White Plains Celebrates 100th Anniversary as Incorporated City in 2016

The 11th edition of 100.7 WHUD’s annual Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals Radiothon was its most successful yet this year, with more than $480,000 raised for Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital. Last week’s fundraiser surpassed the 2014 Radiothon, which raised more than $250,000.

ShopRite Supermarkets, Inc., 1007 WHUD, Saw Mill Auto Sales and the Fareri family were credited with outstandingly generous donations. Other sponsors included Tompkins Mahopac Bank, the Page & Otto Marx, Jr. Foundation, Classic Cruisers Car Club and Hot Rods on the Hudson, The Grove at Valhalla Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, All Aboard! Childcare Education Centers and Somers Sports Arena.

Additionally, former and current Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital patients, Boy Scout troops, high school sports teams and area families brought their collected “loot” to the hospital for counting as part of the hospital’s Western-themed, Change Bandits donation program, which garnered over $18,000 for the Radiothon effort.

Maria Fareri Children’s Hospital, is a member of the Westchester Medical Centers and Somers Sports Arena.

Local Radiothon Raises Almost $5M for Children’s Hospital

By Pat Casey

A look back at events in 2015 reveals that the most pervasive issues in White Plains continue to be related to land use and development as a changing financial climate opens to new demographics and markets.

White Plains Hospital. In January, White Plains Hospital began an active year with the topping of the final piece of steel on a modern cancer care building at the corner of Longview Avenue and East Post Road. By mid-September the ribbon was cut on the new hospital lobby, which some called the lobby of the hospital for the future. Taking its cue from the hospitality industry the new lobby featured interior design by Perkins Eastman, with 25-foot glass walls, a floating staircase, and a café run by New York Hospitality Group.

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The Year 2015 in Review

By Pat Casey

Last week The Wall Street Journal reported that according to a former official the Bowman Avenue Dam near Rye Brook was breached by Iranian hackers in a test to see what they could access.

The article said the breach was not sophisticated and occurred during the same time frame that Iranian hackers were targeting U.S. financial institutions. The attackers were unable to get into the full dam system, but could take control of the flood gates. The incident remains classified, the official said.

Rye Brook Mayor Paul Rosenberg was quoted in the article saying, “The dam is used to control water flow when it rains to prevent flooding downstream. The dam is managed by a piece of software that is industry standard and very common.” Rosenberg said he doubted the hackers could have wreaked heavy damage or that Rye was a substantial target, but it worries him that hackers are looking for any opportunity they could find to cause damage.

The Department of Homeland Security, which knew about the cyberattack, would not confirm on the dam intrusion for The Wall Street Journal article, but did continue on page 4...
HEINEKEN USA encourages revelers 21+ to always drink responsibly, and is providing free rides to residential destinations within Westchester County. Visit the Safe Rides transportation stand on the corner of East Post Road and Mamaroneck Avenue between 11 pm - 3 am. Open to New Year’s Eve Spectacular attendees 21 and older!
Westchester Embraces New York Climate Smart Community Program

In mid-December, the County Board of Legislators voted to make Westchester the latest community to become a New York Climate Smart Community.

The resolution, introduced by Legislator Catherine Parker (D-Mamaroneck), aims to find energy efficiencies and cost savings available to municipalities and promote economic growth in the expanding green technology field.

"The Climate Smart Communities Pledge includes all the elements of a successful local climate program."

Formally adopting the Climate Smart Communities Pledge initiates a community's commitment to Green House Gas emission reduction and climate adaptation. The Climate Smart Communities Pledge includes all the elements of a successful local climate program. By reducing GHG emissions and preparing for a changing climate, local climate programs protect public health and safety, and support a secure economic future.

"Reducing energy costs and improving operation efficiency will save taxpayer dollars for many years after the initial cost is paid," Parker explained in a release announcing the legislation. "Climate smart land use practices, like the ones prescribed in this resolution, can also lower the cost of infrastructure and public services."

Providers of "green" (energy efficiency and renewable energy) products and services, and the workers who install and maintain these products, are also considered beneficiaries as communities increase efficiency and adopt clean technologies. "Green technologies generate more jobs per dollar than conventional fuel technologies, and these dollars are more likely to be retained in the local economy," Parker said.

According to the American Solar Energy Society, the renewable energy and energy efficiency sectors have the potential to generate up to 37 million jobs by 2030, more than 17 percent of all anticipated employment in the nation.

The Climate Smart Pledge is comprised of the following 10 elements:

• Pledge to be a Climate Smart Community.
• Set goals, inventory emissions, plan for climate action.
• Decrease community energy use.
• Increase community use of renewable energy.
• Realize benefits of recycling and other climate-smart solid waste management practices.
• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions through use of climate-smart land use tools.
• Enhance community resilience and prepare for the effects of climate change.
• Support development of a green innovation economy.
• Inform and inspire the public.
• Commit to an evolving process of climate action.

Many Westchester municipalities have already taken the pledge including: City of New Rochelle; City of Peekskill; City of Rye; City of White Plains; City of Yonkers; Town of Bedford; Town of Cortlandt; Town of Greenburgh; Town of Lewisboro; Town of Mamaroneck; Town of New Castle; Town of North Castle; Town of North Salem; Town of Ossining; Town of Pound Ridge; Town of Somers; Town of Yorktown; Village of Ardsley; Village of Dobbs Ferry; Village of Croton-on-Hudson; Village of Hastings-on-Hudson; Village of Irvington; Village of Larchmont; Village of Mamaroneck; Village of Mount Kisco; Village of Ossining; Village of Port Chester; Village of Tarrytown; Village of Sleepy Hollow.
Hackers Breach Local Dam Security, Astorino Asks Why He Was Not Informed—

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note in a statement that its cybersecurity center serves as a hub for monitoring and mitigating such attacks.

The Iranian hactivist group SOBH Cyber Jihad was reported to have claimed responsibility for the Rye Brook cyberattack and said they kept quiet for two years because of a "state-level" warning not to go public with it "for the greater good." They came forward after the Wall Street Journal report.

Officials in Rye said the Department of Homeland Security notified them about unauthorized access to the city's computer system and followed up with a report in January. According to NBC News the intruder accessed and read files, including usernames and passwords, six times between Aug. 22 and Sept. 27, 2013.

Shocked when he heard the news and disturbed that he and other Westchester County officials had not been notified of the breach, County Executive Rob held a press conference Dec. 23, asking the Department of Homeland Security for details about the reported Iranian cybersecurity breach at the Bowman Ave. Dam. He also demanded explanations about why the county wasn't informed of the security risk.

"If this information was important enough to be reported to the White House then why wasn't it reported to me and the county officials who would have been required to deal with the consequences of any terror attack?" asked Astorino. "It is unacceptable that in this day and age that I had to read about this in the newspaper. No amount of intelligence information is too small or insignificant when it comes to security."

Despite being a member of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, Westchester County was never alerted to the potential security risk. Since January 2010, a Westchester County police detective has been assigned full-time to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force to ensure access to the highest levels of intelligence information affecting Westchester and its citizens. Westchester is also part of a separate counter-terrorism zone that also includes Putnam County.

"Even though it was done with computers, this is considered a criminal break in," said County Public Safety Commissioner George Longworth. "The link to a possible terror threat makes this extremely serious."

In 2014 the Department of Homeland Security responded to 245 cyber incidents reported by critical infrastructure operators, 32 percent of which were in the energy sector and 27 percent of which were in critical manufacturing. Many of the compromises were carried about by simple "spearphishing" attacks, where employees are duped into clicking a malicious link by an email.

Local Radiothon Raises Almost $5M for Children's Hospital —

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Center Health Network (WMCHealth) and is the children's hospital for New York's Hudson Valley region and Fairfield County, Connecticut. Located in Valhalla, this 136-bed advanced pediatrics facility cares for the region's most seriously ill and injured children including those in need of cardiac surgery, neurosurgery, hematolgy and oncology treatments, organ transplants and other specialty pediatric services. Maria Fareri Children's Hospital is also home to the areas only Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Level I pediatric trauma and burn care programs and its Regional Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

At a press conference Dec. 23, Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino asks why he was not informed about a cybersecurity breach from Iran that occurred in Rye in 2013.
move during the first quarter, White Plains Planning Commissioner Elizabeth Cheteny was asked to resign from her post and a subsequent unanimous vote by the Common Council sealed her removal.

Conversations with some Council members after the fact indicate they were not given specifics as to the reason for Cheteny’s removal. It is not clear if Cheteny did resign as asked or if the Council vote was needed to force her out. Comments by Mayor Roach at the time of the vote as recorded by several media outlets are brief. The Mayor said, “We have decided to go in a different direction.”

In June, Christopher Gomez was named as White Plains’ new Commissioner of Planning. Gomez had worked as a planner at both the County and municipal levels. Most recently, he served as the Director of Planning and Development for the Village of Port Chester.

Westchester Avenue Redevelopment.
In mid-March, development partners Saber White Plains LLC and Chauncey White Plains LLC made a conceptual presentation to the White Plains Planning Board seeking an amendment to the city’s zoning map.

The redevelopment project, which involves 1 million square feet fronting Westchester Avenue, extends from the property line of the White Plains Diner to the property line of the site now housing Avis and extending back to Franklin Avenue.

Two buildings on both sides of a new Paulding would be four stories, and approximately 60 feet high including 75,000 sq. ft. at the ground and second floor levels, featuring retail and restaurants. One building would have 11 loft-style apartments on the top floor and across the Paulding Street entrance, an AC Barcelona Hotel, would include 154 rooms and a 16,000 sq. ft. spa. The Chrysler Jeep showroom currently at the location would have a new 7,000 sq. ft. showroom and 33,000 sq. ft. of car storage and auto services below ground.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Saved.
Faced with the prospect of the imminent merging of their historic Roman Catholic parish with two others located within a few mile radius (St. John’s and St. Bernard’s), members of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church took to grassroots efforts in March to try to save their historic worshipping community. After months of back and forth, the church was able to stay open.

White Plains Historic Preservation Law. The much anticipated White Plains Historic Preservation Law was drafted and a copy submitted to the Common Council at its April meeting. During its May 4 meeting the White Plains Common Council voted unanimously to adopt the new local law in the form of an amendment to the White Plains Municipal Code. The law set a base for the creation of a new commission comprised of members appointed by the mayor that would make recommendations and establish policy for the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of landmarks and historic districts within the city of White Plains.

By October the historic preservation commission met, with chairman Robert Hoch, announcing that the group was eyeing two properties for immediate action: Soundview Manor and the Good Counsel property.

French American School of New York (FASNY). After several years of debate, the decision on FASNY’s proposal to operate a regional school in the Gedney neighborhood of White Plains was swiftly moving toward a conclusion. In May eight neighborhood associations brought out over 200 people to protest the proposed entrance to the FASNY regional school opposite the entrance to White Plains High School. In June the Common Council held a Special Meeting to discuss and air publicly their concerns about the final documents regarding the partial closure of a public roadway – Hathaway Lane – as it related to FASNY’s...
December 29, 2015-January 4, 2016

The White Plains Examiner

The Year 2015 in Review
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Dennis Krolan voted against Nicoletti’s dismissal. First Deputy Commissioner of Public Works Rick Hope took over as Acting DPW Commissioner.

Cabaret License Changes. On July 6, the White Plains Common Council voted six to one to change the city’s Municipal Code regarding cabarets to allow the collection of a fee at the door. With many entertainment establishments in White Plains expressing angst at having to wait for the city’s cabaret code to be revised, the wait was most likely well worth it when the Council voted to allow restaurants to collect an entrance fee on top of the prices already posted on their food and drink menus. The code still requires that cabarets are conducted in restaurants only and defines the operation of primary and secondary cabarets based on square footage.

White Plains Transportation Center. The $1 million funding for a grant from the New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) for preliminary planning, design and engineering related to the White Plains Transportation Center was accepted by the White Plains Council Oct. 5 and the city contracted with Parsons Brinckerhoff to do a study. On Oct. 29, White Plains Mayor Tom Roach announced the members of the White Plains Multimodal Transportation Center Redevelopment Project Stakeholder Task Force, which would work in tandem with the professional research group.

Esplanade Repurposing. Situated across from the vacant former Border’s Books store in the Pavilion shopping center, which is scheduled for demolition and the construction of two residential towers as part of a $275 million project, the Esplanade residence and hotel in White Plains, has also been slated for a complete renovation.

The proposed development project, made public at a December Council work session, would bring the existing building into context with other projects in various stages of development in the immediate area. The plan is to take the existing building and re-adapt it to create a full service apartment tower to include restaurants to collect an entrance fee.

The White Plains Council in December and in the early discussion stages is a proposed redevelopment plan for the Post Road and Maple Avenue near the Scarsdale border. Called The Boulevard, the proposed development requires a zoning change to allow for residential and retail in a mixed-use configuration in a zone that currently allows automotive dealerships.
Police Blotter
Westchester County District Attorney’s Office
Vehicular Manslaughter. Hasani Ewan (DOB 2/17/77) of Mount Vernon, was arraigned on a seven count indictment charging him with: Vehicular Manslaughter, Criminally Negligent Homicide, and Driving While Intoxicated.

On September 7 at approximately 1:40 a.m. the defendant was driving his 2001 Honda Accord eastbound on the Cross County Parkway in the vicinity of the Seminary Bridge in Yonkers. Also inside the car, was Elouise Spears of the Bronx, a front seat passenger.

Ewan drove his car off the highway and into the Seminary Bridge abutment. The vehicle’s front passenger side impacted the bridge, killing Spears.

When police arrived, the defendant was outside the vehicle and appeared to be in an agitated state. Officers noted that Ewan’s eyes were glassy and that he staggered when he walked. They also detected the smell of alcohol on his breath and the smell of marijuana coming from his clothing.

Ewan suffered a cut to the face from the accident and was taken to Westchester Medical Center. Upon his arrival he was placed under arrest and advised of his rights. Officers noted that Ewan’s eyes were glassy and that he staggered when he walked. They also detected the smell of alcohol on his breath and the smell of marijuana coming from his clothing.

Ewan’s blood drawn at the hospital revealed that he had a .13 percent BAC. Defendant pled not guilty and remains out on a bail of $75,000. The defendant’s next court date is March 23, 2016. He faces a maximum sentence of seven years in state prison.

Greenburgh Police Department
Petit Larceny. On Dec. 19 police responded to Saks at 29 Tarrytown Road for two reported shoplifters in custody. Upon arrival, units met with Saks asset protection, which identified two suspects as the parties who stole three watches with a total value of $219.97. Both parties were observed removing the tags for the merchandise and then concealing the watches on their person. Both parties passed all points of sale without paying for the concealed merchandise. They were placed under arrest and transported to police headquarters for processing. Store surveillance video captured the theft.

Larceny. On Dec. 18 police responded to the CVS at 253 N. Central Ave. for a report of a larceny. At the store the shift manager said two black males entered the store and were observed in the aisles removing items from the shelves. The items were placed into Christmas bags each person was carrying. The manager approached the males and advised they needed to leave the store at which time they exited. The manager is uncertain of what was taken and could not provide a dollar amount of loss. The area was canvassed by several units with negative results. Other CVS stores in the area were advised of the theft and given descriptions of the suspects.

DWL. On the evening of Dec. 18 officers were on a traffic stop at 395 Saw Mill River Rd. when an unknown party stopped her vehicle behind them and approached on foot. The party was observed to be unbalanced as she approached. She said she was lost and needed directions. She was told to sit in her vehicle and that she would be assisted as soon as the traffic stop was done. When the party was asked where she needed to go, she stated that she needed to get to Bergen County, New Jersey. When asked where she was coming from she said Bergen County, New Jersey. When asked if she knew where she was, she stated that she was in Nyack, New York. She appeared to be disoriented and confused. When asked what bridge she took to get here she said she did not go over a bridge. When asked if she had anything to drink that night and she reported that she had two glasses of wine. When asked if she was on any medications and she reported that she had taken a Xanax and a Zoloft. She became increasingly agitated and unable to respond to commands. She was transported to police headquarters.

Burglary. On Dec. 17 the complainant called police headquarters and reported that he arrived home and believed his house was burglarized. Upon police arrival, an exterior check of the premise was conducted and a rear first floor window was found to be open. There were no signs of forced entry, only smudged hand prints. No alarm system or surveillance cameras in the home, and there were no recent calls to the area of suspicious activity. An interior check was conducted and the interior of the home appeared to have been ransacked. Several drawers and jewelry cases throughout the house were emptied. The Detective Division was notified and detectives responded to process the scene. Upon further investigation it appeared that exit was made through a rear French door, which had the frame bent from having been pushed open from inside of the home. The homeowner reported that an unknown amount of jewelry was stolen, possibly over $15,000 worth. He also reported that the last person to leave the home was the nanny. A canvass of the neighboring homes was conducted with negative results.
November 2015 Sales Tax Revenues Drop from Prior Year

Only weeks after several independent entities cautioned against the overly aggressive revenue assumptions in the 2016 budget, Westchester County released the results from November 2015, which include those generated by Black Friday and the start of the holiday shopping season that are down 2 percent from the same point in 2014.

In November of 2015, the county reported $38,825,843 in sales tax revenue, down from $39,649,702 the prior year. The drop is $823,859 and leaves the County's 2015 11-month total over $2.5 million short of the budgeted revenue figure for the year. In order to meet the goal for the 2015 budget, December sales tax would have to have an 8.5 percent increase from the prior December.

"While the weather has been extremely conducive to shopping throughout the country, expecting to inject $16 million into the local economy in one month with one shopping season is a bit too large of a gamble for my comfort," Legislator Ken Jenkins (D-Yonkers) said.

The County would need to pull in $54,570,562 in sales tax revenues in order to make budget for 2015 or else it will have to rely on funds from the County's reserve to close the several million dollar operating deficit for the year.

"We've been cautioned against these practices for exactly this reason and with the growth in ease of online shopping, this trend is only going to continue. The last time our area saw a winter miracle like this was when Joe Namath guaranteed the Jets would win the Super Bowl; I don't think we're on the cusp of anything great with this administration," Jenkins concluded.

The Double Standard of Price Gouging

Very recently it was reported in the local media that a number of taxi cab operators were publicly reprimanded and fined for price gouging at the White Plains train station in the wake of last January's Metro North accident in Valhalla. This event does pose a moral conundrum with regard to the double standard being set by White Plains. True, the cab drivers did take advantage of a situation that improved their bottom line, though we must remember this is a capitalistic economic system of supply and demand. Most people would agree it is morally wrong to "extort" money from people in a time of crisis who have little choice but to pay.

As appalling as this is, along with the quick response from the City to impose punitive fines for price gouging, we must not lose sight of White Plains' high parking fees along with its excessive penalties for tickets. I thought usury and price gouging were illegal, and, not to be tolerated in the City of White Plains. One could logically conclude that price gouging is legal and acceptable if mandated by a government.

We should ponder the hypocrisy of such actions if we truly believe that price gouging is illegal regardless of who engages in this unethical practice.

–Rolando D’Illuric, White Plains

Obituaries

John M. Simone

John M. Simone Jr., 89, of White Plains, passed away December 23. He was born February 1, 1926 in White Plains to John M. Simone and Cecelia Faulkner. John served his country during WWII in the Air Corps. On January 6, 1952 John married Bernadine Wechgeiler. He is a former Deputy Chief of the White Plains Fire Department, retiring July 1, 1975. He was a member of the Elks Club.

Besides his loving wife Bernadine, John is survived by his four loving children; John Simone of West Nyack, Pat Simone of Greenwich, and Ron Simone of Stamford, and four cherished grandchildren; Erica Murray, Danielle Simone, John Simone and Collin Marino. He was predeceased by his brother Fred Simone December 28, 2011.

Joseph G. Lemm

Joseph G. Lemm, 45, of West Harrison, died on December 21 from wounds received in action while serving his country in Afghanistan with the Air National guard. Born August 12, 1970 in Dubuque, IA he was the son of Charles Ronek of Dubuque, IA and Shirley Lemm of Beemer, NE. Joe attended Beemer High School in Nebraska where he excelled as an athlete in football, basketball, and track. Joe accomplished everything he strived to achieve.

After High School he enlisted in the Armed Forces serving in the United States Air Force. Promoted to the rank of Technical Sergeant, Joe served three tours of duty in both Iraq and Afghanistan with the 105th Base Defense Squadron. Throughout his military service he received numerous awards and commendations to include The Purple Heart and he is set to receive The Bronze Star Medal with Valor. In 2000 Joe wanted to continue protecting people by joining The New York City Police Department.

A 16-year veteran of law enforcement Joe was a highly decorated New York City Police Officer with 590 arrests. After serving in the 48th Precinct and Bronx Street Crime Unit, Retired First Grade Detective, Danny Rivera, a longtime mentor and friend, inspired Joe to further follow his heart. On December 19, 2014 Joe was promoted to Detective serving as member of the department's Warrant Squad. Nicknamed "superman" by friends and colleagues Joe was a gentle giant who strived to be the best in whatever he set his mind to. He enjoyed playing basketball, being on his boat, and was a true Philadelphia Eagles fan.

Joe was also an avid hunter, outdoorsman, most of all enjoyed spending time with friends and family. Joe is survived by his wife Christine, daughter Brooke, son Ryan, father Charles (Charlotte) Ronek, mother Shirley Lemm, brother Brian Lemm, mother-in-law Jill DeGuisto, sister-in-law Kim (Travis) Arnette, niece Taylor Arnette and nephew Travis Arnette Jr., Godmother Carmela Fuca, many cousins, aunts, uncles, and numerous friends.

Joe was preceded in death by his sister-in-law Karen Ann DeGuisto and friend and fellow Serviceman Staff Sgt. Todd "TJ" Lobraico. Joe would want everyone to celebrate his life listening to rock and roll. We all know Joe is watching us and will be here with us for all Eternity.

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In the early days of our marriage, my wife and I lived in a small New York City studio apartment and we had to make the most of what space we had.

Some of our neighbors opened up floor space by sleeping on Murphy beds that folded up vertically into the wall. We opted instead to purchase an extra-long convertible sofa, a Lawson-style, upholstered in red velvet, and had that as our regular bed. It followed us through many moves. The daily ritual of folding the sofa up again early in the morning became ingrained in us.

Eventually we settled into our home in the suburbs and acquired a queen-sized bed in its own bedroom. Our old convertible sofa became part of our living room furniture. We imagined that it could still be unfolded for our relatives when they came to visit, but as we already had a separate guest bedroom with its own bed, the sofa was opened for company only rarely, mainly on Christmas Eve when relatives visiting from a distance stayed over.

After many years we finally brought it to the curb and replaced it with a more delicate – but admittedly less adaptable – pink Sheraton-style settee. We felt fortunate to have enough rooms to meet our needs. But now as we look forward, we see the appeal of having less house to tend to. Eventually we will downsize, yet we will still want to entertain and have family over as before. I decided to investigate convertible furniture to see if it has evolved from my old city days.

There is no doubt that the fold-out sofa is the classic choice for temporary guest bedding, although many of us dread spending a night over that infamous metal bar that runs across the width of the mattress. Fortunately, a little research on the Apartment Therapy or Consumers Digest websites can give me advice for choosing the newest comfortable brands.

One alternative to the foldout is a daybed with a slide-out trundle underneath, turning a sofa into two side-by-side twin beds. Another is the ingenious sofa bunk bed, which unfolds upward, revealing easily positioned ladder rungs and safety rails.

For the more experimental, many manufacturers offer geometric foam pieces that can be rearranged like building blocks into a sofa, a daybed or a low table with extra blocks on the floor for seating. I’m not sure how much I would enjoy picking myself up off the floor after sleeping on that foam, but the younger or more limber among us may want to try it.

Once you know where your guests will be sleeping, it’s time to find them a place to sit and eat. The most traditional way to expand your dining table is to buy one that accommodates extra panels in the center, and perhaps unfold a card table for the overflow.

But if your space is too small for a dedicated dining table, there are still alternatives. One of my favorites is the fold-down table, where one edge is joined to the wall with hinges. When open, the legs unfold down for support, and when closed, the legs and eating surface lie flat against the wall. Some models, available online for the DIYer, reveal medicine cabinet-sized storage when the table is folded down. Other versions, such as those made by IvyDesign, turn the underside of the table into a framed work of art once it is folded up.

Even small furniture items can give you more space when you need it. Not only can sets of end tables nest into each other, but with design ingenuity even chairs and coffee tables can be stored in a similar way.

For the ultimate in space efficiency, one can marvel at the highly engineered components that make up accordion-style apartments, where sliding and pivoting structures transform one room into three or more. The traditional Murphy bed, for example, not only folds up into the wall, but it might pivot to reveal bookcases and a fold-down table on the other side. What looks like a solid wall might easily slide forward, similar to the mobile shelving in museum archives, to create a new mini-room with bunk beds or other storage that unfold from the newly revealed wall.

While I don’t see myself returning to the days of folding my bed away every morning, I can certainly handle stacking a few coffee tables, matryoshka doll-style, after company leaves. Even this lifetime suburban homeowner can adapt to using space in a new way.

Rancho Grande Serves a South of the Border Fiesta

By Morris Gut

By Morris Gut

Mexican food and culture meld beautifully with any season, and big, sprawling Rancho Grande Restaurant in the Highridge Shopping Plaza along Central Park Ave., Yonkers, offers an exciting environment for a good time.

Proprietor Mary Maloney and general manager and host Jose Perez are ready to feed you a large dose of south of the border festivities in their multi-faceted 320-seat dining room and bar. The bar/lounge is a great spot for networking and there are Happy Hours offering specially priced cocktails Sunday through Friday from 4 to 7 p.m. Three separate dining areas are strewn with Mexican art and artifacts, and there is some seating with a view overlooking bustling Central Park Ave. A stage on the main level is the setting for live entertainment.

The kitchen is manned by talented Executive Chef Angelo Magno who some may know from Gaucho Grill in White Plains, and the former Milonga and Tango Grill in White Plains.

Great starters on the menu include: Queso Fundido, a caserole of cheese fondue with Mexican sausage, served with flour tortillas; Cachos de Cacahuete, shrimp marinated in lemon juice, chopped tomato, onions, cilantro and fresh chilies; Alitos, Mexican style Buffalo Wings with mango habanero or BBQ sauce; and the Botanita Grande, a combination platter of nachos, dry quesadilla, flautas, guacamole, chorizo, pico de gallo and sour cream.

A specialty of the house is Guacamole al Molcajete prepared tableside. Sizzling Fajitas really put on a smoky aromatic show in the dining room with your choice of fillings: chicken, carnitas, steak, or seafood. The Fajita Torito includes chicken, steak, shrimp, chorizo and melted Oaxaca cheese. A selection of Vegetarian dishes includes: a version of Paella with broccoli, carrots, cauliflower and spinach. Your favorite Tacos, Enchiladas and Burritos are here, too.

Signature House Specialties served in generous style include: Alambre Mar Y Tierra, steak, chicken, shrimp, with mixed vegetables, white rice and chile poblano sauce; Mole Poblano, chicken breast cooked in a flavorful dark sauce with dried peppers and spices; Mariscada Don Francisco, clams, mussels, calmarami, scallops, red snapper and shrimp cooked in a creamy lobster sauce with parsley, served with white rice; and house made Tamales, cornmeal stuffed with pork and spices, steamed in corn husk.

Special Hint: Families should check out ‘Kids Eat Free’ (under 10) Sunday, Monday and Wednesday. Senior Citizens get a 20 percent discount all day Tuesdays. Rancho Grande Mexican Restaurant is located at 1789 Central Park Ave., Yonkers. The restaurant is open 7 days a week for lunch and dinner. Sunday through Thursday: 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday open to midnight. Daily Happy Hours Sunday-Friday: 4 to 7 p.m. Weekend entertainment schedule, check ahead for details. On and off-premise catering. Private party facilities for up to 90. Major credit cards. Casual dress. Free parking. Phone: 914-337-3056 www.ranchograndemex.com.

Culinary Grapevine in Early 2016

Kee Oyster House has taken over the long vacant space that was Tango Grill on East Post Road and Court Street, White Plains. It is an Asian work in progress. The ‘oyster house’ theme has come on strong with fish houses of every stripe making waves. Proprietor Les Barnes’ Saltairie, 55 Abendroth Ave., Port Chester (914-939-2425), for example, opened late last year housed in the renovated Willett House building, is one of the best new spots to indulge in platters of fresh clams and oysters and assorted fish and seafood dishes deftly prepared by Chef Bobby Will. A recent happy hour tasting proved that. Meanwhile, owner Ray Shramm’s rustic North East Oyster Co., 152 Mamaroneck Ave., Mamaroneck (914-304-3313), keeps his clams and oysters fresh daily out of a much smaller New England seacoast type space. And our friends at Lilly’s, 169 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains (914-997-5600) have latched on to the oyster house tag and are putting out fresh platters, too.

Peruvian cuisine in all its variations will make a greater impact in the coming year. We are seeing restaurants carrying the Peruvian theme not only in such ethnic enclaves as Port Chester and New Rochelle, but about to debut at Andino Peruvian Restaurant along Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck, at the former Gusano Loco site. Even long running Splendid Coffee Shop, 106 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains (914-288-0000), is now devoting part of its old diner menu to Peruvian dishes at prices that are hard to beat. Celebrity Chef/Restaurateur Jose Andres helped the Peruvian culinary movement along with the opening his Chica Chicano in Washington, D.C., which tastefully plays on the wildly popular fusion of Peruvian, Chinese and Japanese cuisines. A popular concept in Peru, according to my friend Walter Ricci of La Piccola Casa in Mamaroneck, across from Harbor Island Park. Walter is originally from Peru where he grew up in an Italian/Peruvian household. Let’s see if bbq ‘cuy’, Andean Guinea pig, a native specialty in some parts of Peru, makes it big here, too. Peruvian roast chicken is always delicious, though.

Estiatorio in Manhattan at York and 78th has taken over the former Casa Brusco space at 219 Main Street, Eastchester. It is being renovated as of this writing. Fans of Greek and Mediterranean cuisine should be quite pleased. Among his many designations, Chef Christou had worked for the Livanos family’s Molyvos in the city. More to follow…

Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in Greater Westchester for over 30 years. He may be reached at: 914-235-6591. E-mail: gutreactions@optonline.net.

Menu Movers & Shakers

General Manager Jose Perez with Executive Chef Angelo Magno at Rancho Grande, Yonkers.
// The Restaurant Examiner

New Year’s Eve Dining and Entertainment Guide, Part III

By Jerry Eimbinder

Here is a continuation of The Examiner’s coverage of venues for area New Year’s Eve events. Prices shown are per person and do not include tax and gratuity unless otherwise stated.

Hastings-on-Hudson: Purpl. Passed hors d’oeuvres. The Cookery food station, ice cream sandwiches from Pennylick Ice Cream and desserts by As You Wish Catering and pastry chef Rob Jones. Open bar includes cocktails, Champagne, wine and Captain Lawrence beer. Silent auction for work of many artists. Karaoke band. $100 per person; $179 per couple; $242 for a table of eight. 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. or later. Cost is 50 percent tax deductible.

Mount Kisco: Rose A La carte dinner. DJ. Entrées include filet mignon with lump crabmeat, lobster and spaghetti, braised beef ravioli, salmon, shrimp risotto, grilled swordfish, veal chop and chicken cutlet.


White Plains: Royal Palace. Masquerade theme (bring a mask). Three-course dinner. Open bar. Midnight Champagne toast. Party favors, photo booth, belly dancer. Kaotic Sound DJ. $75 per adult in advance or $90 at door. $40 per child (ages 5-12). $65 per person for groups of 10 or more. Opens at 8 p.m.

White Plains: Serafina. Appetizer, entrées include a choice of risotto, filet mignon or branzino and taramisu for dessert. Party favors, balloons, music and midnight countdown. Welcome Champagne toast. $79.

Yonkers: Alley 810. At Empire City Casino. DJ LAX. 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Yonkers: Dan Rooney’s Sports Bar. At Empire City Casino. Rachel Allyn Band. 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Yonkers: Entertainment Lounge. At Empire City Casino. Four entrée choices. Champagne Toast. Guss Hayes Band. $79 for Empire Club members; $89 for non-members. 9 p.m. seating.


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The Examiner’s Creative Winter Cocktail Guide

By Jerry Eimbinder

At many local restaurants, mixologists have enhanced the dining experience by applying bold imagination and artistry to the ancient art of cocktail making. Blending in new ingredients has produced “craft cocktails” alternatives to the Old Fashioned, Manhattan, Bloody Mary and the Cosmopolitan.

The following directory has been prepared for the adventurous drinker seeking creative or exotic winter/holiday cocktails. Since most of the drinks are new, in some cases the establishment has not yet listed a price.

Armonk: Moderne Barn. Rum Toddy. Apple-flavored rum, apple cider, cinnamon stick, cloves, nutmeg, allspice, star anise, butter ($13).

Dobbs Ferry: Cedar Street Grill. The Big Apple Toddy. Served warm with Serpent’s Apple Whiskey, local cider ($12).


Port Chester: Salsa. Pumpkin Spice & Everything Nice. Pumpkin beer, bourbon, maple syrup, egg ($13).


Rye: La Panetiere. Russian Ballet. Similar to a vodka sour; vodka, creme de cassis. Shaken ($14).

Scarsdale: Meritage. The Hudson Valley wheat whiskey, sweet vermouth, bitter, cherry ($14).

Sleepy Hollow: Bridge View Tavern. BVT Bloody Mary. Crop cucumber vodka, meddled sherry tomatoes, parsley, fresh horseradish with Bloody Mary mix. Served with fresh lemon, olives and crisp celery.


Tarrytown: Equus. Raq & Bubbles. Prosecco and Stoli Raq with muddled raspberries, fresh lemon juice and Simple Syrup with a twist.


The bar in the cocktail lounge at Saltaire in Port Chester.

The 36th Vote

By Jerry Eimbinder

Winter


Port Chester: Salsa. Pumpkin Spice & Everything Nice. Pumpkin beer, bourbon, maple syrup, egg ($13).


Rye: La Panetiere. Russian Ballet. Similar to a vodka sour; vodka, creme de cassis. Shaken ($14).

Scarsdale: Meritage. The Hudson Valley wheat whiskey, sweet vermouth, bitter, cherry ($14).

Sleepy Hollow: Bridge View Tavern. BVT Bloody Mary. Crop cucumber vodka, meddled sherry tomatoes, parsley, fresh horseradish with Bloody Mary mix. Served with fresh lemon, olives and crisp celery.


Tarrytown: Equus. Raq & Bubbles. Prosecco and Stoli Raq with muddled raspberries, fresh lemon juice and Simple Syrup with a twist.


The bar in the cocktail lounge at Saltaire in Port Chester.

Simple Syrup muddle on the rocks ($13).


Mount Kisco: Pour. Between the Sheets. Parce 8-year-old Columbian rum, Guillon-Painturaud cognac, Caffo Solero, fresh lemon juice ($14).


Port Chester: Salsa. Pumpkin Spice & Everything Nice. Pumpkin beer, bourbon, maple syrup, egg ($13).


Rye: La Panetiere. Russian Ballet. Similar to a vodka sour; vodka, creme de cassis. Shaken ($14).

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Sleepy Hollow: Bridge View Tavern. BVT Bloody Mary. Crop cucumber vodka, meddled sherry tomatoes, parsley, fresh horseradish with Bloody Mary mix. Served with fresh lemon, olives and crisp celery.


Tarrytown: Equus. Raq & Bubbles. Prosecco and Stoli Raq with muddled raspberries, fresh lemon juice and Simple Syrup with a twist.


Raz & Bubbles, a popular cocktail at Equus in Tarrytown’s Castle Hotel and Spa.

White Plains: Serafina. Appetizer, entrées include a choice of risotto, filet mignon or branzino and taramisu for dessert. Party favors, balloons, music and midnight countdown. Welcome Champagne toast. $79.

Yonkers: Alley 810. At Empire City Casino. DJ LAX. 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Yonkers: Dan Rooney’s Sports Bar. At Empire City Casino. Rachel Allyn Band. 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Yonkers: Entertainment Lounge. At Empire City Casino. Four entrée choices. Champagne Toast. Guss Hayes Band. $79 for Empire Club members; $89 for non-members. 9 p.m. seating.


White Plains: Morton’s. The 36th Vote. High West whiskey aged in oak barrels for three months, vermouth, bitters, stirred, served over an ice sphere.

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Diaper Bank of Westchester Receives Generous Donation from Huggies

The New Year is already looking a little brighter for families struggling to afford clean diapers, as the Westchester County Diaper Bank received a generous donation of 90,000 diapers from Huggies. During its first year of operations, the Westchester County Diaper Bank distributed 150,600 diapers (or 3,012 packages) to local families in need. That’s an average of 274 packages monthly -- all procured through donations, community drives and corporate sponsorships. Pictured left to right: John Befus, Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County Department of Social Services (DSS); Kevin J. Plunkett, Westchester Deputy County Executive; Alison Meserle, President, Junior League of Central Westchester; Meridith Alin, President-elect, Junior League of Central Westchester; Christine Sculti, Senior Advisory to County Executive Robert P. Astorino; Ellen Lynch, President & CEO, Food Bank for Westchester; Kevin M. McGuire, DSS Commissioner.

The Year of the Ape is their stage in this high-flying adaptation of the Disney film.
We're happy to help spread the word about your community event. Please submit your information at least three weeks prior to your event and include the words “Happenings Calendar Submission” in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to Pat Casey at pcasey@theexaminernews.com.

Tuesday, Dec. 29
Tuesdays at Dorry's. No presentation.


White Plains New Year's Eve Spectacular

The City of White Plains New Year's Eve Spectacular will be held at the intersection of Main and Court Streets and includes a DJ as well as a live band, a crowd countdown and ball drop, followed by a not-to-be-missed fireworks display and confetti.

The event is large and a number of street closings are necessary. The City will begin closing streets in the event area at 2 p.m. on New Year's Eve. Streets will begin to re-open to vehicular traffic after the event is over, starting at approximately 12:30 a.m. on Jan. 1. The New Year's Eve event will be accessible via gated entry only. Four gates will be set up at the following locations: Main Street at Church Street; Renaissance Square at Williams Street; Court Street at Martine Avenue; Martine Avenue at Mamaroneck Avenue.

No large bags will be permitted inside the event area and all bags are subject to search at the entry gates. Attendees are asked to plan ahead, leaving extra time to go through security before entering the event. In addition, the event will be a No Fly Zone for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (aka “drones”). These security precautions are intended for the safety of the public attending this event.

New Year's Eve. The Free New Year's Eve Celebration will begin at 10 p.m. on Main Street in White Plains and includes DJ music, Live Band, Ball Drop, Confetti and Fireworks display by Zambelli Fireworks and novelty items vendors.

Friday, Jan. 1
Happy New Year!

Eighth Annual New Year's Day Walk.
Start off the year and your 2016 bird list with an invigorating walk along the Hudson River shoreline. Dress warmly since it is often cooler by the river. Bring binoculars if you have them. There will also be spotting scopes to share. Walk for an hour or stay longer if you wish and weather permits. Rockwood Hall State Park, Sleepy Hollow. 9 a.m. Free. Info: Visit www.sawmillriveraudubon.org.

Saturday, Jan. 2
Family Saturdays at the Lab.
Learn about green screening, explore an augmented reality sandbox and make your own claymation stop-motion film! Jacob Burns Film Center educators will be on hand to guide visitors through an experience like no other. Jacob Burns Film Center's Media Arts Lab, 405 Manville Rd., Pleasantville. 1 to 3 p.m. Free. Meets the first Saturday of the month. Info: Visit www.burnsfilmcenter.org.

Monday, Jan. 4
Wild Encounters Story Time.
Nature discovery for youngsters. Enjoy a nature-themed story and discover the wonders of nature while exploring fields, forests or landscaped grounds. Dress for outdoor activity. Except in extreme weather conditions, a portion of each class is spent outdoors. For children three to five years old; with a parent or caregiver. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Drome Rd., Scarsdale. 1 to 2 p.m. Members: $9 per child. Non-member: $12 per child. Every Monday (except Jan. 18). Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

Telephone Support Group for Women With Metastatic Breast Cancer.
This Support Connection group offers the opportunity to share information and experiences with women across the country who are living with breast cancer. Share information and experiences. Confidentially discuss concerns and gain support from others who understand from the comfort of home. Open to women nationwide living with recurrent, advanced stage or metastatic breast cancer. 8 p.m. Free. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Contact Support Connection at 914-962-6402 or 800-532-4290.

Heineken to Provide New Year. Safe Ride Taxi Service for 12th Year

For the 12th year in a row, Heineken USA is partnering with The City of White Plains and the White Plains Business Improvement District on its New Year. Safe Ride program, created to help local residents get home safely on New Year's Eve. Through the New Year. Safe Ride program, HEINEKEN USA will provide free and safe rides home for Westchester County residents of legal drinking age who celebrate New Year's Eve in downtown White Plains. Between 11 p.m. on December 31 and 3 a.m. on January 1, a dedicated fleet of 30 cars will provide complimentary rides home for those 21 and older traveling from the heart of downtown White Plains to anywhere in the City or across Westchester County. The Safe Ride pick-up location will be located in the heart of downtown White Plains, on the corner of East Post Road and Mamaroneck Avenue.

White Plains Family Spectacular

Tarzan, The Stage Musical will play the White Plains Performing Arts Center Tuesday at 7 p.m.; Wednesday at 2 p.m.; and January 10, Sunday at 2 p.m.Tickets are $25 - $47. White Plains Performing Arts Center is located on the third level of City Center off Mamaroneck Avenue and Main Street in downtown White Plains. For tickets: visit the theatre box office Monday-Friday (11a.m. – 6 p.m.), purchase tickets online at wppac.com or call 914-328-1600. For Group Sales, contact barbara@wppac.com.


Pack Chat for Kids. Children will learn about the mythology surrounding wolves and the important role they play in the natural world. Guests will visit ambassador wolves Atka, Alawa, Nikai and Zephyr and the critically endangered red wolves and Mexican gray wolves. Bring a camera. Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem. 10 a.m. Adults: $13. Children (under 12): $11; 11 a.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit www.nywolf.org.

Wednesday, Dec. 30
Wolves of North America. Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why it's a special time for packs in North America. Whether the wolves are living on the Arctic tundra or the high desert of the southwest, wolf families are out searching for prey as their pups prepare for their first winter season. Guests will 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. Adults: $13. Children (under 12): $11; 11 a.m. Pre-registration required. Info and pre-registration: Visit www.nywolf.org.

Thursday, Dec. 31
White Plains Family Spectacular
By Albert Coqueran

The Stepinac High School and White Plains High School basketball teams almost had the opportunity to compete against each other in the 2015 Slam Dunk Tournament at the Westchester County Center last weekend. This would have been the match-up most local fans would have desired to witness.

However, The Tigers were defeated in the First Round by last year’s Section 9 Champions, Middletown High School, 56-43. White Plains shot a dismal 3-for-23, in the first half, which equals 13 percent from the field for those that are counting.

Luis Cartagena led the Tigers with 22 points. However, the senior guard committed six turnovers and did not have any assists in the game. Senior guard Lamar Noel had 10 points but added another five turnovers and only dished one assist.

“Horrible shooting, I think 23 percent for the game, you are not going to beat anyone scoring 11 points in a half,” said Tigers Head Coach Spencer Mayfield.

Middletown was led by junior guard Jordan Bryan, who nearly secured a double-double with 22 points and nine rebounds. Bears point-guard Daniel Grant finished with 11 points, while guard Kenneth Middleton contributed 11 points and seven rebounds. Grant also had four assists in the game.

White Plains versus Middletown was the first game of an evening doubleheader in the First Round of Boys’ Basketball, which started at 5:30 p.m. Therefore, before Stepinac took the court against Eastchester High School at 7 p.m.; the Tigers were already destined for the Loser’s Bracket, while the Bears would play the winner of Stepinac versus Eastchester, on Sunday.

The Crusaders found themselves in a battle with Section 1 Class A Eastchester, in the ensuing game. The Crusaders from the elite CHSAA AAA met a scrappy, hustling Eagles team and led by only 28-25 at halftime.

Stepinac outscored the Eagles 16-9, in the third quarter to make the score 44-34. The Crusaders, behind the shooting of guard Steve Galgano and forward Jack Heffernan, closed the gap to within two points, 56-54, with 23 seconds left in the game. Galgano scored 13 points and Heffernan added 10 points in the second half.

However, the Crusaders grinded to a 57-54 win over the Eagles in the First Round. They were led by sophomore Aundre Hyatt, who notched a double-double with 17 points and 14 rebounds. Hyatt also had four block shots in the game.

Stepinac junior forward Jordan Tucker almost added another double-double by scoring 11 points and securing nine rebounds. Tucker also blocked three shots. Guard Kobe Miranda was the “x-factor” for Stepinac, while playing tenacious defense and contributing 10 points.

Furthermore, the Crusaders finally found that fourth double-digit scorer

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EXAMINER SPORTS

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with senior Mario Nery hustling for 10 points. Eagles Galgano and Heffernan finished with a total of 15 points and 16 points correspondingly in the game, while Eagles’ prolific senior guard Benny Dimirco had 15 points in the game but only four points in the second half.

“We said we were not going to let Benny beat us. He had 11 points at halftime and our halftime talk was to hold him and we held him to four points in the second half,” revealed Crusaders Head Coach Pat Massaroni.

On Sunday afternoon, White Plains (5-3) turned things around in the Boys’ Bracket One Consolation Game, while defeating Eastchester, 58-40 and securing Third Place in this year’s Slam Dunk Tournament.

The Tigers were led by forward Braxton Gill who secured a double-double with 10 points and 12 rebounds. Tigers guard Cartagena had a game-high 17 points. Forward Andrew Schultz was team-high for the Eagles with 15 points.

The nightcap on Sunday, registered one of the most fast paced games witnessed in the Slam Dunk Tournament. Nonetheless, Stepinac outran Middletown, 71-57, to capture the 2015 Boys’ Bracket One Slam Dunk Championship.

It was the first Slam Dunk Tournament for Massaroni as the Crusaders Head Coach and the initial Slam Dunk Tournament for Crusaders sophomore transfer Hyatt; yet they both came-up winners.

“Growing-up in White Plains and getting a win here is a special feeling,” said Massaroni. "We have a young group with eleven underclassmen, they fought through some adversity last night and then came out tonight and won against a really good team,” said Massaroni, who now has his young Crusaders at 4-5 on the season.

The Bears, as in their game versus White Plains were fast and feisty with Bryan scoring 22 points again in the Championship Game. Bryan created his own Slam Dunk highlight reel, as the 6'-2" guard tomahawk-dunked throughout the game.

But the Bears could not overcome Hyatt, Tucker, Nery and Jorden Means for the Crusaders. Hyatt dropped 18 points and snatched 15 rebounds for his second double-double of the tournament. Tucker added 13 points, eight rebounds and four assists. Means finished with 15 points and again Stepinac found that all-important fourth scorer with Nery netting 12 points, while shooting 4-for-4 on the day.

Hyatt, who transferred from Fort Green Military Academy this season, won the Slam Dunk Boys’ Bracket One Most Valuable Player Award. Hyatt had a double-double in both contests, while totaling 35 points, 29 rebounds and seven block shots during the weekend. “It feels tremendous! It was a good team win. We fought and we got the Championship,” exclaimed Hyatt.

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