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4 Black Women on the City Council



Council Majority Leader Corazon Pineda-Isaac and Council President Elect Lakisha Collins Bellamy, right, make up a new majority of women or color on the council

OP-ED

Yonkers was established as a City in 1872, and the City Council was established in 1877. In the last 144 years we have only seen a majority of women serving on the City Council twice.

On January 1st, when Lakisha Collins-Bellamy is sworn in it will mark the third time the aforementioned will be true. In addition, it will mark the first time in Yonkers history that a majority of the City Council is Black people or People of Color (the current Majority Leader Corazon Pineda-Isaac is a Latina and recognizes herself as a member of the African Diaspora), and therefore a majority Black women!

These four women should be proud of themselves and should be celebrated; Shanae Williams, following a rich tradition of Black Councilmembers in District 1; Corazon Pineda-Isaac, the first Latina to hold the position of Majority Leader- District 2; Tasha Freeman-Diaz, the first Black person, man or woman to represent District 3; and Lakisha Collins-Bellamy, the first Black person, man or woman, to be elected City Council President.

Every resident in the City of Yonkers should be excited to witness this day in this City's history. But the work cannot stop there. They will be joined by Councilmember John Rubbo to form a Super Majority. This should mean that historic pieces of legislation and budgets that work for the children and families of Yonkers, especially those that have often struggled to be heard, should be passed.

The first signal of that should be on Day 1, when the Yonkers City Council should choose one of those women to be it's Majority Leader. No disrespect to John Rubbo, a recent convert to the Democratic Party, now Yonkers has the opportunity to show the County, the State, and the Nation what can be done when women lead.

WOMEN CAN LEAD! WOMEN SHOULD LEAD! Yonkers voters said by choosing these four women that we want to see women in the forefront – and that's what we should get. Each of the four women have proven in their own right that they have the skill set needed to lead and they should

continued on pg 7-

Yonkers Inauguration Delayed as COVID Spikes Again: Testing Hard to Find Without Long Lines



Council Majority Leader and Deputy County Executive Test Positive

By Dan Murphy

Yonkers City Clerk Vinny Spano made the announcement on Dec. 22, "Postponement of the January 1st 2022 Swearing In Ceremony of Yonkers Officials. In light of the recent increase of Covid cases here in Yonkers as well as around the country, the January 1st 2022 Swearing In Ceremony of Yonkers Officials will be postponed to a later date, yet to be determined. It is with concern for the Health and Safety of all that we painstakingly made this decision. We apologize for any inconvenience this postponement may have caused."

The delay in the Inauguration, which is still seven days away, is a sign that COVID cases continue to increase in Yonkers and across the country, but testing kits can no longer be easily found in stores, and long lines are at any testing sites.

MSNBC host Andrea Mitchell said what many Yonkers residents are thinking, during an interview with Dr. Anthony Fauci on Dec. 21. "The testing shortages are profound, I don't need to tell you, even for people who fortunately can pay for it and go commercially. They're just not available," Mitchell said. "The drugstores don't have them. The commercial locations don't have appointments ready because it's a holiday week, and we all should have anticipated this. I know the president is making a big announcement today, but isn't the administration behind the curve on being prepared to ship about 500 million free home tests when we need them now?"

The people of Yonkers should not expect to see a Free COVID home testing kit for at least 30 days. That is despite efforts by NY Governor Kathy Hochul to get free test kits to health centers and clinics here in Westchester and across the state, and the recent announcement by President Joe Biden that 500 million home testing kits have been ordered, but will not arrive until Feb. 2022.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said that he has offered to re-open the County Center in White Plains and Glen Island Park in New Rochelle as testing sites to Governor Kathy Hochul. New York State will have to staff the locations, and find a health care partner to operate the site, but the hope is that both could be open in January.

continued on pg 7-

Santa Returns to a Re-Opened Yonkers Police Athletic League



By Dan Murphy

Santa Claus returned to the Yonkers Police Athletic League to celebrate the big day with a children who got donated gifts. Over 125 kids stopped by. Gifts were donated by the YPD's Community Affairs Division!

Special thanks to the Yonkers Police Cadets for providing the entertainment, and a special welcome to Marisol Mancebo, the new Executive Director of the Yonkers PAL.

COVID caused the closure of the PAL's Walshin center on North Broadway for a year and a half. But now the PAL has regrouped with some support from local businesses.

Hopefully, this new wave of COVID will give the PAL a chance to stay open for a while. The kids of Yonkers need it!

We look forward to providing our readers with more information about the new Yonkers PAL in the weeks to come. They have always had a special place in Yonkers Rising. And Santa, Great Job!

Thank You Yonkers for Providing us with the Opportunity to Serve You and Provide you with the local news that Yonkers deserves. Please read us on YonkersTimes.com and we will see you in 2022!

YMA Lady Eagles Win Yonkers City Hoops Championship



Congratulations to the YMA Lady Eagles, who won their first City Championship in program and schools history. Last year the Lady Eagles finished in 2nd place. And this year after being disrespectfully ranked 3rd in pre-season polls, the YMA Lady Eagles beat Saunders 62-45 in the Yonkers City Championships.

Emma Reynolds had 24 points, Ana Ndoci finished with 18 points, 22 rebounds and 10 blocks despite sitting the entire 3rd quarter with 4 fouls, and Sinead McGourty finished with 9 points to help the Lady Eagles avenge their loss to Saunders last year.

YMA started the game hot and never looked back after a 22-11 first quarter lead. Congratulations to Emma Reynolds, who was named Tournament MVP. The entire YMA Girls Basketball team used the low prediction of how their year would go as an inspiration, and posted #3 in their meeting and group chats on social media.

"We always knew how good we were and we confirmed it with the City championship this year," said Coach Elie Moise. "Last year we lost our point guard in the finals with an injury and we couldn't recover. But in the offseason last year, the core five put in the hard work and effort required to win the title, traveling for AAU and off-season programs."

MaryKay Scott, Emma Reynolds, Emma Gleeson, Sinead McGourty, Britteny DaCosta, and Ana Ndoci have been playing together for four years, and the off-Season workouts/ Weightroom, Spookynook, Gymrats in Albany, and trips to South Jersey and Central Connecticut paid off with the trophy-the Yonkers Cup!

"I finally feel like my baby eagles have finally grown up into Lady eagles. We've taken our lumps as a younger group, but this time they've finally come onto their own. What I'm most proud of isn't their success on the court, it's academics. They lowest GPA with this group is a 96.5, and our team GPA is a 91.562. We take academics very seriously here at YMA. I know the minimum GPA for the city is about a 75 but all our girls know our requirement is an 85 minimum. Lastly, I must note that, both seniors Emma Reynolds and Emma Gleeson have an offer to play Basketball at The City College in New York," said Coach Moise.

NYS Sen. Leader Stewart-Cousins Brings Cheer for Holidays to Grandparent Primary Caregivers



NYS Senate Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, left with Grandparent Margaret Greer.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins' Angel Project will bring holiday gifts this week to 162 grandparents who are the primary caregivers for their grandchildren. The gifts have been purchased and donated by generous "Angels" who have fulfilled the grandparents' wishlists.

The Senator created the annual "Angel Project" six years ago to bring holiday cheer to grandparents who care for their grandchildren. While there are a number of organizations focused on making sure children have toys for the holidays, she found there were none focused on the caregivers, who often don't have anything to open. The grandparents often take on the role of caregiver to keep the children out of foster care. Most are on fixed incomes and think of the children before they think of themselves.

The "Angels" are caring individuals who wanted to participate in the project. All bought gifts for the grandparents they were matched with.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "I call it the Angel Project because I am asking people to do a little something for someone they do not even know, who they probably will never meet, but whose life will be changed by their generosity. Many of these families do not want to lose a child to the foster care system and the grandparents often become the primary parent for this reason. They sacrifice so much for their grandchildren. The Angel Project is our way of ensuring they are not overlooked during the holidays."

Partnering with the Senator are Family Service Society of Yonkers, Family Ties of Westchester, New Rochelle Housing Authority, Westchester County Department of Social Services, and the YWCA of Yonkers. These agencies identify the grandparents they work with and will deliver the gifts to them in time for the holidays.

Normally, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins hosts a luncheon for grandparents to meet their "Angels" and exchange gifts, but due to the ongoing pandemic, it had to be canceled again this year. To ensure gift delivery was safe, the Senate Majority Leader asked "Angels" to send gifts to the Senate office where her staff wrapped the presents for area nonprofits and religious organizations to pick up by appointment and deliver to families in need.

Charlie Knight, CEO of the YWCA of Yonkers said, "The YWCA of Yonkers appreciates and thanks Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for her exemplary work and dedication in uplifting the community during this time of need. The Angel Project creates a sense of joy, generosity, happiness and inspiration to all during this holiday season."

Carolyn Fluckinger, Director of the Kinship Support Program for Family Service Society of Yonkers said, "Senator Stewart-Cousins has demonstrated care and concern for grandparent and kinship caregivers raising children for many years, first as a Westchester County Legislator and now as the Senate Majority Leader. The caregivers who participate in the Angel Project through Family Service Society of Yonkers feel the sacrifices they have made to keep their families together are recognized by the Senator and the community."

"Angel" Claudia S. Lee said, "It's been my sincere honor to participate in Senator Andrea Stewart Cousins' Angel Project. My Church, North Yonkers Community Church, and I have contributed to this project since the beginning. And every year, we look forward to recognizing grandparents that make sacrifices for their grandchildren."

Grandparent Felisha Dixon said, "I feel great. There have been so many times since the girls came to me that I have not been able to get anything for myself. It is easy for me to speak from the heart in this situation."

Grandparent Margaret Greer said, "This project is very special. I still have the coat I received last year. I cannot go out and shop for myself now that I have my granddaughter."

Grandparent Rita Livingston said, "I think it is a beautiful thing they are doing. It is a great project and has been very helpful for me."

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins said, "It's heart-warming to see how many people want to give back even during the holidays, despite the difficulties posed by the ongoing pandemic. The organizations partnering with us are ensuring delivery of these presents in time for Christmas. We thank them for serving our most vulnerable during these challenging times, and always going above and beyond to help residents."

Letter to the Editor:

Mr. Murphy, I hope this Christmas Season you are able to include your Keep Christ in Christmas ad that runs every year, courtesy of Mr. Frank Spotorno. I look forward to it and agree with the message, that we should embrace and celebrate Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanzaa and all religions this time of year. I think we need it now more than every. God Bless You--Delores Stacey, Yonkers.

Editors Note:

Ms. Stacey-thanks for your kind letter and Merry Christmas to you and your family. Unfortunately, this year we do not have the room in color for the box but I think that your letter reminded us all about what Christmas is really about

Yonkers Police Investigate Dec. 17 TikTok Threats, Without Incident



By Dan Murphy

Several Westchester NY school district and local police departments addressed a number of vague warnings posted on TikTok about violence at schools on Dec. 17. The threats were made across the country and most schools stayed open, with both local and national law enforcement stating that the threats were low level with little or no specifics posted.

The Yonkers Police Department issued the following statement, "The Yonkers Police Department and Yonkers Public Schools are aware of the nationwide viral social media threats claiming that schools will be targeted with violence tomorrow, Friday, December 17th, 2021. These threats appear to have originated on the TikTok social media platform and have spread from there. There is zero credible information regarding specific threats to Yonkers Public Schools or private institutions. Yonkers Police Detectives will continue to monitor the situation. The Yonkers Police Department and Yonkers Public Schools places the highest priority on student safety; as such and out of an abundance of caution, you may see an increased police presence and enhanced security measures at school tomorrow. The Yonkers Police assesses all threats to our community and takes appropriate action. At the same time, as these types of viral incidents have increased with the proliferation of social media and mobile devices, we must guard against those who would instill fear in our communities and hold them accountable."

The Pelham School District took the threat most seriously, and conducted classes on Dec. 17 remotely.

An alert was issued by Westchester County Police Department after it received a tip from its School Resource Officer Program about purported threats made on TikTok regarding a potential incident on Friday, Dec. 17. "WCPD / School Resource Officers WCPD increased patrols today in the school districts where we have School Resource Officers assigned (Somers, North Salem, Lakeland and Hendrick Hudson). Our goal, as it is every day, is to create a safe environment for students, staff and the entire school community. In light of recent social media posts causing alarm across the nation, our Patrol and Special Operations Divisions are providing additional high visibility, directed patrols throughout the school day. The high visibility patrols supplement the safety and security presence provided by school resource officers. In addition, we increased our patrols around Westchester Community College and its annexes. The recent posts on TikTok regarding the potential for school violence today have been investigated by law enforcement. The posts are general and NOT directed at any individual school or location. The posts appear to have originated outside the United States. The investigation is ongoing and the threat is considered low level at this time," posted the Westchester County Police.

TikTok, the video sharing site most often mentioned in local news reports, said in a statement on Thursday that it was working with law enforcement "even though we have not found evidence of such threats originating or spreading via TikTok."

The company said a search of its posts showed users warning about the threats but no evidence of anyone directly making or promoting them. "We are deeply concerned that the proliferation of local media reports on an alleged trend that has not been found on the platform could end up inspiring real world harm," it said.

In a statement on Twitter, the F.B.I. urged people to contact the police or the federal authorities if they saw a threat against a school. "DO NOT share or forward the threat," the bureau said. "Doing so can spread misinformation and cause panic."

HBO- DMX Documentary Worth Watching



If you have some spare time during the holiday -new year break, check out the HBO documentary on Yonkers legend DMX called *Don't Try to Understand*. I enjoyed it and learned a lot. Visit YonkersTimes.com for more details about it.

<http://yonkerstimes.com/dmx-film-on-hbo-shows-us-the-comeback-relapse-final-days-in-y-o-of-rap-legend/>

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New Year's Eve Events

12/31 – New Year's Eve Dinner Party at Riedlbauer's Resort | Roundtop, NY

12/31 – A Celestial New Year's Eve at Scribner's Catskill Lodge + Prospect | Hunter, NY

12/31 – New Year's Firework Display at Windham Mountain | Windham, NY

See more at greatnortherncatskills.com/events

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Out of Control Shop Lifting Now Happening at Some Yonkers Supermarkets: Off Duty YPD Hired at ACME on McLean Avenue

By Dan Murphy

In my travels around Yonkers, as I dropped off 500 copies of Yonkers Rising at the ACME on McLean Avenue, I noticed a Yonkers Police officer standing at the exit. I asked if he was working off duty and he replied yes, explaining that ACME had hired some of Yonkers finest to work to try and stem the tide of shop lifting, which has gotten out of control in some neighborhoods in New York's third largest City.

On Nov. 23, Yonkers Police Commissioner John Mueller told the Yonkers City Council at their meeting on Nov. 23 that shoplifting in the major retail drug stores in the southwest portion of the City, (Walgreens, Rite Aid, CVS) has become "a considerable problem and a big time, repeat offender, recidivist crime," and that because of bail reform, Judges cannot keep repeat offenders behind bars and they are released, only to commit the same shoplifting crime at the same drug store, the next day and week and month.

"The vast majority of shoplifters in Yonkers are repeat offenders, and in our three area pharmacies the bi product is the shelves are becoming empty and the elderly can't find the items they need to purchase to live," said Mueller, who said that overall, shoplifting arrests are the same as last year, but that repeat offender arrests are on the rise.

"We believe that a multi-faceted solution is required that would include changes to the existing bail reform and how we can hard target some of the affected areas. The vast majority of shoplifters are a small subset of the criminal population. The same person goes into a pharmacy, steals, gets arrested and then is released, and the judge has no latitude to hold them. And when we have to repeatedly arrest the same person for shoplifting, we have limited resources and can't be spending time somewhere else," said Mueller, who also asked the retail pharmacies to step up their security and enforcement in their stores.

Commissioner Mueller recently made a trip to Albany to ask for the elimination of cash bail in exchange for giving Judges the power to place repeat offenders in jail.

Doug Horsting, head of Rite Aid's Asset Protection Program, called the problem "organized retail crime", he said "I have never seen this amount of shoplifting in my career. Customers are asking are you going out of business because there are no items on the shelves. Employees are afraid to go to work because they are assaulted and spit on. Shoplifters are coming in with large bags and the items are re-sold at a lower cost. We now have to hire additional security and lock up many items and install more cameras, but shoplifting is still rampant in Yonkers, and across the country. The support we have received from the Yonkers Police is second to none."

The officer that I spoke to at ACME said that "cash bail isn't needed," and agreed with Commissioner Mueller that what was needed was an effort to put repeat offenders in jail, "for even one night," I left him saying, "we appreciate what you are doing."

In another related story, the YPD is setting up traps for persons who steal boxes left by Amazon and UPS on the front porches of many Yonkers homes. The set up box has a GPS and once the thief takes it, YPD are alerted and can track down to culprit.

So to all who are trying to steal your Christmas gift, the Porch Pirates or Grinches--You Better Watch Out!. NBC-NY Channel 4 News did a segment on this, check it out at

<https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/to-catch-a-pirate-police-set-trap-for-suspects-allegedly-stealing-packages-from-homes/3455909/?fbclid=IwAR2d1pMmpWRF6ba23vdVg7NUIMZJcjr0Jog1Jzy23HCAAF-8znt-MZxj8qT0>

We all Need A 'Linus Blanket'



By Eric W. Schoen

I was looking forward to writing a very positive column for our Christmas-New Year combined edition this week. I thought we would all be gathering with family and friends which it's hard to believe we haven't done in close to two years. People freely traveling to visit their loved ones like any normal year.

But as I sat down earlier this week, all I could think of is that we all need a 'Linus Blanket' right now. Don't tell me you don't know what that is! If you are not familiar with the Peanuts comic strip, no better time to turn on your 75 inch television and watch 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' this week or next.

Peanuts is a syndicated daily and Sunday American comic strip written and illustrated by Charles M. Schulz. The strip's original run extended from 1950 to 2000, continuing in reruns afterward. Peanuts is among the most popular and influential in the history of comic strips, with 17,897 strips published in all. It is referred to as "arguably the longest story ever told by one human being".

The phrase 'Linus Blanket' denotes an object, or occasionally a person, depended upon for reassurance and comfort. It was named after Linus van Pelt, a small boy who carries a blanket for comfort in the Peanuts comic strip. No one even Snoopy the dog in the strip can snatch away the blanket from Linus.

There's a lot going on in the world today, particularly in the area of our health. I'm not going to go into the details. I've done it via these columns so many times. Not that you shouldn't stay aware of what's going on in the world. Pick up every newspaper, turn on every television and radio station, turn on your iPads, iPhones, Laptops, Desktops and you will find what you need to know.

But we all need a 'Linus Blanket' for reassurance and comfort. Things are going to be alright. Whether it be a physical blanket like Linus used, or just someone to talk to when we are feeling down. Many of us if not all of us are in a state of confusion. We don't know what's going to happen next not only with ourselves but with our families and friends.

If you have watched 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' you know Charlie Brown doesn't have a big Christmas tree adorned with lights and bright bulbs and sentimental ornaments and tinsel like many of you have. He picks an unattractive Christmas tree to decorate. To Charlie Brown, The selection of the tree represents a protest against the commercialization of Christmas.

Yes, Christmas and Chanukah have become commercialized. Just this week I picked up a four foot Chanukah Menorah inflatable that will adorn my garden area next year. Did I need it? No. Have I lived without it for 61 years? You bet! But my hope in purchasing it is to share the joy of my holiday with others. And since this was the first time I ever saw one and it was on sale I thought I would buy it to have a little something new to look forward to brightening my holiday next year.

We have so much to be grateful for this Christmas and for the New Year. Things we take for granted and that many people in the world don't have. We have food on the table, and that table will be full on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

continued on pg 6-



Yonkers Mourns the Loss of Danny Ventarola Owner of County Cycle Center on McLean Ave.



Danny Ventarola, center, celebrating the 50th Anniversary of County Center Bicycles with members of the Yonkers Police Department in 2016

The Yonkers community lost a 50 year mainstay-legend on McLean Avenue with the passing of Danny Venterola, owner of County Cycle Center Bicycles, on Dec. 13 at the age of 86. Danny was a beloved member of the community. Some of the posts from those whose life he touched include:

Every bike I've owned in my life excluding one was purchased from Danny. For years I would pop into his store hell bent that I was going to get a new bike and he refused to sell me a new bike saying "the one you have is a great bike for you." Eventually the materials became much lighter and Danny relinquished and sold me a new bike. Danny steered me away from the high end brand names and whispered "this bike is the same material as the others but will save you money." A true gentleman and a neighborhood institution.

To Danny Venterola, Jr: Dan, your father was always warm and friendly and inviting. After my Pop retired he would often sit with other McLean stalwarts on your Dad's bench. We all offer our condolences to your family during this time of loss. Our last family purchase at the Cycle Center was a bicycle that my sister Maureen (your year at Barnabas) wanted to help her in her recovery from cancer surgery. Unfortunately she succumbed to complications last October just 5 days after her 63rd birthday. All hail and God's blessings to the Venterola family for a father's life well lived.

Danny also had a close bond with the Yonkers Police Department. The YPD posted, "The City of Yonkers and #YonkersPD lost a dear friend Monday. Daniel "Danny" Ventarola, longtime owner of County Cycle Center on McLean Avenue, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family. For many years, County Cycle Center would refurbish the bicycles donated to the Yonkers Police as part of Mayor Mike Spano's bike donation program run by our Community Affairs Division – and he never charged us a dime. Hundreds of kids today are riding donated bikes that passed through Danny's hands. To his family and friends, and the Yonkers community at large, our deepest condolences. Thank you Danny for all your service to the people of Yonkers. From Ruggiero & Sons Funeral

Home: <https://www.frswfh.com/obituaries/Daniel-R.-Ventarola...> Daniel R. Ventarola, a resident of the Bronx, NY passed away peacefully surrounded by his family, after a brief illness. Daniel was born in the Bronx to the late Dominick & Mae Ventarola. He owned County Cycle Center for 55 years and loved being on McLean Avenue, talking with everyone who came into the bike store. He was a father figure to many and loved his late wife, Marie and his family. He was the loving husband of the late Marie (nee Maddalena). Devoted father of Daniel (Marylou), Marie Martell, Michael and Eugene (Kevin Cote). Cherished grandfather of 9 and great grandfather of 3. He is also survived by his brothers John & Nick. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society. The family will be present on Thursday, December 16, 2021 from 4 to 8 pm at Ruggiero & Sons, Inc. Funeral Home – 732 Yonkers Avenue – Yonkers, NY 10704 (914) 375-1400. A Funeral Mass will be celebrated on Friday, December 17, 2021 at 10:45 AM at St. Barnabas Church – E. 241st Street & Marth Avenue – Bronx, NY 10470. Following the Mass, Daniel will be laid to rest at Gate of Heaven Cemetery – 10 W. Stevens Avenue – Hawthorne, NY 10532.

In 2016, Yonkers Rising reporter Phil Foley wrote about the 50th Anniversary of Danny's Bike Shop, County Cycle Center. To many it was known as Danny's Bike Shop on McLean. Foley writes, Danny Ventarola Recognized for His Bike Shop Celebrating 50 Years on McLean Ave. By Phil Foley

Tuesday November 1st was designated Danny Ventarola Day in the City of Yonkers by Mayor Mike Spano. In a wonderful ceremony put together by Danny's loving daughter Marie and the members of the McLean Avenue Merchants Association it was a total surprise for Danny. Many of his relatives and friends from all his years on the Avenue came to honor him. Deputy Mayor Steve Levy presented Danny with a Proclamation from the Mayor. He also received awards from Liam McLaughlin and the City Council. (Those awards were presented to him by Councilman Dennis Shepherd).

Danny first opened his bike shop on November 1, 1966. He has served the Avenue well as the co-founder of the annual Christmas Lights Display each holiday season. For many years he was the head of the Merchant's Association as a forerunner of MOMA today. He was also an aide to the Grand Marshall of the annual St Patrick's Day Parade in 2015. One of the things that Danny is most proud of is his involvement with the Mayor's Bicycle Program which delivers good used bikes to children who would otherwise not have one. He repairs all donated bikes so that they are in good working order when received by each child in the program," wrote Foley

Cargiver Channels Frustration at Mother's Alzheimer's Battle Into Working for a Cure



Gwen Farassat, right, with her mom, Sally Factor

Gwen Farassat of Mamaroneck said that she and her brother, David Factor of Chappaqua, first realized that their mother, Sally Factor, was experiencing cognitive changes when she began having difficulty with finances.

A former real-estate broker from the Boston area, Sally Factor had lived an independent and dynamic life with many friends and activities. Widowed at 49, she put both of her children through college and traveled extensively after her husband's death.

"She was a dynamo. I would visit my mother at home, and when we would walk in the downtown area — everyone would know her; she always had lots of friends. She was always petite and energetic," Farassat recalled.

After retirement, Sally Factor moved to Heritage Hills in Somers to be closer to her children and grandchildren, where she lived for 14 years. There, she continued to live an active life while volunteering in the community.

"She played golf several times a week. She was very philanthropic; she would drive people to doctor's appointments who couldn't get there. She helped people cope with cancer diagnoses later in life when she had more free time." But when Sally Factor didn't file her taxes, Farassat and her brother realized something was off.

"She had an accountant who would send a checklist every year, and my mother didn't do it. That wasn't like her," she recalled. "She was initially diagnosed with MCI (mild cognitive impairment), probably six years ago. That's when my brother and I noticed that she was having some difficulty — but she was still able to take care of herself."

But eventually, about two years later, they began noticing some disturbing signs. Sally Factor's microwave door had been mysteriously burned, and her refrigerator was never full.

"We got concerned about her safety living alone, driving. She wasn't cooking meals for herself, she wasn't eating; her weight had gotten really low. Her refrigerator was always empty unless we brought her food."

So three years ago, they moved her to an assisted living facility. "It was actually a really great fit for her at the time," Farassat recalled. "It provided the oversight and assistance she needed, but at the same time, she had her own apartment. She could pick and choose the activities she did." But during COVID, her condition worsened, and eventually the choices and independence of the assisted living became a source of anxiety rather than a benefit. Suddenly all the choices had become overwhelming.

"My mother had anxiety and frustration. 'Something's going on here,' she would tell me. She didn't feel comfortable, she was overwhelmed, and she had trouble putting it into words." At that point, they moved her to a memory care unit.

Farassat said the COVID-19 pandemic likely took a toll on her mother's decline because of the isolation it forced on the assisted living residents. "Early on in the pandemic, the residents were almost isolated in their rooms — they were having meals in their rooms. For someone suffering from dementia, I think it was torture. We'll never know how much the decline that occurred during the pandemic was just the natural course of the disease and how much it might have been sped up by the isolation. And then when they did have things had things under control, they had a visitation room where we could schedule a visit for 45 minutes. We had to sit a certain number of feet apart wearing a mask. It wasn't very personal."

During November, which is National Family Caregiver Month, the Alzheimer's Association recognizes the impact of caregiving and honors the more than 11 million Americans caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease. Some of these caregivers may not even think of themselves as caregivers. Farassat said she was initially in this category.

"Originally, I didn't think of myself as a caregiver," she said, because she doesn't actually administer her mother's daily care. But as she became more involved with the Alzheimer's Association, she learned the role can take many forms. She said it has been hard watching her mother decline and knowing there is no way to stop it.

"One of my kids gets sick, and I'm going to take them to the doctor and get to the bottom of it, but I can't do that with my mother. I can't change the course of the disease; that's frustrating and sad. I've taken that negative energy and am putting it into something positive by turning it to the Alzheimer's Association. There is something comforting when other people are experiencing something similar to what you are. That's one part. The other part is raising the money for the research, services and care."

This year she started a team for the Westchester Walk to End Alzheimer's, Sally's Soldiers, which raised more than \$10,000. She also joined the walk planning committee as co-Mission Chair, a role she plans to continue solo in 2022. She says she finds the work fulfilling.

"I couldn't be more proud of my team," she said. "Once I got involved, and started doing the fundraising, it's amazing how many people have been touched in some way by dementia." She said that was a factor in her team's fundraising success. "I love the work that I've been doing, I love the people I've been meeting. It's been really helpful to me, just to try to give back."

To learn more about the programs and services offered locally, visit alz.org/hudsonvalley.

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Westchester Congressman Bowman “Outraged” That Build Back Better Bill Delayed Until 2022



Rep. Jamaal Bowman

On Dec. 17, with the US Senate now out of session and taking their holiday recess without passing the Build Back Better Bill, or Human Infrastructure, \$2 Trillion spending plan, Westchester Congressman Jamaal Bowman denounced the delays in passing voting rights, democracy reform, and police abuse.

“For months, the Senate has centered Senator Manchin while failing to center what matters most: the basic needs and dignity of everyday people in my district and across the country,” said Congressman Jamaal Bowman (NY-16). “The Senate’s decision not to move forward on the Build Back Better Act is a reflection of that chamber’s disregard of the people’s most immediate needs.

“The House passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act on March 3, the For the People Act on March 3, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act on August 24, and it has now been 29 days since we passed the Build Back Better Act. These life and democracy saving bills haven’t reached the President’s desk because of two senators and what they represent: powerful special interest groups and corporate lobbyists who use money to protect the status quo and endanger our future.

“Every day that the Senate fails to act is another day that my community loses out on life-saving and life-changing resources. When the Senate says “no” to progress, it’s really saying that it’s willing to end child tax credit payments for 84,000 families in NY-16. In our district, the Senate is willing to tell over 44,400 children that childcare and universal pre-k isn’t guaranteed for them, delay over \$151 billion in funding to improve 4,266 public housing units, and continue forcing our neighbors suffering from diabetes to choose between insulin and rent. They’re willing to let police escape accountability after murdering Black men and women, and they’re willing to let our democracy crumble.

Last month, Rep. Bowman voted no on a \$1.2 Trillion infrastructure bill because an agreement to vote on both bills together was changed at the last minute, with the first infrastructure bill being voted on and approved by both the House and the Senate. But the Build Back Better, Human Infrastructure Bill passed in the House on Nov. 19, the U.S. Senate never voted on it because there was not support from 50 Senators for its passage.

“While I feared that passing funding for roads and bridges without funding for families and children would result in this situation, the Senate’s failure to act is not just about Build Back Better. It is past time to end the filibuster and ensure the Senate puts people over profits.

“The American people elected President Biden because of his commitment to deliver these resources to our community, and from day one, I have been committed to helping him get his full agenda across the finish line. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to work with me to find solutions and pass every single bill sent to them. If Democrats want to continue to have the opportunity to deliver for the American people, we must deliver on the promise of a more equitable and inclusive world – passing each of these transformative bills is the first step in that mission.”

Two U.S. Senators, democrats Joe Manchin (West Virginia) and Kristen Sinema (Arizona), will not support BBB. President Joe Biden has been trying to negotiate changes to win the support of both. With the Senate in a 50-50 tie, both Manchin and Sinema must vote yes on BBB, so that Vice-President Kamala Harris can break the tie.

U.S. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell has been trying to get Manchin to switch parties, become a republican, and give the majority back to the GOP. If that happens BBB is officially dead; right now it is on life support.

Last week, another Westchester Congressman, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney said that the SALT (State and Local Tax Cap) provision of BBB, was going to be modified to help Westchester homeowners deduct more of their property taxes, was “on the one yard line” and headed for a touchdown.

It now appears there was a fumble on the one yard line. We would encourage our elected officials to WAIT until the legislation that they are patting themselves on the back passes first please!

On This Day in Yonkers History...



Edwin Armstrong, inventor of FM Radio, in Yonkers

By Mary Hoar, President Emerita, Yonkers Historical Society, recipient of the 2004 Key to History and President Untermyer Performing Arts Council

Monday, December 27th

December 27, 1941: The family of Sergeant Joseph Bruce of Livingston Avenue, radio operator of the first plane shot down in the December 7th Japanese attack, received a letter to let them know not only had he recovered from his wounds, he was back on combat duty to “catch up with the dogs” that attacked Pearl Harbor. Bruce, in a fleet of Flying Fortresses flying from California the evening before the attack, was admiring the view as they neared the islands when eight Japanese planes attacked, forcing them to go down in flames. As they ran for cover, machine gun fire sprayed the men, killing the flight surgeon and wounding several others

December 27, 1946: Mayor Frank and Yonkers received a birthday card from Janet Yonkers of Freeport, Long Island, celebrating the 300th anniversary of our City of Gracious Living!

Tuesday, December 28th

December 28, 1783: Israel Honeywell, William Hadley and Thomas Sherwood supervised the town meeting at which Town officers were elected. The meeting for Yonkers in the Manor of Philipsborough was held at the home of David Hunt to provide temporary government until the enemy abandoned or was dispossessed of the region. Israel Honeywell, Esq., was elected Supervisor; David Hunt, Clerk; Thomas Sherwood, Constable and Collector; Israel Honeywell, Jr., Esq., Security; and William Betts and Jacov Vermilyear were chosen as Assessors.

December 28, 1916: Judge Beall refused applications from all strikers and employees of the Yonkers Railroad Company to have revolvers. He was afraid Yonkers turn into a “veritable armed camp” if so many people were allowed to carry guns.

Wednesday, December 29th

December 29, 1902: Yonkers resident Gus Williams of Waring Place, well known German comedian and vaudeville star, sent out New Year’s cards with the message, “Father Time Ushering in the New Year and Plenty of Coal.” A Civil War veteran, his first appearance was during the Union Army’s occupation of Huntsville, Alabama; he appeared as Carney in the “The Pirate Legacy: The Wrecker’s Fate.” After the war, he joined Tony Pastor’s vaudeville show and became nationally known. His name at birth was Gustave Leweck, Jr.

December 29, 1938: Academy Award nominated actor Jon Voight was born in Yonkers. Besides starring in several successful movies, Voight may best be known as Angelina Jolie’s father.

December 29, 1942: The United States Army’s Quartermaster Depot ordered a million dollars worth of blankets from Alexander Smith & Sons Carpet Company. Made of 100% wool purchased from our allies, the average price of each blanket was \$6.87.

Thursday, December 30th:

December 30, 1914: Park Hill resident Irwin S. Cobb began a national tour speaking on the war in Europe. He was to illustrate the tour with motion pictures and stereopticon views he made while visiting Germany and Belgium.

December 30, 1938: Otis Elevator Company received a \$552,950 contract to build 133 elevators for New York City’s Red Hook and Queensbridge housing developments, the first use of elevators on a large scale in low-cost housing projects in the New York metropolitan area. Housing officials believed building six-story buildings with elevators were more economical than building the four-story walkups on a larger area. The elevators were to stop only at the first, third and fifth floors, keeping costs down to meet limits set by the US Housing Authority.

December 30, 1943: Staff Sergeant John Quinlan, tail gunner on the famous Flying Fortress Memphis Belle, made his mother a very happy woman... he arrived at his Truman Avenue home on a long furlough! The Memphis Belle was the first bomber to complete 25 air missions without a casualty.

Friday, December 31st

December 31, 1943: Confined with pneumonia, Mayor-elect Curtiss Frank, took the oath of office in his Rockledge Road home from City Clerk Francis J. Heafy to prevent a lapse between the expiration of Mayor Barnes’ term and the beginning of the new Common Council, elected by Proportional Representation.

December 31, 1946: In a private meeting, Public Safety Commissioner O’Hara “urged” Police Chief William Kruppenbacher to retire. O’Hara, dissatisfied with the way the Police Department was functioning, told the Chief it “would be good for the morale of the entire department. Earlier, Deputy Public Safety Commissioner Francis Duffy scolded Kruppenbacher because gambling operations in Copcutt Lane not only resulted in “nonarrests,” police records allegedly were altered.

continued on pg 7-

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Legal Notices

NOTICE OF SALE SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER DYNASTY, LLC, Plaintiff AGAINST CGSRE ACQUISITION CORP, ET AL., Defendant(s) Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly entered 10-22-2021 I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Westchester County Courthouse, 111 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, Courtroom 200, White Plains, NY on December 23, 2021 at 10:30AM, premises known as 68 Runyon Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10710. All that certain plot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements erected, situate, lying and being in the City of Yonkers, County of Westchester and State of New York, Section: 3 Block: 3112 Lot: 59+60. Approximate amount of judgment \$1,792,943.78 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index #50855/2019. The aforementioned auction will be conducted in accordance with the Westchester County COVID-19 Protocols located on the Office of Court Administration (OCA) website (<https://ww2.nycourts.gov/Admin/oca.shtml>) and as such all persons must comply with social distancing, wearing masks and screening practices in effect at the time of this foreclosure sale. Anthony J. Centone, Esq., Referee CLAIR GJERTSEN & WEATHERS PLLC 4 New King Street, Suite 140 White Plains, NY 10604 70260

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NOTICE OF SALE
SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF WESTCHESTER
JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association, Plaintiff

AGAINST

Rosetta Silvestro as heir at law and next of kin of Luigia Silvestro a/k/a Luisa Silvestro; et al., Defendant(s)

Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly dated July 8, 2021 I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Courtroom 200 of the Westchester County Courthouse, 111 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, White Plains, NY 10601 on February 3, 2022 at 3:30PM, premises known as 147 Florence Street, Yonkers, NY 10704. All that certain plot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements erected, situate, lying and being in the City of Yonkers, County of Westchester, State of NY, Section 5 Block 5235 Lot 34 & 35. Approximate amount of judgment \$101,787.83 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index# 69552/2016. The auction will be conducted pursuant to the COVID-19 Policies Concerning Public Auctions of Foreclosed Property established by the Ninth Judicial District.

John Gifford Molloy, Esq., Referee
LOGS Legal Group LLP f/k/a Shapiro, DiCaro & Barak, LLC
Attorney(s) for the Plaintiff
175 Mile Crossing Boulevard, Rochester, New York 14624, (877) 430-4792
Dated: December 17, 2021
For sale information, please visit www.Auction.com or call (800) 280-2832

Postponement of the January 1st 2022 Swearing In Ceremony of Yonkers Officials

In light of the recent increase of Covid cases here in Yonkers as well as around the country, the January 1st 2022 Swearing In Ceremony of Yonkers Officials will be postponed to a later date, yet to be determined. It is with concern for the Health and Safety of all that we painstakingly made this decision. We apologize for any inconvenience this postponement may have caused.

We want to wish you a very happy and safe Holiday season.
Sincerely, Vincent E. Spano Yonkers City Clerk on behalf of

Lakisha Collins-Bellamy, Yonkers City Council President-elect,

Majority Leader Corazon Pineda-Isaac, City Council Member - Second Council District

John Rubbo, City Council Member - Fourth Council District

Anthony J. Merante, City Council Member - Sixth Council District

Yonkers City Clerk's Office is Open by Appointment Only

Beginning Tuesday, December 21, 2021, the Yonkers City Clerk's Office will require everyone to make an appointment before visiting the office. City Clerk Vincent Spano is implementing this change in policy to address the increasing cases throughout our region.

"We are committed to providing the best service possible," said City Clerk Spano. It is necessary to control the number of visitors in our public spaces to protect them and our employees. While we are all hopeful that the winter surge will be limited, this new policy will remain in place until further notice."

Please call (914) 377-6020 or email cityclerk@yonkersny.gov to request an appointment or for any additional information. Please note that all visitors to City Hall must wear a protective face mask regardless of vaccination status. Learn how you may make requests online or via mail by visiting our website: Yonkers City Clerk Office.

Hours of Operation (Appointments Required)
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday (except holidays) 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Tuesday (except holidays) 9:00 am to 7:00 pm

Marriage Licenses: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday (except holidays) 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Marriage Licenses: Tuesday (except holidays) 9:00 am to 6:30 pm

Call 914-377-6020 or email cityclerk@yonkersny.gov to request an appointment or for any additional information.

CORPORATION NOTICE

CITY OF YONKERS-NEW YORK PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, pursuant to law, that the City Council of the City of Yonkers, New York will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 7:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, 40 South Broadway, Yonkers, New York on the following Resolution, to wit:

PROPOSED RESOLUTION: RESOLUTION OF THE YONKERS CITY COUNCIL TO HONOR THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY'S REQUEST TO HONORARILY RENAME THE PORTION OF HORATIO STREET BETWEEN DUNBAR STREET AND CLEMENT STREET "RITA GROSS NELSON" WAY

VINCENT SPANO City Clerk

Eric Schoen, continued from pg 3-

If you read this column weekly like many of you do maybe we won't have cream cheese to make a cheesecake this year, though friends tell me it is abundant in the market. Or to schmear on a bagel or maybe a slice of Panettone as some friends I have do when they get up Christmas morning. But there will be plenty of food on the Christmas table, whether it be fish on Christmas Eve or turkey and fixings Christmas Day.

We have great hospitals, doctors and nurses to care for the sick, and first responders whether they be EMT's, firefighters, policemen and others to keep us safe. We have public works employees who keep our streets clean, and government workers who aren't subject to be thrown out of office by a dictator or a tyrant. We have freedom to walk the streets!

How many people in the world don't have a place to live. A roof over their head. We might not live on 5th Avenue but we know we can come home at night and not have to worry about the rain coming through the roof of where we live. Heat keeps us warm during the winter and air conditioning keeps us cool during the summer.

Look at the water we drink. Is there ever any concern for its safety? We can drink it, cook with it and cleanse with it not having to worry about contamination. How many people in the world don't have the simple amenity of water readily available that they can consume without fear?

We have vaccines including the one we read and hear about everyday that keep us free from illness from birth throughout our lifetime. We have medications available to us and a government that's helps when we cannot afford them.

As we prepare to enter 2022 we have much to be grateful for. We often take for granted what we have, moan and complain not thinking about those who are not as blessed as we are.

Yes we are going through a rough time right now. This, too shall pass. Sometimes our lives can be made better by simply turning off the negative news and putting on music to uplift our spirits. Taking a walk through our beautiful parks or simply going outside and enjoying the beauty around us. Children playing. A mother pushing her new baby in a carriage. A couple coming out of a church or synagogue having just been married. Or a couple walking down the street holding hands or simply sitting on a park bench in love.

Let's lift our spirits this new year by trying everyday to do something good for someone else. Never forgetting to do something good for ourselves, children, families and the ones we love. Think about that everyday but just don't think about it. Do it!

And find that Linus Blanket. It's ok in these difficult times to depend on it for comfort and assurance. We all need it right now.

I thank you for welcoming me into your homes every week. I hope I can make you laugh, maybe bring up a reminiscence that will bring tears to your eyes, and for a few moments take you on a journey that will let you forget your troubles and come on and get happy! Forgive me if I make a mistake. The New York Times with a much higher circulation than these Rising Newspapers makes many mistakes. Special note of gratitude to Editor Dan Murphy who is a one man band putting the paper together and making sure it gets to you assisted by Bayan Baker.

Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa and a Happy, Healthy New Year to you and yours. Pray for people everywhere!

Reach Eric Schoen at thistooisyonkers@aol.com. Follow him on Twitter @ericyonkers. Listen to Eric Schoen on the Westchester Rising Radio Show Thursday's from 10-11 a.m. On WVOX 1460 AM, go to WVOX.com and click the arrow to listen to the live stream or download the WVOX app from the App Store free of charge.

Notice of formation of Thomas Family Taste LLC. Arts. Of Org. filed with the SSNY on 07/20/2021. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as the agent of the LCC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 268 Van Cortlandt Park Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10705. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

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Palisades Prep Hoops Win Larizza Tournament



By Phil Foley

Congratulations to the boys basketball team on winning the first ever Lou Larizza Memorial Tournament at Port Chester HS. In the first round on Friday afternoon, the boys won over Yonkers High by a final score of 64-43. Deneli McIntosh led all scorers with 18 points, Xavier Merrill had 15 points and 16 rebounds and Jalen Brown 12 points and 10 rebounds.

The Phoenix returned to Port Chester on Saturday night for the championship game versus the host Rams. In a crazy game they Phoenix won by a final score of 50-49. Deneli McIntosh was named Tournament MVP scoring 21 points in the Championship game. The team also had great effort from Louis Martinez who was named all-tournament team scoring 12 points in the title game. In addition, the Phoenix had great contributions from Miguel Gonzalez & Yashua Martin.

The team went 2-1 in the first week of the season. The lost their season opener on Monday at Hastings High School with a final score of 56-53. The team is back in action this week in the Yonkers City Tournament. On Monday December 13th, the Phoenix host Yonkers Montessori Academy in the first round of the tournament. The winner will go to the semi-finals at Lincoln HS on Wednesday December 15th. The finals will be at Lincoln High School on Saturday December 18th. The boys final is scheduled to start at 4pm.

Yonkers History, continued from pg 5-

Saturday, January 1st

January 1, 1941: FCC assigned Edwin Armstrong's FM frequencies 40 FM channels and authorized commercial service.

January 1, 1947: The New Year's rang in with gunshots at an Elm Street tavern. Because his former girlfriend would not be his New Year's date, a war veteran fired his gun twice. Frank Keegan tried to shoot Betty Thomas after she refused to drop her new boyfriend, but missed and hit an innocent female bystander. William Peace of Greenvale Avenue managed to wrestle the gun away as Keegan tried to shoot himself; the weapon, a German pistol Keegan brought back from the war, was turned over to Patrolman Ernest Nizicco, walking his beat near the pub and rushed to the scene when he heard the shots.

Sunday, January 2nd

January 2, 1946: At 10:15 am, the new majority on the Common Council fired City Manager Morris Rosenwasser. Norman Henderson was named Acting City Manager; a few minutes later, he made seven appointments, including appointing former City Manager Robert Montgomery, removed by the Democrats a year earlier, as City Comptroller at 10:45 am. After a very short recess, the Common Council returned just after 11:00 am and appointed Mr. Montgomery Acting City Manager. Montgomery officially took over his office as city executive at 11:15. Within one hour, Yonkers had three City Managers! The lame-duck Democratic majority elected Rosssenwasser City Manager 2:08 pm two days earlier on December 31st. January 2, 1950: Curb collection of refuse began in Yonkers. People lined up their ash and garbage cans to be picked up by one of thirty-seven city trucks; each truck had a crew of four

Questions or comments? Email YonkersHistory1646@gmail.com. For information on the Yonkers Historical Society, Sherwood House and upcoming events, please visit our website www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org, call 914-961-8940 or email yhsociety@aol.com.

Four Black Women, continued from pg 1-

band together and make sure that one of them gets to help lead the Council forward. Let's be honest, they are the actual Majority.

- Signed by:
- Hon. Marisol Alcantara, Former State Senator
 - Hon. Symra Brandon, Former City Councilmember and Former Yonkers Democratic Party Chair
 - Elvira Castillo, Westchester Latinos Unidos, President and Founder
 - Hon. Rev. Margaret Fountain-Coleman, Former Trustee-Village of Tuckahoe, Measiah Baptist Church
 - Maria Garcia, Community Advocate-Pastor Alonda Hassell, Kingdom Christian Cultural Center
 - Subomi Macaulay, Westchester Black Women's Political Caucus, President
 - Luz (Lucy) Moreno-Casonova, Community Advocate, Founder of Orgullo Borinqueño Inc.
 - Joanne Robinson-Boettcher, Black Women's Political Caucus, member; NAACP, Yonkers Chapter member
 - Roberta Robinson-Fraizer, Yonkers Democratic Committee, 3rd Ward Leader
 - Kisha Skipper, NAACP, Yonkers Chapter, 1st Vice President
 - Beryl Weaver, Yonkers Democratic Committee, 1st Vice Chair

One mother and daughter from Yonkers asked, "Why didn't anyone think about ordering these tests earlier this year?" And the responsibility to order 500 million COVID tests rests with our Federal government. Don't blame the County Executive or our Governor, or Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano for not having tests to give you.

President Joe Biden's announcement that 500 million tests have been ordered is great, but what would be better is if we all had a test before we gathered for Christmas and New Year's with friends and family.

Latimer is completing his home quarantine after testing positive. He remained in relatively good health and conducted the business of Westchester County during this time, including signing the county budget for 2022, Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins also tested positive and was at home under quarantine. Jenkins explained his symptoms as "like having a cold, with mild symptoms of chills and aches."

Both Latimer and Jenkins were vaccinated, and the point of both sharing their story is to caution Westchester residents to get vaccinated and boosted, because it will help you stay healthy, and out of the hospital if you become COVID positive. Latimer said that 94% of Westchester residents over the age of 18 has at least one dose and 83% have two doses, (700,000 Westchester residents).

The vaccination totals indicate that 9 out of 10 county residents support the science of vaccinations. And if you travel around the county, more than 9 out of 10 residents are wearing a mask.

In his weekly COVID update on Dec. 20, Latimer said that county government would be distributing 500,000 free masks, and that the Westchester County Center in White Plains has been offered to Gov. Hochul as a state testing site. Latimer added that all county meetings would be held remotely until the end of January and that while Westchester was enforcing the mask mandate, "we will do so without confrontation."

There are a portion of Yonkers residents who do not support the mask mandate and do not believe that masks should be required to be worn in public, nor in schools for their children.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said, "Vaccinations and masks do not guarantee you won't get COVID. But they reduce the chances you will. And they reduce the chance you'll be seriously sick, hospitalized or die. Being unvaxxed and unmasked raises those odds. Period."

"I have no desire to order you to do anything; that is why Westchester imposed no mandate of any sort. But we have politicians who are trying to pander to extreme ideologues who willfully tell us to not mask and not to vaccinate. That is playing with people's health for political gain. They should be ashamed ...but they're not."

"Have we forgotten how many people died while arguing against common sense – people like Herman Cain? A tragic and unnecessary loss of a life. Instead of focusing the debate on opposition to a mandate, they should be encouraging people to protect themselves and reduce the odds of illness."

"If Donald Trump, Tucker Carlson, Laura Ingraham and Sean Hannity all got vaccinated, why should we be pandering to the fear of being vaxxed? And if doctors wear masks in the ER why should we conduct a holy war against masks? No one wants to wear a mask..we're trying to survive a pandemic," stated Latimer.

The debate over masking also has landed in school board meetings across Westchester, from Yorktown to Yonkers and Eastchester, with parents holding signs saying, "unmask our kids."

In Yonkers, Superintendent Dr. Edwin Quezada listened to parents from a group United Yonkers, who want to have students unmasked in school. But Quezada disagreed with their request, saying "that the mask policy "is out of the circle of our control. It's a Governor's mandate. Everyone here has the right to express themselves, but we have kept our schools open because of the mitigation strategies that we have put in place."

YPS Parent Margaret Madden said on News 12 after the meeting, "We don't believe that (masks mandates are working to keep children safe). We are looking at the science, and we are pushing for parental choice. If you think your kids should wear a mask, put a mask on your kid but we think it's making it worse." Other United Yonkers parents at the Nov. YPS BOE meeting called mask mandates "about freedom of choice," and another called mask mandates a form of "child abuse."

But most parents in Yonkers, and In Westchester, are willing to have their children wear a mask in school, if it is a way to keep students learning in class. "To the BOE, stand strong to keep our kids safe! Make sure the ventilation systems are working well! Create safe spaces for our teachers and support staff who are working so hard during this pandemic! And yes, let's keep masking up," said Eileen O'Connor.

Yonkers City Council Majority Leader Corazon Pineda-Isaac also announced that she tested positive for COVID. "As many of you are aware, COVID numbers have been rising rapidly in the city, state, country and across the world. I, myself, have recently tested positive for COVID, and in the short-term, that means being unable to celebrate my birthday and Christmas with friends and family. On a larger scale, however, this issue extends beyond myself or any individual. It is important to remember that we are still in the midst of a pandemic, in which individual actions and safety protocols can save real lives. In Yonkers, there are over 1,600 active COVID cases. As a result, a new statewide mandate has been passed in which people are required to again wear masks in all indoor public spaces. With the holidays only days away, please be cognizant and respectful of everyone's safety and well-being," wrote Pineda-Isaac in her weekly email blast on Dec. 21.

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