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Covering White Plains, Greenburgh, Harrison

November 9 - November 15, 2021

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

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Brasch, Martin, Payne Prevail in White Plains Council Race

By Rick Pezzullo

Three Democratic candidates swept the three available seats on the White Plains Common Council on Election Day.

Incumbent Justin Brasch was reelected as the top vote getter with 5,239. Finishing second was newcomer Richard Payne with 5,074. Incumbent John Martin, the longest serving member on the council, claimed the third seat with 4,997.

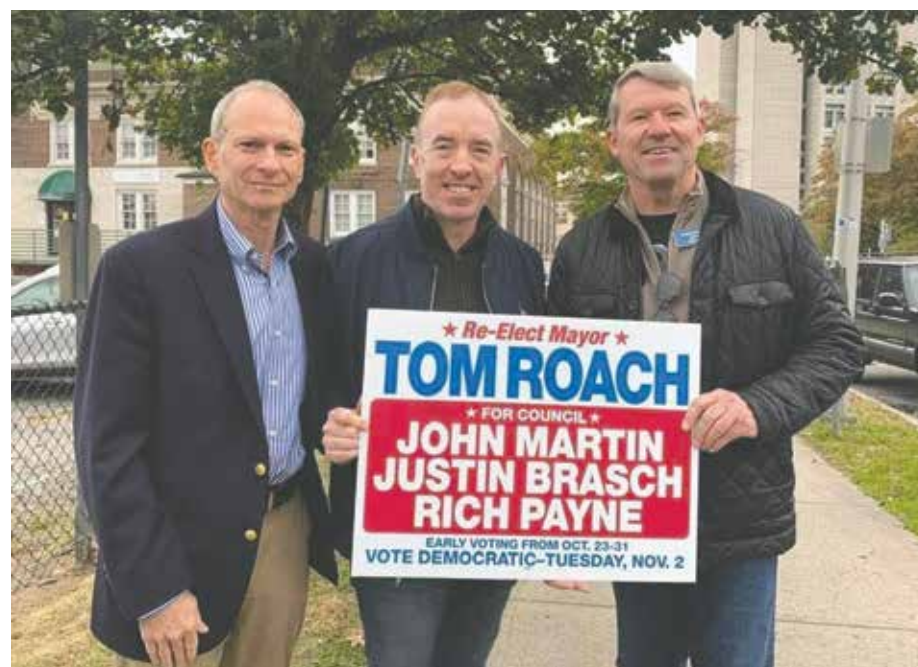
First-time candidate Allan Grafman, a Republican, fell short in fourth place with 2,714 votes.

"I want to begin today by saying THANK YOU! John Martin, Rich Payne and I had a tremendous victory. My sincerest thanks to everyone that voted for and supported our team," Brasch stated.

"I love public service and look forward working with all of you to keep White Plains moving in the right direction."

"Thank you. I'm beyond words (for now)," Payne stated.

Meanwhile, Mayor Thomas Roach, running uncontested, will begin his third four-year term in January. The position pays an annual salary of \$167,000.



Victorious White Plains councilmen Justin Brasch, Rich Payne and John Martin.

Tyana Thompson Honored as White Plains Youth of the Year

By Bailey Hosfelt

Tyana Thompson was recognized as Youth of the Year by the White Plains Common Council at its monthly meeting on Nov. 1.

Thompson, a senior at White Plains High School, has been a member of the White Plains Community Youth Court social justice program for the past three years, taking on various positions including prosecutor, defense attorney and judge.

"I would like to thank the mayor, the White Plains Common Council and the White Plains Youth Bureau for having Youth Court as a program," Thompson said. "I've participated in Youth Court since ninth grade and have loved it ever since."

Thompson, who is engaged in issues regarding equity and social justice, has traveled to Albany to speak to legislators to advocate for an alternative to suspension.

"That's when I realized that giving back to the community and helping is an amazing thing to do," Thompson said.

In addition to her involvement with Youth Court, Thompson has been a secretary of White Plains/Greenburgh NAACP's Youth Division for the past year, where she has advocated for racial equality. She held a town hall meeting in White Plains to address COVID-19's impact on young people, and most recently, Thompson aided in the 9/11 Flag of Honor Across America Memorial Day of Remembrance.

Thompson loves to make holiday cards for Kensington assisted living residents and veterans yearly and helps honor past and present women on the White Plains Common Council for Women's History Month.

A member of the National Honor Society,



BAILEY HOSFELT PHOTO

White Plains Mayor Tom Roach presented award to Tyana Thompson.

Thompson aspires to pursue a future career as a corporate lawyer. Thompson thanked Connie Jones Harrison for being the coordinator of Youth Court in her remarks.

"I have never seen a program run so well," Thompson said. "She has helped me write my resume and strengthen my speaking and writing abilities."

Mayor Tom Roach said Thompson was chosen among many young people in White Plains who are doing incredible work.

"She's a role model and an aspiration to others, showing people that they should continue to fight for what they believe in," Roach said. "She has certainly been an incredible asset to our community in her young life."

WP Hospital Unveils Cardiac Surgery Operating Room



Dr. Robert Michler, Surgeon-in-Chief, and Chairman of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery at Montefiore, joined Susan Fox, President & CEO of White Plains Hospital and other hospital leaders in cutting the ribbon on OR 8. White Plains Hospital expects to begin performing Cardiac Surgery in early November.

Columbia Doctors Children’s Health Expands Clinical Space in WP

ColumbiaDoctors Children’s Health has launched new specialties and expanded clinical care facilities at its 15 North Broadway, White Plains location.

This collaborative project with NewYork-Presbyterian provides access to pediatric specialists in 14 care areas within a 5,000-square-foot, family-friendly space complete with additional clinical rooms, spacious waiting areas, dedicated echocardiography spaces, an expanded allergy practice, and all with a sensitivity to post-COVID best practices. Patients can now receive top-tier treatment across pediatric specialties including Allergy, Cardiology, Genetics, Gastroenterology, Surgery and more. The facility is designed to be more welcoming and accommodating for young patients, as well as their parents and caregivers.

“Columbia’s long history of providing superb pediatric care informed by the latest research truly sets us apart in Westchester, and bringing more of our specialists to the area is part of an overall effort by our department to improve access to and continuity of care from our world-class providers,” said Jordan S. Orange, MD, PhD, chair of pediatrics at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and physician-in-chief of NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital. “These

expanded services bring more of the pediatric specialties parents and general pediatricians are looking for to White Plains, enhancing the outstanding care our physicians provide.”

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Latimer Easily Wins Second Term as Westchester County Executive

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County Executive George Latimer easily won re-election to another four years in office Tuesday night, defeating Republican challenger Christine Sculti.

Latimer declared victory and spoke to supporters at The Opus Westchester hotel in White Plains, pledging to continue fighting to improve the quality of life for the county's residents while reaching for common ground among those who disagree.

"We here in Westchester County created a template and the template is results matter, that we don't accept that we can't build a New Rochelle Family Court, we don't accept the thought that the Miller House is going to collapse," Latimer said.

"We're going to succeed in department after department because we believe in things to make people's lives better," he added.

Latimer defeated Sculti 97,753-60,324, according to the Westchester County Board of Elections. Sculti, a Harrison resident, had served as former county executive Rob Astorino's chief adviser during his eight years in office.

At a briefing the following morning he called his victory "a significant vote of confidence." He pointed to the county's handling of the COVID-19 crisis and the county's 91 percent vaccination rate. Latimer said he expected the pandemic to still be an issue during the next four years.

In 2022, the county tax levy will decline for the third consecutive years. Whether that can be extended in the ensuing years will depend on whether fresh non-property tax revenues can be identified and on how will expense are held in check.

"It is to do the things we need to do, maintain services and not increase property taxes in the process of doing that," Latimer said.

Sculti, a Harrison resident, said she spoke with Latimer during the day on Wednesday to congratulate him on his victory and wished him success in his

second term.

She said she was pleased to have given Westchester voters a real choice and that it is important for incumbents to be vigorously challenged.

"To the tens of thousands of voters who welcomed our message and placed their trust in me, I am humbled by your support," Sculti wrote on her campaign's Facebook page. "I heard your voices, and I will continue speaking out on your behalf. Going forward, the issues we campaigned on - the need for lower taxes, safer communities and checks and balances - will not be going away and it is our collective responsibility to continue to

hold government accountable."

The victory for Latimer, 67, continues his streak of never having lost an election starting with his service on the Rye City Council in the 1980s. He has also served on the Board of Legislators and both houses of the state legislature before winning his first race for county executive in 2017.

In the county clerk's race, Democratic incumbent Timothy Itoni defeated Republican challenger Scooter Scott 90,560-55,704 to win a fourth term.

County Executive George Latimer was successful in his re-election bid against challenger Christine Sculti last week.



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Incumbents Hold on to Win Local County Legislator Seats

By Abby Luby

Democrats will still hold a supermajority on the Westchester Board of Legislators for the next two years, although some of the races involving local county seats last week were closer than anticipated.

Democratic legislators Colin Smith (D-Peekskill) Vedat Gashi (D-Yorktown) and Catherine Borgia (D-Ossining) all won re-election while Katonah resident Erika Pierce, in her first run for public office, won the race for an open seat in District 2.

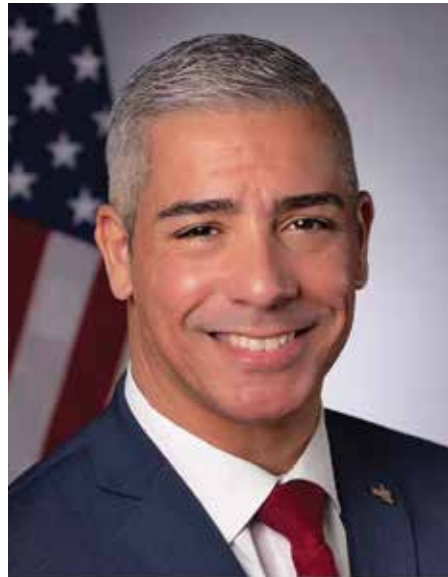
In the District 1 race, Smith was re-elected to a second term, edging former Peekskill Councilman Joe Torres, 5,965-5,651.

"I won re-election because the people saw I was focused on delivering results and making things better," Smith said. "Our county executive set the tone with his slogan this year – results, not rhetoric – but that was my guiding philosophy from the moment I took office."

While Torres has a mathematical chance to catch Smith, it is unlikely. According to the Board of Elections, 416 absentee ballots have been received, but about 60 percent are from registered Democrats.

"I've always sought to bring people together to deliver meaningful change, not score cheap political points, and that's exactly what I will continue to do over the next two years," Smith said.

Gashi in District 4, covering Yorktown, New Castle and a portion of Somers, was



County Legislator Colin Smith staved off Republican challenger Joe Torres to hold onto his District 1 Board of Legislators seat. Democrats will hold a 15-2 advantage on the board next year.

re-elected to a second term after defeating Republican challenger Robert Brower Jr., 8,179-7,038.

For most of the evening last Tuesday, the election was extremely tight before Gashi pulled ahead late.

"We had a great campaign even though it

was a rough environment for Democrats, but the results are a testament to the great work the board did during my first term," he said.

Gashi added that he was humbled by the overwhelming support, but there is a lot of work to do.

"We will continue investing in the infrastructure and try into find way to keep Westchester affordable," he said.

Pierce will succeed Legislator Kitley Covill, who announced early this year that she would not seek a third term. Pierce defeated her Republican challenger, Gina Arena, 7,838-5,738. The district covers Mount Kisco, Bedford, Lewisboro, North Salem and part of Somers.

Pierce, who served as Covill's legislative aide, thanked her supporters for her success but was disappointed that voting reform measures on the ballot last week failed.

"As a group of Democrats and voters with similar sensibilities, we cannot walk away from yesterday without recognizing the urgency for the continued work ahead," she said.

Arena also thanked those who backed her. "We did not get the election results we wanted, but I appreciate the support and enthusiasm I received from so many people on Tuesday," Arena said.

Borgia easily won re-election over Republican Charles Braue, 6,864-3,375. This will be Borgia's sixth and final two-year term as a county legislator because she is term-limited.

Another incumbent, Margaret Cunzio (C-Mount Pleasant), was victorious in her bid for a fourth term representing District 3, which includes Mount Pleasant, North Castle and parts of Briarcliff Manor and Greenburgh. Cunzio defeated Pleasantville Village Trustee David Vinjamuri, 7,325-5,307.

"Thank you to the residents of District 3 for their overwhelming support," Cunzio said in a statement. "It has been a privilege to serve them over the last six years. I will continue to work in a nonpartisan manner to achieve meaningful results for our community and all of Westchester County."

Vinjamuri said he was happy to run despite falling short.

"My campaign was entirely positive and issue-based and I intend to keep fighting for the issues I believe in as Pleasantville village trustee," he said.

Vinjamuri said he called Cunzio to congratulate her.

"I believe she will continue to work hard for the county."

Democrats will hold a 15-2 majority on the Board of Legislators next year. The one seat snatched from them was by Republican James Nolan who defeated incumbent Ruth Walter in District 15, which includes portions of Yonkers and Bronxville. The final tally gave Nolan 5,477 votes to Walter's 4,715.

Ten of the Board of Legislators races were uncontested.

Rick Pezzullo contributed to this article.



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Winning New Castle Slate Calls on Board to Table Form Based Code

By Martin Wilbur

The hard-fought New Castle town election may be over but it remains to be seen what will become of the Form Based Code.

Last weekend, Supervisor-elect Lisa Katz called on the current board majority to suspend any anticipated action on the code for the remainder of the year given the outcome of last week's election.

Unite New Castle, the ticket that Katz led, swept the four Town Board seats that were contested as they campaigned vigorously against the Form Based Code. They contended it would allow developers to construct four-story buildings throughout downtown Chappaqua with well over 900 residential units that would crowd the Chappaqua School District.

But the first item on the board's Wednesday evening work session agenda is a discussion item on the proposed findings statement for the Form Based Code and its status. The board approved the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement last month.

"I'm not sure what will happen, but I would hope my colleagues see what voters were saying and table that decision," Katz said.

The three remaining board members, Acting Supervisor Jeremy Saland and councilwomen Lori Morton and Lauren Levin, have supported the code but only Saland will remain on the board after the end of the year.

In a statement released late last week, the Unite New Castle slate, which also included Tara Kassal and Victoria Tipp urged Saland, Morton and Levin to refrain from taking any action on the Form Based in the remaining weeks of 2021.

They called the election a referendum on the Form Based Code.

"What has often been mischaracterized as the few voices of a loud minority is clearly much more than that, and the outcome of this race is an unambiguous, undeniable statement from our residents that they are looking for a different solution than the one that has been proposed," their statement read in part.

A fourth member of the ticket, Andrea Sanseverino Galan won a seat but has already announced via social media she will not serve because she is moving out of town. Her running mates have announced they intend to appoint Chris Hildenbrand to the vacant seat.

Reached last week, Morton gave little indication about what the board might do.

"I think that as a board we will be talking out our individual perspectives on the path forward and arriving at an action or a no-action that's in the best interests of the town as we see it," she said.

Messages left for Saland and Levin last weekend were not returned.

However, if the board were to move forward with adoption of the findings statement or any action to advance the Form Based Code, the new board in

January "will use every legal means at its disposal to have this action reversed," Unite New Castle's statement read.

The winning slate also warned downtown property owners not to rely on any new zoning based that would be moved forward between now and the end of the year.

"We are hereby putting every party on notice that they should not have any reasonable expectation that they can rely upon any resolution passed relating to the proposed Findings Statement or Form-Based Code unless it is ratified or established by the newly elected board after it has been sworn in," they stated.



Championship Smiles

Proud parents of the Byram Hills High School girls' varsity tennis team celebrate together last Friday after their daughters returned home following its first-ever state championship. The Bobcats capped an undefeated season, defeating Friends Academy 5-0. Pictured with the parents is head coach Michael Racanelli.

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–Supervisor-Elect Lisa Katz and Councilmembers-Elect Victoria Bayard Tipp, Tara Kassal and Chris Hildenbrand

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Parents Appeal to Un-Mask P'ville School District Students

By Abby Luby

Students wearing face coverings in schools has become a flash point at Board of Education across the United States.

Recently, two mothers made an emotional appeal to Pleasantville school officials to unmask the district's students, especially the youngest children.

Addressing the Board of Education during a recent public hearing on the district safety code was Mandy Yasinski and Ellen Norton, two of the 63 signees of an online petition titled "Parents in Pleasantville School District Support to Lift Mask Mandate in School."

Yasinski, a mother of four children attending high school and middle school, pressed for answers, especially since new COVID-19 cases among students in the district are negligible. Last week the district reported no positive cases.

"What are the parameters from the (Department of Health) to justify the use of emergency mask measures in schools? Is there a threshold that would trigger an end to the masking?" Yasinski asked.

Last August the state Health Department issued an emergency regulation requiring all students in public or private schools, along with faculty and staff, to wear masks inside school buildings. The mandate followed the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Yasinski cited a large-scale study published by the CDC last year that covered more than 90,000 elementary school students in 169

schools in Georgia. The first of its kind, the study was inconclusive. It found no clear benefit for masking requirements for students without also studying mitigation measures such as improved ventilation systems and social distancing.

In her executive summary last summer, Superintendent of Schools Mary Fox-Alter wrote that the district would be maximizing the capacity of its air handling units, roof-top units and/or classroom vents. It installed high-quality MERV filters, which goes beyond the state requirement.

In the middle school, where there were older systems in some of the original classrooms, the district installed HEPA air handling purification units.

"I am looking for reliable scientific evidence," Yasinski told the board.

She cited the Food and Drug Administration's April 2020 statement about Emergency Use Authorization relating to non-surgical face masks saying "labeling should not state or imply that the product is intended for antimicrobial or antiviral protection or related uses or is for use such as infection prevention or reduction, nor should it be used for particulate filtration."

"Masks do not kill viruses," Yasinski said. "And misrepresenting the use for masks intended for antimicrobial or antiviral protection is deceptive."

Norton, the mother of three young children, two in elementary school and one in preschool, criticized the negative consequences of young children wearing

masks, with some having difficulty learning to read.

"Imagine trying to learn how to read when you can't see the teacher's face," Norton said. "That's a great impediment to my children's learning. So there is a failure happening."

Crediting the district for making what she called a "valiant effort" to educate children, she added "We all have the same objective. However, it must be said how our children are getting the short end of the stick this entire time."

Fox-Alter said she respected both women's questions and added that the district had to follow the original mask mandate ordered by the governor and the state Education Department and shared by all agencies

including the Westchester Department of Health.

"However, I do agree with you and many here agree with you that your questions about metrics are all incredibly valid and that some level of understanding of when and how long this will continue. That's an important question," Fox-Alter said.

While Fox-Alter said the district will follow the law, it has been in contact with the county health department and the state about testing protocols. Other professional organizations are asking the state the same questions.

Fox-Alter offered to share both women's information with County Executive George Latimer and with other professional organizations she meets with regularly.

Sharing a Special Gift

The Bedford-Armonk Rotary Club shared the gift of reading by donating 500 new children's books to Open Door Family Medical Center and Northern Westchester Hospital.

This fall, the Rotary Club met at the home of Immediate Past President Abbot Fleur to organize books, apply bookplates, enjoy fellowship and promote literacy. On Oct. 24, club members distributed the books to Open Door and additional books will be delivered to Northern Westchester Hospital ahead of the holiday season.



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Oct. 29: Caller reported a tractor-trailer struck the building at 99 Lafayette Ave. at 2:52 p.m. No injuries were reported. The responding officer stated that an accident investigation was conducted with assistance from the state police's Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit. The tractor-trailer was impounded due to a violation discovered during an inspection of the truck.

Oct. 31: At 2:31 p.m., a report of mail having been removed from a Sunrise Drive resident's mailbox on Friday, but the resident was unable to make a report at that time. The responding officer secured depositions. A report will follow.

Nov. 3: Caller reports that her vehicle was struck by a school bus on Evergreen Row at 3:34 p.m. The incident occurred at the driveway. No injuries reported.

Pleasantville Police Department

Oct. 30: An illegally parked vehicle was impounded at the Memorial Plaza parking lot at 5 a.m.

Oct. 31: A report was filed at 2:39 p.m.

concerning a previous incident of a car impairment, possibly concerning personnel at Paulies Bar on Marble Avenue.

Nov. 4: Report of a suspicious person in the area of Bedford Road at 10:30 a.m. The subject was later verified as a homeless male. No criminal activity involved.

Nov. 5: At 2:23 p.m., a dispute regarding a parking spot on Memorial Plaza was resolved.

Yorktown Police Department

Oct. 28: Rommel Velez, 38, of Carmel, was charged with driving without a license and in possession of a forged registration and license plate after being stopped on Route 6 at 10:45 p.m. for failing to use a designated lane.

Oct. 31: Daniel George, 21, was charged with driving while intoxicated after being stopped on East Main Street at 1:53 a.m. for driving without a rear bumper and having an inoperative taillight.

Nov. 6: Erik Migliore, 28, of Yorktown, was charged with driving while intoxicated following a traffic accident on Route 202 at 11:56 a.m.

Obituary

Antonia Cannizzaro

On Nov. 5, Antonia (Antonietta) Cannizzaro passed away peacefully at the age of 87.

Antonia was born Apr. 4, 1934, in Favara, Sicily to Giuseppe and Rosa Terrana. In August 1960 at the age of 26, she immigrated to the United States where she reunited with her parents and six siblings, finding her home in Pleasantville. She worked for several years as a seamstress at the dress factory in Pleasantville until she later met and married Antonio (Tony) Cannizzaro, who preceded her in death in 2010.

They are survived by three children, Roy Cannizzaro of Pleasantville, Vivian and husband AJ Nikolatos of Pawling, N.Y. and

Joe Cannizzaro of Pleasantville, as well as their two grandchildren, Jason and Andrew Nikolatos, of Pawling. Of her six siblings, Antonia was predeceased by Guseppina (Sister Rita) Terrana, Rosalia Terrana and Gaspare Terrana. She is survived by sister-in-law Joan Terrana, Cologero and Serafina Terrana, Salvatore and Jane Terrana and Dominic and Judith Terrana, as well as her nieces, nephews and cousins, all of whom will miss her dearly.

Visitation was on Nov. 7 at Beecher Flooks Funeral Home in Pleasantville. The funeral service was held at Our Lady of Pompeii Chapel in Pleasantville on Nov. 8.

ERA Insite Realty Expands Sales and Rental Teams



Two of the newest members of the ERA Insite Realty family, Teresa Badagliacca left, and Deezyr Torrado, who recently joined the Pleasantville and White Plains offices, respectively.

ERA Insite Realty recently welcomed two agents to their sales and rental teams. Both agents selected ERA thanks to the endorsements of other agents within the firm and their enthusiasm about all the company has to offer.

Teresa "Terry" Badagliacca was recently added to the ERA Insite office in Pleasantville, while Deezyr Torrado joined the office in White Plains.

Badagliacca has been a licensed real estate salesperson since 2015, most recently working at another real estate brokerage in Mount Pleasant. She holds her Commercial & Investment Real Estate Certificate (CIREC) and is working toward earning her Home Staging certification.

Past sales have included properties in Westchester, Dutchess County and Connecticut. Badagliacca studied architecture and holds a bachelor's degree in facilities management from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston. She previously worked with her father, Rudy, at his namesake engineering firm, Petrucelli Engineering in Valhalla.

A Mount Pleasant resident, Badagliacca is involved locally as a Girl Scout troop leader and in local political campaigns.

Torrado has joined ERA's sales and rental team based in the White Plains office. Coming to real estate after working

in the food service and nutrition industry, she brings skills in business planning, personal consultation techniques and communication and an exceptional work ethic to benefit her real estate clients. Torrado is a native of the Bronx and Yonkers and is fluent in English and Spanish.

"As we continue to serve clients in diverse geographies and with a wide range of real estate needs, we are always looking to expand our agent roster to meet those needs," said Lou Budetti, ERA Insite's founder and principal broker. "Terry has great connections in the Mount Pleasant market, while Deezyr is helping to serve our extensive list of tenants and landlords, as well as our bilingual clients."

ERA Insite Realty Services, part of the ERA global network and the region's number one ERA company, has been serving the Westchester market for over 35 years out of the same headquarters located at 600 N. Broadway in White Plains, in addition to operating successful offices in Bronxville, Pleasantville, Yonkers and Bethel, Conn.

You may contact Terry Badagliacca at the Pleasantville office at 914-769-2222 and Torrado at the White Plains office at 914-949-9600.

Calendar Submissions

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 "Calendar Submission" in your email subject line. Entries should be sent to Abby Luby at aluby@theexaminernews.com.

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New Organization Provides First Steps to Help Domestic Violence Survivors

By Martin Wilbur

When the warnings were sounded in the early days of the pandemic to shelter in place, a chill went down Jacquetta Jenkins' spine.

At five years old, Jenkins' mother removed her and her younger sister from their home in Mount Vernon to escape domestic violence. The pandemic proved to be the impetus for her to help others who had been in a similar situation as her family, knowing that there were going to be residents who would have to choose between the health danger of COVID-19 or the physical threats from a violent home situation.

"I couldn't imagine sheltering in place back then when we grew up, and so I wanted to do something to help domestic violence survivors and their children, but I really didn't know what that looked like," said Jenkins.

By last February she had officially launched the nonprofit organization First Steps to Heal, which provides immediate assistance to low-income Westchester residents with minor children who must leave their home to escape violence.

With the help of the Westchester County Office of Economic Development's accelerator program Launch1000, which lends support to county residents looking to create new businesses or nonprofits, Jenkins created First Steps to Heal. Thus far, she has partnered with four hotels in the county to provide a safe haven for a parent with children. Extended stays could last from one to six months, which takes victims out of a dangerous situation and gives them time to



Jacquetta Jones, the founder, president and executive director of First Steps to Heal, an organization created earlier this year to help victims of domestic violence flee danger.

find a stable situation somewhere else.

"I asked them what they needed most when they needed to leave a violent situation," explained Jenkins, who formerly worked for the Mount Vernon School District and currently lives in Elmsford. "They told me emergency shelter, more emergency shelters were needed. But not just in a shelter facility. There are a lot of

survivors staying in their situation because they didn't want to go into a shelter, they couldn't imagine bringing themselves and their children into a shelter facility."

Jenkins has also formed partnerships with other organizations, such as My Sister's Place, which provides legal assistance, case management and shelter to abuse victims. The partnership organizations refer people in desperate need of help to First Steps to Heal.

Domestic violence only got worse when the pandemic hit in March 2020. Incidents surged 8.1 percent across the United States after the pandemic-related lockdowns were imposed, according to the National Commission on COVID-19 and Criminal Justice.

The problem in Westchester is acute, as there are more than 12,000 reported domestic violence incidents each year in the county. Westchester ranks second in domestic violence child homicides in the state, only behind New York City, Jenkins said.

It also cuts across all socioeconomic lines, she noted, with 11 of the last 15 domestic violence-related homicides in the county occurring in the five most affluent towns.

Since its launch nine months ago, the organization has helped four families directly and has initial funding to assist 40 survivors and 120 children.

In addition to procuring grants and donations, Jenkins is also striving to increase the roster of participating hotels. Some of the hotels also provide food for the survivors.

She also wants to eventually help families permanently relocate into affordable housing so they can move on with their lives and don't have to return to a violent situation. But the shortage of affordable units makes that challenging.

"I'm very confident that in the coming years, we'll be able to provide that piece, that affordable permanent housing piece to our clients, because when you think about it, when our survivors are ready to transition out of the hotel and their own affordable units, they have to wait anywhere from three to five years," Jenkins said.

She also hopes to expand First Steps to Heal into Putnam and Rockland counties, but wants to make sure that the organization is on strong footing before venturing outside Westchester.

Currently, the organization is based in Mount Vernon, located in office space donated by Macquesten Development.

To progress from an idea to creation within a year, First Steps to Heal has been an incredibly fulfilling experience to help families in the same situation she found herself in as a child, Jenkins said.

"I told myself I don't know how successful we are going to be with ultimately saving people, but I know if I can save one person, then I can do it a million times," Jenkins said. "So those four families, they validated, this is possible, this can be done with my work, with the partnerships with both the hotels and the other organizations."

For more information about First Steps to Heal, visit www.firststepstoheal.org or e-mail contact@firststepstoheal.org.

Westchester Pitches Vaccine to Parents of Younger Children

By Martin Wilbur

Westchester County health officials appealed to parents of 5- to 11-year-olds on Monday to consider having their children receive Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccination to prevent spread and increase the likelihood of them remaining in school.

Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler and county Board of Health chair Dr. Robert Baker said there are good reasons for getting children inoculated, including protecting any older relatives such as grandparents, that they may come in contact with.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration gave the green light for the overwhelming majority of the youngest public school students to receive the vaccine on Nov. 2.

"I think it's important for us to remember that children are at least as likely to get COVID as adults and, in fact, children five to 11 years of age are at risk for serious illness if they get COVID," Amler said.

More than 8,300 children in that age group have been hospitalized nationwide since the start of the pandemic through mid-October, she said. In Westchester, 5- to 11-year-olds comprise about 9 percent of all COVID-19 positive cases.

Risk of side effects are mild, similar to

adults, according to Amler. There would most likely be arm soreness in the area where the shot was administered or a chance of a mild fever, but little more than what a child might experience from other vaccines, she said. If there are symptoms more serious than that, parents should contact their pediatrician.

She said one significant advantage for a child to get the vaccine is if they are exposed to COVID and have been vaccinated, as long as they have no symptoms they can continue to attend in-person classes and avoid quarantine. Another is to protect older family members who could be at greater risk for serious illness if they tested positive for COVID-19.

Baker, who had his 10-year-old son Aaron and nine-year-old daughter Sophie vaccinated, said getting their peers to get the shot may be one of the last significant hurdles to return to normal.

"I think this vaccine is very important for this age group," Baker said. "This will change the direction of the pandemic. It's the last age group of significant spread that we really haven't had some penetration of the vaccine into it and now we're getting it."

County Executive George Latimer said

county officials will work with local districts to coordinate pop-up vaccination sites for schools should they want to participate. He also called on each district to survey their parents with children in the 5- to 11-year-old age group to gauge the interest.

The county Department of Health clinics at 134 Court St. in White Plains and 20 S. Broadway in Yonkers will administer shots to children. Parents can find pharmacies or ask their pediatrician if their office has the vaccine. They may also visit the state Department of Health website to learn where vaccines for children are being administered in their area.

The emphasis on children comes as the county vaccination rate stands at just over 91 percent for residents 18 years old and up," Latimer said. The number of active cases in the county has been stagnant at about 1,100 for the past few weeks, he added.

While that is down from the August highs this summer of about 2,800 cases, Latimer said it bears watching because most residents are spending more time indoors as the weather turns colder.

"We are in a period of time of transition because we're leaving the fall season (and) entering the winter season, more of our



Pictured, back row left to right, are Dr. Robert Baker, chair of the Westchester County Board of Health, and Melissa Baker; middle row, left to right, are Ariel Churba and Pat Patel, a pharmacist at New Rochelle Prescription Center; and front row, left to right, are Chael Churba, Aaron Baker and Sophie Baker, who received the vaccine.

activities are going to be indoors, which may open the door for us to have some concerns about greater spread," Latimer said.

SMALL NEWS IS BIG NEWS

Letters to the Editor

Not Everyone is in a Position to Support Restaurants

Re: "Support Your Favorite Local Restaurants, Especially for Restaurant Week," by Larry Penner (Nov. 2-8).

While the author's letter may be well-intentioned, I find it to be extremely tunnel-visioned.

Much of this country cannot afford to eat out and tip 20 percent. When I was supporting two children and a wife, it was everything I could do to keep a roof over our heads and food on the table. Now that I'm divorced, child support long over, one child grown and completely independent and another semi-grown and semi-independent, I have a few discretionary dollars. I still look for the cheapest gasoline, shop in discount stores,

look for sales on coffee. I can't afford to eat out regularly.

The author worked for 31 years for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). I doubt he's affluent, but also doubt he's hurting financially. I don't begrudge any level of financial comfort the author has attained. I do begrudge, and mightily, him not understanding that not everyone is as well off as he is.

My heart aches for those in the restaurant industry hurt by the pandemic. But I refuse to be guilted into spending my money at restaurants. The problem was not of my making, nor is the solution.

Here are two interesting questions. First, is the author himself going to go to the Hudson Valley to support restaurants? And second, how is he going to get there?

Every year around Earth Day he publishes a letter, urging everyone to take public transportation. Is he going to get from Great Neck to the Hudson Valley via public transport?

Nat Weiner
Bronx, N.Y.

Correction

In last week's article concerning the recent passage of the Mount Kisco leaf blower legislation, the story inadvertently neglected to add that the seasonal prohibition of gas-powered leaf blowers from May 1 to Sept. 15 will not go into effect until 2024. The Examiner regrets the omission.

Stepinac Blood Drive Results in More Than 50 Pints Donated

Students, administrators, faculty, staff, parents and supporters donated 51 pints of blood in Stepinac High School's recent drive to benefit the New York Blood Center (NYBC).

Since each donated pint can save three lives, according to the NYBC, Stepinac's total contribution can potentially be used to save 153 lives, including cancer patients, accident, burn and trauma victims, newborn babies, mothers delivering babies, transplant recipients, surgery patients and others in need. The Blood Center also notes that 4.5

million Americans receive blood transfusions each year and 40,000 pints are transfused each day in the United States.

Much of today's sophisticated medical care (transplants, heart surgeries, etc.) relies on blood transfusions. Car accident and trauma victims may need as many as 50 or more red cell transfusions and severe burn victims may need as many as 20 platelet transfusions.

For more information or to make an appointment to donate blood, call 800-933-2566 or visit www.nybloodcenter.org/

The Dangers of Thinking That Elections Are Rigged or Stolen

Donald Trump has repeatedly said that our elections are rigged and that there is massive voter fraud.

In Putnam Valley, there are more registered Democrats than Republicans. And Donald Trump has repeatedly said that our elections are rigged and that there is massive voter fraud, and I don't hear Republicans disagreeing with him.

In Putnam Valley the election results tell us that Republicans trounced the Democrats. How can I believe that when Donald Trump has repeatedly said that our elections are rigged and that there is massive voter fraud, and the rest of the party does not disagree? I don't hear the Republicans disagreeing with him.

I charge the Republicans with stealing the election in Putnam Valley and, for that

matter, all of Putnam County. Because Donald Trump has repeatedly said that our elections are rigged and there is massive voter fraud! How can I think otherwise?

The corrupt Republican Party just stole Putnam Valley and Putnam County. All their victories are illegitimate. Why? Because Donald Trump has said so and the rest of the Republican Party does not refute him. So, obviously, in Putnam, the election was stolen.

Get it? Do you see how dangerous this is?

Nicholas Kuvach
Putnam Valley Democratic
Committee and Putnam County
Democratic Committee member

A Time of Year to Be Thankful for Everything That We Have

A time to be grateful for so many things in our lives, grateful for our families when we gather around the Thanksgiving table and let's not forget those who we lost this year and comfort those they have left behind. Let's be grateful for our precious children and grandchildren, those of us who are so blessed.

We give thanks for our community and to all of the men and women on the front line and to those who volunteer in so many ways to make Cortlandt such a great place to live and to raise our families. We give praise to our volunteers who are very dedicated. To our police, firefighters, EMTs, paramedics and to our military for defending our country. We are grateful.

I am so thankful for the 34 years of support and trust I've received to be first a councilwoman (four years) and then as town

supervisor (30 years). I have always tried my best to live up to that trust and to work hard every day to improve the quality of life in our community. Cortlandt is not just a place, it's home. I have cherished every day as supervisor and have taken this responsibility very seriously.

Thanksgiving for me has always been a day of joy, smiles, good food and a day of renewal as we remember our past days and those we've loved and lost but to always go forward and think about what we can do for others in the present and future.

Please join me in giving thanks for our lives, our community and for those we love. Happy Thanksgiving!

Linda Puglisi
Supervisor, Town of Cortlandt

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New Croton-Harmon Superintendent of Schools Named

By Rick Pezullo

The Croton-Harmon School District has announced that Stephen Walker has accepted the role of superintendent of schools.

The Board of Education unanimously approved Walker's contract last week. He will take over on Jan. 4, replacing Dr. Deborah O'Connell, who has served as superintendent for four years and will be officially retiring on Jan. 3.

"I am incredibly honored to have been

selected as the next superintendent of the Croton-Harmon schools," Walker said. "The district is renowned for its high achievement, forward-thinking culture and focus on educating the whole child, and I am excited to get to know and work with the faculty and staff, students and the broader community."

Walker joins Croton-Harmon from Sullivan West Central School District in Sullivan County, a roughly 1,100-student district where he has served as superintendent since August 2018. In that role, Walker oversaw advancements

in technology and social emotional learning, including the creation of an instructional technology facilitator position in each school and the incorporation of a specialized middle school program within the district's secondary school.

He also helped develop several innovative high school classes, including cybersecurity, drone production, social justice and the Advanced Placement seminar.

"Throughout his career, Mr. Walker has championed a student-centered approach,



Stephen Walker was appointed by the Croton-Harmon Board of Education to become the district's new superintendent on Jan. 4.

Norman Leaves GW Elementary School for New Role in Lakeland

By Rick Pezullo

Dr. Tracy Norman recently left his longtime position as principal of George Washington Elementary School to begin a new role as acting assistant superintendent of instruction in the Lakeland School District.

Norman, who has worked in the district for 21 years, assumed his new job on Oct. 25 and was replaced at George Washington by Marc Casey, who has been an assistant principal at Copper Beech Middle School since 2015.

"He is a passionate advocate for all students and an accomplished leader in our district," said Karen Gagliardi, Lakeland's interim superintendent of schools. "I am confident that Dr. Norman will make great strides in his new role."

Norman, a major in the Army National Guard, said it was an honor serving as principal of George Washington for 19 years.

He said he had mixed emotions about making the switch.

"Over the years I have enjoyed the many wonderful and challenging experiences of serving as the principal of George Washington Elementary," Norman said. "At this time, my career ambitions and desire to make change for the greater good of the Lakeland community make it necessary to accept the position of acting assistant superintendent of instruction."

"I will always be grateful for the cooperation and support of the Board of Education, district office administration and the George Washington faculty and staff. I am particularly grateful to all the parents, both present and past, for your years of partnership and service to the children of the George Washington community," he added.



Dr. Tracy Norman

ensuring equity in education for all learners and essential professional development for faculty and staff," said Croton-Harmon Board of Education President Sarah Carrier. "Throughout the interview process, board members were continually impressed by his experience, measurable successes, and positive energy."

Prior to his position at Sullivan West, Walker was deputy superintendent and assistant superintendent for human resources at the Suffern Central School District in Rockland County. He has also held the position of director of pupil personnel services in Suffern and in the Marlboro Central School District, where Walker began his career as a special education teacher and principal.



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Aviah Cohen Pierson

Saw Mill Club Named Mt. Kisco Chamber's 2021 Business of the Year

The Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce recently named the Saw Mill Club as its 2021 Business of the Year.

Saw Mill Club has been serving the community and surrounding area a dose of healthy living since 1973. Its slogan – "Highest Quality. Greatest Variety. Family Friendly." – aptly describes the club's services, including children's education and fitness, Forever Active senior programming, tennis and aquatics for all and hundreds of group fitness activities that encourage families and individuals to change their lives through fitness.

A Mount Kisco landmark business for

48 years, Saw Mill Club has experienced a variety of changes since its start as a tennis-only club. With a signature passion for a more-variety-is-better approach to successful healthy lifestyles, it has stayed on the cutting edge of the industry with annual investments in new technologies, expert staff and exciting new fitness and sports formats. Very simply, if it is healthy, it is here.

Saw Mill Club furthered its commitment through major investments in the expansion of facilities over the years. In 2011, the club made a bold move with the addition of a second Mount Kisco location, Saw Mill East,



The Saw Mill Club, which has operated since 1973, was recently named the 2021 Mount Kisco Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year.


deepening its commitment to providing a path to wellness for all area families.

As one of Mount Kisco's largest employers, Saw Mill Club fulfills its role as an economic driver in the community, employing more than 200 people who reside in Mount Kisco and the surrounding areas.

Saw Mill Club also has a long history of

civic and community outreach including support for Hope's Door, the Mount Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry, Toys for Tots, Northern Westchester Hospital, all area schools and many local organizations. Total wellness has been an individual as well as community goal for nearly 50 years.

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Local Author Writes the Ultimate John Wayne Quote Book

By Martin Wilbur

Mark Orwoll has been an enormous John Wayne fan since childhood, so it isn't surprising that he would write a book about the Duke, one of the most celebrated Hollywood actors.

But the 26-year Pleasantville resident didn't pen a biography or delve into Wayne's personal life. Orwoll strictly focused on the larger-than-life figure's quotes and lines from his voluminous filmography in his book, "John Wayne Speaks," that is scheduled for release by St. Martin's Griffin this week.

Despite being deceased for more than 40 years, Orwoll believes that John Wayne remains a highly appealing actor and person because he was such a strong and versatile performer who stood out in voice and stature.

Along with his many westerns, people sometimes forget Wayne played a leading man during his earlier career and appeared in lighter films as well, he said.

"There are a few actors who have the ability to project the sense of authority, of understanding, and yet also are not braggadocious, they're not Sylvester Stallone, let's put it that way," Orwoll said. "They are reluctant heroes, and I think John Wayne definitely falls into that camp. He does not walk into a room and says, 'Hey, everybody, look at me.' In fact, he does exactly the opposite."

Orwoll brings in the famous lines, the obscure and everything in between, often prefacing them with context and sometimes

including them with dialogue from another actor. Each John Wayne quote is annotated with a footnote, and the reader can look in Appendix B to find in which movie the line was spoken.

"Honey, this is strictly from Brooklyn, but why don't you dance with the guy that brung ya?" he stated in the 1944 film "The Fighting Seabees." Or this gem from "True Grit" in 1969, in which Wayne captured the Oscar for best actor: "I know him – well. I shot him in the lip last August over at Winding Stair Mountains. He was lucky that day, all right. My shootin' was off."

Orwoll divided each of the 19 chapters by category of quotes, such as How to Woo a Gal, In Service to His County, which centered on patriotism, war and life in uniform, and Make Mine a Double. There is one chapter near the end that includes John Wayne quotes from interviews, speeches and public appearances.

What's fascinating about Orwoll's work, in which he watched every one of Wayne's 173 credited roles that spanned 50 years (although the early Wayne movies were silent films), is what is not included in the book. There are perhaps dozens of lines that have been attributed to Wayne over the years, even though he never uttered them, Orwoll said.

There's no "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do" or "Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway." Wayne happens to be in that small pantheon of famous people where his name evokes a certain mythology.



Mark Orwoll, author of the just released book "John Wayne Speaks."

"I'm going to guarantee you that any quote in here could be attributed to a specific movie," said Orwoll, a former editor at Travel + Leisure for 30 years who is currently a freelance travel writer. "I felt like I had to do that for John Wayne fans, and for myself. Enough of these made-up quotations."

Orwoll believes John Wayne fans will enjoy the book as will people who love Hollywood, particularly its Golden Age after World War II. He said many teenagers

and younger adults are familiar with Wayne through their parents or grandparents.

In fact, Orwoll contacted Brian Downes, who runs the John Wayne Birthplace Museum in the actor's hometown of Winterset, Iowa, to inform him he had written the book. Downes wrote back, "Does it include the quote 'Life is tough, it's tougher if you're stupid?'"

"I wrote back (that) John Wayne never said that," Orwoll recalled. "He wrote back a one-sentence response: 'Send me the book.'"

For Orwoll, some of his favorite John Wayne movies were from the heart of his career, including "Fort Apache," "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" and almost anything else directed by John Ford.

He doesn't apologize for enjoying the actor's work, even though he acknowledges some of the moves would never be made today. Orwoll, who identifies as a liberal Democrat, also doesn't get into Wayne's politics.

"If you're not able to separate an artistic product from the actual human being's history, who created it, then you're going to have a lot of wonderful artistry in this world that is off limits to you," Orwoll said.

He also made sure to credit the screenwriters who wrote the lines.

What turned out as "a contagion-inspired compendium" while being homebound during the pandemic has received strong feedback.

"I'm very proud of the book," Orwoll said.



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Feeling Safe at Home: Does it Take a Gun?

The pandemic has inspired a surge in gun sales, I have read, not really understanding why. But research shows that having firearms in the house won't necessarily help in a dangerous moment –and it can heighten other risks, such as accidents with children finding them.

Discussions about guns and their safety or dangers have also been sparked by the recent accident on the Alec Baldwin movie set for the film "Rust," where a crew member was killed when the gun Baldwin was firing was somehow loaded with real bullets rather than blanks.

Early in my career, I applied for a job with a public relations agency where the interviewer told me that the job had become available when a former account executive had walked off the job when it came time for him to board a plane. It seems that he had a fear of flying, which he could not overcome when it came time to visit a client in another city.

The interview was going swimmingly, my emphasizing that I loved to fly, until the wrap-up when I was asked if I happened to have any fears or hang-ups that would prevent me from performing on the job. I volunteered that the only fear I could think of was that of guns. I was quickly dismissed without getting the job after being told that the major account on which I would have served was the U. S. Army!



By Bill Primavera

But I always had that fear of guns, and perhaps I still do today. Maybe it's something from my early childhood, perhaps as young as five or six years old, when my parents took me to the funeral of one of my dad's friends who had been shot with a gun in front of his home in South Philadelphia. In those days – the Dark Ages – funeral homes exposed the whole body, including the shoes, and that poor guy who had been shot left a lasting impression on me that guns were something to be avoided, including owning one.

There was only one time in my family's history when I considered the purchase of a gun. It was when my home in Brooklyn Heights was burglarized while we slept in our beds. Whenever I think about that early morning when my wife awoke and told me that she had dreamt that someone was in our bedroom, looking at us in bed, I get the chills because, in fact, that had been exactly what happened.

When my wife went downstairs to make breakfast, I heard her scream from the kitchen that our back door to the garden had been completely taken off its hinges. In those days, we kept no cash to speak of in the house and the only thing the burglar was able to steal was my daughter's piggy bank. We learned something when we discovered that every single book in our rather large



library had been opened. The intruder was obviously checking for hidden cash.

Still, I began fantasizing about what I would have done if I had woken while the burglar was in the house, with the scenarios of my having and not having a gun. If I had a gun under my pillow and awoke, would I have blown him away? Or would I have just said "Hands up?" Probably the latter, but I really don't know, considering the alarm of the moment.

One of my friends suggested that, rather than a gun for home protection, I might consider having a can of wasp spray close to my front and back door. Wasp spray was recommended because it shoots more directly at its intended target. I even mentioned the possibility in one of my

columns, only to have a reader upbraid me by saying, "Right, go blind another person, then see how you feel."

Considering the pros and cons of having a gun in the house, I suppose I would recommend to others that they invest instead in a quality home security system to protect themselves from the criminal elements among us, which thankfully are not high in our region.

Bill Primavera is a realtor associated with William Raveis Real Estate and founder of Primavera Public Relations, Inc., the longest running public relations agency in Westchester (www.PrimaveraPR.com). His real estate site is www.PrimaveraRealEstate.com. To engage the services of The Home Guru and his team to market your home for sale, call 914-522-2076.

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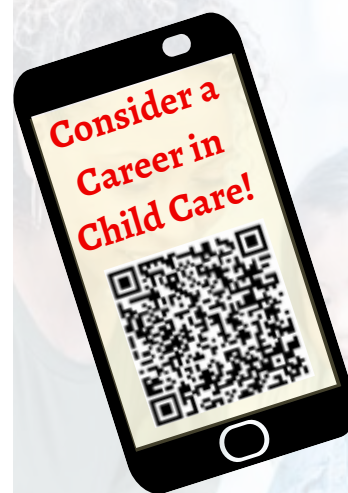
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Creating Memories: SMRA Bird Calendar a Perfect Stocking Stuffer

By Brian Kluepfel

Although there are many reasons to become a birder, probably the primary reason many do so is because birds are visually stunning.

Here in North America, where the number of avian species pales in comparison to global birding hotspots, we still get hundreds of individuals of different colors, sizes and shapes, from the miniscule hummingbird to the magnificent eagle.

During these pandemic times, many of us have been challenged to look both inward and outward. Some of those doing the latter have entered the world of birding, and many of them, the related hobby of bird photography.

Though I have splashed thousands of words across the pages of this and other publications relating the wonder of birds, the stories hardly compare in impact with the power of a photograph. Luckily, local photographers have always come to my rescue in this regard. We often rely on Audubon stalwarts like Suzanne O'Rourke (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/sueorourke>) to add a splash of visual panache to offset my ponderous prose.

Starting last year, the Saw Mill River Audubon (SMRA) began producing a calendar of bird images taken by local photographers which allow us to appreciate the seasonal variety of bird life in the Hudson Valley and tip our collective cap to these talented and patient mavens of the lens.

One relative newbie birder and photographer is Rebecca Bell of Briarcliff Manor, who now posts on Facebook as @Briarcliffphotography. Her stunning image of a red-tailed hawk alighting in her backyard graces the October 2022 calendar page. As she jokingly wrote upon receiving the news, "Bucket list item achieved - I'm finally a calendar girl! Miss October, to be precise!"

Another calendar contributor is Mitch Goldfarb, whose photos will grace the April and August pages. Goldfarb moved up to Westchester during the pandemic, and an old bird feeder in his parents' garage and a camera of more recent vintage got him started. Beginning with colorful species like the American goldfinch and the pileated woodpecker, he has now catalogued 230 species in the tristate area.

Goldfarb credits his friends at SMRA

with much of his success.

"I'm constantly learning," he said. "So much of that is thanks to the fantastic programs and people involved with the Saw Mill River Audubon, which continues to be an amazing resource and way to connect with other people who share a love of birds," he said.

While many would like to get the ultimate snap of a beautiful bird, there are limits. The golden rule of birding photography is "do no harm." Remember that these are wild creatures trying to survive and feed their young. Audubon has published guidance for ethical bird photography on its website at <https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography>.

I'd like to dedicate this month's column to Pleasantville photographer Jeff Seneca, who was well-respected in the local birding community for his wonderful images (<https://www.jsenecaphotography.com/>) and all-round personality. We lost Jeff in the early days of the pandemic and we miss him tremendously. To quote his website: "Jeff lived his life in the manner of his pictures, vibrantly and full

of life and color."

SMRA Executive Director Anne Swaim added, "We started the Birds of New York calendar to highlight the work of local bird photographers and the beauty and diversity of the birds found in our area. Our first calendar was for 2021 and featured two spectacular pictures by Jeff Seneca, one of the leading bird photographers in our area who was lost, much too young, to COVID in April 2020."

Another wonderful photographer and personality lost in 2020 was Croton-on-Hudson's Edward Mertz, whose appreciation of Westchester wildlife was contagious. Luckily for us, these men live on through their photographs.

Feel free to buy one, or several, 2022 Saw Mill River Audubon calendars at www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/calendar.

Brian Kluepfel is a longstanding Saw Mill River Audubon member and encourages you to support efforts in protecting and enjoying local wildlife habitats. Visit SMRA sanctuaries and attend their events, online or in person. All are welcome.

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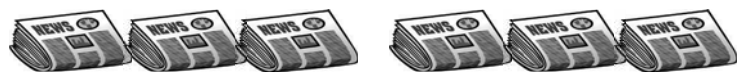
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It's Best to Think of Daydreaming as Theater of the Mind

"And you can be sure that if you're feeling right

*A daydream will last long into the night
Tomorrow at breakfast you may prick up your ears*

Or you may be daydreaming for a thousand years"

--John Sebastian

Writing is my profession though daydreaming is my full-time job.

Like most artists, and as an existentialist, I find my creativity in daydreaming, though one does not have to be an artist or an existentialist to daydream.

Daydreaming can be viewed as the theater of the mind since this is where we stage our life's ambitions, fantasies and even create new realities. Anecdotal, mind-wandering has been associated with creativity for centuries. New research on daydreaming is offering validation that mind-wandering can make us happier and more creative.

"I was trying to daydream, but my mind kept wandering"

--Steven Wright

To master the art of daydreaming, one must avoid constrained thoughts where we ruminate over unpleasant events and topics. And, to focus on thoughts that are free-moving, meaning they skip from one

pleasant topic to another. Positive mind-wandering has also been shown to enhance convergent thinking; that facilitates the kind of solution that just comes to you as a "a-ha" moment in a flash, not knowing how we got there.

I have personally experienced such moments. A solution in the flash that trumps methodical testing and elimination of options.

"Sit in reverie and watch the changing color of the waves that break upon the idle seashore of the mind"

--Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Current research shows when our minds wandered in more fantastical ways, like playing out implausible or bizarre, funny scenarios, we tend to be more inspired and creative and it elevates our mood. This is especially true for writers since we think through stories as means to harness

our creativity to find our a-ha moments. Artists use these moments to present works to our audiences in the hope they will experience a catharsis brought on by our work.

"Daydream, imagine, and reflect. It's the source of infinite creativity"

--Deepak Chopra

As mentioned, one does not need to be an artist or existentialist to daydream. Taking

an existential view to crafting our dreams may help us to better frame and navigate our life experience; especially when we consider all the possible things to think about, for many the negative possibilities outnumber the positive ones.

And, if we think of higher unobtainable goals, the higher the possibility of disappointment. If we create elusive realities in our daydreams, we find we are only living in our own nightmares. As Pascal said, humans may be as fragile as reeds, but they are thinking beings; in their consciousness they reflect the immensity of the universe.

Existentialism is the attempt to transmute our mere existence into essence, no easy task for sure. For life is full of adversity, and at times can be outright cruel. It's this absurdity that we need to overcome life's adversity, in some degree through creating positive daydreams by taking a more existential view of life.

Existentialism is concerned with



By Richard Cirulli

ontology, the study of being, and makes no claims to be a comprehensive philosophy or way of life, but an endeavor to grasp the reality and adversity of life. It does not paint life with rose-colored glasses, and quoting the philosopher Sartre, we are the result of our choices. True, we must address life's realities and adversities during our waking thoughts to address our material needs, but we also have the choice to daydream with free-moving positive thoughts to counter our negative impulses.

In closing, I'm an artist, existentialist and oftentimes a procrastinator – more often than I like to admit. So, as I was ruminating about my editor's deadline, I took a break to do some positive mind-wandering, and low and behold, I had my a-ha moment. Just in time to meet my deadline.

Be well. Be safe. Be happy. Be nice. Amor fati!

Dr. Richard Cirulli is a published author, playwright and retired professor. His body of works can be viewed at www.demitasseplayers.com. He looks forward to your comments, and can be reached at profcirulli@optonline.net.

Existentially Speaking

THERE'S A WORD FOR IT A vocabulary-building quiz By Edward Goralski

"No" – vember. You may have noticed that the calendar has made its way to the month of November. To make note of that event, the quiz words this week all begin with "no." Ready to take the quiz? There's no time like the present.

1. **nonfeasance (n.)**
A) failure to conform B) failure to act C) failure to communicate
2. **nosh (v.)**
A) to eat a snack B) point out C) observe with care
3. **notion (n.)**
A) a footnote B) something unusual C) small useful items
4. **nonce (adj.)**
A) used only once B) not essential C) not easily described
5. **nodus (n.)**
A) a way of life B) a small quantity C) complication
6. **nobble (v.)**
A) to hamper B) get ahold of C) fit in
7. **nostrum (n.)**
A) a questionable remedy B) a thing without equal C) a raised platform
8. **noctceptive (adj.)**
A) active at night B) noticeably bright C) painful

- ANSWERS:**
1. B. Failure to act, especially failure to do what ought to be done
 2. A. To eat a snack
 3. C. Small useful items; sundries
 4. A. Occurring, used, or made only once or for a special occasion
 5. C. Complication; difficulty
 6. B. To get ahold of; catch; also to steal, swindle, cheat
 7. A. A usually questionable remedy or scheme; panacea
 8. C. Painful; injurious



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continued from page 24

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Winning the War of Ideas on the Afghan Battlefield

A Scarsdale lawyer teamed with an Iraqi refugee and an immigrant from Singapore to create a non-profit that brings liberal ideas to the Arab world. Their next mission: Afghanistan



By Andrew Vitelli

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Two months after the final American troops left Afghanistan, the media and much of America have moved on. The initial wave of intensive coverage has long since abated, even as the threat to the thousands of Afghans still trapped in Afghanistan who worked with American troops remains.

But as American forces left the country, New York-based non-profit Ideas Beyond Borders has stepped in to support the Afghans left behind. IBB,

an anti-extremism organization focused primarily on translating books and articles from English into Arabic, has dramatically scaled up its operations in Afghanistan. It is now translating works into Dari and Pashto and helping Afghans who worked with Americans escape, with an eye towards supporting women's education in the country.

The organization has hired more than 60 editors, publishers, and proofreaders in Afghanistan to provide translation and other services, and plans to hire more in the future. The translators began their work last month and have already translated more than 160 articles. "These are the people who were left behind by the US withdrawal. They are the ones that are joining our team," Faisal Saeed Al Mutar, the president and founder of IBB, says. "They support a lot of the values that many Americans support."

Al Mutar launched Ideas Beyond Borders in 2017 with Melissa Chen, a journalist and an immigrant from Singapore. The organization, which relies on private donors to fund its \$1.8 million in annual spending, runs several initiatives. Its flagship program, called



PHOTO: IBB

IBB founder and president Faisal Saeed Al Mutar

House of Wisdom 2.0, employs some 120 translators and has translated 20 books and more than 22,000 articles into Arabic, as well as hundreds into Kurdish and Farsi.

IBB's board includes Steven Pinker, a Canadian psychologist once named

one of Time's most influential people in the world, and former Reason editor-in-chief Nick Gillespie. The board chairman is Scarsdale resident Sam Hershey, a restructuring litigator at White & Case.

The Opposite of Vegas

An Iraqi refugee, Al Mutar understands the importance of both combating extremism and promoting free thought in the Middle East. Now 30, he grew up under the rule of Saddam Hussein and saw his reality shaped by the dictator's regime-run media.

"All of the information, and I mean all of it, was controlled by the state," he recalls. "The punishment for acquiring information outside of the country, through satellite television or radio, was either jail or death."

The climate following Saddam's removal was not much better; Al Mutar says the country went ...

To read the rest of this article, and others like it, visit examiner-plus.com and click subscribe.

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Enjoy the Holiday Train Show Followed By Some Great Eats

The glittering 30th annual Holiday Train Show is on track to start on Nov. 20 and run through Jan. 23 at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx near Fordham University.

It's a seasonal treat, a must for the young and the young at heart. Thousands of Westchester residents, myself included, look forward to visiting the Botanical Garden, walking through the beautifully restored Enid Haupt Conservatory and seeing the seductive floral arrangements and dramatic plantings. It is one of the first Christmas events of the season.

There are themed dining pavilions throughout the park and near the Enid Haupt Pavilion – the casual Pine Tree Café and Hudson Garden Grill. Open daily. Early dining is recommended since the hours are until 6 p.m. most days and until 10:30 p.m. on certain dates.

For more information, call 646-627-7711 or 718-817-8700. For info on the train show, including times and tickets, visit www.nybg.org.

After taking in all that beauty, we do get hungry. Here are some tasty options on your way home.



By Morris Gut

Mario's

Arthur Avenue is just a stone's throw from the Botanical Garden. Since 1919, five generations of the Migliucci family have worked the front and back of the house, making sure patrons are taken care of at this venerable Little Italy institution. Amiable Regina Migliucci is at the helm.

For starters, enjoy the palate-pleasing lagniape of marinated carrots, hot peppers and crusty Arthur Avenue bread. Great appetizers include the hot antipasto platter for two and the Spiedini al la Romana (skewered deep-fried mozzarella sandwiches).

Move on to entrees such as the penne rustica with sausage; stuffed braciola napolitana; osso bucco the size of Mount Vesuvius; or the traditional chicken parmigiana.

Open Tuesday through Sunday. There's a free parking lot and valet service.

Mario's is located at 2342 Arthur Ave. in the Bronx. Info: 718-584-

1188 or visit www.mariosrestarthurave.com.

Artie's Steak & Seafood

There is an enhanced craft beer list as



The hot antipasto platter for two at Mario's on Arthur Avenue, one of the many restaurants to visit if you're going to the New York Botanical Garden's Holiday Train Show this holiday season.

well as specialty cocktails and wines by the glass. There are also big combination platters to share, a loaded lobster salad roll at lunch and a deluxe-size hamburger platter.

Owner Spiro Chagares and his staff offer patrons a fine melding of traditional and contemporary dishes served with flair. Sit back in one of several dining areas and enjoy delectable lamb sliders; hearty

seafood chowder; a seafood platter for two; tender short rib; a massive Zuppa Di Pesce; tender oven roasted rack of lamb; American shellfish jambalaya; chardonnay poached salmon with seafood; and fresh lobster prepared in a variety of styles.

Check out the bar and lounge in the evening for good networking. Open seven days. Free parking.

Artie's Steak & Seafood is located at 394 City Island Ave. in the Bronx. Info: 718-885-9885 or visit www.artiescityisland.com.

Jack's Bar

Jack's is the new kid on the block – and a darn good one, too. Seasonal decorations are up, and owner Shane Clifford has been drawing a fine crowd. It has been remodeled and offers an enhanced Irish-American tavern menu on steroids. That's the best way to describe it.

Generous specialties coming out of Chef Brendan Donohoe's kitchen include spicy chicken ranch pizza; pepperoni and salami calzone; half roasted duck; decadent short rib mac and cheese; Jack's meatballs; burrata pizza cooked in their wood-fired oven; Berkshire pork chop; and grilled lamb sliders. The staff could not be friendlier.

Open daily. There's indoor and outdoor seating and televisions to watch. Municipal parking is free in the evenings.

Jack's Bar is located at 219 Main St. in Eastchester. Info: 914-652-7650 or visit www.jackseastchester.com.

continued on next page



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Enjoy the Holiday Train Show Followed By Some Great Eats

continued from previous page

Maria

Two-time winners of Michelin's prestigious Bib Gourmet Award, brothers Peter and Giovanni Cucullo have been causing a stir in New Rochelle, drawing patronage from all over Westchester for their flavorful riff on Italian and global cooking. I love their happy hours from 3 to 7 p.m. when they offer favorite beverages and small plates that are loaded with flavor.

I am already hooked on eclectic dishes like the glazed pork ribs, truffled green beans, grilled sausage with sweet and spicy Peruvian peppers, meatballs, cauliflower fritters and roasted shishito peppers.

A comfy dining room and bar is filled with artifacts from Mom. Friendly staff, too. The family also operates the bustling Fratelli Pizza & Pasta next door. Open Tuesday through Sunday.

Maria is located at 11 Huguenot St. in New Rochelle. Info: 914-636-0006 or visit www.marianewrochelle.com.

Gusto Pizza

David Masliah and Chef Erwen Perez of Encore have opened an artisanal pizza shop next to their popular bistro. One taste of their pies and your palate will fly off to foodie heaven.

The imported wood-burning pizza oven is named Victor, after David's father, who was a pizzaiolo in France for many years. There's wine by the glass, appetizers, salads and delicious personal-size pizzas



A view of the Holiday Train Show at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, which opens on Saturday, Nov. 20. There are plenty of delicious places to eat afterward in the Bronx and Westchester.

such as the Margherita (tomato, fresh mozzarella and fresh basil) or the Pancetta (tomato, pancetta, crème fraiche, onion and mozzarella). A cozy and colorful setting.

Open seven days, from 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 11:30 a.m. Friday through Sunday.

Gusto Pizza is located at 18 Chatsworth



An artisanal pizza at Gusto in Larchmont.

Ave. in Larchmont. Info: 914-881-3466 or visit www.gustopizzany.com.

Macelleria

This high-end Italian steakhouse offers classic cuts of prime beef and chops along with a hearty helping of Italian-American specialties. Tony Lala and his crew will take good care of you.

Be seated in the handsomely renovated dining room and bar and lounge and peruse the menu over a glass of wine. There

are diver scallops, steak tartare, slabs of Canadian bacon, spaghetti carbonara, pappardelle with short rib Ragu, zuppa di pesce and even a classic burger to enjoy. Carnivores should consider the lamb chops, veal chop or New York strip steak.

Open seven days for lunch and dinner. Macelleria is located at 111 Bedford Rd. in Armonk. Info: 914-219-5728 or visit www.macelleriainitaliansteakhouse.com.

Mughal Palace

Owner Mohammad Alam serves a delicious variety of regional Indian specialties. Look for the Lasuni Gobi (cauliflower florets tossed with bell peppers, onion, garlic and green herbs); chicken barbecue kabab (marinated boneless chicken cooked in the tandoor oven); lamb bhuna (pieces of lamb cooked in a medium-spiced sauce of bell peppers, tomatoes and fresh Indian herbs); and mango chicken (boneless chunks of chicken cooked with fresh mango, ginger, garlic and dry spices). A glass of lassi with help wash it all down. Cocktails are served. Open seven days.

Mughal Palace is located at 16 Broadway in Valhalla. Info: 914-997-6090 or visit www.mughalpalace.com.

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 30 years. He may be reached at 914-235-6591 or by e-mail at gutreactions@optonline.net.

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SPCA Announces Star-Studded Virtual Gala to Air November 18

SPCA Westchester announced its star-studded lineup for its Welcome Home Virtual Gala, which is the one online event of the year not to be missed!

Viewers will enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the SPCA's new state-of-the-art animal rescue center, which opened this past summer. Throughout the Welcome Home Virtual Gala, various wings of the new building will be introduced by a long list of celebrities who support the SPCA's many life-saving programs.

Special appearances include Broadway legend and Tony-Award winner Bernadette Peters, Grammy-winning artist Rob Thomas, musician Paul Shaffer, comedian Robert Klein, NHL coach John Tortorella, Yankee broadcaster Suzyn Waldman and many more.

"This year's virtual gala gives us an opportunity to showcase our new home, which is truly an amazing space for our rescue dogs and cats," said Shannon Laukhuf, SPCA Westchester's executive director. "If you're unable to visit and take a tour of our rescue center, not to worry, we can bring the SPCA to you. We encourage all animal lovers to tune in to learn more about the SPCA and to get an inside look at what we do to support our community. And when else are you going to see an old English library and music room made especially for rescue animals to live in?"

The SPCA is looking to raise critical funds for its many rescue and community outreach programs during this special event.

For further details or to support SPCA's Welcome Home Virtual Gala, visit spcawestchester.org or contact Lisa Bonanno, director of development, by e-mail at Lisa@spcawestchester.org. SPCA of Westchester's YouTube page can be found at YouTube.com/spcawestchester.

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Dying is Not the Problem!

Dear Mr. Di Costanzo: Is having a Last Will and Testament enough?

When I meet with individuals regarding their estate planning needs, I am often asked to "put their affairs in order." In most cases, they are asking for a Last Will and Testament. You might be surprised, however, to learn that a will might be the least important document in your estate plan.



By Salvatore M. Di Costanzo, Esq.

utilized and sought-after planning techniques of an elder law attorney is the Medicaid trust.

A Medicaid asset protection trust is paramount to a will. In fact, a power of attorney is paramount to a will. Without proper asset protection planning, there may be no assets to pass to your heirs under a will. For the above reasons, an estate plan


that only considers a will may be deficient.

Salvatore M. Di Costanzo is a partner with the firm of *Maker, Fragale & Di Costanzo, LLP* located in Rye and Yorktown Heights. Mr. Di Costanzo is an attorney and accountant whose main area of practice is elder law and estate planning. He can be reached at (914) 245-2440 or via e-mail at smd@mfd-law.com. Visit his practice specific website at www.plantodayfortomorrow.com.


Understand that a will only takes effect upon your death. Until your death, it has no legal significance.

While planning for the orderly disposition of your assets upon your death is important, planning for your disability or incapacity is of greater importance. If you fall ill and have taken no action to protect or preserve your assets, you run the risk of losing them to the cost of long-term care. As such, one of the most

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Wine in the Time of Jesus – and in Today’s Catholic Mass



By Nick Antonaccio

Last week, I attempted to follow the history and antecedent practices leading to today’s Christian celebration of the Eucharist, the celebration of Christ’s Last Supper.

In this week’s column, I address the two questions I left unanswered: Which wine did Christ likely consume during his life on earth? What type of wine do we consume at mass in the 21st century?

Christ’s wine? The four gospel writers don’t mention a specific varietal, vintage or producer. That is not unusual. In all likelihood, it was the house wine that was served in that upper dining room as Christ and his disciples reclined at the table – Christ’s last supper.

Fast forward to today’s restaurant dining experiences. Do you remember the wine served to you the last time you ordered “a carafe of the house red?” Wine was a natural accompaniment to food in Christ’s time, not enjoyed as a pairing experience with the course at hand.

There were a number of grape varietals growing in the Mideast in Christ’s time. The Greeks and Romans had occupied these lands for centuries, introducing their culture

and traditions to the local populace. They planted grapes for winemaking and imported finished wines from their vast domains to supplement locally produced wines.

Recent archeological discoveries in the Mideast may hold the secret of grapes grown in Christ’s time. Remnants of a winery structure, wine-stained vessels and 1,500-year-old seeds are being analyzed to unlock their DNA.

So what wine did Jesus drink? There is no documented proof of a particular grape, but speculation is boundless. Several researchers have posited that it was likely a grape with origins in ancient Greece – and which was transplanted to fields around the region of Palestine, including Judea where Jesus lived. Therefore, it may have been the Assyrtiko grape, a red grape still cultivated in Greece today. Yet speculation should not blur our focus on the symbolism of partaking of sacramental wine, rather than its oenological DNA.

The 21st century offerings at Roman Catholic masses bear little resemblance to ancient wines. Across the globe, modern wines are of a higher quality, with more discerning taste and aroma profiles.

Except in church.

For Catholics, the prescripts for the production of sacramental wines are codified in the Code of Canon Law. Published in 1983, it dictates that the wine for the Eucharist must be natural and pure, from the fruit

of the vine and not corrupt – to which a small quantity of water is to be added (my paraphrasing).

What is served might be termed “ecumenical wine.” No particular grape is specified. The grape may differ in each locale across the globe, but the essence and spirit of the wine is the same.

Here in the United States, two wine companies supply more than 80 percent of sacramental wine to churches (made in accordance with the Code of Canon Law). They offer a number of choices, yet names printed on the bottle labels tend to be more brand-related than varietal type. Names such as Tokay, Burgundy and Port are generic descriptors not alluding to the contents, which are rarely disclosed.

There are three basic categories: dry, light and sweet, the latter being the most prevalent). These wines typically are a proprietary blend of California grapes that result in a red, or orange, or yellow, or amber, or brown, or pink wine.

The most widely grown blending grapes are Chenin Blanc, French Colombard, Chardonnay, Petit Syrah, Zinfandel,



Cabernet Sauvignon – and in many instances an underpinning of Thomson seedless grapes. Many are fortified with natural brandy or alcohol (as a preservative). The limit mandated for alcohol content is 18 percent. They typically are screw-cap bottles costing under \$7 each, but don’t look for them in your local wine shop; they’re generally sold only to churches.

Christians seeking the certainty of consuming a natural, organic wine with no additives and a long history of ancient practices and symbolic legacy need look no further than their local church. One caveat: whether it meets your personal preferences and taste should not be a criterion.

Nick Antonaccio is a 45-year Pleasantville resident. For over 25 years, he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. Nick is a member and program director of the Wine Media Guild of wine journalists. He also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick’s credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com or on Twitter @sharingwine.

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