May.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 by executive order of the President to recognize some of the nation’s most distinguished graduating seniors for their accomplishments in many areas: academic success, leadership, service to school and community.

It was expanded in 1979 to recognize students demonstrating exceptional scholarship and talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. In 2015, the program was expanded once again to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical fields.

Annually, up to 161 U.S. Presidential Scholars are chosen from among that year’s senior class, representing excellence in education and the promise of greatness in America’s youth.

Two Byram Hills students recently receive Certificates of Excellence for their submissions to StArt 2020: 14th Annual Regional High Schools Student Art Exhibition at the OSilas Gallery of Concordia College in Bronxville.

Senior David Schwimmer received an Award of Excellence for his painting entitled “Just Another Day” and senior Veronica Zawojek received an Award of Excellence for her work “Exoskeleton Wings.”

Senior A.J. Plousadis had his work, “Another Day at the Office,” on display at the gallery and was one of three students chosen by Byram Hills art teachers to represent the best of the school. Byram Hills was the only school to have more than one winner.

Student artwork was juried by a panel of art professionals who selected seven students to receive an Award of Excellence. On display were art pieces from 90 talented artists representing 31 high schools from the Hudson Valley, the Bronx and southern Connecticut.

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You Don’t Have to Be an Athlete to Benefit from Graston Technique

Graston Technique is a specific brand of instrument-assisted mobilization devices used to treat soft tissue injuries or fascial restrictions, as well as help assess the kinetic chain and various pathologies.

Composed of stainless steel and designed with unique treatment edges and angles, Graston instruments allow the clinician to sweep through a particular area to help restore movement and function in addition to helping with the healing process. These instruments can treat a wide range of conditions and injuries for people with varying levels of activity.

When thinking about who needs treatments such as Graston Technique, one usually thinks of athletes and the active population. Graston Technique certainly has many benefits for athletes and those who are active by helping to maintain functional motion and rehabbing injuries.

Many certified athletic trainers and doctors of physical therapy use it in the prevention, treatment and recovery of physically active patients, and it can be a great supplement to therapeutic exercises and other manual techniques.

However, you do not need to be an athlete to benefit from Graston Technique. Regardless of lifestyle, everyone ends up dealing with some sort of soft tissue issue at some point in their life. Whether it is tightness from sitting at a desk all day, a long-term injury you never addressed and learned to live with or excessive typing at work, fascial restrictions can occur; limiting range of motion and function. The Graston Technique specialists can use the instruments to lessen the pain of myofascial adhesions or scar tissue. The mild to moderate pressure of the instruments compress and then stretch the tissue repeatedly, which over time can lead to several physiological changes.

While originally derived from the ancient Chinese healing technique of Gua Sha, Graston Technique has a firm foundation in evidence-based medicine. Research studies have shown that Graston Technique can help separate and break down collagen cross-links (i.e. scar tissue and fascial adhesions); inhibit abnormal muscle tone (muscle guarding); modify neural sensitivity and input; help with angiogenesis to an area (stimulation of new blood vessels and localized blood flow); and increase cellular activity in the tissue (recruiting fibroblasts and mast cells for proper healing).

In order to effectively treat a particular condition, healthcare professionals need to complete the Graston Technique basic course and then complete the advanced course and become Graston Technique specialists. Through these courses, clinicians learn a variety of treatment strokes, sequencing of these strokes, how to integrate Graston Technique with therapeutic exercise and stretching, indications and contraindications and the variety of conditions that may benefit from this type of treatment.

Graston Technique can be used to treat a host of injuries, including tennis or golfer’s elbow, Achilles tendinopathy, patellar tendinopathy, sprains and strains, cervicogenic or tension headaches, carpal tunnel syndrome, plantar fasciitis, rotator cuff injuries, neck pain and back pain and many more. Most people are able to pick out at least a couple of conditions from this list that they have experienced before.

Through a combination of Graston Technique and therapeutic exercise, pain from these conditions can be reduced and motion restored. In the clinic, we often see these injuries from soccer, basketball, cycling/spinning, tennis, golf and baseball and from the gym. Everyone from professional athletes to the weekend warrior to the less active are susceptible. Regardless of how it happened, an injury needs to be evaluated and treated so that you can get back to functioning at a more effective, pain-free level.

At ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy, our physical therapists, certified athletic trainers and chiropactors use instrument-assisted soft tissue mobilization along with other manual techniques and exercises in treating patients. Benefits of Graston Technique can be experienced with routine maintenance, acute injury or that chronic issue you have been putting off in hopes of it going away on its own. So come get evaluated by one of our practitioners today.

Justen Lopez is a certified athletic trainer at ProClinix Sports Physical Therapy & Chiropactic in Pleasantville and Armonk. For more information about this article or about ProClinix, he can be reached at 914-202-0700 or at Justen.proclinix@gmail.com. Also visit www.ProClinix.com.

By Justen Lopez

Happening

continued from page 26

pre-registration: Visit www.wnywolf.org.

Chinoiserie: Beijing to Versailles:
Baroque Treasures from the Forbidden City.
Ars Antiqua will present a rare opportunity to hear Baroque music presented in an entirely adventurous and beautiful context – European music of the 18th century inspired by compositions brought back by musicians and missionaries who visited China’s Forbidden City. The decorative style called chinoiserie was all the rage in Paris as it captured the imagination of painters, furniture makers, architects and craftsmen. Violin virtuoso Krista Renney will be joined by members of Ars Antiqua in an exotic program which brings together the haunting ancient Chinese melodies of Beijing and Rococo masterpiece heard at Versailles. Followed by a Rococo Chinoiserie dessert buffet. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 191 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 7:30 p.m. Info and tickets: 914-235-1800 or visit www.musictinorg.

Gorilla River’s Music Video Film Festival. This inaugural festival will feature 12 up-and-coming bands on one unique night. Let yourself enjoy a one-of-a-kind rock ‘n’ roll roller evening. The three judges are MTV legend Mark Goodman, Veuve Vice President Ed Walker and SiriusXM host Alan Light. Hosted by Daddy Stingray, Chappaqua Performing Arts Center, 480 Bedford Rd., Chappaqua. 7:30 p.m. Info and tickets: www.filmfreeway.com/MusicVideoFilmFestival/tickets.

Raise the Volume Benefit. An evening of dinner, dancing and drinks while supporting suicide prevention and youth emotional wellness. Held by Break the Hold (BTH), which was established by the Halloran Family in honor of their late son, Brian Thomas Halloran, who passed on Jan. 23, 2018. Its mission is to prevent depression and youth emotional wellness is accomplished by delivering evidence-based resilience programs to students, parents, coaches and community members. Through education and open dialogue, BTH hopes to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. Club Infinity, 404 Irvington St., Pleasantville. 7:30 to 11 p.m. Tickets start at $75. Info and tickets: 914-907-7321 or visit www.BTHbenefit2020.eventbrite.com.

Villalobos Brothers. Contemporary and high-octane, The Villalobos Brothers (Ernesto, Alberto and Luis, joined by artistic director and guitarist Humberto Flores, drummer Rosa Avila and bassist Leo Sherman) are redefining contemporary Mexican music. Their original compositions masterfully blend elements of jazz, rock, classical and Mexican folk to deliver a powerful message of love, brotherhood and social justice. The Villalobos Brothers have produced around the world and taken part in many intriguing projects and collaborations. In 2018, they joined forces with Arturo O’Farrill and the Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra for “Fandango at the Wall.” This ambitious undertaking, produced by Kabir Sehgal, united legendary international musicians for a live concert at the Tijuana-San Diego border wall and resulted in a live album and a documentary film. PepsiCo Theatre at Purchase College, 735 Anderson Hill Rd., Purchase. 8 p.m. $11.25 and $42.50. Info and tickets: 914-251-6200 or visit www.artscenter.org.

Hollywood Nights: A Bob Seger Experience. This New Jersey-based powerhouse has set out to recreate everything about Seger and his music right down to the smallest detail. Determined to leave no stone unturned, Hollywood Nights even tours with and has the stage every night with a baby Grand Piano. The band, and all of its members, prides itself on continuing the amazing groundwork laid down by Seger over the past 30 years. If Seger himself is not on tour, Hollywood Nights is the next best thing. Tarrytown Music Hall, 10 Main St., Tarrytown. 8 p.m. $30, $35 and $40. Info and tickets: Visit www.tarrytownmusichall.org.

Sunday, Feb. 9

Lobo Love: A Valentine’s Day Party With Wolves! Show the wolves how much you love them by attending this Valentine’s Day-themed program. Visitors will learn about mythology surrounding wolves, the important role of wolves in the natural world and discover why this season is such a magical time for packs in North America, while also assembling “woofy” valentines for the ambassador wolves. Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr as well as potentially behold some of the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Guests will enjoy hot beverages in the woodstove-heated classroom. Please dress for cold weather. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Adults: $15. Children (under 12): $12. Also Feb. 15. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit www.wnywolf.org.

Eating to Help Save the Planet. Jason Grauer, senior crops manager at the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, will lead this forum entitled From Finance to Farming: A Personal Journey to Reconnect with Food & Land. Grauer manages the daily responsibilities and organization of field crop production, sales of vegetables from the greenhouse and field and vegetable experimentation and research. He also co-developed the lab’s first soil-based greenhouse for four-season food production, continued on page 27
P’ville High School Writing Contest Announces Student Winners

By Abby Luby

For the 10th year, Pleasantville High School held its 11th-grade writing contest co-sponsored by local author Joe Wallace and Jennifer Kohn of The Village Bookstore.

At last Tuesday night’s Pleasantville Board of Education meeting, student winners and honorable mentions were recognized by Hatzidis and high school English teacher Leigh Meyer.

“You’re living lives and telling stories that the rest of us just can’t experience,” Wallace told the students. “These students have a lot going on and yet they created these extraordinary pieces.”

Wallace said it was a special year for well-crafted entries that made choosing winners difficult.

“It was Joe’s enthusiasm and passion that motivated and excited the kids,” Meyer said. “The students have been so dedicated and they’ve written great pieces.”

There were 70 entries this year. Meyer coordinates student participation, and Wallace is assisted by a three-member panel of judges to select the winners. He also sponsors an eighth-grade writing contest where winners of the 11th-grade competition review the entries.

Eleventh-grade winners who were called up to receive a certificate and a round of applause, included Angelie Wallace for her work “All Mixed Up” and Tia Poquette’s “Sometimes I Say Yes,” both personal narratives. Anthony Parnizari won for his fiction piece “boy.”

Honorable mention went to Christina Skrzypczak for “A Visit to Grandma and Grandpa’s,” Julia O’Reilly for “The Trunk” and Charlie Allen for “Obsessive.”

The winners of Pleasantville High School’s 11th-grade writing contest were recognized last week by the Pleasantville Board of Education. Pictured, from left to right, are Pleasantville author and contest co-sponsor Joe Wallace, students Charlie Allen, Anthony Parnizari, Christina Skrzypczak, Tia Poquette, Julia O’Reilly and Angelie Wallace, The Village Bookstore owner Jennifer Kohn and English teacher Leigh Meyer.

Axial Theatre in Pleasantville is hosting its sixth annual Twisted Valentines festival, a seasonal tribute to love, lovers and those determined to fling their own arrows at Cupid.

The festival is Fridays through Sundays, Feb. 7-16, with a special Thursday performance on Feb. 13. These eight original one-act plays, a mix of comedies and dramas, probe the depths of joy, despair and everything above, below and in-between that love and lust are prone to evoke.

The plays are:
- “Love Contained” by Lisa Kimball.
- “Okay Valentine” by Linda Bidwell Delaney.
- “No Lovers for Helen” by Niki Hatzidis.
- “Calculating” by Stephen Baluzy.
- “Grandpa’s,” Julia O’Reilly for “The Trunk” and Charlie Allen for “Obsessive.”

Performance dates and times are:
- Saturday, Feb. 8 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.;
- Sunday, Feb. 8 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.;
- Saturday, Feb. 15 at 5 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 9 and 16 at 4 p.m. on the campus of St. John’s Episcopal Church.

Tickets are $25 for general admission and $20 for seniors and students and can be purchased online at Brown Paper Tickets at https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4492393. For more information, call 914-286-7680 or visit www.axialtheatre.org.

Axial Theatre’s Twisted Valentines Festival to Begin Feb. 7

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THERE’S A WORD FOR IT

A vocabulary-building quiz

By Edward Goralski

Words of the Month Club - February Edition. This week the quiz words come from the February entries found in the book “The Cabinet of Linguistic Curiosities” by Paul Anthony Jones. The book is “A yearbook of forgotten words” that features a “curious or long-forgotten word of the day, picked from the more obscure corners of the dictionary.”

1. lunette (n.)
   A) a love note  B) a leap day  C) a small moon

2. xenodochy (n.)
   A) entertainment of strangers  B) one drawn to foreign things  C) a greeting of friendship

3. vinomadeifed (adj.)
   A) made with wine  B) soaked in wine  C) covered with vines

4. twinkle (v.)
   A) to tremble with agitation  B) to play idly on a musical instrument  C) pinch and pull

5. limerence (n.)
   A) center of attention  B) extreme optimism  C) extreme displeasure

6. Tapsleyism (n.)
   A) extreme optimism  B) extreme displeasure  C) extreme resolve

7. evarniness (adj.)
   A) short-lived  B) as likely as not  C) conditional

8. bissexat (n.)
   A) a love note  B) financial ruin  C) a leap day

ANSWERS:

1. C. A small moon or natural satellite

2. A. Hospitality; the entertainment of strangers

3. B. To play idly on a musical instrument

4. B. One drawn to foreign things

5. B. A greeting of friendship

6. B. Extreme displeasure

7. C. Conditional

8. B. Financial ruin

February 4 - February 10, 2020 The Examiner
**Pairing Oscar Best Picture Nominations With a Wine Selection**

By Nick Antonaccio

The 92nd Academy Awards show airs this Sunday. This is my 12th year of presenting the Best Picture nominees and creating hypothetical pairings of wine with the top contenders. Due to the space constraints of this column, I’ve distilled my list to five of the nine nominees.

**The Irishman:** Another mob thriller from Martin Scorsese. Except this time, it’s not so much a thriller as it is a cinematic tribute to actors from his older, more vibrant movies. A small-time hitman ascends the ranks of the 1950s mob, making friends and enemies along the way. We find him at the end of his life, remorseful to the lack of love and support of his family.

So too with the Zinfandel grape. It has evolved from a pungent grape of uncertain origin to ascendency in the American market over the lack of love and boundary-breaking conductor Rachael Smokey Robinson, Marvin Gaye, the members: $8. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit Scarsdale. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: $8. Info: Visit cucwp.org.

**The Two Popes:** A fascinating and complex look at the lives of Pope Francis and Pope Benedict as they observe each other and confront disinformation in the news and issues, providing practical advice and tools to discern what is fact and fake. Led by Andrew Katell. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 3 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-273-3887 ext. 3.

**Grounded in the indigenous character** of the movie. A small-town World War I buccaneer (Jared Leto) fights to save his small town from the German army’s final push. A unique and complex character? The answer: German Rieslings. Although having similar DNA, each is unique unto itself. Each is influenced by its surroundings and can be simple or sophisticated, revealing nuances we have previously experienced.

**Joker:** Yes, this is a psychological thriller or a psychiatric thriller? While the movie introduces a comic book Gotham City, the action is singularly focused on an anti-comic book character. Arthur Fleck is a conflicted and disturbed comedian who takes on and hides behind the persona of a Joker clown. As he devolves into a world of self-doubt and demonic actualization, we are drawn in by the superb acting of Joaquin Phoenix in the title role. Beware of the conflicting meaning of the phrase “put on a happy face.”

Which movie can we experience multiple times, and on each occasion find we are conflicted by its change in character? The answer: Grounded in the indigenous character...
My name: Adele Stanley

Day job: Nurse Practitioner and Educator

Favorite song: Good Feeling by Flo Rida

Perfect day: Summer at the beach

Guilty pleasure: Shopping

Inspiration: My family

Childhood dream: A runway model

Greatest strength: My sense of humor

My health club: Saw Mill Club

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