By Rick Pezzullo

City Manager Calling it Quits in Peekskill

Embattled Peekskill City Manager Anthony Ruggiero, whose credentials to hold the position has been under fire by Mayor Frank Catalina and the Republican minority and some outspoken residents, is leaving under his own terms.

Ruggiero, who was hired in July 2013, informed Catalina Thursday afternoon in the mayor's law office that he was taking a job with the City of Beacon and giving Peekskill his 60 days notice.

Catalina said he was aware that Ruggiero had interviewed for jobs in Beacon and Mount Kisco in the fall but was "surprised" by the timing of his departure, despite the fact Ruggiero's contract stipulated that he relocate to Peekskill by June.

"I was surprised it was that job," Catalina said of Ruggiero's new role as city administrator in Beacon, which the mayor described as more like a chief of staff. "I'm happy for him. I'm happy for his family. I've known Anthony for 15 years. He had a good run in Peekskill. I wish him the best."

Since Catalina became mayor in January 2014, he and Republican councilmen Joe Torres and Vincent Vesce have criticized the previous Common Council...continued on page 12

Sober Home Owners Seek Town Approval in Lawsuit

By Rick Pezzullo

Despite maintaining last month "it's our preference not to further litigate," the owners of a facility for recovering alcohol and substance abuse addicts on Underhill Avenue in Yorktown have opted to sue the town to force a favorable decision.

Tom McCrossan, his son Devin, slated to be the on-site supervisor of the sober home, and business partner Mark McGoldrick filed an Article 78 proceeding February 23 in state Supreme Court seeking a judgment "reversing, annulling and setting aside, as arbitrary and capricious, an abuse of discretion and contrary to law, the determination of (the) Town Board rendered on January 20, 2015."

In a 2-1 vote, the Town Board denied a special permit for the sober home, with Councilman Vishnu Patel being the lone dissenter. Without the special permit, Compass Westchester, the corporation name created by McCrossan and McGoldrick, is not required to abide by any conditions that the town would have imposed with the permit.

Compass Westchester has contended it can proceed with plans to house as many as 14 individuals at 425 Underhill Avenue this spring as a matter of right under the definition of a family in the town's Zoning Code.

However, in the lawsuit, Compass Westchester principals are asking the court to direct the Town Board "to issue the special permit forthwith, and/or alternatively declaring that petitioners do not need any such special permit, but may use their property, and the three existing dwellings thereon for said sober home living residence, as of right, as such falls within the definition of 'family' in town's Zoning Code, and therefore constitutes a permitted residential use of such dwellings."

...continued on page 12
Former Enemies Team Up to Push for Government Reform

By Rick Pezzullo

An unlikely pair has joined forces to lobby for government reform in the Town of Yorktown after alleging some town officials have damaged their businesses by “overstepping” their authority.

Bill Primavera, a public relations specialist/realtor who pens The Home Guru column in Examiner Media publications, announced over the weekend that he has teamed up with Brian Amico, owner of Competition Carting, Yorktown’s garbage hauler since January 2013. In 2012, Primavera represented C.R.P. Sanitation, the company that picked up Yorktown’s garbage for seven years, as the town board was reviewing switching haulers. The town board opted to sign a contract with Competition Carting, citing $500,000 in annual savings.

Under the banner of Citizens for a Progressive Yorktown, Primavera and Amico are inviting others who are “frustrated” with the status quo in the PR game, but when I saw that he was the victim of an apparent political vendetta, I decided to do whatever I could to help him out.”

“Our mission is to ensure that any unethical or just plain ridiculous behavior committed by any candidate, from any party, is brought to light,” Amico added. “I believe in a fair and balanced playing field, and it’s obvious the field right now is tilted.”

A few weeks ago, Primavera charged Councilwoman Susan Siegel violated his Fourth Amendment rights when she asked the town’s building inspector to visit his Hickory Street home to see if he was obeying the conditions of a special use permit to operate a business issued about four decades ago.

Siegel has contended she was simply looking into concerns raised by some residents in Primavera’s neighborhood and denied setting foot on his property. She accused Primavera and Supervisor Michael Grace of playing dirty tricks and making false accusations to smear her reputation.

Primavera has also targeted Councilman Vishnu Patel for providing the media with a ruling from the town’s Ethics Board and has called for him to be “impeached.”

“I have been affected personally by this political agenda, but I want to take away something constructive from the experience by now modifying the mission of Progressive Yorktown to focus our efforts on providing unbiased facts about issues affecting the political health of our town, and that includes generating information about our elected officials to the voters of Yorktown,” Primavera said. “Right now, the reports cards on our council persons get two big fat F’s!”

Prior to getting elected to the town board, Siegel appeared at many town Zoning Board of Appeals meetings raising issues about Competition Carting’s plans to park garbage trucks on a parcel on Front Street, which it had done illegally for more than a year. The ZBA ultimately granted the company permission to park the trucks there.

Battling Back Pain?

What you should know about treatment options...

Ask the Doctor

John Abrahams, MD, FAANS
Chief, Neurosurgery
Co-Director, Orthopedic & Spine Institute, Spine Section
Northern Westchester Hospital
nwhorthespine.org/DRAbrahams

Q: What can I do about my aching back?
A: Back pain is surprisingly common - nearly 80 percent of Americans will experience back pain at some point during their lives. For most, stretching, rest, and over-the-counter painkillers will resolve the issue. If your pain is persistent, your doctor might refer you to a physical therapist for guidance in how to sit, lift, and move in ways that won’t exacerbate your pain. A physical therapist can teach patients stretches and exercises that will help prevent future back troubles.

Q: What causes back pain?
A: Strains are the most common cause of back pain and usually occur from awkward lifting or even a sudden movement. Structural problems are also a common source of back pain. Discs can bulge and press on the spinal nerves, the vertebrae can develop arthritis, narrowing and pressing on the spinal cord, or osteoporosis can develop. Although rare, it’s possible to get infections or cancer in the spine.

Q: What if my back pain won’t go away?
A: After standard treatments such as rest, physical therapy, painkillers and steroid injections have failed, your physician might refer you to a spine specialist. There are several surgical solutions for chronic back pain, and the tools and techniques have vastly improved. The O-Arm Surgical Imaging System at Northern Westchester Hospital is an innovative technology that provides surgeons with a detailed, multidimensional CT scan of the spine during surgery.

The detailed views offered by the O-Arm enable surgeons to operate with increased precision and patient safety when performing complex spine surgery. With the treatments available for many spinal disorders, there is no need to live in pain.

Q: When should I see a doctor for my back pain?
A: Your pain can be your guide - if you’re worried about your back, definitely make an appointment. Some signs that your back trouble might be serious are if the pain:

- Spreads to one or both of your legs
- Is constant or intense especially when you lay down
- Causes weakness or numbness in your legs
- Comes after a fall
- Causes bowel or bladder problems
- Is also in your abdomen, is throbbing, or is accompanied by a fever

*American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons

Learn about the innovative technologies available at the Orthopedic & Spine Institute at Northern Westchester Hospital, visit www.nwhorthespine.org

Quality, patient-centered care that’s close to home
Peekskill Purchases Property for $6M to Settle Suit with Karta

By Rick Pezzullo

The Peekskill Common Council agreed last week to spend $6.1 million to purchase a former recycling company property on Lower South Street.

The action settles a longstanding legal battle between the city and Karta Container & Recycling, Inc. and gives Peekskill title to a large parcel that Mayor Frank Catalina said lends itself ideally for mixed-use development.

However, Catalina and City Manager Anthony Ruggiero stressed Peekskill was forced by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court to either close on the property or give it up. The mayor strongly believes acquiring property is not something the city should make a habit of.

“I don’t believe the city should be in the real estate business,” Catalina said. “We really have to get rid of city-owned property and get them back on the tax rolls.”

Karta filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in January 2002 and a reorganization plan was approved by the court in 2006. In February 2010, city officials exercised an option to buy the property a 1013/1017 Lower South Street for $6.05 million, $1.85 million of which covers back taxes owed on the site. The city issued a bond for the purchase in 2011.

“We had that option for years but they never closed,” Catalina said of previous councils.

Ruggiero noted the property is eligible for the state’s Brownfield Cleanup Program which should guarantee any environmental issues stemming from the recycling operation will be adequately addressed. He said city officials have had preliminary talks with three developers interested in the site.

“No firm plans, just discussions,” Ruggiero remarked. “It’s a good thing that it’s going into the Brownfield program.”

Ruggiero explained a developer could receive some substantial tax benefits from the state getting involved in the cleanup.

Catalina said he envisions a three or four-story commercial development with a residential component on the property, which he maintained was “the new trend with malls.”

Councilwoman Kathy Talbot said she was anxious to see what projects are proposed for the site.

“T’m looking forward to do something good there that’s good for Peekskill,” she said.

Councilman Joe Torres and Peekskill Mayor Frank Catalina presented longtime resident Al Collins with a proclamation Sunday in honor of his 100th birthday.
For almost the last 15 months, the Yorktown Town Board has tried to conduct business with less than a full complement of five members. That will all change after next Tuesday, March 10, when a special election is held to fill two empty seats.

The special election is actually two separate elections. In one race, Republican Greg Bernard and Democrat Rosanne Brackett are running to serve the final two years and nine months of former Councilman Terrence Murphy’s unexpired four-year term.

In the other contest, Republican Tom Diana and Democrat Bob Giordano are competing to serve the last nine months of former Councilman Nick Bianco’s unexpired term.

The board now consists of Republican Supervisor Michael Grace and Democratic councilpersons Vishnu Patel and Susan Siegel, so the election will determine which party will have the upper hand for the next nine months. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Bernard vs Brackett

Bernard, a 30-year resident, is looking to return to the board that he served on from 1994 to 2001. A former Planning Board member as well, Bernard had sought committee support to run for highway superintendent two years ago but fell short to Dave Paganelli.

“I believe my resume says I’m qualified for this position,” Bernard said of running for the Town Board. “I think experience definitely counts. Whose side is he on? I think we need to get away from that type of thinking. If I get elected I will work with anyone.”

Brackett is running for elected office for the first time. A former manager with Verizon, Brackett is a stay-at-home mom and a member of MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) whose opposition to the planned Algonquin natural gas pipeline expansion propelled her into wanting to represent residents.

“What I saw I didn’t like. Instead of complaining I decided I would do something about it,” Brackett said. “I think we need a fair and open Town Board. I’m here to be a new voice and a new face with new perspectives.”

Bernard feels it’s essential for someone running for Town Board to have gotten their feet wet in some other board or committee. “I don’t think it’s time someone learning the job should be on the Town Board,” he said. “I want to move Yorktown forward.”

Brackett disagreed, saying, “I don’t think I have to put 20 years on the Planning Board first. That’s ridiculous. We need to change things and we can’t do it by putting people back on the board.”

On the issue of attracting businesses to Yorktown, Bernard said the town has to do a better job of projecting being “business-friendly.”

“Who can we trust in Yorktown?

Who Can We Trust in Yorktown?
The March 10th election can restore trust in our town government

IT’S TIME FOR A CHANGE
• Telling the truth about budgets & taxes
• Being realistic about economic growth
• Televising Town Board work sessions
• Strengthening our ethics law
• Allowing more public input

Rosanne Brackett & Bob Giordano will be your independent voices on the board.

DO YOU WANT MORE OF THE SAME?
• Deceiving the community about taxes
• Exaggerating economic development
• Making decisions behind closed doors
• Misrepresenting the costs of projects
• Awarding non-competitive contracts

Do you trust Greg Bernard and Tom Diana to be independent of the Supervisor?

Rosanne Brackett & Bob Giordano

For Town Board

The only candidates truly committed to Honesty, Integrity & Transparency

Paid for by The Friends of Rosanne Brackett & The Friends of Bob Giordano
Town Board Special Election

continued from page 4
special knowledge. We need to tap into those groups.

Diana vs Giordano

Diana is a lifelong, third generation Yorktown resident and a retired police officer having worked for Yorktown, Cortlandt and Westchester County. He owns an oil delivery and service business. Diana lost to Paganelli for highway superintendent in 2013 and lost to Councilwoman Susan Siegel in November in a special election to fill Paganelli’s former council seat.

“I feel that I’m a good candidate for this position,” Diana said. “I hope to bring some fairness to the Town Board and get it back on track. I would like to bring civility back to the Town Board. I will bring common sense. We have to keep moving Yorktown forward. This is the Town of Yorktown. This is not the Town of Tom. We all have to work together.”

Giordano is a retired IBM manager who has lived in Yorktown for 27 years. He served on the town’s Planning Board, was chairman of the Landmark Preservation Committee and founded the Yorktown Small Business Association. In 2003, he ran for supervisor. “I’ve been heavily involved,” Giordano said of his community work. “I think we need a government that works for everyone. I think people know me as a straight-shooter and being candid. With me what you see is what you get.”

If elected, Diana said he would champion the fight against drug addiction in the area by starting a citizen’s task force and pledged his support for the sober home. “This will be my way of giving back to the community,” he said. “We know we have an opiate problem. I think the character of this town would be lacking if we didn’t allow this home to come in. We are here to be leaders.”

“I simply want to move Yorktown to the future,” Giordano said. “I think I have a lot of what is needed to do that. I bring a lot to the table.”

Diana said having Costco in Yorktown will attract more people to the town, which will benefit existing businesses. “We all worry about the big box guy coming in and crushing the little guy. With Costco, Yorktown will be a drive to destination instead of a drive through,” he said. “We want Yorktown open for business. It lowers all of our taxes.”

Giordano said he had his heart set on a hotel/conference center being built on the former motel site where Costco is planned on Route 202. “We need to become a destination. We want people to come here and spend money,” he said. “I would promote tourism and the historic aspects of our town.”

For more information on the candidates and where they stand on specific issues, see page 9 to read responses candidates gave to the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce.

Correction
It was inaccurately reported last week that a deli in Cortlandt where a $1 million Powerball second place ticket was sold on February 18 would receive $10,000. Retailers only are compensated for selling jackpot tickets for Powerball and Mega Millions games. The Northern Westchester Examiner regrets the error.
Murphy Bill to Restrict Sex Offender Residency Passes Muster

By Rick Pezzullo

State Senator Terrence Murphy (R/Yorktown) reached a milestone last week when a bill that he crafted successfully passed through the Senate.

The legislation Murphy wrote addresses concerns that child safety zone laws are not enough to protect victims by restricting sex offenders from residing within 1,500 feet of the home of their victim. Murphy’s bill would make it unlawful for a convicted sex offender to live near the victim.

“This victory has been a long time coming and I’m proud that after eight years we can finally say that our towns and counties are free to pass child safety zone laws that will now withstand a legal challenge,” Murphy said. “Yet what we’ve learned is that while child safety zones may create a sense of security, many sexual assaults against children are perpetrated by someone the victim knows. Victims should not have to tolerate the emotional distress that coming into contact with their abuser may cause.”

Murphy began his advocacy for child safety zones in 2007 with the organization Keeping Westchester Safe. He also served on the State Assembly Sex Offender Watch Task Force.

Another bill that Murphy co-sponsored also passed through the Senate. That legislation allows communities to provide residency requirements for sex offenders.

“I hope the state Assembly will move quickly to pass both these laws to protect victims and so our towns and counties finally have the option to legally define sex offender free zones such as schools, bus stops, child care facilities, parks, playgrounds, sports fields, dance studios and other facilities that attract children where we say to sexual predators, find someplace else to live,” Murphy said.

Sen. Carlucci Secures $50,000 for Ossining American Legion

By Rick Pezzullo

The Ossining American Legion Post 506 will be able to make needed repairs thanks to a grant secured by state Senator David Carlucci (D/Westchester, Rockland).

Carlucci presented veterans from the Legion with a $50,000 check last week during his Veteran’s Advisory Council meeting in Ossining.

“The Ossining American Legion does wonderful things for our community,” Carlucci said. “Whether it’s providing a meeting place and programs for our veterans, or awarding scholarships to local students, they are constantly giving back. It’s an honor to work with Commander Frank Faiella, to ensure that our veterans have a comfortable and safe place to meet.”

The Legion will use the funds to fix the roof and modernize the kitchen and other parts of the Legion building on Route 9.

“We have great members here at Post 506,” Faiella said. “These funds will allow us to keep our doors open to all of the veterans in Westchester County. Senator Carlucci worked for two years to get these funds, and we can’t thank him enough.”

In addition, Carlucci presented Faiella with a proclamation for 50 years of volunteer service with the Ossining Fire Department.

The George Ondek Show can be seen Thursdays 8:30 pm Channel 74 in Yorktown and surrounding areas and Tues., Wed. & Thursdays 8:30 pm Channel 15 in Peekskill or anytime on Youtube. I can also be seen in my new markets in Yonkers, Greenburgh, Harrison & Rye.
Virginia Costigan Reid, a longtime resident of Cortlandt, died February 24 at the age of 100 years old at home surrounded by her family.

She was a beloved daughter, mother, grandmother, cousin and friend and will be greatly missed by all. She was the beloved daughter of Robert Hampton Costigan and Augusta Henrietta Briggs, born on June 5, 1914 in New York City. She grew up in New York City and lived in Minnesota, White Plains and moved to Cortlandt Manor from White Plains in 1956. On August 30, 1940, she married her husband, Samuel Malcolm Reid at the White Plains Memorial Church in White Plains. She was predeceased by her husband of 65 years in 2006. She was a long time member of the Peekskill United Methodist Church.

During her early youth, she spent many summers at Camp Arcadia in Casco, Maine. Virginia attended the National Park Seminary, Silver Springs, Maryland and graduated from White Plains High School. She went on to attend Cooper Union, New York City. Virginia was employed for over 35 years for Caldo’s. She will always be remembered as an avid reader, and an accomplished knitter and crocheter too. Virginia enjoyed traveling internationally and throughout the United States and always looked forward to the next adventure. But most of all, her friends and family will always remember her passionate letter writing and her German Shepherds. Her friends were life long and writing was very special to them and to her.

She is survived by four children, Patricia Perruccio of Peekskill, Richard Reid of Cortlandt Manor, Virginia (Michael) Costa of Cortlandt Manor, and Linda Kirinus of Aurora, Colorado. Eight grandchildren, Dominic Perruccio of Peekskill, Pia (Dave) Dixon of Seattle, Michael Reid of Arkansas, Edward (Dee) Jucius of Bronxville, Michael Costa of Washington, DC, Matthew Costa and David (Phoebe) Costa, both of North Carolina and Ryan Kirinus of Aurora, Colorado and two step grandchildren, Joe (Karen) Costa of Virginia and Carolyn Costa Smith of Rhode Island. Also surviving are five great-grandchildren and her cousins, David and Peggy Briggs of Troy, NY and Mary Briggs Leff of Madison, Wisconsin. Virginia was predeceased by sons-in-law, Dominic Perruccio and Reinvalid (Eddie) Kirinus, daughter-in-law Maureen Reid and step granddaughter Lisa Costa.

Francis J. “Frank” Hughes, Jr.

Francis J. “Frank” Hughes, Jr, a lifelong resident of Peekskill, died on February 24. He was 86.

Prior to retiring, Mr. Hughes was a Programming Manager for IBM in Sterling Forest. He was born on March 4, 1928 in Peekskill to Frank J. and Susanna Kelly Hughes, Sr. He attended Peekskill High School graduating in 1946. Soon after high school, he served in the U.S. Air Force and was honorably discharged in February 1949.

Mr. Hughes was a longtime member and past officer of the Cortlandt Yacht Club and former member of the See Boat Club in Peekskill. For over 60 years he served with the Peekskill Fire Patrol. He also enjoyed bowling and softball.

He is survived by three sisters and a brother, Maureen (Bud) Turner of Ft. Myers, FL, Lorraine (Fred) Koverda of Beacon, Thomas (Margaret Ann) Hughes of Crompond and Sue (Derek) Tudor of Garrison and niece, Virginia Conrad (Charles Balen) of Shrub Oak and sister-in-law Joan Hughes of Lake Mohegan. In addition also surviving are six nieces and seven nephews and a host of great-nieces and great-nephews. He was predeceased by two brothers, Patrick and Peter Hughes and a sister Nancy Jucius. He was also predeceased by the love of his life and fiancée, Anne Carroll.

Robert Treadwell

Robert L. Treadwell, a lifelong resident of the area, died on February 21. He was 91.

He was born in Peekskill on February 16, 1924 to Lester and Edna Marquart Treadwell. On February 26, 1945 he married Gertrude (Trudy) McChain; she predeceased him on March 3, 2007. They first met at the Peekskill Roller Rink and continued to skate until 2006. Mr. Treadwell was a WWII U.S. Army veteran. He was a member of the First Baptist Church in Peekskill since the 1940’s. He worked at IBM in Yorktown for many years as an electronics technician.

He is survived by his daughter Patricia Jacobs, three grandchildren, Donald Ingersoll, Daniel Ingersoll and Joelle Jacobs, three great-grandchildren and his sister Edie Ludington.

Douglas L. Zerrilla

Douglas L. Zerrilla, a longtime resident of Ossining, died on February 21. He was 85.

He was born in Ossining on October 5, 1929 to Michael and Lillian. He was a veteran of the Korean War in the U.S. Navy. He was the Fire Chief of the Ossining Fire Dept. 1987-88 and was a member of Ladder 41.

Mr. Zerrilla is survived by his wife Judy; his sister Dorothy Thomas; several stepchildren, many step- grandchildren and nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his first wife Laurel; and his siblings Michael, Frederick, Thomas, Anthony, Donald, Elizabeth, Theresa, Barbara and Joan.

Financial Troubles, Health Problems May Be Signs of Gambling Problem

March is Problem Gambling Awareness Month. Issues seemingly unconnected to gambling, like financial stress or health issues, may be an indicator that someone in your life has a gambling addiction.

Problem Gambling Awareness Month coincides with the start of March Madness which is when college basketball teams compete and many people bet on the games and the outcomes of the games. While for many people gambling is a form of entertainment, for others it can become a serious addiction. Just like having a drink can develop into alcoholism, chemicals in the brain are activated during gambling activity and for 6-8 million Americans it turns into an addiction. Because a gambling disorder often goes unrecognized, only around 8 percent of those with a problem ever seek treatment.

Problem gambling is a legitimate mental health issue that responds well to treatment. The longer the problem gambling goes untreated, the greater the financial, emotional or health consequences can become.

If you suspect someone in your life has a gambling problem, have a conversation. Ask if they are struggling with the consequences of their gambling behaviors. Assure them that there is hope and help available. For more ideas on how to have the conversation, and information on problem gambling prevention and treatment resources visit the National Council on Alcoholism & Other Drug Dependencies/Putnam 845-225-4646 www.putnamnccadd.org or National Council on Problem Gambling NCPG at www.npgam.org or 1800-522-4700.
Editorial

Pivotal Election in Yorktown

The special election for two seats on the Yorktown Town Board on March 10 is pivotal since it will determine the balance of power for the next nine months.

Supervisor Michael Grace, a Republican, apparently feels a lot at stake as he has chosen to make robo calls to some residents urging them to vote for Republicans Greg Bernard and Tom Diana, which, while maybe not unethical, does seem a bit inappropriate considering he is the head of the town government that is supposed to fairly represent all constituents, regardless of their political affiliation.

The decision to fill the two empty seats—one for the next nine months and the other for the next two years and nine months—will ultimately be made by voters, so it’s vital that residents be informed, get out to the polls next week and let their voices be heard.

When evaluating the candidates in the two separate races, Bernard vs Democrat Rosanne Brackett for the longer term and Diana vs Democrat Bob Giordano for the shorter term, residents should take into account who appears to have the best interests of the entire town, not just a certain faction, at heart.

Bernard and Diana have both emphasized they are running to help “move the town forward,” but what exactly has been delayed during the tumultuous transitional period that has seen one longtime incumbent councilman retire, another councilman move on to the state Senate and a former supervisor return as a councilwoman?

Costco? That project is clearly moving ahead and will only be hung up if other levels of government fail to act as required. Depot Square? The town board has already voted on environmental study for the Highway Department garage property where Grace has envisioned as a trigger to downtown revitalization. Sober home? Now in litigation, it was actually Grace who failed to schedule a vote on the controversial facility last year while Terrence Murphy was still on the board, a deliberate tactic, some feel, to avoid having Murphy put his cards on the table during the Senate campaign--a move that may have helped Murphy go on to victory.

Bernard is the lone candidate with past town board experience. He also served on the planning board, as did Giordano. Bernard feels anyone interested in being on the town board should be appointed to the planning board or zoning board of appeals first to gain experience. Brackett has touted herself as a fresh face looking to make a difference. Diana is a lifelong, third generation resident.

There are many differences between the foursome, but the one thing they have in common is their desire to be a leader in the community. In a few short months, candidates will be jockeying again for the supervisor seat and two board seats that will be up for grabs in November. The special election is something of a warm-up act for that headline show, but one that voters shouldn’t think they can skip.

Guest Commentary

There Should Be New Rules for New City Manager

By George Ondek

The Peekskill city manager Anthony Ruggiero resigning is good news to the people of Peekskill because he was put in by ex-Mayor Foster and the 7-0 Democratic council by a 7-0 vote although he did not comply with two of the three key terms which are stated in the city charter which the law in Peekskill by which government officials must comply with similar to the Constitution United States. Former mayor Foster chose to violate the Peekskill city charter in the following ways.

Under the Peekskill city charter a Peekskill city manager must live within the city of Peekskill. Mr Ruggiero does not, he lives upstate and he was granted $400 a month to commute from his home upstate in his contract with the city and he was granted a waiver by former Mayor Mary Foster and the council to have up to a year to move to Peekskill and the city taxpayers have to pay $25,000 for his moving expenses.

The second violation is the charter says the city manager must have three years experience as a city manager. Mr. Ruggiero did not have this, he was a city planner for the city of Peekskill for over a dozen years, quit his job in Peekskill to go to a job for Putnam County at about $20,000 a year. When he was making as city planner in Peekskill. A few months after Mr. Ruggiero quit Peekskill, the Peekskill residents were shocked to hear he was hired back at $153,000 a year to replace an interim city manager that mayor Foster had for more than a year because another city manager she hired quit. I hope there are no sweetheart clauses in this five-year contract.

Mr. Ruggiero left because he says he got a new position elsewhere but he was under a lot of fire from the public in Peekskill with the terms of this contract became known. When I took business law classes if the terms of the contract where illegal a contract was then null and void.

When questions about his status came up at city Council meetings mayor Frank Catalina and the two other Republican members voted to vacate his position but not before the Democrats on the council voted by abstaining so the resolution did not pass because the Democrats have majority and they needed four votes to oust him. What's strange about this is of course they would not vote to put him out because they voted it appears illegally to put him in.

One may wonder why Mr. Ruggiero got this position as city planner. It appeared he worked very closely with Mayor Foster and her plan to redesign Peekskill from an old historic town on the Hudson to modern cosmopolitan city. Some people also speculate he helped expedite a real estate deal that helped a methadone clinic be placed in Peekskill because Hudson Valley Hospital didn’t want it. It passed through the planning board while he was director of planning and it appeared that ex-mayor Foster had no knowledge of it. There are also questions if the city manager’s contract also appears unethical if not illegal, such as hiring him back with the same benefits as a 25-year employee with pay for back sick pay although he quit his job in Peekskill and even included immediate vacation pay.

It also appears Anthony Ruggiero had no intent of living in Peekskill because he is leaving voluntarily before the provision for him to live in Peekskill is up. I believe the mayor and city council should make the following form so that abuses like this don’t happen to the tax payers of Peekskill. A city manager contract should be no longer than two years. A resolution should be passed that the city manager which is the most important position in the city because he makes most of the important decisions for the city passes an MBA with a major in city management. An interim city manager should possess at least an MBA degree in Business.

George Ondek can be seen Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at 8:30 p.m. on Peekskill channel 15 and in Yorktown Fridays at 8:30 on channel 74 or in Yonkers, Port Chester, and Harrison Saturday at 8:30 on channel 21. Or anytime on YouTube on the George Ondek Show channel.
Yorktown Chamber of Commerce Interviews with Board Candidates

By Aaron Bock, Chairman

On February 17, members of the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee interviewed the four candidates running to fill the vacant seats in this year’s special election to be held on March 10. The Committee, headed by Board Chairman Aaron Bock, is a bipartisan group of prominent local business people including Albert Capellini, Sergio Esposito, Tony Grasso, RoseMarie Panio and Marc Saida. The interviews consisted of opening and closing statements and a free-flowing discussion about issues of importance to the business community and to the Town in general.

Given the short time frame of this election cycle, the Chamber is not endorsing any candidate for office. Instead, the Chamber is proud to present information on the candidates’ positions on important issues to both our Chamber membership and to the residents of Yorktown in the hope that voters will make informed decisions on Election Day.

TOM DIANA, a Republican and lifelong Yorktown resident, is running for the seat left vacant by Nick Bianco, whose term expires Dec. 31, 2015. He understood that he would have to run again in November, and was willing to do that if elected. As a former Yorktown Police officer, Mr. Diana stressed that he had the experience and temperament to be on the Town Board. He felt that he would be able to cooperate with other Council members. Although he did not serve on either the Planning or Zoning Board in the past, he has dealt with the Town and knows its infrastructure and how the Town works. He feels he is able to solve problems on the Town Board and would encourage conversation and education.

“Things need to get done,” said Mr. Diana. A five-member Board is needed, and the Board must make the right decisions. When asked what he would base his decisions on, Mr. Diana stated that his decisions would be based on “what is the best for the Town, not for five or ten people, or small groups.” Mr. Diana favors term limits and would commit to serving three, four-year terms.

On specific issues facing the Town, he supports issuing a special use permit to the Sober Home and allowing Spectra Energy to renovate their existing pipeline and would allow specific alienation of parkland for a limited period of time.

Mr. Diana supports bringing new business into Town, and supports many of the new business projects which are currently under consideration, including Mandalay, which would bring a beautiful, small village feel to the Bear Mountain Triangle. He also supports the development of the State Land Corporation site, as well as the Depot Square project in the Heights area, which would “brighten up the gateway to the downtown business area.” By moving the Highway Garage to Greenwood Street, the Depot Square project would help revitalize the entire downtown area, including the K-Mart shopping center.

Mr. Diana presented himself as business-friendly, someone who would work closely with the Chamber, and who would encourage the Chamber to bring business proposals before the Town. He also pointed to his interest in, and experience in dealing with the heroin problem currently facing the Town and his desire to work in this area.

Regarding taxes and the use of the fund balance, Mr. Diana felt that the 3.6% tax increase last year was unacceptable in light of the large surplus that the Town had on hand. He would have used it for tax reduction.

In closing, Mr. Diana stressed his knowledge of Town Government gained from attending three years of meetings, and his desire to work together with everyone on the Board.

ROBERT GIORDANO, is opposing Tom Diana for the term expiring December 31, 2015. Mr. Giordano is a lifelong resident of Westchester, who first got involved in local politics in Greenburgh, when he worked on the campaign of former County Legislator Lois Bronz. In 2003, he ran unsuccessfully against former Yorktown Supervisor Linda Cooper, and has been involved in many community organizations over the years, including having served on the Chamber Board of Directors. He is currently head of the Yorktown Small Business Association, although he is not sure he will remain in that position if elected to the Town Board.

When asked why he was running, he stated the current Town Board is dysfunctional, and that it needs reasonable people who will listen and can be independent and not toe the line. He feels he can work with all the people on the Board, and would try to get Vishnu Patel to slow down and speak more clearly.

Mr. Giordano is in favor of term limits, and would like to see the Supervisor’s position be four years, like all the others. When questioned about last year’s local tax increase and how much of the Town’s surplus should be used to reduce taxes, Mr. Giordano responded that he “does not have a lot of experience” with the Town’s budget process, but that he would ask questions and find out the answers. When asked how he would maintain services without raising taxes, he stated that he would reduce expenses and increase commercial ratables. He supports the mixed commercial/residential Mandalay project at the Bear Mountain Triangle, although he feels that Costco will compete with local businesses.

Small business growth and development should be encouraged. Mr. Giordano felt that the Town should capitalize on the hiking trail network in Town, to encourage pedestrian use of the Town and patronize local businesses. The Town should also capitalize on our landmarked buildings and the museum to attract people to the Town.

Mr. Giordano offered less than full support for Depot Square. He wants to see the numbers to see what it would cost to put up a Highway Garage at Greenwood Street, and if there is a developer who will actually come in and build the Depot Square project.

Mr. Giordano opposes the Sober Home proposal in a residential neighborhood, and feels that the Code must be amended to deal with the problem.

ROSEANNE BRACKETT, a Democrat, is seeking to fill the seat of Terrence Murphy, whose term would have expired at the end of 2017. She is running because she cares about things that her neighbors care about, and would be voice for people raising families in Town. She has corporate management experience. She has lived in Yorktown for seven years, and views her “newness to politics” as an advantage, and see herself as an independent minded person who will bring a new perspective to the Board.

Mrs. Brackett feels that the Town Board is not working well, especially when compared to Somers, for example, where members ask questions and engage in open dialogue. She pointed to recent discussion about the future of the Croft at Teatown, as an example of how the Board could conduct business in an open, cooperative manner, although she recognized that this wasn’t a Town issue. She also felt that there “should be one rule for everyone” regarding courtesy of the floor. To further improve how the Board functions, more information should be given to the public, communications should be improved, and better use should be made of the Town’s website.

When questioned about how she would increase revenues and maintain services without raising taxes, Mrs. Brackett said she would bring in more business, but she wasn’t sure how much of the tax base was commercial. With regards to specific projects, she stated that she needs more information on Depot Square, saying she wouldn’t necessarily be against it, but would want to know how much it would cost first. She feels that the Mandalay project is a good plan.

To help the Town Board stimulate confidence in new business investment and overcome the perception of high costs of opening businesses and compliance, Mrs. Brackett would seek input from people who have recently opened businesses in Town to find out their concerns and learn from their experiences. She is not sure that this is just a Town problem. She feels that the Sober Home has every right to open in Town, and that there is a need for this type of service. The project had “holes” which caused animosity, and the zoning issues should have been addressed during the process. She would vote yes based upon present zoning, but would prefer to address the zoning issues first. She does not think it would depress neighborhood property values.

Mrs. Brackett is pleased that the Chamber is reaching out to other businesses -- Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods or example -- and looks forward to working with it.

She supports term limits for local officials, 3, 4-year terms.

GREG BERNARD, a Republican, is opposing Mrs. Brackett for the term ending in 2017. He is running to get a working majority on the Board. Mr. Bernard felt he was well-qualified in light of his experience in many levels of government, having served on the Planning Board and two terms on the Town Board. One of the ways he would try to improve the functioning of the Town Board would be to “tone down” Supervisor Michael Grace. He feels he would be able to work with all the members of the Board, even if there was a Democratic majority, as he has done during his prior time on the Board. He favors three, four-year term limits for Council members, and five, two-year term limits for Supervisor.

Mr. Bernard would raise revenue by increasing the commercial tax base. Although he supports the Mandalay Bear Mountain Triangle project overall, he feels that the housing component may be too dense for the area. Regarding the 2014 tax increase, Mr. Bernard would not have raised taxes in light of the large surplus, would use the fund balance to pay for capital projects, and would eliminate continued on page 14
Ossining Bank Manager Pleads Guilty to Stealing $1.4M

By Rick Pezzullo

A 46-year-old Mount Kisco woman faces up to 25 years in jail after she pled guilty last week to stealing more than $1.4 million from two depositors during her tenure as branch manager of an Ossining bank.

Maria Rodriguez is free on $200,000 bail as she awaits sentencing on May 20 after pleading guilty to two counts of grand larceny and one count of criminal tax fraud on February 23 in White Plains. “We entrust our money and investments to our financial institutions and their employees,” said Westchester District Attorney Janet DiFiore. “Both victims put their trust as well as their money in the hands of someone who they had faith in, but ultimately took advantage of that trust and stole from them.”

According to DiFiore, Rodriguez systematically stole the money over a five-year period starting in June 2008 from the two customers who knew her and trusted to help manage their accounts at the M&T Bank on South Highland Avenue. Rodriguez is accused of stealing $1,112,127.40 from one victim by writing unauthorized checks to cash, making unauthorized cash withdrawals and requesting an ATM card and making unauthorized ATM withdrawals. She knew the victim for close to 20 years, authorities said.

The second victim, a 92-year-old retired Village of Ossining police officer, had $256,644 stolen from his account. DiFiore stated that the victim would only deal with Rodriguez and thought she was withdrawing just the interest from his bank account. However, she was making unauthorized withdrawals worth thousands of dollars over several years.

Reportedly, Rodriguez used some of the money to frequent casinos, including Empire City in Yonkers. The thefts were uncovered when several of Rodriguez’s subordinates contacted M&T Bank’s whistleblower hotline to report suspicious activity. The bank then initiated an internal investigation, which led the financial institution to refer the matter to the Village of Ossining Police Department, which contacted the District Attorney’s Office. The New York State Tax Department also assisted in the investigation.

State Police

February 20 - Troopers from the Cortlandt Barracks arrested Kevin J. McMullen, 44, of Putnam Valley, for driving while intoxicated. Troopers were dispatched to assist the Peekskill Police Department with a disabled vehicle that was located on Route 202 in the area of Conklin Avenue. The driver of the disabled vehicle, McMullen, was located inside of the vehicle sleeping. While police interviewed McMullen, he displayed clues that indicated he was intoxicated. McMullen was charged with felony DWI when it was discovered that he was convicted of DWI in January 2007.

February 22 - Troopers from the Brewster barracks charged Ashlee Cerutti, 28, of Lake Peekskill, with aggravated driving while intoxicated. Troopers were dispatched to assist the Putnam County Sheriff’s Department with a verbal dispute that occurred at the Shell gas station on Danbury Road. Following an investigation it was determined Cerutti had driven to the location intoxicated. A breath sample provided by Cerutti revealed a blood alcohol content more than two times the legal limit.

Yorktown Police

February 24 - 4:45 p.m. - Charles Ulacco, 38, of Yonkers, was arrested on an arrest warrant issued by the Yorktown Justice Court for burglary in the second degree. Ulacco is alleged to have used forced entry into a residence at Kessler Place in Yorktown and stole property. He is scheduled to appear in court on March 5.
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Tax, Accounting, and Financial Planning For Construction Industry Members

**Thursday, April 9, 6:30 pm**
How to Better Market and Grow Your Construction Business

**Thursday, May 14, 6:30 pm**
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City Manager Calling it Quits in Peekskill

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for hiring Ruggiero for $163,000 as city manager and violating the City Charter, which states a city manager must have at least three years’ experience as a city manager and reside in the city. Ruggiero lives in Fishkill and never served before as a city manager. Ruggiero worked for the city in planning for 13 years before being named city manager after he left six months earlier to become Putnam County’s commissioner of planning.

Last November, Catalina and his GOP colleagues insisted a written opinion from the city’s corporation counsel stating the Common Council violated the City Charter and New York Statutory and Common Law when they hired Ruggiero left the office technically vacant.

However, a resolution appointing Ruggiero as acting city manager that Catalina maintained had been agreed upon by the entire council in closed door discussions failed when the four Democrats abstained, thus keeping Ruggiero in the position.

At one point last year, Catalina asked Ruggiero to resign after they differed on several issues. Last September, Catalina and Torres pointed fingers again at Ruggiero for approving raises for two employees without informing the Common Council.

“We got off to a rocky start,” Catalina conceded. “He did some things that I questioned such as not recognizing the role of mayor in our government. I think it was disrespectful. We had to move forward with the city’s business. I think we came to have a very good working relationship since September.”

Ruggiero did not return a phone message seeking comment, but Councilman Darren Rigger said Ruggiero “faithfully served three city administrations under both political parties.”

“It’s a shame that a campaign of character attacks may have contributed to his decision to leave our city,” Rigger said. “At the end of the day, it’s the taxpayers who will suffer as we lose a phenomenonal city manager who was well-liked by residents of the city. Moving forward we need to ensure that his replacement has the same level of integrity and is a professional and not a patronage hire. We have lost a number of very professional staff this year, including two corporation counsels. We must ensure that the taxpayers come first.”

Catalina said the council would discuss in executive session the best way to proceed in finding someone to replace Ruggiero.

“I’m assuming everyone wants what’s best for the City of Peekskill,” Catalina said. “It will not have an impact on city offices or city business.”

Sober Home Owners Seek Town Approval in Lawsuit

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During an interview with the Northern Westchester Examiner last month, McCrossan said Compass Westchester has secured the necessary insurance to operate the facility, countering speculation has changed. We want to be accepted. We believe there are valuable services we can provide. We’re in this for the right reason. We’re in this to help people,” McCrossan said. “We wanted to do this the right way.”

Compass Westchester first filed for a special permit from the Town Board to operate a “convalescent home” in December 2013.

“At the end of the day, it’s the taxpayers who will suffer as we lose a phenom-
Tech Savvy Students to Apply Knowledge in App Development Bowl

By Janine Bowen

A marching band and cheerleaders stormed the court at the Westchester County Center on Friday afternoon, but not for a basketball game -- the fanfare was celebrating the launch of a new academic challenge.

Friday marked the kickoff of the first-ever Westchester Smart Mobile App Development Bowl, which challenges students across the county and throughout the metropolitan area to use technology to find solutions for problems facing today's society.

"What's so encouraging is that standing here, surrounded by this group [of students], you see how much human potential we have to address all our needs and challenges, and all of you have the power to change the world with technology or change the technology that exists today," said County Executive Rob Astorino.

The goal of the inaugural event is to develop an Android or iPhone application that will help people suffering from Alzheimer's disease or dementia manage their symptoms.

Fifty teams from high schools and colleges across Westchester, Rockland, New York City, Connecticut and Long Island have signed up to compete. Winners receive cash prizes and opportunities for paid internships. Local high schools involved in the competition include Hen Hud, Lakeland, Walter Panas, Ossining and Soundview Preparatory School in Yorktown.

"The fact that we have 50 schools from three states is phenomenal," Astorino said. "We've got so many different minds now working on developing an app, which could literally change a life and a family's life in regards to Alzheimer's or dementia, so this is a wonderful thing."

The Mobile App Development Bowl, sponsored by the county and Pace University’s Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems, Bill McGrath, senior vice president and COO of Pace University's Westchester campus, said the focus was chosen because most people know someone who suffers from Alzheimer's or dementia.

People suffering from those ailments represent an underserved population, McGrath said, leaving a gap in the market for tools and technology that can be addressed by the work of these students. McGrath noted that the competition will provide local students with a practical and more hands-on approach to technology than they would ever be able to experience in a classroom, where lessons are often based on theoretical problems.

"They're going to be able to see the outcome of their work truly help people who are a vulnerable population, so it's gratifying, but it's like having a real job instead of being in a classroom," he said.

Virginia Nalbandian, an AP computer science teacher at Pleasantville High School and coach of the school's Mobile App Development Bowl team, said while all of the students on her team already have a love of technology, this experience will show them how they can apply their classroom knowledge outside school.

"I think being part of this contest gives them an opportunity to actually see how they can use Java or any programming language in the real world, so it's a great application and it's a great cause," she said.

Nalbandian noted that members of her team, Hot Cup of Java, have not settled on an idea for the app they will ultimately submit, but said that she and the students will be working hard over the next few weeks on the project.

The winners of the Westchester Smart Mobile App Development Bowl will be announced by a panel of judges Apr. 17.
Yorktown Chamber of Commerce Interviews with Board Candidates

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use of fund balance for operating costs.

Mr. Bernard supports Depot Square and feels that Greenwood Street is the right place for the Highway Garage.

He feels that the Sober Home should have been treated as a group home, with a committee to investigate and make recommendations. Now, however, the Town Board is “boxed in.” He supports the concept, and recognizes the need for this type of facility, but feels the current site in a residential area is not the appropriate location. A transitional zone would be better, and the Code needs to be addressed to provide for this.

Mr. Bernard presented himself as Pro Business, and criticized the recent petition circulated by his opponent which stated that the Jefferson Valley Mall was in danger of closing. Rather than helping the Mall, Mr. Bernard said that this would actually hurt the Mall’s ability to attract new tenants. Favoring “smarter development,” Mr. Bernard stressed his planning experience even while on the Town Board, which used to handle site plan and other planning issues. Being pro-business does not mean a Costco on every corner.

The Town must send the message that Yorktown is open for business. Mr. Bernard would work to make approvals quicker by removing roadblocks and reducing the time the building department processes applications. He would look at the Code and pass laws easing restrictions applying to steep slopes, for example, similar to the way the Town recently eased parking requirements in commercial zones.

We hope that this information will help you, the voter, make an informed decision next week. Regardless of who you vote for, do make your voice heard and get out and vote.
By Neal Rentz

Lifelong Yorktown resident Donna Simone has demonstrated her compassion for local residents in various ways as a mission in life.

“T've always helped people. I was a single mom up until eight years ago when I married my husband (Frank Soto),” Simone said last week. “I always had people reaching out to me and giving me a hand here and there and I always helped people myself.”

For example, three children, on separate occasions, who needed a place to stay, lived with Simone and her family.

Simone furthered her charitable efforts by opening Yorktown Love in Action in August 2011. “When I got married I didn't have to worry about working my butt off to support my kids so I talked with my husband about it. I said I'd really love to take what I do to a larger scale,” she recalled.

Yorktown Love in Action helps two categories of people – “families” and “friends.”

Local families helped out by Yorktown Love in Action live in such local communities as Yorktown, Mahopac, Somers, Cortlandt and Peekskill.

Financial assistance is provided to families who have fallen on hard times for a variety of reasons, such as illness, cannot be receiving government assistance, have at least one person working and are in the process of getting themselves out of their financial difficulties, Simone said.

Bills are paid for families with whatever money is left at the end of the month after the costs of overhead of her charity have been paid. Families receiving assistance need to volunteer or have someone else volunteer at Love in Action.

“We're trying to help them catch up,” Simone said.

If a person is in need of help who is receiving government assistance he or she could qualify as a friend, Simone explained. "They completely shop for free,” she said. Furniture, clothing and linens are among the items “friends” can obtain for free at Yorktown Love in Action and Simone's husband will provide delivery of the items if requested.

Yorktown Love in Action accepts a wide variety of donated items, including records, clothing, CDs, DVDs and even cars. The donated items are available for purchase with proceeds going to the charity; donated to individuals in need or sold to companies with the proceeds going to Love in Action.

Financial donations are also encouraged. Love in Action has a monthly donation plan that has a donation automatically taken from a person's credit card, Simone said. "If everybody in this town gave me $1 I would have thousands of dollars every month,” she said.

Local businesses have been chipping in by setting clothing boxes for donations, with the items sold for contributions or provided to the families and individuals Yorktown Love in Action assists.

Donations of items or money provided to Yorktown Love in Action are itself in need of assistance in the coming months aside from donations. Her building and others on her street will soon be torn down to make way for a new shopping center that will be located across the street from the Cortlandt Town Center. Simone is seeking to lease a 10,000 to 20,000 square feet building for a new location and she is seeking a landlord who will provide her with discounted rent.

Simone explained her passion for helping others. “If people don't work together to help each other what is it all about? What are we doing here?” she said.

Yorktown Love in Action is located at 3144 E. Main St., Mohegan Lake. It is located across the street from the Cortlandt Town Center on Route 6. For more information, call 914-890-3966 or visit YorktownLoveinAction.com.

Lifelong Yorktown resident Donna Simone opened the non-profit Yorktown Love in Action in 2011.
Digital Calendar Sharing Platform Gaining Traction Locally

By Colette Connolly

Calendar gridlock was a way of life for Pelham residents Julie and Dennis Roche, the parents of four school-aged boys.

Already drowning in e-mails and flyers to remind them of their children’s school schedule and sports teams’ practices and their own commitments, trying to keep track of it all was taking a toll.

“That was until the couple came up with the idea about two years ago of creating a free digital calendar sharing and synchronization platform that allows parents to search, find and add events from important local calendars and permits groups to easily create and share calendars as well.

Originally focused on Pelham and lower Westchester, the platform has been gaining traction recently throughout Westchester, including in Pleasantville, Yorktown and Peekskill and many other communities.

“We wanted to create a solution for group organizers and for people like us who need to be organized,” said Julie Roche, Burbio.com’s co-founder.

“Our lives have become so overscheduled, but on the other hand we want to give our kids every opportunity to get involved in different things. What comes along with that is calendar frenzy and chaos.”

Dennis and Julie Roche, co-founders of the digital calendar sharing platform Burbio.com.

The couple found that other busy families were similarly accessing different calendars to locate specific information. They also discovered that there was no platform that automatically compiled different schedules into one place.

In addition, they were still seeing flyers being sent home with their children and newsletters arriving in the mail.

“You can’t even look at it all on a computer,” said Roche, who has a background in marketing and market research. “It is definitely overwhelming.

Naming it Burbio -- a play on the word suburbia, since the suburban demographic is the company’s primary target market -- was the easy part. Getting the platform up and running was more complicated. Roche, who majored in applied math and took computer programming classes in college, enrolled in a web development and backend programming class to get up to speed.

“That was one of the best things I could have done, to teach myself some of those prototyping tools,” said Roche, who was helped by her husband, who has a background in business development and ad sales.

The end product, Roche said, is a calendar system that is simple to use and can be synced with a number of mobile devices as well as with Google and Apple calendars.

They charge for zip code-targeted advertising and sponsored e-mails and will be adding a marketing platform for local merchants to partner with non-profits.

Since those early days, the Roches, who currently have one full-time employee and several part-timers, have acquired users from about 50 Westchester zip codes, in addition to locations in New Jersey and Connecticut.

Users can access the public calendars of more than 1,000 local nonprofits, public school districts, churches, libraries, restaurants, movie theaters, sports leagues and other organizations. They also receive notifications of recommended events and alerts when event information changes.

A recent addition to the platform is a new carpool-scheduling feature. Roche realizes that not everyone can drive his or her child to every event.

“Carpools are convenient and good for the environment,” said Roche, “but they can be really hard to keep track of when there are lots of changes flying around in texts or e-mails.”

To create a carpool schedule, all a user has to do is click on the “Add a Carpool” icon on the Burbio website. Then, whomever created the carpool invites other drivers, all of whom can add or edit driving shifts on the calendar. Each member of a carpool is notified when the schedule changes, explained Roche.

Behind the Burbio platform is a passion Roche and her husband share— to make local communities more connected and to thrive.

“We like the fact that Burbio is helping people to connect,” said Roche, “rather than replacing the connection.”

For more information or to sign up for Burbio, visit www.burbio.com.
Long-time Peekskill resident Katherine McGurty will lead the 26th Annual Peekskill St. Patrick’s Parade through the streets of downtown Peekskill on Saturday, March 14, at 3 p.m. She and her four aides, Brian P. Kelly, Pete Kelly, Kyle Knapp and Janice Molly, will be joined by other marchers, dignitaries, pipe bands, Boy and Girl Scouts troops, community groups, floats, fire trucks and other emergency service vehicles and more.

In addition, the Peekskill 75th Anniversary Committee is planning its own contingent recognizing the 75th Anniversary of the incorporation of the City; the Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber of Commerce will be represented by its members in celebration of the organization’s 100th Anniversary; and visiting dignitaries from Peekskill’s Sister City Castlebar, Ireland also will be marching. “As an all-volunteer committee, the Peekskill St. Patrick’s Committee is honored to organize the parade each year along with all of its surrounding activities to bring enjoyment to the entire community. We host a number of fund raising efforts in order to present the parade and I want to thank all those who support us, especially the local businesses,” said Peekskill St. Patrick’s Committee Chairman Bill Powers, in his first year as chairman.

The parade passes Assumption Church, makes a left on First Street, right on Union Avenue, right on South Street, left on N. Division Street, right on Main Street, right on James Street, and right on Brown Street. The reviewing stand is on the corner of Park and James Streets, where most of the bands perform.

The parade is preceded by a special St. Patrick’s Mass at Assumption Church at 1:30 p.m. and a Grand Marshal’s Brunch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Elks Club, 1038 Brown Street, Peekskill. Price for the brunch is $12 for adults, children 5-12 $5, and under 5 free. Walk-ins welcome.

McGurty is being recognized for her contributions to the St. Patrick’s Parade Committee since its inception. Her involvement grew over the years to fill the role of treasurer and that of organizing the special St. Patrick’s Mass at Assumption immediately preceding the start of the annual parade.

McGurty is the third family member to wear the sash and be honored with the Grand Marshal title. Her father-in-law, Dr. John McGurty Sr., was the parade’s first ever Grand Marshal and her husband, John McGurty Jr., was the 10th Grand Marshal.

Aide Brian P. Kelly is being honored for his involvement in the AOH Division 18, Peekskill, Westchester County Board of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and the Knights of Columbus, Monsignor Francis J. Ansbro Council 462 in Peekskill. Brian is a member of The Cortlandt Engine Company #1 and is a Volunteer Fireman with the Montrose Fire District.

Aide Pete Kelly is being honored for his participation in the fund-raising efforts to put on the parade and for his dedication to the local law enforcement community. Starting his career as a beat officer, Pete rose through the ranks in his law enforcement career and now serves on a nationally-driven, locally focused law enforcement task force against violent crime.

Aide Kyle Knapp, the owner and operator of Kyle’s Pub on Washington Street in Peekskill, is being honored for his charitable efforts and for his involvement with parade activities. Kyle has put on a number of fund-raisers to help others in the greater Peekskill community and supports the St. Patrick’s Parade activities.

Lastly, aide Janice Molloy is being recognized for her volunteer work with the Peekskill Lions Club, serving currently president. She was a founding member of the Peekskill Education Foundation, and she also serves on the Peekskill Salvation Army Board of Directors and the Lincoln Society in Peekskill. Most recently she was inducted into the Peekskill Elks Lodge.

McGurty will officially be installed as Grand Marshal along with her aides at the group’s annual installation dinner on Saturday, March 8, from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Mansion at Colonial Terrace. A limited number of tickets are still available for $85 per person by calling Dinner Chairman Chuck McGreal at (914) 804-0088.
Local Importer is Your Personal Wine Consultant

Last week I introduced readers to “artisanal importers” who have a passion for particular styles or regions and vigorously pursue the wines that express their passions. A particular artisanal importer’s name on a wine’s back label can compel you to purchase a wine with certainty, not with the usual element of chance. This week I feature one of the local Westchester-based importers.

Serge Doré has evolved from a restaurateur and corporate salesperson to an entrepreneurial spokesperson for artisanal producers. From the office of Serge Doré Selections in Chappaqua, he has pursued his passion for nearly two decades.

Recently, I sat with Serge and his assistant, Robin, at a cozy table at Le Jardin du Roi, a fitting dining venue around the corner from their office. I asked them to present wines that they felt represented their philosophy and embodied their passion for wines. Interspersed with the wine samplings, I learned more about Serge’s passion for wine.

He hand-selects the winemakers he represents, from nine French regions, of which Bordeaux and Burgundy are the most expansive in his portfolio. These artisans are typically small, multigenerational farmers with unique wines and limited production, generally under 1,000 cases.

Notable quotes from Serge: “Wine is life.” “I focus on terroir, and the genius behind it. If my name is on the label, then you know my soul is in the bottle.” He has a new branding image: the icon of a wine drinker, glass of wine in hand, toasting a grapevine as if to say “Thank you for the gift of this wine.” I agree: Vive le vin.

Château de Portets Grave Rouge, 2009: While the blend is typical of the region, the terroir and style are not. The Merlot (60 percent), Cabernet Sauvignon (35 percent) and Cabernet Franc (5 percent) combine to produce a full-bodied wine that is clean on the palate and reflects its micro terroir and its lineage. The Théron family has been tending this land for over 50 years. Their goal is to produce wine for people. Mission accomplished.

Domaine Dupré Beaujolais-Villages, Vignes du 1940, 2013: The Dupré family produces only 300 cases of their 100 percent Gamay wine, grown on nearly 75-year-old vines. This is a full-bodied wine redolent of plums and cherries, with a fine balance of fruit and acidity. Perfect for summer quaffing.

Domaine Fond Croze Côtes du Rhône Villages, 2011: The third generation of the Long family has a vision unlike most Southern Rhone winemakers. They produce wines from single varietals. This allows them to show the true expression of their vineyards and their terroir. First, I sampled their Grenache (850 cases) and then their Syrah (600 cases), both produced without a supporting cast. Each burst with fruits and a balanced complexity emblematic of the local terroir, lovingly nurtured in organic harmony with nature.

Adissat Lirac Cru du Rhône, 2011: What better way to emphasize your philosophy and passion for wine than to be actively involved in its ultimate expression? Doré’s name appears on both the front and the back labels of each bottle of this partnership with two oenologist friends. The grapes -- Mourvèdre (80 percent) and Grenache (20 percent) -- are cultivated in this tiny, little-known corner of the Southern Rhone Valley. Its deep purple color belies the rich, dark fruit and hints of chocolate wafting from my sampling glass. This was my favorite of the day; alas, only 400 cases of this gem were produced.

When we concluded our tastings, I realized the symbiotic relation between Serge and his producers. An American artisanal importer setting the stage for French artisanal winemakers. One feeds the passion of the other. Without one, the other could not exist. Ask for his wines at your favorite wine shop.

Nick Antonaccio is a 35-year Pleasantville resident. For over 15 years he has conducted numerous wine tastings and lectures. He also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick’s credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @sharingwine.
Qualifying for a Mortgage: What Next, Blood and Urine Samples?

With the purchase of four homes under my belt, I’ve applied for that many traditional mortgages. There have been many more times when I’ve taken mortgages to either lower my interest rate or tackle major renovations or new business ventures.

I’ve lost count of how many times, but never have I been put through the wringer quite like the last time when I bought my new home at Trump Park Residences in Shrub Oak.

During the first round, I went through the humiliation of being turned down flat because, I am told, I am self-employed and was holding on to my primary residence, which already holds a hefty mortgage. The residence has served throughout my career as a piggy bank to finance a new business venture after another.

The first mortgage lender, recommended by my selling agent, wasn’t as resourceful as he might have been. But the second one, Richie Vicinanza of Homestead Funding Corp., was my lucky charm and got me qualified. Still, the paperwork was astounding. Each time Vicinanza would ask me for more documentation, I would joke with him and eventually asked, “What next, a blood and urine sample?”

But Vicinanza never lost patience with my insolence and saw me through the joke with him and eventually asked, “What is it that keeps the mortgage industry so distanced from its homebuyers and so difficult to deal with? I asked my two closest buddies in the business to comment about it. Beside Vicinanza, I asked that question of Paul M. Menga, who heads up the mortgage division of the agency where I hang my hat, William Raveis Mortgage.

“I have been in the business for about 10 years now and the only significant differences I have noticed in qualification is with self-employed borrowers,” Menga said. “They tend to have the most difficulty qualifying for a mortgage but it’s still not impossible if you know what you are doing, have the right lenders at your disposal and do your up-front homework to try and address all possible hurdles that you might face down the road.”

“There has definitely been an increase in documentation required to secure a mortgage these days, but that is actually a good thing for the industry and helps solidify a safe and stable market for the future. Lack of documentation and due diligence were major contributors to the housing industry collapse.”

Basic qualification standards haven’t changed much over the years, Menga said. Prospective borrowers may mistakenly associate increased paperwork with increased difficulty in qualifying, which is not the case.

Menga said there are still low down payment options available, even zero percent in some cases, so it remains a great time for first-time homebuyers or people who saw their credit suffer during the housing market collapse.

“Regulation standards for mortgage lenders have changed and will continue to change, especially since the financial crisis of 2008,” Vicinanza said. “The industry has been required to conform to new guidelines brought on by the Dodd-Frank Act, which promotes financial institutions’ accountability and consumer protection.”

The most recent implementation, he said, was the Qualified Mortgage guidelines in January 2014, regulated by the Financial Protection Bureau. As a result, mortgages may have pre-closing audits by outside sources and that can delay closings.

Working with a licensed loan originator who is experienced and a lending institution that knows what the requirements are from the beginning of a home financing search can save time. Loans can still be closed within 30 days.

There is talk throughout the industry about loosening lending standards, but lenders are being cautious, Vicinanza said. Recent changes include Fannie Mae reducing the cash-out refinance limit from 85 percent loan-to-value to 80 percent. Meanwhile, Fannie Mae has brought back 97 percent conventional mortgage financing for purchase transactions for first-time homebuyers.

“What people really need to know is that mortgage financing is still readily available and that rates are still at all-time lows,” Vicinanza said. “But we are never sure how long rates will stay at this level. Bottom line: there is no time like the present to purchase a new home or refinance your current mortgage.”

To know more, call either Paul M. Menga of William Raveis at 914-837-9889 or Richie Vicinanza of Homestead Funding Corp. at 914-447-6158.

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 and his blog is: www.TheHomeGuru.com. To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.
Keep in Mind

Comedy Night: Somers Travel Baseball will present A Night of Comedy on March 20 at Villa Barone Hilltop Manor at 466 Route 6 in Mahopac. Join us for a fun-filled night of food and adult comedy featuring two outstanding stand-ups, Johnny Lampert & Sherry Davey. The doors open at 7:30 p.m. with dinner at 8 p.m., followed by the comedy acts at 9 p.m. The cost for the evening is $95 per person which includes a full dinner buffet, wine, soda, coffee, and dessert. Please reserve by March 10. To purchase tickets go to: https://somerseybb.sportsSignupApp.com/MySportsStore. All proceeds benefit the U12 Somers Travel Baseball teams heading to Cooperstown Dreams Park this July. For questions contact either Laura Cabo at cabmac@optonline.net or Cindy Russo at cynthiarusso428@aol.com.

Tuesday, March 3
Parenting And Cancer: Support Connection’s free program “Parenting and Cancer: Talking to Your Children” will be offered from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Support Connection office in Yorktown Heights, 40 Triangle Center, Suite 100. The program is open to people living with breast, ovarian and gynecological cancers who have children of all ages. To learn more or to pre-register, which is required, call Support Connection at 914-962-6402 or 800-532-4290.

Free Medicare Counseling: Get help understanding your Medicare benefits and coverage on Tuesdays year-round (except holidays) at the John C. Hart Memorial Library in Shrub Oak, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Field Library in Peekskill. No appointments are necessary for the free service. Meet with a trained counselor for information about Medicare Parts A, B and D, Medicare Advantage Plans, Medicare Savings Plans, Extra Help and EPIC. You can also call the Senior Benefits Information Center helpline with your questions at 914-231-3260 and a counselor will return your call within two business days. For a listing of all eight SBIC centers in Westchester libraries, go to http://www.westchesterlibraries.org/sbic.

Farmers’ Market: The Putnam Valley Farmers’ Market is held every Tuesday from 3 to 7 p.m. at the corner of Mill Street and Peekskill Hollow Road (Adams Corners).

Senior Benefits Information: Trained volunteer counselors help older adults and their caregivers find information about government benefits to help them stretch their budgets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the John C. Hart Memorial Library, 1130 E. Main St., Shrub Oak.

Get information on Medicare health and prescription plans, nutrition assistance, the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), tax relief programs, and much more. Info: 914-245-5262 Ext. 227 or http://www.westchesterlibraries.org/sbic.

Checkmate: A chess program is held every Tuesday at 4 p.m. at the Ossining Public Library, 53 Croton Ave. It is held in the second floor conference room. Info: 914-941-2416 Ext. 336.

Wednesday, March 4
Hear The Megillah: Annually, the Jewish community celebrates the holiday of Purim with a communal reading of the book of Esther. Come hear the book retold with group participation and joy at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Am. Following the reading, our “Purim Players” will put on a show-stopping version of the Megillah with many twists and turns. All are welcome. Temple Beth Am is located at 203 Church Pl, Yorktown. For information, please call our Rabbi at 962-7500 or email him at rabbiv@templebetham.org.

Please send your information to Neal Rentz at nrentz@theexaminernews.com.com.

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247 Veterans Rd (across the street from the Y orktown Community Nursery School, Wednesdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m at the Torah Studies course, that probe the depth of contemporary Torah movements and poses is offered at Theatre Fitness Program, a 45-minute full-body musical/#toggle-id-1.

**Purim Megillah Reading:** Come hear the Megillah being read on Purim eve from 6:15 to 7 p.m. at the Yorktown Community Nursery School, 247 Veterans Rd. in Yorktown (next door to the VF and across the street from the running track).

**YJC Purim Celebration:** The Yorktown Jewish Center, 2966 Crompond Rd., will celebrate the holiday of Purim at 7 p.m. We will read the Story of Esther with lots of merriment and congregation participation. Mark your calendars for this Purimspiel and Megillah reading. All are welcome. Info: 914-245-2324 or info@yorktownjewishcenter.org.

**The Whole Megillah:** Come in costume and bring the family to First Hebrew to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Purim. Bring your noisemakers or use ours during the reading of the Purim story where the Jews prevailed over an ancient enemy. Prizes will be awarded for the best costumes, traditional hamantaschen snacks and a “make your own” sundae will be part of the festivities. First Hebrew is located at 1821 Main St., Peekskill. Info: 914-739-0500 or www.chabadyorktown.com.

**Fitness Program**

The POUNDTM Fitness Program, a 45-minute full-body cardio and stress relief jam session, fusing Pilates, cardio, plyometrics isometric movements and poses is offered at Theatre and Dance Arts 131 Bedford Rd. Katonah. Drop in or weekly discount rates available. The program is being provided on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. and on Saturdays at 11:45 a.m. Call Peggy for more information at 914 941-2416.

**Torah Studies Course:** Chabad of Yorktown is conducting season two (12 classes) of the Torah Studies course, that is running through March 25. Our lessons probe the depth of contemporary Torah thought. Classes are being conducted on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Yorktown Community Nursery School, 247 Veterans Rd (across the street from the running track and next door to the VFW).

Fee for the full season are $36 and includes the textbook. Each class is independent.

For more information or to register visit www.chabadYorktown.com/TorahStudies, call 914-962-6600, or e-mail info@chabadYorktown.com.

**Bingo Wednesdays:** Come to First Hebrew for $2,000 in total guaranteed bingo prizes, plus an average of $1,000 awarded in specialty games. Doors open 5 p.m. and games begin 7:15 p.m. every Wednesday (except holidays – check First Hebrew's website calendar). First Hebrew is just west of the Beach Shopping Center at 1821 Main St., Peekskill. Info: 914 -739-0500 of www.firsthebrew.org.

**Thursday, March 5**

**Seussical The Musical:** Hendrick Hudson High School’s Starboard Stars Drama Club is presenting “Seussical the Musical” on March 6 at 7:30 p.m. and March 8 at 2 p.m. at Hendrick Hudson High School. Admission is $15 for adults / $10 for students and seniors. Visit www.showtix4u.com for tickets. You can also enjoy dinner with the Seussical characters on March 5 from 4:30 to 5:45 p.m. - dinner / 6 p.m. - dress rehearsal / $10 per person. The Cat in the Hat and Mr. and Mrs. Mayor of Whoville invite you to join them and meet the characters of Seussical. Come for dinner and stay for the final dress rehearsal. You must RSVP for this event to dressrehearsal1@gmail.com. Payments will be collected at the door.

**Sound Of Music:** The Kennedy Catholic Players will perform “The Sound of Music” on March 5 and 6 at 7 p.m. and on March 8 at 3 p.m. at John F. Kennedy High School on Route 138 in Somers. This year is the 50th anniversary of the release of the filmed version of the play. Tickets are $20 for adults, $15 for seniors and $12 for students. Info: 914-232-5061 Ext. 226 or http://kennedycatholic.org/spring-musical/#toggle-id-1.

**Family Purim Celebration:** Chabad of Yorktown invites you to join a family Purim celebration at 5 p.m. Be entertained by internationally acclaimed ventriloquist John Piuzzi. Dinner will be served. Hear the Megillah read, while simultaneously watching a pantomime video of the Purim story. Prizes will be given for all in costume, a raffle will be conducted and there will be crafts for children. Cost: $12 per person; maximum of $42 per family. Location: Yorktown Community and Cultural Center, 1974 Commerce St. For more information call 914-962-1111 or visit www.chabadyorktown.com.

**Friday, March 6**

**Little Bundles:** “Little Bundles,” a free class for babies between the ages of six weeks and six months, meets on Fridays from 12:30 to 1:20 p.m. at My Gym in Yorktown. The program includes baby exercises, songs, dances, infant-safe rides, unique swings, and many other Parent & Me adventures await the infant-parent team. Info: 914-302-7705.

**Job Hunting Help:** Free drop-in, hands-on assistance with online applications, resume writing, e-mail accounts and more is held on Fridays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the infant room, adjacent to the children’s library of the Ossining Public Library, 53 Croton Ave.

**The Northern Westchester Examiner 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 Neal Rentz at nrentz@thenexaminernews.com.**

**Yoga Program:** Support Connection, which provides free programs and services for people affected by breast and ovarian cancer, announces a free program: “Yoga-A path toward Red Wellness.” It is offered every Saturday from noon to 1:30 p.m., at Club Fit, 600 Bank Rd., Jefferson Valley. The program is open to women with breast, ovarian and gynecological cancer. To learn more or to pre-register, which is required, call Support Connection at 914-962-6402 or 800-532-4290.

**Ossining Farmers Market:** Down to Earth Markets is holding the Ossining Winter Farmers Market at the Claremont Elementary School, on Van Cortlandt Avenue, off of N. Highland (Route 9). The market runs every Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., though March. Visit DowntoEarthMarkets.com for vendor details, events, and other updates at Ossining’s Down to Earth Winter Farmers Market.

**Overeaters Anony-mous:** Worried about the way you eat? If food rules your life, Overeaters Anony-mous may have the answer for you. There is no weigh-ins, dues or fees. The group meets on Saturdays from 8:30 to 9:30 am at the fourth floor conference at the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center, 1350 Route 9, Garrison. Info: call/text Lisa at 917-716-2488.

**Sunday, March 8**

**Maple Sugaring:** Watch sap turned into maple syrup during a program being conducted from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Muscoot Farm, located on Route 100 in Somers. Info: westchestergov.com/parks or 914-864-7282.

**Healing Yoga:** Yoga classes for women with breast cancer are held at 5 p.m. on Sundays at Hudson Yoga, 5 Old Post Rd. South, Croton-on-Hudson. Weekly classes are being conducted by rotating instructors. The suggestion is $15. Info: Elisheva Simpson at 914-319-4010 or send an e-mail to info@laughingheartyoga.com.

**Family Art:** The spring Art for Families series will begin today at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, 1701 Main St., Peekskill. Today’s program, slated for 2 to 4 p.m. is Love Notes with Ori Alon. Join us for a docent tour of our current LOVE exhibition followed by a special writing workshop with Alon. Write from the heart and type a love note to loved one the old fashioned way. Admission is $10 for the general public and $7 for HVCCA members and Peekskill residents. Reservations are required. Info: 914-788-0100 or www hvcca.org.

**Happenings Calendar**

The artist reception will be held at the library on March 14 from 2 to 4 p.m. Please call the library for viewing times in the program room at 914-232-5717 or visit us online at www.wilmibrary.org.
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LEGAL NOTICE
NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING MOUNT PLEASANT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special meeting of the qualified voters of said District be and the same is hereby called to be held in said District in the Westlake High School Gymnasium, Westlake Drive, Thornwood, New York on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 from 7:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of voting on the following propositions:

PROPOSITION #1
Shall the Board of Education of the Mount Pleasant Central School District be authorized to (1) construct additions to and reconstruct various District buildings and facilities, including infrastructure and site work improvements, and acquire original furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus, at a maximum cost of $34,920,000, (2) expend such sum for such purpose, (3) levy the necessary tax therefore, to be levied and collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education taking into account state aid; and (4) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, issue bonds and notes of the District at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed $2,685,000, and the levy of a tax to pay the interest on said obligations when due?

PROPOSITION #2
Shall the Board of Education of the Mount Pleasant Central School District be authorized to (1) construct additions to and reconstruct the auditorium and related facilities, including the auditorium, main entrance and auxiliary rooms, including site work, and acquire original furnishings, equipment, machinery or apparatus required for the purpose, at a maximum cost of $4,996,000, (2) expend such sum for such purpose, (3) levy the necessary tax therefore, to be levied and collected in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education taking into account state aid; and (4) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, issue bonds and notes of the District at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed $2,685,000, and the levy of a tax to pay the interest on said obligations when due?

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Somers senior Ryan Grossman works the lane against Byram Hills F Matt Groll in the second-seeded Tuskers’ 44-34 loss to the No.3 Bobcats last Wednesday in the Section 1 Class A semifinals at the Westchester County Center where the Tuskers hadn’t ventured in 24 years only to shoot poorly and see its magical run come to a screeching halt... see Class A Boys Hoops Notebook
Golden Moments for Haldane, Ossining at County Center

Knowles MVP for Pride, Ricci Notches 400th Career Win: Peekskill Falls in Final

By Ray Gallagher & Tony Pinciaro

Ossining senior forward Jalay Knowles recalled a special moment from her first year on varsity as an eighth-grader – Coach Dan Ricci's 300th career win.

"It was one of our last home games and we had a big crowd," Knowles said. "After the game, we had tee shirts and my mom baked a cake. We were all happy for him."

Knowles and her teammates gave Ricci yet another reason for cake and tee shirts for his 400th win after the two-time reigning NYS champion Pride defeated North Rockland, 82-62, in a Section 1 Class AA semifinal.

Ossining (20-2) then advanced to its seventh consecutive Class AA title game and played Our Lady of Lourdes Monday where the Pride held serve and defeated the youthful Warriors, 78-61, for their fifth-straight sectional title, sixth overall in the last 12 years and 65th-straight win over Section 1 foes.

Lourdes, which defeated Scarsdale in the other Class AA semi, led 34-26 after two quarters before Ricci read the halftime riot act. The Warriors will surely pose similar problems next year, but it was all Ossining in the second half as the Pride won an unprecedented fifth-straight Class AA title and have now competed in nine of the last 12 championships.

The one common denominator for all five Pride title is Knowles, who scored 17 points in the pivotal third quarter, 25 for the game, and simply took over despite early foul trouble. She added nine boards and Coach Ricci called her "the face of our program."

"I told her at halftime she better come out hard or go home a loser," Ricci said to Knowles, second only to All-American Saniya Chong in points scored at Ossining with 1,775. "She reacted accordingly. They went man on her and couldn't stop her. We played dumb in the first half and we were beating ourselves, but we got it straight in the second."

Pride junior F Shadeen Samuels, possibly the most talented player in the section, was selected to the All-Tournament team. Samuels scored 22 points, dished six assists and yanked six boards. Pride G Steph Svoboda chipped in with 12 points and nine assists while Madison Strippoli added eight points and seven caroms.

Abby Squirell added nine points.

Ricci joined Irvington's Gina Maher, Ursuline's Beth Wooters, former Lourdes' coach Brian Giorgis and retired coach Stan Koczka in the 400-win club.

"It was special to do it at the County Center," said Ricci, in his 24th season as Ossining's varsity coach. "Four hundred means that I have had some great kids the past 24 years who were willing to put the ball."

but were happier because Coach Ricci got his 400th win," Knowles said. "We had tee shirts and cake again. We also gave him balloons and a basketball. He told us now it was time for us to get another gold ball."

The Pride did not have a chance to go out for dinner following the game because Ossining was the final game, Thursday, and the girls had school Friday. Knowles said despite this, the bus ride home was a happy one.

Junior Shadeen Samuels contributed 24 points, five rebounds, four assists and six steals and Stefanie Svoboda added 17 points and seven assists in the semifinal win. Abby Squirrel finished with a game-high 16 rebounds.

Ossining led, 15-12, after one, but progressively took control of the game and would eventually outscore North...
Slow Start Dooms Put Valley in Class B Semifinal Loss to Woodlands

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor

The 17-point first-half whole dug by 5th-seeded Putnam Valley was ultimately too much to dig out last Wednesday night at the Westchester County Center, where top-seeded Woodlands, the 2014 NYS semifinalists, worked a 68-56 triumph in the Section 1 Class B semifinals. But Coach Mike McDonnell’s Tigers (14-7) went down slugging, getting as close as 57-51 with 1:19 left.

But Woodlands (18-3), which hit 30-of-44 free throws for the game and many down the stretch, held on for its third-straight win over the Tigers, including last year’s Section 1 championship. The Falcons went on to repeat in Sunday’s title tilt, knocking off second-seeded Briarcliff, 56-50, for their third gold ball in the last six years. Falcon senior stud Jamil Gambari scored a game-high 22 points, including the 1,000th of his career, added nine boards and converted 12 from the charity stripe.

After the Tigers admittedly lost that deer-in-the-headlight look, All-Section senior Ryan Basso dropped a team-high 21 points, collared nine rebounds and four steals, and saw fellow senior Mike Del Guidice (10 points) play his finest game of the season.

"Woodlands was way more confident than we were in that first quarter," said Basso, an All-Section choice and first male to score over 1,000 points at PV. "We didn't come out strong like we needed to. Coach gave it to us at halftime and that made us pick it up. I'm really proud of all we accomplished in my three years on varsity. We got Putnam Valley's name out there and people know all about us now."

Tiger F Joe Spinola finished with eight points, 12 rebounds and three blocks and will be one of four prime-minute juniors to return next season, along with Kevin Gallagher, Anders Spittal (5 points) and Harrison Deegan (5 points). PV senior Zack Nolan finished his five-year varsity career with seven points, four assists and four boards. "We got back here three years in a row and I don't know of many Class B teams that have done that," Nolan said. "I'm really proud of my, we left nothing out on that court. Unfortunately, we had the slow start and Woodlands got the best of us. Woodlands really pushed us and that's hard for us to simulate in practice, but we got used to it and stepped up and went on our run."

The Tigers opened the second half on an 8-0 run and continued to make a game of it from that point on, trailing by six with little more than a minute to go.

Putnam Valley F Joe Spinola attacks rack in semifinal loss to Woodlands.

Putnam Valley senior G Ryan Basso soars through traffic in Tigers’ 68-56 semifinal loss to Woodlands at the County Center.

The major development afterward shifted to Coach McDonnell's displeasure with the officiating. Three Tigers fouled out, including Spittal, Spinola and Deegan, who was done midway through the third quarter. Not one player from Woodlands fouled out despite their aggressive style, which McDonnell was irate about during and after the game.

Woodlands went to the foul line 44 times, connecting on 30 shots while the Valley saw the stripe just 14 times, hitting only six. Coach McDonnell begged for an explanation.

"How does that happen," he asked? "How does that happen when one team plays a flat zone and the other team is pressing and double-teaming up and down the court? I really wanted to come down here and sit calmly and coach this team like the old Jack Curran at Archbishop Molloy, God bless him. But you’re forced to step up and defend your kids.

"We had three guys foul out," he added. "It’s frustrating and I’m getting tired of it. I’m not here to be anybody’s buddy, friend or pal and if that ruffles people then so be it. I’ve coached in the CHSAA and you never go into a gym worrying about who is officiating, what’s their personality, what’s going to happen. They just come out and call the game, and I’m really ticked off because this is for all the marbles. We have enough issues with the things we didn’t do, and Woodlands is a damn good team and we didn’t bring out A-game at times, but I’m frustrated that I’ve got to get up and get involved like that. Now, people get this idea that this is how I coach, but this is for all the marbles and I had to step up for my kids."

While those sentiments may not endear him to Section 1 officials, McDonnell didn’t seem to care. He went to bat for his kids for something he felt strongly about.

"I told the kids I love being at Put Valley," McDonnell said. "Woodlands is graduating and we’re going to be back here next year, I strongly believe that. We’re going to take that golden ball yet. We didn’t attack the basket, everything was outside jumpers. But I didn’t think we were done at the end of one, I knew we’d fight back. I feel like we’re pretty even with Woodlands and we’ll be back."

PV’s Charlie Pagani and Kevin Gallagher were bummmed out like the rest of the Tigers after semifinal loss to Woodlands.
Haldane’s Monster 4th Q Leads to Section 1 Title Repeat
Blue Devils Close with 17-4 Run to Finish off Tuckahoe; Reppin’ at States Next

BY RAY GALLAGHER
EXAMINER SPORTS EDITOR

When Haldane F Edmund Fitzgerald comes to play, the Blue Devils are a matchup nightmare, but like the great ship that sank in a Lake Superior storm in 1975, Haldane’s SS Fitzgerald was in sinking in foul trouble for much of the first half of last Saturday’s Section 1 Class C championship game against rival Tuckahoe.

With Fitzgerald on dry dock, top-seeded Haldane found itself in a dogfight against the third-seeded Tigers, who held a 41-39 lead with 6:45 left before Fitzgerald returned and the Blue Devils closed the game with a 17-4 run and held on for a 56-45 victory at the Westchester County Center.

Haldane, which repeated as champions for the first time in its history, won its fourth gold ball and advanced to play the yet-to-be-determined Section 9 champ at 6:45 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10 at Mount St. Mary College in the Class C state regional semifinals.

Fitzgerald had an immediate impact upon his two returns from foul trouble, finishing the game with 14 points, 11 rebounds and four blocks, but while he simmered on the bench it was senior MVP Peter Hoffmann who did the cooking, finishing with a game-high 21 points, six rebounds and four blocks.

“Edmund’s two quick fouls got us out of our rhythm,” Hoffmann said. “We’re just used to having him in there with us a lot, so we got off to a slow start, but we had some guys come in off the bench and step up. Once Edmund got back we got back in our groove, so that’s when we
really turned it up and came out with the win.

“This feels awesome,” the four-year varsity veteran Hoffmann added. “I’ve been coming down here a lot over the years and saw us lose some close ones in the semis my first two years on the varsity, so it feels really good to back-to-back as a junior and senior. We’re taking it one game at a time from here.”

As he has done throughout his two-time All-Section career, Hoffmann manned up and delivered the big-game qualities he’s known for at both ends of the floor. Still, Tuckahoe was resilient and showed why it is among the most respected Class C athletic programs in Section 1 history.

“They’re just so scrappy,” Haldane Coach Joe Virgadamo said of the Tigers. “Foul trouble hurt us, not having Edmund in there hurt. We couldn’t get into a rhythm. We weren’t shooting well. Defensively, we were trying to figure out what was working because they were killing it. Tuckahoe is well coached, and I knew they were going to give us this kind of game. They flopped early and took charges and we told the guys that all week.

“Driving down here on the bus we were talking about how awesome it would be if both the girls and boys could do it again, so this is awesome,” Coach V added. “So many schools out there don’t get to experience this once, so to do it twice, both of us, is really something special. There’s a lot of kids in the stands that got us to this point from eight, nine years ago when we were struggling, and many of them were here supporting us today. It’s a unique, tight-knit community and each year we just keep elevating the expectations. We’re ready for Section 9 now, let’s go!”

Blue Devil senior Garret Quigley stepped up to add 14 points and seven rebounds, teaming with Fitz and Hoff to provide a dominant paint presence the youthful Tigers were no match for. Down two early in the fourth, Fitzgerald and Quigley went back-to-back to get the lead the Blue Devils would never relinquish with 5:15 left. Fitzgerald went hard again for a 45-41 lead at 4:50 and Ryan McCollum dropped a big bucket next at 4:00. Hoffmann’s powerful and one hoop gave the Blue Devils a 50-43 lead, sending the Haldane faithful into a frenzy.

“I just had to come back in and dominate,” Fitzgerald said. “I got taken out of the game and lost the right mindset for a bit, so I had to get it back. This is crazy, us and the girls going back-to-back. It’s the first time it’s ever been done. Now we gotta keep it going from here and get to Glens Falls.”
Somers Meets Match in Byram Hills, Comes up Short in Final 4

By Ray Gallagher  
Examiner Sports Editor

It seemed almost as if Somers High was on a first date last Wednesday night at the Westchester County Center, where the Tuskers had not wafted with any of the elite teams on the Class A Final 4 dance floor in 23 years. And Coach Chris DiCintio's second-seeded Tuskers (17-4) appeared to have some first-date jitters in the Section 1 Class A semifinals, averaging under nine points per quarter in their 44-34 loss to No.3 Byram Hills (18-3), which shot particularly well in crunch time to advance to the Section 1 Class A finals.

Top-seeded Spring Valley, ranked No.3 in NYS, was to face the No.21 Bobcats in Monday's Class A title tilt, and the winner will go on to represent Section 1 in the NYSFHSAA tournament.

State-ranked (No.24) Somers, which won its lone Section 1 championship in a 1992 win over Albertus Magnus during its last County Center showing, has now laid the groundwork for future Tuskers, according to DiCintio.

"In truth, despite coming up short, it meant the world to this team, the program and our community to reach the County Center," said DiCintio, now in his third year at Somers. "All I wanted to do when I took this job, is to help legitimize Somers basketball. I felt like we did well in other sports and should have the same opportunity to do well with basketball. The fact that I live in Somers for over 20 years and being a veteran high school coach, I felt it only natural to come home and try to help build something here. To my pleasure, the kids have responded well in my first three years and have exceeded my expectations. It is now time to take my son's freshmen group, who were 16-0 this season, and continue to build towards Gold."

It may take that young unit a year or two to match the feats of the current bumper crop of history-making seniors, who, along with recent Somers grads like John Decker, put the Somers program back on the Section 1 map.

Somers had momentum on its side for about 10 seconds in the fourth quarter when senior point guard Matt Maloney (eight points) drained a trey from just off the top of the key with 4:58 left to cut the Bobcats' lead to 34-31. But Bobcats Skylar Simon (six points) and Jared Friedberg nailed back-to-back, game-sealing 3's, spelling the end for Somers, which lived and died by the 3 all season, only to be finished off by a poor shooting effort from across the perimeter, highlighted by a 12-point second half.

"I think we just needed to get some better shots towards the end of the game," Somers swingman Ryan Grossman said after scoring six points. "We were down by six or eight and we were throwing up desperation shots like we were down by 20. We didn't have consistent ball movement but a bounce here or there could have changed the game."

Byram Hills advanced the Class A finals for a third time in five years behind them Groll boys:
Hen Hud/Haldane Falls, 3-1, in 1st Section 1 Final 4 Appearance

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Rockland, 31-14 in the third quarter.

“We didn't start off well in the first quarter, but in the second quarter we picked it up and we were able to extend the lead,” Knowles said. “We just kept doing the things we needed to do and we were the bigger team so we were able to outrebound North Rockland.”

HALDANE, as expected, defeated Alexander Hamilton, 60-38 to win its second consecutive Section 1 Class C title and eighth Class C crown overall. The Lady Blue Devils will face the Section 9 champion at a site, time and date to be determined.

Blue Devil senior Allie Monteleone scored a game-high 15 points and was named the tournament most valuable player. This was Monteleone's third Section 1 title. She was a member of the 2011 team, her first year on varsity as an eighth-grader. Missy Lisikatos led all scorers with 17.

Blue Devils Coach Tyrone Searight admitted this was just the first step for Haldane, which hopes to contend for the state title.

“We hadn't played in a couple of weeks,” Searight said, “so I didn't know what to expect as far as us being a little rusty, but that wasn't the case. We came out flying and scored 60 points in this place, which is pretty good. We're ready for the next step, bring it on!”

PEEKSKILL (18-4) saw junior sniper Lanay Rodney score 32 points and grabbed 12 rebounds as Peekskill rallied to a 60-56 win over Rye in the Class A semis. Rodney's performance was one of the more dominant in recent County Center history and propelled the Red Devils to a third-straight Class A final where the No. 2 Red Devils suffered a 56-49 loss to top-seeded Albertus Magnus (22-0) at the County Center on Monday night.

Peekskill's Lisiana Burnett did major damage in the first half (scoring 11 points) as Magnus did all it could to contain Rodney, slamming both a diamond-1 and box-1 defense on her, limiting Rodney to two first-half points, and the Red Devils trailed 28-22 at the half. It was 37-33 at the end of three as Peekskill couldn't put much of a dent in the Falcons' lead and they extended to nine points with just under 7:00 left.

Somehow, the Red Devils summoned up one last run and cut it to a point, 50-49, when Kiara Dillard drain a corner 3 and then hit a runner in the lane. But the Red Devils couldn't buy a shot in the final 2:00. Despite the loss, the Lady Red Devils remain the biggest thing in Peekskill these days.

In the semis, two-time defending champion Peekskill outscored Rye, 14-4 over the game's final four minutes to advance to the finals against Albertus Magnus, which advanced with a victory over Rockland County-rival Tappan Zee. (The Class AA title game, along with the Class A final between Peekskill and Albertus Magnus, were both snowed out, Sunday and played Monday while the Examiner Media Group were on deadline and in production. We apologize for the scant coverage, but our deadline prohibited live photos and staffing of the event)
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