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p 12

State champs
Smith and Thomas win
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p 22

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RIVERTOWNS Dispatch

Local News,
Locally Sourced
~

June 20, 2025

\$2⁵⁰

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ARDSLEY — DOBBS FERRY — HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON — IRVINGTON



The drums of Juneteenth

The Ice Cold Experience drumline performs during the Village of Irvington's sixth annual Juneteenth celebration on Wednesday, June 18, at the Irvington Theater. The event also featured performances by sixth-graders Dallas and Dakota Dawkins, the African Healing Circle, and the Resistance Revival Chorus. Deputy Mayor Arlene Burgos and Injy Sullivan co-chaired the Juneteenth Committee.

County boosts laws to protect consumers

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

REGION — The Westchester County Board of Legislators has unanimously passed legislation updating the County's 50-year-old Consumer Protection Code, expanding it to better protect residents from modern and technologically driven fraud. The law, signed on Tuesday, June 10, gives Westchester County the strictest consumer protection code in the state — for the moment.

Since 1975, the code has been written to prohibit business practices that fall under the categories of "deceptive" or "unconscionable." The update adds two new categories: for actions considered "unfair" and "abusive." It also increases the fine for a first offense to up to \$5,000, from \$1,000, and up to \$15,000 for repeat offenders, which is up from the \$10,000 previous punishment. In certain cases, the Westchester County Department of Consumer Protection can write multiple tickets if multiple areas of the code are violated.

The updated code will cover victims of deceptive and abusive artificial intelligence (A.I.) scams, such as a person using A.I. to recreate the voice of a person, calling their relative to say they're kidnapped, and soliciting money for their release. It also includes punishment for businesses that trap consumers in subscriptions they can't cancel,

Continued on page 4

Yes-Yes-Yes votes pass bond propositions

*Next steps to be discussed
at meeting on July 14*

BY AMY BOCHNER

HASTINGS — Voters approved all three propositions that made up the capital bond referendum on June 17.

The first proposition encompassed districtwide infrastructure improvements for \$11,254,780, including mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and masonry work. There were 2556 votes in favor of this proposition, while 276 residents rejected it.

The second proposition covered instructional space and accessibility enhancements at the Farragut Complex for \$19,049,465, passing with a total of 1772 "yes" votes and 1046 "no" votes. Key components of this measure are adding six new classrooms, a new cafeteria, a new main entrance, and other upgrades to meet accessibility and safety codes.

The final proposition, for \$8,171,259, will fund two synthetic fields — a multi-sport field and a softball field, both at the Burke Estate — as well as bleachers, dugouts, site grading, irrigation, drainage, and retaining wall upgrades. This proposition passed by a slim margin, with

1440 ballots in favor and 1369 against.

On May 20, voters also passed the 2025-2026 school budget, which amounts to \$62,465,988. There were 1676 votes in favor, and 487 against. According to information shared with the district by the Westchester County Board of Elections, there are 10,631 registered voters in the district. Approximately 2,800 participated in the bond referendum.

Board of education president Alex Dal Piaz told the Dispatch that the board was "heartened and humbled by the turnout."

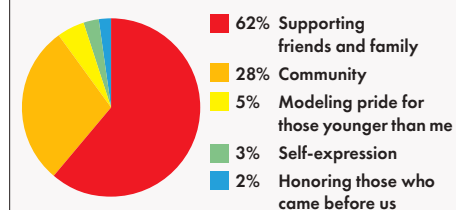
"Each vote cast is a request to be seen and

Continued on page 4

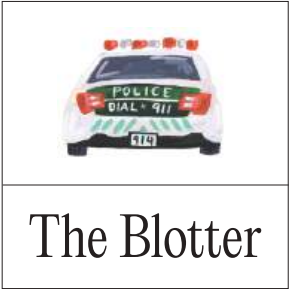
— You Answered —

**What is important about celebrating
Pride Month for you?**

As answered by 95 readers of the Rivertowns Dispatch



Vote at rivertownsdispatch.com/the-weekly-poll



The Blotter

ARDSLEY

Leafblower warnings: Police received reports about gas leaf blowers in use on Chimney Pot Lane on June 9, Beacon Hill Road and Bramble Brook Road on June 10, Overlook Road and Beacon Hill Road on June 11, Prospect Avenue on June 12, and Overlook Road on June 13. Warnings were issued about the ban on gas leaf blowers between May 16 and Oct. 14.

DOBBS FERRY

Theft from Mobil: An unidentified man, accompanied by another unidentified man, stole a vape pen from the Mobil station at 430 Broadway (Route 9) on Sunday, June 8, at 2:20 a.m.

Stolen car found: A car stolen from White Plains was found unoccupied in the lower parking lot at Chauncey Square, off Stanley Avenue, on the evening of Monday, June 9.

Assault attempt arrest: A 15-year-old resident of The Children’s Village was arrested for throwing items at a 25-year-old member of that residential treatment center’s staff on Tuesday, June 10. He was charged with attempted assault in the second degree, felony. Officer Robert Marron made the arrest.

Shoplifting arrest: A 16-year-old Dobbs Ferry resident was arrested for shoplifting \$36.99 worth of items from the Ulta Beauty at Rivertowns Square on Tuesday, June 10, and \$974 worth of items on Wednesday, Feb. 19. She was charged with two counts of petit larceny, a misdemeanor. Officer Julius Derevanik made the arrest.

Illegal fishing: An unidentified man was found fishing in a private pond in front of a home on Osceola Avenue on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 11. He left when confronted by a landscaper.

Unlicensed driver: An 18-year-old Dobbs Ferry resident was arrested for a suspended driver’s license, a misdemeanor, on Broadway on the evening of Wednesday, June 11. He was also cited for a broken brake light, an unregistered motor vehicle, and for no auto insurance.

Theft of wallet: A wallet left on a counter at the Chipotle restaurant at Rivertowns Square was stolen on the afternoon of Thursday, June 12. A credit card inside the wallet was then used at the Ulta Beauty next door.

Shoplifting theft: A 54-year-old Yonkers resident was arrested for shoplifting \$109 worth of items from the Ulta Beau-

ty at Rivertowns Square on the evening of Friday, June 13. He was charged with petit larceny and criminal possession of stolen property in the fifth degree, both misdemeanors. Officer Robert Marron made the arrest.

Impersonation and robbery arrest: A 23-year-old Yonkers resident was arrested on June 13 for impersonating a police officer and for stealing a \$100 bill from a customer at the Mobil station at 430 Broadway on the evening of Saturday, May 24. He was wanted by the Dobbs Ferry Police Department and was apprehended by the Tuckahoe Police Department. He was charged with criminal impersonation in the first degree and robbery in the third degree, both felonies.

HASTINGS

Suspended registration: A 41-year-old Bronx resident was arrested for a suspended vehicle regis-

tration, a misdemeanor, on Warburton Avenue on the evening of Tuesday, June 10. He was also cited for six vehicle and traffic violations.

Theft of sign: A lawn sign was stolen from Chauncey Lane on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 11.

Suspended registration: A 35-year-old Yonkers resident was arrested for a suspended vehicle registration, a misdemeanor, on the evening of Friday, June 13. She was also cited for no insurance.

Warrant arrest: The NYPD apprehended a 37-year-old Bronx resident wanted by the Hastings Police Department on the evening of Sunday, June 15. On March 26, he had been arrested for criminal possession of a controlled substance in the fourth degree, a felony, and false personation, a misdemeanor, and then missed a court appearance for that arrest, which resulted in an arrest warrant for him.

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HATS OFF TO THE 2025 RIVERTOWNS GRADUATES!

Congratulations & best of luck from
The Francie Malina Team at Compass





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ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER ORKIN LEWIS

Local Curiosities

— ASK THE DISPATCH —

What's the story with the oversized skeleton on Main Street in Dobbs Ferry?

BY JANINE ANNETT

His name is Harry. He's 12 feet tall, wears a size 3X T-shirt, and gets dressed up to celebrate various holidays.

It's hard to miss the guy, who first arrived across the street from Scaperrotta's Deli in 2023. He belongs to Isabel and Ryan Schading, who have been village residents since 2012.

Isabel Schading developed a fascination with these larger-than-life (or death) plastic skeletons after seeing them on social media. Although most of the giant figures she saw were positioned in large yards, Schading determined there was no reason she couldn't display one on the sidewalk in front of the building where she lives, so she ordered it online.

"He came in tons of big boxes and we put them together," Schading told the Dispatch. Originally, the Schading family intended to have Harry just hang out for Halloween (Schading's two daughters weren't fans at first, but came around after seeing the joy Harry brought to passersby). "Then I thought, maybe I can find something for him for Thanksgiving, and we found a turkey hat or something and put it on him. After that, we just kind of ran with it. So every holiday, he's had a new outfit."

Earlier this year, Harry sported Easter and St. Patrick's Day attire. In May, in honor of Memorial Day, Harry wore a patriotic ensemble that included a red-white-and-blue hat with stars and stripes, and a T-shirt featuring



Isabel Schading and Harry

Homer Simpson barbecuing while wearing a similar hat. He also held an American flag. For June, Harry is sporting a cap and gown to pay tribute to all those who are graduating from local schools — among them the Schadings' younger son, a member of the Dobbs Ferry High School Class of 2025.

What motivates Isabel Schading to continue Harry's dress-up routine? "It's fun. It keeps us busy and we see how the kids enjoy it," Schading said. "The best thing is sitting on the couch, watching TV, and hearing little kids say things like, 'I'm going to take a picture!' They'll hold his hand and stuff."

Asked how she came up with the skeleton's name, Schading replied, "He just looks like a Harry!" Schading says if people per-

ceive Harry as being female, that's fine, too. "It could be short for 'Harriet.' People can project whatever they want!" she said.

Schading also created an Instagram account for Harry (@harryindobbs) where she posts photos of him in various getups, so even if you're not walking by the skeleton, you can keep up with his latest looks.

Fortunately, Harry is low maintenance, according to Schading. He's remained outside in all kinds of weather (except when it's extremely windy), with Schading taking him down to change his clothes and accessories and then putting him back up in his usual spot. Harry has acquired such an impressive wardrobe, though, that the Schading family has had to dedicate additional storage for it.

Schading envisions keeping Harry around through the Fourth of July (possibly with at least one other summer-themed outfit in the works) "and then he'll retire for a little bit and come back in the fall." She anticipates that Harry will go all-out for other upcoming holidays, including, of course, his favorite, the one where it all began: Halloween.

Harry isn't promoting a business or trying to raise awareness for a cause. He's not looking for fame or fortune. He's just there to amuse people. So if you walk by and want to take a selfie with him, go right ahead — he doesn't mind a bit. You can even tag him on Instagram.

Follow Harry the Skeleton on Instagram at @harryindobbs.

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Bond referendum
Continued from page 1

represented, and we will honor this responsibility as the work moves into the design phase,” he said. “We look forward to promoting community engagement and seeing that the value of this significant bond is carefully realized for our students, schools, and the village as a whole.”

The referendum followed months of debate and discussion within the community, particularly regarding the new entrance, new cafeteria, and new synthetic turf fields. One group, Hastings Sustainable Schools, advocated for proposition 1, but found fault

with propositions 2 and 3. Comprised of former Village Trustee Daniel Lemons, former school board president Lisa Litvin, former Mayor Peter Swiderski, and retired CBS producer Alan Golds, the group shared a joint statement with the Dispatch regarding the results of the vote.

“Hastings Sustainable Schools is proud to have contributed to the wide community discussion about the school bond,” they wrote. “We trust the board of education will continue to listen to all voices from the village as it moves forward.”

Kefira Wilderman, an organizer of a group which shared information in support

of the bond, described her enthusiasm after the referendum.

“I’m thrilled that the community showed up to support infrastructure improvements and instructional space enhancements that will benefit Hastings students for generations,” she said.

PTSA co-president Tanya Rynders echoed that sentiment.

“I am so excited about the opportunities before us and grateful to our community for coming together on behalf of the children of Hastings,” she said. “This really was an all-hands effort, and I couldn’t be more proud to have been part of it.”

Melissa Sbrega, co-president of the Hastings Athletic Booster Club, emphasized the role of students in advocating for the synthetic turf fields.

“Prop 3 passed due the tireless efforts of our student athletes who advocated for themselves and for the future of their village,” she said. “Despite knowing they will never play on these improved facilities, they took a stand for the next generation who will be lucky enough to have a level playing field. This bond passed with a narrow margin of people who heard our kids and voted ‘yes’ because the kids couldn’t.”

The next steps for the bond will be shared at the board of education’s July 14 meeting.

Consumer protection
Continued from page 1

contractors who take deposits and disappear without following through on services, and companies that use language barriers to overcharge and mislead customers.

The code, which previously described what needed to be included in a receipt from a commercial business, now also requires that a receipt be provided. According to Jim Maisano, the director of the consumer protection unit, businesses had used that as a loophole to say they had no record of a customer they overcharged.

“We can write a ticket against anyone in the world, but it’s awfully hard to enforce if they’re sitting in China,” Maisano told the Dispatch. “We’ll get on the phone, we’ll get on the internet, we’ll do anything we can to protect the Westchester consumer, but certainly it does

get difficult when we get into overseas issues.”

While there have been small revisions to the Consumer Protection Code, this marks the first major change and fine increases in five decades. The law was co-authored by legislators David Imamura, who represents Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Irvington, Edgemont, and Hartsdale, and Colin Smith, who represents Cortlandt, Peekskill, Yorktown.

“The law is like a blanket — it doesn’t cover everyone,” Imamura told the Dispatch. “A lawmaker’s job is to try to stretch the blanket to cover everyone. Deceptive is a very limited term, so you want to try to expand it to cover as much as we can.”

Imamura started working on the legislation in 2024, following a County forum on deed theft. At the forum, state Attorney General Letitia James revealed that not only Westchester County, but New York State as a whole had consumer protection standards

that weren’t as comprehensive as the federal standard. As a lawyer, Imamura had litigated cases under the federal standard, and was surprised to find that the State and County weren’t on par with the federal policy. Imamura and Smith’s efforts ramped up at the beginning of 2025, as federal consumer protection efforts began to take a hit.

“This became much more urgent after Donald Trump became president,” Imamura said, “because we knew under Trump, in all likelihood, the federal consumer protection enforcement agencies would basically halt their enforcement actions. And that has proven to be the case.”





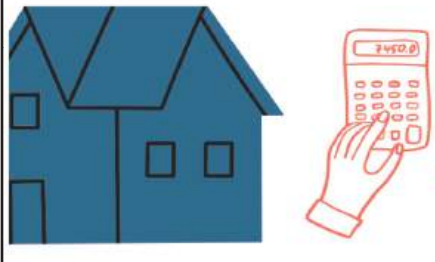
According to the Associated Press, in February, the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s newly appointed acting director, Russell Vought, ordered the bureau’s 1,700 employees to stop nearly all their work. In April, employees started receiving layoff






notices in an effort to terminate as many as 1,500 employees, which the bureau’s union has since challenged.


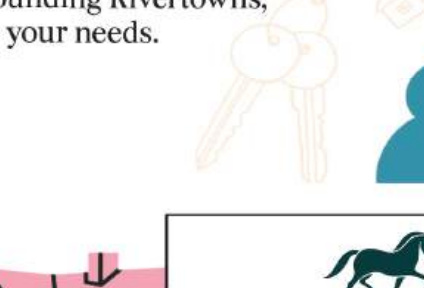

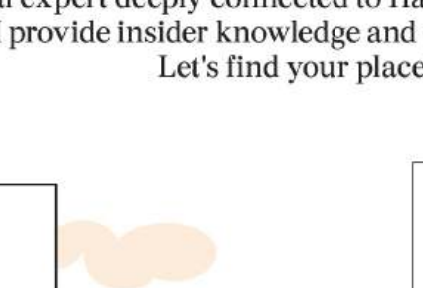
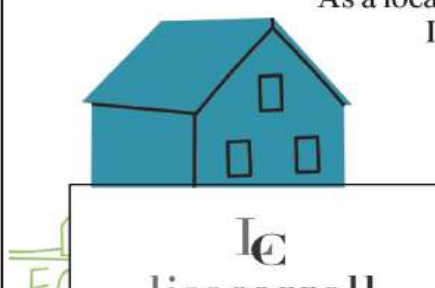
On June 17, the New York State Assembly followed Westchester’s lead and voted 94-48 in favor of the FAIR Business Practices Act, which makes similar provisions to Westchester’s Consumer Protection Code on the state level.






“We passed this in Westchester for two reasons,” Imamura explained. “One, to improve our own standard, to allow Westchester to fill the gap left by the federal government. Two, we also wanted to pass this to show Albany that this is something that should be done.”






“As of right now, in this exact moment, Westchester has the strongest consumer protection laws in the state,” Imamura added. “Once Governor Hochul signs it, we’ll basically be in parity. Compared to the country, we will be roughly on par with the federal standard.”




















ARDSLEY

— Coming Up This Week —

Flavors of Greenburgh

Saturday, June 21, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
Metro-North Train Station,
1 E. Hartsdale Ave., Hartsdale
Food festival, organized by three Ardsley High
School seniors, features local restaurants
serving an array of fare to celebrate
Greenburgh's cultural diversity.

Food Drive for the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry

Saturday, June 21, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Ardsley United Methodist Church,
525 Ashford Ave.
Drop off donations of nonperishable foods,
grocery gift cards, diapers, and monetary
gifts or call 914-693-4225 or
914-473-3910 for a pickup.

Senior Event: Geriatric Medicine Presentation & Ice Cream Social

Wednesday, June 25, noon
Ardsley Community Center

End-of-year Ice Cream Social

Wednesday, June 25, 6-8 p.m.
Pascone Park Softball Field

Zoning Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 25, 8 p.m.
Village Hall
Agenda available at ardsleyvillage.gov.

Library Board Meeting

Thursday, June 26, 7:30 p.m.
Ardsley Public Library

Mobile Shredder

Saturday, June 28, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.
Concord Road Elementary School

Summer Reading Club Kickoff Party

Saturday, June 28, 11 a.m.
Ardsley Public Library
Featuring a musical show by The Harmoninas
For kids finishing grades K-5. Registration
and rules at ardsleypubliclibrary.org.

"Kids Recycle This, Not That!"

Saturday, June 28, 11 a.m.
Ardsley Public Library
Presented by the Ardsley Green Task Force.

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at
amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Yaniv Dardashti-Weisz, Henry Mascia, Dave Palamdai, Zymal Baig at the Hartsdale Train Station.

Food festival offers a taste of diversity

Students organize 'Flavors of Greenburgh'

BY AMANDA SCHOLZ

For their senior externships, Ardsley High School students Zymal Baig, Henry Mascia, and Dave Palamdai of Ardsley, and White Plains High School student Yaniv Dardashti-Weisz, organized a food festival called "Flavors of Greenburgh," which will be held tomorrow, June 21, from 11 a.m.–4 p.m. at the Hartsdale Train Station off East Hartsdale Avenue.

The seniors set out to enlist vendors with differing cultural backgrounds, five of which agreed to participate: Liebman's Deli of Ardsley, Taqueria del Valle of New Rochelle, and Maska, Gotham Freeze, and Inkaterra Market — all of Hartsdale.

Visitors will be able to experience Jewish

fare from Liebman's, Mexican dishes from Taqueria del Valle, Indian cuisine from Maska, artisanal gelato from Gotham Freeze, and Peruvian specialties from Inkaterra.

The seniors will all graduate on June 26. The externships lasted from May 19 to June 13. The group was formed by Town Supervisor Paul Feiner, who oversaw the students. Mascia and Palamdai were friends beforehand.

Baig describes Feiner's goal for the festival as "something that would promote 'Greenburgh welcomes all.'" Dardashti-Weisz added, "He assigned us the task of this project, and he gave us suggestions throughout the project, but we're the working hands on it."

During the summer before his junior year, Palamdai was among a group of interns with the Town of Greenburgh who organized a picnic for migrants being housed by New York City at the Ardsley Acres Hotel Court. He plans to study computer science

at SUNY Binghamton.

Baig moved to Ardsley from Pakistan last year. "Since I'm really new to this town, it was really heartwarming when I was welcomed here, and I really loved the diversity of the town," she said. "I also love to organize events and be a part of events. I think it's a good opportunity for people to come together."

Baig sought a government externship. "I'm interested in law, and how it operates at a local level," she said. "We do not have this system back in Pakistan. So, I was really curious when I came to know everything is so organized and managed." She will also attend SUNY Binghamton, majoring in integrated neuroscience.

Mascia, who will attend St. Thomas Aquinas College, relates his involvement in the festival to his experience growing up in Ardsley. "My group of friends is pretty diverse,

Continued on page 15



Juneteenth warmup

Safiyyah Ali and Rechelle Dawson of the 40-Plus Double Dutch Club warm up before the Juneteenth celebration hosted by the Ardsley Multicultural, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee at Ardsley Middle School on Saturday, June 14. Ali and Dawson belong to the Bronx and Westchester chapter of the club, which is for women 40 and older, and which meets every Saturday in the Bronx.

ARDSLEY

Draft first half takes stock of built environment within village

BY AMY BOCHNER

The Village of Ardsley got a look on June 5 at a draft of its Natural Resources Inventory (NRI), which profiles the community's assets and opportunities regarding climate resiliency.

An NRI is a document featuring maps and geographic, infrastructure, social, and historical information to be used as a guide for preservation and enhancement of municipal natural resources. An NRI offers guidance for land use and development, with a focus on future weather-related events.

The NRI project, which began in October 2024, is funded by a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program.

Andrew Buck, a project manager at civil engineering firm VHB, provided the virtual presentation, which served as a deep dive into the first half of the NRI. This chapter focused mainly on the built environment, with sections on land use, downtown businesses, historical and cultural sites, as well as utilities and roadways.

"These are all the items that really shape daily life for the majority of people and at the same time, these are interlinked with the environment," Buck said. "It's important for us to really understand this, because there's always this kind of back and forth between development patterns and preservation, es-

pecially of the natural environment."

For each section, Buck provided key facts and insights, as well as opportunities for the Village to become more climate resilient.

Eighty percent of Ardsley's land use is residential, Buck said. Despite being mostly built out, there are still vacant parcels, several of which are in the downtown area. These could be retrofitted for tree planting, water capture, or passive recreation.

Buck also noted that the downtown lacks consistent tree cover. If expanded, this could help cool the streets, sequester carbon, and improve aesthetics. Another challenge the downtown presents is how steep slopes and dense impervious surfaces contribute to localized flooding and runoff issues.

Buck described strong support for giving the business hub an environmental upgrade.

"Businesses and residents really expressed interest in unifying and greening the area, especially through collaborative and low-maintenance projects," he said. "That may be an opportunity to really integrate that type of support for green infrastructure that could, one, act to mitigate flooding, but two, can also, if signed the right way, really help unify the street."

One goal of the NRI is to protect historic places that define the community's identity. The presentation noted the cultural and historical sites, and how these influenced

the village's development.

As he segued into his slide on transportation, Buck explained how the roadway network has served as a key driver in Ardsley's development over time. This network includes the New York State Thruway (I-87), Saw Mill River Parkway, and the Sprain Brook Parkway. As a result, a lot of stormwater is generated.

"The other thing that we noticed too is [that] some of the development has a lot of surface parking, which also creates more impervious surfaces [and] exacerbates the stormwater problem," he said. "Due to the nature of the village having such steep terrain, we saw that a lot of surface sheet flow from key streets also can create issues as the stormwater travels downhill until it hits drains... and can be relatively fast."

One method to slow down stormwater is by integrating grass strips along streets to retain and capture it.

Another challenge the village faces is its hilly terrain, which may discourage people from riding bikes. The NRI offers ideas on how to encourage people to get around without needing to drive as much.


"The biggest thing we saw in terms of just streetscape design is a lack of bike lanes," he said. "One consideration may be thinking about how to find some key corridors

where you would want to integrate or design a complete street pilot."

Buck also covered challenges in Ardsley's infrastructure and utilities. The village's utilities are embedded in a regional network, largely provided by Con Ed, Veolia Water NY, and Westchester County, as well as Verizon and other telecoms. Ardsley operates a separate storm sewer system, which means it is not treated before discharging back into the Saw Mill River. The presentation stated that heavy rainfall events have begun to overwhelm the drainage systems, especially in low-lying areas near Saw Mill River Road (Route 9A) and Ashford Avenue. The Village also faces the challenge of aging infrastructure, including fire hydrants, storage tanks, and pump stations.

Regarding energy infrastructure, no power generation occurs locally. Despite this, Buck said there are still opportunities in the future to "think about integrating renewables and microgrids and battery storage, or enhancing overall resiliency for the village." This includes the opportunity to integrate electric vehicle-charging infrastructure.

A meeting covering the second half of the NRI will take place on July 2 at 7:30 p.m., and will focus on the natural environment. Attendees can watch in person at village hall or over Zoom. A link will be available on the Village website.




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DOBBS FERRY

— Coming Up This Week —

Food Drive for the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry

Saturday, June 21, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Ardsley United Methodist Church,
525 Ashford Ave.

Drop off donations of nonperishable foods, grocery gift cards, diapers, and monetary gifts or call 914-693-4225 for a pickup.

Garden and Trail Maintenance

Sunday, June 22, 10 a.m.–noon
Chauncey Park

Volunteer to help the Conservation Advisory Board Pollinator. To sign up, visit eventbrite.com and search for the Dobbs Ferry Conservation Advisory Board.

Wickers Creek Market

Sunday, June 22, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.
(rain date June 29)
Waterfront Park

Color Our World Drop-in Craft Station

Monday-Friday, June 23-27, noon-4 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library
For all ages

Romance Book Club

Wednesday, June 25, 6 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library

Discuss “Seven Days in June” by Tia Williams.
Register by emailing sbook@dobbsferrylibrary.org.

Trivia Night

Wednesday, June 25, 7 p.m.
The Pit at Memorial Park (bocce court)

Mobile Shredder

Thursday, June 26, 9 a.m.–noon
Waterfront Park

Juneteenth Grab Bag Movie Night: “Harriet”

Friday, June 27, 7 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library

Friday Night River Jam

Friday, June 27
Waterfront Park

The concert series continues with One Wild Night, 7-9 p.m., plus Cousins Maine Lobster, The Steak Truk, and Wanna Sip food trucks, 5-9 p.m.

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER ORKIN LEWIS



Tsha Gregory in the auditorium control room.

Beloved teaching assistant to bid farewell

Gregory to retire from ‘Rat Pack’ and more

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Teaching assistant Tsha Gregory, affectionately known by students as “Ms. Tsha,” is retiring after 26 years at Dobbs Ferry Middle School. Gregory, who turns 66 in July, also made an impact with both middle and high school students as the founder of the schools’ Black History Month programming, Mighty Stepping Eagles step team, and American Sign Language (ASL) club. She has also been a longtime auditorium facilitator.

“For every young person’s life I’ve touched or enriched, mine has been touched in return sevenfold,” Gregory, who grew up in Piscataway, New Jersey, told the Dispatch. “Being in Dobbs Ferry for so long and meeting so many different people from different walks of life, and learning new things, has just been

a wonderful experience in my journey.”

Before she went to work at DFMS in August 1999, Gregory spent 20 years as a teaching assistant and cottage parent at The Children’s Village.

As Martin Luther King Jr. Day approached in January 2000, when Gregory was a few months into her new job, she asked fellow staff what the school typically did to commemorate the holiday. When she was told that there was no scheduled programming for MLK Day, or for Black History Month in February, it encouraged Gregory, then the middle school’s only Black employee, to spring into action.

“When I came from Children’s Village, we often celebrated these types of holidays,” Gregory said. “So when I saw they weren’t doing it here, I was thinking that they were missing out on so much beautiful education.”

For the next 19 years, Gregory organized Black History Month activities each February,

including performances by the school gospel choir, heritage choir, and drumline, as well as by dancers and singers she invited from as close as Yonkers and as far away as Ghana. In 2009, she brought activist Ruby Bridges, who was notably the first African American child to desegregate an elementary school in Louisiana in 1960, to speak at the school.

The school’s celebration of Black History Month each year would always culminate in a performance of the song “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” written by James Weldon Johnson in 1900 and often called the Black National Anthem. It was often sung by the heritage choir, which was made up of students and teachers, many of whom still send Gregory messages, reminiscing about the tradition.

“Every time they [former teachers] hear anybody else sing ‘Lift Every Voice and Sing,’ they often send me clips of other people singing it, and they’ll tell me how much

Continued on page 15

Teen showcase

Ethan Zoli of Manhattan, Syd Levitan of Ardsley, Jack Burstein of Wilton, Conn., and Matt Allen of Ardsley perform at South Presbyterian Church during the RiverArts Music Tour on Saturday, June 14. The church hosted a lineup of students organized by Marie-Louise Miller of Hastings, who runs an open mic for students at the church. Due to rain, all Music Tour performances were held indoors in Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Irvington, and Tarrytown.



DOBBS FERRY

Public hearings address trees, leaf blowers, and parking

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Dobbs Ferry residents are sharing concerns about proposed changes to Village policy around the removal of downed trees. The village board of trustees also plans to hold public hearings about phasing out of gas-powered leaf blowers by 2028, and proposed on-street parking rule changes on Ashford Avenue.

Tree Code Amendments

Proposed changes to the Village's tree preservation provisions would reduce the definition of a regulated tree from 8 inches to 6 inches, allow shrubs to be used in lieu of tree replacement following tree removal, and adjust the administrative tree removal permit process so that all tree removal starts with the building department, which will review and determine if the issue needs to go to the tree commission.

During a public hearing over the amendments on Tuesday, June 10, the most contested change is the requirement that residents or commercial businesses looking to remove a downed tree on their property would have to go to the building department for a permit before removing it. Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to \$500.

The code currently provides an exemption for residents or businesses to remove a downed tree without a permit if the tree fell

down on its own. Village planning consultant Valerie Monastra explained the changes as an attempt to quell abuses of the current exemptions for the removal of downed trees.

"People have been saying there are trees downed, and in reality there have been some situations where trees have been cut, and [those people] then said they were downed, and they didn't need to have permits," Monastra explained during the hearing. "So the tree commission wants to prevent those types of loopholes from taking place."

Several village residents spoke out against the changes to the policy. Vincent Coulehan contended that the amendment will place undo regulation and hardship on homeowners and commercial establishments because of what he called "unnecessary administrative controls."

"What happens on Friday afternoon at 4:45, Monday is a holiday, a tree comes down on my property, and I'm going to have a party on Sunday?" Coulehan said during the hearing. "You're penalizing the balance of the village. We're going into the penalty box because of this."

Toward the end of the hearing, Trustee Matt Rosenberg suggested that the board consider the option of allowing a call to police and confirmation of a downed tree to be sufficient evidence to remove the tree without needing a permit. The hearing will continue during

the next public meeting, on Tuesday, June 24.

Leaf Blower and Ashford Parking Hearings

On June 24, the village board of trustees will also hold public hearings on the village leaf blower code, and the adjustment of on-street parking rules on Ashford Avenue, near the intersection of Storm Street and Grandview Avenue.

The board is proposing that the use of gas-powered leaf blowers be banned year-round, starting Jan. 1, 2028. Currently, Dobbs Ferry allows the use of gas-powered leaf blowers between March 15 and May 15, and between Oct. 15 and Dec. 15, from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays. Until the potential ban begins in 2028, proposed changes to the code would also allow no more than two gas-powered leaf blowers to be used on a property at one time.

There will also be a hearing on proposed revisions to on-street parking restrictions on Ashford Avenue from Broadway to the intersection with Storm Street and Grandview Avenue, where curb extensions and paint striping were added in 2024 in an effort to calm traffic. The Village is considering opening up 55 feet of space for on-street

parking on the northern side of Ashford Avenue, west of Storm Street, where parking, standing, and stopping are now prohibited.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

During the June 10 meeting, the board voted to remove 24 proposed electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at the 99 Cedar Street parking lot from the 58 charging stations it's planning to install this year with a grant from Westchester County and Con Edison. The 99 Cedar Street lot is one of three lots, along with two vacant parcels on Cedar Street, where the Village is partnering with Somers-based Kearnsey Realty & Development Group on an affordable housing initiative.

The Village is removing the request because if the charging stations can't fit into the development, and they were removed within five years, the Village would lose grant funding. The board plans to work with Kearnsey Realty to look into new opportunities to incorporate EV charging station access at 99 Cedar Street into the development.

In April, the Village also approved plans to include 22 charging stations at the waterfront parking lot abutting the train station, 10 stations at the Village Hall parking lot, and two on Main Street. The stations are expected to be installed toward the end of the summer.



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HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON

— Coming Up This Week —

Early Voting for the Primary Election
Through Sunday, June 22 (election on Tuesday, June 24)
Hastings Public Library, downstairs entrance
Visit hastingslibrary.org for the polling place's hours.

Farmers' Market
Saturday, June 21, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Commuter Lot, Southside Avenue
For details, visit hastingsfarmersmarket.org and follow the market on Facebook.

Community First-Aid Class
Sunday, June 22, 10 a.m.
James Harmon Community Center
Presented by the Hastings Volunteer Ambulance Corps.
Register (free) at tinyurl.com/yymnc2ye.

Hastings on Jazz
Sunday, June 22, 3-5:30 p.m.
VFW Plaza
The weekly summer series continues with longtime Hastings resident and jazz pianist David Janeway playing Latin jazz with his septet. Rain location: The Good Witch Coffee Bar, 134 Southside Ave.

"Let's Learn About Rodents"
Tuesday, June 24, 3:30 p.m.
Hastings Public Library
Presented by the Greenburgh Nature Center
For ages 5-10

Library Board Meeting
Tuesday, June 24, 7 p.m.
Hastings Public Library

Zoning Board Meeting
Thursday, June 26, 7 p.m.
Village Hall
Agenda available at hohny.gov.

Summer Reading Kickoff Celebration
Friday, June 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Hastings Public Library
Games on the lawn (indoors if raining) for Hastings children in grades K-12.

Senior Book Club
Friday, June 27, 1:30 p.m.
Hastings Public Library
Discuss "Case Histories" by Kate Atkinson.

Got news?
Email staff writer Amy Bochner at amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Commencement celebrates community

132 graduates cast off for college and more

BY AMY BOCHNER

The Hastings High School Class of 2025 marked a new chapter at their June 18 graduation, with speeches about what makes the community they grew up in unique, and how to forge their paths forward.

At the Burke Estate, the graduates, dressed in green caps and gowns, crossed the field, past friends and family and into their seats. HHS Principal Andrew Clayman opened the ceremony, recalling his experience joining the district this past year.

"Many communities define themselves through exclusion, through othering people, and by identifying who is not part of that community," he said. "The Hastings community, on the other hand, defines itself by its openness, by inclusion, and by its commitment to making sure everyone knows that they belong here. Since day one, you have gone out of your way to make me feel wel-

come, supported, and valued."

This inclusion, he said, goes deeper than how the community welcomed him.

"You have continuously demonstrated the importance of recognizing our shared humanity, each of us with our own histories and our own narratives," he said. "You approach others and their differences not as irreconcilable strangers who are fundamentally dissimilar from you, but as variations in the spectacularly beautiful rainbow of ways that it is possible to be human... The world needs your moral clarity. The world needs your commitment to continue to fill your lives with deep and meaningful relationships within your communities."

The class president, Jack Maney, listed the graduates' accomplishments, from students winning National Merit Scholarships to athletes earning recognition at the county and state level.

While this list of achievements is impressive, he explained that the awards and trophies were not the most valuable gain throughout their Hastings journey.

"I can confidently say that the diploma I will be receiving today will not matter nearly as much as the friends and people I've met along the way... No matter how far we go or how different our paths may be, we'll always have our roots here, anchored in the people, the lessons, and the moments that shaped us. Our stories start in this very place. No matter where life takes us, Hastings is our home."

Actress and musician Lili Thomas, HHS Class of 2003, was the guest speaker. She has starred in various Broadway and off-Broadway productions, including "Chicago" and "The Hello Girls." She is currently appearing on Broadway, playing Miss Mazeppa in "Gypsy." Her speech addressed how many in the crowd may have uncertainty about the future, a feeling she shared at her own graduation 22 years ago.

"I knew that I had this drive inside of me, but I couldn't find a path to follow that felt genuinely aligned with the person that I knew myself to be... I encourage you to think about the path you want to make for

Continued on page 16



Pride in the streets

Students from Amanda Kupillas Dance perform on Warburton Avenue during the annual Friday Night Pride celebration on June 13. The event started at The Good Witch Coffee Bar, where Brass by the Slice performed and then led a procession to Warburton, which was closed to car traffic. The lineup on Warburton also featured MK Dance of Hastings as well as a host of musicians, including emcee Amy Lynn Hamlin of Dobbs Ferry.

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON

Skate park faithful hold fundraiser for a downsized project

BY AMY BOCHNER

The Rivertown Skate Society will host its third annual summer fundraiser this weekend, providing drinks for the community and sharing updates on its plan to build a skate park in Hastings.

Rivertown Skate Society (RSS) is a non-profit organization that evolved from a 2018 youth-led initiative to build a facility on the Burke Estate, a school district property that has several playing fields. Since RSS was established in 2021, the group has raised \$250,000 for the project, which includes \$100,000 from the community and a \$150,000 commitment from the Village.

This year's summer fundraiser, on Saturday, June 21, will take place at the home of Debra Dean, 95 Villard Avenue, at 7 p.m. The event will feature music, Dominican cuisine from El Patio Food Truck for purchase, and RSS merchandise. The \$50 entry donation covers unlimited drinks, including cocktails, mocktails, and beer.

In addition to raising money, Dean, one of the leaders of the skate park initiative, said the event will also serve as an opportunity to share the updated plan for the skate park. The original fundraising goal was \$500,000, but, having reduced the skate park's scope, the estimated budget

is between \$350,000 and \$415,000. The entire plot of land donated by the district is 18,000 square feet. According to Dean, contracting the size of the project, which was initially set to be 8,000 square feet, was done to make building it more feasible.

"To get something done sort of superseded the desire to have a bigger park, so we scaled back the design to around 5,000 square feet," she told the Dispatch. "We removed the bowl. We've created a design that we can add to over time, whether that's in terms of additional square footage or additional features. It's a buildable design so that, as we fundraise over the years, we can add more to it."

Last year's summer fundraiser raised \$27,000, which included proceeds from a silent auction and the \$120 admission fee. RSS decided to simplify this year's event and lower the ticket price to \$50 so more people could attend, according to Dean.

"I think especially this year, especially in these times, we wanted to put something on that created a sense of unity and togetherness," she said. "We just want people to come together, celebrate a cause that is focused solely on connection and getting people off social media and just being with each other."

Although Dean anticipates this year's event will raise less money, the RSS is seek-



The Rivertown Skate Society's revised rendering for the skate park.

ing more donors and applying for grants in order to reach its funding goal. She also shared that once the project gets greenlit, there will likely be a bigger fundraiser to contribute to the park's programming and extra equipment.

As RSS closes in on its financing, Dean emphasized the value a skate park would add to Hastings.

"It's about ... building these third places in communities where young people who

are feeling increasingly isolated and spend a lot of time online, physically come together and connect with each other. It's cross-generational," Dean said. "We want people to know it's not just about giving people a place where they can skateboard. It's about what the park itself will create for young people, as a meeting place and a place of connection in the community."

Tickets for the event can be purchased at rivertownskatesociety.org.

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- Advocate for free downtown parking to boost local business
- Engage with all points of view to rebuild trust and foster stronger relationships across our village

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IRVINGTON

— Coming Up This Week —

**Sherlock Holmes and
“The Problem of Thor Bridge”**

Saturday, June 21, 1 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Hosted by the Three Garridebs, a Westchester-based Sherlock Holmes society.

Irvington Pride: Paint the Crosswalk

Saturday, June 21, 4-7 p.m.

The intersection of Main and Astor streets
Visit bit.ly/irvpride25 to participate or donate.

Farmers’ Market

Sunday, June 22, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Main Street School, 101 Main St.

Visit theirvingtonfarmersmarket.org and follow the market on Facebook.

Board of Trustees Special Meeting

Monday, June 23, 7 p.m.

Village Hall

Architectural Review Board Meeting

Monday, June 23, 8 p.m.

Village Hall

To attend via Zoom, visit irvingtonny.gov for the link.

Zoning Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 24, 7:30 p.m.

Village Hall

To attend via Zoom, visit irvingtonny.gov for the link.

Sidewalk Chalking

Wednesday, June 25, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Senior Movie:

“A Tree Grows in Brooklyn”

Friday, June 27, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Stories in the Park

Monday, June 30, 10:45 a.m.

Scenic Hudson Park

For children of all ages

Pride Month Screening: “Rent”

Monday, June 30, 11 a.m.

Irvington Public Library

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com

ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER ORKIN LEWIS



The graduates toss their mortarboards at Matthiessen Park.

Mortarboards fly as showers subside

IHS launches class of 147 graduates

BY TIM LAMORTE

Light rain fell before the start of Irvington High School’s commencement at Matthiessen Park on the morning of Saturday, June 14. Mother Nature then turned off the drizzle until after the 147 graduates had received their diplomas, tossed their mortarboards, and posed for photos along the Hudson River.

In between showers, the IHS Class of 2025 heard from their principal, schools superintendent, board of education president, class president, salutatorian, and valedictorian — all of whom shared advice and recollections.

Principal Jon Hirsch addressed the value of attention. Referring to Chris Hayes’ 2025 book “The Sirens’ Call: How Attention Became the World’s Most Endangered

Resource,” Hirsch pointed out that “The wealthiest companies of the 20th century were built on the extraction of oil. Today the richest corporations don’t drill into the earth; they mine our attention. They design platforms, apps, and algorithms to capture and hold our focus. Because, in the modern economy, attention is the new oil.”

“Give your attention freely, but never cheaply,” Hirsch counseled. “Choose people and causes worthy of your focus. Don’t be distracted from what matters most... What we give our attention to reveals what matters most.”

Schools Superintendent Mara Ratesic then delivered her first high school commencement speech since taking charge of the district last summer. She shared five guiding principles: make good choices; how people treat you says more about them than it does about you; remember this is a marathon, not a sprint; find your passion and

success will come; and do the work.

“I hope you take these lessons and all that you learned from your parents, families, your teachers, your coaches, and the community, and carry them forward,” Ratesic said. “Be proud of your Irvington roots. You will always have a home here.”

Board of education president Susan Brunenavs echoed Hirsch’s point about the value of attention. “Treat your attention like money and spend it wisely,” she said. “Be careful what you consume.” Brunenavs also mentioned the “paradox of choice.”

“Research proves that people who aim to make the best choice tend to be less happy than those who find the good enough choice,” she said. “Instead of falling down the rabbit hole in pursuit of perfection, just get started. And, frankly, we’re all just winging it. Just ask your parents.”

Continued on page 16

Lifting voices

Arin Maya Lawrence leads a performance of the Resistance Revival Chorus during the Village of Irvington’s sixth annual Juneteenth Celebration, which was held at the Irvington Theater on the evening of Wednesday, June 18. The performances included 12-year-old sixth-graders Dallas and Dakota Dawkins, who sang “Lift Every Voice and Sing.”



IRVINGTON

11-year-olds tackle health challenges with a dose of positivity

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Two 11-year-old Irvington Middle School students, one living with Crohn's disease and the other with ulcerative colitis, teamed up last week for their campaign to help find a cure for the autoimmune diseases, which impact the digestive system. Despite light rain throughout race day on Sunday, June 15, roughly 30 kids completed the two laps around the Richmond Hill townhouse community as Toby Lowenbraun and Natalie George led the fifth Crohn's and Colitis Annual Race and Carnival.

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease that causes chronic inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract when a person's immune system mistakenly attacks harmless bacteria. Symptoms can include abdominal pain, persistent diarrhea, loss of appetite, weight loss, fatigue, and delayed growth in children. Lowenbraun was diagnosed with Crohn's disease in 2020, during a four-day hospital stay at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"That was not the best experience in the world, but I can now turn it almost into a good thing with the fundraisers," Lowenbraun, who launched the event in 2021, told the Dispatch. "This race became such a big thing that I don't even remember [having the disease]. It takes my mind off of Crohn's."

"He's a really active kid and he started sit-



Natalie George and Toby Lowenbraun

ting on the couch, and that was the first sign," Toby's mother, Lisa Lowenbraun, explained of his first symptoms, at age 6. "And then he had severe stomach pain. And he kept contracting viruses, so he kept getting fevers."

With ulcerative colitis, an overactive immune-system response causes the lining of the colon to become inflamed and develop ulcers. Symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, fatigue, anemia, and delayed growth in children. In 2022, Natalie, who Toby has known since they were in pre-school, was diagnosed with the disease. She spent the first

two weeks of fourth grade in a hospital after beginning to have bloody stools, losing weight, and becoming so sick she couldn't eat or drink.

"It can be stressful at times, but when life gives you lemons, you make lemonade — you make lemon bars, you make lemon cobbler, lemon pie, lemon custard," Natalie told the Dispatch. "You make all sorts of positive things out of one bad thing. It makes it easier to do it with a smile. Scientists have proved that everything is easier with a smile on your face."

According to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation, Crohn's disease can be diag-

nosed at any age, but is most prevalent in people between the ages of 15 and 35. Most people with ulcerative colitis are first diagnosed in their mid-30s.

This year's race and carnival, which was the first time Natalie and Toby worked together as organizers of the event, included a ring toss, beanbag toss, and cornhole, and bracelet making, hula hoops, and jump ropes. Thanks to baked-goods purchases; raffle tickets for prizes from Irvington Pizza Company, Tony's Pizzeria, Geordane's Market, and Ludy Café; and donations from the families of kids who raced and from those who couldn't attend, the event raised more than \$7,100. Toby and Natalie have now collectively raised more than \$57,000 since 2021, including money from a carnival that Natalie organized in 2024 for her class of graduating Main Street School fifth-graders.

"I think that any time a kid has to battle adversity and turns it into a positive experience and tries to help others, it's an amazing thing, and it's impressive for their age how dedicated they are," Natalie's mom, Stefi George, said. "They've both been through a lot, and being able to see that they don't want others to go through that, it's incredible to see."

During the first two years after her diagnosis, Natalie transitioned from pills to one

Continued on page 15

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2025

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Friday, June 27: 10-2pm

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Opinion

The Dispatch welcomes letters to the editor about subjects related to the Rivertowns. Letters must be no more than 300 words, submitted by Monday at noon for that week's issue, and include the names, home addresses, and phone numbers of their writers. No letter is guaranteed publication. To submit a letter, visit rivertownsdspatch.com/contact-us.

Hastings will benefit from Drake as mayor

To the Editor:

I am writing in support of Tom Drake as our village's next mayor. My wife and I have lived in Hastings for nearly 30 years, and I've had the privilege of knowing and working with Tom for nearly 20. Throughout the years I've been impressed with Tom's passion for our village. I regularly marvel at Tom's ability to meet challenges and confrontational situations head-on with an open mind and calm demeanor, while not shying away from difficult decisions, clearly communicate them, and answer all questions. Tom's military experience translates to accountability so invaluable to public service.

While working full-time in law enforcement and raising three young children with Julia, Tom returned to school to study and earn his master's degree in public policy from Penn State University. This rich academic platform will enhance his ability to leverage his deep local and state relationship network for the benefit of our community.

Tom is committed to building upon our history and village legacy through improvements to our infrastructure, stewardship on our waterfront, preservation of individual rights, and economic growth of our wonderful downtown business district.

With Tom at the helm, we can indeed achieve the vibrant, safe, and inclusive community we all desire.

JASON FEIN, *Hastings*

Fleisig is the leader Hastings needs to face current challenges

To the Editor:

I cannot imagine a more experienced, courageous, and dedicated candidate for mayor of Hastings-on-Hudson than Morgen Fleisig. His initiatives during six years on the village board have been remarkable.

Morgen served as the Village's liaison to NYS DOT during the Ravensdale Bridge reconstruction, upgrading the design and ensuring bike and pedestrian access to the South County Trailway. He tackled challenging traffic issues in our southern corridor, reducing Yonkers-bound traffic on James and High streets, and worked with Westchester County to improve traffic safety at the Farragut Complex. He led efforts to amend the downtown zoning, reducing development scale while encouraging af-

fordable housing, and worked closely with emergency services to secure necessary equipment.

Morgen has tirelessly advanced waterfront cleanup and redevelopment. As an eight-year board of trustees veteran with keen waterfront interests, I appreciate its complexity. Serving with Morgen on the Waterfront Rezoning and Comprehensive Plan Update Committees, I was astonished by how quickly he mastered these issues. Committee members came to trust his well-considered opinions and sound advice, based on 30 years of experience as an architect and designer. With graduate degrees in architecture from Harvard and New York universities, Morgen has designed museums, hospitals, office buildings, and homes. This

work has honed his ability to collaborate while consistently managing consultant and contractor teams — positioning him perfectly to lead challenging negotiations with BP/ARCO, New York State, and the EPA. He was also instrumental in securing grants and BP/ARCO funding for shoreline stabilization and upcoming MacEachron Park renovations.

In these difficult times, facing challenging political, financial, and environmental issues, Morgen is exactly the leader we need. Check out his website at fleisigforhastings.com. I urge you to vote for Morgen during early voting at the Hastings Public Library (June 14-22) or on Primary Day, June 24.

MEG WALKER
Hastings

Roundabout would be unsafe for pedestrians at Ashford Avenue

To the Editor:

Thank you for the excellent reporting in your article entitled "DOT updates proposals for Route 9."

The motivation behind altering the traffic patterns in the Rivertowns involves improving traffic efficiency. However, the safety of our community members should be our first priority. I believe that the inclusion of a roundabout at the intersection of Ashford Avenue and Broadway in Dobbs Ferry will be dangerous for motorists and pedestrians, including children as young as 8 years old who walk to school by themselves.

Roundabouts may have useful applications on high-speed roads where there aren't

many pedestrians. Our streets have a diverse combination of bikers, walkers, distractions, and drivers who may not be familiar with this area. Introducing a confusing intersection will not make anyone safer here.

This intersection is utilized by many members of our community, including children. If you take the time to observe the intersection on school days between 8 a.m. and 8:40 a.m., and again after 3:20 p.m., you will see many children and adolescents, aged between 8 and 18, waiting for the all-stop of vehicle traffic in order to cross the busy intersection.

In the proposed rendering, more than half of the sidewalk is removed in front of

Sacred Heart Church, as well as in front of Compass Realty. If you walk here, you know that walkers need that sidewalk buffer zone. A casual observation of the flashing light pedestrian crossing on Broadway at Clinton will show that the lights do not guarantee safety. Ask our dedicated crossing guards if removing sidewalks and relying on blinking lights will keep pedestrians safe.

I do not believe we should risk the injury of children to meet transportation statistic goals. The safest car is a fully stopped car.

SUSAN GALLOWAY
Dobbs Ferry

Continued on page 17

— LOCAL DISCOURSE —

How does Pride feel in 2025?

Compiled at Friday Night Pride in Hastings on Friday, June 13.
By Amanda Scholz



"Pride feels good. I think there is an underlying sense of importance and more of an eagerness to really show up for pride I think after like the election and everything going on. I think people are urged more strongly to come and support."

—Franny Kastner



"It feels good here. It feels a little scary in other places but I'm glad I'm here and we can just do our thing you know, it's a safe space."

—Officer Stephanie Minor



"It definitely feels really good to have this basis of people that all are just here to support you and all are ... everybody here is just incredibly talented."

—Noa Reimer



"The attacks right and left in the last couple of years at the local state and national level are egregious and so to have spaces where we feel not just included but feel like we belong is more important than ever."

—Steven Lopez



"Very important to make anybody feel inclusive especially in today's political environment."

—Lisa Roe

The Agenda

SATURDAY JUNE 21

Flavors of Greenburgh

HARTSDALE

11 a.m.–4 p.m. Metro-North Train Station, 1 E. Hartsdale Ave. The food festival, organized by three Ardsley High School seniors, features local restaurants serving an array of fare to celebrate Greenburgh's cultural diversity.

Juneteenth Weekend Comedy Showcase

DOBBS FERRY

8 p.m. / Dobbs Ferry Public Library, 55 Main St. For ages 18 and up. Sign up by emailing Reference@DobbsFerryLibrary.org.

Rivertown Skate Society: Summer Party

HASTINGS

7–11 p.m. / \$50. Address will be provided to registrants. Annual fundraiser to build a skatepark on the Burke Estate. Ticket price includes drinks, and El Patio Food Truck will be selling food. Adults only. rivertownskatesociety.org

Live Jazz: Jon Faddis Quartet

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$40, \$35 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Black History Walking Tour

YONKERS

10:30 a.m. / Free. Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site, 29 Warburton Ave. This 2.5-mile urban hike features historic churches, the Enslaved African Rain Garden, and sites of early Black landowners. Recommended for ages 12 and up. philipsemanorhall.com

Artist Talk with Joseph Squillante

YONKERS

2 p.m. / \$13 for adults, \$8 for ages 3-18, \$9 for students and seniors, free for members and children under 3. Hudson River Museum, 511 Warburton Ave. The photographer leads a walk-through of his special exhibition documenting the full 315 miles of the Hudson River. hrm.org

Minnie Untermeyer Concert Series: Christopher Williams Dance

YONKERS

5 p.m. / \$35. Untermeyer Park and Gardens, 945 N. Broadway. "La Rhétorique des Dieux" features contemporary incarnations of classical Greek and Roman mythology. Contains moments of sexually suggestive content and partial male nudity. untermyergardens.org

SUNDAY JUNE 22

Wickers Creek Market: Antiques and Vintage Goods

DOBBS FERRY

10 a.m.–4 p.m. / Free admission. Waterfront Park. Rain date June 29. wickerscreekmarket.com

"PaperWorks 2025: Made in America"

HASTINGS

2–5 p.m. / Free. Upstream Gallery, 8 Main St. Opening reception for the annual juried exhibit of works on paper, including drawing, collage, printmaking, and painting. On view through July 6. upstreamgallery.com

Hastings on Jazz

HASTINGS

3–5:30 p.m. / Free. VFW Plaza, 558 Warburton Ave. The weekly summer series continues with longtime Hastings resident and jazz pianist David Janeway playing Latin jazz with his septet. Rain location: The Good Witch Coffee Bar, 134 Southside Ave.

Alexander Jackson Davis Symposium

TARRYTOWN

10 a.m.–6 p.m. / \$50. Lyndhurst, 635 S. Broadway. Explore Davis' career as an architect and his influential style. Guided tour of the mansion focuses on special Davis pieces being exhibited, 9 a.m. (\$26). lyndhurst.org

Comedy: Demetri Martin

TARRYTOWN

7 p.m. / \$53.50. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

MONDAY JUNE 23

Westchester Foodies x Bloomy: Cheese 101

DOBBS FERRY

7 p.m. / \$75. HudCo, 145 Palisade St., Suite 200. The class includes four cheeses, wine pairings, and accompaniments. Register online. bloomydobbs.com

TUESDAY JUNE 24

Live Bluegrass: The Hudson Line String Band

HASTINGS

7–9 p.m. / No cover charge. Uncle Lefty's, 583 Warburton Ave. uncleleftys.com

MorDance: Coffee, Class, and Conversation

YONKERS

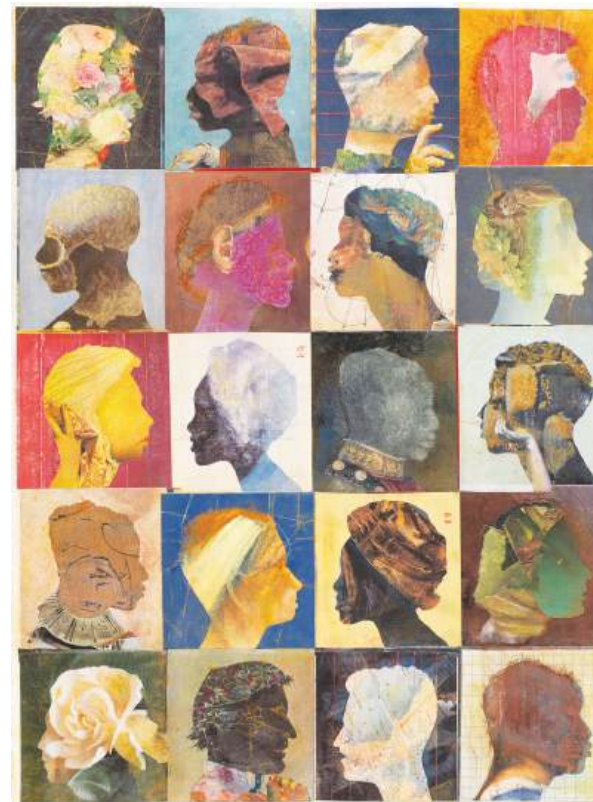
10–11:30 a.m. / Free. 86 Main St., 6th floor. Seniors are invited to watch a warm-up and rehearsal. Register online. mordance.org

WEDNESDAY JUNE 25

"Read 25 in '25"

DOBBS FERRY

10 a.m. / Free. Picture Book at HudCo, 145 Palisade St., Suite 200. Gather to read silently together for 25 minutes in honor of Gretchen Rubin's challenge encouraging a daily habit-building activity. RSVP at picturebookny.com/calendar.



"Layers of Dialogue," collage by David Barnett, is on view in "PaperWorks 2025: Made in America" opening with a reception this Sunday, June 22, at Upstream Gallery in Hastings.

Rivertowns Networking Group

DOBBS FERRY

6–8 p.m. / \$30; free if you are unemployed. Harper's, 92 Main St. Connect with professionals from various industries. Food included; pay as you go for drinks. Register at near.it/sm/5EIOUgaOZ.

THURSDAY JUNE 26

Outdoor Live Music: Cash Jacobs & Dave Blickstein

DOBBS FERRY

6–9 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com

Octagon House: Classic Tour

IRVINGTON

Various times Thursday-Monday (except July 3-4) / \$29. The Armour-Stiner Octagon House, 45 W. Clinton Ave. Features a 1-hour look inside this unique National Historic Landmark. For ages 7 and up. Through the end of the year. Advance tickets required. armourstiner.com

FRIDAY JUNE 27

Damani Quartet: Classic Rock, Blues, and R&B

ARDSLEY

9 p.m. / No cover charge. Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road. Reservations encouraged. smtavern.com

Friday Night River Jam

DOBBS FERRY

7–9 p.m. / Free. Waterfront Park, 11 Station Plaza. The summer concert series continues with One Wild Night, plus Cousins Maine Lobster, The Steak Truk, and Wanna Sip food trucks, 5-9 p.m. dobbsferry.gov/recreation-department

Juneteenth Movie Night: "Harriet"

DOBBS FERRY

7–8:30 p.m. / Free. Dobbs Ferry Public Library, 55 Main St. Recommended for ages 16 and up. dobbsferrylibrary.org

Movie on the Trail: "Super Mario Brothers"

DOBBS FERRY

8:30 p.m. / Free. Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St. Bring your own chair or blanket and refreshments. aqueduct.org

Visiting Artist: Troy Ramey

IRVINGTON

7:30 p.m. / \$50–\$75. Irvington Theater, 85 Main St. The up-and-coming country-folk Americana artist shares songs and stories. irvingtontheater.com

Legends of Country Rock

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / \$76–\$126. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. Pure Prairie League, Richie Furay, and Firefall perform their iconic hits. tarrytown-musichall.org

Flavors of Greenburgh
Continued from page 5

and it's always been something that I've appreciated," he said. "I have a window into all these different cultures and experiences, and it's great that we have that diverse population within Greenburgh. This festival is a way to bring all that together in one place so people can see and appreciate that diversity through the cuisine specifically."

Dardashti-Weisz, who will pursue a degree in economics at Wesleyan University, described how the project relates to his interests and how it will benefit the community. "We're promoting local businesses," he said. "It's part of this revitalizing of East Hartsdale Avenue, while also celebrating the diverse cultures in Greenburgh."

Baig hopes food festivals will be held in the future. "I would really want people to participate in this, so there is an initiative, and then there's something like this happening every year," she said.

In addition to organizing "Flavors of Greenburgh," the seniors conducted video interviews with Maria Portilla, the Town of Greenburgh's special adviser to the Hispanic community, as well as Ardsley Mayor Nancy Kaboolian and Mona Swanson, co-chair of the Ardsley Multicultural, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. The interviews, which focus on people "promoting awareness and appreciation of diversity," Dardashti-Weisz said, will air on the Greenburgh public access television.

Gregory
Continued from page 7

that song meant to them too," Gregory said.

During Gregory's first year at the middle school, a student from South Africa observed Gregory doing a step dance routine during recess that Gregory had learned as a child. She started teaching that one girl how to step every day during recess, and gradually a growing group of girls joined them. Those lessons turned into the Mighty Stepping Eagles step team that Gregory led until she had knee surgery, in 2014, and other instructors continued until 2017.

In 2019, Gregory started a beginners ASL club, teaching sign language to students one day per week for five months. A 2-minute video that's on the Dobbs Ferry School District's home page (dfsd.org) features Gregory's students demonstrating some of what they learned this academic year.

In 2008, Gregory became auditorium facilitator, a role in which, assisted by students, she's been responsible for the audio-visual components of shared middle/high school auditorium programs. She nicknamed her crew the "Rat Pack," and even as new students cycle in and out, they remain a tight-knit group with the motto, "We make the magic happen."

"If I wasn't in the classroom, I was in the auditorium, and that was like my second home," Gregory explained. "It makes me very happy that at least seven or eight people who were in the 'Rat Pack' continued working in that field."

For as many students and teachers that Gregory impacted in Dobbs Ferry schools over more than two decades, she acknowledged that she almost didn't make it past the first five years on the job.

"I was by myself, and I ran into uncomfortable situations with racism," Gregory recalled. "There was even a time I was considering quitting because it was so bad. And Anna Sterne, who was the president of the board of education at the time, said, 'Don't quit Tsha — stay, hang in there.'"

Gregory credits both her mother, Lillian Gregory, and a woman named Mother Harris from her former church in Mount Vernon, for also helping her to find the strength to stay the course.

"I think God has a sense of humor, because when I was young, I had told God I wanted to be a choreographer, an interior designer, and psychologist for teenagers," Gregory said. "So be careful what you ask for, because he gave me all three, but in this school in Dobbs Ferry."

Gregory will spend her last day of work at the school on Thursday, June 26. Earlier in June, Gregory was ordained as a deacon at South Presbyterian Church on Broadway in Dobbs Ferry. Besides continuing to be active in the church and enjoying time with her dog, Redd, Gregory remains open to whatever plans await her in the future.

"I just plan to enjoy the next chapter of my life, and continue to try to be of service. Take what I know, take what I've learned over these years, take my heart and just continue to be of service and do God's work."

Fundraiser
Continued from page 12

injectable medication every seven weeks, to another she uses now, all while taking steroids on and off. The steroids led to her developing osteoporosis, which resulted in Natalie fracturing her clavicle in September 2024. In addition, the colitis has caused stunted growth, which has been exacerbated by the steroids.

While "ulcerative colitis is not fun and Crohn's is not fun," Natalie said, there is a lot to be said for "knowing that you're helping people. It actually makes you a lot stronger mentally and physically."

Natalie's ulcerative colitis has been in remission, leaving her free of flare-ups since August, when she began getting infusions of her current medication, Entyvio, every seven weeks. As a sixth-grader, she has enjoyed her first full school year feeling mostly healthy since third grade. Toby's Crohn's disease has been in remission since he began taking Remicade every six weeks in 2020. His parents have turned the ritual into a positive one by taking Toby to one of his favorite restaurants, Dallas BBQ, which is across the street from the Washington Heights hospital, after every infusion.

Toby looks forward to a future where efforts eradicate Crohn's disease and colitis. He imagines that future as one in which he "wouldn't have to get an infusion every six weeks, but I would still require Dallas BBQ."

To donate to Natalie's and Toby's Crohn's and Colitis Foundation fundraising page, visit tinyurl.com/TandNCCF.



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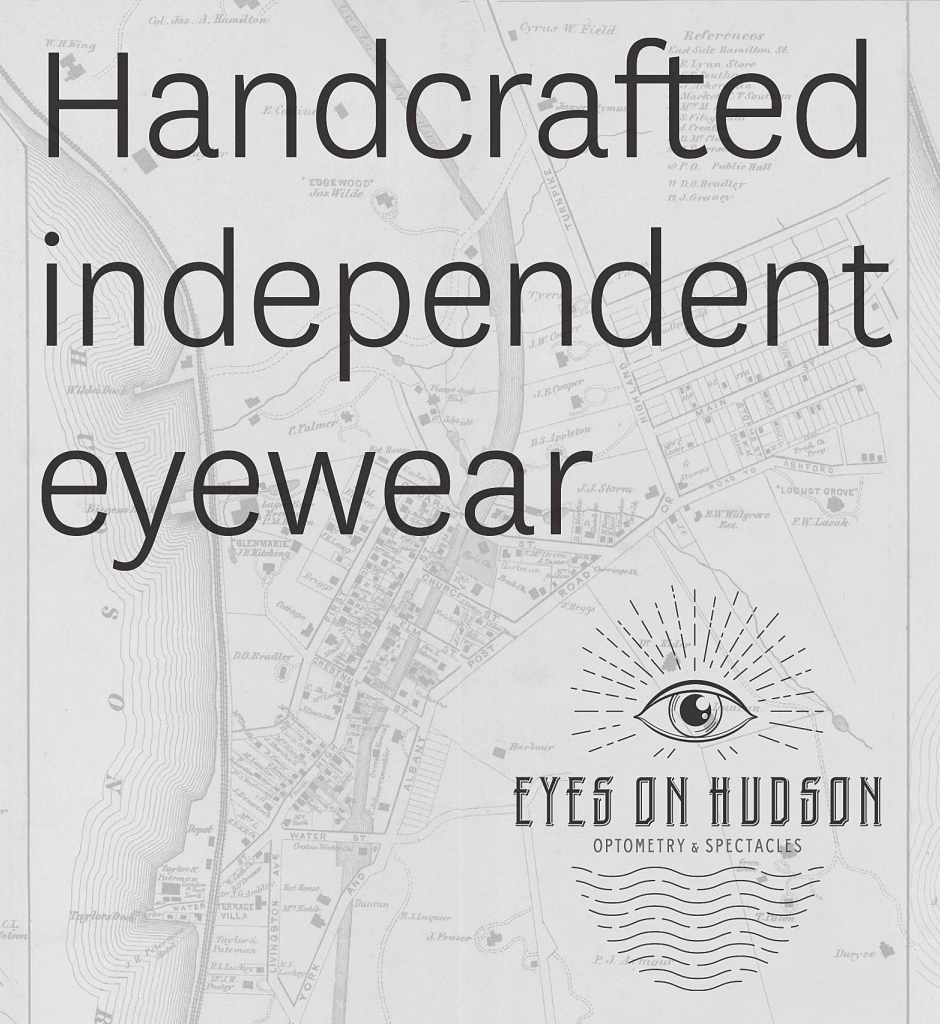
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Hastings graduation

Continued from page 9

the unique person that you are,” she said. “Yours must be custom-made to try to find true pride and happiness in your efforts. Welcome the reality that in order to be truly great and to earn your bespoke success, you will have some scrapes and bruises along the way. Your ability to heal the wounds is what will give you the skill to finish that path and walk in it, in your own skin and with pride.”

The salutatorian, Adam Greenwald, described the traits that helped the class of 2025 flourish.

“As a grade we shared our diverse skills with each other, and while these skills were important to achieving our grade-point goals, what was even more important was the character we demonstrated as a class,”

Irvington graduation

Continued from page 11

“Time” was the subject of senior class president Alex Shapiro’s speech, in which he referred to the years that passed from kindergarten to senior year of high school.

“Time is valuable because it’s the one thing we can never get back,” Shapiro said. “You can earn money and lose it again, misplace something and find it later, but once a moment is gone, it’s gone. That’s what makes it powerful and also a little scary, but it’s also what makes time exciting, because every second is a chance to build something,

he said. “We brought our different personalities, passions, and ideas together to do the best we could in everything we put our minds to. When we join together, not only do we push the boundaries of what our communities can achieve, but we also capture bits of each other’s good qualities.”

The valedictorian, Natalie Garson, shared an early memory from her time at Hillside School, which she felt encapsulated the Hastings spirit. She recalled sitting on the Buddy Bench, where students go when they need a friend to play with, and how she “got picked up off the bench by a group of athletic boys really far outside of my quiet, nerdy comfort zone.”

“They were really nice to me,” she continued, “and I ended up playing an intense game of tag with them, running from one end of the front playground to the other.

to try something new, to become more of who we’re meant to be. Time is the space where goals are chased, relationships grow, and dreams turn into real things.”

Salutatorian Scott Zinman, who will attend Cornell University, compared the education he and his classmates had received to a smoothie that blended academics, extracurricular activities, family, friends, passions, and struggles.

“I first realized the power of blending in middle school, when a team of endocrinologists, orthopedists, and physical therapists combined to ultimately solve, for me, knee and leg issues requiring a series of surgeries,”

When recess ended, I remembered that I had a huge smile on my face. I’m telling you this story today because I think that Hastings is a really special place where people who meet a friend are welcomed with the games of tag, and on a broader level, all types of people can co-exist, work together, and connect.”

Before the graduates’ names were read by Assistant Principal Tara Ware, Schools Superintendent William McKersie offered words of wisdom and encouragement:

“I want you to think about who you have been, who you are, and who you will be... At Hillside when I see the wee ones, I wonder what they will look like when they’re sitting in these seats. When I see all of you, I wonder, what were you like in those days?”

He continued, “What is the same in you? What has changed? But I think about it from the inside, through your head, your heart,

your hand. What has changed? And now I ask you... Who will you be? Will you weave all that together — your head, your heart, your mind, your hand — to help us strive toward a much better and caring place?”

McKersie referenced the students’ impact in advocating for the three-part school bond, which voters passed on June 17.

“Yesterday in Hastings, a historic moment happened... The capital bond was adopted yesterday in a brilliant example of a democracy working as it’s designed and hoped for,” he said. “Many of you here, all of you in those wonderful green outfits, you participated. You prompted input. You prompted questions. When you were old enough, you did vote. Now who will you be? As you go forward, think back on yesterday as an example where each one of you can make a difference. That’s what democracy is about.”

she said. “Flipping through each yearbook, I was greeted, page after page, year after year, by the same familiar faces that stand behind me today.”

Zumbro mentioned events documented in those pages, such as performing “The Great Kapok Tree” in kindergarten, as well as physical changes such as bangs and braces.

“It is my hope that, 18 years from now, we will all find ourselves in the same position I found myself last fall — sitting on the ground, flipping through old photos, rereading the past chapters of our lives, flooded with sentimentality and gratitude for the people who made us feel at home.”





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Opinion

Fleisig has a record of results as well as a vision for Hastings

To the Editor:

When we vote for a candidate, we look not only for vision, but for proven leadership, experience, and results. That's why we're voting for Morgen Fleisig in the Hastings Democratic primary for mayor.

In his six years of service as village trustee, there are many important Village projects where Morgen took the lead or was instrumental to project planning and implementation — from the traffic and safety improvements to Farragut Avenue, near our schools, to

ensuring the Ravensdale Bridge was functional and beautiful, to supporting our emergency services with new vehicles and equipment, to developing a plan to stabilize our Hudson River shoreline and restore MacEachron Park. On every project Morgen digs deep, consults with professionals and stakeholders, and engages Hastings residents for the most thoughtful decisions for our village.

Morgen knows the workings of Village government. This makes his communications thorough, transparent, and clear. After read-

ing his recent newsletter about the Hastings waterfront, we said to each other, this was the first time we actually understood what was going on. His follow-up on reinvigorating our downtown is also inspiring and pragmatic.

Please read about these topics and more at fleisigforhastings.com, and see why Morgen Fleisig will be a mayor who will work tirelessly, keep momentum going on the important projects in progress, and protect the future of Hastings for all of us.

EILEEN AND FRED CHARLES, *Hastings*

For Irvington, back Burgos, Ogrodnek, and Zweibel

To the Editor:

With the Department of Government Efficiency dismantling the federal government and new tariffs causing instability and real economic pain, it's clearer than ever that we need to focus our energy close to home — on local leaders and institutions who will fight for us every day.

That's why I'm excited to endorse current Trustee Arlene Burgos for mayor, former Trustee Larry Ogrodnek for trustee, and community stalwart David Zweibel for trustee.

They're good people who will bring transparency, open-mindedness, and integrity to our village government — and they're not afraid to stand strong on the issues that matter most.

As someone who's lived in Irvington my entire life — grown up here, runs a small business in town, and serves as a Democratic district leader in Westchester — I promise you: The best, most meaningful government happens right here in our own backyard.

Let's support this team!

KAMRAN SALIANI
Democratic district leader
Election District 31

Continued on page 18

What parents and educators need to know about companion AI

To the Editor:

As someone who works in children's digital privacy, I can see tech trends coming before they hit the mainstream. Right now, there's one that has me deeply concerned for our kids and teens: companion AI, chatbots designed to simulate a friend, a confident, or romantic partner.

Tools like Character.AI, Replika, ChatGPT, and Google's Gemini can use artificial intelligence to mimic empathy, affection, and intimacy. The intersection of the fast-developing tech and the just-forming social-emotional skills of adolescence creates an environment for isolating escapism to a new degree.

Relationship-building is a core part of child-

hood and adolescence. It involves risk, disappointment, boundaries, and compromise. Companion AIs offer connection without any of that friction — creating a false sense of emotional connection that risks undermining critical development and preparedness for life ahead.

In a brief experiment, I let my 10- and 12-year-olds chat with one. Within 20 minutes, they were hooked. My fourth-grader asked the next day, "Can I talk to that guy again?" We had to explain: It wasn't a person — it was a machine trained to act like one.


And now, it's arriving in our schools. Google has rolled out Gemini AI with default "on" to Family Link accounts and Chromebooks. In the release, Google acknowledges the risks

and puts the burden of knowledge and protection on parents and educators. Meanwhile, federal protections are weak and commercial incentives are strong: Google wants to win the next generation before ChatGPT does.

I'm pro-AI. I use it every day. But this rollout is commercially driven, not tested for safety of younger users. And yes, there is already a case where companion AI contributed to teen suicide.

My ask is simple: Talk to your kids. Ask what tools they're using. Check their devices. Help them understand what makes a relationship real versus pleasing.


KATE O'LOUGHLIN SEARS
Dobbs Ferry



Rivertowns

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Opinion

Fleisig has demonstrated his dedication and effectiveness

To the Editor:

We wish to express our strong support for Morgen Fleisig in the Democratic primary for mayor of Hastings-on-Hudson. A current trustee and trained architect, Morgen has worked tirelessly to safeguard Village assets, provide critical oversight and support to Village departments, and get the most value out of every Village project. He prepares thoroughly and does his research, enabling him to ask incisive questions even of the experts. And he sees his work through, monitoring progress and keeping the community informed along the way. Morgen has been an exceptionally hard-working trustee these last six years, showing the kind of ded-

ication and effectiveness that we can expect of him as mayor.

Morgen has proven himself on a variety of projects — including the upgrades he exacted from New York State for the Ravensdale Bridge and South County Trailway connection, and the \$3 million commitment he helped secure from BP/ARCO for MacEachron Waterfront Park. On our biggest project, the waterfront, his proficiency and persistence have been crucial to moving each component forward. These are complex and consequential issues, with little room for error, and we see Morgen's ability to learn the regulatory landscape, consider the big picture, and follow up on the details

as integral to their success.

As Hastings Democratic district leaders (writing here in our individual capacities), each of us has followed the primary candidates during their years on the village board. We believe the voters are fortunate to have a viable choice in this race. However, Morgen stands out for his proven ability to deliver for Hastings and his well-rooted Democratic values.

Please read up on Morgen at fleisigforhastings.com and join us in voting for him between now and Primary Day, June 24.

ANJALI CHEN, STEVEN GODESKI,
ROBIN HERBERT, IRIS HISKEY
ARNO, AND ALEXANDRA RIZIO
Hastings

As mayor, Drake will focus on the needs of Hastings

To the Editor:

As longtime residents of Hastings-on-Hudson — and as fellow volunteer firefighters who served alongside Tom Drake — we write in strong support of his candidacy for mayor. We've known Tom and his wife, Julia, since they were youngsters growing up here, and we've watched them become dedicated, civic-minded parents raising their own children in our local schools. Their commitment to our community is deep, genuine, and generational.

Over the last four years, we've seen Village leadership shift its focus away from local priorities toward broader, often national issues. While we respect some of the intentions behind that agenda, it's clear that Hastings needs a mayor who will refocus on the real, day-to-day needs of the people who live and work here.

When the other candidate launched his campaign, he re-emphasized his advocacy for national social issues — a continuation of the current administration's approach. He, for example, supported opting in to the state's cannabis dispensary program. Tom, on the other hand, voted "no" — recognizing that allowing a dispensary across from our community center would have a negative impact on our children. Tom's decision showed thoughtfulness and reflected a deep understanding of what makes Hastings such a unique and family-oriented community.

We need leadership that is laser-focused on our village: repairing roads, supporting emergency services, improving our infrastructure, and encouraging thoughtful development.

Tom stands out for doing the harder work — listening to residents, making practical decisions, and keeping our community strong. That's what local leadership looks like.

We urge our neighbors to vote for Tom Drake. He's not just from Hastings — he's for Hastings.

ROBERT CADOUX, LARY GREINER,
AND STEVE HORELICK
Hastings

Roundabout would not provide protection for pedestrians

To the Editor:

I want to voice my concern regarding the DOT's proposed Ashford Avenue/Route 9 roundabout.

I am concerned that the proposed plan removes the current pedestrian-only signal and replaces it with limited traffic assistance for pedestrians.

The DOT is basing its choices for this intersection on the wrong pedestrian safety research.

In its current Route 9 plan, the DOT references research claiming roundabouts are safer for pedestrians than regular 4-way intersections. But the current intersection at Ashford/Route 9 is not a regular 4-way intersection. It already utilizes extra pedestrian precautions.

For example, currently, students walking from our Walgrove Park neighborhood to middle or high school and crossing the intersection have a dedicated pedestrian-only signal. During this time, all cars sit at a red light and cannot turn right on red. Students also have visual and audio cues from the signals to assist them, as well as crossing guards during school hours.

Compare this with the DOT's proposed roundabout: Students traveling the same route will have to cross over 4 car paths, with limited precautions for pedestrian crossing. Cars will never have a red light to stop and will be allowed to turn right at any time. The DOT has only proposed flashing

beacons for pedestrian crossings. Their plan relies on drivers stopping in 4 directions for our children to cross one intersection. And how would crossing guards manage safely escorting them through this intersection?

It's not just students I'm concerned about. What about the elderly or those with visual or physical handicaps? The current intersection provides a dedicated time for pedestrians to cross the intersection safely. The proposed roundabout does not do this.

The DOT's proposed traffic plan for the Ashford Avenue/Route 9 intersection must do better for pedestrians in Dobbs Ferry. Our children's lives depend on it.

LAURA WERTS, *Dobbs Ferry*

Fleisig considers humanity while managing complexity

To the Editor:

Ben and I are proud to support Morgen Fleisig for mayor of the Village of Hastings.

We first met Morgen when we moved here, and he welcomed us with warmth and generosity — exactly the spirit that makes this village feel like home. Not long after, we worked with him as our architect on a full renovation of our house. From start to finish, Morgen brought vision, care, and collaboration to every step of the process. He was always available to meet, to listen, to think creatively and critically with us. What

could have been stressful became a shared project grounded in trust — and we were overjoyed with the result: a beautiful home, delivered on time and on budget, with a level of care that shows in every detail.

But what stood out most was Morgen's ability to manage complexity without ever losing sight of people. He has a rare combination of precision and heart. He understands that behind every collective effort — whether a construction project or a community initiative — are human beings, with hopes, needs, and dreams. Morgen has the courage to take

on difficult challenges, and the humility to lead in a way that lifts others up. He doesn't just seek solutions; he builds relationships.

That's the kind of leadership Hastings deserves. Someone who listens deeply, thinks strategically, and acts with integrity. Someone who can bring people together not just around problems, but around possibility.

We're lucky to have someone of Morgen's character and caliber stepping forward. We hope you'll join us in supporting him.

MICAH SPRATT
Hastings

Teach children about consequences

To the Editor:

On Friday night, June 6, a member of the Dobbs Ferry Walden Wood townhouse community investigated sounds coming from the private swimming pool adjacent to the clubhouse on the property. He found a large group of youths at the swimming pool in the dark. When discovered, they climbed back over the pool's locked gate and fences, scattering through the adjacent woods.

The Dobbs Ferry Police responded to a call during the incident. Two officers rounded up 14 or more youths on or near

the Walden Wood property. There were no arrests, but the youths received a strong warning by the Dobbs Ferry Police. Over the past several years there have been ongoing incidents of damage to the property's clubhouse by groups of youths, a mix of residents and non-residents. Parents have a duty to instruct their children regarding the legal consequences of trespassing and damaging property, along with the dangers of swimming in the dark and without a lifeguard.

ROBERT E. MISS
Dobbs Ferry

Nominate Businesses of the Month

To the Editor:

Local businesses in the river villages and unincorporated Greenburgh frequently are asked to donate to local causes. It's expensive to be a local business and always being asked to make donations for worthy causes.

I plan to honor Businesses of the Month at upcoming Greenburgh Town Board meetings and encourage residents to submit nominations to me by emailing me at pfeiner@greenburghny.com. Businesses that will be honored will include those located in the villages and unincorporat-

ed Greenburgh.

It's important for the Town to show that we value and appreciate the businesses that are involved in the community. By recognizing businesses, we will also motivate other businesses to support local charities, schools, events, and causes. We will also help strengthen bonds and relationships between the private sector and the community, promoting good will.

Small businesses make sacrifices to give back. We should also help them succeed.

PAUL FEINER
Greenburgh Town Supervisor



— MOMENTS —



Irvington High School Graduation

Matthiessen Park, Saturday, June 14





Congratulations to the Hastings High School Class of 2025!

The Hastings High School Alumni Association Welcomes You into the Family!
It is through the generosity of HHS Alumni that we are able to award the following
scholarships to these graduating seniors:

Charles O. Aschmann Scholarship for Excellence
Iryna Romaniv

—
Auggie Andronica Memorial Scholarship
Cecily Hunter

—
*Larry Kent Benjamin Scholarship for the
Study of Information Technology*
Jacob Andrus

—
*Sarah Elizabeth Black Memorial Scholarship
for Compassionate Medicine*
Emma Schlacter

—
Julius Chemka Community Scholarship
Kaylee Arau

—
Class of 1962 Merit Scholarship
Mathias Toro

—
*Class of 1973 Vocational, Technical, and
Trade School Scholarship*
Andrew Garcia-Gutierrez

—
Coach John Costello Memorial Scholarship
Diego Hernandez

—
Coaches' Scholarship
Caitlin Thomas

—
*Colb Family Chemistry Scholarship in
Honor of James Pressley*
Valentina Dimnet

Gulish Family Art Scholarship
Angela Ye

—
James V. Harmon Community Scholarship
James Doherty

—
*Michael & Eric Kantor Scholarship for
Mathematics and Engineering*
Adam Greenwald

—
Philip S. Klipp Memorial Scholarship
Samantha Guilfoyle

—
*Lee Kaiser and James Kennedy
Future Educators Scholarship*
Lydia Knittel

—
*Ronald Wilson Lindemann
Athletic Scholarship*
Caitlin Gellas

—
Bernard J. O'Brien Leadership Scholarship
Lydia Knittel

—
Richard Thomas Family Music Scholarship
Sofia Eliasi

—
Coach Richard Bub Memorial Scholarship
Adam Hatim

—
*Rita Zaratzian Tribute to Music Teachers
Scholarship*
Jasper Zimmerman

Congratulations to All!

For more information about our organization, or to make a donation, please go to our website at www.hohalumni.org.





— MOMENTS —

Hastings High School Graduation

Thomas J. Fazio Field at the Burke Estate, Wednesday, June 18



Sports

EDITED BY ROB DIANTONIO

Smith and Thomas capture state titles in track and field

BY ROB DIANTONIO

Heading into your final state meet in track and field, most seniors are looking to leave it all on the track in hopes of finishing their career on top as a state champion.

Mission accomplished for Dobbs Ferry's Jayden Smith and Hastings' Caitlin Thomas.

Smith won the public school Class C state title in the 200-meter dash, while Thomas captured the Class C state title in the 3,000 meters on June 13-14 at Middletown High School.

"It means a lot to be a state champion in my senior year because it means I get to close my high school athletic career with the biggest title you can get," Smith said. "For that, I'm truly grateful."

Thomas, who is committed to Georgia Tech, had won a state title in cross-country in the fall and got to finish up her high school career with another title.

"It meant so much to close my high school career as a state champion," she said. "I couldn't have done it without my team."

The day before states, at an open track session, Smith said he suffered an injury after another runner collided with him on the track. He said he had cuts on his ankle and the collision had a "bad impact" on his left leg. But that didn't stop him from achieving his goal.

"I went into my final state meet banged up," he said, "but I chose to end my high-school career on my terms and still came out with the victory."

Smith recorded a 22.37 in the preliminaries of the 200-meter dash and then recorded a 22.16 in the finals to take home the state crown.

"The key heading into the finals was to execute better than I did in the prelims," he said. "The mindset was simple: do what needed to be done. My coach [Curtis Brown] told me, 'Just be a dog and go get your title.' I said, 'OK.' Now, I'm a state champion."

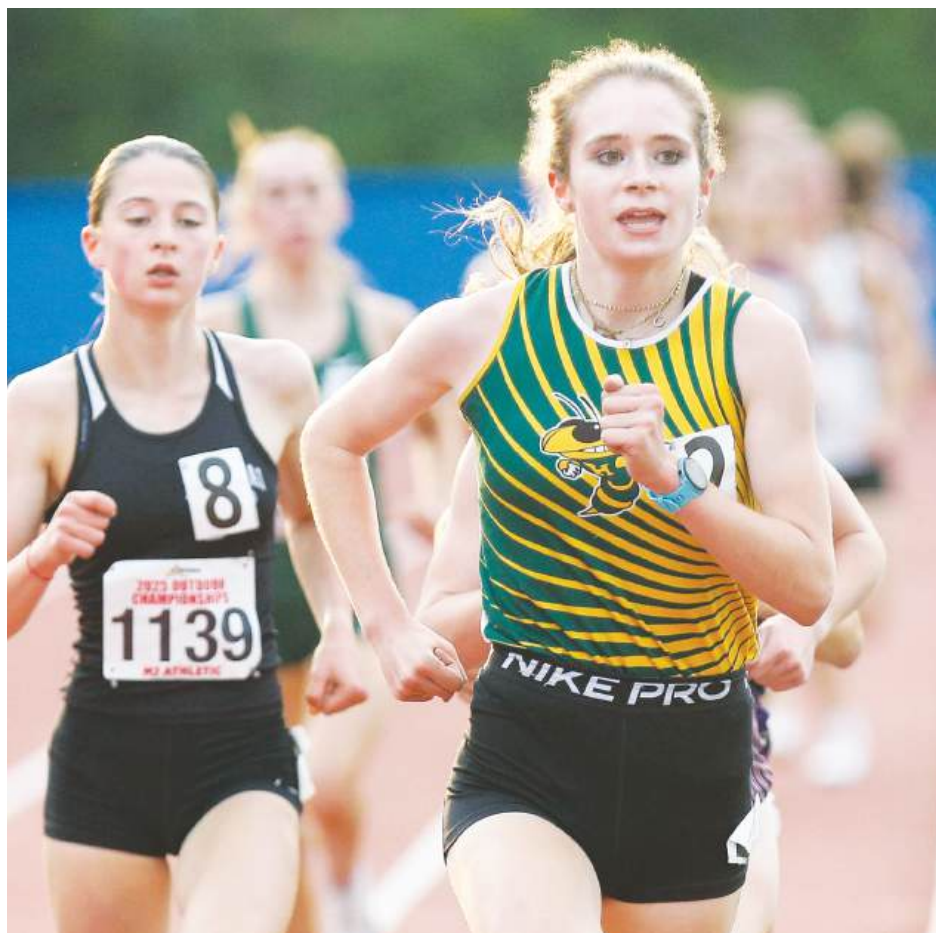
The senior also ran in the 100-meter dash where he placed sixth. He clocked an 11.31 in the prelims and an 11.39 in the finals.

Smith's road to becoming a state champion definitely had its obstacles. After spending two years in Georgia, he moved back to Dobbs Ferry heading into his sophomore year. There was criticism that motivated Smith to get where he is today.

"I often faced scrutiny not just in track, but in football too," Smith said. "People constantly told me I'd never win a state championship or that I was full of myself. But I used all that as fuel. I worked day in and day out to earn my moment. Not for others, but for me. I'm grateful to have a strong support system of coaches, friends, and family."

Smith credited his mother, Chantal Manchester, for his success.

"My mother is absolutely the reason I'm here," he said. "She made this moment happen. She raised me by herself, sacrificing her



Top: Hastings senior Caitlin Thomas won the 3,000 meters. Photo by Jim MacLean. Bottom: Dobbs Ferry senior Jayden Smith won the Class C public school state title in the 200-meter dash. Photo by Rob DiAntonio.

own wants and needs to make sure I had everything I needed to enjoy life and succeed in track. I'm forever grateful for her."

Smith plans to continue competing in track and field in college. His top three choices are Virginia Tech, Mount St. Mary's, and New Jersey Institute of Technology.

"I hope to make a decision soon," Smith said. "But no matter where I go, I believe you don't pick a school, you pick a coach. And I'm confident that all three coaches can help me reach my end goal: making it to the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles, which just so happens to be my birthplace."

Thomas won the Class C state title on June 13 in the 3,000 meters in a clocking of 9:29.08, which was a 13-second personal best. The senior started in the back of the pack but gained ground as the race progressed. She was second in the Federation behind Zariel Macchia of William Floyd, who finished in 9:26.55.

"The key for running a big personal best was consistency and strategy," Thomas said. "I worked super hard and reminded myself of what I accomplished during cross country and how I could use that to help me stay confident in my abilities."

Hastings assistant coach Molly Guilfoyle, who is the head coach for indoor track in the winter and cross country in the fall, said no one was "more deserving of the win" than Thomas.

"I was so happy for Caitlin," Guilfoyle said. "She has put in years of work and dedication to get to this point and she put together the perfect race that capitalized on her aerobic fitness and great finishing speed."

Thomas came back the next day, June 14, and finished 14th overall in the 1,500 meters and third in Class C.

Hastings' girls' team sent a group of nine to states and Guilfoyle gives credit to Thomas for that.

"The work she puts in day after day has not gone unnoticed," Guilfoyle said. "Others have seen that hard work pays off."

Thomas was headed to the New Balance Nationals in Philadelphia this weekend, June 21-22. Smith is not competing in the Nationals in order to attend Dobbs Ferry's graduation ceremony on June 21.

Junior Danae Morgan competed in the discus and shot put for the Yellow Jackets. She was ninth in the discus with a heave of 108-1 and 10th in the shot put (35-1 1/4). Samantha Guilfoyle was 15th in the 400-meter hurdles in 1:13.04.

The 4x400-meter relay team finished 12th in 4:22.31. The 4x800 relay took 17th in 9:30.75. Samantha Guilfoyle, Louise Durietz-Bourdain, Georgia Schmit, and Maya Ganesananthan made up the 4x400. Competing in the 4x800 were Hazel Kuniholm, Sage Wrzesinski, Claire Grushko, and Thomas, who ran in her third event of the weekend.

Dobbs Ferry junior Chris Doherty was 19th overall in the 800 meters and fourth in Class C. He clocked a personal best time of 1:55.28. Fellow junior Evan Schwartz placed 15th in Class C in the 400-meters in 50.97 seconds.

Ardsley's 4x100-meter relay clocked a personal best time of 43.79 seconds. Derin Adewunmi, Zaire Bell, Andrew Herceg, and Ahmady Dolcine made up the foursome, which placed 12th in Class B.

Irvington senior Anish Joshi placed 44th overall in the 3,200 meters in 9:48.29.

Sports

Trio of Bulldogs named all-section

— GIRLS' LACROSSE AWARDS —

BY ROB DIANTONIO

It was a standout season for the Irvington Bulldogs and it culminated with the team having three players named all-section.

Senior Sadie McRae, who surpassed 100 career goals this past season, was selected to the all-section first team. McRae will continue her lacrosse career at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee.

Seniors Aly Raimondo and Isi Doncov were named to the all-section second team. Raimondo was also a 1,000-point scorer in basketball and is committed to Muhlenberg College for hoops.

Earning all-league honors for Irvington were McRae, Raimondo, Doncov, senior Alexis Canfin, and junior Federica Ricciardella. Junior Natalie Rushford and sophomore Petra Rancic received all-league honorable mention.

The Bulldogs made it to the Section 1 Class D semifinals, where they fell to eventual champion Pleasantville, 21-7, and ended the season with a 12-6 record.

Dobbs Ferry

Dobbs Ferry senior goalie Eleni Georgioudakis concluded an impressive career



Irvington senior Sadie McRae was named first team all-section. Photo by Rob DiAntonio.

by being named to the all-section second team. She had over 500 career saves.

Georgioudakis, junior Cailleigh Doyle,

senior Hope McCormack, junior Molly O'Brien, senior Ella O'Connor, and junior Mary O'Dea received all-league honors.

The Eagles concluded the season with a 7-9 record. They lost to North Salem 16-4 in the Section 1 Class D opening round.

Ardsley

Ardsley junior goalie Sienna Kay was a wall in net for the Panthers this season. She was named to the all-section second team.

Receiving all-league honors were Kay, junior Mairead Gowran, junior Lyla Vega, junior Lily Tiernan, sophomore Hazel McGourty, and freshman Juliette An. Senior Ryann Rosenfeld, junior Anna Gallante, and junior Lyvia Pulver were selected as all-league honorable mention.

Ardsley ended up with a 7-10 record and fell to Pelham 17-1 in the first round of the Class C sectionals.

Hastings

Hastings junior Mila Angoff received all-league honors and surpassed 100 career goals this season. Senior Sophia Ballard was named all-league honorable mention.

The Yellow Jackets concluded the campaign with a 4-12 record. They did not qualify for the Class D sectionals.

— BOYS' LACROSSE AWARDS —



Alex Zinman. Photo by Rob DiAntonio.

Zinman receives all-section honors

BY ROB DIANTONIO

Irvington's Alex Zinman is a magician when it comes to face-offs. Zinman, who just completed his junior season with the Bulldogs, gave the team numerous possessions each game by dominating face-offs. He also piled up goals and assists, surpassing 200 career points.

Zinman's success this season resulted in an all-section nod for Irvington, which completed the campaign with a 16-5 record.

Earning all-league honors for the Bulldogs were Zinman, junior Nick Grados, junior Soren Deyonker, sophomore Harrison Malakoff, sophomore Josh Tatz, and sophomore Bowie Frank. Grados recorded his 100th career goal and 200th career point this season.

The Bulldogs' season ended in a 9-8 loss to Blind Brook in the Section 1 Class D quarterfinals. They only lose two seniors to graduation, so Irvington should be right back in the mix as a contender next season.

Dobbs Ferry

Dobbs Ferry senior attackman Jake Broccoli and sophomore attackman Jackson Kearns were each named all-league.

Broccoli scored the 100th goal of his career and broke the school's single-season record, finishing the regular season with 60 goals.

The Eagles ended the season with a 6-11 record. They lost to Haldane 16-4 in the opening round of the Section 1 Class D playoffs.

Ardsley

Ardsley senior Shahz Naqvi received all-league honors for the Panthers, who concluded the season with a 3-13 record. They came up short of making the Section 1 Class C playoffs.

Hastings

Hastings junior Anthony Laboy was named all-league for the Yellow Jackets. The team finished the season with a 2-14 record and did not qualify for the Section 1 Class D playoffs.



Dobbs Ferry senior goalie Eleni Georgioudakis was named to the all-section second team. Photo by Rob DiAntonio.



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