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RIVERTOWNS Dispatch

Local News,
Locally Sourced
~

\$2⁵⁰

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



Free stuff

Children await free stuff tossed into the stands by the Harlem Wizards at Dobbs Ferry High School on the evening of Saturday, March 8. The Wizards played against a team a community members called the Dobbs Ferry Dunkers and recruited participants from the stands for assorted activities. The proceeds from the event benefited the Dobbs Ferry PTSA.

Opposition lines up vs. Con Edison rate hikes

BY AMY BOCHNER

REGION — Over the past week, various state, county, and local officials took a stand against Con Edison's proposed rate increases.

Con Edison provides electric, gas, and steam service for more than nine million people in New York City and Westchester County. In January, the energy company filed a request with the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC), proposing new electric and gas investment plans to begin in January 2026. The plans call for an 11.4% increase in overall electric customer bills and a 13.3% increase in overall gas customer bills.

The request states that the proposed plans will "support economic growth and development in New York City and Westchester County by investing more than \$21 billion over three years to build infrastructure like transmission, substation, and distribution facilities to better serve communities throughout Con Edison's territory."

On March 5, New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins sent a letter to Rory M. Christian, chair and CEO

Continued on page 15

\$4.5M to fund downtown upgrades

Village receives NY Forward grant from New York State

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL
DOBBS FERRY — Dobbs Ferry will receive \$4.5 million from New York State to help revitalize the village's downtown. For the Mid-Hudson region, Dobbs Ferry and Nyack were awarded NY Forward Grants of the same amount, while Poughkeepsie received \$10 million from the State's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. The grants were announced during a press conference in Poughkeepsie on Tuesday, March 11.

Dobbs Ferry was awarded the grant for proposals to upgrade public parks and sidewalks and to turn a former theater on Cedar Street

into a public performance space. According to Dobbs Ferry Mayor Vincent Rossillo, it's the largest single grant the Village has ever received.

"I think it's going to be transformative to the downtown area," Rossillo told the Dispatch. "I think it's going to really change the way our village is going to look and feel, and the amenities it would open to people."

As part of the grant agreement, the Village will meet with representatives from the State who will provide oversight on what in the Village's application is feasible, and how to execute the plans, before they're finalized. Specific projects include building a facility next to the Memorial Park basketball court, where the old American Legion building used to stand; cleaning up and adding benches to High Street

Park, adjacent to the train station, which is occluded by weeds and overgrown shrubs; and sprucing up the plaza at the corner of Main Street and Cedar Street, where there are chess tables and a community bulletin board.

The application also proposed turning the 4,253-square-foot, 117-seat theater in the building owned by the Stolen Moments music and entertainment business, into a public theater, as it had been. More than a century old, the space hosted vaudeville performances as the Embassy Theatre, then films as the Pickwick Theatre, before Stolen Moments bought the building in 1991.

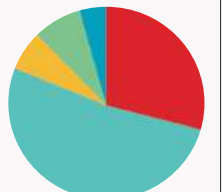
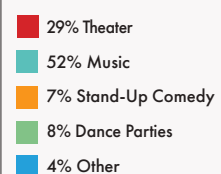
"The theater used to be a place to go for the people who lived here, and to restore

Continued on page 18

— You Answered —

What type of live entertainment do you want more of in the Rivertowns?

As answered by 138 readers of the Rivertowns Dispatch



Vote at rivertownsdispatch.com/the-weekly-poll

Local Curiosities

— FOUR QUESTIONS WITH —

Denise Stefano *Chairperson of the accounting program at Mercy University*

BY JANINE ANNETT

Denise M. Stefano is the chairperson of the accounting program and an associate professor in the accounting department at Mercy University, where she teaches on both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Stefano has extensive experience in both public and private accounting and previously served as a board member and vice president of the New York State Society of CPAs (NYSSCPA). She was recently appointed to the New York State Board of Accountancy and the Office of the Professions of the New York State Education Department.

With tax season underway, the Dispatch asked Stefano four questions about taxes.

No one likes paying income tax, but why is it necessary?

Income taxes help the government support programs that support the general public. From the federal perspective, taxes go toward Social Security, defense, the health of citizens, and medical programs. There's a whole host of public programs that those monies support. At the state and local level, money from taxes goes toward things like education, public housing, and transportation. Income taxes also help fund public programs that sometimes taxpayers take for granted. Your taxes support things like public safety (such as your police department and fire department), infrastructure (like roads maintenance), and social welfare programs (like unemployment insurance).

What can people do to make tax season easier for themselves?

Have your documentation in order. Be cogni-



Professor Denise Stefano at Mercy University

zant of the fact that maybe you've received W-2s or 1099s, and other information that helps to document your tax position for that year. Make sure to get that in order for your tax preparer. It's always helpful to have more information than not enough, and to have appropriate information.

I don't always recommend that people prepare their own taxes, because they could be missing something. But there are facilities like H&R Block or Liberty Taxes that offer tax preparation. Members of AARP are also eligible for tax filing assistance through AARP. You can also look at professional organizations like the New York State Society of CPAs to find information on qualified CPA tax preparers. There's a whole host of resources out there. For those individuals who have fairly straightforward returns, there are some basic tax programs and software they can use, like Turbo Tax. But if you have some things that you're not sure about, it's always best to go to a qualified tax preparer or some type of facility that

has a little bit more experience in tax preparation.

It's important to know that there are also lots of scams that arise in tax filing season. Taxpayers should know that the IRS will never, ever text you or call you on the phone if there is an issue with your taxes. If there's a problem with your tax filing, you will get a letter in the mail.

What is the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program?

It's a program where the IRS provides free tax preparation for low-to-middle-income households. If you have a household income of \$67,000 or less, you're eligible to have your tax returns prepared for free at any national VITA site. These VITA sites are all over the country. Locally, Mercy University works in collaboration with Westchester County. The County has a grant from the IRS to run the program, and we work with the County to provide services through that grant and at our Dobbs Ferry and Bronx campus sites.

Do you think there will be any changes to the tax filing process (and potentially receiving refunds) under the new federal administration?

That's a question that we're all pondering. Right now, taxpayers who have come to the VITA site have not been experiencing slowdowns with their tax return filings. With all the layoffs of federal workers, that could slow things down. I have a feeling that what's going to happen is that in the more complicated tax situations, that might be the case, but if you have a very straightforward and easy tax return, you're probably not going to see significant slowdowns as of right now.

For more information on VITA, see <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/free-tax-return-preparation-for-qualifying-taxpayers> or call "211" (if dialing from within Westchester County) or 1-800-899-1479.

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Hastings resident reflects on loss of job due to USAID decimation

BY TIMOTHY REUTER

Rhiannon Gulick of Hastings is among the tens of thousands who lost their jobs since February, when the Trump administration decided to cut 90 percent of the staff at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), close USAID's headquarters, cancel nearly all of its contracts, and stop payment for work that had been completed.

Since 2003, Gulick had worked for DAI Global, a contractor based in Maryland. Starting this past October, she had been the director of a global project titled "Advancing Women for Resilient Agricultural Supply Chains," which was funded by \$30 million from USAID and was budgeted for five years.

Gulick, her husband, and their daughters, ages 8 and 11, moved to Hastings in August 2024. For the Rivertowns Dispatch Podcast, she was interviewed on Friday, March 7. To listen to the interview, search for the Rivertowns Dispatch Podcast on Apple Podcasts and Spotify or visit www.rivertownsdispach.com and click on the Podcast tab. During that interview, Gulick shared the following:

One of the things you'll see if you ever go around the world, if you're ever in a place that has recently had a disaster of any kind, there will be leftover tarps and bags and water bottles, and they all have a stamp on them that says 'from the American people.' It is a little bit of a positive

propaganda campaign to say, 'Hey, when things are tough we will help you. We are the good guys.'

...

By and large, the people who choose to work for the government, particularly when they make that their career, they're doing it out of service... And I would like everybody to not forget that those are humans, probably your neighbors, who are there doing hard work for good reasons. These are people who've come in to try to make the world a better place.

...

There's a lot of my colleagues who have worked overseas in some really challenging places, to build partnerships with people on the ground. To watch that just be negated is sad. There is grieving involved in this. I think there was also an element of anger to say, 'Who are you to be coming in and telling us that that this is no longer valid?'


...

I really do think that the role of USAID around the world is not only to do the good things, it is also hugely important for the way that America is seen overseas. And to just throw that out with no kind of recognition of its value — I was kind of astonished that that we were willing to do that.

If you are a Rivertowns resident who was laid off due to changes at the federal level, and want to talk about that experience on the Rivertowns Dispatch Podcast, please email timothy@rivertownsdispach.com



Rhiannon Gulick



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ARDSLEY

— Coming Up This Week —

“Creating Your Pollinator Garden” Workshop

Saturday, March 15, 10 a.m.-noon

Greenburgh Public Library

Ardsley Pollinator Pathway’s three-part series concludes with “Preparation for Planting and Maintaining the Garden.”

Register at ardsleypollinatorpathway.org.

Food Drive for the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry

Saturday, March 15, 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.

Board of Trustees Meeting

Monday, March 17, 7:30 p.m.

Village Hall

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

School Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 7 p.m.

High school library

Agenda and link to the livestream available at ardsleyschools.org.

Architectural Review Board Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 8 p.m.

Village Hall

Agenda available at ardslevillage.gov.

Seniors’ St. Patrick’s Day Luncheon

Wednesday, March 19, noon

Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road

Fee: \$20 per person

For more information, email placy@ardslevillage.gov

Friends of the Library Cornhole Tournament

Wednesday, March 19, 7-10 p.m.

House of Sports, 1 Elm St.

\$35 per person includes tournament, drinks, and light bites.

Register at forms.gle/teZ5ag217WF7gfAG8

Reading Rox Book Group

Friday, March 21, 4 p.m.

Ardsley Public Library

Fifth- and sixth-graders discuss “The Night War” by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley.

Register at ardsleypubliclibrary.org.

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Rabbi Mara Young holds the torah scroll from Rakovnik at Woodlands Community Temple.

Series shares Holocaust survivors’ history

Interviews also prepare next generation to share stories

BY AMY BOCHNER

After defeating the Nazis in World War II, Allied forces found warehouses filled with torah scrolls stolen from communities left without survivors. These scrolls, then placed in the Memorial Scrolls Trust, were distributed to synagogues throughout the world to hold as a loan. One of them, safeguarded in the arc of Woodlands Community Temple in White Plains, is from Rakovnik, a town in the former Czechoslovakia.

“We keep it in our arc as a testament to the people of Rakovnik and all of those who died,” Rabbi Mara Young told the Dispatch. “We as a temple community have the responsibility of holding on to this scroll and telling the story of the people of Rakovnik, even though I’ve never met them.”

For Young, the Rakovnik torah scroll is symbolic of what she is trying to accomplish through the Town of Greenburgh’s “Holocaust Living History” program, in which she interviews the relatives of Holocaust survivors. The interviews will air on local public access TV (GATV) every Yom HaShoah and on International Holocaust Remembrance Day. They are also available for streaming on <https://www.greenburghpublicaccess.com/>.

Young’s interviews are an expansion of the Holocaust Living History initiative, which was created by Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner four years ago. The goal of the initiative, Feiner told the Dispatch, is

“to make sure that future generations never forget the horrors of the Holocaust.” Six interviews, conducted by various people — including Feiner — were originally produced, but Feiner thought that children of survivors would be more inclined to be forthcoming with a rabbi. Last fall, he reached out to Young, who found the timing to be perfect, as she was working to highlight survivors’ stories at Woodlands.

“Over the last two, three years, I’ve gathered people who are the children or grandchildren of Holocaust survivors just to share about their experiences with one another, and think about how we could get their stories out into our congregation even more,” Young said. “You almost don’t even realize how many temple households have somebody who survived the Holocaust in them.”

Young works with Janelle Wallace and Terence Brosnan, respectively the director and assistant director of GATV, to create the interviews for “Holocaust Living History,” two of which have been released. In the first, Melanie Roher Schwartz tells the story of her mother-in-law, Elizabeth, a Hungarian survivor of a German concentration camp. The second features Nancy Sibirski Oren, who recounts her father Aaron’s escape from Poland as a child.

The people interviewed are encouraged to bring artifacts and props that belonged to their loved one.

“We hold them up and show them, just to make it very real and tangible,” Young said. Items such as immigration papers and passports. “It’s amazing what people actu-

ally were able to hold on to or rediscover afterward,” she noted.

The interviews bring to light the generational trauma experienced by the second generation.

“Oftentimes there was a fraught discussion, or non-discussion, of the survivors with their children,” Young explained. “They wanted to protect them from the horrors. Maybe they didn’t talk about it. In some cases, they talked about it so much that it was upsetting, and the second generation wants to distance themselves.

“It’s a very complicated thing,” she continued, “but what I’m finding is that as the survivors’ generation has basically died off as a result of age, this second generation is now reevaluating how they want to interact with their parents’ stories, and wrestling with what it means to take on the responsibility of telling stories now that the survivor can’t tell it firsthand. It’s now the responsibility of their children, and it’s a heavy responsibility.”

Young believes that furthering Holocaust education and awareness is needed to push back against misinformation and honor the people whose lives were cut short.

“There’s some staggering figures out there about how little people know these days... Holocaust denial has gone up,” she said. “It’s important to me that we don’t just tell the story for the sake of telling the story, although living with that pain is important, but seeing the ways in which fascism took hold then and making sure that we don’t rel-

Continued on page 18

ARDSLEY

River’s Edge to highlight women’s voices in 24-hour production

BY AMY BOCHNER

River’s Edge Theater Company is recognizing Women’s History Month with the upcoming “Women’s Writes,” which will allow female playwrights 24 hours to create short plays from scratch.

According to Meghan Covington of Ardsley, the co-founder and artistic director of River’s Edge, the playfest is in keeping with the company’s mission “to reflect the human experience, spark conversation, and inspire social change.”

“With this, in particular, we’re highlighting not only female playwrights, but also female issues — things like reproductive rights, workplace equality, domestic violence, healthcare, mental health,” she said.

“Women’s Writes” will begin on Friday, March 28, and end with productions on March 29 at 6 and 8 p.m. at the Bethany Arts Community in Ossining. For tickets, which cost \$25 for general admission, and \$20 for seniors and students, visit bethanyarts.org.

One hundred women applied to participate in the playfest, and five were chosen: Molly Canu and Serena Noor of Westchester; Abbie Goldberg and Jessica Feder-Birnbaum of New York City; and Lizbette Ocasio-Russe of New Hampshire. Fourteen actors will also participate, as well as five directors: Nina Fry, Jessica Irons, Katie Kopajtic, Marie Louise Miller, and Julia Schonberg.

Covington walked through what the 24 hours will look like.

“On the Friday night before the performance, the playwrights will have a meeting with me, and be assigned a cast and a director and a writing prompt. Each playwright will



Molly Canu



Abbie Goldberg



Jessica Feder-Birnbaum



Serena Noor

have a different writing prompt and a different cast of [two to three] actors, different directors,” she said. “Once they receive that information, they’ll have until the next morning to write their play. The plays are all about 10 minutes, and then the next morning the scripts are turned over to their team of actors and director. Throughout the late morning and afternoon hours, the actors and directors will rehearse the plays, and by the evening, the audience comes, and we perform them.”

The playwrights wrote two prompts each, and sent them to Covington, who mixed them up and will hand them out to begin the event. Each prompt, she said, relates to women’s issues.

“We chose social issues that are important to our community and we explored them,” she said. “We’re hoping that by bringing our community together and presenting them with these topics, it will open up conversations about them.”

Consonant with the prompts’ themes, 10% of ticket sales will go to Hope’s Door, an organization that seeks to end do-

mestic violence and empower victims to find safety, independence, and healing from the trauma of abuse. At the theater, representatives of Hope’s Door will have a table to provide information and resources.

Covington emphasized the need for creative outlets to promote discussion of social issues.

“Now more than ever, it’s important for communities to come together to talk about important issues,” she said. “And I also think that we should support the arts right now, and support freedom of expression and free speech. With the community coming together in support of that, it does send a message.”



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DOBBS FERRY

— Coming Up This Week —

Food Drive for the Dobbs Ferry Food Pantry

Saturday, March 15, 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
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Saturdays through April 12 (closed March 29),
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Mercy University, 555 Broadway,
Victory Hall, Room 100
To schedule an appointment, call "211" (if
dialing from within Westchester County) or
1-800-899-1479, then select menu option 8 to
reach tax assistance personnel.

Readers' Circle

Thursday, March 20, 2 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library
Discuss "Long Island" by Colm Tóibín.
Register by emailing
reference@dobbsferrylibrary.org.

Documentary Screening: "Home Court"

Sunday, March 23, 1 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library
Advanced screening of the PBS documentary
that traces the ascent of an Asian American high
school basketball star pursuing her dreams.

Invasive Species Clearing

Sunday, March 23, 10 a.m.-noon
Juhring Preserve
Volunteer to help the Conservation Advisory
Board remove invasive Japanese knotweed and
barberry, and plant native species. To sign up,
visit eventbrite.com and search for the Dobbs
Ferry Conservation Advisory Board.

A Dispatch Discussion: Cellphones in Schools

Tuesday, March 26, 7 p.m.
HudCo, 145 Palisade St., Suite 200
The Rivertowns Dispatch hosts a panel
moderated by one of its writers, Janine Annett,
to discuss Gov. Kathy Hochul's proposed limits
on smartphones in schools. Submit questions by
March 19 and reserve a spot at eventbrite.com.

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Caldwell at
julian@rivertownsdispatch.com



Jane Bunting and Grace Golio

Students stage Springhurst's first musical

*Cast and crew of 98 to perform
'Seussical Jr.' this weekend*

BY DEBORAH ANDERS

Oh, the talent you'll see!

This weekend, Dobbs Ferry students in grades 3 through 5 will present "Seussical Jr.," the first musical production to be performed and staged by Springhurst Elementary School.

With a nod to the beloved children's books of Dr. Seuss (aka Theodor Geisel), "Seussical Jr." follows the journey of a young girl named JoJo as she conjures up The Cat in the Hat and Horton the Elephant with her powerful imagination and is then whisked to the Jungle of Nool for a fantastical adventure.

Featuring a cast of 73 students and 25 more working behind the scenes, the production is directed and choreographed by actor and recording artist Amy Lynn Hamlin of Dobbs Ferry, whose daughter is in the cast.

"The talented kids involved in this production, both onstage and backstage, have put a tremendous amount of work into the show," Hamlin said. "It is amazing to see the world they've created and how they bring their characters to life."

Under the musical direction of Dobbs Ferry music teacher Charles Rhyner, all students that auditioned were given a part "and an opportunity to be on stage," said Melissa Kozusko, vice president of communications for the Dobbs Ferry PTSA,

who also was involved with operations and costume design for the show.

"The list of students who auditioned was a long and talented one," she said. "Those of us on the inside of the production say that they're all stars. It's an incredible amount of talent to be featured on one stage."

Sheet music and theatrical materials for "Seussical Jr." were acquired through Music Theatre International and are part of the Broadway Junior franchise that supplies schools with condensed, author-approved versions of shows, like "Annie" and Disney's "Aladdin." They are revised by educators to accommodate the abilities and vocal ranges of younger performers.

"Seussical Jr." was written, in part, by Eric Idle, of Monty Python fame, who played The Cat in the Hat on Broadway in the original "Seussical" and was a writer for "Spamalot."

As with any first-time venture, there have been experiences "from which we will learn for next year," Kozusko said, "but it has, overall, been a fairly smooth operation."

Most difficult: managing the horde of children and something "over which we have no control — illness," she explained.

"It's been a rough cold and flu season and getting through such a large event in the middle of that has been a bit of a challenge." However, she said the kids learned their lines and choreography on their own if they were not well for rehearsals.

What is rewarding, she said, "is listen-

ing to young performers belt out 'Oh, the Things You Can Think!' or seeing them run through lines or dance moves with each other."

For Hamlin, who played Mrs. Claus at Radio City Music Hall, sung backup for Kristin Chenoweth, and directed a Dobbs Ferry High School production of "Chicago," the most satisfying part of the endeavor "is when I give notes to the actors — notes I would typically give to 20-year-olds — and watch them have an 'aha!' moment and then nail it. They're more than capable of stretching themselves, and it's amazing to see them rise to the challenge."

Hamlin hopes the Dobbs Ferry School District, which is known for its strong sports programs, can also be recognized as a school that values the arts.

"These kids gain confidence, learn to embrace who they are, and develop their imaginations," she said. "Most importantly, they're learning to work together, because theater is the ultimate team sport."

Funding for "Seussical Jr." was provided by the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation and the Dobbs Ferry PTSA.

Performances take place in the Dobbs Ferry Middle/High School auditorium this Friday, March 14 at 7 p.m., and on Saturday, March 15 at 2 p.m. Showtimes are approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, including an intermission. Tickets are free and can be reserved at <https://bit.ly/Springhurst-SeussicalJr-Tickets>. Reservations are recommended.

DOBBS FERRY

Village solicits residents' input regarding new comprehensive plan

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Dobbs Ferry is calling on residents for input to create a new comprehensive plan that will serve as a roadmap for municipal policy for the next decade. The Village is collecting data via an online survey and three in-person public workshops, the first of which will be Saturday, March 29, where residents can let the Village know which aspects of the proposals they want the board of trustees to prioritize.

Comprehensive plans are documents that are often hundreds of pages long and detail the current state of a municipality, and also rely on feedback from a municipality's residents to create policy on a variety of topics, such as housing, transportation, and infrastructure. While comprehensive plans are typically established every 10 years, Dobbs Ferry hasn't had a document that resembles a comprehensive plan since the Vision Plan that was established in 2010. That Vision Plan doesn't extensively discuss some of the topics the upcoming plan will cover, such as sustainability.

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, tasked with leading development of the new plan, consists of members from 10 different local committees and boards, including the Affordable Housing Committee and the planning board, and Village Trustees Christy Knell and Michale Patino. The group began meeting monthly last summer and has been gathering data from surveys and

reports the committees have completed since 2010 as a foundation for the comprehensive plan.

"The reason we have this [comprehensive plan] is to give as many residents as possible the chance to chime in so we can all align on how we want Dobbs Ferry to be in the next 10 years," Knell said. "So that is about how we use the land, the character of the village, how we approach problems that come up, like climate change or infrastructure."

Knell first set her sights on establishing a new comprehensive plan in 2017, during her first term on the village board. She acknowledged that by then, with developments like Rivertowns Square and the renovation of Waterfront Park, the village looked much different than during the creation of the 2010 Vision Plan.

"We were getting a lot of projects coming our way, there were all of these development projects coming to the board [of trustees], and I didn't feel like we had an updated comprehensive plan to guide us toward knowing what everybody wanted," Knell recalled. "And there was so much opposition at the time that I felt like if we had had more recent alignment with the community on what people were looking for in future development in Dobbs Ferry, it wouldn't be such a pain point."

Patino, like Knell, has been aiming to create a new plan since joining the village board in 2020. Patino believes that with Dobbs Ferry elections often uncontested, a comprehensive plan is an

effective way to make sure the village board is operating according to the desires of residents.

"They [residents] can show up to meetings and write letters, but the comprehensive plan is a point where people can influence the trajectory of village policy for the next 10 years," Patino said. "Once this comprehensive plan gets done, we are supposed to use this as the roadmap for what we're doing. So if the community says, 'We want affordable housing' then your elected officials are supposed to be doing whatever they can to make that happen."

In 2020, the Village began fielding proposals from environmental planning firms to help establish a comprehensive plan. Those initial plans were derailed by the Covid-19 pandemic, and delayed further as the Village looked to onboard a new village administrator, the job for which Robert Yamuder was hired in July 2023.

In anticipation of creating a comprehensive plan, the Village hired environmental planning firm Nelson Pope Voorhis and named Valerie Monastra village planner in 2021. Monastra, along with members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, has helped to establish the online survey asking residents what they want to see from the Village over the next 10 years.

The survey asks residents questions like what the biggest strengths and challenges of the community are, and asks residents to prioritize top-

ics for the Village to address, such as climate change, sustainability, housing, and economic development. The survey and three in-person workshops that will take place throughout the next several months are the first step in a process that takes 12-18 months.

"The initial outreach is to get an assessment of the community's concerns, and then you develop goals and recommendations, and then from there you go back out to the public to get additional input on the goals and recommendations to see if the community agrees with them," Monastra explained. "From there you develop the draft comprehensive plan, and that goes back out again for public input, and then once that is done, you can look at adopting the comprehensive plan. Once the committee feels the comprehensive plan has been vetted well with the public and they're comfortable with the draft, then they'll send it over to the village board, and at that point the village board will call for a public hearing on the comprehensive plan."

Once the draft is finalized, the comprehensive plan will undergo a State Environmental Quality Review before being fully adopted, which the Village is aiming to have happen in 2026.

The comprehensive plan online survey is available to fill out at dobbsferrycompplan.npvoorhis.com. The upcoming public workshop is Saturday, March 29, at the Embassy Community Center, 60 Palisade St., from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.



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HASTINGS- ON-HUDSON

— Coming Up This Week —

Farmers' Market

Saturday, March 15, 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Commuter Lot, Southside Avenue

The winter market convenes the first and third Saturdays of each month until spring. For details, visit hastingsfarmersmarket.org and follow the market on Facebook.

Vine Squad Volunteer Opportunity

Saturday, March 15, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Meet in the Zinsser Park parking lot

Training and equipment for lopping invasive vines will be provided. No prior experience necessary.

Senior Mindfulness Drop-in Session

Tuesday, March 18, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

James Harmon Community Center

Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 7 p.m.

Village Hall

Agenda available at hohny.gov.

Schools Superintendent's Hybrid Forum

Wednesday, March 19, 6:30-8 p.m.

Hillside Multipurpose Room

Visit psahastings.org for the Zoom link.

Senior Thursday

Thursday, March 20, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Screening of "Chinatown" at the public library, 1 p.m. (RSVP at has@hastingslibrary.org); cookies and games at the community center; and discounts for dining and shopping for residents over 65. Pick up a free parking pass at the library or community center.

Tech Help for All Ages

Friday, March 21, 3:30-4:45 p.m.

Hastings Public Library

For an appointment, call 914-478-3307 or email amanning@hastingslibrary.org

Hastings Repair Cafe

Saturday, March 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

James Harmon Community Center

Sign up to volunteer at repaircafehvh.org/hastings.

Local Luminaries: New York Green Roofs with Amy Falder

Thursday, March 27, 7 p.m.

Hastings Public Library

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Mary Denham and David Beckham

Super Bowl ad put actor back in her game

Denham appears with Beckham and Damon

BY AMY BOCHNER

Hastings residents may know Mary Denham from her membership at St. Andrews Golf Club or the Tennis Club of Hastings, or as a fellow parent of two Hastings graduates. For fans of soap operas, theater, and football, Denham's name or face may also ring a bell.

After a decorated career in modeling and commercials and on stage and television, Denham returned to the small screen on Feb. 9 in a Super Bowl commercial for Stella Artois beer. The 60-second spot was directed by Ben Affleck and featured Denham as the mother of Matt Damon and David Beckham, who play, respectively, long-lost brothers Dave and David.

Denham, a Hastings resident since 1976, grew up in Northampton, England, where she immersed herself in theater from a young age.

"Northampton has a terrific repertory theater, and I used to go all the time as a kid. I was just obsessed with it. I would wait backstage to meet the actors and have them sign my program," she told the Dispatch. "When I was in school, I was always in every play that we ever had, and I was usually the lead role, because I was just madly keen on doing everything."

At 18, she and her first husband moved to New York City where she dove into the entertainment industry, first by becoming a model.

"My modeling agency had a division that was for commercials. At that period I had the perfect look, the California look, with the long, straight blonde hair, but I could do any accent that they wanted, and I was

good at acting," she said. "So, they would send me up on things where they wanted an actor, as opposed to a model. I could look like a model, but also was able to act and be sort of character-funny."

She took acting classes at HB Studios before auditioning for a theatrical agent and booking various roles. Her early credits include "Play it Again, Sam," with actor Jack Gilford, and an Off-Broadway show called "The Real Inspector Hound," playing opposite Ted Danson.

During the day, Denham shot commercials, and at night, she performed on stage. While doing "Real Inspector Hound," she auditioned for soap operas. Among the callbacks she received was one for the NBC daytime drama "The Doctors." Denham was cast in the role of Margot Stewart, going on to shoot 106 episodes for the show.

Throughout her career, Denham found comfort in the quieter parts of New York. She feels she was able to avoid the pitfalls of the entertainment industry by having "a really good home life," she said.

"We had a farm upstate [New Paltz], not really a working farm by any means, but it was a farm that we bought, and I had a great big vegetable garden. I just loved all that kind of outdoor life, and, you know, making jams and cooking from stuff that had been pulled out of the garden," she said. "I just wanted to be at home at night and watch TV and relax, whereas other models of my age would be out at bars till 2 in the morning. It just wasn't my thing."

In 1976, she moved from New Paltz to the house in Hastings that she and her second husband still reside in for half the year (spending the other half in Sarasota,

Florida). Both of her children attended the Hastings schools, her daughter graduating in 1994 and her son in 2000.

Denham recalled taking the morning train from Hastings to New York City to shoot episodes of "The Doctors" while she was pregnant with her daughter.

"I would get on the train, with my belly getting bigger and bigger, and I would learn the script on the way in, because I got to the point where I could actually learn whole shows on the train," she said. "It's amazing what your mind, your memory can do, as you have to keep memorizing every single day. We'd have our rehearsal, tech rehearsal, and then we'd go to the NBC Studios to do the final dress [rehearsal], and then we'd tape."

After "The Doctors," Denham returned to commercials and theater. She understudied Christine Baranski and Glenn Close for Broadway's "The Real Thing." In 1983, while performing in the Off-Broadway play "Greek," Denham booked an interview on the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson. Carson introduced Denham as "somebody that you've all seen, but you don't really know who she is."

"That is the classic commercial actress — somebody that does tons of work, but is never a star," Denham said. "In a way, it's a wonderful way to go through your life with an acting career, because you're always busy."

For 10 years, Denham maintained her connection to theater through "Broadway Buzz," a television program on which she promoted plays and musicals.

"They'd have me outside, with the crowds behind me, and I'd be talking about what the shows were like," she recalled. "I would

Continued on page 18

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON

Board of Trustees considers updates to downtown parking rules

BY AMY BOCHNER

The Hastings Board of Trustees offered updates on alternate side parking in the village and the MacEachron Park Restoration Project at their March 4 meeting.

The board held a public hearing to solicit input regarding changes to a proposed local law amending alternate side parking prohibitions. The changes were made in response to public feedback from residents at a previous meeting, after signs had been posted along Warburton Avenue in January, prior to the rules being approved.

The revisions include extending alternate side parking prohibitions from 1 hour to 3 hours along Warburton, south of Main Street; Maple Avenue, north of North Street; and Washington Avenue, Whitman Street, and Villard Avenue (between Warburton and Broadway).

On Mondays, from 9 a.m.-noon, the rules would apply to the west side of Warburton, south side of Washington, east side of Maple, and north side of Villard. On Thursdays, during the same timeframe, they would apply to the east side of Warburton, north side of Washington; west side of Whitman; west side of Maple; and south side of Villard.

The newest iteration of the law revised the parking prohibitions on the east and west side of Warburton to extend to Pinecrest

Drive, instead of the Yonkers border, on Mondays and Thursdays between 9 and 10 a.m.

The rules regarding overnight parking changed in the new proposal, with several streets being removed from the law and the hours/days streamlined. On Mondays, parking would be prohibited between 3 and 6 a.m. on the east sides of Southside Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Warburton Avenue, as well as on the north side of Spring Street. On Thursdays, parking would be prohibited during the same hours on the west sides of Southside Avenue, Maple Avenue, Warburton Avenue, and the north and south sides of Main Street.

Village-owned parking lots are also included in the proposed law. Between 3 and 6 a.m., parking would be prohibited in the Steinschneider and Warburton lots on Thursdays, as well as in the Boulanger Plaza, ConEd, and River Street lots on Friday. In addition, between 3 and 5 a.m., parking would be prohibited in the area north of Cropsey Lane in the Zinsser Commuter Lot on Tuesday, and in the area south of Cropsey Lane on Thursdays.

During the public comment, two residents thanked the board for the changes, while offering additional feedback. Warburton resident Jim Metzger suggested that the Village alternate the days when overnight

parking is not allowed in the parking lots.

“We should be alternating, so the people that live especially in the downtown area have a shot at putting a car somewhere that is not in somebody else’s neighborhood, that is somewhat walkable to where they live,” he said.

Warburton resident and former Village Trustee Danielle Goodman added to Metzger’s point.

“I hope we can, if not now, in the future, do something creative for parking downtown,” she said. “Whether you deck lots, get money, have a land bank, buy land for parking, which I know is a waste, but it is a necessary evil to create business opportunities. People won’t come if they can’t park.

She also questioned the necessity of 2- to 3-hour limits in certain areas.

“The other thing we have with parking is the need to service our buildings. We have electricians, we have plumbers, and they can’t wait the 3 hours,” she said. “They just don’t want to come and do the work if they have to hassle with the parking. I appreciate the 1-hour time limit on Warburton, and I question whether we’re hampering residents with the 2-hour and the 3-hour limits.”

MacEachron Waterfront Park

In her report, Village Manager Mary Beth Murphy shared an update on the restoration

of MacEachron Waterfront Park, providing the board with a draft for a request for proposals (RFP). Two years ago, the board received a grant from the state Department of Environmental Conservation to do an evaluation of the park and come up with a plan on how to make “not only improvements to the park, but really to keep the park from continuing to fall into the river,” Murphy explained.

“There’s a lot of stabilization that needs to be done in many areas. We had a public meeting about it, and took in comments,” she said. “Now that we have amassed all of the funding to do the project, the purpose of this RFP is to get an engineer, landscape architect, ecological environmental specialist, who can help us bring the design to 100% and also prepare bid documents to be able to actually physically have the work done in the park.”

In addition to making improvements to the park’s stabilization, the project will include a kayak launch and walkway repair for Kinnally Cove, which abuts the waterfront park.

Murphy said that the document is drafted to ensure that public input and input from the board are taken into account during the design process. The board’s authorization for the RFP to go out will be included in the next meeting’s agenda.

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IRVINGTON

— Coming Up This Week —

Author Talk

Saturday, March 15, 3 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Lois Cahall discusses her newest book, "The Many Lives and Loves of Hazel Lavery."

Board of Trustees Meeting

Monday, March 17, 7 p.m.

Village Hall

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

"Rag Doll Heart" Reading

Tuesday, March 18, 7 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Irvington author and two-time Emmy nominee Robert Firpo-Cappiello shares semi-autobiographical short stories.

Virtual Tour of the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site

Thursday, March 20, 7 p.m.

Learn about Walker's contributions to civil rights and educational opportunities for African Americans and women. Visit irvingtonlibrary.org for the Zoom link.

Thursday Evening Book Club

Thursday, March 20, 7:30 p.m.

Irvington Public Library

Discuss "The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride.

Senior Movie: "Leap Year"

Friday, March 21, 10 a.m.

Irvington Public Library

Invasives Cleanup

Saturdays, March 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

O'Hara Nature Center, 170 Mountain Road
Volunteer to help remove Japanese barberry from Irvington Woods Park, and learn best practices for identification, removal, and tool usage.

Registration required at register.capturepoint.com/villageofirvington.

The Modern Marionette Company

Saturday, March 22, 4:30 p.m.

Recreation Center

Learn about marionettes with "Jack and the Dancing Beanstalk."

Fee: for ages 14 and under, \$10 for village residents, \$15 for nonresidents; for ages 15 and up, \$15 for residents, \$20 for nonresidents.

Register at

register.capturepoint.com/villageofirvington.

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com



Panelists Elona Shape, Jackie Ourman, and Deshi Singh

Panelists map career paths, motherhood

The Lark hosts event for International Women's Day

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

"You are exactly where you need to be" — the phrase featured in an art piece at The Lark fitness studio and social club in Irvington — speaks volumes about the journeys of a lineup of speakers at The Lark's International Women's Day luncheon and panel. The event on Monday, March 10, featured a panel of women — all mothers — who referenced the phrase as a grounding message that helped them navigate uncertainties on their diverse career paths.

Panelists included moderator Pamela Pekerman, consultant and founder of Hustle Like a Mom; therapist and Irvington resident Jackie Ourman; KeyBank market retail leader Elona Shape; and Chamber of Mothers co-founder Deshi Singh. A fifth scheduled panelist, News12 reporter Tara Rosenblum, was unable to attend because of illness.

The ticketed event also served as a fundraiser for Chamber of Mothers, which advocates for legislation such as federal paid leave for pregnant women and new mothers, and other maternal rights. Chamber of Mothers has chapters in 40 states across the country, as well as a military chapter.

"I saw firsthand what it meant to invest in girls and women, and I also saw what happened when people didn't," explained Singh, a New Jersey resident who grew up in the U.S. and India. Singh is the mother of three boys. "At some point I think that when you see the problem, you're already positioned to be a part of the solution, and I physically could not wait for someone else to fix this."

The panel, which focused on the themes of confidence, values, and leadership, addressed an audience of roughly 40 women. The Lark, which opened on South Buckhout Street six months ago, hosts fitness programs for women and provides wellness events as a third space for women to

gather and support each other.

"Women are pretty incredible at really building community and coming together for a greater good," The Lark's founder, Lindsay Gerspach of Ardsley, told the Dispatch. "So, I think with this event today, I hope people come away with a little inspiration, a little confidence, like, 'I could be a leader.'"

Ourman, an Irvington resident since 2008, owns a therapy practice called Values Aligned Therapy that provides couples therapy, individual therapy, and executive coaching. She believes value alignment is the key to making sound business and life decisions, and being a better leader.

"It's about knowing what matters, really understanding what your compass is, and acting intentionally with that in mind," Ourman said. "And along with that, motivating others to buy into that and come along with you on that journey."

Ourman, who, like Singh, is the mother of three boys, first worked in human resources at an investment banking company. After her sons and Ourman herself were diagnosed with serious food allergies, she followed her heightened interest in food, earned a degree from the Institute of Culinary Education in 2013, and worked as a test kitchen contributor at Bon Appétit magazine. Then, in 2021, Ourman earned a master's degree in mental health counseling from Mercy University. Most of the women on the panel had similar stories of changing careers before aligning their work with their passions.

"I like to say every 'no' you say to someone else is a 'yes' to yourself," Ourman said. "Just be really careful about what you commit to, make sure it's something you really care about and want to dedicate your time to."

Shape, a mother of two boys, has worked in banking for 18 years, and currently oversees 57 KeyBank branches in Massachusetts and Connecticut, where she lives, as well as a new branch in Port Chester. Shape shared how arriving in 2021 at KeyBank, where a program for empow-

ering women small business owners existed, exemplifies how the banking industry has changed during her career.

"It's shifted so much in a positive way," Shape explained. "When I first started, banking was more male-dominated, especially in executive roles. To see that change 18 years later showcases that we are growing as a society and adapting, and helping and elevating our women in these roles."

Shape encouraged the women attending the luncheon to not only learn from the panelists, but leave with new mentorships and sponsorships.

As the founder of Hustle Like a Mom, Pekerman, the panel's moderator, serves as a mentor for women looking to balance motherhood with entrepreneurship, just as she has done with three children — the youngest is 17 months old.

Pekerman pivoted to life as an entrepreneur after working as a correspondent representing brands on TV programs. She hopes her own story illustrates "the possibility that if you are, for whatever reason, dissatisfied with where the trajectory of your life is going, there's no Prince or Princess Charming, and you have the opportunity to make some micro-changes."

The event included raffles for prizes such as access to the Hustle Like a Mom inner circle; a facial and new client consultation with Aesthetics By KM of Irvington; and a session with Laura Hoffman Acupuncture of Dobbs Ferry. All proceeds from the raffle and half of the ticket sales went toward Chamber of Mothers' campaign for legislation supporting maternal rights.

"A big part of being here today is to help moms understand that being a mother and the challenges that come with motherhood is not a personal failing, it's a systemic failing, and it is up to them to use their voice to advocate for change," Singh said. "I would love for everybody to walk out and call their elected official, or send an e-mail about something that's important to them. Whatever it is you care about, pick up the phone and call because they actually listen."

IRVINGTON

Library exhibit shares paintings that offset ‘banality of business’

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Irvington resident Daniel Rush brings simplicity, innocence, and a touch of humor to his 16 canvases on view at the Martucci Gallery of the Irvington Public Library.

The show, titled “Contemporary Landscape & Figure Paintings,” opened on March 3. Rush, 76, began painting seven years ago as a reprieve from his career in technology.

“You get to a time in your life when you work and go into the city, and do a lot of business travel and events, and what I felt was I needed something to take my mind off of the banality of business,” Rush told the Dispatch.

Rush has lived in Irvington for 22 years and works part-time at Plastic Card City Printing Co., which makes gift cards, loyalty cards, and membership cards for brands. He previously worked in data transformation with Samsung Electronics Corp.

Now, Rush considers painting his part-time job. He works with canvases that are at least 3 feet tall or wide, depending on the orientation. His subjects range from wide shots of activities like golfing, surfing, tennis, or a child playing on a swing, to close-up abstract portraits of people.

“It’s a question of the right side, left side of the brain, and when you work with a whole range of data, formats, web-based



“Swimmer”

stuff, drawing becomes a wonderful escape,” Rush explained. “The thing that I try to do is keep things simple. The color is simple, and I have no qualms about saying I’ve been influenced by Matisse, on the other hand Keith Haring, and in between [Alex] Katz.”

The influence of Katz is most apparent



“Miss Ray Ban”

in pieces like “The Swimmer,” which is a bold portrait in black and white over a red background. Rush, who grew up in Santa Monica, California, also painted a series of pieces illustrating surfers he’s seen on recent trips to Montauk, Long Island. One of the paintings in the exhibit shows surf-

ers walking out to the beach, while another shows a man who’s little more than a speck in comparison to the huge wave he’s riding, which engulfs the totality of the artwork. Rush jokes about how he often works off of real-life scenes, then takes liberties to create images that are fun and larger than life.

“You go there [to the beach] and see something going on, and take some photographs of some people out there and have a reference point to start with,” Rush said. “There are always waves out there, and what you do is you see somebody in a wave, and you say, ‘Oh, that’s nice. Now let’s give it a little more excitement. Let’s get creative and let the paint do the work.’”

Rush employs irony in a piece that depicts a painter on a step ladder, at work on a large abstract piece. For Rush, it’s a slightly exaggerated version of art imitating life. The art is vibrant, to the point, and like Rush, doesn’t try to take itself too seriously.

“There’s nothing there that anybody has to think about,” he said of visitors to the exhibit. “If they enjoy themselves and see something that puts a smile on their face, that’s all that matters.”

“Contemporary Landscape & Figure Paintings” is on view at the gallery, 12 South Astor St., through Saturday, March 29.



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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.

For humanity to flourish together, justice and peace should be the goal

To the Editor:

In response to recent letters about antisemitism, I risk writing a very personal one.

As someone who has long compared (even in occasional academic work) his own anti-war Christian tradition to strands of Jewish dissent, I find myself distressed by Jewish voices calling other Jewish voices who imagine healing the world “antisemitic.” And as one so committed to nonviolence that he has even told his own daughters that he would not automatically kill somebody to save them (a terrifying thing

for a father who luxuriates in their love to say), it would be inconceivable for me to hang out with people who celebrated Oct. 7. Instead, what I hear among my friends in Jewish Voice for Peace is an anguished cry for us to understand that the traumas — for both peoples — did not begin that day, and that unless there is justice and peace for all in that land the cycles of violence will destroy everyone.

And apropos David Weinstein's letter: In my own passion to “decarcerate the Hudson Valley,” working to undo a pro-

foundly racist legacy of mass incarceration right here in Westchester, I have been inspired, even sustained, by the Hebrew prophets — Samuel (his forgotten, but radical, repudiation of kingship), Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, among others. Yet every one of these would be called “antisemitic” were the IHRA [*International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance*] definition adopted. Each of these Jewish voices thought that faithfulness to their God not only permitted, but required, even as an absolute necessity (at immense personal

cost), critique of the state violence and injustice that actively destroyed their very identity as a people — of justice and mercy, against the sacral absolutism of the nations — from within.

In the words of one of those prophets, “May justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream.” We must all work for justice, and peace, always and everywhere, so that all humanity might live and flourish together.

STEVEN SIEBERT

Hastings

Cuts in federal funding through NIH highlight need to stand up for science

To the Editor:

On March 7, I participated in a NYC rally (one of many around the country) organized by Stand Up for Science 2025. The event featured an impressive lineup of speakers, including former NIH directors, Nobel Prize laureates, and elected officials.

This rally was a response to drastic funding cuts to science, including at NIH. The legal basis for these cuts has been challenged — but NIH has not distributed money for the last two months or so. One dynamic

speaker charged each of us to tell stories about why funding science matters. Here is one story.

My work includes developing new treatments for people with anorexia nervosa. What you may not know about anorexia nervosa is that it is both very serious — causing physical and psychological pain for young people and their families — and can be treated. My team has found that there may be psychological, pharmacological, and neuro-modulatory ways to target places in

the brain that keep people stuck in the illness, and help them to change behavior.

Taking scientific steps to test our new ideas requires the scale of funding only available through NIH (pharmaceutical companies are not interested — anorexia nervosa is, alas, not a good money maker). To decide if the ideas we propose are worth funding, NIH does not simply “trust me.” Their experienced team (some of whom have now been fired) work with a group of independent scientists who, essential-

ly, donate time to decide if work like mine merits funding.

Many families in the Rivertowns have received care through my team — and others have joined us as healthy volunteers. I am thoroughly grateful for your partnership, as research collaborators and as taxpaying citizens. I hope we can keep helping each other, not just by participating in, but also standing up for, science.

JOANNA STEINGLASS

Hastings

End trend of mayors appointing trustees to the village board in Hastings

To the Editor:

In his letter here last week, Hastings Trustee Morgen Fleisig omits the crucial detail about his run for mayor. As Democratic Committee chair Cassandra Sweet explained at the candidates' forum — two present trustees are running against each other for the open mayor's seat. One, Tommy Drake, is at the end of his term. To run for mayor, he is giving up his trustee seat. If he loses for mayor, Drake will be out.

The other, Fleisig, has a year left in his

term. If Fleisig loses for mayor, he is still trustee. A self-described pro-development “urbanist,” Fleisig has nothing to lose.

But here's the rub. After a question from the audience, Ms. Sweet revealed the significance of Fleisig's maneuver. If he wins for mayor, he resigns his trustee seat, leaving it vacant. Who fills trustee vacancies? The mayor. If Fleisig wins, he will immediately appoint a comrade as trustee. Whomever Fleisig appoints serves an entire year unelected, and then runs as an incumbent

Democratic trustee — a lock.

If this maneuver sounds familiar to 10706ers, it should. During the Swiderski and Armacost administrations, non-running trustees would resign, so their seats could be appointed by the mayor. This undemocratic maneuver was used so often that when Trustee Leaf wanted to resign in 2021, Mayor Armacost didn't let him. Four of five board members were already first appointed at the time (including Armacost and Fleisig). Leaf stayed on, but didn't

run. His seat was filled properly — by an election. The winner was Tommy Drake.

The Hastings voters want change at Village Hall. We moved the Village vote to November from obscurity in March. Now we have an actual June primary for mayor. Let's use it. The era of board of trustee appointments in 10706 has to finally end.

BRIAN ALLEN

Hastings

Letters continue on page 15

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The Agenda

SAT
15

Live Classic Rock and Pop Hits: Slowburn

ARDSLEY

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

“Live at the Upstream”

HASTINGS

7:30 p.m. / \$5-\$10. Upstream Gallery, 8 Main St. Folk musician and songwriter Colin McGrath performs in an intimate setting. upstreamgallery.com

Farmers’ Market

HASTINGS

9:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Commuter Lot, Southside Avenue. hastingsfarmersmarket.org

Author Talk

IRVINGTON

3 p.m. / Free. Irvington Public Library, 12 S. Astor St. Lois Cahall discusses her newest book, “The Many Lives and Loves of Hazel Lavery” in honor of St. Patrick’s Day and Women’s International History month. irvingtonlibrary.org

Guided Nature Walk

YONKERS

10 a.m. / Free. Lenoir Nature Preserve, 19 Dudley St. Register by emailing turlan@oponline.net. hras.org

Artist Tour and Workshop

YONKERS

1:30 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. Ebony Bolt teaches her sketching technique currently on display in “Botanical Dreams in the Concrete Jungle.” hrm.org

Juried Members Exhibition: Opening Reception

YONKERS

1-6 p.m. / Free. Blue Door Art Center, 13 Riverdale Ave. On view through April 19. bluedoorartcenter.org

Live Jazz: Javon Jackson Quartet

TARRYTOWN

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

“The Weir – Ghost Stories with a Gaelic Twist”

SLEEPY HOLLOW

8 p.m. / \$45. Hudson Valley Writers Center, Philipse Manor Station. writerscenter.org

History Walk

SLEEPY HOLLOW

10 a.m. / \$4. Rockwood Hall, park in the lot behind Phelps Memorial Hospital, 701 N. Broadway. A 2-mile guided trek to explore the former estate of William Rockefeller. Registration required. rockefellerstateparkpreserve.eventbrite.com



Irvington author and two-time Emmy nominee Robert Firpo-Cappiello reads from “Rag Doll Heart,” his collection of semi-autobiographical short stories, on Tuesday, March 18, at the Irvington Public Library.

“Creating Your Pollinator Garden” Workshop

GREENBURGH

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. / Free. Greenburgh Public Library, 300 Tarrytown Road. Ardsley Pollinator Pathway’s three-part series concludes with “Preparation for Planting and Maintaining the Garden.” Register online. ardsleypollinatorpathway.org

SUN
16

Purim Carnival

DOBBS FERRY

10 a.m.-1 p.m. / ticket prices vary based on activity. Greenburgh Hebrew Center, 515 Broadway. Festivities include carnival games,

crafts, food, and a magic show (\$10 per family) beginning at 11:45 a.m. ghcny.org

Coffee and Crafting: Jewelry Making

HASTINGS

10 a.m.-noon / \$15, \$10 for members. The Maker Hive, 416 Warburton Ave. makerhive.space

“Prelude to a Dream”

HASTINGS

1-5 p.m. / Free. Denouement Fine Art, 579 Warburton Ave. Opening reception for Stephen Stoller’s exhibit of original oil paintings. denouementfineart.com

Friends of Old Croton Aqueduct: Tibbetts Brook Park Walk

YONKERS

1 p.m. / Free. Tibbetts Brook Park, 355 Midland Ave. Four-mile loop featuring the history of aqueducts and trails. Registration

required. aqueduct.org

“Hilby: The Skinny German Juggle Boy”

TARRYTOWN

2 p.m. / \$18, \$15 for members. The Ark at the Shames JCC, 371 S. Broadway. The performance includes unicycles of all sizes and juggling unexpected objects. Purchase tickets online. shamesjcc.org

Red Hot Chilli Pipers

TARRYTOWN

7 p.m. / \$45-\$55. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. The Celtic rock band consists of bagpipes, guitars, keyboards, and drums. tarrytownmusichall.org

Brazilian Drummer Vanderlei Pereira

TARRYTOWN

4 and 6 p.m. / \$25, \$20 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. Pereira performs with his band, Blindfold Test. jazzforumarts.org

Live Music: The Chris Conte Trio

HASTINGS

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

“Rag Doll Heart” Reading

IRVINGTON

7 p.m. / Free. Irvington Public Library, 12 S. Astor St. Irvington author and two-time Emmy nominee Robert Firpo-Cappiello shares semi-autobiographical short stories. irvingtonlibrary.org

WED
19

Friends of the Ardsley Public Library Cornhole Tournament

ARDSLEY

7-10 p.m. / \$35. House of Sports, 1 Elm St. Tickets include tournament, drinks, and light bites. Proceeds support library programs. Register at forms.gle/teZ5ag217WF7gfAG8.

New to the Rivertowns Meetup

DOBBS FERRY

10-11 a.m. / Free. HudCo, 145 Palisade St., Suite 200. RSVP at hudco.eventbrite.com.

THURS
20

Virtual Tour of the Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site

IRVINGTON

7 p.m. / Free. Learn about Walker’s contributions to civil rights and educational opportunities for African Americans and women. Visit irvingtonlibrary.org for the Zoom link.

Krishna Das Benefit Concert for Tibetan Home of Hope

TARRYTOWN

7:30 p.m. / \$66-\$91. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

“The Art of Drag”

TARRYTOWN

6:30 p.m. / \$15. The Pocantico Center, 200 Lake Road. The performance celebrates creativity, courage, and community, followed by a reception. Purchase tickets online. rbf.org/pocantico/events

FRI
21

“Into the Woods”

ARDSLEY

7 p.m. / \$22, \$20 for students. Ardsley High School, 300 Farm Road. The Sondheim musical is presented by the Ardsley High School Drama Club. Also Saturday, March 22, 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets at cur8.com with keyword Ardsley.

Live Country, Rock, and Pop: Even Trade Band

ARDSLEY

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

River’s Edge Theatre Company: Cold Reads

HASTINGS

6:30 p.m. / \$5. The Good Witch Coffee Bar, 134 Southside Ave. The monthly play-reading series features local actors tackling a mystery script with no rehearsal. riversedgetheatre.com

Comedy: Whitney Cummings

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / \$51-\$71. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

Con Ed rate hikes
Continued from page 1

of the PSC. In the letter, Stewart-Cousins opposes the rate increase requested by Con Edison, stating that her “constituents are already faced with outlandish electric and gas bills because of the previous increases the PSC has granted to the company.” She urged Christian to deny the request, as it “flies in the face of the priorities of the state Senate, Assembly, and the governor to make life for New Yorkers more affordable.”

Stewart-Cousins referred to the most recent increase that PSC granted to Con Edison, which went into effect in January.

“This was the latest increase which the PSC has granted Con Edison on a yearly basis for at least the past six years,” she wrote, “It is time to change the game. ConEd’s delivery rates are too high now; to increase them further increases the burden on the public.”

In a unanimous, bipartisan vote on March 10, the Westchester County Board of Legislators agreed to authorize the County to request party status in ConEd’s electric and gas rate cases pending before the PSC. Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins signed legislation authorizing this request the following day.

County Legislator David Imamura, who represents Ardsley, Hastings, Irvington, Dobbs Ferry, and Greenburgh, commented on the proposed rate increase in a March 10 press release from the board of legislators.

“At a time when the CEO of Con Edison is making more than \$16 million a year, it is outrageous to place the burden of paying

corporate executives’ salaries on the backs [of] the working people of Westchester,” he said. “I’m thrilled that today the County is ensuring we have our day in court.”

When signing on to the cases challenging the rate hikes, Jenkins also announced that he will be participating in the PSC’s online hearing in early April. He called on Con Edison to hold an in-person hearing in Westchester so that residents and business owners have the opportunity to voice their concerns and receive answers.

According to Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner in a press release shared on March 9, he received a request from the Westchester Municipal Officials Association asking if Greenburgh would join at least 20 other municipalities in Westchester hiring a special counsel with expertise dealing with utility fights. At the town board’s work session on March 11, the town board discussed this recommendation, and agreed to intervene. They invited two attorneys from the Municipal Officials Associations to give presentations at a future meeting.

County Legislator Jewel Williams Johnson, who represents Elmsford, Greenburgh, Tarrytown, and White Plains, attended the meeting and encouraged residents to take action.

“I want to emphasize the importance of our residents and constituency being aware that we need as many people as possible to sign up for the Public Service Commission’s public hearings,” she said. “There are two virtual sessions on April 8, and two sessions on April 9. Everybody and their mother needs to sign up and make comments.”

Opinion

School bond will fund critical investments

To the Editor:

The Hastings Board of Education is working toward building a stronger future for the children of our schools. The upcoming budget and bond votes are critical investments in our students, our community, and the long-term success of our district. We have been listening closely and carefully, shaping a proposal that balances our instructional needs with our responsibility to taxpayers.

This bond isn’t just about today; it’s about ensuring our facilities and classroom environment excel for years to come. Smart investments now will prevent costly repairs later and create the best possible learning environment for our students.

As we finalize the bond details, the quality and

thoroughness of information available to residents matters. Our board is aware that a lot of erroneous information has been circulated, and will be addressing this proactively in these pages, online, and in our meetings starting on March 11. As always, we welcome the community’s engagement, critiques, and suggestions as we work together to strengthen our schools and our village’s future.

ALEX DAL PIAZ (PRESIDENT),
SILVIA ROBLES (VICE PRESIDENT), DAVID
BARONE, CATHERINE DIMARTINO, THERE-
SA MCCAFFREY, JODIE MEYER, AND MAU-
REEN LENNON-SANTANA
Hastings Board of Education

Reduce ill-conceived Hastings school bond

To the Editor:

I echo the concerns about the excessive costs associated with the Hastings Board of Education’s (BOE) proposed improvements to Farragut Middle School (FMS).

In response to the November 2024 BOE presentation for the Farragut Complex by PBDW Architects, I understand the goals to include: a) increased classrooms; faculty/admin space; plus, storage; and b) an improved FMS entrance.

As a licensed New York State architect, I see items which are expensive to build and question the use of glass facades, which are inconsistent with the brick exterior of the school complex. Thoughts for the BOE to consider:

a) The relocation of the cafeteria to the courtyard to create additional third-floor classrooms is thoughtful. However, there is no need for a glass-enclosed, two-story-high cafeteria space and roof deck. High school students eat lunch off-site, and the auditorium handles large events.

b) New classrooms at the courtyard bridge — this proposal for cantilevered, glass-enclosed classrooms is structurally expensive to build.

Glass creates acoustic issues, increases glare, has low thermal performance, and is subject to damage from playground activities.

c) FMS entrance — This is a worthy cause, but the proposed design with the marquee-like façade necessitates the removal of (four) mature trees and would block daylight to the gym. In 2024, the school cut down (three) mature trees.

d) Storage — Which storage needs have increased? Many municipalities have digitized their records and use of cloud-based records storage and most suppliers will make just-in-time deliveries in lieu of stockpiling. Can the former FMS storage areas be converted to classrooms and staff space, as part of the flood reconstruction?

Conclusion: The proposed bond needs to be substantially reduced in value as it will increase school taxes for decades to come. We see the impact of the 2020 Hillside bond already.

Please attend the next BOE meeting on March 11 and mark your calendars for the June 11 bond vote.

MICHELE BODDEWYN, AIA
Hastings

— CORRECTIONS —

The first Revolution on the Hudson event was in 2022, not 2023, as was reported in the March 7 issue. In addition, the “Spotlight on Westchester’s Revolutionary Women” at Port Chester Village Hall on March

20 is at 1 p.m., not 2 p.m.

“Many Things at Once” is Veera Hiranandani’s second picture book, not first, as was reported in the Jan. 31 issue.

Police

Continued from page 2

tered 2022 Honda Civic with improper Georgia temporary license plates on Farragut Avenue on the afternoon of Thursday, March 6.

IRVINGTON

Burglary arrest: A 33-year-old homeless man was arrested for entering Irvington Presbyterian Church, 25 North Broadway, on Thursday, March 6, which was reported at 12:24 a.m. He was charged with burglary in the third degree, a felony.

Bomb threat: A bomb threat was phoned into the Ardsley Country Club on Saturday, March 8. The club was evacuated and then searched by the Westchester County Hazardous Devices

Unit. Nothing was found and no one was arrested. The Irvington Police Department, Volunteer Fire Department, and Volunteer Ambulance Corps responded to the scene.

Theft from church: Five thousand dollars was illegally transferred from an Immaculate Conception Church bank account on Friday, March 7. That theft was reported on March 10.

School lockdown: in response to a photo of a teenage student posted on Snapchat with a threatening caption, there was a lockdown at Irvington High School and Middle School, and a lockout at Dows Lane Elementary School and the Main Street School, on Monday, March 10. The lockdown and lockout were lifted after it was determined the student was not a threat.

A Dispatch DISCUSSION

Cellphones
in Schools

Wednesday
MAR
26
7 p.m.

HudCo
145 Palisade St.
Dobbs Ferry



A lively panel discussion on New York’s proposed school phone ban, featuring educators, parents, and students.

Moderator:	Ken Slentz	Monique	Francis	Frieda
Janine Annett	Dobbs Ferry	Johnson	O’Shea	Belasco
Rivertowns	School District	LCSW, Ardsley	Irvington	Hastings High
Dispatch	Superintendent	School District	parent	School Senior
Contributing		Social Worker		
Writer				

Sports

EDITED BY ROB DIANTONIO

Ardsley wins first section title in program history

BY ROB DIANTONIO

Ardsley has had successful teams the past few seasons but could not get over the hump of reaching the Section 1 finals. Two quarterfinal losses and a setback in the semifinals ended the Panthers' seasons over the last three years.

But everything came together for Ardsley in the 2024-25 season.

The top-seeded Panthers captured their first section title in program history, defeating No. 2 Pelham 54-36 in the Section 1 Class A championship game on March 7 at the Westchester County Center.

"It means everything for this group," Ardsley coach Nick Resavy said. "We've been together for eight years. I've coached these girls since fourth and fifth grade in travel and AAU, then when they got to high school. These are like my kids. We grew up together and I wanted it for them."

It was another slow start for Ardsley, trailing 9-3 after one quarter. But the Panthers came to life in the second quarter and took a 19-13 lead into halftime.

"It's a 32-minute game, not eight," Resavy said. "We wanted to hold our composure and not get too tight. We know Pelham's a great team and Taylor Green's a special player. They've got a great supporting cast. But we wanted to hold our composure. It's kind of been our theme since we lost that Hen Hud game [on Feb. 7]."

Senior forward Iva Corluka, an all-tournament selection, turned up the dial in the second half. She scored 19 of her 23 points over the final 16 minutes.

"I knew because I wasn't finishing that I had to take my time in the second half to really help us out and bring us ahead," Corluka said. "We just knew that [Pelham] could go on their runs, but we just had to stay calm and composed. That's what we did."

Corluka, who is committed to St. Bonaventure, also had 16 rebounds, four assists, and two blocks.

Fellow senior captain Joie Levy said that Corluka "played insane."

"She's a D1 player and that's what we expected from her," Levy added. "She went out there and accomplished it. We're just so happy."

Corluka said that Baye Moussa Keita, who played at Syracuse University and has helped the team over the last month as a coach, pulled her aside at halftime and told her to take her time on offense and "go into contact." "They always yell at me for fading away," she added.

Corluka scored the first seven points of the third quarter to give the Panthers a 26-13 lead. Pelham countered with a three-point play and a basket from Green. Dylan



(Above) Ardsley celebrates with the gold ball. (Below) Leah Burriss secures a rebound. Photos by Rob DiAntonio.

Paley's three-pointer from the left wing put the Panthers up 31-20 with 2:48 left in the third quarter. Ardsley led 36-28 after three quarters.

After a Pelham three-pointer and one-of-two from the line, the Panthers went on a 9-0 run to build a 47-33 lead midway through the third quarter. Corluka converted a three-point play and then scored on a feed from Levy. Madison Bortstein nailed a foul-line jumper and Leah Burriss scored inside.

Ardsley outscored Pelham 18-8 in the final quarter to secure the gold ball. Elise O'Brien made a three in the final 30 seconds, sending the bench into a frenzy. The final seconds ticked off the clock and Ardsley stormed the court, celebrating its first section crown.

Levy, who had five points, five rebounds, and two steals, was named the tournament's MVP.

"Doing this with my teammates just means the world to me," Levy said of winning the section. "I couldn't imagine doing it with any other group. Our relationships got even stronger [this season] and it converts to the court."

Burriss, a junior, made the all-tournament shot.

Continued on page 18



Dobbs Ferry falls to YMA in championship showdown

BY ROB DIANTONIO

Coming into the Section 1 Class B championship game against Yonkers Montessori Academy, Dobbs Ferry was riding high. The Eagles rallied to defeat Blind Brook in the semifinals on the strength of an 18-point fourth quarter from Ella Moon for their ninth-straight win.

Second-seeded Dobbs, however, was unable to keep the run going in the finals as the Eagles fell to top-seeded YMA, 56-45, on March 9 at the Westchester County Center.

"They worked extremely hard to get to this point," Dobbs Ferry coach Kasey Grisanti said. "We just ran out of gas."

The Eagles started the game strong behind three-pointers from Mya Ustares and Alexa Vicchio. They led 8-6 after one quarter but YMA settled in, took a 10-8 lead early in the second quarter, and never trailed again.

A physical YMA squad with potent guard play and size in the paint took a 24-17 advantage into halftime. YMA increased its lead to 37-24 with 3:16 left in the third quarter.

"YMA was a strong and well-rounded opponent and we knew that going into the game," Moon said. "Their lead was just too big to come back from. It didn't seem like a lot but when they were constantly going back to the free-throw line, and making those shots, it was hard to get a lead back."

Samira Phillips' three-point play on a feed from Vicchio with 10.3 seconds left in the third quarter trimmed the deficit to 39-30 heading into the fourth.

Three free throws from Dann and a Moon left wing three-pointer had the Eagles down just 41-36 with 5:30 remaining in the game. But YMA was able to extend the lead to 10 points at 47-37 with under 3 minutes left. It was academic from there as Moon made two threes in the final minute but it was too late for the Eagles.

"They caused a lot of turnovers for us," Grisanti said of YMA. "They're a great team. We couldn't figure it out today. We couldn't settle down on offense and settle our nerves."

Moon, who made the all-tournament team, was held scoreless in the first half but came to life in the second half. She finished with 15 points and six rebounds.

"They were trying to ice her out and it got a little in her head," Grisanti said of YMA's defense on Moon in the first half. "The second half she was able to step up as a senior and give it all she had."

Dann, who also made the all-tournament squad, ended up with a double-double of 11 points and 11 rebounds. She also had four steals. Vicchio and Phillips netted seven points apiece. Phillips corralled seven rebounds and blocked two shots. Vicchio grabbed five rebounds. Ustares and Chloe Runge had three and two points, respectively.

Despite the loss, it was a memorable run for the Eagles, who finished the season 15-8. Dobbs endured a rough patch in the middle of the season when it dropped six out of eight games, but the chemistry started to



(Above) Dobbs Ferry's Abby Dann heads to the basket. (Below) Alexa Vicchio leads a fast break. Photos by Rob DiAntonio.

soar after that. The Eagles won nine games in a row to reach the Class B final.

Grisanti added that prior to this season she did not have a playoff win as the Eagles' head coach. But she gave all the accolades to her players.

"All the credit goes to them," Grisanti said. "They were all in. They believed in themselves, especially in the second half of the season. To see the growth and maturity as a whole unit was amazing. I'm proud of all of them."

The trio of senior starters — Moon, Dann, and Vicchio — left their mark on the program. Moon gave credit to the underclassmen and said the three seniors "could not have been more proud of our teammates."

"They showed up for us every single day," Moon added. "At the beginning of the season, the three of us wanted to win so badly, and they recognized that and worked so hard. That did not go unnoticed by us. It meant everything that we ended our season as one family and we'll forever cherish this season."

Moon, Dann, and Vicchio played together since they were young and helped build the Eagles into a contender after some difficult seasons.

"We don't get here without them," Grisanti said. "The three of them, I had the pleasure of coaching them both on JV and at the varsity level. To watch them grow into the young women they are, I couldn't be more proud. They really were true leaders and each of them stepped up in big moments when they needed to. I'm very sorry for them that they couldn't take this home because they wanted it."

Dobbs Ferry also graduates two other seniors in Kim Gregorio and Ella O'Connor, who was the team manager this season.





Iva Corluka looks to finish in the paint.

Photo by Rob DiAntonio.

Ardasley hoops

Continued from page 16

ment team. She had 11 points and eight rebounds. The duo of Corluka and Burriss combined for 34 points and 24 rebounds. They once again displayed that they're a lethal combination in the paint.

"We thoroughly believe that they're the best bigs in Class A," Resavy said. "We've wanted to play through them the entire tournament. We did that and they did a great job."

Bortstein totaled nine points and six rebounds. Paley and O'Brien had three points each.

Green led Pelham with 15 points but had just two points in the first half.

"We had Leah, who is a great defender, start on her," Corluka said. "It would have been not good if I was in foul trouble like against Westlake. The game plan was for me to start on Brooke [Green] and I could be in extra help."

The Panthers needed overtime to defeat Pelham 65-62 during the regular season on Jan. 8. But the championship game rematch was a comfortable 18-point win, displaying the team's growth over the course of the season.

"Last time it was early in the season and we were just trying to figure stuff out," Levy said. "But it was all about composure today. If we just trust our teammates, trust the process, we knew we were going to get that gold ball."

Ardasley improved to 21-3 when it cruised to a 76-40 win over Section 9's Marlboro in the Class A regional semifinals on March 11 at Yorktown High School.

Corluka led the way with 27 points and 19 rebounds. Burriss had 17 points, 14 rebounds, and three blocks as the Panthers dominated the paint again. Levy added 13 points, six rebounds, and four assists. Paley and O'Brien had six and five points, respectively. Paley also blocked three shots.

Bortstein (four assists) and Whitney Butler scored four points apiece.

Ardasley started the game on a 17-0 run before Marlboro finally got on the scoreboard with 1:33 left in the first quarter. The lead was 35-13 at halftime and 59-33 after three quarters.

The Panthers advanced to the regional championship game, where they will face Section 4's Johnson City at Visions Veterans Memorial Arena in Binghamton on March 16. A win there would propel the team to the state final four, which takes place at Hudson Valley Community College in Troy on March 21-22.

"Ever since I've been on this team, it's really been for this goal," Corluka said of winning the section. "It just means everything. The motivation from losing last season helped us get here. We didn't even make it to the County Center. We knew that we had to pick it up, especially me and Joie. We knew this was our year to do it."

NY Forward Grant

Continued from page 1

that and make that a cultural center, sort of like what's happened in Tarrytown and Irvington, I think it would bring a lot of people to downtown," Rossillo explained.

For the past three decades the theater has been used for Stolen Moments' private events and video shoots, and occasionally for public events in collaboration with local organizations. Making it a public theater would require the participation of Stolen Moments, and like all of the proposed plans, it's yet to be finalized.

Before submitting the application in November, the Village fielded input from multiple sources, including members of the board of trustees, municipal administrative staff, and business owners. The Village also solicited ideas of what the public would like to see downtown via online surveys and a table at the Ferry Festa. Trustees Jessica Galen and Christy Knell helped lead the effort to synthesize the feedback into a successful grant application.

"It's not going to fund all of the improvements that we need in the downtown, but it focuses on these programmatic things that it can be hard to get funding for, and I think that's what's so beautiful about this grant," Galen told the Dispatch. "We have a lot of infrastructure challenges, we have these other really big-ticket things like emergency services and housing that are all so important, but the day-to-day texture of living in a place, so much of that is tied up in what the downtown feels like when you're there."

Galen's volunteer experience with Dobbs Ferry began when she joined the Downtown Task Force in 2018 during its first year,



Village Administrator Rob Yamuder, Village Attorney Lori Lee Dickson, Trustee Michael Patino, Trustee Shari Rosen Ascher, Trustee Christy Knell, Mayor Vincent Rossillo, Trustee Jessica Galen, Trustee Matt Rosenberg, Deputy Mayor Nicole Sullivan, and village planner Valerie Monastra.

where she worked with Knell, a founding member of the group that's now known as the Downtown Committee. In 2023, Dobbs Ferry was one of five municipalities awarded \$250,000 in Westchester County's pilot Downtown Improvement Grant program.

"We've been working all these years to basically make this argument that we need help and support to help make the downtown successful and make the businesses in it succeed," Knell told the Dispatch. "And I think now for the State to acknowledge that we're there and we're ready, and to have their support with their resources I think is going to be really transformative and so exciting."

"It's such a huge recognition of the work that's been done over so many years," Galen added. "Most municipalities who apply for this don't receive the grant the first time, and

I think it's a really strong endorsement of not only the leadership that we've had on these issues of downtown improvement, but also the really clear involvement of the community."

Rossillo, whose term as mayor ends in December and will not seek re-election, encourages residents to attend monthly village board meetings throughout the year to keep track of updates to the proposals, and to also write letters to the board and speak during the public comment portions of meetings to share suggestions.

"I'm so thrilled that we got this historic award, and I'm glad to be on the ground floor to get the ball rolling," Rossillo said. "I have great confidence in the board of trustees and the staff and I'm sure that they will carry it forward, and it will be great to see these changes in the future as I'm driving by or sitting in the park."

and don't have children and grandchildren to continue to remember them."

Two episodes are set to be filmed in April and May. These interviews will be guided by seventh-graders at Woodlands' religious school, who are preparing to become b'nai mitzvah.

"They have been learning about the Holocaust for the last few months, and as a kind of capstone project, they are going to

prepare questions, and they will be the ones who sit with the second-generation survivors and ask them the question, be there with them," Young said. "To me, that's highly symbolic. I've been learning about this my whole life. [With] my educator, Sarah Canfield-Dafilou, and our director of youth engagement, Alex Shapiro, we are now preparing the next generation to be the ones to tell the story."

Denham

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get house seats for every show for 10 years. It was brilliant."

Denham continued to work doing voiceovers and industrial films, which are made for a company's employees. For the past 30 years, Denham has also been involved in real estate, working as a broker for Houlihan Lawrence.

In October 2024, she received a phone call from her agent, informing her of a Zoom audition for a beer commercial the next day.

"All I knew was that it was a very odd script about a son called David, and we tell him that he's got a twin brother, called 'other David,' and we left him in America," she said. "It was odd, but I did it. I mean, I had no idea who 'David' was."

She would soon come to learn that David referred to British soccer star David Beckham, with "other David" to be played by actor and filmmaker Matt Damon. She wouldn't know until she was on set that Ben Affleck was the commercial's director, and that it was to be aired during the Super Bowl.

The shoot, which took place in Los Angeles, lasted four days and was "enormous," Denham said.

"They had three cameras, and normally a commercial will use maybe one or two, but this was like a full movie set," she said. "It was probably the biggest shoot I've ever been on, with the most people backstage... Once they told us that it was going to be on the Super Bowl, the guy playing my husband and I both looked at each other and went, 'Oh, that's why this is so big.'"

The shoot resulted in two commercials, one of which has not been aired yet. Denham is proud of this project, because her ad libs were included in the final product.

Denham hopes the Stella Artois ad will lead to more exposure and future commercial bookings. In the meantime, she plans to return to Hastings from Sarasota in May.

"I love the community. I love proximity to Manhattan, to the theater," she said. "I like the small-town, safe feeling that I believe we still have in Hastings."

Holocaust Living History

Continued from page 5

egate the Holocaust to just this one moment in history. To understand these are errors and tragedies that people will continue to inflict upon one another unless we stand up as a people and call it unacceptable. That is the most important lesson, in addition to remembering millions of people who died

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