Chappaqua Thrilled With Hillary's Presidential Bid

By Janine Bowen and Martin Wilbur

Less than 24 hours after Hillary Clinton announced her candidacy for president next year, residents of her adopted home community of Chappaqua had nothing but good things to say about the decision.

On Monday, some called Clinton's choice to once again make a bid for the White House "a great idea." With the election still just over a year-and-half away, many are already hoping to see her become the nation's next commander-in-chief.

"I think everybody is very excited about it for sure," said Marilyn D’Amico, an employee at Great Stuff on South Greeley Avenue.

D’Amico, along with her colleague Karen Rouchou, agreed that with the long campaign Clinton likely won't be around town nearly as much. But Rouchou felt that if Clinton is successful, it will help make the hamlet an even more recognizable place since it would be the only town that a current and former president would call home.

Rouchou noted that the Clintons are a staple in the community. She sees former President Bill Clinton every Saturday at Starbucks across the street from her shop. While they haven't had as many encounters with Hillary Clinton, they theorized that her duties as secretary of state likely kept her busy.

"She did have other things to do than morning coffee runs," said D’Amico.

Clinton made her announcement Sunday in a smartly packaged two-minute, 18-second video.

"I'm getting ready to do something, too," Clinton began. "I'm running for president."

She also emphasized that she wants to be the “champion” of average citizens “so you can do more than just get by.”

President Sean Bell has seen Clinton in the local shops, and noted that a portion of her presidential announcement video was filmed down the street from his house. He believes she has had a positive impact on Chappaqua and will bring those same qualities to the White House to help the country at large.

“I think she's been great for the local community,” said Bell.

Thomas Condon noted that when the Clintons initially moved to town, it brought added attention to the area. He remembered hearing that the couple had a hand in helping to hire extra police. If Clinton makes it to the White House, it could mean only good news for New Castle, Condon said.

Some residents have had the opportunity to meet the Chappaqua Democrat, who previously ran for president in 2008 but was outfinished by Barack Obama in the primaries. Peggy

Three Victims Awarded Judgments in Consignment Shop Scam

By Janine Bowen

Justice is bittersweet for three victims of an alleged scam executed by the owner of Elegance II Consignment Shop, following an alleged scam executed by the owner of Elegance II Consignment Shop, following a New Castle Town Court decision last Thursday night.

Owner Julia Faotto moved Elegance II, which was located on South Greeley Avenue in Chappaqua, to Pleasantville earlier this year, but the shop never officially reopened, leaving multiple victims without their items and money. Since Faotto, who has not responded to e-mails or phone calls since February, did not appear in court, the three victims accepted default judgments and were awarded the full sum of their claims.

Under the law, Faotto has 30 days to contest the ruling.

Despite judgments in their favor, the three victims have no confidence that they will ever receive their money or be able to retrieve their belongings. Under the ruling, the plaintiffs are responsible for enforcing the judgment themselves, meaning that if Faotto isn't found, it is unlikely they will be able to receive payment from her.

The women can file the judgments with the county clerk’s office and a lien could be placed against the shop, said Town Justice Douglas Kraus, who granted the judgments. In addition, the county sheriff can garnish any accounts found in Faotto’s name and go after any property she may own.

Kraus said that the victims could have opted for a month-long adjournment, continued on page 6

Pleasantville Board of Ed Awards Three Bids; No Decision on Turf

By Janine Bowen

Pleasantville School District officials have awarded three of four capital projects bids, while a final decision on artificial turf remains unresolved.

John D'Angelo, the district's architect, said seven bids were received that matched the specifications for new artificial turf fields at all three schools. The bids included various types of infill for the playing surfaces at Pleasantville High School and Pleasantville Middle School, including EPDM rubber, organic infill and polymer-coated sand in addition to the standard crumb rubber.

A group of district parents have been adamantly opposed to the latter option, citing health concerns because the material may contain carbon black and other carcinogens.

Board of Education President Shane McGaffey said the EPDM infill and the polymer-coated sand are cost prohibitive, continued on page 30

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Developer Submits Zoning Request for

continued from page 1

environmental impacts and the amount

the proposal regarding issues such

residents were generally skeptical about

by Benchmark's representatives. The

speaking following the presentation

week's meeting, with four residents

to a dozen neighbors attended last

hearing the neighbors' concerns. Close

Maple Hill Road residents during an

lot. The latter proposal drew the ire of

with vehicles cutting through the church

Road rather than using Maple Hill Road

version has the entrance on Bedford

facility's entrance point. The updated

made from the design presented more

than two months ago is the location of

Dwyer said. "Commercial area,

parts of the village as long as the agreed

upon conditions are met.

"I am certainly pleased thus far with

to whittle its size to an appropriate level

forward and that means putting in the time

project to succeed if it were to move

been raised. She said the board wanted

for the immediate neighbors, but needed

the property, including providing sewers

what Madonna was hoping to do with

concerned if Pleasantville, which relies

on volunteers for its ambulance and

concerns. Blaney questioned whether

on the residential street, he still has other

addressed the potential traffic problem

that while it was encouraging Benchmark

provided that I think will give everyone a

terms of the documents they have

the responsiveness of Benchmark in

One major change Benchmark has

application to the planning commission.

develop there.

the neighborhood if Benchmark does

property value of the houses in

fire services, can handle the four-story

on volunteers for its ambulance and

concerns. Blaney questioned whether

on the residential street, he still has other

addressed the potential traffic problem

that while it was encouraging Benchmark

provided that I think will give everyone a

terms of the documents they have

the responsiveness of Benchmark in

New Castle Historical Society Exhibit on Farms

New Castle's Beginnings--Our

origins from Native American lands

Founding Farms will trace the town's

developments that turned New Castle

through the farms of the 19th century,

No alternate number of units was

A date for the work session was not

additional screening.

be removed and trees would be planted for

currently on the grounds that is slated to

height would not exceed a house that is

Madonna said. Furthermore, the buildings'

units would be contained in three separate

expressed concern that the mass of the

female athletes are 2 to 10 times

more likely to suffer an ACL injury

than male athletes engaged in

the same sport.

At Northern Westchester Hospital, we treat the full range of sports-

related knee injuries with the most advanced surgical procedures

and rehabilitative physical therapies. These injuries require different

treatment, and we are deeply experienced in each. An injured ACL

must be surgically replaced with a new ligament taken from the

patient's own body. An MCL injury normally heals with physical

therapy, while a meniscus tear requires surgery.

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. Look 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 warmup.

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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Ask the Doctor

Victor Khabie, MD, FAAOS, FACS

Chief, Department of Surgery

Co-Director, Orthopedic and Spine Institute

Director, Sports Medicine

Northern Westchester Hospital

nwhorthospine.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.
Mt. Pleasant Officials Discuss Bond Defeats at Joint Meeting

By Neal Rentz

Mount Pleasant School District officials sat down with the Mount Pleasant Town Board last week to discuss the fallout of the second failed capital projects bond and how both entities could share sports facilities more effectively.

Joining the town board at the one-hour Apr. 7 joint work session were Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Guiney, school board President James Grieco, and trustees Laurie Donato and Vincent D’Ambrosio.

“We were very, very disappointed,” Guiney said of the referendum defeats on March 24 and last Nov. 15.

The bonds were turned down convincingly by voters despite efforts by the district to provide information to residents through mailings and public meetings. Having a quality school district is important to the entire town, Guiney said.

“We want people to move to Mount Pleasant,” she said.

Grieco said a certain portion of the electorate would never support higher school taxes, but he was particularly disappointed at the turnout. Only about one-quarter of the roughly 8,000 eligible school district residents cast votes. Among the nonvoters were many parents whose elementary-school-age children will eventually move on to the secondary-level schools, the two facilities that would have seen the bulk of the work, Grieco said.

He also said he was disappointed that the PTAs and other school committees did not make a greater effort to get out the vote.

Donato said that before serving on the school board, she and other district residents participated in a door-to-door campaign to turn out the vote on the successful elementary schools referendum. Similar efforts failed to materialize on the two recent bond defeats, she said.

Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said he felt the major reason for the back-to-back bond defeats was that many residents are still struggling economically.

The other major topic discussed last week focused on allowing town and local sports leagues to more frequently use school district fields and gyms.

Councilman Mark Rubeo and other town board members said they hoped for better cooperation with the district to allow its athletic facilities to be used by the town’s summer day camp and men’s basketball league, among other activities. The basketball league was unable to use the Westlake High School gym this winter because of expansion of district programs for students that increased the demand for the facility, Grieco said.

Rubeo, commissioner of the Mount Pleasant American Youth Soccer Organization, said he has reached out to the district to ask about using the district’s fields, but his calls have often gone unanswered. The district’s representatives said they would strive to improve communication.

The district also wants to expand opportunities for residents, particularly intergenerational programs where students interact with senior citizens, Guiney said.

Rubeo added that the district should be proud of the educational programs being provided to local youths, many of whom have been accepted to outstanding colleges.
Chappaqua Thrilled With Hillary’s Presidential Bid

Klinger stated that she has met Clinton while shopping and had the opportunity to speak with her on one occasion. “She’s very personable and down to earth, easy to talk to. I think she’s great,” said Klinger.

Of course, for close to 15 years, New Castle has been used to having a former president living in town. Now having a presidential candidate along with a former chief executive is an honor, said town Supervisor Robert Greenstein. He said he “was humbled” when Hillary Clinton swore him in as supervisor in January 2014. At the time he said he would happily return the favor by attending her inauguration as president.

“We have a lot of famous people who live in town. But (the Clintons) aren’t just residents, they’re out there,” Greenstein said. “They’re really contributing to the community.”

Even a prominent Westchester Republican, County Executive Rob Astorino, had only good things to say about Clinton’s announcement. “Westchester is proud to have Secretary Clinton as a leading candidate for president,” Astorino said. “Mrs. Clinton and I may come from different political parties, but I admire her service and we have always enjoyed a friendly rapport. I wish her the absolute best in the Democratic primary.”

During more than an hour of speaking with residents, The Examiner received nothing but glowing comments regarding Clinton’s decision. Even those who don’t call the area home were supportive of having another Clinton as president.

A couple visiting from Arizona who declined to give their names, stated that they give “two thumbs up for Hillary” and hope to see her victorious in November 2016.
No. Castle Tables Referral on Old Mount Kisco Rd. Project Change

By Martin Wilbur

North Castle officials tabled a request last week to refer a revised age-restricted development proposal to the planning board because they had significant reservations about the reduced condominium taxation and the larger project.

Developer Frank Madonna, who had been granted a zoning change about a year ago to allow him to build a 14-unit project consisting of 12 townhouses and two affordable units, returned before the town board on Apr. 8 in hopes of advancing the proposal for amended zoning to construct 22 condominiums.

In exchange for the increased density, Madonna said the setback from Old Mount Kisco Road would be increased to 50 feet, which would allow for additional screening, and he would extend Sewer District #2 for all residents on the street.

He would also agree to relinquish his development rights on another two-acre parcel that he owns across Old Mount Kisco Road to maintain that as open space.

The current 14-unit proposal provides setback of between 13 and 20 feet and was a downtown kind of building, “but a key issue is whether Madonna belongs downtown, not surrounded by other homes.”

Madonna and attorney Kory Salomone contended that the reconfigured proposal is a better project because it would be more effectively screened from the neighbors.

“We think we’ve come up with a better layout here,” Salomone said.

Another significant change in the revised plan would have the 22 units housed in one structure with about 37,000 square feet of floor space as opposed to the 14 units in several structures totaling about 32,000 square feet.

In the condominium plan, there would be 20 two-bedroom market rate units between 1,500 and 1,700 square feet and selling in the $700,000 price range. The project’s two affordable units, also with two bedrooms, would be between 800 and 900 square feet, Madonna said. The townhouse units would sell for about $1 million.

“Their’s a lot of beautiful buildings in this town. I think this will be one of the nicest,” Madonna said of the updated proposal.

The developer said tax revenue generated by the current 14-unit townhouse proposal would be $220,000 to $225,000 a year while he projects $170,000 to $180,000 in annual taxes with the condominium plan.

Town board members said they were hesitant to make a decision without more analysis. A big consideration is the lower taxation rate for condos, which is roughly half that of similarly valued single-family houses. They also voiced concern about the size of the one building.

“This is a very big decision,” said Councilwoman Barbara DiGiacinto. “I’m one vote but I’m not comfortable tonight referring this to the planning board.”

“I like the previous project because it was fee simple and that was one of the selling points when you pitched it to us,” Supervisor Michael Schiliro told Madonna.

“I think we’ve come up with a better place,” but a key issue is whether Madonna would be able to effectively mitigate the impacts.

A couple of Old Mount Kisco Road residents also weighed in on the proposal last week. Resident Christine Eggleton said she wasn’t a supporter of either plan but the new proposal is something that belongs downtown, not surrounded by other homes.

“I like the (increased) setback, but what you have to get in exchange for the setback is this huge building and it really feels like a downtown kind of building,” Eggleton said.

Another resident, Craig Usted, agreed the building is huge, but said the greater setback is an advantage that the townhouse proposal doesn’t have.

The town board took no action on the requested planning board referral. No estimate was given for when the item may be discussed again.

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Three Victims Awarded Judgments in Consignment Shop Scam

continued from page 1
during which time they could have hired
a processor in hopes of finding Faotto.
One of the plaintiffs, Lynn Kohn, said
they declined that option because they
did not believe Faotto would be found.
Kohn was awarded $750 for three pairs
of shoes that she brought to Elegance II
in December. She went to the Chappaqua
shop one day after the date set by Faotto
to collect her money or reclaim the shoes,
only to find the store had closed. Kohn
said e-mails sent to Faotto were never
answered.
Connecticut resident Emma Patterson
was awarded $995 for a leather and fur coat
that she brought to the Chappaqua shop
last September. In December, Patterson
returned to the shop to learn that the item
had sold, but when she asked Faotto for
the money, the owner began taking phone
calls and acted as though she was too busy
to write a check, Patterson said.
Additional attempts to collect the
money were made, said Patterson, but
each time Faotto never showed up.
Patterson explained that when she
decided to sell her coat, she asked her
daughter to do a Google search for
consignment shops. Although there
were two that were closer to her home,
Patterson chose to use the Chappaqua
shop because she has a friend in town
and figured the trip would give them the
chance to have lunch together.

“I went to the wrong consignment
shop. I’ll chalk it up to a loss at the casino,”
Patterson said of the experience.
Alexis Cambareri received the maximum
$3,000 judgment allowed in small claims court. According to
Cambareri, last September she brought
in a white Chanel bag and was issued a
check for $987.50 for the sale of the item.
She went to cash it at Wells Fargo Bank,
where Faotto had a checking account, but
was told that the transaction could not be
completed because there were insufficient
funds in the account.
She made several other attempts to cash
the check, but was told each time that it
couldn’t be done.
“She had done this to me before with
bounced checks but she always gave me
the money so I wasn’t worried,” Cambareri
told Kraus.
Around the same time, Cambareri said
she also gave Faotto a black Chanel bag as
well as a brown Shearling coat to sell. She
said she has text messages showing that
Faotto claimed to have sold the black bag
for $2,000, a lower amount than what was
initially agreed on.
The two women had agreed to meet
in Pleasantville on Feb. 17 to settle the
matter, but Cambareri said Faotto failed
to show.
Cambareri said she can see the Shearling
coat, valued at about $400, through the
window of the closed Pleasantville shop
at 484 Bedford Rd. Although New Castle
police are aware of the situation, she has
not reached out to Pleasantville police
about the matter.
Kraus said he may be able to sign an
order saying that the coat needs to be
returned. It’s possible that police in both
municipalities may be able to help get the
coat returned, he said.
“We just have to kind of wait and see
what the police say,” Cambareri said after
Thursday’s court hearing.
Pleasantville Detective Morgan Cole-
Hatchard said police would be unable to
enter the shop to retrieve the coat or any
other items without a warrant. She also
said that Pleasantville police have only
one complaint against Elegance II, filed
by a woman who charged that she made
a deal with Faotto to have 12 items sold,
valued at a combined $2,000, but was
never paid despite multiple attempts to
contact Faotto via e-mail and Facebook.
Since the transaction occurred in
Chappaqua, as did all others previously
reported by the victims, Cole-Hatchard
explained that the Pleasantville Police
Department does not have jurisdiction
over the case, but would assist New Castle
if asked.
Kraus said if Faotto is failing to pay
rent and the landlord initiates eviction
proceedings, he can sign an order
entitling the women to their belongings
in the shop once the space reverts to the
owner.
William Barish, the owner of the
Pleasantville building where the
unopened Elegance II sits, said Faotto
has failed to pay rent in several months.
However, if police determine that Faotto’s
actions constitute a crime, the items in the
shop could be held as evidence.
The judgment is valid for 20 years and
accrues a 9 percent annual interest rate
from the time it is issued until the matter
is settled. In addition, if Faotto is still in
the country, Kraus said that courts in
other states will enforce the judgment in
New Castle.
“If no property can be found in the
jurisdiction, it can be hard,” said Kraus.
“It’s small consolation, but it’s the best we
can do.”

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New Castle Explores Traffic Reconfiguration for Downtown Chappaqua

By Martin Wilbur

Reconfiguration of traffic around the triangle in downtown Chappaqua and converting lower King Street into a two-way street were two of the major proposals discussed in depth last week by New Castle officials.

The town board met for about two hours on Apr. 7 with representatives from WSP Sells of Briarcliff Manor, the town’s engineering consultant that has been examining improvements for Chappaqua’s downtown business district.

While short- and long-term measures had been raised last month, two of the most intriguing proposals centered around potential long-term traffic circulation enhancements.

Bernard Kalus, WSP’s executive vice president of transportation and infrastructure, said that the town could consider “a triangular roundabout,” where two lanes of traffic heading into the downtown over the Quaker Street bridge would veer off to the right while two lanes of traffic would leave downtown on the other side of the span.

The two lanes exiting downtown would have to merge since there are only three lanes over the bridge, Kalus said. However, left turns onto South Greeley Avenue would be allowed coming into downtown and a left turn would be permitted off of South Greeley to leave town.

Currently, there is one lane of traffic going in each direction coming off of and going onto each side of the bridge around the triangle.

The proposal would require state Department of Transportation (DOT) and county approval, Kalus said.

New Castle Director of Planning Sabrina Charney-Hull said careful consideration must be completed before any change can be initiated. The proposed change was not part of the original scope of downtown work, she said.

“We have to make sure that the analysis of it makes sense and really makes a difference and makes the situation better than it is now,” Charney-Hull said.

At least one board member was encouraged by the proposal. Councilwoman Lisa Katz said it would make the area less confusing for motorists.

“It’s better because now you don’t know what to do over there and when to stop and when to go,” Katz said. “I think this is a great idea.”

Another proposal was to open lower King Street to two-way traffic. Kalus said that change would be dependent on having a traffic signal at the King Street/South Greeley Avenue intersection approved.

Parking would also have to become parallel so there is enough room for a lane of traffic in each direction. However, that would result in a loss of about 10 spaces, Kalus said.

Kalus said that the impact on the area for drivers and pedestrians is murkier because there will be cars that now leave the train station area through Washington Avenue or Woodburn Avenue that will now shift over to King Street. A two-way King Street would give motorists three options to leave the train station.

“The goal of the project was not only to move vehicles but also move people and safe operation of pedestrians,” Kalus said.

Supervisor Robert Greenstein said there are benefits and drawbacks but he was looking to help merchants.

“The main benefit that I saw is right now if you want to shop in these stores on lower King Street, you essentially have to be willing to move through the train station and get out,” he said. “Maybe during the day it’s not a big deal...but four or five o’clock at night, six o’clock at night, you risk getting stuck in train traffic, which is not good.”

A short-term improvement that gained board consensus was getting rid of the right-hand slip land at King Street and South Greeley Avenue, installing a four-way stop sign and improving striping.

Also discussed last week were beautification efforts at the four main South Greeley Avenue intersections—Washington Avenue, Woodburn Avenue, the triangle and King Street—and installing historic district lamp posts and benches.

The town is also expected to schedule extensive sewer and drainage improvements downtown next year.

Charney-Hull said the Master Plan and Downtown Revitalization committees will be asked for input on the proposed changes and enhancements.

By Martin Wilbur
North Castle Makes Appointment to Fill Town Historian Post

By Martin Wilbur

The North Castle Town Board last week appointed Banksville resident Sharon Tomback and the North Castle Historical Society co-town historians.

Proprietor              Licensed Funeral Director

8

Historical Society co-town historians Sharon Tomback and the North Castle week appointed Banksville resident

By Martin Wilbur

voters twice defeated major capital projects budget conditions survey. School district

Elementary School.

are new boilers at Columbus Elementary

initiatives proposed by the superintendent non-instructional sections. Some of the plan.

$92 under the currently proposed spending the district assessed at $8,300 would rise

state’s tax cap for the district of 2.76 percent.

$59,092,000 2015-16 budget that includes a Schools Dr. Susan Guiney has proposed a

Carries Tax Hike Under 1%

By Neal Rentz

Mount Pleasant Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Guiney has proposed a $59,092,000 2015-16 budget that includes a projected property tax rate increase of 0.95 percent.

The spending plan will comply with the state’s tax cap for the district of 2.76 percent.

“It is essentially a flat budget,” Board of Education President James Greico said at the Apr. 8 meeting.

Property taxes on the average home in the district assessed at $8,300 would rise $92 under the currently proposed spending plan.

Last week Guiney spoke about the budget’s non-instructional sections. Some of the initiatives proposed by the superintendent are new boilers at Columbus Elementary School and masonry work at Hawthorne Elementary School.

Also being sought is funding for a building conditions survey. School district voters twice defeated major capital projects bonds, primarily for infrastructure work at the middle and high schools, in November and again last month. Guiney said the study would recommend capital projects that could be funded through the annual budget over a five-year period.

The proposed budget would maintain current class size guidelines and provide for technology purchases through BOCES, including smartboards and increased bandwidth.

Guiney said the budget would also include funding to increase the district’s communication through its website and social media.

The budget’s instructional portions will be discussed at the board’s next meeting scheduled for tomorrow (Wednesday) at the middle school/high school library at 7:30 p.m.

The board of education is slated to adopt next year’s budget on Apr. 21 and hold a public hearing on May 6. Voters will decide whether to approve next year’s budget on Tuesday, May 19.

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D’Errico will be staging its first pet beauty pageant at 8 p.m. The winning dog will receive a personalized sterling silver dog bone dog tag.

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The Examiner
By Janine Bowen
Fond farewells and the welcoming of new additions were the focus at the Pleasantville Village Board’s annual organizational meeting Monday night.

Current and former trustees said goodbye and poked fun at Jonathan Cunningham, who has retired after 12 years on the board. In addition to his unconventional style and financial expertise, Cunningham will likely be remembered by his colleagues for having food delivered to village board work sessions.

Joking that she was concerned about how the local economy would fare after Cunningham’s retirement, Trustee Mindy Berard suggested that the village pass a resolution declaring Monday “dinner take-out night” in his honor. She also presented Cunningham with a gift card for one of his favorite establishments, Magic Wok Chinese restaurant, while Mayor Peter Scherer presented Cunningham with an emergency food kit, containing local take-out menus and snack items.

Despite the jokes, Cunningham’s contributions to Pleasantville were acknowledged and his former colleagues agreed that he will be missed.

“You have been a great partner,” Scherer said to Cunningham. “We have tangled constructively on lots of subjects, we have worked cooperatively together on many subjects and there has never been a meeting when we’re not glad to have your insight, your commentary and your vision.”

Former mayor Bernard Gordon thanked Cunningham for his “steady hand” as well as his “tremendous contribution to the village” while former trustee Michael Gilfeather, who helped recruit Cunningham to run for the board in 2003, joked that he never expected Cunningham to stay so long.

“For 12 years, he treated it like his full-time job,” said Gilfeather. “I know he treated his full-time job with a lot of vigor and I think the same was the case here, so we were very fortunate to have him serve us in the village.”

Cunningham said he believes his greatest service during his tenure was helping to hire the employees who run the village, including Village Administrator Patricia Dwyer. Dwyer arrived shortly after Cunningham joined the board.

He praised current board members while urging new and younger residents to step forward to serve in the future.

“Twelve years, we’ve had a great run. We’ve been through hard times, we’ve been through good times,” he said. “We got (it) mostly right; I must say that when we didn’t, I voted in the minority.”

As Cunningham said goodbye, new Trustee Joseph Stargiotti, who previously served on the board from 2006-08, was sworn in. In addition, Scherer was sworn in for his third term as mayor while Trustee Colleen Griffin-Wagner took the oath for a second term.

The village also welcomed a new officer to its police department and promoted two longtime members of the force.

Kevin Murphy, a 15-year police veteran, was hired for a $76,757 salary.

“We put our feelers out for some people with experience and I think we have definitely found the person that we needed for Pleasantville,” said Police Chief Richard Love.

In a ceremony attended by more than a dozen department members, Officer James O’Keefe was promoted to sergeant while Sgt. Jesse Wollman was elevated to lieutenant. They will earn salaries of about $115,000 and $137,000, respectively.
Mount Kisco Police Department

Apr. 4: Report of an assault outside the Las Vegas Sports Bar on South Moger Avenue at 3:20 a.m. Two male subjects were arrested following the altercation. A 26-year-old Bedford Hills man was charged with third-degree assault, fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon and second-degree menacing, all Class A misdemeanors. A 40-year-old Mount Kisco man, who told police that the other subject had a knife, was charged with third-degree assault. No weapon has been located.

Apr. 4: A woman reported at 10:02 a.m. that she was at the Mount Kisco Public Library on Main Street on Apr. 3 between 12:30 and 3:45 p.m. and that she had medication taken from her bag. She stated that the only time she left her bag unattended was to go to the restroom. When she returned and needed to take the medication, it was missing.

Apr. 6: A Manchester Drive resident reported at 10:36 a.m. that someone had entered their house after hearing the door chimes. The resident started to head downstairs and saw an unknown male subject run out of the house and into the nearby woods. Nothing was taken from the premises. Officers brought tracking dogs but there were no leads.

Apr. 6: A 17-year-old Mount Kisco girl stopped at headquarters at 12:36 p.m. to report that her ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend changed her passwords on several of her social media accounts. The passwords were apparently obtained from the ex-boyfriend. The incident was reported as a matter of record.

Apr. 8: Report of a larceny at Northern Westchester Hospital at 2:40 a.m. A nurse on the third floor reported that her cell phone was missing from her purse. She stated that she last saw the phone at about 10 p.m. the previous date, but when she looked for the phone at about 1:45 a.m., it wasn't there.

Apr. 10: A 23-year-old Bedford Hills man was arrested at 7:17 p.m. and charged with DWI drugs and making an unsafe lane change. Police had received a call a short time earlier informing them of an erratic driver on Kisco Avenue. A car fitting the description provided by witnesses was spotted and stopped on Kirby Plaza. The woman is due in Mount Kisco Village Court on Apr. 16.

Apr. 11: A 24-year-old Purdys man was arrested at 1:09 a.m. and charged with public urination after relieving himself on South Moger Avenue.

Pleasantville Police Department

Apr. 3: A 50-year-old Pleasantville woman was arrested at 10:03 p.m. and charged with DWI following a traffic stop on Country Club Lane.

Apr. 4: Report of a larceny on Washington Avenue at 2:51 p.m. A Schwinn bicycle was taken from a carport sometime the previous overnight.

Apr. 7: A 34-year-old Sleepy Hollow woman was arrested at 2:21 p.m. and charged with petty larceny for shoplifting an undisclosed number of items from Key Food on Pleasantville Road.

Apr. 10: Report of a larceny from a vehicle that was parked on Romer Avenue at 6:57 a.m. Gift cards and cash were taken from the car. The owner reported that the vehicle wasn’t locked.

North Castle Police Department

Apr. 3: Staff at Equinox gym on Business Park Drive reported at 9:47 a.m. that a member has been injured after falling off a spin bike. Armonk Fire Department personnel was dispatched.

Apr. 5: The Traffic Management Center called headquarters at 10:03 a.m. to report a 27-year-old man was found unconscious at a location on Thornewood Road. Officers were dispatched and 60 Control was notified.

Apr. 6: Report of a larceny on Labriola Avenue at 1:44 p.m. An employee reported that extension cords were taken from the loading dock.

Apr. 6: A truck was reported to have gone off the road striking a utility pole on Bedford Road at 5:23 p.m. Injuries weren’t immediately known. The vehicle was towed by Empire Towing.

Apr. 6: A complainant called headquarters at 9:30 p.m. to report receiving threatening e-mails and text messages from an unknown party. The responding officer spoke with the individual and secured a witness deposition.
Armonk Girl Overcomes Challenges to Help Type 1 Diabetics

By Janine Bowen

Sarah Ilany doesn’t let her Type 1 diabetes hold her back.

Now the 13-year-old Armonk girl has been honored for her efforts to raise awareness about the disease.

In February, Ilany, who was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at 11 years old, created an Instagram account entitled Blood Sugar Cookies where she shares posts that describe the funny, awkward and challenging aspects of dealing with Type 1 diabetes.

“It’s almost like a support group,” Ilany said. “You can reach out (to) people who you probably don’t know and there’s international people, so you can ask people questions if you don’t know any diabetics in person, or just kind of relate about how everyday life is affected and also learn stuff.”

Ilany said many people don’t fully understand the amount of work involved managing Type 1 diabetes and often hold misconceptions because they are used to hearing about the more common Type 2 version of the disease.

Unlike Type 2 diabetes, which is usually caused by poor diet and often linked to obesity, Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease that causes the body to attack cells that produce insulin. Only about 5 percent of the population has Type 1 diabetes. There is currently no cure.

Tracy Joseph, outreach manager for the Westchester County chapter of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, said efforts such as Ilany’s Instagram account go a long way in raising awareness.

“Sarah always kind of had the attitude of what am I going to do and what am I going to need to do this,” Joseph said. “She started her Blood Sugar Cookies, she started a walk team, she engaged all her friends and her entire school, her community, so it really became something of a mission.”

In addition to the social media efforts, Ilany has also been active in fundraising for Type 1 diabetes research. Her team raised $6,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund walk last year while a bake sale that she and her friends held in downtown Armonk raised an additional $500.

For her efforts in fundraising and building an online community, Ilany was honored by the Westchester County Department of Health last Thursday in Greenburgh. The H.C. Crittenden Middle School seventh-grader received the J.R. Tesone Youth Public Health Service Award, an honor developed last year in memory of the late John Richard Tesone, an Armonk resident and former Breezemont Day Camp owner.

Ilany was nominated for the award by her guidance counselor, Sue Adams, who stated in a letter that “Sarah took her diagnosis in stride and she handled in the initial stages with grace and maturity.”

Ilany explained that she was inspired to create the Instagram account after browsing through other accounts dedicated to Type 1 diabetes, but was disappointed in the quality of the posts. After a few weeks of managing the account, she realized she was pretty good at creating posts that others could relate to and has seen the account grow to more than 2,000 followers.

She created the profile’s name after seeing a Before and After puzzle, where two words are tied together by a common word in the middle, on “Wheel of Fortune.” She liked the play on words with blood sugar and sugar cookies and went with the title of Blood Sugar Cookies after several previous title ideas were deemed inappropriate by her mother.

In managing her diabetes, Ilany has had to overcome a host of challenges, ranging from the humorous time she found a test strip stuck in her hair to dealing with strangers staring when she must give herself an insulin injection in public. Despite the day-to-day struggles, Ilany lives an active life. She is a certified scuba diver and plays modified field hockey and tennis.

“Sarah is certainly Westchester smart for what she is doing with Type 1 diabetes and the virtual community that she organized and leads,” County Executive Rob Astorino said during last week’s ceremony to recognize Ilany. “She has done a great job and it’s [with] that support network… that you can get through it and learn from it and live a healthy, normal life.”

Also honored at the event was the Westchester Library System for its health literacy initiatives for older adults. Since 2010, 10 Westchester libraries have offered space where seniors can speak to navigators about healthcare issues. The program has helped more than 440 people apply for healthcare since its inception, according to county Commissioner of Health Sherlita Amler.
By Janine Bowen

The Pleasantville School District hosted its final budget presentation last Tuesday night, offering concrete numbers after weeks of uncertainty surrounding state aid figures.

Assistant Superintendent for Business David Quattrocchi said the maximum allowable tax levy for 2015-16 will be $35,097,170, a 1.87 percent increase over the current school year. The district will need to use $1.5 million in fund balance, $25,000 less than for 2014-15.

There will be about $6 million in state aid to help balance the proposed $48,926,573 school budget, a 3.19 percent spending increase over the current year. District officials did not learn of state aid totals until after Gov. Andrew Cuomo and the legislature agreed on the new state budget Apr. 1.

Now that state aid totals can be accurately computed, the final revenue projection is $11,453,623 for next year. That includes $202,144 restored from the Gap Elimination Adjustment, a program introduced in 2010 that took money from education aid to help close the state’s budget deficit.

Included in the expenditures is the $3.5 million bond for capital projects that was approved last year, as well as $268,000 from the Smart Schools Bond Act approved by voters last fall, which allocated $2 billion to finance improved education technology and infrastructure in schools throughout the state. When expenses from the Smart Schools Bond Act and the capital projects bond are eliminated, spending rises 1.43 percent.

Prior to last week, school officials had been preparing for a worst-case state aid scenario, anticipating no increase. Board of Education President Shane McGaffey said the biggest issue with state aid is its linkage to the Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR). Under Cuomo’s proposal, standardized tests could account for up to half of teachers’ APPR scores, while observations conducted by independent evaluators would account for the remainder.

Once the state Education Department (SED) develops and approves a plan for the new system by late June, the district will have to negotiate implementation with teachers before Nov. 15.

Trustee Larry Boes briefly recused himself from the board at last week’s meeting to speak as a parent and resident over the state testing. Boes said he is distressed by the conversation with the state and has decided to have his two sons opt out of this week’s ELA tests and the math exams that will be administered toward the end of the month.

Boes said the emphasis on the tests remove creativity from the classroom.

“More importantly … the politicization of our children in this whole matter is really sickening to me,” Boes continued. His comments were met with applause from parents in attendance.

Boes is not the only person to speak out against state testing. Last Wednesday, County Executive Rob Astorino announced on his Facebook page that his children will not take any state exams and reminded parents that they have the right to refuse to have their children sit for the tests. Students will face no repercussions for opting out.

If more than 5 percent of students in any district opt out of state testing, the district can lose its Title I federal funding. Pleasantville receives about $37,000 in Title I annually, McGaffey said.

Mt. Pleasant Library’s Valhalla Branch Closed for Carpet Installation

The Mount Pleasant Public Library is scheduled to install new carpeting at the branch library located at 125 Lozza Drive in Valhalla this week.

The branch library will close on today (Tuesday, Apr. 14) and is scheduled to reopen at the end of the week. The main library in Pleasantville, which was closed last week was scheduled to re-open on Monday.

For more information, call 914-769-0548 or visit www.mountpleasantlibrary.org for daily updates.
Mt. Kisco Residents to Be Refunded 3% Tax Hike in New Budget

By Neal Rentz

The Village of Mount Kisco’s proposed $20,976,447 2015-16 budget may carry a 3 percent tax increase but it looks like property owners won’t have to lay out any additional money to cover the expense.

Interim Village Manager Jerry Faiella said the spending plan, which was the subject of an Apr. 6 public hearing, would include a tax levy increase of 2.4 percent and a tax rate hike of 3 percent.

Taxes on the average home in the village assessed at $36,000 would rise by $103 in the upcoming fiscal year beginning on June 1, bringing the total municipal tax bill to $3,517, he said. The $103 increase would be refunded by the state because the village has remained below the tax cap, Faiella said.

No changes in village services have been proposed. Spending in the tentative budget is proposed to rise 1.5 percent.

The largest portion of the general fund--$5.66 million--is for public safety, Faiella said. It would cover expenses regardless of whether the proposed police consolidation with Westchester County takes place.

Faiella is also seeking funding for a variety of capital projects, including $1.3 million for a Department of Public Works building addition; $250,000 for paving and sidewalk projects, with half of the cost to be reimbursed by the federal government; $510,000 for heavy equipment replacement; and $300,000 to go toward fire department equipment and facilities.

Faiella said Mount Kisco taxes make up 34 percent of an average resident’s property tax bill. Another 51 percent goes toward schools; and 15 percent to the county.

The only resident who addressed the proposed budget at last week’s hearing was Juliana Biro, a part-time librarian at the Mount Kisco Public Library. The library recently had two full-time librarians leave their posts. They are scheduled to be replaced by two part-timers, Biro said.

Since the turnover rate for part-time librarians is high because of inadequate pay, she requested that two new full-time librarians be hired to replace the ones who left. The village board did not respond to her comments.

Deputy Mayor Anthony Markus praised Faiella and staff for their work on the proposed budget.

“Everybody did a great job,” Markus said.

Mayor Michael Cindrich said the board has been working for years to limit the cost of local government. About one-third of the properties located in Mount Kisco are tax-exempt, Cindrich said, which he called “a major burden for the community.”

The board is expected to approve the new budget on Apr. 20 or Apr. 27. May 1 is the deadline for final approval.

The proposed budget can be viewed on the finance page of the village’s website at www.mountkisco.org.
Guest Column

Benchmark Zoning Vote Defeat Will Pave Way for New Proposal

By Ron Pramshufer

Thank you, Mayor Scherer.

A few short months ago, for reasons still unknown, Mayor Scherer cast the deciding vote against the Benchmark assisted living facility’s zoning amendment for the back property of the Pleasantville United Methodist Church. This followed the better part of two years of nothing but public and private support for the project by the mayor.

Little did anyone know, at the time, that this unexplained vote would be the primary reason that the recent Easter service was the first of its kind for Pleasantville and probably a first for all of Westchester. The service was a joint worship combining three nationalities, three languages and three generations in a single Easter message.

While maybe not envisioned by the original founders of the Pleasantville Methodist Church, this once aging church is now comprised of three individual churches. The Methodist church facility is joined by the Sekwang Korean Presbyterian Church and the Iglesia Una Esperanza Viva Las Naciones Church. The joint Easter service blended English, Korean and Spanish into a single voice of song and prayer. The attendance was the largest in a generation.

Anyone passing 70 Bedford Rd. on a Sunday can’t help but see the full parking lot and worshipers of all ages and ethnic backgrounds coming and going. On non-joint service Sundays, the Methodist service is at 10 a.m., with coffee hour following. The Sekwang Korean Presbyterian Church service starts at noon with the worship service followed by lunch. The Iglesia Una Esperanza Viva Las Naciones Church service starts at 4 p.m. with dinner following the service. Everyone is welcome to all.

With the church congregation now strengthened, it’s time to go back to the mission. What is a strong possibility is a facility to address what has become a huge problem has grown well beyond that.

A detox center or rehabilitation center probably not be used for expanded food services. Several developers have already approached us with similar projects that would fall within this mission.

Of course, the care of the elderly remains a mission of the church. The only logical reason for the last project to be voted down has to have been divine intervention, to allow us the time to bring the Spanish church into the 70 Bedford Rd. Christian family. At this point, the church is strong in spirit, mind and body as well as a commitment to develop the property in a manner that fulfills the church founders’ vision.

Whatever is proposed to the town will be well-thought out and fit the needs of both the church and the town. Hopefully, divine intervention will not be needed this time for the mayor and trustees to do the right thing. Only time will tell.

I want to thank the Westchester community.

For the last 21 years, I’ve had the pleasure of calling Westchester – and the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester – my home. It is with bittersweet sentiment that I step down as executive director of this amazing organization to accept the position of director of major metro services for Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Over the last two decades, I have seen the club continue to grow into a thriving resource that inspires our youth to realize their full potential. With the community’s help, we offer hope, opportunity and a sense of belonging.

In my final days at the club, I wanted to thank the Mount Kisco and Westchester communities for helping this organization lead our young people to success, especially those who need extra guidance and support.

I am humbled and honored to be the recipient of this year’s Humanitarian Award at the club’s dinner June 6. Through events like this, and a supportive community like Westchester, our club has enabled 100 percent of our at-risk high school seniors to graduate on time for six consecutive years; provided more than 60,000 hot meals and snacks to members, many of whom would not have otherwise had a nutritious dinner; and has instilled a strong sense of community among our action-minded youth. I’m proud they give back to a community that has already given them so much.

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Longtime Boys & Girls Club Leader Thanks Community for Program’s Success

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By Martin Wilbur

Gail Burlakoff’s winding path might seem a bit unusual, but for someone who has had a passion for poetry and writing since childhood, her travels have provided her with a lifetime of material.

A native of Hawaii, both sets of Burlakoff’s grandparents relocated there in the early 20th century. Her father was in the Army and was transferred to Washington, D.C. in 1943, so Burlakoff and her family lived in Silver Springs, Md. for the final two years of World War II.

The family returned to Hawaii for three years following the war until her father resumed his sugar business in Panama. Her parents would remain there for the rest of their lives.

She has now been a Westchester resident with her husband, Nick, for the past 20 years, easily the longest she has been in one location. Burlakoff has lived at more than 30 addresses on two islands, on three continents, in four countries and in five states during her 78 years. “As long as my family was there I was fine,” Burlakoff remarked. “That’s what mattered to me.”

Even when she went to a boarding school for high school, only returning home during the summer, she considered her schoolmates and teachers family.

Burlakoff’s experiences growing up and her sojourns as an adult provided the material for many of her poems, something she started as a 10-year-old. Recently, she had a collection of her work published in a poetry memoir called “Blue Heron Woman: Poems.”

“I think it’s better today than when I was 10,” Burlakoff said of her poetry, “but that feeling’s been in me all these years.”

Last Saturday at the Mount Kisco Public Library, a standing-room-only audience crowded into a space in the children’s room to listen to her read portions of the collection. It was a fitting venue since she is the one who reads to preschool children every Monday.

Burlakoff came from a family who loved to write—out of necessity. “Letters were the way we connected,” she said. “The family was always scattered geographically, so writing was the way you kept in touch.”

As an adult she has honed the craft, writing every day in a journal, if not writing poetry. But having her works published was something that seemed far-fetched years ago, especially considering that it took Burlakoff 49 years to earn her bachelor’s degree.

Burlakoff met her first husband, who worked for Chase Bank in international finance, when he came to Panama as a trainee. She had started her college education in Arizona, but never finished once married. (She would complete her degree in 2004 at Sarah Lawrence College.)

They had three children, but after 22 years the couple divorced in 1981. “I enjoyed being a stay-at-home mom,” Burlakoff recalled. “I did not enjoy being a corporate wife. I’m not cut out to live in the corporate world. But that life afforded me some wonderful experiences, to see different places and meet different people.”

Before her first marriage ended, Burlakoff sought to enter the workforce in 1979, but had no idea what to do or what she might be qualified for. Since she is bilingual, Burlakoff worked for a multiservice center and later the International Center in Indianapolis, where she was living at the time.

When she lost that job, Burlakoff applied for a copy editor’s position for a publishing company, which was later bought out by Macmillan. Burlakoff was able to snag the job, ahead of seasoned veterans.

She married Nick in 1985, then the couple relocated four years later to Old Bridge, N.J., one of only a couple of places that Burlakoff wasn’t happy with.

“When we came here, three days before Christmas to an apartment, and you know how apartments are in the wintertime. People don’t go out,” she said. “(Nick) had work and I had the computer and the cat.”

Macmillan retained her as a freelance copy editor after moving east, but it was a solitary endeavor. As someone who loved children, reading and writing, Burlakoff applied for an opening in the children’s room at the Mount Pleasant Public Library in Pleasantville after spotting an ad. She worked there for just over 10 years before transferring to Mount Kisco three years ago.

Burlakoff doesn’t know if she has another book of her work to publish, but is currently compiling her late brother’s writings of his experiences growing up.

She said she was amazed at the turnout for her reading and that people continue to borrow “Blue Heron Woman.”

“It keeps going out and every time I see it going out, it doesn’t compute in my head,” Burlakoff said. “It’s quite wonderful.”

Safety is much more than a job for our engineers. Rob Andersen is a Navy veteran, control room supervisor at Indian Point, and father of three. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission just gave Rob and our entire team at Indian Point its highest safety rating — for the fifth year in a row. Today, after a $1 billion investment that added layers upon layers of safety and security throughout the plant, Rob is helping to run one of the safest nuclear power facilities in the U.S.

Discover more about Indian Point at SafeSecureVital.com
AT HUDSON VALLEY HOSPITAL, A NEW CHAPTER BEGINS.

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nyp.org/hudsonvalley
**Home Improvement**

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 varieties, first introduced as flora to plant in gardens, can be confused with similar, native varieties. Here are two common damaging ones to watch out for:

- **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 other trees having similar leaves, such as black walnut, butternut and most sumac.

**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:

- **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.

**Invasive weeds**, such as the Purple Loosestrife, can out-compete native species.

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.

Defend your local ecosystem by identifying exotic plants in your garden or yard. Spot invasive weeds and insects in your area? Let your county extension office know, which may have a monitoring and management program in place.

For more lawn and garden tips, visit www.DebugTheMyths.com.

By being aware of invasive species and other pests in your area, you can help support native species and a healthy ecosystem in your own backyard and neighborhood.

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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 Southhampton, Pa. That particular graveyard is one of many.

As a realtor, I frequently am asked by clients selling their homes for advice about what 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?

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For entertainment. Even with our wealth of modern diversions, people still love listening to music. Why shouldn't they still love creating it?

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Music Teachers Association. Here's the list of benefits he gave me:

Greatest Musical Compositions in History:

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.

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.

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.

Social Connection:

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.

The Home Guru at home:

The Home Guru at his 1929 Baldwin Baby Grand, given to him by a family who was downsizing to smaller space.

The Home Guru at his 1929 Baldwin Baby Grand, given to him by a family who was downsizing to smaller space.

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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.
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New Project Helps Parents Give Their Teens The Alcohol Talk

By Martin Wilbur

Logic would dictate that if you want to guide parents about how best to approach their children about the perils of underage drinking you wouldn’t advise them to turn to other teens.

But a new initiative does just that. A group of five teenagers from throughout the United States will be empanelled in the coming months as part of an initial focus group for the website TheAlcoholTalk.com.

The interactive site will also contain advice from psychologists and educators as well as blogs written by the five teens who are selected. Wine and spirits marketer Pernod Ricard USA has underwritten the project to prevent underage drinking.

“The whole idea behind the project is this website that is dedicated to helping parents talk to their kids about the dangers of underage drinking. Parents of each teen will monitor what their child writes. Meanwhile, the teens who are selected will be expected to answer periodic questions and write blogs on related topics. They will get paid $25 to respond to questions and $50 for the blogs and also earn extracurricular credit for college applications if they’re in high school.

This year’s group will be for the next school year. It is expected there will be a new group each year.

Powell-Lunder, co-author of the book “Teenage as a Second Language,” said a common misconception is that teenagers don’t want to listen to adults or their parents. However, a key, taking into account the still maturing adolescent brain, is for adults to learn how to effectively converse with teens, especially about as an important topic as underage drinking, she said.

The one thing teens don’t care for is to be talked at, they want to be talked with, Powell-Lunder said.

“What we want to do is get their feedback on what they think about underage drinking, what their ideas are and what they should be telling their parents that they’ll listen to,” Powell-Lunder said.

Information that adults may find helpful in their approach that can be found on the site for example, is that research has shown that the most common reason for teens to start drinking is peer pressure, she said.

“So it doesn’t mean that all these thoughts and feelings (they have) are the same as their parents, but their parents have far more influence than they realize,” Powell-Lunder said. “What parents say really gets internalized, so we feel like if parents are communicating the right messages themselves, better to communicate that message through the teens themselves."

Today’s parents of teens are at one major disadvantage that no other generation of parent has faced or will likely face again--it’s the first time that they’re teenage children speak a completely different language because of the digital age.

“You can immerse yourself, but unless you are truly immersed in a culture, you’re not really going to understand it in a way that someone who is native to that culture,” Powell-Lunder said.
SunBlue Energy
Sleepy Hollow

By Colette Connolly

It's true that Chris Hale, president and founder of SunBlue Energy in Sleepy Hollow, is a strong believer in the power of new technologies. But what inspired him to establish his own solar energy company six years ago was a photovoltaic class he took at Bronx Community College.

A former project manager at a New York City-based technology company, Hale saw opportunity in solar energy and believed it would be the perfect business to establish in Westchester County.

Teaming up with Barrett Silver, senior vice president of sales and marketing, the company has thrived since its inception and is one of the go-to solar energy companies for homeowners and businesses seeking alternatives to traditional forms of energy.

“This is a very mature technology and has been around for a very long time,” said Hale, whose company has installed more than 100 solar energy systems throughout the tri-state area in the last five years.

“The demand has increased, which has allowed for more investment in the technology, and prices have also come down,” explained Hale. “It is the fastest-growing industry out there.”

Hale said one of the common misconceptions is that reliance on solar energy won’t work in the Northeast. In fact, solar energy takes its heat from light, which means that solar panels can work just as well in Alaska as they do in Florida.

While it is gaining popularity in the U.S., other nations have moved ahead, he noted.

“The country with the most progressive solar program is really Germany, and they have installed so many more kilowatts than what we have, and there’s a lot less sunshine,” said Hale, referring to a climate that’s comparable to upstate New York.

While clouds may hinder the efficiency of solar panels, newer technology has allowed ambient light to filter through, and as a result it can generate a healthy dose of energy for the average home or business.

Solar panels, consisting of photovoltaic cells, are placed on the roof of a house or business and convert light into direct current (DC) electricity, which in turn is converted to alternating current (AC) through an inverter. If electricity is not being used during the day, the excess is pushed back into the grid, proving to be more economical than relying on traditional electricity services.

Most residential solar energy systems can be installed within a week. For commercial properties, Silver said it takes a bit longer while SunBlue Energy obtains necessary approvals and permits from local municipalities and state agencies.

The demand has increased, which has allowed for more investment in the technology, and prices have also come down,” explained Hale. “It is the fastest-growing industry out there.”

“We pride ourselves on customer service and high-quality design and installation,” said Hale, who is certified by the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners.

Hale said his company of certified installers, sales consultants and project managers all live in the area and are familiar with the needs of customers in the region.

What has convinced a growing number of prospective customers to switch to solar energy, Silver said, is their electric bill. The Northeast has some of the highest energy rates in the country, and when residents and business owners evaluate the benefits, they are often convinced by the incentives that can offset the upfront costs of installing a solar energy system.

Perks include a 30 percent federal tax credit and a 25 percent New York State tax credit. The New York State Energy Research and Development Agency also offers generous incentives. Systems can be purchased outright, financed, or leased.

Hale said the company monitors customer systems on a regular basis and is fully responsible for its operation for five years after installation.

For more information on SunBlue Energy and installing a solar energy system, call 914-222-3510 or 914-297-9870 for a free consultation or visit www.sunblueenergy.com.

COLETTE CONNOLLY PHOTO

SunBlue Energy's Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing Barrett Silver, left, and President and founder Chris Hale.

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COLETTE CONNOLLY PHOTO

SunBlue Energy’s Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing Barrett Silver, left, and President and founder Chris Hale.

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COLETTE CONNOLLY PHOTO

SunBlue Energy’s Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing Barrett Silver, left, and President and founder Chris Hale.
Tuesday, Apr. 14

**German Language Potluck.** A chance to speak and converse in German. All level of skill welcomed. Potluck dish does not need to be a native dish. American Legion Hall, 52 Garrigan Ave., Thornwood. 6 to 8 p.m. Free. Info: 914-739-8996.

**Italian Language and Culture With Mara De Matteo.** De Matteo, born and raised in Italy, combines lively conversation with grammatical instruction in her classes, creating interactive lessons on the richness of Italian culture, past and present, through real-life anecdotes, literature, personal memoirs, films and photography. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd East, Armonk. 6:30 p.m. Free. Tuesdays in April. Info: 914-273-3887.

**Chamber Talk With Max Mandel.** Joined by the promising Horszowski Trio, Mandel explores the phenomenon of composers dying young and their formation with performers in their youth. Mandel is an alumn of Caramoor’s Rising Stars mentoring program and an accomplished viola player. Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, 149 Girdle Ridge Rd., Katonah. 7 p.m. $15. Info and tickets: 914-232-1252 or visit www.caramoor.org.

Wednesday, Apr. 15

**Master Networker Meeting.** Join this high-energy interactive membership network of learning-based, service-oriented entrepreneurs and business leaders. Come be a guest any Wednesday to learn more about this world-class business training and referral program. Mount Kisco Coach Diner, 252 E. Main St., Mount. 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday. RSVP suggested. Info and RSVP: Contact Julie Genovesi at 303-929-7203 or e-mail julie@eurobella.net or just drop in.

**Zumba Fitness.** Achieve long-term benefits while having a blast in one exciting hour of calorie-burning, body-energizing, awe-inspiring movements meant to engage and captivate for life. For all fitness levels. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 Main St., Mount Kisco. 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-231-3260.

**Knitting Club.** Come learn to knit, or if you already know how, bring your current project and enjoy a visit with other knitters and crocheters. Beginners should bring a pair off size 8 or 10 straight knitting needles and skin or worsted weight yarn. Open to knitters and crocheters 10 years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday: Info: 914-666-8041.

**Wednesday Night Bingo.** Regular bingo tickets and specials available for sale. Includes coffee, tea and hot chocolate. Holy Rosary School, 180 Bradhurst Ave., Hawthorne. Doors open at 6 p.m. Games start at 7:20 p.m. $2 (for one card). Extra game cards may be purchased for $2 or $3 each along with a few specialty games. Every Wednesday.

**Art Discussion Series: Holbein The Elder.** Born sometime during the latter part of the 15th century, this German painter was part of a dynasty of three generations of northern Europe’s most celebrated artists. Working independently as well as in conjunction with his brother, Holbein focused on religious works and moved German painting into the Renaissance style. Led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastleslibrary.org.

**Bedford Chamber Concert Series.** Violinist Francisco Fullana and pianist Anthony Newman will perform Bach’s Partita in G Minor, Mozart’s Sonata K 303 in C Major, Beethoven’s Sonata no. 3 in E Flat, and three Paganini Caprices. St. Matthew’s Church Fellowship Hall, 382 Cantitoe St. (Route 22), Bedford. 8 p.m. $35 (includes refreshments during intermission). Info and tickets: 914-522-5150 or visit www.bedfordchamberconcerts.org.

**Magic: The Gathering With Lucas.** Chat over some short poems to celebrate National Poetry Month with Christina Eisenberg from the Westchester Independent Living Center. For students in grades 6-12. Chappaqua Public Library, 195 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Fridays through Apr. 24. Info: 914-238-4779 or www.chappaqualibrary.org.

**Story Time Playgroup.** Join Miss Debbie for a story, music and playtime with toys and books in this new program. Children and a parent or caregiver can spend special time together and make new friends. For children six months to four years old. Mount Pleasant Public Library, 350 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 1:45 to 2:30 p.m. Free. Every Thursday. Info: 914-769-0548 or visit www.mountpleasantlibrary.org.

**Drop-in Homework Help.** Difficult math problems? Tricky grammar questions? Drop in to the Teen Zone after school for some extra help from a high school volunteer. For students in grades 6-8. Chappaqua Public Library, 195 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 3 to 4 p.m. Free. Also Apr. 21, 23, 28 and 30. Info: 914-238-4779 or www.chappaqualibrary.org.

**Bring in Your Books.** E-mail: claudiaiyogadance@gmail.com.

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**Friday Night Films: “The Other Son.”** Two young men, one Israeli and one Palestinian, discover they are accidentally switched at birth. In English, Hebrew, French and Arabic with English subtitles. Discussion led by Professor Val Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd., Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887.

**WCC Film Series: “The Owl and the Sparrow.”** A 10-year-old orphan works in her uncle’s factory outside Saigon. The uncle berates the child constantly, so she runs away to Saigon. She encounters two individuals who impact her life and she is determined to bring them together. Westchester Community College’s Gateway Center, Davis Auditorium, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. Doors open at 7:10 p.m. Refreshments at 7:30 p.m. Screening at 7:50 p.m. $11. Seniors (60 and up): $10. $48. Info: Contact Bob Bruckenthal at 914-723-3186.

**Orphans.** A Small Town Theatre Production about two brothers, one sensitive and recluse and the other who supports his damaged younger sibling by petty thievery, makes the house a virtual prison for him—he also makes the house a virtual prison for him—before the older brother kidnaps a rich, older man who turns out to be the father figure the boys have always yearned for. Katonah Village Library, 26 Bedford Rd., Katonah. 8 p.m. $15. Also Apr. 18. Info and reservations: Visit www.smalltowntheatre.com.

**Danceworks.** Westchester Community continued on page 24
The Junk Car in the Garage May Not Be Junk

By Kevin Peters

Have you been out to the garage to kick the tires on that old coupe lately, or taken your antique roadster on a road trip?

If not, you may want to rethink your attitude toward America’s love affair with the automobile, because depending on the year, make and model, many are once again “hot.” Finding a classic, antique or vintage car or truck, in some cases even motorcycles and scooters, is as near as your computer or hand-held device.

Automobiles in myriad forms are sold in the classified sections of news outlets as well as Internet advertising and auction sites. But to really stake the interest of potential investors, it is worth noting that quite recently a 1963 Ferrari 250 GTO sold for $52 million, making it the most expensive sale of any car in history.

The vehicle was purchased from a Connecticut man who bought it in 1974. But it was not in a hermetically sealed room for 40 years only to be released when the market was right. The seller reportedly took the Ferrari to vintage auto events, so it certainly didn’t acquire dry rot.

The previous record price paid for an automobile – only 18 months ago – was $35 million, for a 1962 Ferrari GTO in May 2012. The $52 million sale price represents a staggering 49 percent premium over that prior record Ferrari GTO sale.

The previous $35 million record for a Ferrari was held by the purchaser of a model that was built for racer Sterling Moss. It was sold in 1996 for $3.5 million and roughly nine years later it was sold again for about $8.5 million. The price jumped from $8.5 million to $35 million when the Moss Ferrari was sold in May 2012, and while Ferraris hold a special place in the hearts of wealthy buyers, the sale also gives a good indication of the value of classic and vintage automobiles in general.

Collector cars become deceptively more attractive when yields on stocks and cash investments are low. But potential buyers should beware and educate themselves on the nuances that are small but ever so important when purchasing older vehicles.

The three primary definitions with which to be familiar are:

• Antique: In most cases a car that is over 45 years old, that has been maintained in keeping with the original manufacturer specifications.

• Classic: A vehicle that is at least 20 years old, but not more than 40 years old and is not be modified or altered.

• Vintage: Generally, cars that were manufactured between 1919 and 1930, but some end it at 1925. Unlike the other two classifications, having had modifications does not necessarily keep a car from being classified vintage.

With the New York Auto Show this month, I cannot help wonder if any cars being featured will someday end up being termed a “classic.” My guess is you probably will get a better investment return steering elsewhere.

An obvious question is whether the prices of such vehicles will continue to rise and how high? I am skeptical. What will happen to the market for these cars if Cuba suddenly is opened to trade and all those cars from the 1950s are suddenly on the market?

While I am always open to considering alternative investments, I am far more comfortable with a different sort, real estate investment trusts, for example, with typically high yields.

Of course, investing in a classic car may be more fun than buying a particular stock or bond. However, if you need to liquidate the asset to pay for a child’s college or for retirement income, the car probably won’t be the right “vehicle” for you.

Kevin Peters is a managing director and financial adviser with Morgan Stanley Wealth Management in Purchase. He can be reached at 914-225-6680.

Think Ahead for 2015 Taxes With Charitable Planning

By Roger R. Yergeau

Most of us were concerned about having our 2014 income taxes prepared by Apr. 15, but now might be the time to reduce your 2015 tax burden with the use of charitable planning.

Taxpayers now have had two full tax years under the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (ATRA) and different groups have seen different results to their income tax burden. This change looked to add income taxation to the upper income taxpayer. ATRA has implemented higher income tax rates for the upper income taxpayers and modest changes for itemized deductions. Charitable gifts deductions have not changed for leading upper income taxpayers and their advisers should recognize the need to reduce income taxes through the use of prudent charitable planning.

Income Taxes. Upper income taxpayers have seen their top tax bracket raised to 39.6 percent. Should an upper income taxpayer have passive income, the Medicare tax of 3.8 percent will be added, making the top federal tax bracket 43.4 percent. This has resulted in upper income taxpayers having a renewed interest in charitable planning.

Capital Gains Tax. Currently there are three capital gain rates: none for low income taxpayers, 15 percent for mid-level taxpayers and 20 percent for top tier taxpayers. The Medicare tax of 3.8 percent is added to the applicable tax rate, thus raising the top capital gains rate to 23.8 percent. The taxpayer who has significant capital gains is also likely to be in the top income tax bracket. Those taxpayers who can bypass capital gains through the use of charitable planning have a compelling reason to take action in 2015.

Appreciated Property. Many taxpayers who have appreciated property are reluctant to sell. Last year home prices increased by 11 percent and the Dow reached 18,000. With the large tax burden, some taxpayers may feel “locked in” with the appreciated assets. Using appreciated assets for various charitable planning options provides taxpayers with relief from this burden.

IRA Charitable Rollover. For the past several years, Congress has extended the option for IRA owners over 70-and-a-half years old to give up to $100,000 to a charity through an IRA custodian-to-charity transfer. The latest extension ended on Dec. 31, 2014. Congress last year almost passed the Supporting Americas Charity Act, which would have permanently extended the IRA charitable rollover and even expanded limits for conservation gifts and gifts of wholesome foods. There was strong bipartisan support for the bill, but it failed to pass due to congressional procedural rules. Watch for possible passage of this bill in 2015 or another annual extension. Taxpayers with a substantial IRA are required to take a minimum distribution even if they would benefit from this charitable gift planning strategy.

Tax Strategies for 2015. The IRA Charitable Rollover, if extended, would give taxpayers a couple of different types of income tax relief. First, since the IRA rollover is direct from the IRA custodian to the charity, this would not be included in the taxpayer’s taxable income. The Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) exemption is being phased out for higher income taxpayers. Thus, the use of an IRA rollover prevents these funds from being subject not only to income taxes but to the AMT. Not having to add the minimum required distribution to one’s income through the use of the IRA Charitable Rollover will substantially lower the tax burden for many taxpayers.

Second, gifts of appreciated property or stocks bypass capital gains and are deducted based on the asset’s fair market value. The taxpayer should keep in mind the 30 percent limit of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) when making gifts of appreciated assets.

Third, once a taxpayer has used 30 percent of AGI in gifts of appreciated assets, he may want to consider using cash gifts of up to 20 percent of AGI. The combination of 20 percent of AGI (cash gifts) and 30 percent of AGI (appreciated property) will give taxpayers in the upper brackets the maximum income tax savings of 50 percent.

Longtime Orning resident Roger R. Yergeau worked in the life insurance industry for over 30 years. After retiring in 2008 as a principal partner of Agent Support Group, he volunteered with The New York Public Library in the Planned Giving Department from 2008 to 2014. In 2013, he was named director of planned giving for the Open Door Foundation on a volunteer basis. He can be reached at Foundation-ryergeau@dfmfc.org.
College's dance company, a diverse ethnic and cultural combination of college students and alumni and led by Company Director Mollyann Franzblau, will present a special program Westchester Community College's Academic Arts Theatre, 75 Grasslands Rd., Valhalla. 8 p.m. $15. Children, students and seniors: $10. Also Apr. 18 at 8 p.m. and Apr. 19 at 3 p.m. Tickets: 914-606-6262 or at the door. Info: Visit www.sunywcc.edu.

Saturday, Apr. 18

Pleasantville Farmers Market. The market moves indoors featuring vendors with winter-grown produce along with a variety of meats, cheeses, breads and prepared foods. Pleasantville Middle School, 40 Romer Ave., Pleasantville. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Every Saturday through May 9. Info: Visit www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.com.

Mount Kisco Farmers Market. St. Mark's Church, 85 Main St., Mount Kisco. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info: Visit https://www.facebook.com/MtKiscoFarmersMarket.

Third Saturday Bird Seed Sale. The sale supports the local conservation work of the Saw Mill River Audubon. Pruyr Sanctuary, 275 Millwood Rd., Chappaqua. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Info (including bird seed descriptions and prices): Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/seedsale.

Sahaja Meditation. Led by Peter Simone. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 10 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Saturday. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-864-0137.


T'ai Chi With Larry Attile. Learn specific feldenkrais and chi kung breathing techniques for deep relaxation and apply them to t'ai chi movement. A hands-on class that is geared to the level of experience of the class. Please wear comfortable clothes and bring a floor mat or towel. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 10:30 a.m. Free. Saturdays in April. Info: 914-273-3887.


Teaching Trails: A Community Path for Environmental Education. Join guided trail experience through the woodland forest. Discover who left that track, which tree makes the best animal home or which plant makes its own heat to help melt through the late winter ice. Program runs about 30 minutes. Greenburgh Nature Center, 9 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Saturday and Sunday. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

Pound Fitness Program. A 45-minute full-body cardio and stress relief jam session, fusing Pilates, cardio, plyometrics, isometric movements and poses. Using lightly weighted drumsticks called Ripstix” and combining constant simulated drumming resulting in working the entire body. TADA Theatre And Dance Arts, 131 Bedford Rd., Katonah. 11:45 a.m. $20. Every Saturday; also Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Info: Contact Peggy at 914 960-4097.

Adult Salsa Class. Addie-Tude Performing Arts Center, 42 Memorial Plaza (lower level), Pleasantville, 11 a.m. to noon. Free. $12. Every Saturday. Also Mondays from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Info: 917-215-1720 or visit www.addie-tude.com.

Greystone Rescue and Rehab Meet and Greet Adoption Day. Thornwood Town Center, 10-18 Broadway, Thornwood. 12 to 3 p.m. Info: Contact Amy Eisenberg at aeisenberg@petlanddiscounts.com or visit www.petlanddiscounts.com.

World Cup Gymnastics Open House. Featuring lots of fun activities including open gymnastics, balloon twisting, tattoos, puppet making, wagon rides, summer arts and crafts, games and free food and snacks. There will also be an exhibition from World Cup gymnasts. World Cup Schools, 160 Hunts Lane, Chappaqua. 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-238-9267.

Signs of Spring. Explore the trails with a naturalist and see who is awake after a long winter nap. Read a short story and meet some live animals to learn how they welcome spring. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 1 p.m. Info: 914-238-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

“God’s Ballroom: Music and the Bavarian Rococo Wieskirche.” The Ars Antiqua Period Instrument Orchestra will stage this concert of Baroque music played on historic instruments with Baroque trumpet player David Kjar and guests soprano Clara Rottsolk and Heather Johnson. Followed by a reception of apple strudel and Bavarian specialties catered by Susan Lawrence. Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 191 S. Greet Ave., Chappaqua. Ticket desk opens at 7:30 p.m. Concert at 8 p.m. $35. Info: Contact Mark Kramer at 914-238-8015 or mark@susanlawrence.com or visit www.ars-antiqua.org.

Modigliani String Quartet. This internationally acclaimed quartet will be performing Mozart’s String Quartet in D minor, K. 421, Claude Debussy’s String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10, and Ernst von Dohnanyi’s String Quartet #3 in A minor, Op. 3. 6:30 p.m. Briarcliff High School Auditorium, Briarcliff Manor. Info: 914-666-7595.

Argentina Tango Dances. Great music and dancing on a 3,000-square-foot dance floor. Enjoy a pleasant time with friends. Refreshments served. Broadway 26 Dance, 26 Broadway, Hawthorne. 8 p.m. to midnight. $12. Also the first Sunday of each month from 3 to 6 p.m. Info: 914-725-3023 or 914-484-5101 or e-mail sampelyao@optonline.net.

Sunday, Apr. 19

“A Year With Frog and Toad.” The Play Group Theatre, theater for children and teens, opens its 2015 season with this story based on the books of Arnold Lobel. Part vaudeville, part make belief, all charm, this is the story of friendship that endures, weathering all seasons. Lively melodies and endless wit make it for a fun production for the entire family. The Play Group Theatre, 1 N. Broadway, White Plains. 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. $18. Seniors and children (under 12); $15. Also Apr. 26 at 2 and 7 p.m. Info and tickets: 914-946-4433 or visit www.playgroup.org.

Earth Day/Arbor Day Celebration. Learn how to gather fresh rainwater for your gardens and how to turn your food scraps and garden waste into rich compost that will build up your soil. Other family-friendly activities include making your own seed garden, personalizing a reusable bag and take a guided tour of the newly restored and revitalized native meadow. Also, plant a tree in recognition of Arbor Day. Refreshments available for purchase. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. (Some activities require a small fee.) Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.


Horszowski Trio. This versatile group will showcase “For Daniel” by Joan Tower, one of today’s most important American composers. Tower will be on hand to introduce her piece, which shares the program with works by Fauré and Schubert. Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, 149 Girdle Ridge Rd., Katonah. 4 p.m. $15, $35, $45 and $55. Info and tickets: 914-232-1252 or visit www.caramoor.org.

Monday, Apr. 20

Knitting Group. Hats for our servicemen and women overseas and other ongoing projects for care centers and hospitals. Clinton Street Center, 1A Clinton St., Pleasantville. 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Monday. Info: 914-769-2021.

Women’s Club of Pleasantville. Local singer Dan Visconti will entertain with songs of Frank Sinatra and a tribute to the 100th anniversary of Old Blue Eyes’ birthday. Guests welcome. Our Lady of Pompeii Church, Saratoga and Garrigan avenues, Pleasantville. 1 p.m. Free. Info: Contact Dorothy Gates at dvgates@verizon.net.

Wild Encounters Story Time. Nature discovery for youngsters. Enjoy a nature-themed story and discover the wonders of nature while exploring fields, forests or landscaped grounds. Dress for outdoor activity. Except in extreme weather conditions, a portion of each class is spent outdoors. For children three to five years old, with a parent or caregiver. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: $9 per child. Non-member: $12 per child. Every Monday. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.


Zumba Class. Open to all. Drop-ins welcome; no membership needed. PFX, 101 Castleton St., Pleasantville. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. $10 a class. Every Monday. Info: Contact Amy Olin at olin.amyj@gmail.com.


Tuesday, Apr. 21

Money Smart Week Series: Estate Planning and Elder Law. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, continued on page 25
Bedford-Mt Kisco Solar Campaign Focuses on Commercial

By Martin Wilbur

The Solarize Bedford-Mt Kisco campaign took the next step last week when officials and program organizers introduced the benefits of using solar energy to commercial establishments in the two municipalities.

Doug Hertz, owner of Sunrise Solar Solutions of Briarcliff Manor, the program’s commercial contractor for solar installations, provided an overview of the advantages of the benefits during a presentation last Wednesday at Tesla Motors in Mount Kisco before about two dozen prospective customers.

The goal is to impress commercial property owners and business owners that a solar energy system is worth the investment through significant savings during its roughly 20-year lifespan.

“The idea is to make it as easy and affordable as possible for people to install solar on their homes or commercial property,” said Nina Orville, the program manager for Solarize Westchester, which is overseeing the four areas in the county where the program is taking place.

“We do that by using a group purchasing model. So the fact that the community is supporting the campaign and bringing people out to learn about the opportunity, address the marketing costs for the selected installer, and so that installer is then able to share those savings with lower prices for customers.”

Hertz said with attractive incentives provided by the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA) and a 30 percent federal income tax credit, a business or property owner can save at least $100,000 on a typical system that costs about $184,500.

There also are financing opportunities available for customers who may be unable to lay out the entire cost up front.

A common misconception is since the Northeast can have long winters, solar panels would be ineffective for a good chunk of the year, Hertz said. However, there is plenty of light for solar panels to work, he said. Germany is one of the world’s leaders in producing kilowatt hours through solar and has less average annual sunshine than Seattle, he said.

Hertz said a southern roof exposure without shade trees works best.

If a customer’s system produces excess energy, it can be sent to the utility, which earns the account credits at the same rate that is paid.

During the presentation, Hertz pointed out several high profile commercial property owners in and around Mount Kisco who have successfully used solar energy, such as Diamond Properties, residential developer William Balter and municipality’s carbon footprint, has partnered with the Solarize campaign. Bedford 2020 Executive Director Midge Iorio said since the residential launch on Jan. 31, more than 100 homeowners have signed up for solar in the two communities. The Ross Solar Group of Pleasantville was retained as the residential contractor.

Orville said Solarize Westchester plans to introduce several more communities to the program later this year. In the area, the Town of Cortlandt and Village of Croton-on-Hudson have signed up.

Peter Finkelstein, owner of Mount Kisco Truck & Auto Parts.

Also in attendance last Wednesday were Mount Kisco Mayor Michael Cindrich and Bedford Supervisor Chris Burdick who agreed that the Solarize Bedford-Mt Kisco program isn’t only good for the environment but for the bottom line as well.

“We wouldn’t be doing it if we not only thought it was good for the pocketbook but also the environment,” Burdick said.

Bedford 2020, a town program which has committed to reducing that

 Continued from page 24

Armonk. 1 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887.

Wednesday, April 22

Support Group for Alzheimer’s Caregivers. Temple Shaaray Tefila and Westchester Jewish Community Services have scheduled this forum to provide a place for caregivers to discuss their feelings, share their experiences and support another one. A specialist from the Alzheimer’s Association will lead the group and provide educational materials and information. All welcome. Temple Shaaray Tefila’s Youth Lounge, 89 Baldwin Rd., Baldwin Corners. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Registration required. Info and registration: Contact the Alzheimer’s Association at 800-272-9989 or visit www.alz.org/hudsonvalley.


Art Discussion Series: Hans Holbein the Younger. Born after Columbus discovered America, Holbein the Younger learned to paint from his father, an accomplished painter in his own right. With a letter of recommendation from Erasmus, this Northern Renaissance artist was renowned for his portraits, book design and religious art. Led by Professor Valerie Franco, North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlilibrary.org.

Thursday, April 23


Money Smart Week Series: Investing Over the Lifespan. At different stages of life we have different goals. How should we invest to have the best chance of funding our goals? Why is it important to maintain a well-diversified portfolio, even in retirement? Why do most investors buy high and sell low? Explore the answers and learn the one proven method for increasing return while reducing risk. Presented by Anthony DeVito, certified financial planner and past president of the Greater Hudson Valley Financial Planning Association, North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 6:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887.

What’s Happening at Fordham’s Louise Calder Center Biological Field Station? Tomas Daniels, director of Fordham University’s Calder Center Biological Field Station, will introduce the Armonk-based center to the community that they have been stationed in for over 40 years. He will describe the ecological research at the center, the importance of field stations to their community and reveal the mystery of what goes on behind the closed gates. The first part of an ongoing series. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 6:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887.

Pizza With Author Jennifer Lyne. A new area resident, Lyne will stop by to chat about writing and her debut novel “Catch Rider,” a “horse story” that received a starred review in Kirkus magazine. For students in grades 6-12. Chappaqua Public Library, 195 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-238-4779 or www.chappaqualibrary.org.

Doug Hertz, owner of Sunrise Solar Solutions, makes his presentation to Mount Kisco and Bedford business owners on Apr. 8 pitching the advantages of solar energy.

Martin Wilbur Photo
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An Exploration Into Changing Wines Into Spirits

The process of making wine, with its natural life cycle of fruit-producing grapevines 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 a dissimilar agricultural product. More on this next week.

This week, I’ll focus on micro siblings. These can be as diverse as vodkas distilled from grapes (Cîroc being the most popular), fortified wines (Port, Sherry, Madeira and Vermouth) or distilled spirits. In the latter category, the most prominent are brandies, principally from the Cognac and Gascony regions of France.

A distinction between fortified wines and distilled spirits is in order. For fortified wines, traditionally produced wines are supplemented with additional alcohol, typically in the form of brandy (yielding 18 to 20 percent alcohol by volume). In distilled spirits, the wine is reduced to its essence through a still.

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 a 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 brandies 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 Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department will open its doors to area residents so they can learn about what it takes to be a volunteer firefighter in their community as part of the fifth annual RecruitNY statewide initiative. Over the last several years, it has been difficult for many volunteer fire departments throughout the state to recruit and retain volunteers for a variety of reasons. Like most volunteer departments, Pleasantville must bolster its emergency responder numbers so it can continue to provide the optimum level of protection for its residents.

As part of RecruitNY, on Saturday, Apr. 25 between 8 a.m. and noon, the Pleasantville Volunteer Fire Department, located at 75 Washington Ave., will join volunteer departments across the state at their firehouses for a unified recruitment drive. Not only will RecruitNY be an opportunity to highlight the rewards and responsibilities that come with being a volunteer firefighter, it will also raise public awareness about the need for volunteers. “Come on out and join us for this unique recruitment day at our firehouse,” said Chief Aimee Deiter. “This is a great opportunity for our neighbors to observe the exciting tasks of a firefighter. Our current members love what they do: they are everyday heroes who help neighbors in need. We hope our recruitment day will inspire other area residents to join our fire service family.”

Throughout the morning, the department will conduct tours of the station and firefighter apparatus, allowing visitors to try on firefighter gear and provide activities and fascinating informational opportunities throughout the firehouse for visitors. Department representatives will discuss the requirements needed to be a volunteer, as well as conduct demonstrations, answer questions and let visitors know how to get involved.

Last year, more than 500 fire departments in 55 counties across the state held recruitment open houses. Established in 2011, RecruitNY is a joint undertaking by the Firemen’s Association of the State of New York (FASNY), the New York State Association of Fire Chiefs (NYSACF), Association of Fire Districts of New York State, Volunteer Fire Police Association of the state of New York, and County Fire Coordinators Association of the state of New York.

For area residents looking for more information, or to find out if your fire department is participating in RecruitNY, visit www.recruitny.org or contact your local fire department via a non-emergency phone number on its website.

The Pleasantville Tennis Club will be hosting a Kids Day on Saturday, Apr. 25 at 2 p.m.

The club invites the community at large to visit the club, free of charge, to see its facilities and enjoy light refreshments. Lessons and other activities will be offered at no cost. The centerpieces of the day’s activities will be the club’s new court, designed for children 10 years old and younger.

“The 10-and-under court, which we believe is the first such court in the Northeast built to USTA specifications, will enable young children to experience the joys of our sport,” said club Vice President Tom May. “The smaller court, along with specialized balls and smaller rackets, will allow young children to achieve success on the court. We are very excited about this addition.”

The club also offers six regulation Har-Tru courts for adults.

Pleasantville Tennis Club is member-run and owned and devoted strictly to tennis. It has programs for children four and five years old and five to 16 years old. There is a camp for four- to seven-year-old children and those eight to 17. The club has nine separate teams (three men’s, five women’s and one junior) for different skill levels. Included in this is a senior team for men.

The event will be held Sunday, Apr. 26 at 2 p.m. in the event of rain. For more information and to request a brochure, call Marielise Watts at 914-769-7931 or visit www.PleasantvilleTennisClub.com.
The Restaurant Examiner

Spring Menu Unveiled at Mt. Kisco’s Café of Love

By Jerry Embinder

Leslie Lampert is the founder and proprietor of the popular Mount Kisco restaurant Café of Love, Ladle of Love (takeout only) and Love on the Run (off-premise catering).

Just over a decade ago she was one of America’s leading food writers. A senior editor at Ladies Home Journal, she wrote food features, among other responsibilities.

But Lampert liked making soup at home for her fledgling gift basket business so much that she decided to give up journalism to pursue a career in the food business. Her “reinvention of herself” was brought to the attention of a vast television audience on “The Oprah Winfrey Show” in 2008.

“It’s all about love,” Lampert said about her endeavors, “Love of food, community and cooking with a conscience.”

She sources many local ingredients and products and stresses the importance of contributing to the neighborhood’s economic (and overall) health.

Lampert, a White Plains resident, finished the 2015 spring dinner menu for Café de Love about a week ago and it debuted last weekend. She wrote the menu and the recipes.

“The kitchen staff creates the dishes with French technique and a whole lotta love,” she said.

The varied spring menu consists of 14 appetizers and 13 entrees — most of which are new dishes.

“The farmhouse salad and the bouillabaisse will stay on the menu forever; there would be a mutiny by my guests if I ever took them off,” Lampert commented.

No cuisine is off limits for Café de Love.

“The kitchen is my comfort zone, ” Lampert said.

The varied spring menu consists of 14 appetizers and 13 entrees — most of which are new dishes.

When local residents look for a place to go out to eat in Chappaqua, Le Jardin du Roi has been one of the more popular destinations over the past 14 years.

For lunch and dinner, the entrees receive special praise from Lampert.

“The kitchen is my comfort zone,” Donnelly said. “I hung out with my Irish grandma watching her cook from recipes in ‘The Joy of Cooking’ and ‘The New York Times Cookbook.’ When I was five years old, I already knew I would make my career in the kitchen.”

He began as an overnight cook at Ladle of Love, and shortly after, moved to Café de Love. He is the newest team member, having joined the restaurant five years ago.

“Your kitchen staff creates the dishes with French technique and a whole lotta love,” she said.

The varied spring menu consists of 14 appetizers and 13 entrees — most of which are new dishes.

“‘The kitchen is my comfort zone,’ ” Lampert said.

The varied spring menu consists of 14 appetizers and 13 entrees — most of which are new dishes.

Chappaqua Bistro Helps Mt. Kisco Pantry Raise Funds in New Program

By Martin Wilbur

When local residents look for a place to go out to eat in Chappaqua, Le jardin du Roi has been one of the more popular destinations over the past 14 years.

Now when patrons dine at the French Bistro, they not only can enjoy a meal out with friends or family, but can help others who are having a hard time putting food on the table.

In February, Le Jardin co-owner Joe Quartararo partnered with the Mount Kisco Interfaith Pantry to serve as the initial participant in the Shared Plates program. When each table receives its check, customers will also find a card in the bill folder where they may opt to add $1, $2, $5 or any amount to their check. The money that is added to the bill goes to the pantry.

Quartararo said he was honored to have his establishment launch the program.

“It’s great to be involved with a terrific organization like the Pantry,” he said. “We’re happy to be the ones introducing Shared Plates.”

The program is based on a similar concept that was started in London, said Lena Cavanna, one of the members of the food pantry board. For every dollar donated, the pantry can buy $4 of food, she said.

Since its launch, a few more restaurants have been included in the area served by the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, which is based out of the United Methodist Church of Mount Kisco on East Main Street and is open for distribution on Tuesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. and Wednesdays from 9:30 to 11 a.m. In addition to Mount Kisco and Chappaqua, the pantry’s territory also stretches to Bedford and Armonk.

Cavanna said there has been positive feedback from the public since the program’s inception nearly two months ago. At first, there was some concern about whether patrons would be put off by the request, she said. Organizers realized that the card couldn’t simply be left on the table, and found a discreet way to make sure diners see it without feeling pressured.

She hopes to eventually have a wide assortment of establishments throughout the area to participate in Shared Plates.

The Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry serves more than 300 people a week.

“When you think about that number and when you think of the rich area that we live in, it’s a shame that we have hungry people,” Cavanna said.

All of the pantry’s food, which includes fresh produce, dairy, frozen meat and fish, non-perishable staples, fresh eggs and bread, is bought through donations and fundraising efforts, she said. Its budget is about $200,000 a year.

For more information about the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, visit www.mountkiscofoodpantry.org.
Pleasantville Board of Ed Awards Three Bids; No Decision on Turf

continued from page 1

priced at about $250,000 and $400,000 more than the crumb rubber, respectively.

The lowest bid came from King's Capital Construction in Dobbs Ferry, which submitted a base bid of $1,403,200 for crumb rubber infill. It could also use an organic infill, which consists of 90 percent coconut and 10 percent cork, for an additional $105,000.

District officials explained that even though the organic infill is priced slightly higher, they are able to consider it as an option because bids for other projects came in lower than expected. In addition, the second phase of the capital improvements project, which is currently awaiting state Education Department (SED) approval and includes $1 million worth of technology and safety improvements, can be funded from the Smart Schools Bond Act for technology upgrades instead of using money from the $3.5 million bond approved by district voters last May.

"The long and the short of it is, though, the way the numbers came in, when it comes to the fields, economically we have two very viable choices," McGaffey said.

Although crumb rubber remains on the table for now, some residents are steadfastly against using the substance because they believe the product is linked to an increased cancer risk. There is currently no definitive scientific link between crumb rubber and cancer.

"I feel it's a choice between something we believe is toxic, [which] has a lot of pointers it is toxic, and something that may be possible for a bit more money, and I very strongly recommend the board considers the health of our children," said resident Helen Meurer. "I don't feel there's a need to install something that the public is finding to be inappropriate for children to play on."

Matthew Finkelstein, a founding member of Parents Advocating Clean TurfGrass (PACT), submitted a petition to the board of education asking that it choose the safest nontoxic option that is independently certified and doesn't include carbon black, carcinogens, BPA or other chemicals.

D'Angelo said he's not sure that any product will meet every requirement in the petition, but explained that a material data sheet will give a detailed summary of the chemicals and materials that will be in the product that is selected. This information will not be obtained until the bid is awarded, however.

Finkelstein and other residents were also concerned about the materials to be used in the drainage pad that will be underneath each field, especially at Bedford Road School (BRS), which will use only a shock absorbing pad without any infill. They asked that the board utilize polypropylene, which they believe to be the most benign substance for the project, as opposed to polystyrene, which is essentially Styrofoam and contains a variety of chemicals.

District officials said they can request that the eventual contractor use one product over another, but can't require it because it was not included in the original bid specifications.

The board will vote to award the bid for the athletic field's project and decide which infill will be used at its meeting tonight (Tuesday).

Last week they awarded the bids for the three remaining aspects of the Phase 1 projects. The bid for site construction, which consists of paving and sidewalk repairs at BRS, was awarded to Avanti Building Construction Corp. of Mount Vernon for $123,800. The general construction bid, which includes changes to the BRS vestibule doors and removal and replacement of the asbestos ceilings at the middle school, was awarded to Peter A. Camilli & Sons of Pleasantville for $280,000. The middle school roof replacement bid of $867,500 went to Sea Breeze General Construction, Inc. of Astoria, Queens.

The board also added a concrete pad near the dumpsters at BRS for $11,000 and partial replacement of the middle school roof for $13,500. That section was not included in the original bid because it is only 10 years old, but Director of Facilities Steve Chamberlain explained that replacing it now would be easier than attempting to repair the roof's hard-to-reach portions in the future.

"I would hate to redo the roof, and five or six years from now that small area starts to leak, then you have to stage something up on a roof that you've just redone," he said.

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P’ville Students to Talk Up Their Travels Abroad at Annual Event

By Janine Bowen

While most teenagers may spend their summers lounging by the pool, a select group of Pleasantville High School students have elected to spend their time off halfway around the world and engage in community service and cultural immersion.

On Apr. 24, students in the Pleasantville International Association (PIA) will share their experiences of having traveled abroad last summer during the annual International Night held at the Holy Innocents Church social hall.

At the event, the 12 students who took trips last year will each prepare appetizers from the country they visited while the four students who plan to travel this summer will make desserts that are popular in their destination of choice. The event features an open bar with international wine and beer, silent and live auctions and performances from three local bands.

“It’s a nice evening. It’s good food and...it’s all decorated with all of the flags and we do international themes and international music,” said PIA co-President Elizabeth Kwiat.

Kwiat’s daughter, Katelynn, traveled to Botswana last summer where she lived with a local family for three weeks. During her visit, she experienced what it was like to live with a family with eight children, began to learn the native language and helped to paint a wildlife center. While Katelynn Kwiat, a high school junior, was able to live in a home with electricity, other program participants lived a more primitive lifestyle.

Pleasantville High School senior Katie O’Neil went to Tanzania where she lived in huts with a local tribe for a portion of her stay. Both girls noted that they experienced some culture shock at the start, needing to adjust to new foods, an abundance of chores and a slower pace of life.

“They don’t keep track of time. They just do what they have to do; nothing’s rushed, you don’t have to be at a certain place at a certain time,” O’Neil said.

Kwiat and O’Neil agreed that their experiences were unique and urged other students to participate. Elizabeth Kwiat said traveling abroad makes students more independent and gives them a sense of accomplishment that many high school kids don’t experience.

PIA requires that each student in a given year visits a different country. Participants meet up with students in similar programs from around the country and travel with them.

Kwiat and O’Neil said their trips gave them an opportunity to make friends with people they would not have met otherwise. Kwiat added that she is already planning to reunite with members of her group this summer.

“From a parent’s perspective, there were more tears when she came home than when I dropped her off,” said Elizabeth Kwiat.

International Night is scheduled for 7 p.m. Tickets are $25 in advance or $30 at the door for adults and $10 for seniors and children under 18. The event is one of two big fundraisers PIA hosts each year. Proceeds are given to students as a stipend to help fund their trip.

Currently, PIA is open only to sophomores or juniors, but Elizabeth Kwiat explained that freshman will be able to participate for the first time next year. Although students will still be unable to embark on their trip until sophomore year, the younger students will be given the extra year to participate in PIA fundraisers to save for the trip.

P’ville, Fox Lane Students Interact With Leading Historian at the Burns

By Martin Wilbur

Students in AP European History classes at Pleasantville and Fox Lane high schools had a special opportunity last week to listen and interact with one of the world’s acclaimed historical scholars.

The Jacob Burns Film Center, in conjunction with its ongoing Jewish Film Festival, was able to arrange for the screening of a nearly one-hour episode of Simon Schama’s “Story of the Jews,” a five-episode project that was originally produced for and aired on BBC in 2013 before being shown last year on PBS in the U.S.

Before the Apr. 9 screening, Schama, a Briarcliff Manor resident and a professor of history and art history at Columbia University, spoke to the students about the documentary, then participated in a Q&A about various issues raised in the episode.

The episode that was shown, “Leap of Faith,” traced the transformation of Jewish life in Europe when progressive thinkers of the Enlightenment encouraged greater participation of Jews in society.

The result transported Jews from the ghettos to astonishing accomplishments and career successes, including the great composer Felix Mendelssohn. But over the generations as they became part of mainstream European culture, old prejudices resurfaced in the latter part of the 19th century, paving the way for alarming anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

Schama said a continuing dilemma over the centuries for Jews, stretching from the Enlightenment through Hitler’s rise to power, was how much should they integrate and immerse themselves in their country’s culture or stay on its outskirts.

Much of the world’s Jewry has faced that dilemma at one time or another, except perhaps for many in the United States, a country comprised of immigrants, he said.

Fox Lane Social Studies teacher Bill Broggy, who brought his students to the program, said he wanted to give his class a clear understanding of why the 20th century unfolded the way it did in Europe.

“I thought it was helpful for my AP Euro kids to see what’s happening in the 19th century that contributed to the rise in anti-Semitism in the 20th century, where they took this terrible action against these European Jews,” Broggy said.

His counterpart at Pleasantville High School, Virginia Mancini, said the extreme prejudices that led to are sometimes difficult for this generation to fully appreciate.

“I think the kids in Pleasantville believe in the democratic principles and acceptance,” she said. “Every once in a while you’re going to have somebody who doesn’t, but most generally, they’re very, very welcoming and accepting.”

Emily Keating, director of education programs, said the film center had discussed a program with local students when Schama attended last year’s festival. She said she hopes that classes in future years could have a similar experience with Schama or other notable scholars and filmmakers.
Pleasantville’s Alyssa Rufino and Nicole Nero of Briarcliff Chase After a Ground Ball in the Championship Game of the 2015 Mt. Pleasant Cup