Fundraiser Set for May 31 in Armonk

‘Miles for Miles’ Mental Health Fundraiser Set for May 31 in Armonk

Chap Crossing Developer Proposes Affordable Units for Cupola Building

By Martin Wilbur

Chappaqua Crossing developer Summit/Greenfield has proposed moving up to 32 affordable housing units into the top two floors of the property’s iconic cupola building, now a largely vacant office building.

Under a revised plan discussed at last Tuesday night’s New Castle Town Board work session, the project’s 91 market-rate units would remain in the residential portion of the 114-acre property, referred to as the East Village, and become fee simple townhouses. The town originally approved 111 residences in April 2011—61 townhomes, 30 flats and 20 affordable units for that section of the parcel.

Felix Charney, Summit Development’s president and CEO, said switching the location of the affordable housing would help to integrate residential units throughout a greater portion of the site, find a use for a portion of the former Reader’s Digest’s most recognizable building and provide more affordable units than originally planned.

Under the 32-unit plan, there would be 26 one-bedroom or studio apartments, four two-bedroom apartments and two three-bedroom units, Tung said. The previous plan featured 18 two-bedroom units and two three-bedroom apartments in two multistory structures.

Despite the increase in the number of residential units throughout the property, “This responds to a whole host of things that we were asked to do,” Charney said. “We were asked to come up with an adaptive reuse of the building; one was to create something a little more creative than mothballing this really amazing space.”

Project planner Andrew Tung said 28 to 32 affordable units can be created, taking up roughly 40,000 square feet on the building’s third and fourth floors. Summit/Greenfield has been unable to rent the office space on those levels and does not view the location as particularly attractive for potential office tenants, he said.

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Despite the increase in the number of residential units throughout the property,

continued on page 4

P’ville School Board Takes Stand Against Performance Reviews

By Janine Bowen

The Pleasantville School District took a stand last week against Annual Professional Performance Reviews (APPR) by unanimously approving two resolutions opposing the state-mandated practice.

One resolution, authored by board President Shane McGaffey, states that the current APPR model relies too heavily on unproven state tests and calls for a system that can be validated and deliver higher standards and teacher accountability.

A separate resolution from the Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association that was also adopted by Pleasantville asks the state to convene a task force to evaluate state tests. It also requests that the Board of Regents and state legislators perform a detailed review of the system using expert input.

The Board of Regents, which has been seeking public input, has been asked to develop a new APPR model, the third in the last four years. Pleasantville trustees are taking issue with the evaluations that will be largely tied to state test scores and three snapshot observations to be conducted by an independent evaluator.

Teachers are rated as ineffective, developing, effective or highly effective. Board members fear that two evaluations of “developing” could cost teachers

continued on page 22

‘Miles for Miles’ Mental Health Fundraiser Set for May 31 in Armonk

By Martin Wilbur

When Miles Applebaum was a student at Byram Hills High School, running on the cross-country team was one of several activities he loved to do.

On Sunday, May 31, community members will turn out on the same trails he traversed near the school’s grounds to remember and honor Applebaum at the inaugural running of the Team Daniel Runs Miles for Miles 5K. Applebaum, a 21-year-old Armonk resident and talented musician, committed suicide early last fall after having battled depression.

Organized by Armonk residents Ann and Rob Laitman, the event is designed to raise awareness and money for mental health issues.

continued on page 22
P'ville Assisted Living Plan: Developer submits zoning request for
environmental impacts and the amount of the 24,000-square-foot building,
as potential noise, the use and mass the proposal regarding issues such by Benchmark's representatives. The week's meeting, with four residents to a dozen neighbors attended last hearing the neighbors' concerns. Close Benchmark is adjusting its plans after lot. The latter proposal drew the ire of with vehicles cutting through the church Road rather than using Maple Hill Road the facility's entrance point. The updated met. "

Dwyer said. "Commercial area, upon conditions are met.

Scherer said he was happy that it can be anywhere in the village, "

"But there is a lot to be said down the chance to take a look at it, " Scherer said.

"I am certainly pleased thus far with terms of the documents they have provided that I think will give everyone a

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Chap Crossinng Developer Proposes Affordable Units for Cupola Building

continued from page 1

the bedroom count would remain at 244, Tung said. That would not impact much of the already completed work under the state Environmental Quality Review Act, he said.

The proposal is supported by Westchester County if the town government is on board, said Norma Drummond, the county’s deputy commissioner of planning. County officials are racing the clock to comply with the affordable housing settlement with the federal government, which calls for 750 units to be built in Westchester by the end of next year. Currently, 468 new units have been financed, she said.

"The county certainly supports adaptive reuse of all buildings in the county," Drummond said. "There's a great historic treasury of buildings in the county, particularly this building, and for our affordable (housing) families to say they live in this iconic building is just going to be a treat."

Summit/Greenfield hopes to have the property's iconic building.

The proposal, although two council members, Lisa Katz and Adam Brodsky, expressed concerns about certain aspects of the plan.

Greenstein said he liked the revised proposal since all the market-rate units would now be fee simple. As a result, it should generate significantly greater revenue for the town and school district. He also said this would be a vastly superior site for affordable housing than the controversial Conifer Realty project on Hunts Place.

"We would be building here the best affordable housing in Westchester, if not the state, and one of the things that I've said and I know other people have said as far as the Conifer site is that this directly reflects the values of our community," Greenstein said.

However, Katz said she was skeptical about Summit/Greenfield’s motives. Its representatives were portraying the updated proposal as a boon for the town but weren't providing details about what the developer would derive, she said.

At one point during the discussion, Katz, who was the dissenting board member during last December’s rezoning vote to allow retail use at Chappaqua Crossing, said Summit/Greenfield was probably in line for a financial windfall because the market-rate portion of the property would become more valuable.

"It's not just that you are just giving us out of the goodness of your heart to make this wonderful for us," Katz told Charney. "Don't pull the wool over our eyes. We are not just out of the goodness of our heart to make this wonderful for us," Katz told Charney.

"It's not just that you are just giving us out of the goodness of your heart to make this wonderful for us," Katz told Charney. "Don't pull the wool over our eyes. We are not just out of the goodness of our heart to make this wonderful for us," Katz told Charney.

"I would hope to think we stumbled upon an incredibly cool idea about what to do with this...building and one that satisfies the needs of the town, the county, and creates a really good connection between what's going on," he said.

Brodsky said because Summit/Greenfield would now be using 40,000 square feet of office space, he was concerned about how much office space it would be "mothballing." The entire complex currently contains more than 660,000 square feet of office space, but Summit/Greenfield is capped at renting 500,000 square feet. It will demolish one building and may also take down all or part of another structure.

In response to concerns from the board that the affordable units would be segregated from the market-rate residences, Drummond said the county has no objection. It is much easier for developers to finance their projects if the affordable units are separate, she said.

Summit/Greenfield would need to submit a zoning petition and have a public hearing scheduled, said Town Attorney Nicholas Ward-Willis.

Marwell said his client would actively pursue the new affordable housing plan if the town board approves the Preliminary Development Concept Plan and the application of the retail zoning. A vote is scheduled on those elements for tonight (Tuesday).

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Judge Rejects Conifer’s Chappaqua Affordable Housing Permit Suit

By Martin Wilbur

A state Supreme Court justice on Wednesday rejected Conifer Realty’s injunction request against the Town of New Castle to prevent enforcement of the special permit’s 18-month deadline to complete construction of the Chappaqua affordable housing project.

Representatives of Conifer, which has proposed building 28 affordable units on about one-third of an acre at 54 Hunts Place, went to court in February arguing that the town code allows the permit to be in effect for 25 years to complete a workforce housing project without applying for and obtaining an extension.

The special permit was granted for the project by the town board on Sept. 10, 2013, and expired in March.

Conifer had argued that because there had been significant opposition to the project by some of the town’s residents, there could be motivation for the town board to reject granting an extension.

Calling the developer’s interpretation of the code “absurd,” state Supreme Court Justice Charles D. Wood sided with the town by ruling that Conifer erroneously applied a section of the code that allows the permit to be in effect for 25 years once construction is complete and a Certificate of Occupancy has been issued.

“Moreover, the Town’s interpretation of the Town Code is rational and reasonable,” Wood’s decision stated. “A 25-year time period would enable Conifer to move at a snail’s pace for two and a half decades from date of its special permit before the Town could assert its right, and would very likely eviscerate aspects of the legitimate zoning and planning goals of the town. Conifer’s interpretation defies common sense and the plain meaning of the Town Code.”

Randolph McLaughlin, an attorney for Conifer, said the developer filed a notice of appeal Thursday and has notified the town’s attorney of a formal request to extend the special use permit.

“We are confident that the request will be granted in light of Building Inspector (William) Maskiell’s recommendation to the board in February 2015 that an extension should be granted,” McLaughlin said in a statement.

Edward Phillips, one of the town’s attorneys, characterized special permit extensions as routine, particularly for a complicated application such as this. Phillips said officials had felt secure that their interpretation of the code was accurate.

Phillips, who concurred with McLaughlin that Maskiell had recommended an extension be granted, said the town was secure in its reading of the code.

“I think that our confidence in the interpretation of the code wasn’t just my confidence but also the confidence stated by the court and the judge,” he said.

The controversial application has generated intense debate over whether the site is appropriate for housing and would be safe for its residents. The parcel is wedged between the Saw Mill Parkway and the Metro-North train tracks. The building would be constructed with virtually no setback from the property lines.

Last fall, the county Board of Legislators approved funding for the project to have the 28 units count toward the 750 new units of affordable housing that Westchester must build by the end of next year to comply with the 2009 housing settlement with the federal government.

Earlier this year, Conifer was granted the necessary fire code variances by the state Board of Review. Most recently, it has been working with Metro-North to receive the necessary permission for the project to encroach on the railroad’s property.

A Jolly Good Fellow

Former village trustee Jonathan Cunningham, center, received Pleasantville Community Television’s 2015 Making a Difference Award on May 2. Cunningham was joined by PCTV board members and staff, left to right, Nick Antonaccio, Bernie Gordon, Shane McGaffey, Juliette Saiselin, Evelyn Latella and Ernie Csak.

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Critics: Teacher Pension System Key Source of High Taxes

By Martin Wilbur

As voters throughout New York State will decide their school district’s 2015-16 budget next week, most school officials have found ways to maintain programs despite the tax cap and lack of mandate relief.

However, there are some grassroots groups and individual citizens who believe that the tax cap, which was signed into legislation nearly four years ago, hasn’t had nearly the impact its advocates had hoped for because of outdated practices and runaway unfunded mandates.

One state mandate in particular continues to sap millions from district coffers and taxpayers’ wallets every year. In just a little more than a decade, employer contribution rates for the New York State Teachers Retirement System (TRS), the percentage of teachers’ salaries that districts must pay each year into the state pension, has risen from a microscopic 0.36 percent in 2002-03 to 17.53 percent this year.

With salaries and benefits routinely accounting for roughly 70 percent of district budgets statewide and about two-thirds of homeowners’ property tax bills going to the schools, calls for pension reform continue to rise.

“The fact that they can’t do something about it is a lie,” said Laury Pandelakis, a former Long Island teacher and assistant principal who is a member of the Manhasset Proponents for School Accountability, one of many grassroots taxpayer advocate groups around the state. “They can do something—hold down salaries. That’s what’s behind the contributions to pensions.”

While salaries play a major part in determining employer contribution rates, performance of the financial markets and the number of retirees are also significant variables, said John Cardillo, a spokesman for the TRS. In 2013, there were just over 147,000 retirees collecting a pension, up about 12,000 from 2010.

Although the TRS, established in 1921, failed to meet its ambitious 8 percent annual returns helping to necessitate catch-up payments during the past decade, it holds an average return of 9.2 percent over the past 20 years, Cardillo said.

Chappaqua resident Judy McGrath, chair of the Town of New Castle's Mandate Relief Committee, said common sense business practices that recognize modern economic challenges and are adhered to in the private sector still elude the state when it comes to managing public sector jobs and pensions.

McGrath is one of many who believe that a major salary driver has been the Triborough Amendment, an addition to the state’s Taylor Law more than 30 years ago that allows the terms of an expired contract to remain in effect. Triborough removes incentives for teachers unions to agree on new contracts, especially as districts look for concessions in tighter economic times, McGrath contended.

Bob O’ Baldwin, who blogs about excessive school taxes and pensions, particularly in his native Long Island, said it has become routine for pensions of retired superintendents to top $200,000 a year. For most retirees, their pension is determined by the average of their three highest consecutive annual salaries, typically the final three years of their career.

In Nassau and Suffolk counties, which has retired superintendents accounting for 23 of the top 24 TRS pensions in the state, four retirees receive an annual benefit in excess of $300,000, led by former Commack Union Free School District superintendent James Feltman’s $325,854.36 pension, according to the nonpartisan Empire Center for Public Policy.

Nineteen retired Westchester superintendents also crack the top 100 in the state, led by former Ossining schools chief Phyllis Glassman’s $213,052.92 pension. The Empire Center reported that about 2,300 retirees receive at least $100,000 a year.

continued on next page
“Money for education has become money for educators,” O’Baldwin said. “Students, programs, services, buildings, taxpayers and the local New York economy are getting the short end of the stick.”

Despite some public angst over escalating pensions and district contributions, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) union spokesman Carl Korn said that anger toward teachers who have earned their pensions is misplaced.

Although the high-profile six-figure pensions receive the publicity, the average current TRS pension is about $35,000 a year across the state, he said. In many instances older teachers and retirees had relinquished greater potential salary during their careers in exchange for greater benefits, Korn said. Additionally more than 90 percent of the TRS pensions are being paid for by member contributions and return on investments, not taxpayers, he said.

But Korn said there were few complaints from the public in the late 1990s into the early 2000s, when the formulas dictated minimal district contributions. From 1997-98 through 2002-03, districts contributed a high of 1.43 percent of teachers’ salaries (1999-2000). It fell to as low as 0.36 percent (2001-02 and 2002-03).

“Where were these same people from 1997 to 2002 when the districts paid very little?” Korn said.

Revisions to TRS, such as the addition of Tier 6, which increases individual teachers’ contributions to as high as 5 percent and requires a later retirement age, will likely take a generation to help the situation, critics argue.

Last year just 17,368 out of 270,039 TRS members belonged to Tier 6, according to statistics provided by the TRS. Coupled with the state legislature’s decision in 2000 to eliminate the 3 percent employee contribution for Tier 3 and 4 members after 10 years of service, districts have had to foot an increasing percentage of the contributions, McGrath said.

Last year, just over 230,000 current TRS members--about 85 percent--are in either Tier 3 or 4, the TRS reported. However, those who want reform, whether they be part of taxpayer advocate groups or are more progressive, point out that there has yet to be the political will to make serious changes. Assemblyman Tom Abinanti (D-Pleasantville) said he introduced a measure three years ago that requires the state to foot the bill for pensions that exceed the 2 percent tax cap.

Despite getting state Sen. George Latimer to carry the bill in the Senate, his proposal has gone nowhere, Abinanti said.

David O’Halloran, a trustee in the Roudout Valley Central School District in Ulster County, said the lack of meaningful pension reform and mandate relief and the presence of the tax cap may eventually force more districts to take drastic action, such as mergers.

“At the end of the day, if the pensions fail to live up to projections, taxpayers are the ones who are forced to make them whole,” O’Halloran said.

Top 10 Westchester Teacher Retirement System Pensions

While some people may be surprised at the high pensions former Westchester superintendents receive, they can’t compete with some of the recipients from Long Island districts, which account for 23 of the highest 24 pensions.

The largest Westchester Teacher Retirement System pension is collected by former Ossining School District superintendent Phyllis Glassman, but she ranks just 25th highest in the state, according to The Empire Center for Public Policy.

Below are the top 10 Westchester TRS pensions:

1. Phyllis Glassman (Ossining): $215,052.92 (25th highest)
2. Robert V. Lichtenfeld (Katonah-Lewisboro): $205,436.52 (32nd)
3. Paul R Fried (Mamaroneck): $201,767.40 (37th)
4. Kenneth J. Connolly (Lakeland): $200,163.84 (39th)
5. Joanne A. Marien (Somers): $199,023.36 (41st)
7. Bruce L. Dennis (Bedford): $193,503.00 (48th)
8. John A. Chambers (Byram Hills): $187,834.20 (58th)
9. Richard E. Maurer (Ardsley): $186,906.60 (62nd)
10. Donald A. Antonecchia (Pleasantville): $186,765.24 (63rd)
Four Candidates Square Off in Mt. Pleasant Board of Ed Race

By Neal Rentz

Change on the Mount Pleasant Board of Education is guaranteed come July. Two incumbents, school board President James Grieco and fellow incumbent Vincent D'Ambroso did not seek re-election, paving the way for current Trustee Thomas McCabe to face newcomers Peter Peale, Colleen Tully and Colleen Scaglione Neglia for three seats in next Tuesday's race.

Voting takes place on May 19 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at Westlake High School.

Thomas McCabe

McCabe, 53, an account executive for a technology company, said he was seeking another term because he has the passion and desire to improve Mount Pleasant's schools.

Improvement of the infrastructure is essential despite the recent overwhelming defeats of capital projects bonds primarily for work at the middle school and high school. He hasn't given up hope that some of the most pressing matters can be addressed in a future referendum but short-term fixes are the option that's currently available.

"Without a bond approval the district will have to be reactive on infrastructure fixes as the systems fail or are mandated by the state or as they become too costly or impossible to maintain," said McCabe, who is also a member of the district's Audit Committee.

He supports programs that enhance students' educational experience, such as the International Baccalaureate middle years program and eventually the IB diploma program.

McCabe said he backs the principles behind Common Core to help students develop critical thinking skills rather than regurgitate memorized facts. However, rushing to install a one-size-fits-all standard has been "a complete disaster."

"Regardless of how it is being so poorly managed by state bureaucrats, we need to trust our district leaders, teachers and parents to adapt and align with the standards that best service our students," he said.

He also supports changes in the teacher's evaluation system. While McCabe said educators should be held accountable for students' results, the costs for the friction between the state and the unions is prohibitive. The district needs to adhere to the mandate to protect its state funding by improving evaluation systems which do rely as much on standardized testing, he said. Real reform in the tenure system is also needed, McCabe added.

Colleen Scaglione Neglia

Neglia, 44, said if she's elected she would try to bring the school community closer together.

With three children in the district, Neglia said she has a fresh perspective and a feel for the schools. She also believes in pushing for change in a fiscally responsible manner.

"Residents of Mount Pleasant are strongly divided along ideological lines and are expressing their frustration in negative and unproductive ways," said Neglia, who previously worked as an assistant vice president for a Standard and Poor's 500 company before being a stay-at-home mom the last two years. "I want to break down the divide and reunite our town. Residents should feel comfortable expressing their opinions in the appropriate forums that allow the school board to understand their concerns and lead to practical solutions."

Neglia supports the district's 2015-16 budget and backs another capital projects referendum as soon as the fall.

"From the two defeats, the community is clearly looking for incremental increases and not a massive change as illustrated in a smaller defeat of the second bond," Neglia said.

But the district must spend wisely, efficiently plan projects and minimize disruption to learning. She said boilers at three of the district's four schools must be replaced and the ventilation at the middle school and high school should be addressed.

Neglia, who has also served as co-president of the Westlake Middle School PTA and was a parent member of the Curriculum Initiative Assessment Committee, said she supports the initiation of the International Baccalaureate program at the middle school and more challenging elementary school classes.

She would have preferred to see a phase-in of Common Core starting with kindergarten and allowing students to grow with the standards. Neglia is critical of the heavy dependency on tests to evaluate teachers and wants that changed by the state Education Department (SED).

Peter Peale

Although Peale, 48, hasn't served previously on committees, he said that continued on next page
Four Candidates Square Off in Mt. Pleasant Board of Ed Race

Peter Peale

should be explored with input from parents and their children, Peale said, but changes are needed in how teachers are evaluated. A system that relies on half a teacher’s evaluation based on test scores is wrong.

“I believe that a system that evaluates teachers heavily by a student's test score performance fails to look at the issue as a whole rather than one aspect,” Peale said. Peale believes a compromise will eventually be reached on that issue and school officials should work toward that goal.

With education constantly evolving, district residents should provide the direction they wish to pursue, Peale said. To invite more opinion, he has set up an e-mail address, ppboecad@outlook.com, and would arrange for in-person meetings with constituents.

Catherine Tully

Tully said she is running to help the community deliver the highest quality education. She said the board must effectively communicate with residents and constituents, Tully said. The double defeat of the bond proposals was a sign of mistrust and miscommunication, she said.

“If these projects are absolutely critical to providing a quality standard of education for the students, not only do we have to effectively communicate this, we must also reassure the community that the funding of these projects has been estimated in a cost-conscious manner,” Tully said.

The district must address declining enrollment and “right size” the schools and the budget. The campus footprint should not be expanded until school officials and the community agree on a path.
Police Blotter

Mount Kisco Police Department

May 4: Report of a disturbance on Pleasantville Road at 8:24 a.m. The caller stated that the fight ended. He returned to the scene at 5:19 p.m. and stated that a vehicle sideswiped a parked car.

May 5: Report of a hit-and-run accident on Pleasantville Road at 8:49 p.m. The driver was identified and a summons was issued.

May 6: Report of a theft from a residence on Westview Drive at 2:22 p.m. The caller stated that the thief had entered the residence and taken a bicycle.

May 7: Report of a domestic dispute at a residence on Pleasance Avenue at 11:33 p.m. The responding officer reported that the parties were acquainted and had ended before the officer arrived.

Pleasantville Police Department

May 2: Police impounded a 2010 Saab at 4:30 p.m. The driver was identified and a summons was issued.

May 3: Report of a disturbance on Main Street at 10:35 p.m. The caller stated that the fight ended before the officer arrived. Both parties declined to press charges.

May 4: A 31-year-old Brewster man was arrested at 1:35 a.m. on South Moger Avenue after having been observed urinating on the side of a building. The responding officer also discovered a small quantity of marijuana on the subject. He was charged with seventh-degree criminal possession of a controlled substance, a Class A misdemeanor, and urinating in public, a violation.

May 5: Report of a disturbance on Main Street at 11:30 p.m. The caller stated that the fight ended before the officer arrived. Both parties declined to press charges.

May 6: A 27-year-old Katonah man turned himself in at headquarters at 7:10 p.m. and was arrested on a bench warrant for failure to appear in village's justice court. He had originally been arrested on a trespassing charge.

May 7: A 78-year-old Yorktown man was arrested at 9:48 p.m. and charged with DWI after being stopped on North Bedford Road. A caller had reported seeing the car he was driving being operated erratically. The responding officer was forced to move in front of the vehicle because the suspect was slowing down making it appear he would stop, then speed up again. The driver was also charged with failure to comply. He was released on his own recognizance.

North Castle Police Department

May 1: A caller reported at 9:06 a.m. that the windows of her vehicle, which was parked on Business Park Drive, were broken.

May 2: An Emmalon Avenue resident reported at 2:48 p.m. that he believes his son may have overdosed on heroin. The call was transferred to the Westchester County Department of Emergency Services, which dispatched Valhalla Ambulance and the North White Plains Fire Department and ALS. The responding officers reported that the party is conscious and is being transported to Westchester Medical Center.

May 4: An Evergreen Row resident reported at 10:08 a.m. that he has been renovating his house and when he returned this morning he found a bicycle left in the house and graffiti on the walls.
Action-Packed Weekend in Store for Downtown Chappaqua

By Martin Wilbur

There has been plenty of talk about improving downtown Chappaqua and increasing its vitality.

Permanent plans are in motion, but until those are in place, for one weekend the downtown should be buzzing with plenty of excitement.

On Saturday and Sunday, there will be six events, including three new additions to the calendar, that organizers hope will attract crowds of residents as well as out-of-town visitors, particularly if the weather cooperates.

Saturday morning is the re-opening of the Chappaqua Farmers Market at the train station from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the town’s nearby Take It or Leave It shop in the station’s parking lot. The farmers market is returning after its forced hiatus because of a lack of a suitable venue over the winter.

The Take It or Leave It Shop will be open from 9 a.m. to noon. Only New Castle residents may donate items to the shop but anyone from the public regardless of residency may pick up.

While those two town staples re-emerge after the long winter, two new events promise to add to the action on Saturday. The Northern Westchester Artists Guild will be unveiling its first Art Under the Bridge show from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., where local artists working in a variety of media will sell their works.

Coinciding with the launch of Art Under the Bridge is the first day of the new Chappaqua Flea Market from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The art show and the flea market will return the third Saturday of every month until November.

On Sunday, the Town of New Castle’s annual 10K will step off shortly after 8 a.m., while that is still ongoing, car lovers can head to Revs and Bevs, organized by town residents Sam Matluck and Sam Birenbaum, styled after the many classic automobile shows throughout the area. That will take place from 9 a.m. to noon at the train station’s rear parking lot near the old skate park.

Supervisor Robert Greenstein said he’s optimistic that having crowds flock to the train station and adjacent areas will not only make it a fun and successful weekend for vendors and shoppers but could provide a residual effect for downtown merchants.

“The bottom line is we have this gigantic train station and we should use it as often as we can,” Greenstein said.

Farmers market director Pascale Le Draoulec said many of the public’s favorite vendors will return for the 2015 season. As always there will be a few new features, including two wood-burning pizza ovens and an artisanal baker using locally sourced ingredients.

She said with a more than five-month break, the anticipation of the market’s return could be a strong drawing card, especially with all the activity that’s going on downtown.

Peg Sackler, one of the organizers for Art Under the Bridge, said there will be paintings, ceramics, photography, jewelry designers, fiber artists and many others types of work. The artists will display their works under cover from the elements in the shadows underneath the Route 120 bridge.

All the work displayed will be from local artists and will be on sale, Sackler said.

Joining them is Ilana Arazie, who is bringing the flea market she started in Hastings in 2013 to Chappaqua this weekend. She’s also starting one at Rye Playland.

“It’s a fun experience,” Arazie said. “I’ve always loved festivals, street fairs and carnivals. There’s something about people gathering together outside in the sun and meeting, and sharing their merchandise, stories and more.”

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EMPIRE CITY CASINO
Westlake Proposes Internship Program With Town Government

By Neal Rentz

The Mount Pleasant Town Board expressed support for a Westlake High School proposal to extend an internship program that would include work in town government primarily for special education students.

Westlake High School Transition Program Coordinator Kerry McKenna, special education teacher Alex Casabona and Westlake parent Mary Ward pitched their proposal at last week’s Mount Pleasant Town Board work session for the idea that could begin as early as next academic year.

McKenna said the school was looking to have about 10 students participate in internship programs in town government, with about five or six of the participants special education students between 16 and 20 years old. The remainder of the slots would be open to regular education students who are juniors or seniors.

During the early stages of the internship, students would be accompanied by a job coach hired by the school, Casabona said.

Last year, a Westlake High School special education student interned at the Mount Pleasant Public Library in Pleasantville, Casabona said. This year, another is interning at Walgreens in Thornwood, she said.

McKenna said all students who successfully complete an internship are eligible for a New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies Commencement Credential. The credential's purpose is to indicate readiness for an entry-level job. It is particularly helpful for special education students who are unable to earn a Regents or regular high school diploma, Casabona said.

McKenna said by having students, especially special education students, intern in town government they would be recognized in the local community, which could help them get jobs closer to home after high school.

Ward said her son, Sean, and other special education students at the high school could benefit by receiving the critical job skills that a successful town government internship could provide.

"I would love to be involved with this program," Supervisor Carl Fulgenzi said.

McKenna said he would return to the town board with a formal proposal created by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Susan Guiney or Westlake High School Principal Keith Schenker.

Power-armed Mount Kisco Little League pitcher Will Oliverio uncorks a fastball at the Examiner Media Green Team’s game on Saturday morning at Leonard Park. See Sports for more photo coverage.

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Letters to the Editor

Indian Point Transformer Fire Raises Questions About Pipeline

Last Saturday’s transformer fire at the Indian Point Energy Center is a reminder that we must be extremely vigilant with safety protections and oversight at this facility. Over the past few months, I have actively opposed the siting of the 42-inch high pressure AIM gas pipeline near the nuclear power plant.

I am well aware that there are numerous safety protections in place at Indian Point, with back-ups upon back-ups. In fact, transformer fires do happen and the plant did take appropriate actions to deal with this one. Nevertheless, to add yet another high-powered energy distribution system into the equation really seems to be tempting fate. Just because it is expedient to make this the chosen path for the pipeline does not make it wise. This particular emergency was contained, but even with a relatively minor event such as this in the scope of Indian Point, unexpected circumstances can lead to unexpected reactions.

Gov. Cuomo stated about the accident at Indian Point, “Anything that happens at this plant obviously raises concerns. A transformer fire in and of itself was not dangerous, but the fear is always that one situation is going to trigger another...”

A confluence of high-energy power generation and distribution at this location is literally asking for trouble. This is not the only option, and therefore should not be the chosen option for the AIM gas pipeline siting. I urge New York state to seek a stay from the federal government on the approval to site a pipeline at this locale. We must conduct an independent risk analysis using research from past gas line explosions to determine if there really is no additional threat to public safety with this new high-powered pipeline at this location. The safety of our public is at stake.

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef
95th Assembly District

Bicyclists Must Follow Traffic Laws the Same as Motorists

Most cyclists are not aware that they are subject to the same rules of the road as motorists. This means that they are required to obey traffic signals and speed laws, yield right of way to other vehicles as prescribed by DMV rules, operate in a safe and prudent manner and, of course, yield to all pedestrians.

The vast majority of bicycle riders do not know the rules of the road or that they pertain to them as well. Unfortunately, far too many motorists don’t know the rules of the road either.

The result is that there are far too many collisions involving bicyclists and motorists, often resulting in severe injuries. I pass the crosswalk of the Buckshollow Road pedestrian trail daily and bicycle riders are constantly ignoring stop signs on the trail that are intended for them and recklessly crossing Union Valley Road. In so doing they are at risk of being hit by an oncoming motor vehicle or cause a collision with other motorists as they abruptly stop.

Then there are those unwitting motorists who cause accidents or near accidents from vehicles approaching them from the rear by stopping in the middle of the road and wave these bicyclists across the road. By encouraging the cyclist to violate traffic laws they are technically in violation of traffic laws.

Finally there is the inconsiderate pedestrian who is no doubt aware of state law granting them the right of way in an intersection. However, this does not entitle them to ignore stop signs and crossing only when the traffic allows. This is called jaywalking, which is dangerous to pedestrians and motorists and subject to citation.

I suggest that the trail have designated bicycle lanes and that signs be placed reminding them that they are subject to the rules of the road and violations will be prosecuted accordingly. Let’s do this before someone is killed, not wait until it is too late to save that life.

Andrew Powers
Mahopac

Traffic Laws the Same as Motorists

As a parent of a young student and an attorney, I strongly encourage all to vote for her on the BCSD Achievement Committee (2009-13).

I am well aware that there are numerous safety protections in place at Indian Point, with back-ups upon back-ups. In fact, transformer fires do happen and the plant did take appropriate actions to deal with this one.

Traffic Laws the Same as Motorists

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Correction

In last week’s sports section, Horace Greeley High School lacrosse coach and one of its players were misidentified. The team’s head coach is Kevin Kuczma and Jacob Brandes plays for Greeley, not for Westlake High School. The Examiner regrets the errors.

Chappaqua School Buses Avoid Town’s Most Perilous Intersections

It was surprising to me how many people were not aware of our policies regarding our Chappaqua Transportation school cars, vans and buses, policies that I put into effect when I came to Chappaqua in 1970.

Our vehicles are not allowed to turn left from Hardscrabble Road onto Route 120. They are not allowed to come down the King Street hill into town unless they have students to drop off along the route. Most importantly, our vehicles are not allowed to cross the railroad tracks at Reader’s Digest Road. It might take longer to get to our destinations, but it has always been about safety first.

Joan Corwin,
President, Chappaqua Transportation
By Martin Wilbur

Alex Chin attended his first karate class when he was four-and-a-half years old to help protect himself against bullies.

What started out as a plan for self-defense and to raise self-esteem, has helped Chin in most every aspect of his life.

“Even after the bullying stopped, I still kind of stuck with karate because it didn’t become about how to defend myself, it was more about the morals that you get from karate,” Chin said.

He has stuck with it now for 10 years. A Horace Greeley High School freshman, Chin earned his black belt on Apr. 17, just the 18th student in 36 years to enter Chin in most every aspect of his life.

But it’s not only Chin’s achievements at the dojo. He credits karate with giving him the ability to juggle his own training, which became progressively more difficult as he approached his black belt test, with teaching children at the school every Saturday morning, playing the cello, going to Boy Scouts with designs on becoming an Eagle Scout and playing on Greeley’s junior varsity football team. All of this has been accomplished while maintaining a 3.5 GPA.

Chin said there is definitely a connection between the discipline needed at excelling at karate and other pursuits.

“It’s definitely a lot of time management,” he said. “I try to get a lot of my homework done in school and that way by the time I get out of school I come home (and) play my cello. It’s definitely hard.”

Dwyer said he wasn’t necessarily surprised at Chin’s rise to elite territory, that it wasn’t a consistently upward trajectory, said Sensei Mark Dwyer, his instructor at the school.

“When Alex came to my class, he was a short pudgy kid, he had asthma, he would have a hard time running up and down with the class, but he kept showing up and kept coming on Saturdays for classes and he’d come and stay for many hours of training,” Dwyer said. “I knew back then he was strong but out of shape. As he got into better and better shape he became a very powerful person, that this was going to be good for him, and he’s a very dedicated kid.”

Of course, like with many youngsters, it wasn’t a consistently upward trajectory, said Chin’s father, Ken. Despite enjoying karate, there were days when Alex didn’t care to go. But his father didn’t have to try very hard to motivate him.

“Like any other kid he’d say, ‘I don’t want to go,’ but I’d threaten him and say, ‘That’s it, there’s no more karate,’” Ken Chin said.

“He would acquiesce and say, ‘Okay, what do you need me to do because I’m going to go to karate. So deep down he really liked it and hopefully he continues to for the rest of his life.”

Chin has no plans to quit karate—there are actually 10 degrees of black belt—although Dwyer said that after he passed the black belt test and his family had a celebration that night he took the next morning off. He needed to take a one-day respite.

“It just felt so rewarding with your mom and dad with you, to continue and to go on higher,” Chin said.

His father said that Alex almost gave up football this year because he was concerned about how he would fare in high school and wanted to maintain strong grades.

Chin said he is already preparing for his Eagle Scout project. He plans on getting a group of scouts to help him delve into the history of the names of the town’s servicemen listed on Chappaqua’s downtown memorial and write short a story about each of them and post them on a website.

Although he has three more years before college, Chin currently has another goal for the future: going to West Point.

Whatever he chooses to do, Alex’s father said that he knows his son understands that achieving anything of worth takes plenty of hard work.

“Just really proud that it’s something that he’s been so successful at and hope he continues it in all other aspects,” he said.

Kaitlyn Corbett has always called New York home. Born and raised in Buffalo, she earned her degree in nuclear power engineering at SUNY College of Technology and moved to Peekskill to start her career at Indian Point. Safety is the single most important mission for Kaitlyn and her 1,000 colleagues at the plant, and it’s been the focus of her years of study and training in the nuclear power industry. Every day, engineers are graded on their performance by inspectors from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The NRC recently gave Kaitlyn and the team at Indian Point its highest safety rating — for the fifth year in a row.

Discover more about Indian Point at SafeSecureVital.com
Walk-a-thon for Day Camp for Children With Cancer Set for June 14

On Sunday, June 14, Sunrise Day Camp – Pearl River will host its third annual fundraising walk-a-thon, SunriseWALKS, to help children with cancer and their siblings attend summer day camp free of charge.

This fun, noncompetitive event, which steps off at 10 a.m., will take place at the 95-acre Henry Kaufmann campground a short drive from the Tappan Zee Bridge. The day includes a one-mile walk and fun activities for the entire family, as well as food and refreshments.

“Everyone who participates in SunriseWALKS helps support the camp in a big way,” said Sandy Haft, the camp's director. “This allows us to continue to create a place where lives are changed for the better for children struggling with cancer.”

Last summer, the second year for Sunrise Pearl River, was a huge success with more than 130 children attending camp. The expectation is that the third year will be significantly larger. Every family whose children attend camp deals with the tremendous financial and emotional burdens of medical costs related to cancer treatments and hospitalizations.

“Sunrise Day Camp is a place where children enjoy just being kids and can forget about their illness,” Haft said. “It also provides a respite for parents and allows them to create some normalcy in their lives.”

Sunrise WALKS helps support the camp to avoid adding to that burden, Sunrise is offered completely free of charge. It is only through the generosity of others, and events like SunriseWALKS, that the camp can ensure no child is turned away.

“Sunrise Day Camp is a place where lives are changed for the better for children struggling with cancer,” Haft said. “It also provides a respite for parents and allows them to create some normalcy in their lives.”

Sunrise Day Camp is the only full summer dedicated day camp in the nation for children with cancer from three and a half to 16 years old. It is a joint program of the Friedberg JCC and the Rosenthal JCC and is a member of the Sunrise Association. The camp serves children from Manhattan, the Bronx, Westchester, Rockland and Orange counties, southern Connecticut and northern New Jersey.

For more information, to register or donate, visit www.sunriseWALKS.org or contact Marianne Bosshart at 914-741-0333 ext. 23 or e-mail Marianne@rosenthaljcc.org. Day-of-event registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

WCC Schedules Summer STEM + Arts Classes for Students

The Center for the Digital Arts in Peekskill is offering an array of STEM + Arts = STEAM courses for children and young adults this summer. The Westchester Community College Art and Science Precollege Institute classes for students seven to 17 years old are focused on merging the worlds of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and arts in order to provide young people with 21st century literacy and problem-solving skills.

The courses, ranging from $211 to $268, are intended to encourage students to have fun while honing their observational skills and merging the worlds of STEM and art: by painting and drawing (BioArt class), learning to code and control robots while utilizing Scratch software and using recyclable materials to make art and then generate songs about sustainability and raising consciousness about the natural world and our climate.

The Art and Science Precollege Institute classes are designed to spark the imagination and cultivate critical thinking skills that will serve students well as they move forward. They will be taught how to work collaboratively, express themselves and innovate by combining manual and digital skills to actualize a takeaway portfolio project.

The Art and Science Precollege Institute classes run in two-week intervals from July 6 through July 30. Details and course descriptions are available at www.sunywcc.edu/peekskill or www.sunywcc.edu/peekskillyouth.

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Westchester County Offers Camp for Almost Every Child’s Interest

Whether your youngster is a nature nut, a budding musician or a sports hound, Westchester County Parks’ popular summer camps offer something for kids of all ages and interests.

Boys and girls in grades 1-9 can hit the boards at the air-conditioned County Center during the Slam Dunk Basketball Camp. “Little Hoopers” in grades 1 and 2 runs from 8:30 a.m. to noon for $150 per session before June 30 or $175 afterward. Campers in grades 3-9 attend from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. for $325 per session before June 30 or $350 afterward. Four one-week sessions begin Monday, June 30. A special discount team rate of $250 per camper per week is also offered for 10 or more members from a basketball team who sign up for the same week. For more information and for a special group registration form, call 914-231-4673.

The Summer Music Center at the County Center is a six-week music instruction program for students in grades 3-12, providing daily class instruction in band and orchestral instruments as well as keyboard, guitar and recorder. The program runs from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. daily, from June 30 through Aug. 8. Tuition is $575 for Westchester resident participants registering before May 30, $625 after; keyboard students pay $675 before May 30 and $675 after). Non-residents add $75 to each fee. For more information, call 914-231-4673.

The Children’s Summer Ecology Program introduces children in grades 1-6 to the natural world and is conducted at three nature centers: Cranberry Lake Preserve in Cross River. Camp runs weekdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. beginning July 7. The fee is $275 per week. For information, call 914-864-7273.

Youngsters entering grades 7, 8 and 9 can learn outdoor skills that run the gamut from radio-tracking wood turtles to map reading during the Conservationists in Training program offered at Cranberry Lake Preserve and the Trailside Nature Museum. The program is held Mondays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in three two-week sessions beginning July 7. The fee is $725 for each session. For information, call 914-864-7273.

The Challenger Sports Soccer Camp for boys and girls in grades 1-9 is offered at V.E. Macy Park in Ardsley. Operated by the prestigious Westchester Soccer Academy, top-notch coaching is offered to kids in grades 1 and 2 during a half-day program from 9 a.m. to noon, while a full-day session is offered for children in grades 3-9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fees range from $132 to $245. Camp runs in six one-week sessions beginning June 22. For more information, call 914-714-8601 or visit challengersports.com.

The Perfect Pitch and Swing Baseball Camp provides children ages 8 to 12 with training that uses unique and innovative methods, combining traditional baseball skills with disciplines from other sports at V.E. Macy Park. The daily schedule includes drills, hitting, throwing/pitching, fielding instruction and games. For information, call 914-231-4673 for brochure and application.

Online registration for all camps has begun. Visit www.parks.westchestergov.com/activities/childrens-camps. For more information and for applications, call 914-231-4500.
My wife and I frequently comment about how barren those new multimillion-dollar condos in Manhattan look when we see those ads with only a sofa, a coffee table and maybe a sideboard in the living room.

God forbid you walk around in your underwear in that room, put your feet up and munch on a bagel with lox and cream cheese. How do you live in a room like that? And what do you enjoy visually, other than the view of the skyline? Maybe that’s the point? Just look beyond the void of the room into the wild blue yonder because there’s certainly nothing to ponder inside.

While most of us seem possessed with de-cluttering, especially when it comes time to sell our homes, fashion designer Iris Apfel, 93, is known for keeping her house filled with all sorts of treasures. When interviewed recently by The New York Times, she said, “I love clutter. I think being totally minimal shows a lack of history and soul, and I find it sort of pitiful. I think it’s wonderful to have stuff and live with memories and things you enjoy.”

My wife and I share the same sentiment. A few years ago when we unsuccessfully attempted to sell our house at a time when the housing market had ground to a halt, the hardest thing we had to do was pack up a large amount of our collections in boxes for the professional photographer. Those items are still in boxes waiting to be unpacked for a new home that is 2,000 square feet smaller, where we’ll have more display space for them.

It might seem ironic that we will have more display space in less square footage but that’s the way it’s being brilliantly planned for us by cabinetry genius Jan Efraimsen of Woodtronics in Yorktown Heights. (That story is for a future column.)

Yes, the next chapter of our lives will be spent sharing space with many years of collectables, all items that have personal meaning to us. Among them are those few things, heirlooms that have come from my parents and their parents: a Lionel train set from 1934, a Rosewood vase, a watercolor painting from my Aunt Helen, dated 1939. And from my wife, some pieces of Meissen china that her mother brought with her from Germany as a displaced person after World War II.

And from our marriage, all the things that we scoured Greenwich Village and lower Second Avenue antique shops for, before the skyscrapers were built. And later, all the delights we found throughout the Hudson Valley during our four decades of weekend field trips, combined with my scouting trips coast to coast and internationally. Each piece comes with a memory of where we bought it, what we paid for it and what it represents to us. Then, there is the fun of the connectivity of one thing to another.

For instance, while everything in our new home is basically in disarray as we wait for our cabinetry to be installed, we have only one surface for displaying a ragtag of collectables that I swept up myself on moving day. They include an odd assortment of things that you could imagine, some of which have given people pause to wonder and say, “What the heck is THAT?”

Mostly made of brass, they include: an 18th century candlestick; a candle snuffer; traveling inkwell; a glass globe with a brass base for the top of a newel post; a tea strainer; a large art décor dish; two elaborate European butter knives; a large 19th century door key; a perfume vial; a small sun dial; and a device to tap down tobacco with the likeness of George Washington.

These collectables may all seem disconnected from each other, but to me there is a mental exercise, connecting the dots of association, much like playing six degrees of separation from Kevin Bacon. Granted, to visitors, it offers only the experience of seeing great looking items on a coffee table.

I look at it philosophically. We have only so many years and our brains can contain only so many thoughts at the same time. Memories are very precious to all of us and having a home loaded with reminders of them enriches our lives. Therefore, wouldn’t it seem that minimalist environments make for minimalists lives? Or am I reaching here?

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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nyp.org/hudsonvalley
Twigs Celebrates 51st Year, $500G Pledge to NWH Emergency Dept.

At its annual awards luncheon on May 6 at Crabtree’s Kittle House in Chappaqua, over 100 members of the Twigs groups, supporters of Northern Westchester Hospital (NWH) celebrated several significant achievements.

President Maureen Kilfoyle presented a $90,000 check to NWH President and CEO Joel Seligman. The donation, which also provided $38,000 toward a new central monitoring system in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, completes a pledge of $500,000 for the hospital’s Emergency Department.

Displays highlighted the efforts of Twigs volunteers in creating layettes for newborns in the hospital’s Prenatal Care Center, in creating tray favors for patients and sewing cough pillows for surgery patients.

Elections were also held during the luncheon. The new officers for 2015-17 are: Maureen Kilfoyle of Chappaqua, president; Helen Ewen of Chappaqua, past president; vice presidents Cathy Higgins of Mount Kisco and Mandy Sherman and Kim O’Brien from Chappaqua; Christine Nelson of Mount Kisco, recording secretary; Margaret Marcogliese of Mount Kisco, corresponding secretary; and Deb Coffino of Chappaqua, treasurer. Also elected were shop managers Judy Houlihan and Giselle St. Vincent of Chappaqua and Rosemarie Marino of Pleasantville.

In addition, several volunteers were honored for their increased levels of service hours, notably Virginia Sweeney (7,000 hours), Linda Murphy (5,000 hours), Erika Miller (3,000 hours) and Hope Levene (2,500 hours). A silent auction and raffles showcased wonderful donations from local merchants.

The luncheon also featured a presentation by Dr. Alan Coffino, chief of medicine at NWH, who spoke about “staying healthy in your 50s and beyond.” He urged the group to make sure that your doctors take time with you, listen to you and talk to each other. Coffino advised that leading a healthy lifestyle involves staying in shape, keeping a list of medications with you at all times, listening to your own body, being happy and supporting something to make a difference.

Twigs is a nonprofit organization of volunteers dedicated to raising funds for Northern Westchester Hospital, principally by operating the Thrift Shop. They also make comfort items for patients.

Reservations Being Taken for Mt. Pleasant Italian American Association Dinner

The Mount Pleasant Italian American Association will present its annual Wine Tasting and Dinner Party on Friday, June 5 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 52 Garrigan Ave. in Thornwood. Non-members are welcome to attend. Reservations must be received by May 22. The event costs $35 per person.

Those interested in attending may make checks payable to MPIAA and mail to Jennifer O’Toole, 4 New St., Cold Spring, N.Y. 10516. For more information, call 1-845-809-5252 or e-mail jenniferotoole@icloud.com.

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Wood and Fire Pizza
Pleasantville

By Janine Bowen

A’Mangiare was a fixture in Pleasantville for almost two decades, but after closing the doors to that restaurant, owner Freddy Dolgetta has decided to bring a new restaurant to the village.

Wood and Fire Pizza opened to the public Apr. 16, but it’s not the first of its kind to be opened by Dolgetta. The restaurateur was in the process of creating a similar establishment in Del Ray, Fla., after having sold all A’Mangiare restaurants except for the Pleasantville location, which had originally been opened by his father.

Dolgetta said his father was having trouble managing the old restaurant on his own, so he got friends and family on board to help open Wood and Fire in just six weeks. The new restaurant features a menu that may be a bit smaller than most other local eateries, but Dolgetta said every selection, from pastas to the cheese used on pizza, is made from scratch.

“We’ve got a hot new chef out of culinary school who studied in Tuscany, so we went a whole different route than what we used to be,” Dolgetta said.

In addition to the wood-burning stové, Wood and Fire has outdoor patio seating and offers brunch, happy hour and a pizza bar featuring authentic Neapolitan-style pizza.

Dolgetta said he devised the concept Wood and Fire when he noticed that wood burning was becoming a hot trend in the food industry. He wanted to create a place that would be “out of the box” and different from A’Mangiare, which had five locations during its years of operation. He also wanted Wood and Fire to offer high-class food and atmosphere while still remaining family friendly.

The most difficult challenge Dolgetta faced in opening the new restaurant in a familiar location was making all of the interior changes in just a month and a half. In that short time span, he remodeled the entire restaurant, developed a brand-new menu and brought in new staff and computers.

“It was definitely challenging, but we got through that hurdle and it’s getting better every day,” Dolgetta said.

Having been open for less than a month, he is already looking toward the future. With locations in Pleasantville and Florida, he is hoping to eventually see Wood and Fire become a national chain of restaurants.

As for the Marble Avenue establishment, Dolgetta hopes that his dad will be able to remain part of the restaurant for as long as possible and that Wood and Fire will be a staple in the village for years to come.

“I want to be here for another 20 years; that’s my goal,” Dolgetta said.

Wood and Fire is located at 59 Marble Ave. and is open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information, call 914-747-2611.
to raise awareness about mental health issues and money for organizations that help people who seek assistance and are involved in research.

“It really hits home and it’s all very close to us,” said Ann Laitman. “People are really desperate. They need answers.”

Although the Laitmans hadn’t previously known Applebaum and his family, they reached out about holding an event for suicide prevention. Applebaum’s family wanted to focus on a more hopeful aspect of mental health, Laitman said.

The Laitmans understood the concern, having been familiar with how mental health issues can affect families. Their son, Daniel, also a Byram Hills graduate, has battled schizophrenia. After being prescribed Clozapine, he has been able to graduate college and has been working as a standup comic.

But part of his return to health, has been helped by running regularly, said Rob Laitman, which he and his wife now take part in as well. Laitman also recalled how running and exercising regularly helped his own health.

“Running for me is really what saved my life,” Rob Laitman said.

The family has organized several other events under the Team Daniel name. Last year, they raised about $20,000 for organizations such as the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the Mental Health Association of Westchester and Fountain House.

Applebaum’s mother, Shari, said when she was approached by the Laitmans she wanted to participate despite her family’s tragedy still being fresh.

“We’re touched personally by it,” she said. “I know in my heart if I could save one life it would make a world of difference.”

Applebaum said that it was appropriate to hold the event at the high school not only because that’s where Miles went to school and competed. Byram Hills has been at the forefront of addressing mental health matters with its students and trying to eliminate the stigma that still surrounds the issue.

Principal Chris Borsari said for the past three years the school has run various education programs to remove many of the barriers that have traditionally prevented students from reaching out. Incidents when they do happen also tend to have greater impact in a community like Armonk.

“We’re a small enough community where if one family in the community is affected, it tends to affect us all,” Borsari said.

Rob Laitman said with the help of the business and school communities they are optimistic that several hundred runners will participate.

A treat for running enthusiasts who participate in the event is the scheduled appearance of four-time New York Marathon and Boston Marathon winner Bill Rodgers. Miles for Miles will start at 9 a.m. The more serious runners can use the cross-country course that the school’s team competes on. Walkers are encouraged to use the high school track. Same-day registration begins at 8 a.m.

For more information and to sign up, visit www.teamdanielrunningforrecovery.org.

**continued from page 1**

**P’ville School Board Takes Stand Against Performance Reviews**

Recently, the Board of Regents held a session with experts to discuss education issues, but Pleasantville Trustee Lou Conte took issue with the way the session was handled. It was limited to 200 citizens who were allowed admittance only if they had obtained tickets in advance, which Conte believes violates the state’s open meetings law.

He compared the practice to the show trials of the former Soviet Union, implying that the Board of Regents has already made a decision and will not take public comment into consideration.

“Are we now having ‘show democracy’ so we can push something like this through?” Conte asked. “It’s offensive.”

Recently, the Board of Regents has given a June 30 deadline to create the new teacher evaluation model to be implemented in schools by Nov. 15. But the Westchester-Putnam School Boards Association has asked that the deadline be extended to Sept. 1, 2016.

McGaffey, however, said he would like to see the deadline removed completely so that the Board of Regents can take as long as necessary to develop an effective model.

“I’m all for taking the time to implement something and negotiate it with the teachers...if it’s something that’s effective,” said McGaffey. “But the first thing we have to do is come up with a model that there’s some belief in.”

The Examiner
Curtis Instruments Captures Golden Scoop Award at Food Bank Tussle

Curtis Instruments of Mount Kisco won the Food Bank for Westchester's annual Golden Scoop Corporate Competition last Friday, beating out 10 other teams from around the county to capture the coveted trophy.

The Food Bank, Westchester’s largest hunger-relief organization, schedules the event each year to raise awareness and funds to support its efforts to serve 265 programs throughout the county that feed the hungry. The team that repacks the most bulk food into deliverable packages in one hour at the Food Bank's Elmsford distribution center is the winner.

The packages are then distributed to soup kitchens, food pantries and adult and child day care centers and shelters. “The energy and sense of purpose that the Golden Scoop Competition generates is incredible,” said Ellen Lynch, president and CEO of the Food Bank. “Even as the teams are competing against each other, they’re coming together for a common goal. I am grateful that these generous corporations and their employees are so willing to offer their support and devote their time toward helping us fight hunger in Westchester.”

The Curtis Instruments team repacked a whopping 3,446 pounds of rice to win the trophy, almost 600 pounds more than the second place Stop & Shop team, which repacked 2,854 pounds. The AQR Capital Management team finished a close third with 2,846 pounds repacked. In all, the 11 teams repacked 27,770 pounds of rice.

Proceeds from the competition – each team pays an admission fee – benefit the Food Bank.

For the participants, the Golden Scoop is also a team-building experience and a chance to give back to the community by volunteering in an activity that directly benefits Westchester's hungry children, seniors and families.

In addition to the top three finishers, this year’s participants were Bunge, Capital One Bank, Chubb Group of Insurance Companies, Dannon, Pernod Ricard USA, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, ShopRite and Webster Bank.

The food item to be repacked changes each year and is kept a strict secret until the day of the event. Each corporate team can have up to 20 members. In 2014, the Capital One Bank team beat out 10 other teams by repacking 1,700 pounds of beans.

The Curtis Instruments team will be presented with the Golden Scoop Championship Trophy at the Food Bank’s 10th annual Hunger Heroes Awards Breakfast on Thursday, June 4 at 8 p.m. at the Tappan Hill Mansion in Tarrytown. They will hold onto the trophy until next year’s competition.

For more information about the Food Bank for Westchester, call 914-923-1100 or visit www.foodbankforwestchester.org.
Tuesday, May 12
Gunna Potluck Dinner. Spend a couple hours brushing up on your German language skills. Bring good spirits, your willingness to practice and a dinner dish to share. All abilities welcome. American Legion Hall, 52 Garrigan Ave., Thornwood. 6 to 8 p.m. Free.

Italian Language and Culture With Mara De Matteo. Born and raised in Italy, De Matteo 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. Every Tuesday. Info: 914-273-3887.

Wednesday, May 13
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.

The Breakfast Club. A program for seniors that includes breakfast, a presentation on a healthy lifestyle topic and a light exercise program. Participants will receive information on the most commonly used medications, what they are used for and possible side effects. Phelps Memorial Hospital Center cafeteria (G Level), 701 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-466-9357.

Zumba Fitness. Achieve long-term benefits while having a blast in one exciting hour of calorie-burning, body-energizing, awe-inspiring movements meant to engage and captivate for life. For all fitness levels. Dance Emotions, 75 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. Every Monday and Wednesday at 9 a.m. and Saturdays at 10 a.m. Drop in or weekly discount rates available. Info: Contact Peggy at 914-960-4976.

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. Dance Emotions, 75 S. Greeley Ave., Chappaqua. 10:15 a.m. $20. Every Wednesday. Info: Contact Peggy at 914-960-4976.

Mommy Meet Up. Whether it's your first child or your fifth, this program is a great way to get out of the house, meet new friends and enjoy time with your baby. For newborns birth to eight months old and their moms. Romperee Indoor Playground at World Cup Nursery School & Kindergarten 160 Hunts Lane, Chappaqua, 10:15 to 11 a.m. Free. Every Wednesday (except holidays) through June. Info: Contact Kim Bremer at 914-238-9267 ext. 20.

Support Group for Alzheimer’s Caregivers. Temple Shaaray Tefila and Westchester Jewish Community Services. Meetings have scheduled this forum to provide a place for caregivers to discuss their feelings, share their experiences and support one another. 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 800-272-3900 or visit www.alz.org/hudsonvalley.


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 skein or worsted weight yarn. Open to knitters and crocheters 10 years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-864-0130.

Lego Club. We provide the Legos, you bring your imagination. A fun-building club for students in grades 2-6. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Free. Every Wednesday. Info: 914-864-0130.

Wednesdays Night Bingo. Regular bingo tickets and special tickets are available for sale. Includes coffee, tea and hot chocolate. Hot dogs and soda for sale. 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.

Osteoporosis Empowerment Group. Mount Kisco Medical Group’s presents the first of three monthly sessions with physical therapist Bobbi Ornstein. The sessions will help attendees renew and refresh themselves with weight bearing and weight training exercises. Mount Kisco Medical Group’s third-floor conference room, 110 S. Bedford Rd., Mount Kisco 6 to 7:30 p.m. Free. RSVP required. Info and RSVP: Contact Bobbi Ornstein at 914-242-1562.

“Beyond Waste.” Bedford 2020 invites the community to participate in a collaborative forum on solutions for a zero-waste future. Co-hosted by Rippowam Cisqua School, this event will feature presentations and discussion on how to reduce waste and why it matters; single stream recycling; what to do with non-recyclables such as pharmaceuticals, electronics and toxic household items; and composting food and yard waste. Food and refreshments will be served. Rippowam Cisqua School, 439 Cantonie St., Bedford, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Free. Registration required. (The first 125 registrants will be entered into a raffle for an Earth Machine Composting Bin. Winner must be present.) Info: Visit www.Bedford2020.org.

Art Discussion Series: “Botticelli.” It is impossible to talk about Sandro Botticelli without a look at the iron fist of Florentine political leader Lorenzo di Medici, one of the most important patrons of the arts during the Italian Renaissance. As the Golden Age of Florence expanded and contracted, so too did his power, and patronage of artists like Botticelli and Michelangelo. Led by Professor Valerie Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 7 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887 or www.northcastlib.org.

Local Birds: What They Are, the Problems They Face and What You Can Do. Meet the common and not so common birds in our area, along with the best places in Westchester to see them. Includes a presentation and discussion about the problems these birds face and actions to help them. Presented in partnership with the Sierra Club Lower Hudson Group. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. Refreshments at 7 p.m. Program at 7:30 p.m. Free. Program has been rescheduled from March 11. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

Thursday May 14
Let Your Yoga Dance Classes. The popular Kripalu noon dance class is now in Chappaqua! Combines easy dance, gentle yoga and great music. Come join this noncompetitive, heart pumping and joyful class! Drop-ins welcome. Dance Emotions, 75 S. Greetley Ave., Chappaqua.10 a.m. $20 per 75-minute class. Every Tuesday and Thursday. Info: 914-238-8974 or email claudiayogadance@gmail.com.

Osteoporosis Support and Education. A program that provides education on nutrition, exercise (weight-bearing, strengthening and balance) and activities of daily living for people with osteoporosis. Phelps Memorial Hospital Center’s boardroom (C Level), 701 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free. Registration required. Info and registration: 914-366-2270.

Story Time Playgroup. Join Miss Debbee 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 five years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Every Thursday. Info: 914-769-0548 or visit www.mountpleasantslibrary.org.

Read to Rover. Dogs love listening to stories. Come meet Rover and read your favorite story. For children five years old and up. Mount Kisco Public Library, 100 E. Main St., Mount Kisco. 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Every Thursday. Info: 914-864-0130 or visit www.mountkiscolibrary.org.

How to Market Your Small Business: A Practical Approach to Find, Retain and Grow Customers. This presentation is designed to uncover some core marketing concepts and show that a little bit of marketing knowledge can go a long way. This event is ideal for business owners who want practical ideas and knowledge they can incorporate right away in their businesses. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 6:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887.

“Food Chains: Feed the Nation at Any Cost.” The screening of a documentary that follows the coalition of Immokalee Workers, a group of Florida farm workers, who battle the $4 trillion global supermarket industry in their fight to reveal the human cost in America’s food supply while transforming farm labor through their inspired Fair Food Program. Followed by a panel discussion with two farmers and two activists involved with labor laws, fair food and human trafficking. Ossining Public Library’s Budzar Theater, 53 Croton Ave., Ossining. 6:30 p.m. Free. Info: Visit ossiningpubliclibrary.org or facebook.com/ossinningdocuments

Zumba Fitness Class. Addie-Tude Performing Arts Center, 42 Memorial Plaza (lower level), Pleasantville. 7 to 8 p.m. $15 a class. $29 for four classes. 855-continued on page 28
Transformer Fire at Indian Point Plant No Threat to Nuclear Operation

By Rick Pezzullo

A fire at one of two main electrical transformers at the Indian Point 3 nuclear power plant in Buchanan early Saturday evening posed no threat to the public, according to Entergy officials, operators of the facility.

Entergy representatives said the plant safely and automatically shut down following the 6 p.m. incident. The fire, which caused black smoke to hovering over the plant, was quickly extinguished by an automatic sprinkler system and trained onsite personnel. No injuries were reported and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

The fire was classified as a Notice of Unusual Event, the lowest of four emergency designations for U.S. nuclear power plants, as outlined by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Indian Point 2 was not affected by the fire and is operating at full power.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who has long supported the closing of the nuclear facility, was briefed on the fire at the site and revealed some oil from the transformer was discharged into the Hudson River. He said the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) was monitoring the situation.

“Anything that happens at this plant obviously raises concerns,” Cuomo said.

“A transformer fire in and of itself was not dangerous, but the fear is always that one situation is going to trigger another, and again there has been a repetition in the number of transformer fires that have happened.”

“This plant is the nuclear plant that is closest to the most densely populated area on the globe. If something goes wrong here, it can go very wrong for a lot of people. So it’s always been a priority for us,” Cuomo continued.

State legislators who represent the area also raised concern about the plant and the incident.

The incident was a Notice of Unusual Event (R-Yorktown) said protecting the Hudson River from chemical contamination needs to be the focus. He said oil containment booms were deployed and that clean up should be finished with a few days.

This incident exposes new concerns for regulators to address, and it remains paramount that Indian Point must be operated safely if it is to remain open.”

Assemblywoman Sandy Galef (D-Ossining) acknowledged the incident didn’t jeopardize public safety, but questioned whether the area should be home to the AIM pipeline. She called for a stay from the federal government on approval of the pipeline.

“A confluence of high-energy power generation and distribution at this location is literally asking for trouble,” Galef stated. This is not the only option, and therefore should not be the chosen option for the AIM gas pipeline siting.”

Solarize Westchester Campaigns Continue to Gain Momentum

Westchester residents clearly have an appetite for solar energy—and for saving on their electric bills.

Solarize Westchester campaigns, designed to make it easy and affordable to install solar arrays, have passed the halfway mark in communities where they are now underway. Solarize has received over 900 inquiries and requests for solar site visits, and more than 70 contracts for residential solar electric systems have been signed, for a total of almost 600 kW of solar electricity—well over half a megawatt. (A million watts!)

Under the municipally-supported, time-limited Solarize Westchester program, homeowners and commercial property owners who sign contracts for solar installations by the deadline can take advantage of group rates significantly below market prices for high quality installations. Tiered pricing means the more who sign up, the lower the price for everyone, and several of the Solarize campaigns are already in the second tier of discounts.

The following campaigns are currently under way: Solarize Bedford-Mt Kisco (June 15 deadline), Solarize Cortlandt-Croton (June 1 deadline), Solarize Larchmont-Mamaroneck (June 22 deadline) and Solarize Ossining-Briarcliff (June 1 deadline).

The campaign deadlines, designed to motivate action, are a key part of the Solarize model. If the current campaigns follow the experience of similar Solarize campaigns in Connecticut and elsewhere around the country, program administrators expect a mad dash to sign contracts by the end date and encourage residents not to wait until the last minute.

Interested residents in the communities where Solarize campaigns are underway can find information and request a free site evaluation on their community’s page at www.SolarizeWestchester.com.

Federal tax credits, state tax credits and incentives and the low Solarize pricing mean this is an optimal time for people to install solar. Solar electric systems provide the opportunity to lock in low-cost energy produced over the expected life of the system (at least 25 years). In addition, while solar systems increase the value of homes by an average of $4/watt (according to a recent study from the Department of Energy), thanks to New York State policies designed to encourage the installation of solar, there is a 15-year moratorium on increased tax assessments related to solar installations.

For those interested in having a Solarize campaign in their municipality, the next communities will be selected for Round 2 of Solarize Westchester in July. A community application form will be posted on www.SolarizeWestchester.com by mid-May and will be due June 29.

Another community campaign underway: Solarize Westchester in July. A community application form will be posted on www.SolarizeWestchester.com by mid-May and will be due June 29.

For more information, contact Cassie Ward at 914-238-4666, visit www.solarizewestchester.com by mid-May and will be due June 29.

The New Castle Historical Society’s annual house tour will help visitors explore the varied architectural styles and decorative tastes of some of the most interesting houses in town.

The New Castle Historical Society proudly announces its 12th “Castles of New Castle” House Tour to be held Thursday, May 21 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 pm.

The New Castle Historical Society, located in the Horace Greeley House Museum in Chappaqua, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of New Castle. All proceeds raised from this event help the society fulfill its mission of historical discovery, education, community outreach and research.

“The New Castle Historical Society has a special place in my heart because it is the story of my adopted home, not where I grew up but where I will grow old and where we are raising our family,” said Georgina Frasch, the house tour event chair. “I have a special affection for the annual Castles of New Castle House Tour because... who doesn't love looking at beautiful homes and gardens?”

While many of the details regarding the homes are kept under lock and key until the day of the tour, a few “teasers” have been revealed. One home was nearly destroyed in a town wide disaster in 1904 but managed to avoid complete devastation while another home “explores geometry through architecture” and will leave you feeling inspired. The homes, varied in their architectural styles and decorative tastes, will provide visitors with a fun-filled day of curiosity and exploration.

House tour ticketholders will also have the opportunity to dine at the Chappaqua Tavern, Crabtree’s Kittle House, Lange’s Little Store, Old Stone Trattoria or Le Jardin du Roi for a 15 percent discount with their ticket.

Tickets for the tour are $50 for historical society members and $75 for non-members. Tickets may be purchased by visiting www.newcastles.org or at the Horace Greeley House Museum, located at 100 King St. in Chappaqua.

All proceeds will benefit the New Castle Historical Society. For more information, contact Cassie Ward at 914-238-4666, visit www.newcastles.org or e-mail director@newcastles.org.
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Sebastian, Florida Beautiful 55+ manufactured home community. 4.4 miles to the beach, Close to riverfront district. New models from $85,000, 772-581-0080, www.beach-core.com

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A Primer on Enjoying Fine Wine and Fine Chocolate

By Nick Antonaccio

This past weekend, as I sat at my keyboard contemplating the 396th column of You Heard It through the Grapevine, an urge struck me to indulge in one of the topics I had previously focused on.

So it is that I am sitting here this Sunday evening, with a glass of red wine at hand and an artisanal bar of Amedei chocolate nearby.

I realize that the similarities between wine and chocolate go beyond their agricultural heritage and processing. It is in the consumption of each that the similarities are equally striking.

When I guide my guests in one of the many wine tasting seminars I conduct, I walk them through several steps to better understand and savor each glass of wine they consume. So too with a chocolate tasting seminar I conducted several years ago.

For each wine and chocolate experience there are five steps (the 5 S’s) that assist in honing our senses and enjoyment.

Step 1: “See” the wine. This is your first interaction and provides an overall indication of the style, from light to robust. Hold the glass of wine up to the light. Generally speaking, the lighter the color the lighter the weight and intensity of the wine. Conversely, the deeper the color, the more body and richness. So too with chocolate. A light brown color indicates that more milk product was added during processing. A dark, burnt umber color indicates a high concentration of cacao butter and less milk.

Step 2: “Swirl” the wine in the glass. This infuses oxygen into the wine and opens the bouquet to your olfactory senses. For chocolate, gently “Squeeze” a small piece between your fingers. The higher the cacao butter content, the more quickly it will melt; the lower, the longer it will take. Cacao butter is the foundation of the highest quality chocolates, providing the richness and smoothness desired by connoisseurs.

Step 3: “Sniff” the wine. Bring the glass to your nose; it is in this step that your overall impression of the wine will be set, as well as its nuances. Our sense of smell has tens of thousands of olfactory receptors, which transmit the aromas of a wine to our brains, resulting in a pleasurable or off-putting impression. So too with chocolate. Bring a piece of chocolate to your nose and breathe in the fragrances. Our olfactory receptors are inundated with the aromas that form our impression of the particular brand and style of chocolate. High quality chocolate will have deep and rich aromas, without metallic or medicinal undertones.

Step 4: “Sip” the wine. Our tongue and mouth dominate our sense of taste. Here is where our palates determine if a wine is bitter, sweet, salty, sour or savory. These senses translate to our perception of a wine to be fruity or dry, soft or tannic. So too with chocolate. As you taste a piece, savor it as it melts in your mouth. How does your palate perceive it? Smooth or gritty? Robust or velvety? Sweet or bitter? Which profile do you prefer? This will determine your individual interaction with the chocolate; mine may be fruity or dry, soft or tannic. So too with chocolate. Bring a piece of chocolate to your nose and breathe in the fragrances. So too with chocolate. As you taste a piece, savor it as it melts in your mouth. How does your palate perceive it? Smooth or gritty? Robust or velvety? Sweet or bitter? Which profile do you prefer? This will determine your individual interaction with the chocolate; mine may be diametrically different.

Step 5: “Swallow” the wine or chocolate. The finish is the final impression on your palate. A long, lingering, sensation is another indication of the quality of each. For wine, it transmits a desired level of complexity and finesse. The ability of a wine to impart this sensation is a clear sign of its quality. So too with chocolate. A high level of cacao butter will dissipate on the palate, highlighting the flavors; a low level will leave a waxy or greasy coating in your mouth, muting the flavors and diminishing the experience of the next bite.

As I take another sip from my glass of fruity and mildly acidic Zinfandel (although Port is likely the best pairing with chocolate), my senses of smell and taste are enhanced by the richness and moderate bitterness of the 70 percent Amedei chocolate.

Ah, I love writing this column.

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 nickantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @sharingwine.
for eight classes. Meets every Thursday. Also Saturdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. Info: 917-215-1720, e-mail AddietudeDance@gmail.com or visit www.Addietude-tude.com.

Friday, May 15

Giant Tag Sale. Bargain hunters can for great deals at this sale to benefit the Hudson Chorale, the area’s largest nonprofit community chorus. Sale items include used and antique furniture, collectibles, jewelry, appliances, house wares, CDs, DVDs, books, toys, sports equipment, good used clothing and accessories, bed and bath, decorative art and more. Rain or shine. 107 Bedford Rd. (corner of Manville Road and Route 117). Pleasantville. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Early bird from 8 to 9 .m.: $10. Also May 16. To donate tax deductible items: 914-769-9309. Info: Visit www. HudsonChorale.org.

Zumba Gold Class. A trial class featuring Zumba’s low-impact approach. Drop in anytime. Addie-Tude Performing Arts Center, 42 Memorial Plaza (lower level), Pleasantville. 11 a.m. to noon. Free. ($2 drop-in fee after free trial class.) Every Friday. Also Tuesdays from 10 to 11 a.m. Info: Contact Amy Olin at olin.amyj@gmail.com.

Speech-Language Screening for Preschool Children. Are you concerned about your child’s speech and language development? An experienced pediatric speech-language pathologist will screen your child. Phelps Memorial Hospital Center’s Donald R. Reed Speech & Hearing Center, Suite 303, 777 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow. 1 to 2:30 p.m. Free. Appointment required. Info and appointments: 914-366-3220.

“Rock the Halls” John Jay Middle School Charity Concert. Featuring the vocal and instrumental talents of John Jay Middle School students. All proceeds to benefit Guiding Eyes for the Blind. John Jay Middle School, 40 North Salem Rd. (Route 121), Cross River. 6:30 to 9 p.m. $10 suggested donation. Info and tickets: 914-763-7500 or visit www.guidingeyes.org/rockthehalls. Tickets also available at the door.

Friday Night Films: “42 Up.” An initial examination of the lives of seven-year-olds in various neighborhoods and classes in England, the Up series has continued shooting every seven years for almost five decades. This segment checks in at age 42. Discussion led by Professor Val Franco. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd., Armonk. 7 p.m. Info: 914-273-3887.

Furuya Sisters Trio Concert. The Furuya Sisters’ masterful performances of beautiful classical music is sure to bring great joy and pure relaxation with their program featuring gorgeous classical repertoire, including Tchaikovsky and Mozart piano trios. South Salem Presbyterian Church, 111 Spring St., South Salem. 7:30 p.m. $25 and $30. (Student discounts are available.) Info and tickets: 914-200-3622 or visit www.FuruyaSisters.com.

WCC Film Series: “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly.” Elle France editor Jean-Dominique Bauby, at 43 years old, suffered a stroke that paralyzed his entire body, except his left eye. Using that eye to blink out his memoir, Bauby eloquently described the aspects of his interior world, from the psychological torment of being trapped inside his body to his imagined stories. 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. Info: Contact Bob Bruckenthal at 914-723-3186.

“Dead Man’s Cell Phone.” Axial Theatre’s presents Sarah Ruhi’s bright, satirical comedy that received the 2007 Helen Hayes Award for outstanding new play. St. John’s Episcopal Church, 8 Sunnyside Ave., Pleasantville. 8 p.m. $25. Seniors and students: $20. Also 16 at 2 and 8 p.m. and May 17 at 4 p.m. Info and tickets: 1-800-838-3006 or visit http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/1396632.

Saturday, May 16

Community Pancake Breakfast. To support the Pleasantville Presbyterian Church’s Appalachia Service Project. More than 60 local youth and adults will travel to rural Appalachia this summer to make homes warmer, safer and drier for families in need. Pleasantville Presbyterian Church, 400 Bedford Rd., Pleasantville. 7 to 11:30 a.m. $7 person. Info: 914-769-0458 or visit www.pvilledgespresby.org.

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.

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.

Reverse Painting on Plexiglas Workshop. Inge Pape Trampler presents a painting workshop where will trace designs and paint them on the back of pieces of Plexiglas creating a finished work reminiscent of a piece of stained glass. For children in grade 5 and up. Mamaroneck Artists Guild, 126 Larchmont Ave., Larchmont. 10 a.m. to noon. $30 (includes all materials and supplies). Registration required. Info and registration: 914-834-1117 or e-mail mag2120@verizon.net.

Tai Chi With Larry Attile. Learn specific feldenkrais and chi kung breathing techniques for deep relaxation and apply them to Tai Chi movements 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. Every Saturday in May. Info: 914-273-3887.

Wolves of North America. Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why spring is a special time for packs in North America. Visit ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pre-registration required. Also May 24, 25 and 30. Info and pre-registration: Visit www.nywolf.org.

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.addietude.com.

Sacred Sites Open House Weekend. All Saints’ Episcopal Church will welcome visitors as part of this special New York Landmarks Conservancy weekend. Church members will lead informal tours of the church sanctuary. The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All Saints Episcopal Church, 201 Scarborough Rd., Briarcliff Manor. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free. Info: 914-373-9550 or 914-941-6955, visit www.allsaintsbiarcliff.org, Gmail: djgeher@gmail.com or see the Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsBiarcliff/).

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, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 11:30 a.m. Free. Every Saturday and Sunday. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburnhnaturecenter.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 Riptix® and combining constant simulated drumming resulting in working the entire body. TADA Theatre And Dance Arts, 131 Bedford Rd., Katonah. 11:45 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Every Saturday; also Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Info: Contact Peggy at 914 960-4097.

Muddy Sneakers. Discover the wonders of the natural world. Enjoy a wild excursion through our woods, puddles and fields as we play in and with nature. For all ages. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 1 p.m. Members: $5 per person. Non-members: $8 per person. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburnhnaturecenter.org.

Making the Tax Laws Work for You and Your Family. Congress passes laws that provide us with ways to minimize our tax obligations, but many of us fail to take advantage of what Congress gives us. Tax attorney and accountant Robert E. Mann will explore a variety of tax-saving strategies to employ to keep your hard-earned money for yourself and your family rather than needlessly handing it over to the IRS. North Castle Public Library, 19 Whippoorwill Rd. East, Armonk. 1 p.m. Free. Info: 914-273-3887.

Opening Reception for “Her Nature: Four Women Artists Interpret the Natural World.” This exhibit showcases the work of four members of the Katonah Museum Artists Association: Amanda Lynne, Wendy Isler Alvarez, Patricia Bolgosiano and Pallas Athene. Their works draw inspiration from nature, highlighting a reverence for and love of the natural world using paint, cameras and natural organic materials. Ward Pound Ridge Reservation Gallery in the Park, routes 35 and 121 South, Cross River. 1 to 4 p.m. Free. Exhibit runs through July 30. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily.

Evening Howl for Pups of All Ages. Enjoy visiting the wolves during their favorite hour—dusk. Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why spring is a magical time for packs in North America. Guests will take a short sunrise hike to howl with ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican wolves. Weather appropriate treats will be served. Please bring flashlights. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 6:30 p.m. Adults: $16. Children (under 12): $13. Also May 30 at 7 p.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit www.nywolf.org.

Argentine Tango Dances. Great music and dancing on a 3,500-square-foot dance floor. Enjoy a pleasant time with friends. Refreshments served. Broadway Dance, 26 Broadway, Hawthorne. 8 p.m. to midnight. $16. Also the first Sunday of each month from 3 to 6 p.m. $12. Info: 914-725-3023 or 914-484-5101 or e-mail sampelayo@optonline.net.

Sunday, May 17


Tap Into Your Inner Predator: Movement and Meditation Workshop. Tap into your instinct, intuition and heightened awareness of your surroundings continued on page 30.
Spoken Interludes: A Literary Salon With Dinner and Storytelling

By Jerry Einbinder

DeLauné Michel founded Spoken Interludes, an ongoing program of appearances by authors that combines dinner with writers’ reading from their latest works.

Each event in the series typically attracts an audience of at least 200 book lovers. The meeting begins with a buffet dinner followed by the authors’ readings, a Q&A and book signings.

The concept of combining dinner and readings was inspired by Michel’s childhood. She grew up in Baton Rouge, La. with her parents and four older sisters. The family’s nightly dinner and accompanying conversation was the inspiration for Spoken Interludes in 1996.

“Dinner was the highlight of the day, partly for the food — my Momma’s incredible Creole cuisine — but mostly for the conversation. Or should I say storytelling,” Michel said. “Because that’s what it was: long, funny and illuminating stories. And God forbid if you didn’t have one.”

Every night, Michel and her sisters were expected to sit attentively while eating dinner while her father talked about his day. Not only were they expected to understand what he did running the insurance company, but the girls weren’t expected to be part of the conversation.

“Then Momma talked about running the arts council or working on her Ph.D., or writing her novels, and at this point we were more than just a silent audience because we were involved in some of those stories,” Michel said.

Then it was the girls’ turn. With four loquacious sisters, getting a word in could be difficult for Michel.

By the time Michel was six, her parents realized she rarely spoke at dinner. So they enforced a new rule: every night she would be given time to speak.

“There I was,” she said, “the youngest at the table, with the least schooling, the least experience and the least stories, as it were, but with the time to talk. I cannot think of this memory without a visceral sense of my four older sisters’ mouths clamped shut. And possibly being bored. Or indulgent. But regardless, I got to tell the story of my day. And I did. From the beginning.

“It never really got much easier to talk at that table, and after awhile that nightly rule fell away, so I either fought my way into the conversation or I didn’t, but something amazing had happened. I was able to feel what it was like to have the time and the space to be heard.”

Spoken Interludes is partly a reconstruction of Michel’s childhood dinner table.

“People come together, have a meal and writers tell a story by reading their work, which then inspires conversation between the writers and the audience,” she said.

The meetings are held at RiverView in Hastings-on-Hudson. The food is prepared by Chutney Marsala, an Indian bistro in Irvington under the guidance of Executive Chef Navjot Arora.

Buffet dinner precedes talks

The dinner buffet can vary. Last month’s buffet included saag paneer (fresh homemade cheese folded in seasoned and tempered spinach), chana masala (chickpea stew with tomato and ginger), aloo gobhi (diced cauliflower, potato and peas and tomato garlic masala), keema matar masala (home-style chopped lamb and fresh peas) and saffron pulao.

Chicken tikka masala (chicken chunks braised in a fenugreek scented tomato cream sauce) is a popular offering.

The buffet table has salad greens, sliced beets, small veggie fritters, chicken tikka pieces, naan bread and assorted cookies. Coffee and tea, available at a reception area station, are included.

Three novelists will participate at the next program on Monday, June 1. Appearing will be Chris Bohjalian, reading from “The Light in the Ruins,” Marisa de los Santos, reading excerpts from “The Precious One,” and Lynn Schmeidler who will read from “Plural Like the Universe.”

Bohjalian, born in White Plains and the author of “Midwives,” an Oprah Book Club selection, has written 17 books, three of which were made into motion pictures. His work appears in 30 languages.

De los Santos, also the author of “Connect the Stars,” “Saving Lucas Biggs,” “I Love Walked In,” “Belong to Me” and “Falling Together,” has a poetry collection called “From the Bones Out.”

Schmeidler is a poet and short story writer.

DeLauné is the author of two novels, “Aftermath of Dreaming” and “The Safety of Secrets,” published by HarperCollins. She recently completed writing her third novel. During her career as an actress, she appeared in the television series “NYPD Blue,” “The Gilmore Girls” and “Judging Amy.” She also established Spoken Interludes Next, an organization that helps children in inner city schools in Los Angeles and severely disabled children at Blythedale Children’s Hospital.

Meet the chef

Arora received a bachelor’s degree in hospitality and catering management from the Institute of Hotel Management in New Delhi, India. As his graduation approached, he accepted an offer from the Taj Group, a large hospitality organization headquartered in Mumbai. The city’s 42 hotels contain some of the most prestigious restaurants in India.

He embarked on a two-year training program that exposed him to both the food and service sides of the business. Upon completion of the course, he joined the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi, a luxurious establishment with eight eateries, including world class French, Chinese, Mediterranean and Indian restaurants. He remained there for 10 years, advancing to key supervisory kitchen positions. He also ran the Indian restaurant for three years.

After arriving in the United States, he joined the Cafe Spice Restaurant Group and served as its executive chef as the organization expanded to eight locations in four states. In April 2008, Arora opened Chutney Masala Indian Bistro in Irvington.

Food service starts at 6 p.m. and concludes at 7:30 p.m. when the first author is introduced. Book signings take place from 8:30 to 9 p.m. Books can be purchased from on-site representatives of Pleasantville’s The Village Book Store and can be paid for by cash, check or credit card.

Spoken Interludes is $25 for advance online payment up to 48 hours before the event or $30 at the reception desk. To reserve for $25 with pre-payment, visit www.chutneymasala.com/order-form. To reserve for $30 without pre-payment, e-mail rsvp@spokeninterludes.com. Attendees who pay by check should make them payable to Chutney Masala.

The RiverView is located at 1 Warburton Ave. in Hastings-on-Hudson. Parking is free in the lot directly across the street.

For more information about the program, visit www.spokeninterludes.com.

Novelist DeLauné Michel, founder of Spoken Interludes, a program that features dinner and book readings.

Author Chris Bohjalian with recording team members for the audio book for his novel “Close Your Eyes, Hold Hands.”

Marisa de los Santos, author of “The Precious One,” part of the lineup of writers who will participate in the next Spoken Interludes dinner and storytelling program on June 1.
Playing the Classics: Sister Trio to Perform Tchaikovsky, Mozart

By Janine Bowen

Playing music around the world can make for an exciting but lonely and nomadic existence. It can be made easier, however, when the group you perform with is comprised of your siblings.

The Furuya Sisters, a classical concert trio, will be on stage this Friday at the South Salem Presbyterian Church. The sisters, Sakiko, Mimi and Harumi, each a child prodigy and Juilliard graduate, have been performing together since childhood and agreed that being onstage as a group has become almost second nature.

"It's great to play the masterpieces that we all love together and express our feelings in one voice," said Sakiko.

Having played together for so long, the sisters are in synch musically, but Sakiko said they are each able to express themselves individually. Harumi, though, noted that having that level of comfort does have its drawbacks.

"The downside...of performing with sisters is that because ensemble comes easy, we don't rehearse as much as we should," she said.

Harumi began playing the violin at two years old. Sakiko also took up the violin at a young age before switching to piano at seven so she could accompany her sister. Mimi began with the violin, but switched to piano before eventually settling on the cello, an instrument that she said felt natural to her, at seven years old.

While each child playing a different instrument is uncommon and placed a burden on their parents, their mother sacrificed to get them to lessons in separate locations.

"She always gave us such support without being pushy at all," Sakiko said. "Without her, all this would not have been possible."

It also wouldn't have been possible without her giving them the gift of loving classical music. Sakiko recalled their mother listened to classical recordings such as Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream," and regularly had music playing in the background while they were growing up.

Now, in a time where a vast array of musical genres are accessible online, they believe that classical music remains the easiest for people of all ages and nationalities to understand.

"It stimulates the mind and soothes the soul, and it has an overall therapeutic effect," Sakiko said.

For their May 15 concert, the sisters will be performing two compositions by well-known composers: Tchaikovsky's Trio in A Minor and Mozart's Trio in E Major.

Sakiko said she felt it was appropriate to play Tchaikovsky in New York because of the composer's popularity in America during his first performance at Carnegie Hall. Mimi explained that the Mozart piece was chosen because it complements the Tchaikovsky composition but is also unique.

Although they will not be performing any of their own compositions during their South Salem engagement, they have ventured into writing their own music. Heavily influenced by Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Chopin and Bach, Mimi said she usually begins her compositions developing a melody and harmony before fleshing out the orchestration.

"I...try to compose a beautiful piece that makes sense, [is] simple and unpretentious, that is tonal and easy on anybody's ears," she said.

The Furuya Sisters concert is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Tickets are $25 and $30, with student discounts available. South Salem Presbyterian Church is located at 111 Spring St.

For more information, visit www.furuyasisters.com.

The Furuya Sisters, Mimi (cello), Sakiko (piano) and Harumi (violin), will appear this Friday at the South Salem Presbyterian Church for a program featuring Tchaikovsky and Mozart.
Wagner’s ‘The Flying Dutchman’ Focus of Chap Orchestra Program

By Martin Wilbur

When it comes to the Chappaqua Orchestra’s season-concluding concert each spring, conductor and music director Michael Shapiro never shies away from taking on a challenge.

The orchestra’s final appearance of the 2014-15 season at Horace Greeley High School this Sunday is no different. Shapiro has chosen to present a program, “The Flying Dutchman,” featuring excerpts from Richard Wagner classic work along with Felix Mendelssohn’s “Calm Sea” and “Prosperous Voyage.” Robert Schumann’s Piano Concerto will also be performed by piano soloist Cynthia Peterson, the orchestra’s executive director.

It’s not just the music that is daunting. Shapiro has chosen to seat a roughly 50-seat orchestra with members of the newly-formed Chappaqua Orchestra Choir interspersed among the musicians. Throw in three accomplished vocalists—soprano Jennifer Grimaldi, tenor Alan Briones and bass-baritone John Dominick III—and it should be a memorable afternoon for opera lovers.

Shapiro said “The Flying Dutchman,” which was written when Wagner was a young composer and conductor, was a precursor for some of his many complex operas in the decades to come.

He said it is fascinating that Wagner’s story in “The Flying Dutchman,” about how a man sails the seas and can only be redeemed through the unconditional love of a woman, is a piece for someone whose works and writings were so controversial. Aside from his work with the Chappaqua Orchestra, it has been quite a year for Shapiro. He was recognized during ArtsWestchester’s 50 for 50 celebration, as the organization honored 50 influential artists in the county in commemoration of its silver anniversary.

He has also been conducting the Virginia Symphony in Virginia Beach, the Dallas Winds, the Southeastern Wind Symphony in New Orleans and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in England.

Sunday’s concert is scheduled for 3 p.m. at Horace Greeley High School, located at 70 Roaring Brook Rd. in Chappaqua. Tickets are $25 each. For more information, about tickets and the Chappaqua Orchestra, visit, www.chappaquaorchestra.org.

Support the Arts, Find a Bargain at Hudson Chorale Tag Sale

A giant tag sale to benefit the Hudson Chorale will be held on Friday, May 15 and Saturday, May 16 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. rain or shine in Pleasantville. There will be an opportunity for early bird shoppers from 8 to 9 a.m. both days for $10.

This is not your typical neighborhood tag sale of used toys and children’s clothing. We receive donated items in a wide variety of categories: used and antique furniture, collectibles, jewelry, appliances, house wares, CDs, DVDs, books, toys, sports equipment, good used clothing and accessories, bed and bath, decorative art and more.

The tag sale will take place at 107 Bedford Rd. (at the corner of Manville Road and Route 117) in Pleasantville. All proceeds will benefit Hudson Chorale, the area’s largest not-for-profit community chorus.

Weekly rehearsals are held at the Pleasantville Presbyterian Church as singers come from throughout Westchester and surrounding counties. The chorus performs a wide range of music featuring traditional and contemporary composers. The chorus’ next concert is on Saturday, May 9. Visit www.HudsonChorale.org for complete concert, membership and audition details.

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This is not your typical neighborhood tag sale of used toys and children’s clothing. We receive donated items in a wide variety of categories: used and antique furniture, collectibles, jewelry, appliances, house wares, CDs, DVDs, books, toys, sports equipment, good used clothing and accessories, bed and bath, decorative art and more.

The tag sale will take place at 107 Bedford Rd. (at the corner of Manville Road and Route 117) in Pleasantville. All proceeds will benefit Hudson Chorale, the area’s largest not-for-profit community chorus.

Weekly rehearsals are held at the Pleasantville Presbyterian Church as singers come from throughout Westchester and surrounding counties. The chorus performs a wide range of music featuring traditional and contemporary composers. The chorus’ next concert is on Saturday, May 9. Visit www.HudsonChorale.org for complete concert, membership and audition details.

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