Opt-Out: As State Exams Begin, Many Students Sitting Out

By David Propper

At a recent Brewster Board of Education meeting, the frustration and anger over the upcoming New York State assessments was too overbearing to hide. Near the end of the meeting, a parent stood up and urged a small group of fellow parents also in attendance to take a final stand against the direction public education is going in New York.

The message was simple: Refuse to let your child take the ELA and Math assessments this April and opt them out of the exams.

That one parent's utter dissatisfaction and message is being felt all throughout the Lower Hudson Valley, as a movement to essentially boycott the tests is spreading faster than wildfire. With the ELA state assessments for grades 3-8 starting today and lasting until Thursday and the Math assessments occurring April 22-24 for grades 3-8, a wide net of students in Putnam County will be sitting out.

When Andy Falk ran for the New York State Assembly last year, Common Core - and the exams attached to it - was an issue he discussed consistently, criticizing the rollout of the new standards. After allowing his older son to take the state tests last year, Falk said the decision to opt-out this year was not taken lightly.

Falk, who has two sons but only one, Nathan, is old enough to take the test, said he and his wife don't feel there is any educational value to taking the assessments.

“We think that the testing is being done for all the wrong reasons,” Falk, who is a Carmel school district parent, said.

Because Governor Andrew Cuomo wants the tests to be linked to teacher evaluations, Falk is concerned his kids are being taught to be good test takers, not critical thinkers. To test students in April

continued on page 11

At Last, Mahopac School Community Meets New Superintendent of Schools

By David Propper

Traveling to Mahopac for the first time, Dr. Dennis Creedon was lost.

He pulled into the parking lot of the Olympic Diner and after asking for directions to the Mahopac central district office, two high school students quickly offered to show him the way, leading him in their car to the front door.

While lost that day, it won't be long until Creedon will become accustomed to the unfamiliar, considering he is soon to be the next Mahopac superintendent of schools.

The Mahopac Board of Education announced its superintendent selection last week and a meet the candidate night was set up for last Thursday where Creedon wooed a small handful of parents and community members in attendance. It is expected Creedon will be officially approved at tonight's (Tuesday) board meeting. After former superintendent of schools Thomas Manko retired last school year, the board had its complications finding a replacement in which the board's first

continued on page 16

Putnam Goes Blue for Child Abuse Awareness

Putnam County employees wore blue on Wednesday, April 8 to launch its “Blue Ribbon Campaign” and commemorate Child Abuse Awareness Month. Child abuse is a national tragedy. One in seven girls and one in 25 boys will be sexually abused by the age of 18. “We recognize Child Abuse Awareness month to promote the issue around the country, not just the state or around the county,” said Commissioner of Social Services Mike Piazza. “Very often we see things that happen in New York City and say ‘How could a parent do that to child?’ We had 762 reports of child abuse last year in Putnam County alone. Not all of them were founded, but they were all investigated. Our concern is the safety of children and that is why bringing awareness to child abuse is so important.”

Planned activities for the month include the county’s Child Advocacy Center hosting the workshop “Protecting Our Children: Lessons Learned from Sex Offenders” in Spanish on Tuesday, April 14, at 6:30 p.m. at Henry Wells Middle School in Brewster. The same workshop will be presented in English on Monday, April 27, at 6:30 p.m., at Lakeview Elementary School in Mahopac. Both are free and open to the public. The Putnam County Historic Courthouse is being illuminated in blue light at night as part of the “Blue Ribbon Campaign.” To cap off the month’s activities the CAC will hold their 10th annual Children’s Expo & Public Safety Fair at the Donald B, Smith Campus on Saturday, May 2. The event is free and open to the public.
Two Democrats Nominated to Run for Southeast Town Board

By Neal Rentz

An incumbent Democratic councilwoman and a first-time Democratic candidate have announced they are running for the two open seats on the Southeast Town Board.

Councilwoman Lynne Eckardt, who is currently serving her first four-year term on the town board, is being joined on the campaign by longtime resident John Lord. Both were both nominated recently by the town’s Democratic Committee.

Eckardt said last week she has accomplished much during her first term on the board, including working with Supervisor Tony Hay to increase Southeast’s fund balance from $98,000 to more than $1.3 million and had worked with Hay to keep within the state property tax cap since 2012.

Eckardt said she solicited Solar City’s bid on solar panels for the former town landfill, saving the town 1.8 million over the next 20 years.

Eckardt said she worked with the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the Putnam County Land Trust and Concerned Residents of Southeast to open a one-mile trail running alongside the Diverting Reservoir. It is “a recreational asset added at zero cost to the taxpayer,” she said. Through her contacts, Eckardt said the town received over five acres of commercial property on Route 6 West. While the acquisition cost the town $48,000, the land is valued at over $500,000 and can be used or sold after several years, she said.

Eckardt joined the Putnam CAP (Community Action Program) Advisory Board two years ago.

Eckardt also spoke about some of the issues she wanted to address over the next four years. “Southeast taxes and our fund balance remain on center stage,” she said. “While over 75 percent of our property taxes fund our schools, we need to try to reduce our tax burden while staying within the 2 percent tax cap and maintaining a healthy fund balance. Southeast Town taxes are the lowest in Putnam County -- it’s essential to keep them that way.”

Another town board focus should be recreation, Eckardt said. “Southeast has a solid recreation program which, due to unavoidable budget cuts, hasn’t been marketed properly. I recently worked with the Recreation Department to put together a booklet describing all that we offer. This will go out in a town-wide mailing this April. It’s our job to ensure residents are aware of all we offer,” she said.

The town board should work better with the Brewster Village Board of Trustees, Eckardt said. “While there has been much better cooperation between the town and village than in the past, I believe there’s more we can do,” she said.

Eckardt, 62, said she does garden design professionally, but added, “most of my time is now spent on town business.”

Lord, who will turn 62 in July, works in Connecticut for an international company that moves corporate executives.

Two Democrats Nominated to Run for Southeast Town Board

Democratic Councilwoman Lynne Eckardt

Democratic Candidate John Lord

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Did You Know? Female athletes are 2 to 10 times more likely to suffer an ACL injury than male athletes engaged in the same sport.

Ask the Doctor

Victor Khabie, MD, FAOAS, FACS
Chief, Department of Surgery
Co-Director, Orthopedic and Spine Institute
Director, Sports Medicine
Northern Westchester Hospital
nwhortheastspine.org/DrKhabie

Q: What are the most common sports-related knee injuries?
A: There are three:
- An injury to the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), a key ligament stabilizing the knee, either tears the ACL in two or rips it from the femur (thighbone).
- Damage to the medial collateral ligament (MCL), which keeps the tibia (shinbone) in place, usually consists of a partial tear.
- Made of cartilage, the meniscus is the knee’s “shock absorber,” and a tear causes pain and dysfunction.

Q: When should an athlete seek medical attention for a knee injury?
A: If, after two or three days, your knee is swollen; you are limping; you can’t put your full weight on the leg; or you are in pain, head to the ER for an x-ray to determine if there’s a break or fracture. Whatever the outcome, you should see an orthopedic specialist without delay. Knee injuries often require surgical repair, and left untreated, can have long-term consequences.

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Q: Is it possible to prevent sports-related knee injuries?
A: Female athletes are much more likely to suffer an ACL injury. The good news is that a specific 20-minute warm-up called a neuromuscular injury prevention and performance enhancement program can dramatically reduce ACL injuries among female athletes. It’s for personal trainers who have been trained in this protective conditioning program, and can offer it outside of normal practice. Male athletes can also improve stability from the warm-up.

It’s important to offset activities that stress the knee with others that offer respite. Be aware: Playing sports year-round with no break can stress the knee to the point of injury.

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IMPORTANT NEWS FOR ATHLETES

What you should know about preventing knee injuries

Did You Know? Female athletes are 2 to 10 times more likely to suffer an ACL injury than male athletes engaged in the same sport.

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BEST
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US News
New York, NY
February 2014-15
By David Propper

As budget season is full swing ahead, the Brewster Central School District is eyeing a budget once again under the tax cap, but not without some pushback from parents on how the funds are going to be spent.

With New York State aid still not at the level district officials and board members would like, the Brewster school system is proposing a budget that totals $89.9 million and has a tax levy increase of 2.18 percent. In order to stay under the cap, approximately 17 staff cuts are proposed, ranging from Brewster High School and Henry Wells Middle School, to transportation, library, and special education.

Brewster is also putting forth a bus proposition to voters, where seven new buses would be replaced, in which six are small and one is large. The total cost is $480,000 and is separate from the proposed budget.

School Business Administer Victor Karlsson said after the state budget passed, the district was able to reduce the proposed tax levy increase .1 percent. Karlsson added in order for the district to receive the state aid increase, the district must negotiate with the teachers association and formulate a teacher evaluation plan by November.

Superintendent of Schools Tim Conway said in 2008, there were the equivalent of 650 full-time positions within the district, but by next year, that number will have dropped to 595. “Obvious” and “easy” staff cuts, Conway said, were made years ago.

“We’re dealing with the (cuts) we’ve been putting off for several years,” Conway said. “Thought about it but said ‘no, we’re not going to go down this road.”

One parent who spoke up, Joely Stano questioned the effectiveness of a district librarian going to two different schools during the day. Stano said with short staffing, she didn’t think CV Starr and JFK school students would receive the proper technology instruction with teacher assistants shouldering some of the responsibility.

Conway responded that students would receive a similar experience and that the experience is not dependent on any one person teaching the class. Conway also said the district is saving $83,000 by making the move.

Brewster Teachers’ Association president Elaine Karczmit requested the board take a second look at the current situation.

“Looking at it from the elementary library’s perspective, to divide (the librarian’s) time between two schools and approximately 55 sections and to be in charge of six grade levels, I’m not sure if that’s in the best interest of the kids," Karczmit said.

Board of Education president Stephen Jambor said during the meeting many of the complications felt by the district are a result of the bruising mandates and lack of state aid to pay for them.

“We’re bleeding, it hurts,” Jambor said. “We’re dying before your eyes, we are fighting a real fight to stay alive.”

Brewster Superintendent of Schools Tim Conway and school board president Stephen Jambor sit and listen to parents during a recent board meeting, in which the 2015-2016 proposed budget was the main topic.

Jambor said in an interview because the budget needs to be trimmed one way or another, some position would be reduced, leaving some residents unhappy. Because of the lack of needed state aid, Jambor said the only way to save money is to reduce or alter services. There are only bad choices, he stressed.

“Wherever the sword comes down, it’s going to be a lousy cut,” Jambor said.

Brewster Schools Budget Under Tax Cap, and Light Scrutiny

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Kent GOP Committee Selects Two Newcomers to Run for Town Board

By David Propper

After the Town of Kent saw an overhaul in power on the town board two years ago that shifted away from the town’s longtime GOP regime, two more political newcomers are set to run on the Republican line in the fall election.

The newly configured Kent Republican Committee nominated 9-year resident Scott Chin and lifelong resident Jaime McGlasson to run for the two board seats set to expire this year currently occupied by fellow Republicans Penny Ann Osborn and Michael Tierney. The Kent supervisor seat is also up for grabs, though no Republican has been officially nominated for the position. (Democrat and incumbent Maureen Fleming has yet to officially announce her intentions.)

McGlasson, who is the secretary of the Kent Republican Committee, said she’s running for office because she wants to take a more active role within the town and give it a fresh perspective.

The message she wants to convey to voters as the campaign gears up is advocating for seeking and securing more small businesses to come into the town. Places to eat and little shops are businesses very much needed in Kent, McGlasson said.

She also said she wants to work with the town’s recreation department to become more community involved and attract more residents for programs.

“I’d like to make the town of Kent more family friendly,” McGlasson, who is married with two young children, said.

McGlasson, 29, said town government needs a younger person’s perspective.

“I want my children to grow up here and have a wonderful childhood and be in a wonderful community,” McGlasson said. “It is a wonderful community, but I’d like to see it develop into something more.”

Chin, who came to Kent from Brooklyn, voiced a similar sentiment, noting he would like to see Kent become more of “one heartbeat.” Chin, 47, said it’s important to focus on the younger generation growing up in the town and also the older folks who get forgotten too often.

“I’m not too worried about myself,” Chin, a retired NYPD officer and current physical therapist assistant, said. “It’s about the older people and the younger people. Let’s make it nice for them.”

Business develop is also significant, Chin said, where he would like see more of a main street and culture brought into the community. By having a center to town, it may even attract more outsiders to visit from the city and those traveling through.

“I’m not looking for industrial growth,” Chin said. “I’m looking for some economic growth and some cultural growth.”

“I’m not looking for industrial growth, I’m looking for some economic growth and some cultural growth.”

-Scott Chin, candidate for Kent Town Board.
Hundreds of County Residents Take Part in Freezin’ for a Reason

By Janine Bowen

Saturday was a cool spring day, but hundreds of Putnam County residents were Freezin’ for a Reason after a jump into the lake at Sycamore Park in Mahopac.

The 14th annual event served as a fundraiser to help cure Cystic Fibrosis and was founded by Christine Stack and her husband after their daughter, Jaqueline, was diagnosed with the disease in 2001. Stack explained that only 30,000 people in the United States suffer from the disease and that approximately 4 million people worldwide are diagnosed with Cystic Fibrosis, so the event serves as a fun way for people to learn about a disease that is not often discussed.

“It’s really not a lot,” said Stack. “When we got involved, we didn’t even know how to spell it and all of my friends and family didn’t even know how to spell it so we were like ‘we need to raise awareness.’”

For one minute on Saturday afternoon, more than 250 people of all ages jumped into the lake to raise awareness and money for research for the disease. Caroline McDonagh has been one of the top ten fundraisers at the event for the past few years thanks to her McDonagh Madness team. McDonagh, who coached Jaqueline Stack’s second grade soccer team, jumped with her four children as well as some of their friends.

“I try to get the little guys involved. The younger kids, I think they need to know how they can get involved in the community and help people and see the big picture,” she said.

The younger generation was especially involved in this year’s fundraiser because of the Freezin’ Wars at Mahopac High School. Six teams, across various grade levels, competed against each other in their efforts to raise awareness about Cystic Fibrosis. Each team made posts on Instagram with facts about the disease and designed banners that were hung at Saturday’s event. During the month long competition, the students did a combined 400 hours of community service and made over 180 social media posts that received more than 1,400 likes. Perhaps most importantly, they were able to raise about $10,000 through the sale of raffle tickets and other fundraising efforts.

Altogether, the Freezin’ for a Reason event has raised $1.3 million since it began in 2001, which Stack said is mostly from people making small donations of just $10 or $20. She said that she chose the lake jump for the fundraiser because she had friends who participated in a similar event in Rockaway Beach in Queens.

“We thought we don’t have beaches but we have lakes and how many times would you like to tell someone to go jump in a lake,” Stack said.

One of the posters created by a team of Mahopac students that helped raise awareness of Cystic Fibrosis.
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Groups, Municipalities Demand Pipeline Hearing Be Reopened

By Rick Pezzullo

Municipalities, grassroots groups and individuals from four states affected by Spectra Energy’s expansion of the Algonquin natural gas pipeline filed a Request for Rehearing Thursday in response to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s (FERC) widely criticized March 3 approval of the controversial project.

Many local officials and organizations that are part of the coalition joined forces at Cortlandt Town Hall to express their mutual frustration with FERC dismissing virtually all the concerns raised during a slew of public hearings and siding with Spectra.

“It’s not that we’re against natural gas. We’re not. It’s just the magnitude of this pipeline,” Cortlandt Supervisor Linda Puglisi remarked. “Why do we have to become the energy capital of America? Enough. We have been fighting and opposing the expansion of the Algonquin pipeline for the last two years. The goal is to get them to hear us. We think FERC is just looking at this as ‘What’s the big deal?’ This is a new pipeline.”

Spectra Energy’s project would run from Stony Point, under the Hudson River, through Peekskill, Cortlandt, portions of Yorktown and into Southeast, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The proposal would remove an existing 26-inch gas pipeline and replace it with a 42-inch one. The gas pressure would also increase by 25 percent.

Opponents of the pipeline presented FERC with a petition containing more than 26,000 signatures at a public hearing last year in Cortlandt. Many raised concerns about the pipeline, which has been located in the area for more than 50 years without incident, sitting 1,500 feet away from the Indian Point nuclear power plants in Buchanan.

In the 66-page decision, FERC appeared satisfied with the measures Spectra proposed for the pipeline near Indian Point in its FEIS, stating, “The NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission) concluded that a breach and explosion of the proposed 42-inch diameter natural gas pipeline would not adversely impact the safe operation of the Indian Point facility.”

“The scale of impact of a ‘Fukushima on the Hudson’ on the New York City area and economy of the United States makes it beyond comprehension why FERC, Homeland Security, the NRC, or any government agency, would even consider putting a pipeline next to Indian Point,” said Susan Van Dolsen, co-founder of Stop the Algonquin Pipeline Expansion (SAPE).

“It’s all about safety and making sure our nuclear plants are run safely,” said state Assemblywoman Sandra Galef (D/Ossining), who called for an independent safety analysis of the pipeline plan. “It’s a new line, closest to a nuclear plant than any other in the country. We don’t want to add an energy project that will jeopardize our lives.”

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, there were 119 incidents in gas transmission pipelines in 2014.

The environmental risks of the larger pipeline were also emphasized by some officials. FERC made its determination only six weeks after the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was submitted by Spectra.

Local officials lending their support at last week’s press conference were Peekskill Mayor Frank Catalina and Councilwoman Kathy Talbot, Cortlandt Councilman Seth Freach, Buchanan Mayor Theresa Knickerbocker, Putnam Valley
Fleming Pushes to Overhaul Health Benefits for Kent Elected Officials

By David Propper

If Kent Supervisor Maureen Fleming has her way, by the time prospective candidates take office to start their terms in 2016, the town’s health insurance system for elected officials would have drastically changed.

Fleming and the rest of the town board discussed the possibility last Tuesday, in hopes of eliminating the potential to add on thousands of dollars to the annual budget. Currently, every elected official—part-time or full-time—has the option to be on the town’s health insurance. Fleming’s legislation would only allow full-time positions to receive health benefits, which include the supervisor, town clerk, and highway superintendent. Councilmembers, the tax receiver, and town judges would not be eligible for health benefits.

Additionally, full-time elected officials would have to contribute 20 percent to medical benefits like every other full-time town employee. Part-time town workers do not receive any health benefits.

“I think it’s ridiculous that elected officials have this additional perk,” Fleming said, who is not on the town’s health insurance.

This fiscal year hasn’t been bogged down with elected officials on health insurance, Fleming said, but one councilmember alone could cost the town as much as $20,000 for health insurance if they were to choose the family plan.

But with an election coming up, that could always change with three positions, including the supervisor seat, up for grabs. As Fleming noted, any changes could “radically” affect the town budget.

When Fleming brought up this proposed legislation last year for preliminary discussion, she said one criticism of the new law is that it would drastically change.

Denbaum hopes once the business runs.” Fleming.

With some misunderstanding of the new law is that it would prevent qualified residents from serving.

“’If the reason you’re running is for health insurance, I don’t think that’s the kind of person you need in office.’– Kent Supervisor Maureen Fleming.

If the reason you’re running is for health insurance, I don’t think that’s the kind of person you need in office,” Fleming said.

Other councilmembers seemed to agree with Fleming.

Councilman Bill Huestis said he would support future elected officials not receiving health benefits, but any existing elected officials should keep their health benefits because they already planned their lives around receiving those benefits.

Huestis said this is another way the town can save money in order to remain tax cap compliant.

“The most important, not something that is urgent, but not something that should take more than a meeting or two to decide,” Denbaum said.

Also at the meeting, one of Denbaum’s real property tax exemptions went through. The business improvement exemption is moving forward, while the residential capital improvement is not. A local law must be drafted next and then a public hearing will be set.

The proposal would give businesses a 50 percent exemption on the additional tax assessment as a result of any improvements made and would decrease by 5 percent over the next ten years.

The residential proposal allows homeowners who make improvements to their home a 100 percent tax exemption from the added assessment for the first year and a 12.5 percent decrease from there, per year, for the next seven years.

With some misunderstanding regarding the residential exemption, Denbaum hopes once the business exemption is implemented, other board members will be more familiar with the process.

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By Neal Rentz

Unlike many young people, it was not difficult for Peter Morfea to choose a profession. He decided to follow in his father’s footsteps. Morfea, who resides in Rhinebeck Village, is a barber and owner of Iconic Hair, Color, Cut & Style, with locations in Yorktown, Mahopac and Rhinebeck.

Morfea’s father, Antonino, opened the family’s first salon and barbershop in Mahopac in 1966 and currently works in the Yorktown shop. “I started with him in 1989,” Morfea recalled.

Though his father still works in the Yorktown salon, he turned over the ownership of the Mahopac facility to his son in 2001. In 2009, Morfea opened his Rhinebeck salon and about 18 months ago he opened the Yorktown location.

“I guess my father kind of influenced me,” Morfea said last week at his Rhinebeck location. He took cosmetology courses at Mahopac High School. Following his high school graduation Morfea earned a cosmetology license and trained under his father, who is a master barber.

“It was really good. I got to work closely with my dad and spend more time with him because growing up he was mainly always working,” Morfea said. “I learned all the traditional styles of hair cutting and shaving and all the barbering techniques.”

“We offer all the services of a barber shop and all the services of a hair salon,” Morfea noted. “We do men’s cuts and styles. We do facial shaves with the hot lather and the steamed towel and the single edged blade.”

Morfea has special pricing offers for his Yorktown customers. “Our prices in Yorktown have been reduced and it’s a great deal,” he said. Some examples of the Yorktown prices include men’s haircuts are $15 ($17 with a shampoo), a men’s shave is $15, haircuts for children 12 and under are $10, ladies wash, cut and blow dry is $20 and partial hair highlights are $60 and up.

Aside from his father, Morfea said Tiffany Quinn and Antonneta Kariq also work as hair stylists at the Yorktown salon.

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Leasing Space in Butterfield for Seniors Must Move Forward

I was amazed but not shocked, regarding the Putnam County Legislature’s refusal to take action on a letter of intent, for the leasing of space for a senior center at Butterfield. I would think after six years of study, reviews, meetings, and many approval processes, that should be adequate time to move this project forward. Four legislators, whose names I will not mention, have become a stumbling block for this approval of a letter of intent to lease this space. It seems that they are intent to block the approval of this project. Yet these very same legislators live in towns in Putnam County and their seniors enjoy state of the art senior centers. Don’t they believe that the seniors in Cold Spring are entitled to the same? The space currently occupied for seniors in Cold Spring is sub-standard. Legislator Barbara Scuccimarra, their representative has fought diligently to make this project work.

Marie Zarcone
Former Putnam County Legislator
Town of Putnam Valley

Editor’s note: Last Monday, the Letter of Intent was voted on to be sent to the full legislature for its May meeting, a joy to many seniors on hand.

April is National Donate Life Month

In honor of NYS National Donate Life Month, I would like to call your attention to the more than 10,000 people who are waiting for organ transplants in New York State and that April is National Donate Life Month. According to LiveOnNY, a new person is added to the New York State organ transplant list every two and a half hours. More importantly, not only can one registered donor save up to eight lives, that same donor can help improve the lives of 50 others. Each April, we recognize National Donate Life Month to raise awareness and promote the importance of organ donation so that our state can move up on the ladder of states with the highest donor registry.

New York State adults register themselves as organ and tissue donors at less than half the rate of adults nationwide. Only 22 percent of New Yorkers age 18 and over are registered but the need for lifesaving organs in New York State is among the highest in the country. We need to help get the word out to save New Yorkers’ lives. I urge New Yorkers to visit www.LiveOnNY.org to learn how easy it is to register to become a donor. More information on the benefits of organ donation can be gained by watching my cable television show, “Speak Out-Long Live New York through Organ Donation” tonight and on April 8th when I speak with Helen Irving, President and CEO of LiveOnNY and Roxanne Watson, a heart transplant recipient. Irving reaches out to viewers to dispel many myths about organ donation and describes a special duality: not only may an organ donor live on through his or her recipients, but the recipients have a chance to live on as well. For more information or to receive a copy of the cable show please contact my office at 914-941-1111 or email me at galefs@assembly.state.ny.us.

Sandy Galef
NYS Assemblywoman - 95th AD

Obituaries

Salvatore Thomas Inserra
Salvatore Thomas Inserra, a 10-year resident of Brewster, died Wednesday April 8, at his home. He was 87-years-old. Mr. Inserra was born May 19, 1927 in Roscoe, PA, son to the late Salvatore T. and Lucretia (Poletz) Inserra. Sal proudly served in the US Navy during WWII. Sal married Josephine V. DiGiacchino on January 12, 1952. She predeceased him on June 6, 2007. Mr. Inserra was a supervisor for United Airlines in Newark, NJ for over 20 years before retiring. Sal always had a smile on his face, anyone who met him enjoyed his company and enjoyed being around him. He enjoyed life! Mr. Inserra was a member of the Knights of Columbus and the VFW. He loved being a veteran of the armed forces and talking about his time he served. Mr. Inserra is survived by three sons, Michael Inserra of Colliersville, Salvatore T. Inserra and his wife Darlene of Fife, WA, and Joseph Inserra and his wife Marisa of Howell, NJ; a daughter, Mary Cay Nilsen and her husband Glenn of Brewster; eight grandchildren, Lindsey, Jason (Katie), Salvatore T., Jennifer, Rebecca, Joseph, Daniel and Timothy. Donations may be made in Mr. Inserra’s memory to Hospice Care in Westchester & Putnam, 540 White Plains Road, Suite 300, Tarrytown, NY 10591, www.vnahv.org.
and not get results until over the summer and not even note which questions students struggled with is puzzling to Falk.

Not only has Falk opted his son out, but he's also done so very publicly. With a bit of a larger public profile from his two runs for elected office, Falk wants other parents to know they aren't alone when they disallow their children to take the tests. Falk posted the letter he sent his son's principal at George Fischer Middle School on his Facebook page and got an enormous response.

“"I'm trying very hard to go outside the community that's already committed to opting out," Falk said. "It's been very gratifying to see people so receptive."

Mahopac Teachers’ Association president Tom McMahon has the unique perspective of a teacher, union leader and parent all within the Mahopac school community. He too, has been incredibly vocal about opting students, including his own children, out of the state tests. Parents already feel ignored and in turn, McMahon said, are using the opt-out as the last line of defense against an education agenda that is as polarizing to parents as it is complicated for students. McMahon said he opted out his children the past two years and is doing so again this year.

McMahon also said most parents don't like that their kids are being used to take tests as a way to evaluate the effectiveness of their teachers. By opting out, McMahon said parents are sending lawmakers the message that they trust their kids’ teachers.

“"These exams don’t do anything for students," McMahon said. "They don’t teach students anything, they don’t learn, and they don’t count for kids."

While McMahon readily admits he would love to see as many parents opt-out of these state exams, his role has been to educate parents in his community on how and why to stop their children from taking the tests. Putting out fact sheets, holding community forums, and using social media are all avenues McMahon and other teachers in the county are using. Living in the community he also works in, McMahon said he's fortunate to informally talk with and answer questions from fellow parents on the basketball courts or lacrosse fields.

While McMahon said there aren't a specific number of refusals he'd like to see, there is a clear goal locally and statewide. "That goal is to basically send a message to legislators that parents aren't going to stand for this," McMahon said. "At the same point as far as the number of opt-outs, to really invalidate statically the tests."

"That goal is to basically send a message to legislators that parents aren't going to stand for this," McMahon said. "At the same point as far as the number of opt-outs, to really invalidate statically the tests."

Brewster Board of Education president Dr. Stephen Jambor said there is an overwhelming amount of frustration because of the way Common Core was rolled out, the way the assessments have been prescribe and the way the numbers are being used, all without validation.

"Most people are waking up to this now and getting very frustrated and very annoyed and feeling powerless," Jambor said. "And when people feel powerless, they’re going to try to somehow balance out the equation."

While Putnam Valley Superintendent Dr. Fran Wills understands why parents are refusing the tests, she is a proponent of allowing students to take the tests and has even posted a couple messages on the school district’s website explaining why she encourages parents to allow their children to take the assessments. In an interview, Wills noted the district has done “an awful lot here” to address higher learning standards within the Common Core and the district would like to have a sense of how they’ve done in improving education for all students.

There are many flaws within the state tests, Wills admitted, but there is an important role assessments play because they help the district design a structure to reach higher standards and expectations for Putnam Valley students.

"The fact is students are going to be faced with tests throughout their lives, some of them will be very challenging," Wills said. "We would like to feel that students would feel very confident to take the tests and would use that as an opportunity to continue to improve."

"However what has happened is the entire issue has become so political that it's very hard to sort this out," Wills continued to say. "I would like to be able to protect our students from the politics and we're finding that more and more difficult."
Believe it or Not, the Connection Between Pianos and Real Estate

Either the piano is about to become as extinct as the dodo bird from American homes or, much like Mark Twain, its untimely death has been greatly exaggerated. It depends on what you read and who you believe.

Within the past few weeks, there’s been good and bad news about the piano industry and, oddly enough, a report of its connection to the real estate industry.

First I heard an interview on SiriusXM radio that referenced a New York Times article about a “graveyard” for unwanted pianos in Southampton, Pa. That particular graveyard is one of many.

As a realtor, I frequently am asked by clients selling their homes for advice about how to dispose of their pianos, especially if they are downsizing.

It wasn’t all that long ago that a piano was as integral to a home’s living room as a flat screen TV is today. Sheet music for popular songs was readily available and families would play music together for entertainment. Even with our wealth of modern diversions, people still love listening to music. Why shouldn’t they still love creating it?

At least some enterprising artists will occasionally make use of the parts. The recent production of “Into the Woods” by the Fiasco Theater at the Roundabout in New York played within a set constructed from piano harps retrieved from that dump in Pennsylvania.

But what’s the connection to real estate and is there hope on the horizon for the future of the piano? A report last week in the Chicago Tribune showed that the tempo for piano sales is picking up and, flying in the face of earlier reports of doom and gloom for the industry, the reason is the improvement in real estate sales.

According to Larry Morton, president of Hal Leonard Corp., an educational music print publisher, the sale of new pianos is directly tied to real estate.

“The sales of new pianos have always been driven by people buying new homes,” he said. “It’s part of the experience of having a house, not unlike buying furniture.”

But more importantly, there are distinct benefits to young people associated with the study of piano. To know the full score about that, I spoke to Jonathan Ackerman, a private piano instructor in lower Westchester and Chair of District 4 of the New York State Music Teachers Association. Here’s the list of benefits he gave me:

- Discipline: Piano study requires a daily routine and regiment of warm-ups, music theory study, listening and repertoire development.
- Long-term Planning: Learning piano is a series of achieving a continually more complex set of skills and repertoire over many years. To master an advanced piece of music may take many months.
- Persistence: Mastering a piece of music takes repeated efforts with many failures along the way to achieve success.
- Future Success in School and Work: Studying an instrument often equates to future success in school when compared with any other activity. A recent study found that 75 percent of Silicon Valley CEOs had instrumental music education as a child.
- Brain Development: An MIT study determined that the cerebral cortex of a concert pianist is enlarged by 30 percent on average compared to people who are considered intellectuals but who did not have instrumental music education.
- Cultural/Artistic Connection: The piano literature contains some of the greatest musical compositions in history. Many great composers began as pianists, and the piano is a great instrument to develop improvisational and composition skills.
- Social Connection: A pianist can play solo, in an ensemble or accompany singers and choirs. Students learn how to work in teams when preparing for a performance.

The best year for new piano sales in the U.S. was 1909 when more than 364,500 were sold. In 2005, that number was down to 95,000, dropping to 33,000 at the depths of the recession in 2009. Encouragingly, that number has grown 4.3 percent with more than 37,200 sold last year.

Offering such solid benefits to those who study piano, here’s hoping that the improving real estate market will support a movement to reclaim an important part of our cultural history and encourage people to bring the piano back into our homes.

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). 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.
Invasive Insects

Invasive insects can also have a severe impact on native species by out-competing them for food and resources. Many also cause and carry disease and prey on native species. Here are two common damaging ones to watch out for:

- Emerald Ash Borer, native to Asia, is prominently found across the Northeast, Midwest and Southeastern United States. The larvae do the most damage, killing ash trees by feeding on the inner bark.
- Zebra Mussel, native to lakes in southern Russia, is found in hundreds of waterways throughout the United States. The species commonly clog water intakes, damage boats and can cause cuts and scrapes if they grow on rocks, swim rafts and ladders.

Backyard Pests

Did you know native plants and insects can cause damage too?

- Ticks can transmit Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Left untreated, Lyme disease infects the joints, heart and nervous system. After time spent outdoors, check for ticks, especially in and around your ears, inside your belly button, behind your knees, around your waist, on your scalp and in your hair.
- Mosquitoes can carry West Nile Virus. While most people may show few symptoms, 20 percent of people develop a fever along with headaches, body aches, joint pains, vomiting, diarrhea or rash, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Follow the “three Ds” to protect yourself:
  - Drain standing water: stay indoors at dusk and dawn; dress in long-sleeves and pants; and use DEET-based mosquito repellent.
  - Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac can lurk in backyards. Almost 85 percent of people develop a rash when they come into contact with these weeds. Control poisonous weeds long-term by carefully digging out the plants while wearing waterproof gloves or treating with a pesticide.

Create a Healthy Ecosystem in Your Own Yard

This season, help promote a healthy ecosystem by learning to identify and control damaging plants and insects in your yard.

Information about common invasive species and backyard invaders is now being offered by Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE).

Invasive Plants

Invasive weeds can out-compete native species, changing the local ecosystem. Many invasive weeds can cause damage too?

- Purple Loosestrife, native to Europe and Asia, is found in most states. One plant can produce more than two million seeds annually.
- Native to China, the Tree-of-Heaven was widely planted as an ornamental plant for many years and is often confused with similar, native varieties, first introduced as flora to plant species, changing the local ecosystem. Many invasive weeds can cause damage too?
- Emerald Ash Borer, native to Asia, is prominently found across the Northeast, Midwest and Southeastern United States. The larvae do the most damage, killing ash trees by feeding on the inner bark.
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Invasive Insects

Invasive insects can also have a severe negative impact on native species by out-competing them for food and resources. Many also cause and carry disease and prey on native species. Two common ones to look out for include:

- Zebra Mussel, native to lakes in southern Russia, is found in hundreds of waterways throughout the United States. The species commonly clog water intakes, damage boats and can cause cuts and scrapes if they grow on rocks, swim rafts and ladders.

Drain standing water: stay indoors at dusk and dawn; dress in long-sleeves and pants; and use DEET-based mosquito repellent.

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Disease Control and Prevention.

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You Heard It Through the Grapevine

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An Exploration Into Changing Wines Into Spirits

By Nick Antonaccio

The process of making wine, with its natural life cycle of fruit-producing grapes vines to fermented juice to bottled wine, has been carried on for millennia. For all of the modern technology and techniques, it remains an ancient art best expressed as a simple, natural process.

There are numerous parallels to winemaking in the natural world that man has usurped and attempted to improve upon. Man has endeavored to enhance wine and even to extend winemaking techniques to other agricultural harvests. These parallels may be grouped into two broad categories: micro siblings and macro siblings.

I refer to micro siblings as beverages that begin with grapes, follow the recipe for making wine, but then digress at critical points in the process to create unique, enhanced beverages bearing only fundamental similarities to wine.

Macro siblings undergo a production cycle that is similar to wine, but begin with grapes, follow the recipe for making wine, but then digress at critical points in the process to create unique, enhanced beverages bearing only fundamental similarities to wine.

Charles Neal, author of several books on brandy, offers this definition: "The main objective is to heat wine until it boils, purely condense its vapors, and finally reconvert this steam into liquid form again." (Here the yield is 40 to 46 percent alcohol by volume.)

I began to ponder the inherent similarities and dissimilarities of micro siblings at a private tasting luncheon I attended last week, sampling 12 offerings of French wine and spirits producer, Chateau du Tariquet, from the Gascony region in southwestern France. The winemaker, Armin Grassa, whose family has been associated with the winery for over 100 years, represented the Chateau.

Their offerings? Two distinctive lines: wines (a rarity in Gascony) and distilled spirits (the essence of the region).

This unique approach to winemaking offered me an insight into the distinction between traditionally processed wines and their micro siblings.

Visualize the harvest season at Chateau du Tariquet. International and local indigenous white grapes are crushed and fermented. The grapes for Armagnac are Ugni Blanc, Folle Blanche, Baco and Plant de Graisse. For wines, Ugni Blanc, Chenin Blanc, Colombard, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon are grown.

A dessert wine is also produced from Gros Manseng and Petit Manseng grapes.

The fermented wine grapes progress to holding tanks for aging. The fermented Armagnac grapes are processed through an alambic distiller. The resulting spirits are aged from five to more than 15 years before release.

The eight wines I sampled were excellent expressions of grapes not typically found in wine shops, principally the blends from the above noted grapes. The price points were all reasonable, in the $10 to $15 retail price range. I encourage you to experiment with several of the single varietal and blended wines. You may find your next favorite white wine.

I enjoyed four expressions of the Grassa family Armagnacs, ranging from a single varietal Folle Blanche, to a 1995 single vintage blend, to the Centenaire, a 100th Grassa anniversary blend.

The underlying profile of the Armagnacs was distinctive from other brands and Cognacs I have consumed. The bouquet resounded of orange, plum, quince and apricot, some of fresh fruit, others of preserved fruit. These were complemented by notes of vanilla and caramel. The barrel aging produced an earthy, rustic essence that enhanced the overall flavors and aromas in my glass.

If it seems that I thoroughly enjoyed my tasting event, then I have succeeded in relaying my enthusiasm for the wines and spirits of Chateau du Tariquet. Such winemakers contribute to the diverse and adventurous world of wine's micro siblings.

Nick Antonaccio is a 35-year Pleasantville resident. For over 15 years he has conducted 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.
The owners of Kobu Asian Bistro in Mahopac hosted a grand opening ribbon cutting for their new patio which overlooks Lake Mahopac in Mahopac, NY.

The ribbon cutting took place on Thursday, April 2nd at Kobu Asian Bistro located at 903 South Lake Blvd, Mahopac, NY 10541.

Kobu Asian Bistro is a beautiful restaurant conveniently located on Rt. 6 in downtown Mahopac. Kobu was opened in 2012 by owners Mike and Amy Guo.

“We are very excited to open our patio to the public and to offer patio seating throughout the spring, summer and fall,” said Mike Guo. “I encourage everyone to come out and enjoy lunch or dinner overlooking beautiful Lake Mahopac.”

The ribbon cutting marked the official opening of Kobu’s breathtaking patio with tables and a full-service bar overlooking Lake Mahopac.

In addition to the grand opening of the new patio, Kobu has also recently launched a new website and Facebook page which can be viewed by visiting: www.KobuMahopac.com or facebook.com/kobumahopac.

Kobu has a vast menu that includes Chinese, Hibachi and Sushi Cuisine. Customers have a choice of eating in the dining room, which includes a full-service bar and Sushi bar. If Hibachi is your style, you can enjoy dinner and a show at one of Kobu’s nine Hibachi tables as world renowned chefs prepare your meal directly on your table.

With a total of seven flat screen TV’s and two full-service bars, Kobu is the perfect place to watch the game or host your next private event.

### Crossword Puzzle

**Across**
1. Scrambled items  
2. Small carpets  
9. Pulverized lava  
12. Applaud  
13. Mogul empire capital  
14. Music with jazzlike riffs  
15. Gift on “The Bachelor”  
16. Critical downturn  
18. The highest social class or new Cortland Manor Pizzeria  
20. Cartoon cry  
21. Distress call  
25. Circa  
28. Photo ____ (camera sessions)  
29. Roswell topic  
30. Lot  
31. ____ humbug!  
32. Rehearse in the ring  
33. Baseball’s Mel  
34. Posed  
35. Cry of accomplishment  
36. Yokels  
38. Amazement  
39. Superstitious science  
44. Burrowing, nocturnal mammal, or Mahopac insurance agency  
47. Old Bologna bread  
48. By  
49. And others, for short  
50. Former apple spray  
51. Tree  
52. Disturb  
53. Flat-topped flower cluster

**Down**
1. Beige shade  
2. Cafeteria food  
3. Sound of astonishment  
4. Accelerate  
5. Be compatible  
6. Food thickener  
7. Instance of victory  
8. Spicy dips  
9. Snake  
10. Travel on snow  
11. Solo of ‘Star Wars’  
17. Messy place  
19. Poppycock  
22. Hornswoggle  
23. Over yonder  
24. Knight’s time  
25. Call to a mate  
26. Test version  
27. Pledge  
28. Nosebag tidbit  
31. Fragrant long-grain rice  
32. Finish, of a sort  
34. To every known extent  
35. Deuce in poker  
37. Not matching  
38. Low-down joint  
40. Kind of account  
41. Slick  
42. Metric amount  
43. Easily maneuvered  
44. Fifth, e.g.: Abbr.  
45. Discomfort  
46. Logo on a Dodge truck

Crossword by Myles Mellor  
Answers on page 17

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At Last, Mahopac School Community Meets New Superintendent of Schools

continued from page 1

and teach in the Hudson Valley was a big draw, especially after living in the inner city as long as he has.

“It’s just an amazing thing that fate has brought me here,” Creedon, currently the deputy chief academic officer for the School District of Philadelphia, said.

On top of his religious faith that motivates him to give back, Creedon got into education as a result of his own struggles in school growing up. As a special education student who suffers from dyslexia, Creedon said he works feverishly to make sure no one student is left out or marginalized.

“Anytime I saw a child in crisis, I would not be able to sleep trying to figure out a way to make a pathway for that child to be successful,” Creedon, who earned a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania, said.

At the School District of Philadelphia, Creedon said he learned not just to problem solve, but to solve quickly, considering the school system continues to suffer crisis after crisis.

One similarity between a New York School system and Pennsylvania school system is the fight over Common Core, Creedon said, noting the battle has been raging on for five years within the School District of Philadelphia.

Creedon said he’s going to allow ideas to percolate because “you can’t have a solution or an intervention without knowing what all the issues are.”

“I want to celebrate what is here while also think of ways I may be able to bring another lens to a situation,” Creedon said.

Mahopac Board of Education president Michael Sclafani said the first time the board interviewed Creedon, “he kind of opened up our eyes.” After meeting with him two more times the decision became crystal clear.

One aspect of the interview process that impressed Sclafani is Creedon’s approach that he was “not coming in as the new sheriff in town,” but as a team player and leader wrapped together.

While finding an impressive candidate in Creedon, the road to reaching a happy conclusion was arduous. With pressure from the school community to find a permanent replacement after the departure of Manko, Sclafani said it was important that board members stuck together to stay the course and show patience before choosing a successor.

Candidates applied from all over the country, Sclafani said, including from the mid-west, the south, and Pennsylvania where Creedon comes from. Overall, 60 individuals were reviewed by the search firm hired, and the board ended up interviewing between 15-20 finalists multiple times.

“When it finally happened, it was a sigh of relief,” Sclafani said.

Vice-president Leslie Mancuso added she was impressed with Creedon’s passion for children and education.

Mancuso agrees with Creedon that while Mahopac is wonderful, it can be so much better.

She remarked how Creedon is well rounded, having interest and expertise in the arts, music, academics and athletics. While the months racked up and community members voiced concern if the board members in place were capable of finding the best candidate, Mancuso said the board knew what it was doing from the start.

“We didn’t have pressure because we knew we were waiting for the right person and the right person would come along,” Mancuso said. “It’s such a tremendous decision, there’s more pressure if you make the wrong decision.”

Paint Night Broad Brush of Fun at Ramiro’s

Staff of Salon Amore including owners Maria Stiesfeld and Mary Heady in Mahopac along with owner of Ramiro’s Jan Jimenez in Mahopac hosted a paint night as a fundraiser for Freezin’ for a Reason. The fun class was run by instructor Lea Bolotin and proceeds from the evening went to research for cystic fibrosis.

Garden to Table: Grow your Way to Better Health

You can grow fresh, delicious food for you and your family right in your own back yard or patio. Beginner Vegetable Gardening is part of a series of programs offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension Educators and Master Gardener Volunteers that will help you change the way you look at food, gardens and your health. Beginner Vegetable Gardening will take place at the Tilly Foster Community Garden in Brewster on Saturday April 18th from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This class will teach the basics, from how to prepare the garden bed to planting seedlings and seeds. Registration fee is $10 per person or $20 for the family. Contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at www.cce.cornell.edu/putnam or call 845-278-6738

Pets Of the Week: Minnie and Lulu

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Minnie
Lulu

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Auction: The Town of Patterson's Putnam Lake Park District will hold a public auction of abandoned boats on Saturday, April 25, at 11 a.m. at the Boat House located at the corner of Fairfield and Lake Shore Drive, Patterson. Boats will be available for inspection at 10 a.m. Cash only. All abandoned boats will be sold in “as is” condition and with no warranties as to the condition thereof or title thereto. Each purchaser of a boat will indemnify and save the Town of Patterson free and harmless from and against any claims, damages, causes of action, cost or expenses of whatever kind or nature regarding title to, or the condition or suitability of, such boat.

Register Now: Art Classes at Putnam Arts Council, Mahopac: Adult classes in the arts begin the week of April 20, with kids offerings beginning the first week in May. Classes are offered in Painting, Pottery, Drawing, Sculpture and Faith. Daily, evenings, after-school and weekends. Private piano, voice and acting lessons are also options for 16-adult. Register Now - details and forms @ putnamarts council.com.

Vendors Needed for Indoor Community Tag Sale on May 16. Do a little Spring cleaning and reserve a spot to sell your items. Patterson Recreation Center. 65 Front Street. Patterson. 845-878-7200

Ongoing: Tuesday's: Certified Application Counselor from Open Door will be available to answer questions and make appointments for consumers to enroll in the Health Insurance Marketplace. 3 p.m.-7 p.m. Brewster Public Library. Walk-ins are welcome, but to schedule an appointment, please call 914-502-1478 or email insurancecoverage@odinc.org. For more information about either of these services, call the Brewster Public Library at 845-279-6421.

Wednesday's: Wednesdays is Ladies Day: Ladies will receive a round of golf and lunch at the Terrace Grill for $50. Special Menu Selections. Wednesday only. For more information/Questions please call 845-424-3604, or visit www.terracegrill.com.

In-Stitches Knitting Club at Reed Library (845-225-2439). Wednesday mornings 10:30 a.m. to noon and Thursday evenings 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Beginners and experienced knitters and crocheters are welcomed in this fun and friendly group.

Thursday's: Foreclosure Counseling will be offered by Putnam County Housing Corporation (PCHC). 4:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. If you’re facing foreclosure, PCHC may be able to help. PCHC, a HUD-certified Housing Agency, offers free confidential counseling to assist you in negotiating with your mortgage company. Brewster Public Library. Walk-ins are welcome, or call 845-225-8493 ext.201 to schedule time.

Reed Memorial Library presents, Beginning Yoga and Crafts for children ages 3 - 5. Thursdays 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m., Feb. 5-March 5th. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a mat or large towel if you have one. Call to Register 845-225-2439.

Sunday's: Winter Farm Market. This season, the Winter Market will be open every Sunday until May 31, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Winter Market footprint will be located in the lower level of the HVCPA building (15 Mt. Ebro Road South, ) and we are proud and excited to showcase vendors including: Vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, jams, bread and baked goods (gluten free too!), eggs, mushrooms, food artisans and specialty items from local growers and producers.

Cancer Support: Cancer Support Available: Support Connection, Inc., a not-for profit organization that provides free, confidential support services for people affected by breast and ovarian cancer, offers a wide range of free support groups women with breast and ovarian cancer. Groups focus on topics pertaining to living with cancer through all stages of diagnosis, treatment and post-treatment. They are offered in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess, and by toll-free teleconference. For a complete calendar of groups at all locations, visit www.supportconnection.org. Advance registration is required for all groups; call 914-962-6402 or 800-532-4290.

Wednesday, April 15

17th Annual Hudson Valley Food & Wine Experience. 6 p.m.-9 p.m. Benefiting the Putnam/Northern Westchester, Women’s Resource Center. www.pnwwrc.org


Friday, April 17

Second Annual Rummage Sale - Friday 4/17 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. & Saturday 4/18 9 p.m. - 2 p.m. Saturday 5/ Bag. Donations will be gratefully accepted on Saturday 4/11: 3 p.m.-5 p.m., Sunday 4/12: 12:30 p.m.-5 p.m., Monday 4/13 & Tuesday 4/14: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. or by appointment. The Gift & Thrift Shop is open Thursdays & Saturdays 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. 1st Presbyterian Church, 6N & Secor Rd , Mahopac 845-628-2365, presby411@verizon.net

Saturday, April 18

Book Talk with Retired Brewster Teacher and Senior Citizen Dorothy Killackey - Author Killackey will discuss her two books “Musings, Book 1” and “More Musings with Dot”. Killackey’s books each have over fifty short stories remembering past experiences, sometimes foolish choices made, and her thoughts and criticisms over our current culture. She promises to share her experiences and compare experiences with attendees. Her books will be available for purchase. 12:30 p.m.to 2:30 p.m.. Reservations are suggested: call 845-279-6421.

Library Trustee Meet and Greet at Reed Library. 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Library trustees will be on hand to meet you, listen to concerns, and answer questions.

Art Show & Reception at the Reed Library. 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The open house will feature a moderated 90-minute discussion of the artists’ work. Refreshments served. Music by Midhat Serbagi.

The Putnam County Land Trust 46th Anniversary Benefit Dinner & Auction: The event will be held at the Starr Ridge Banquet and Conference Center at 38 Starr Ridge Road in Brewster 5:30 p.m. Seating is limited and reservations are required. The event is BYOB. Take advantage of special dinner pricing of $60 per person if paid by April 6th. To make a reservation, inquire about advertising space or donate goods or services for the auction, call 845/278-2808 or visit the PCLT website at www.pclt.net.

VA Hudson Valley Health Care System will be hosting an Information Fair. Carmel VA Outpatient Clinic located at 1875 Route Six Carmel, New York from 10:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. This will be an opportunity for Veterans to register for VA Health Care, take pictures for new VHIC I.D. cards, receive blood pressure checks, and much more! There will also be information about several of the VA’s program. These programs include, but not limited to, the Women Veterans Program, Caregiver Program, Returning Combat Veteran Service, and Putnam County Veteran Service Agency. Additionally, Veterans should bring a copy of their DD-214. For more information, please contact Nicole Embly at (914) 737-4400, Ext. 3106 or visit www.hudsonvalley.va.gov.

Car Wash: Carmel fire house. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Sunday, April 19

The Brewster Theater Company’s Armchair Actors will be reading “The Librarian” at the Reed Library. 2 p.m. “The Librarian” is part of the CBS Americans at Work series, a popular broadcast from radio’s Golden Age. Please call the library to register, 845-225-2439.

HHLT Hosts Free Community Forum on Food Sustainability: Highlands Country Club, 955 Route 9D in Garrison, New York. The free event, scheduled from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., will feature a moderated 90-minute panel discussion in the morning, and two 40-minute breakout sessions in the afternoon. Participants will enjoy a complimentary lunch, and have the opportunity to browse information tables and exhibits during lunch, as well as before and after the sessions. Call or email the Hudson Highlands Land Trust at 845/424-3358 x6 or info@hhl t.org for more information or to make a reservation.

Third Annual Bowling Tournament for Putnam Recreation Programs and Habilitation. noon-5 p.m. at Carmel Bowl, on Old Route 6. 9 pin no tap. 4 member team $120. Register by calling PRPH at 845-621-5594 or Sylvia Good at 845-228-2374. Includes 3 games, shoes, prizes, food Come out and enjoy this fundraiser with your family and friends.

Monday, April 20

Blood Drive: 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 112 Old Route 6, DBS Campus, Carmel. Registration is encouraged: 845-808-1500 Ext 49320 or 43153. Participating donors will be entered into a prize raffle.
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Warmhearted couple wishes to give unconditional love to an infant. Get to know us at: RichardAndRenee@hotmail.com 315-200-3559. http://adoption.com/profiles/ReneAndRich_30276-77

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Mahopac Scores Two in 7th, Nips Put Valley, 2-1

Mahopac P Cal Lawrence’s brilliant three-hit, 9K effort was nearly for naught last Saturday at Putnam Valley High where the Indians rallied in the seventh inning for a pair of unearned runs for a 2-1 triumph in a classic pitcher’s duel between Lawrence (7) and Tiger RHP Eddie Lent... see Baseball Notebook.
Somers Comes out Gunning, Huge Test Today vs. Yorktown

By Tony Pinciaro

It was a busy first week of the 2014 regular season for the SOMERS girls’ lacrosse team with four games in six days, and with it, four victories.

The Tuskers defeated perennial Section 1 Class A power, Lakeland/Panas (17-12), Hen Hud (17-9), Mahopac (13-9) and Putnam Valley (12-9).

Somers’ coach Jaime Irving got the best of her mentor, LAKELAND/PANAS coach Sharon Sarsen, as Livy and Gabby Rosenzweig had five goals apiece and Nicole DeMase added four scores.

“We were able to jump out to a strong start and that put us in a good position for the remainder of the game,” said Irving, a Walter Panas graduate and former Lakeland/Panas standout. “In the second half we were able to get many players involved in the attacking end as scoring threats.”

The victory over HEN HUD came the following day, led by Livy Rosenzweig’s six goals. Nicole DeMase had a hat trick and two assists and Izzy LaRocca contributed two goals and three assists.

Somers went 3 for 3 with a victory over MAHOPAC as Gabby Rosenzweig and Nicole DeMase each hit the back of the net four times apiece and Livy Rosenzweig chipped in with three goals.

“The Mahopac game was a complete team effort,” Irving said. “We came up with a game plan and the girls stuck to it to help us come out with the win. The draws were our strength, as well as composure with the ball starting from the defensive end. It was a great win against a tough competitive team.”

Somers closed out the avalanche of games, beating PUTNAM VALLEY behind Livy Rosenzweig’s five goals. DeMase had a hat trick and LaRocca finished with two goals and an assist.

“After a long, competitive week, the girls had the mental toughness to secure another win,” Irving said. “We continued to work on some of our weaknesses to better prepare us for future games. The team is continuing to work hard to ensure we make improvements every day, and play to the best of our ability.”

Mahopac had one practice following its loss to North Rockland opening week. That is not an ideal situation for any team in preparation for its next game. However, Mahopac showed one practice was more than enough as the Indians defeated Horace Greeley, 16-12.

All-American Kim Harker led the way for Mahopac with four goals and one assist and Kelly Maxwell added three goals and two assists. Gabby Light, Ali Korin and Sarah Lilley each had two goals.

“Getting our first win of the season was huge,” Mahopac coach Jim Lito said. “I was impressed to see how much the girls put it together with only one practice between today’s game and last week’s loss to North Rockland. I am proud of how hard the girls worked even when Horace Greeley battled back to get within one goal. The girls were able to regain control of the game and come away with a victory.”

Alyssa Kirby was ferocious going after ground balls, picking up a team-leading five and Tara Ravoli was right behind her with four.

Mahopac faced 2014 Section 1 Class B champion Somers in its next game and the Tuskers came away with a 13-9 victory.

“We have had a difficult early schedule and, unfortunately, we have come away with three losses against three of the top teams in our area,” Lieto said. “Over the past two weeks I think we have improved drastically, but we are not happy with just competing with the top teams in the area. We want to be able to beat them.”

Harker finished with three goals and two assists and Light added a hat trick. Delaney Volpe paced Mahopac by picking up five groundballs and Kirby finished with four.

OSSINING coach Dan Ricci and seven of his basketball players came right out of federation weekend and into lacrosse practice. His basketball players were still acclimating themselves to lacrosse and Fox Lane took advantage in a 19-11 win.

Abby Squirrell, who will attend Marquette University next year and play lacrosse, led the Pride with five goals. Meghan Hooley added two goals and two assists.

Ossining bounced back with a 10-9 victory over Ursuline as Hooley led the Pride with a hat trick. Squirrell added two goals and an assist and Stefanie Svoboda netted two goals.

“We opened up on Monday at Fox Lane and with the seven girls on the basketball team, whose season didn’t end until March 29th, they were not really game ready,” Ricci said. “In our second game, against Ursuline, it showed that with a few more days of practice what we were capable of. We got out to a five-goal lead and held on for a 10-9 win.”

Ossining’s reward for the victory a four-game week in six days as Sleepy Hollow, North Salem, Briarcliff and New Rochelle are on the docket.

After opening the season with wins over R.C. Ketcham and Putnam Valley, outscoring them, 32-12, the schedule-makers were not kind to Lakeland/Panas and Coach Sarsen. Lakeland/Panas’ next three games were Yorktown, Somers and John Jay-Cross River. Unfortunately, Yorktown (16-7) and Somers (17-12) defeated the Rebels.

The Rebels bounced back and came away with an 11-11 tie against John Jay-Cross River. Katie Bradbury led Lakeland/Panas with seven goals, including her 100th varsity goal.

Lakeland/Panas’ next three games are on the docket.

Somers’ Gabby Rosenzweig tries to dodge past Rebel Fitzpatrick in the Tuskers’ 17-12 triumph last Tuesday.

Somers’ Christine Olert works on Mahopac’s Briana Corace in Tuskers’ win over Indians.

Somers M Nicole DeMase is pursued by Mahopac D Sarah Quarto in Tusker win over Indians.
Varsity Lacrosse at a Low Ebb in Our Neck of the Woods

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor

We're trying like heck to stay positive this season, but the combined record for the top teams from the former hotbed of the Northern Westchester/Putnam County area proves the region is more like an igloo than a breeding ground for premier talent this spring. There was a time when this neck of the woods wreaked the rest of the section, but the combined 19-19 record between Yorktown, Hen Hud, Mahopac, Somers, Lakeland/Panas, Brewster and Putnam Valley is undoubtedly the receding tide as we know it. Take out Yorktown and Hen Hud and we're looking at an 8-17 combined record for the programs that once ruled the Section 1 roost. What gives, men? This was bound to happen with the growth of the game, which is a good thing, but let's get this straightened out ASAP before the Mamaronecks,

Sufferns and Arlingtons take Class A over like Bronxville did Class C.

Luckily, it's mid-April and not late May, so there's time to improve, but time is of the essence, so y'all best get cracking and put the new guard in its place by restoring some old-guard pride.

NWE/ Putnam Fab Five Lax Poll

No.1 YORKTOWN – Coach Marr's Huskers (6-1) will rise from the 14-5 Melville drubbing as he will certainly use it as a learning experience for all phases from faceoffs to GBs and shutting off the opposition's top threat, which Yorktown failed to do when Jake McCulloch, who has committed to Cornell, went for six goals.

"We had them in the first half and in the second we couldn't get a ground ball and they won faceoffs, so the offense couldn't get on the field," senior captain and All-American hopeful Mike Dedvukaj said. "It just shows we aren't hot (stuff) and we can be beat or even blown out in a game. We just gotta work harder."

No.2 HEN HUD – Coach Solly's Sailors (5-1) did not look like they were going to make a move in Class B from also-ran to contenders during the second and third quarters of their 9-8 nail-biter over Brewster. Junior M Mike Smith bailed the Sailors out with four goals, but if the Sailors are as legit as we hoped, they are going to have to find a way to beat a rebuilding Brewster club with less stress than that. You can't take a 4-1 lead into the 2ndQ and then rest on your laurels till crunch time. Vanquish thy foe, boys. "The game was very choppy due to so many penalties being called," Coach Solly said. "We never really got into a flow of the game. Our kids played sloppy but responded in the moment. We got stops when we needed to and scored in crunch time. One a key face off at the end of the game, even though Brewster won a majority of the face offs." Matt Kolesar (2G, 1A) and Austin Fraser (2G) had big games as well. Fraser and Nick Marra each had three goals and three assists in an impressive 13-10 win over North Rockland. Smitty added four goals and one assist.

No.3 MAHOPAC – Coach Haddeland's Indians (2-3) re-discovered some magic and yanked my finger off the panic button with a pair of top-notch triumphs of Putnam Valley (1-3) and an even more impressive 6-5 victory over Suffern, but the 11-5 beatdown at the hands of John Jay is disconcerting, so will the real Indians please stand up. All-American hopeful Dan Foley had six goals and one assist vs. Putnam Valley, which has absolutely no control over Foley. Attackers D.J. Pearl and Frankie Ward each had two goals and one assist. "We're finally getting healthy," Haddeland said after the statement win over Suffern. "But we had to start a sophomore defender against Jay and their attack was good. Also, we are still getting our youngsters up to speed with our system. We just don't have the offensive firepower to pose as a legitimate Class C contender this season; much as that pains me to say.

No.4 SOMERS – Coach DeGregorio's Tuskers (1-4) saw Andrew Gross go three goals in a 12-6 loss to Fox Lane, which, while improved, hasn't had the moxie to pull off a win over the Tuskers in at least a decade. Perhaps even more disconcerting was the 10-9 loss to struggling Greeley.

No.5 LAKELAND/PANAS – Coach Lindsay's Rebels (2-4) have hit a sink hole, from which they must recover. We're pretty sure Pelham is a decent club this season, but 10 goals better than the Rebels? Never in my wildest dreams, er uh, nightmares would I have forecasted a 15-5 loss to the Pelicans. I'm certain that's never been previously typed before last Saturday.

HM BREWSTER – Coach Honey's Bears (2-5) are giving the opposition a whale of an effort, they just can't seem to get over the hump, including the loss to Hen Hud, in which senior Joe Guida (2G) and Ryan Honey (3G), plus good-looking soph Jack Guida (2G) were all prime-time players.

Honey had five goals in Brewster's 12-2 win over Carmel while Joe Guida and Kevin Blank each scored twice for the Bears. The Rams hung rough behind Mike Telesco and Tyler Rauch as Carmel trailed just 3-0 at the break.

HM PUT VALLEY – Coach Ignatz's Tigers (1-3) are still learning as they pulled off a win over the Tuskers in at least a decade. Perhaps even more disconcerting was the 10-9 loss to struggling Greeley. The Rebels? Never in my wildest dreams, er uh, nightmares would I have forecasted a 15-5 loss to the Pelicans. I'm certain that's never been previously typed before last Saturday.

Huff's Kyle Bronzo.
Yorktown Impressive in Wins over Carmel, Hen Hud

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports Editor

The move from Class AA to A for just this season could prove beneficial for Coach Sean Kennedy’s Yorktown Cornhuskers. Coming off a 13-win season in AA last year, Kennedy believes the Huskers are in the mix of legitimate Class A contenders as their enrollment dips this year.

Hendrick Hudson didn’t do much to dispute the notion in Yorktown’s 12-3 triumph at Sunset Field last Thursday when the Huskers saw good-looking junior Matt Boccia drive home three runs off a pair of hits to support winning chucker Matt Pupczyk, who allowed just three hits and fanned five over six frames.

If Pupczyk can provide Coach Kennedy with a No.2 starter behind ace Chris Henry, who essentially shit down Carmel in a season-opening win, the Huskers are going to sneak up on some folks this season. Kennedy has always drawn blood from a stone, but early indications are that his line, 1-9, has some potential on its own merit this season.

“We’re going to be tough with Henry on the mound,” Kennedy admitted after he defeated Carmel ace Chris Palmiero, 3-2, on the mound, “Kennedy admitted after he

Ryan Fay went 3 for 4 with a double, an RBI and two runs scored in the Rams’ 7-0 win over visiting New Rochelle in a rematch of last-year’s stunning opening-round playoff win by Carmel. Fay has opened the season with some eye-popping numbers (6-for-11, HR, 3 RBI, 5 R) from the leadoff spot and has thrown out the only two runners who tried to run on him. IF Jimmy Menton went 2 for 4 with a run scored and an RBI for the Rams while teammate Sam Ferranto drove in two runs. P Shaun O’Neil struck out four over five scoreless innings for the win, giving Coach Ryan Dall his first varsity W as head coach of the Rams, who also squandered a 5-0 lead in a 6-5 extra-inning loss to Greeley.

MAHOPAC salted away a 2-1 win over PUTNAM VALLEY with a pair of unearned run off reliever Ryan Basso in the top of the seventh. Starters Eddie Lent of PV and Cal Lawrence of Mahopac locked horns in a classic pitcher’s duel with Lawrence going the distance for the W. The senior RHP sent nine Tigers down via K-way, allowing just three hits. Lent (RBI) had fanned seven over six innings, surrendering just two hits before being pulled. John Reda drove home the winning run for Mahopac.

"Cal was great," Mahopac boss Chris Miller said. "He was ahead in the count on hitters all day. He was awesome. We caught a break in the seventh to win, so that start was almost all for not but he was awesome nonetheless."

The Indians needed that as they head into the meat of an extremely difficult league schedule against rival Carmel and the Dutchess County powers that be (defending champ RCK, 2013 champ Arlington and John Jay EF), who once again look like they might be the class of Section 1.

"It’s tough, no easy games at all,” Miller said of the league. “It seems like Arlington is starting strong, Ketcham has quality wins already, Jay is gonna be good and Carmel has a lot of talent back as well. We are going to have to play good baseball against them. I think our pitching will keep the games close and we’ll see what happens.”

LAKELAND looked like a team with some work to do after suffering a 15-3 defeat at the hands of John Jay CR last Saturday. Lakeland’s bats were lacking pop and ace Rick Burroni was knocked around for 10 runs through three frames. In fact, Lakeland failed to muster a single hit off a combined four Indian hurlers, who did issue 10 free passes on the day, meaning rookie Manager Bill Casey watched his club squander countless opportunities.

HALDANE beat Poughkeepsie, 12-9. Justin Furdico went 3 for 3 with three RBI while Brian Gaines was 2 for 3 with three RBI.

CROTON beat Yonkers, 8-2 as Scott Giordano went 2 for 3 with an RBI and three runs to support winning P Mike Matalavage.

Mahopac’s Joe Fichera is nabbed at 1B by PV’s Jake Reyes in 2-1 Indians’ win Saturday.
Is it Me or Have Times Changed That Much?

By Ray Gallagher
Examiner Sports
Editor

Maybe I just don’t relate to the scene anymore; phaps for the first time I can ever recall, I just don’t get the muddling local sports circuit. Excuse me if this sounds pompous, but I have always fancied myself a man for all generations; the kind of guy who can relate to moms, dads, grandparents, coaches, athletes...even greasers and nerds (do they still call them greasers, hah?) I’ve prided myself on knowing the people I cover, propping them up on a pedestal when the time came and holding them accountable when called for. But it just doesn’t pay to call people out any more. Just like it doesn’t pay in many cases to put your teaching career on the line to be a varsity coach these days. Thudly, Direct Rays reads more like Direct Clichés (until today).

I’ve mellowed over the years on account of the fact that I have two children now and they don’t need to see their dad getting lumped up by a bunch of new-age athletes and parents, who take matters into their own hands if they don’t like what we say in the local media or what they perceive from their coaches. I hear about it from folks all the time if and when Junior doesn’t get the press and/or playing time mom and dad feel they deserve. I’ve had to talk people I love off the ledge because they have trouble dealing with playing-time issues for their children.

It’s just a few bad apples, but Mahopac -- though hardly alone -- is at the forefront of the tomfoolery these days; to the point where it is now indefensible (despite my deep respect for the Indians’ athletic prowess). There’s the varsity girls’ lax coach in Mahopac who had to call “no mas” on a parent that reached into his car window in an effort to pummel him on account of his daughter being cut from the team (it’s all on film but he’s plead not guilty despite eye witness testimony). We’ve had the two Mahopac racial incidents (that we know of); the one with Mount Vernon that went viral and the alleged incident with Carmel, and who knows what else has been swept under the rug in the town I call home (though not proudly these days).

We’ve got parents at Lakeland and Somers writing letters to assist in the dismissal of the former coaches. Somers lacrosse parents won’t be happy until the Gait brothers share the gig...Donahue, DeVito, Schurr, Woolard, Janavey, blah, blah, blah, in just 18 years. They’ve got a shelf life of three years on average over there.

Heck, a few years back Lakeland folk ran A.D./Coach/PE. Teacher Denny Robinson out of Lakeland after 40 years of unwavering service and dedication, thinking the grass was greener on the other side (turns out otherwise).

Putnam Valley’s best coaching candidates won’t touch a coaching job with a ten-foot pole on account of the B.S. over there in the town I once called home, which has gone through athletic directors like Snoop Dog puffs through a dime bag (some ghastly number like 8 in 12 years) The last A.D. went through hell while hiring a replacement for longtime lax Coach Brian Kuczma as parents formed lynch mobs to get “their guy” hired while wreaking havoc against the eventual replacement. They recently had to ban a parent from the Put Valley athletic facility, only to see said parent return in disguise (ala Bobby Valentine in the Mets dugout). And don’t get me started on the way they treat former girls’ hoops Co ch Kelly Thompson a few years back.

Every district has its maroons, but it sure as heck seems like they’ve tripled the past 20 years, and there’s no turning back. It’s too far gone now, so we’re stuck with a hot mess, which will only get souper as school boards and administrators continue to cave in to the small-town politics that endure and destroy prep sports, from tee-ball to varsity football.

There was a time when coaching the youth of America was a privilege and a dream job, but what teacher/coach wants to risk their pension and livelihood to mentor young student athletes these days when a witch hunt inevitably awaits them?

Without being too critical of you youngins I cover I will say this: My generation had thicker skin than you guys/gals do, and, as you’re dads and grandpas will tell you, we walked up hill both ways in a driving snowstorm just to get to school. I’m not saying we didn’t do stupid crap because Lord knows I was the leading hitter in my “Boxing League” back in the day (there was nothing else to do in PV) and the captain of a crappy Lakeland basketball team that sometimes hit the Shillelagh House before practice after our season spiraled (drinking age was 18 then) The difference was we kept every hine in-house and we kept our parents out of team business. If our parents came anywhere near our coaches, we disowned them (until we needed our allowance).

Then, I want to say sometime around the mid-90s (like right after Yorktown’s two state championship football teams), things started to change, beginning with the advent of the vicarious, helicopter parent and the baby-coddled brats, who oftentimes turn on their coaches. School boards began to cave in to the squeaky wheel at the same time, and administrators, fearing the loss of six-figure deals, were at the mercy of the school board and the whimpering taxpayers that employed them: The Imperfect Storm, if you will.

Twenty years ago I was one of the few meatheds opining in print (at least I got paid for it). Now, we got Dumb and Dumber on the blogs spewing negativity about your kid while pumping up their own. It’s insidious! They’re still kids for God’s sake. Save your negativity for the bleachers.

I’ll go on record as saying that in this neck of the woods Mahopac was once the last bastion (until former A.D. Frank Miele retired), and Yorktown has always done a pretty good job of maintaining an old-school mentality (or just a better job of sweeping their B.S. under the rug). But the days of yesteryear and the greater good are long gone, my friends. Nowadays, the end justifies the means, so long as I get mine. I reckon I best get on board, lest mine get left behind.

Nah! Then I’d be a hypocrite.
Mahopac senior Kim Harker (18) had three goals and two assists in a 13-9 loss to Somers last Friday and four more goals in the Indians’ 16-12 win over Horace Greeley earlier in the week as the All-American and an Academic All-American continues to shred the career scoring mark at Mahopac with help from teammates Alyssa Kirby (9) and Kelly Maxwell (10)... see Girls Lax Notebook