White Plains Talent Heads to P’ville Music Festival Main Stage

By Janine Bowen

Rebecca Haviland and Whisky Heart have recently finished two national tours, but the White Plains residents are looking forward to a much shorter trip for their next gig.

A young woman with a voice bigger than her size would suggest, Haviland and her band will be playing at this Saturday’s Pleasantville Music Festival at Parkway Field. Growing up in Harrison, Haviland was surrounded by music and began playing piano as soon as she was big enough to sit on the bench. Her grandmother was a piano teacher and her grandfather played drums in a swing band while several of her uncles performed in cover bands for the local bar circuit.

Haviland began sitting in with her uncle’s bands when she was 13 years old before joining her own group while going to Harrison High School. During that time, she sang, played keyboards and guitar.

Harrington native Rebecca Haviland will perform with her band on Saturday at the Pleasantville Music Festival, featuring a blend of rock with influences of jazz, country blues and bluegrass.

Town of Greenburgh Poised to Foreclose on 128 Properties

Brought on in large part by the Great Recession, the Town of Greenburgh had been faced with 479 properties that had not paid taxes in or before 2010.

According to Town Supervisor Paul Feiner when the foreclosure proceedings began in 2013, the Town sent out eight letters to each property owner advising them about the potential of foreclosure and what could be done to avoid a final action.

Since that time, the total number has been reduced to 128 properties including 50 residential (including apartments), 65 vacant properties and 13 commercial. The amount of back taxes and liens owed to the Town of Greenburgh including interest and charges is $11.2 million.

The last day for redemption by an owner is October 16, 2015.

Feiner is urging property owners to contact Westchester Residential Opportunities (WRO), an organization designated by New York State to accept applications for the Mortgage Assistance Program (MAP). This soft loan can pay up to $40k to homeowners facing foreclosure in delinquent taxes, or mortgage payments for reinstatement of the mortgage or maintenance fees.

Over 160 Take Voluntary County Separation Incentive

Looking at a tough budget coming in 2016, Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino offered County employees an incentive to retire during the late spring, intended to save Westchester millions of dollars.

The incentive was offered only to those employees who had worked a certain number of years and were reaching retirement age. Last week 162 employees agreed to take the offer and will be leaving their jobs by July 31.

Under the plan, departing employees receive $1,000 for every year of completed county service.

“This is a win for everybody,” said Astorino in a press statement. “Employees are rewarded for their years of service and taxpayers benefit from the savings generated from our ability to streamline the workforce. These savings will be applied to reducing the $56 million deficit the county is facing in 2016.”

The cost of the incentive is estimated to be $800,000, while the net savings is projected to be $2.97 million.

The departures will give departments the flexibility to align their staffs more efficiently. In addition, as jobs are refilled, the county can save substantial amounts of
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Pleasantville Gears Up for Exciting New-Look Music Festival
By Janine Bowen

Anyone planning to attend the 11th annual Pleasantville Music Festival at Parkway Field this Saturday can expect some surprises.

Earlier this year organizers announced several big changes, including the addition of a third stage for the event. One of the new features is appearances by winners of this winter’s Battle of the Bands, spotlighting young musicians, to open the festival.

Pleasantville Music Festival Executive Director Andy Goodman said he knew the contest would be a great way to get young musicians involved, but he never expected to be blown away by the entrants.

Initially, the contest was intended to have two winners: one that would open the Chill Tent Stage and another to open the Beer Garden Stage; however, Goodman explained that festival volunteers ultimately booked three artists who competed.

These winners, Megan Talay, Regret the Hour and Wild Planes, will kick off the festival at noon, and Goodman urges ticketholders to be sure to catch their performances.

“I did not expect the caliber of talent that we had. It’s just incredible,” Goodman said. “All three of these are a great reason to come early.”

Gates open at 11 a.m. for the festival, but this year people who wish to participate in Tent City won’t need to line up to ensure they have a good spot.

Goodman said tickets for Tent City, which are now sold out, were put on sale in advance this year in order to make the process go smoothly. Anyone who brings a tent but does not have a Tent City ticket will not be allowed to bring it in.

Other banned items include selfie sticks and drones. Goodman said volunteers will be checking coolers to prevent festival patrons from bringing in alcohol.

The festival will include a silent auction of four acoustic guitars that were donated by Paul Bessolo of Rock Island Sound in Tarrytown. Proceeds from the auction will benefit the festival’s charitable partners: Love, Hope, Strength, which helped acquire some of the artists for the event; the Justin Veatch Fund; the Prader Willi Foundation; and the Tina Gambino Memorial Fund. In addition, Westchester Medical Center, in partnership with Evan’s Team, will be selling raffle tickets for a Mercedes-Benz convertible, with the proceeds going toward remodeling the hospital’s family area.

For younger festival-goers, there will be a Kids Fun Zone run by Funtime Amusements as well as a photo booth from Double Image Entertainment, theater activities with Arc Stages and face painting by Pleasantville residents Greg and Kat Nemec.

Goodman said he owes a debt of gratitude to the more than 130 volunteers who will help run the event on Saturday as well as to Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer and Village Administrator Patricia Dwyer.

“They’ve done a great job,” said Scherer of the volunteers. “It’s a fantastic day for Pleasantville that reflects well on the village.”

Goodman said that after months of hard work, he is looking forward to enjoying the Pleasantville Music Festival as a fan and listening to nine hours of performances.

“You plan and plan and you see it coming together and you get really excited. It’s going to be fantastic,” Goodman said. “This is not just the Pleasantville Music Festival, it’s Pleasantville’s music festival and it’s a real source of pride.”

White Plains Talent Heads to P’ville Music Festival Main Stage
continued from page 1

classical and modern music.

“My lyric writing is reminiscent of some of that more romantic, kind of standard music but then puts some more of a rock, Americana [sound in it] as well,” Haviland explained.

Influenced by classic rock bands like Led Zeppelin and the jazz standards that she heard her grandparents play, Haviland said the band also blends elements of country, blues and bluegrass.

Having opened for acts such as James McCartney, son of Beatle Paul McCartney, she said the group’s live act features high-energy performances that capture the recorded sound while feeding off the energy of the crowd.

“The songs definitely sound like the record but we take them to a different place live,” Haviland said. “We definitely open them up a little bit more and have some more fun with them in a live setting.”

Having grown up a short drive from Pleasantville, Haviland has been familiar with the festival and has been eager to have the chance to perform at a more local event. She hopes that area residents who have seen her perform over the years and it’ll feel really good to get to do something local and show all the hard work we’ve put into the national touring.”

Rebecca Haviland and Whiskey Heart will be performing on the Main Stage at 1:35 p.m.

For those attending this Saturday’s Pleasantville Music Festival, there will be a few changes organizers hope will enhance the spectators’ experience.

“I did not expect the caliber of talent that we had. It’s just incredible,” Goodman said. “All three of these are a great reason to come early.”

Gates open at 11 a.m. for the festival,
Over 160 Take Voluntary County Separation Incentive
continued from page 1
money because contract modifications and changes in state law make the cost of new hires less expensive, particularly in the areas of fringe benefits such as pension and health care costs.

The 162 employees represent 3.3 percent of the county’s budgeted workforce of 4,867. Worker compensation is the biggest expense in the county budget. The average compensation of current county workers is approximately $130,000 a year; $80,000 for salary and an additional $50,000 or 63 percent for benefits.

The county budget office is currently projecting a $56 million deficit for 2016. According to the executive’s office, part of the reason is that sales tax collections are weaker than expected, down 3.7 percent in the first quarter of 2015 compared to 2014.

Astorino has ruled out increasing the county property tax levy, which has been one of his primary election promises, saying that Westchester is the highest taxed county in the country and any tax that he controls will not go up on his watch.

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Interested in a “Bright Futures” degree at Westchester Community College? Many of our academic programs are linked to energy, technology, environmental studies, or engineering. Some are related to sustainability issues as we strive to provide the “bright” power and energy we need in modern society. Students in Civil Technology, Electrical Technology, Energy Systems, Engineering Science, Environmental Science, Environmental Studies and Mechanical Technology start here and then move on to four-year universities or careers.

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Rock Band Shoots for the Moon at a Young Age

By Janine Bowen

Most musicians spend their entire life waiting for a big break but the four members of Lions on the Moon are living the dream before any of them graduate high school.

The band, which recently recorded its first album, will play the Pleasantville Music Festival this Saturday and the four members, ages 13 to 17, are excited for the opportunity.

"I hear there are a lot of hot girls in Pleasantville," joked 15-year-old drummer Henry Thomas. "I hope they come to the music festival and check us out."

Despite their young age, the members of Lions on the Moon have a strong respect and love for classic rock groups. "The dads may have contributed to the music festival and check us out," said Henry Thomas. "I hope they come to the music festival and check us out."

Despite their young age, the members of Lions on the Moon have a strong respect and love for classic rock groups. Thomas said it was listening to The Rolling Stones in the car that inspired him to learn an instrument at seven years old. He said that older music tends to have more depth and soul than modern pop music.

Nick Winegardner, the band's 13-year-old guitarist and lead vocalist, agreed that classic rock is accessible to most people in a way that other genres are not. "The band members' fathers have also instilled a love of classic rock in their sons."

"Speaking for the whole band, I would say that our dads really got us into that music," Winegardner said. "The dads may not be great musicians, actually they don't even play, but they really like rock."

Lions on the Moon write or co-write all of their songs. Winegardner began writing music at 11 with a music instructor from his hometown named Michael Mugrage, whom he said helped him find the direction he wanted to take. Since then he has collaborated with Mugrage and his bandmates.

"Normally I don't really think about what songs are going to be about until after I have a structure," said Winegardner. "I'm not the type of writer that writes lyrics without music, so normally most of my lyrics and melodies come from what I'm feeling at the time."

Although Winegardner writes most of the band's material, Thomas said each of the members contribute to songs, adding their own unique licks or grooves to a track. The band works well together, although they all didn't know each other until Georgia musician, Col. Bruce Hampton, introduced Winegardner to guitar player Brandon Niederauer and his brother, bass player Dylan Niederauer. Thomas was the last to join the group, but said from the first time the four played together, it was as though they had been together for years.

"When Henry came, it became even clearer that we had something special in the works," Winegardner said. "Not only does our styles of playing work well together, but our personalities are all different but fit together like a puzzle."

Finding a name for the group came next, and was inspired when someone compared the four boys to a pride of young lions. Later on, another person said their career was going to skyrocket to the moon.

Although the band has only been together since last year, Winegardner already has ambitious goals for Lions on the Moon. He said he would love to play the Beacon Theatre in New York City, hopes to sell out Madison Square Garden and one day win a Grammy.

For now, Winegardner said that the band is honored to have been asked to play the Pleasantville Music Festival. Thomas said their performance at Saturday's event will be energetic and loud while Winegardner added that they plan to exceed any expectations the audience may have for a band with such young musicians.

"Audiences always seem kind of surprised when they see us for the first time," said Winegardner. "I don't think they see us coming."

Lions on the Moon will play the Beer Garden Stage at 1 p.m.
Barbara’s Concierge Service, White Plains

By Pat Casey

Have you ever been so fed up with running around doing your local errands that you just wished you had someone you could call on to take on some of the load? Well, now you do. White Plains resident Barbara Mayrsohn is establishing a local concierge service that will work with each client to customize her services to their specific needs.

Mayrsohn also works as an event planner, having presented live seminars and teleseminars to help people live their best lives and to break their own cycles of whatever is stopping them from being their authentic selves.

Her work in helping to self-actualize others led her to the realization that what some people really need is help in getting through the obstacles of a regular day.

For some it might be computer help or setting up online banking – which she has done for her senior citizen father – and which she sees a growing demand for from the aging population.

For other clients it might mean taking a trip to the grocery store, pharmacy, post office and dry cleaners. “Sometimes you just can’t wait for each supplier to come to you. Sometimes you need things done quickly and at your own schedule,” Mayrsohn said during a recent interview. Mayrsohn is aware that most of the local supermarkets offer delivery, but that ties you to one particular store she claims. “If you are planning an impromptu get-together, you might need to go to several stores for specialty items, and who really has time for that these days?” she asks.

Mayrsohn has relationships with some of the local retailers who can help her to fulfill orders quickly and provide that personal touch. Each client has different needs at different times.

For the elderly or homebound, having someone work with you personally can relieve stress and provide a bit of daily socialization.

“I think of it as though you are hiring a personal assistant, but you have the benefit of a team working for you behind the scenes,” Mayrsohn says. “Often new mothers become overwhelmed with the small chores that they could easily do before an infant entered the picture. And, although the need might be temporary, it can be a real lifesaver to have someone to call on to pick up those diapers, formula or medicine – and all together in one trip.

The definition of concierge has changed over time when it once defined the gatekeeper at the entrance to a building or hotel who would help guests. The term today is associated with luxury services, but the concept of the gatekeeper having access to local services still remains. That might mean being the person who does the research for a family or a business trip if you are your own boss -- holding on the phone, checking websites, finding out about local entertainment and other on the ground services that a travel agent is not able to do. It might mean doing this research and creating various scenarios that lets the client choose the best itinerary – from soup to nuts.

Mayrsohn expects her clients will be as diverse as the services they will require.

If the services of a local concierge seem attractive to you, contact Barbara’s Concierge Service at bjmcservices@gmail.com to work out a custom plan.

See the Best of the Fest

Excited about the Pleasantville Music Festival Saturday, July 11? We are. Great bands. Great times. In a great Village. And PCTV is going to be there to cover it as always. Want a preview of this year’s artists? Watch 2015 PVille Music Fest Preview any day at 6am, 12pm, or 6pm on channel 76/36 to get a peek at who’s playing. Or watch online at pctv76.org. Be in the know before the show.
Police Blotter

Greenburgh Police Department

Petit Larceny. On June 20 police responded to the Westchester Marriott where a guest reported that while she was at Coppers Mill Restaurant an unknown female had bumped up against her and her bag. The bag was a large beach type bag with her wallet and other personal items. At the time she had not noticed items were missing. Later, while shopping in Tarrytown as she went to pay she noticed that her wallet was not in her bag. She called Marriott security, which initially told her they did not have her wallet. Later the wallet was found by housekeeping in the third floor icemaker. Ninety-three dollars, a Macy’s card, Bank of America debit card and Bank of America MasterCard were missing. Marriott Security had a video of the hotel lobby and restaurant and thought they could possibly identify the suspect female.

Dispute. On the evening of June 21 police responded to a liquor store on Tarrytown Road where two men were engaged in an argument. One of the men had been drinking at his residence and went to the liquor store to purchase more alcohol. The storeowner allegedly refused to sell this customer any alcohol because he was acting belligerent and had called the storeowner’s wife a name. The storeowner said he tried to escort the customer from the store but their heads collided. The customer said the storeowner had attacked him with a head butt. There was no video surveillance in the store and neither party wished to pursue further police action.

Criminal Mischief. On the morning of June 22 police responded to a residence where a young woman had recently purchased a 2012 Volkswagen and had parked the car in her driveway overnight. The following morning she observed scratches on the hood of the car, which she did not recall being there when she purchased the car. She did not notice any suspicious activity and did not understand how the damage happened. The victim did report a similar incident in the past with another vehicle she owned that also had scratches to the door and the hood.

Mental Health Check. On June 22 police officers responded to the Liberty Mutual Insurance office for a report of a letter they had received from a client that was covered in blood. Photos were also included showing the client’s body with a slash mark to his forehead and forearm and a rope around his neck. The letter stated that the client had tried to hang himself but the rope broke. The client was receiving benefits for mental stress related issues. Police were sent to check on the welfare of the client. Photos of the blood stained items were taken and then discarded.

Suspicious Incident. On the morning of June 23 a business owner on Central Avenue called police when she arrived at her store to inform them that paperclips had been inserted into the lock of the front door. There was no damage done to the lock and the lock could be used again. It appeared that no entry was gained to the premises. No surveillance cameras on scene.

Car Theft. On the morning of June 23, officers responded to Longyellow Street where a victim of vehicle theft said he had parked his 2009 Honda in his driveway the previous evening and when he was leaving for work the following morning the vehicle was missing. The victim also reported that an unknown suspect had rummaged through his wife’s vehicle, which was unlocked, and had removed the keys to the 2009 Honda. No other items were taken. The area was canvassed by additional officers. Nothing further at this time.

Unlicensed Operation of a Vehicle. On the morning of June 24, while performing a routine traffic stop officers received a hit notification on the license plate reader for a Toyota Prius that was stopped in the parking lot of Dunkin Donuts at 190 Saw Mill River Rd. The driver said he was aware of a possible suspension due to an insurance lapse, however he was unaware if it was still active. A check on NCIC revealed his vehicle was indeed suspended. A check of the driver’s license revealed that he had several suspensions out of White Plains and Greenburgh, and was also wanted in Ossining for suspended registration and aggravated unlicensed operation of a vehicle. Ossining was contacted, and wished to extradite. The driver was then handcuffed and brought to police headquarters where he was booked and processed. The driver was released to Ossining and the vehicle was towed to headquarters.
North Castle Officials Should Negotiate, Not Obfuscate on Miller House

By Anthony C. Amiano

I’ve only been to a few Broadway shows in my lifetime, but I have seen enough to feel confident in classifying the June 24 North Castle Town Board meeting regarding the Miller House as a Broadway-worthy performance.

What was initially billed on the meeting agenda as a “discussion” regarding the Miller House, quickly turned into a tragic theater-like event, all to the backdrop of a slideshow filled with some outdated photos of the property. Speaker after speaker rehashed the tortured history of the site with some varying degree of accuracy. Many claimed their county legislator wasn’t doing enough to represent them, and yet he was the single elected official to get movement on the property with the help of a previously willing and able town administration.

I can understand the passion and even frustration of some community members on this issue. Everyone involved knows that the Miller House is in need of repair. Everyone involved also knows that those repairs must take place soon to salvage the property. Yet there should continue to be a dialogue between all parties to reach a long-term plan, vision and solution.

North Castle officials simply demanded that Westchester County spend significant taxpayer dollars to repair the house in place across from a damaging cement factory. They repeatedly balked at any further discussion on the issue, including the possibility of moving the house to a safer and more sustainable location, and that’s unfortunate. Why then was the meeting called in the first place? One would hope that it was not a purely political stunt during an election year.

But the evening grew grossly worse when the president of the Friends of Miller House group compared Westchester County government to ISIS and the Taliban. As if the speaker’s insulting comment, particularly as our servicemen and women are risking their lives overseas fighting these terrorists, was not enough, the members of the Town Board—led by Supervisor Mike Schiliro—stood by, never condemning the remark. Their silence was deafening.

To date, the radical Friends group has not publicly retracted the comment and is even running a representative of the organization for the Board of Legislators. How can he stand by that remark—and then seek public office, for Westchester County government nonetheless?

Growing up, I was taught to always strive to work together with others, regardless of how dire a situation appeared to be. Clearly, the North Castle Town Board believes otherwise. If officials truly want to sever all future discussion and dialogue on the issue, so be it. That is a decision they have willingly made, and one they must now stand by. Give them a Tony Award.

Anthony C. Amiano serves as a legislative aide to Westchester County Legislator Michael Smith.

NYS Assembly Passes Nicholas’ Law Requiring Greater Gun Safety

Before NYS Assembly closed its session last week, Nicholas’s Law, also known as A.53, was passed. The legislation would require gun owners to store or lock their guns when not in their immediate possession or control in order to prevent accidental shootings, suicides and gun thefts.

The bill was presented by Assemblywoman Amy Paulin (D-Scarsdale).

The measure was named after 12-year-old Nicholas Naumkin, who was fatally shot in December 2010 at his friend’s home in Wilton, New York. Nicholas had been playing with his friend who found his father’s unlocked and loaded handgun.

“When education about the dangers of unintended access to loaded firearms is critical to preventing accidental injuries and death of children, we must also impose sanctions to hold individuals responsible when they don’t lock or store their guns when out of their possession,” Paulin said. “Nicholas’s Law is reasonable and clear: if your gun is not on or near you, lock it up or put a lock on it. If you don’t, you’ll be held accountable with criminal penalties.”

Safe storage laws exist in Rochester, Buffalo, Westchester County and New York City. Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear a case challenging hand gun.

San Francisco’s 2007 safe storage law. Federal and state courts have continued to uphold safe storage laws.

“Safe storage laws protect children from unintentional shootings, depressed teenagers from committing suicide with a gun, and prevent guns from being brought to school or stolen, ending up on our streets,” New Yorkers Against Gun Violence Executive Director Leah Gunn Barrett said. “Safe storage is about gun owner responsibility. Locking up lethal weapons that are used in at least two unintentional shootings of minors each week in the U.S. is just common sense.”

The bill was sponsored in the New York State Senate (s.2291) by Jeff Klein (D-34).

Obituaries

Clara Spadaro

Clara Spadaro passed away peacefully on July 1. She was born November 13, 1920, in Calabria Italy. A lifelong resident of White Plains, she leaves behind a legacy of compassion and generosity and will be endlessly missed.

She is survived by her children: Joan (Tony) Crino of Bristol, CT, Prudence (John) Griffin of White Plains, Diane Healy of Hollywood, CA, and Dominick Spadaro of White Plains, and six grandchildren and ten great grandchildren. She was predeceased by her parents Frank and Prudence Tino and her loving husband Louis Spadaro.

Maria Florindi

Maria T. Florindi passed away on June 30. She was 83. She was predeceased by her husband Armando and her brother Guistino. Maria is the loving mother of her son James and his wife Mary, and her sons Frank and Joseph Berghino. Her spirit lives on in the hearts of her granddaughters Teresa and Jamie. She also leaves behind her sister Rina (Gino) in Italy along with many extended family members. Maria was the creative hands behind the original ‘Villarina’s’ ravioli store in Tuckahoe. Her delicious cooking has touched thousands.

Letters Policy

We invite readers to share their thoughts by sending letters to the editor. Please limit comments to 250 words. We will do our best to print all letters, but are limited by space constraints. Letters are subject to editing and may be withheld from publication on the discretion of the editor. Please refrain from personal attacks. Email letters to pcasey@theexaminernews.com.

The White Plains Examiner requires that all letter writers provide their name, address and contact information.
Domestic violence is not just a problem for adults. An alarming number of adolescents in this country have been and will become victims of physical, emotional or sexual abuse from a dating partner. This pattern of teen dating violence cuts across all ethnic groups, socio-economic groups and geographic regions. Both male and female teens can become victims but most of the time, boys inflict more serious physical injuries on girls.

The facts behind teen dating violence are disturbing:

One in 10 high school students has been hit, slapped, or physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Violent behavior often begins between the ages of 12 and 18.

Girls and young women between the ages of 16 and 24 experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence, almost triple the national average.

Half of youth who have been victims of both dating violence and rape attempt suicide.

Many teens do not report dating violence because they are afraid and ashamed to tell friends and family.

Teens as well as their parents should be proactive and ask these questions about their dating partners. Does the boyfriend or girlfriend:

Have a history of bad relationships or past violence?

Always blame their problems on other people including blaming you for making them treat you badly?

Try to use drugs or alcohol to get you alone when you don’t want to be?

Try to control you by being bossy, not taking your opinion seriously, or making all of the decisions about who you see or what you wear?

Engage in excessive sexual talk?

Pressure you to have or force you to have unprotected sex?

Engage in stalking, possessive or controlling behaviors that restrict your freedom of movement? Constantly text you or call you to find out where you are and who you’re with?

The most important thing a teen should do is get help. They should go to an adult they trust, including a teacher, school principal, counselor or work supervisor.

If a crime has been committed they should seek out law enforcement so they can get the protections only a court can provide. Parents need to understand that abusers exert power over their victims and it may be hard for your teen to end the relationship. If your teen has confided in you, be comforting and supportive. Tell your teen you’re concerned about their safety and discuss with them how he/she can stay safe. Safety plans must be developed that include knowing in advance what to do, where to get help, who to call and how to escape danger.

Destructive relationships during the teen years can lead to lifelong unhealthy relationship practices, may disrupt normal development and can contribute to unhealthy behaviors in teens that can lead to chronic mental and physical conditions in adulthood. Teens that are physically hurt by a dating partner were more likely to say they engage in risky sexual behavior, binge drink, use drugs, attempt suicide and participate in physical fights.

This problem requires a multi-prong response to include mental health professionals, schools and law enforcement. Assistant District Attorneys from my office regularly visit high schools to discuss the problem of teen violence. Our Special Prosecutions Division handles domestic abuse cases including those having to do with teen dating violence. Their phone number is 914-995-3000.

For teens that need immediate help, Hope’s Door is an organization in Westchester that has a 24-hour Hotline for those that need to talk about dating violence. That number is 1-888-438-8700. There is also Breakthecycle.org, the website of a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering youth to end dating violence.

The cycle of abuse among our young people must be broken and the Westchester County District Attorney’s office is committed to that effort.

Janet DiFiore is Westchester County District Attorney

By Janet DiFiore

By Janet DiFiore
The Surprising Health Debate of Carpeting vs. Hard Floors

For years, from a style perspective, we’ve preferred the clean sleek look of hardwood floors over wall-to-wall carpeting, especially since we figured out that the costs were comparable.

From a health consideration, we’ve had the perception in the media that hard surface flooring holds advantages over carpeting for allergy and asthma sufferers.

But recently, I learned from Diane Darby, vice president, marketing and sales at Absolute Flooring in Yorktown Heights, that the opposite is true.

When I have a question about any aspect of flooring, Darby always “favors” me, if you’ll pardon the pun, with her encyclopedic knowledge of the business and her exceptional ability to communicate that expertise clearly and concisely.

“When I got into the business, I just listened to everything the reps could tell me,” Darby said of how she acquired that knowledge.

But I suspect that she’s just plain smart on top of that process. Also, as I learned with this particular issue, she does independent research.

So, when I read that one in 10 children and one in 12 adults suffer from asthma, and that many people believe carpeting affects asthma sufferers, I knew with whom I should check.

“Although most people come in to remove carpet when a child or an elderly person has some respiratory issue, I tell them that’s not what they should do, based on my research,” Darby explained.

“I found that there had been some studies done, the first one in the 1970s in Sweden, where in commercial buildings they had stopped using carpeting and went to hard surfaces specifically because the incidence of respiratory distress had risen so high in the country and they felt this was a direct correlation to the use of carpeting.

“But in fact, what they found was that carpeting was better for holding allergens and other properties at bay that would normally be airborne until such time that they could be cleaned away while hard surfaces allowed those allergens to become airborne with foot traffic. Studies proved that, in fact, carpeting was better”

“But what about getting the allergens out of the carpeting?” I asked.

“There is that disclaimer,” Diane responded. “The carpeting must be well maintained. It should be vacuumed at least once a week and should professionally cleaned every 18 to 24 months. As a matter of fact, this should be done anyway to maintain the carpet’s warranty in case there’s ever a claim. The preferred method is steam cleaning, or hot water extraction, as it’s called, so that the moisture is also removed.”

Diane Darby, vice president, marketing and sales at Absolute Flooring, said research proves that carpeting rather than hardwood is a better flooring choice for those concerned about air quality issues.

The High Cost of a Fine Meal at a Renowned Restaurant

Wine lists, in the hands of a skilled and customer-focused sommelier, can be the epitome of the overall experience at a restaurant. When curated with the food menu in mind, they can be the cornerstone of an exceptional dining experience at a top restaurant.

They can also reflect the high prices at which many restaurants have priced their food menu. At a number of high-end, highly acclaimed restaurants, notably in New York City, a diner may spend considerably more on a bottle of wine than on the expensive meal for which it is to be paired.

In my last two columns, I’ve focused on the sea change in wine lists and the underlying influence of the newest generation of sommeliers. This week I’m presenting an example of one restaurant’s food and wine offerings that epitomize the pinnacle of the new landscape of top restaurants.

The menus at New York’s high-end restaurants are more expansive, and more expensive, than at any time in this cosmopolitan city’s history – and wine lists are following suit. I’ve previously reviewed “The World’s Best Wine Lists of 2015,” as designated by the highly regarded The World of Fine Wine magazine. The top-rated restaurant wine list was that of Eleven Madison Park in New York City. The combination of food, wine and service has garnered the restaurant the highest accolades from many sources.

Over the past year it has received a four star rating from The New York Times (one of only six awarded in New York) and a three star rating from the Michelin Guide (one of only nine awarded in the United States).

Additionally, it has been honored with the number five ranking in the prestigious San Pellegrino Top 50 Restaurants in the World, the highest ranking of any North American restaurant.

The culinary experience is not for the faint of heart. There is no a la carte menu. Rather, each day the kitchen decides on the ingredients and recipes for each of the dozen (or more) courses. Yes, that will take a large bite out of a patron’s day – up to four hours from start to finish.

The price of this extravagant meal? $225 per person, before tax and gratuity.

And the wines? Befitting the menu. Here is an overview of the restaurant’s wine list, as culled from an analytical review conducted by Grape Collective, a web-based group of editors and writers seeking out topics for wine lovers.

The list is extensive, offering more than 3,000 choices. There is also an impressive list of 73 wines by the glass. The selections are dominated by French wines (90 percent) over 1,100 wines from Burgundy. Surprisingly, there is a reasonable focus on American wines, unlike a number of other high-end restaurants.

The wine prices are more extravagant than the lofty tasting menu price. The median price is $595; the average price is $752. While there are nearly 400 wines priced less than $100, there are more than 750 wines priced over $500.

Patrons dine at Eleven Madison Park for many reasons, often to celebrate a (very) special occasion. And there are special wines for such occasions. For a special birthday, one might be interested in a 1961 Château Margaux Bordeaux ($6,150) or a 1971 Domaine Armand Rousseau Burgundy ($8,900).

For a very special birthday, a dessert wine might be in order. Why not consider the 1929 Château d’Yquem Sauternes ($11,000). The highest priced wine?
Seared sea scallops are on the summer menu at La Crémaillère Restaurant in Bedford.

A special display will commemorate important events in the life of Pope John Paul II, a native of Poland and the first non-Italian pope since 1523. John Paul II served as pope from 1978 to 2005. Polish delicacies will include grilled Kielbasa (deli meat), Galomkie (stuffed cabbage), Bigos (stew), assorted pierogies (dumplings), potato pancakes, Chrusciki (a Polish dessert), poppy seed strudel and more. Hamburgers, hot dogs, soft drinks and Polish beer will also be offered.

Food vendors include Snr Europa Deli of Monroe, N.Y., Polish Deli of Yonkers and the Lithuanian Bakery in Elizabeth, N.J.

The sword fighting sequences will reenact clashes between Swedish forces hired by Germany and the outnumbered Polish-Lithuanian volunteers and monks who defeated the invaders in the Siege of Jasna Gora in 1655.

Admission is free and there is no charge for parking. Attendants are advised to bring folding chairs. Picnic tables are available.

The event is co-sponsored by the Westchester County Parks Commission and the Westchester Pulaski Association. Ron Baker and Lucyna Okrutniak, the association’s president and vice president, respectively, will serve as co-chairs.

For more information, call 914-864-PARK or visit www.westchestergov.com.

Meet the Chef: Rossano Giannini, Restaurant Consultant

Chef Rossano Giannini, charismatic former chef and owner of Lanterna Tuscan Bistro in Nyack, is a restaurant consultant, providing guidance to individuals looking to open a restaurant or operate their establishment more efficiently.

A celebrity chef, he has appeared on many television cooking shows. He has written for Intermezzo, a magazine that covers international cuisine, and authored cookbooks “Cooking with Olive Oil” and “Signature Pasta.”

Giannini founded the Federation of Italian Chefs of America in 2000 and served as its first president. The organization became an affiliate of the International Federazione Italiana Cuochi, formed in 1960 to preserve and promote authentic cooking of Italian food worldwide.

He was recognized by the James Beard Foundation in 2004 and 2009 for his gastronomic achievements and invited to cook at the Beard House in New York City. In September 2004, he prepared crab cake with Aioli sauce, pasta with wild boar sauce, Filetto di Branzino al Balsamico and fillet of sea bass and molten chocolate cake.

In May 2009, his menu was Cestino di Osteria (a basket with parmagiano cheese, prosciutto, greens, goat cheese and Dijon mustard dressing), lamb, lobster, Pasta Gargarelli al Ragu di Anatra (made with duck), striped bass with lobster-asparagus, Farro risotto, yellow and orange peppers and capers, and Torta di Natalgia for dessert. (A chocolate mouse dome with a Grand Marnier dark chocolate truffle center.)

During the 14 years he owned Lanterna Tuscan Bistro, he was known for conducting cooking demonstrations with wit and charm. Although his classes weren’t hands-on cooking sessions, attendees learned to prepare dishes they would eat. A single long table with seating for 30 people was set while Giannini addressed the group from its head.

While growing up in Lucca, Italy, his leisure time was spent on the soccer field. He played midfielder and goalie for his high school, and later joined the town team.

When he was 14 and in his first year of high school, his best friend’s mother secured summer jobs for both boys at the restaurant where she worked. One opening was at the front of the house and the other at the back. His friend chose first and wanted to bus tables, so Giannini was assigned to the kitchen.

Following high school, he enrolled in culinary school to the disappointment of his parents who preferred he study engineering. The school was the Culinary Institute F. Martini, in the town of Montecatini Terme. To earn money while attending school, he gave up playing soccer and became a referee.

Once Giannini graduated from culinary school in 1978, he joined Buc San Antonio, a prestigious fine dining restaurant in Lucca, and worked there for three years. He moved on to cook for restaurants in Valle d’Aosta, Montecatini Terme and Viareggio.

In 1992, in the spirit of high adventure, Giannini accepted an appointment as executive chef for a restaurant at the five-star Islamabad Marriott Hotel in Pakistan. Two years later, he decided to pursue a culinary career in New York City, and upon arrival, was hired as banquet chef by Trattoria Dell’Art. The restaurant, located across from Carnegie Hall, was a rising star in New York City’s cultural circles. He left after less than a year to become executive chef at Masala.

Next, he joined the Sheraton Cairo Hotel in Egypt as executive chef for its acclaimed international restaurant. He returned to America a year later and was rehired in his former post by Masala. Executive chef positions followed at Torre di Pisa in Manhattan and Trattoria Frattoria in Ridgewood, N.J.

Amid traveling and cooking, Giannini found time for romance, and married an Irish lass, a nurse named Maureen, in 1999. Both are serious admirers of the music of Andrea Bocelli. Bocelli’s “The Prayer” was played at their wedding, and three years later a poem written by Maureen about Bocelli won a pair of tickets to a Bocelli concert.

In early 2000, a year after their son Patrick was born, Giannini and Maureen had lunch at a Nyack restaurant.

“We noticed that a restaurant on South Broadway had closed and we learned that the space, kitchen equipment, and the tables and chairs were available,” he said.

A deal was closed in March 2000 and Lanterna Tuscan Bistro opened at 3 S. Broadway less than four weeks later. It closed in April 2014, one week after celebrating its 14th anniversary.

Giannini also owned a restaurant in Larchmont called Lanterna Tuscan Bistro East. While Giannini is noted in the restaurant industry, he doesn’t spend all of his time in the kitchen; he is also in the security services business and continues to referee soccer. Maureen is an oncology nurse at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan.

Giannini can be reached at rossanogiannini@optonline.net.
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ATTENTION VACATIONS
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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 pcas0097@theexaminernews.com.

Tuesday, July 7
Author Beatriz Williams. New York Times-bestselling author Beatriz Williams has become synonymous with the smart and romantic summer read. We've been swept away by The Secret Life of Violet Grant, A Hundred Summers, and Overseas and this summer, Williams is back with a story of politics and secrets that takes place during what should be an idyllic summer on Cape Cod. Join us as Ms. Williams talks about Tiny Little Thing at White Plains Public Library at 6:30 p.m. Refreshments served. Book sale and signing to follow presentation. WPPPL, 100 Martine Avenue, White Plains.


Wednesday, July 8
White Plains Outdoor Market. Fresh food and produce from local farmers, plus specialty items; 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Court Street between Martine Avenue and Main Street, White Plains

TILL Shed. Take It or Leave It recycling at Gedney Yard, 87 Gedney Way, White Plains; 2 to 4 p.m.

Dancing Under the Stars. Larry Stevens – Rock Classic to Pop; 7 p.m.; Renaissance Plaza, Main Street and Mamaronke Avenue, White Plains.

Neighborhood Nights. All movies and special events 7 p.m. at White Plains locations. “Night Time in the Animated Kingdom” presented at Tunnure Park, S. Lake Street, White Plains.

Papal Encyclical on the Environment: A Call to All Humanity. Sister Kathleen Deignan and Brother Kevin Cawley, co-conveners of the Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue at Iona College, present a summary of key points from the Papal Encyclical on Climate Change to be published this month. They also explain the meaning of this document as well as the Pope’s message about climate change for all of humanity. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. Refreshments at 7 p.m. Program at 7:30 p.m. Free. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

Thursday, July 9

Outdoor Yoga Event. The City of White Plains and White Plains Hospital present an evening of outdoor yoga. The event is free and open to the public. Both experienced yogis and those who are new to the practice of yoga are welcome. The event will take place on Court Street (between Main Street and Martine Avenue). Check in will begin at 5:30 p.m. and yoga at 7 p.m. White Plains Hospital is donating yoga mats to the first 200 hundred registrants. To register, call 914-422-1336 or email registrations@ whiteplainsny.gov. The rain date for the event is Friday, July 10. White Plains’ own Patty Holmes, owner of the Yoga Garden, will be leading the yoga for the evening.

“Festa Italiana” in honor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a four-day traditional Italian festival that will take place from July 9-12 and begins each night at 6 p.m. A variety of entertainers will perform Italian and American music and dance favorites with a custom built outdoor dance floor. DJ Jackie Ciaramella will be opening Festa Italiana on Thursday, July 9, followed by The Wanderers on Friday, July 10, Don Felice and Band on Saturday, July 11 and I Forestieri, Sunday July 12. There is a children’s entertainment program each night beginning 7 p.m., along with games of chance, an air conditioned casino and delicious Italian food. Bar D’Italia, boasts an espresso bar, imported cold Italian beverages, gelato and delicious Italian pastries. Free admission and free parking; takes place rain or shine at The Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 92 South Lexington Avenue, White Plains.

Neighborhood Nights. All movies and special events 7 p.m. at White Plains locations. “Night Time in the Animated Kingdom” presented at Chatterton Park, Chatterton Pkwy, White Plains.

Family Film Frenzy. Series features outdoor movies and after-hours swimming (7 p.m.) at various Westchester County swimming facilities. The series kicks off on Wednesday, July 8 at The Brook at Tibbetts Brook Park in Yonkers with the 3D, stop-motion, animated fantasy-comedy film, The Boxtrolls (PG, 2014). Rain date is Thursday, July 9. The park opens at 7 p.m. for after-hours swimming, picnicking, and relaxing. The movie begins at sundown. Bring your own picnic, or purchase food at the concession stand. For seating, bring blankets and chairs. Admission is $5 per person (free for children under 5) and includes the movie only. A Westchester County Park Pass is not required for admission. Admission wristbands will go on sale the day of the event at each location and will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. The series will continue with the showing of Dolphin Tale 2 (PG, 2014) on Wednesday, July 15 at Glen Island Beach in New Rochelle; Big Hero 6 (PG, 2014) on Wednesday, July 22 at Saxon Woods Pool in White Plains; and Annie (PG, 2014) on Wednesday, July 29 at Willson’s Waves Pool in Mount Vernon. Please note that swimming is only permitted until dark, and all food and cooler guidelines for regular pool hours apply.

Friday, July 10

Saturday, July 11
TILL Shed. Take It or Leave It recycling at Gedney Yard, 87 Gedney Way, White Plains; 9 a.m. to noon.

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 (except July 4) Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

“Pirates of the Hudson.” This rollicking show fresh from Off-Broadway returns, a swashbuckling pirate musical in which the audience helps write and perform the tale. It begins with a crew of misfit pirates flung into the future by a bumbling sea witch, with only one chance of returning home: performing the greatest pirate epic ever seen on stage. But when their script is torn asunder, these pirates-turned-actors are forced to improvise based on audience suggestions. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St., Tarrytown. 1, 3 and 7 p.m. Adults: $24. Children (17 and under): $18. Historic Hudson Valley members receive a $5 per ticket discount. Info and tickets: Visit www.hudsonvalley.org.

The Dirt on Dirt. Get your hands dirty in this interactive program as we learn the basics of composting and what makes up dirt. Greenburgh Nature Center, 99 Dromore Rd., Scarsdale. 2 p.m. Members: Free. Non-members: $8 per person. Info: 914-723-3470 or visit www.greenburghnaturecenter.org.

Sunday, July 12
Polish Heritage Festival. Featuring Polish food, music, sword fights, crafts and vendor booths and music and dance performances by students from the Polish School in Port Chester. Kensico Dam Plaza, Valhalla. 12 to 6 p.m. Free admission and parking. Info: 914-864-PARK or visit www.westchester.gov.


Secret Summer Cinema With Marshall Fine. Secret Summer Cinema will offer film screenings for four consecutive Sundays that are selectively curated by one of New York’s top film critics. Followed by a discussion and Q&A with the audience. The Picture House, 175 Wolves Lane, Pelham. 5 p.m. $60 per person for the four-week series. (Tickets to individual screening are not available.) Info and tickets: 914-738-3161 or visit www.thepicturehouse.org.
Congratulations to the White Plains Graduates – Class of 2015
Congratulations to the White Plains Graduates – Class of 2015

Gabrielle Taddeo
Moussa Tall
Yulitza Tapia
Stephanie Tapia Verdin
Danielle Tardio
Jessica Teleco
Kelly Temaj
Josie Tlalmanalco
Ashley Tomaselli
Verenice Torres
Philip Tortoriello
Kevin Trapp
Nina Tucker
Nicole Turlan Caballero
Dangello Ugaz-Novoa
Nin Sabry Uraid-El
Karlem Vacacela
Jeffrey Valdez
Elihu Valencia
Angelo Valverde
Ross Van Doren
Mateo Vaquero
Antony Varela
Arya Vasudevan
Teloria Vega
Oliver Velez Jr
Kelvin Velez Rodriguez
David Ventura
Alexandra Vera
Vanessa Verde
Jack Vignone
Francisco Villacorta Gonzales
Stephy Villada
Fernando Villagra
Thomas Vitale
Allison Vizoskie
Tai Vo
Nicholas Wadden
Robert Walker
Dante Wells
Lauren Werner
Amanda Westin-daRocha
Amina Williams
Lily Wincele
Alana Woffard
Angelina Wolfram
Yera Woo
Lauren Woods
Anahi Xelo
Bujar Zabelaj
Kenneth Zapata
Alexander Zekus
Michelle Zepeda Hernandez
Jose Zhinin Guaman

Tiger Pride!

Interim School Superintendent Timothy Connors leads the procession for WPHS Graduation 2015.

Graduation cap designs featured high school pride as well as college-bound dreams.

The graduating class at Westchester County Center, June 25th.

White Plains Mayor Tom Roach address the Cass of 2015.

Graduate Noah Cattan receives congratulations from outgoing School Board member Peter Bassano.
2015 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

JULY 19
KENNY ROGERS

AUGUST 9
TRACE ADKINS

AUGUST 16
LYNYRD SKYNYRD

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