

# Westchester Rising

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Friday August 5, 2022

## Westchester Congressional Candidates Debate Democrats Biaggi & Maloney in NY-17; Bowman and Gashi in NY-16; Republicans Lawlor & Faulkner in NY-17



Republican Somers Councilman Bill Faulkner, top left, and Democrat County Legislator Vedat Gashi, from Yorktown, are running for Congress in District's 16 and 17. Below, State Senator Alessandra Biaggi is challenging Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney in a District 17 Democratic Primary



See story on pg 5-

## Good News from Yorktown: Trader's Joe's Opens; Bad News-Par 3 Golf Won't Open



By Dan Murphy

Trader Joe's, the popular grocery store, opened its first store in Northern Westchester on July 21. Located on Crompond road in the Lowe's Shopping Center next to the Taconic Parkway, Trader Joe's has quickly developed a big following from foodies in the tri-state region.

Other Trader Joe's locations in Hartsdale, Larchmont and Scarsdale have been successful. The Yorktown opening was well attended and included a ribbon cutting with Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater. "It's a good experience to come to Trader Joe's, it's a good experience to come to the town of Yorktown," who added that 100 jobs were created with the opening.

"It just really shows what we as a community can accomplish by attracting a brand name like Trader Joe's right here to the town of Yorktown to be a regional attraction," Slater said.

The Manager of the Yorktown store, Charlie Ranken, spoke to the media. "The 'captain' of the store is Charlie Ranken, who did the honors of cutting the ceremonial ribbon. 'I'd like to give a shout-out to the town leadership of Yorktown and their support. My wonderful crew is ready to serve our customers.'"

Despite inflation, Trader Joe's has been able to continue to provide low-cost, high quality products. It took a long time to complete the store and open the doors to the public, but to get a name like Trader Joe's in Yorktown is a feather in the cap for the community and for Supervisor Slater and the Town Board.

That's the good news. The bad news is that the long closed Par-3 golf course next to the JV Mall, formerly known as Indian Hill, will not open anytime soon. A lawsuit filed by the developers against the Town of Yorktown and Supervisor Matt Slater, alleges political preferences being used to limit the company RC Recreation Development LLC, from completing the 9-hole course and opening it to the public.

Slater calls the lawsuit nonsense and says that the developer was given years to complete the project but couldn't do it.

1. RC Recreation Development LLC has been in contract to redevelop the nine-hole public golf course since 2014
2. Holding a contractor accountable for under-performance over eight and a half years is not a political campaign, sabotage, abuse, or disparagement.
3. Before the Covid-19 pandemic and my tenure as supervisor, six years of this

continued on pg 7-

## Whistleblower Fired Under DiFiore's Watch for Exposing "Laughing Yoga-Nazi March" in Court

Watch the Video and Decide for Yourself:

Go to: <https://youtu.be/B69XdCTqKNs>

"He (Campbell) did not deserve to be fired. Just the opposite, I applaud his actions and find him to be a true whistleblower. She (DiFiore) is tone deaf. This is hate speech occurring in a New York State Courtroom. I am ashamed that this happened."

-New York attorney, name withheld

By Dan Murphy

Here's another story we received about the outgoing Chief Justice of the NY State Court of Appeals, former Westchester DA Janet DiFiore. This one is a classic tale of a whistleblower who did the right thing and got fired for it, in the final months of DiFiore's leadership of the NYS Office of Court Administration, OCA.

There are some things in our society that are deemed so inappropriate that they should never be done or repeated. Saying the N word is one example that our society has rightfully labeled off limits for someone who is not a person of color. Connotating any horrible event with the Holocaust, or associating in any way with the Nazis should be another common sense -don't go there moment.

An upstate court officer has contacted Yonkerstimes.com about a disturbing incident that he recorded in an effort to prove that this event actually occurred in an upstate court room. On October 2, 2019, Chief Clerk Katherine Thompson of the Warren County Family Court, held a "laughter Yoga class" in one of the Family Court courtrooms. The courtroom doors were closed and locked at the request of Thompson-for the purpose of a wellness practice to create "real, sustained, genuine laughter" from its participants.

The idea that Clerk Thompson had was to have all march around the courtroom with their right arm raised in a Nazi-style salute. Some of the participants took it to another level, with one-person goose stepping around the courthouse with their arm raised; another participant can be overheard on the video saying "Sieg Heil."

Court Officer Matthew Campbell was working on the metal detector that day. He had access to all of the video cameras in each of the courtrooms, and he saw what was happening with Clerk Thompson and her marchers.

Alarmed at what he saw, Campbell took a video from his cell phone of the video in the courtroom. As a result of trying to expose wrongdoing, the court officer, Matthew Campbell was terminated after the video was leaked and ended up in the hands of the Chief Judge of New York State, Janet DiFiore.

Continued on pg 7-

## Anti-Abortion Protestors Sentenced to 90 Days in Jail for Criminal Trespass



Matthew Connolly, William Goodman and Christopher Moscinski. Photo from Facebook Red Rose Rescue

By Dan Murphy

opener--three pro-life abortion protestors got 90 day sentences from White Plains Judge John Collins, who sentenced three men on August 2 for their 2 and a half hour trespass at a Women's Clinic in White Plains in 2021.

Westchester County District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah announced that three men affiliated with the anti-abortion group Red Rose Rescue, including two that live out of state, were sentenced on August 2, 2022, to three months in jail following their criminal conviction for trespassing at All Women's Health and Medical Services in White Plains. The District Attorney recommended the maximum sentence allowed under the law of three months in jail.

"Abortion is legal in the state of New York and interfering with a patient's right to access medical and reproductive care is a crime," DA Rocah said. "I will use the full force of my office to protect patients and reproductive rights here in Westchester County."

Following a three-day trial in March 2022, a jury found Matthew Connolly, 40, of Minnesota, William Goodman, 52, of Wisconsin, and Christopher Moscinski, 52, of the Bronx, guilty of Criminal Trespass in the Third Degree, a misdemeanor.

On November 27, 2021, at approximately 8:40 a.m., the defendants entered All Women's Health and Medical Services in White Plains, a private medical office, where they remained unlawfully for approximately two hours despite receiving numerous requests and warnings to leave from medical staff and the White Plains Police Department. All three defendants disrupted facility operations and patient services, with two defendants occupying the waiting room, rendering it unusable, and another using his body to create an obstacle in one of the office doorways. They were arrested by White Plains police who had to physically carry them out of the premises.

continued on pg 4-

## Iranian Assassin? from Yonkers Arrested Seen “Lurking” Outside NYC Home of Dissident Journalist



Iranian journalist Masih Alinejad

On July 28, Khalid Mehdiyev, of Yonkers, was arrested by the NYPD after he was seen “lurking” outside of the home of noted Iranian dissident journalist Masih Alinejad, with a loaded AK-47.

On July 29, a Federal complaint was filed against Mehdiyev, with the following information provided by FBI agent Derek Kasse to the court.

KHALID MEHDIYEV, the defendant, was observed by members of law enforcement in the vicinity of a residence (the “Residence”) located in Brooklyn, New York, on July 27 and July 28, 2022. On July 28, 2022, MEHDIYEV arrived in the vicinity of the Residence in the morning in a gray Subaru Forester SUV with an Illinois license plate (the “Subaru”) and remained there for several hours. MEHDIYEV behaved suspiciously during that time: among other things, he exited and entered the Subaru several times, ordered food to be delivered to the Subaru, approached the Residence, appeared to attempt to look inside the windows of the Residence, and attempted to open the front door of the Residence. In the afternoon, MEHDIYEV drove away from the Residence. MEHDIYEV was stopped in the vicinity of the Residence by New York City Police Department (“NYPD”) officers after failing to stop at a stop sign. MEHDIYEV was the only occupant in the Subaru.

The NYPD officers who stopped KHALID MEHDIYEV, the defendant, in the Subaru, determined that MEHDIYEV was driving without a license and that MEHDIYEV’s license had been suspended, in violation of New York State law. MEHDIYEV was placed under arrest.

A search of NYPD databases revealed that the Subaru was issued a parking ticket on or about July 23, 2022, on the block where the Residence is located.

Following the traffic stop described above, KHALID MEHDIYEV, the defendant, was taken to an NYPD precinct house in Brooklyn. During an inventory search of the Subaru subsequent to MEHDIYEV’s arrest, members of the NYPD found, among other things, on the rear seat of the Subaru, a suitcase containing a Norinco AK-47-style assault rifle (the “AK-47”), loaded with a round in the chamber and a magazine attached, along with a separate second magazine, and a total of approximately 66 rounds of ammunition. The serial number of the rifle appears to have been obliterated. The AK-47 is stamped with, among other things, markings which read “MADE IN CHINA BY NORINCO.”<sup>1</sup> The AK47, magazines, and ammunition recovered from the vehicle driven by MEHDIYEV are shown below:

The suitcase found in the Subaru also contained, among other things, \$1,100 in U.S. currency, consisting of 11 \$100 bills; a wallet with a social security card in the name of KHALID MEHDIYEV, the defendant; an expired employment authorization card from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in MEHDIYEV’s name; several bank cards bearing MEHDIYEV’s name; a New York State Driver’s Learner’s Permit in

MEHDIYEV’s name and bearing a photograph which appears to depict MEHDIYEV; and an electronic device charger. Also recovered during the inventory search of the Subaru were two other license plates with different license plate numbers and issuing states than the Illinois license plate on the Subaru. MEHDIYEV also had approximately \$70 in U.S. currency on his person

The New York State Learner’s Permit issued to KHALID MEHDIYEV, the defendant, and in his possession at the time of the car stop, lists an address in Yonkers, New York as his residence (the “Yonkers Address”).

At the NYPD Brooklyn precinct house, KHALID MEHDIYEV, the defendant, was advised of his Miranda rights and waived those rights and agreed to answer questions. During the ensuing interview, the following occurred, in substance and in part:

a. MEHDIYEV stated that he has been staying at the Yonkers Address and woke up there the morning of July 28, 2022.

b. MEHDIYEV claimed that the rent was too high and he needed to find a new place to live, and was in the vicinity of the Residence in Brooklyn because he was looking for a new apartment. MEHDIYEV further claimed that he had also been in the vicinity of the Residence the day prior to his arrest.

MEHDIYEV further claimed that: he attempted to open an outer door of the Residence so that he could knock on the inner door, and ask the occupants if they were interested in renting him a room, but changed his mind because he might wake up a sleeping or sick occupant; he had cash in order to rent a hotel room if necessary; and he had borrowed the Subaru and needed to return it to the Yonkers Address.

Without having previously been questioned about the assault rifle found in the Subaru, MEHDIYEV volunteered that he did not know anything about a gun, and during subsequent questioning, he claimed that the suitcase recovered from the backseat of the Subaru was not his. MEHDIYEV further stated that the suitcase was on the backseat of the Subaru when he borrowed the Subaru in the morning, and remained in the Subaru as he drove the Subaru from Yonkers, to New Rochelle, and then to Brooklyn. MEHDIYEV further claimed that he had placed his wallet, an electronic device charger, and other personal effects inside the front pocket of the suitcase for safekeeping, but had not observed that the main compartment of the suitcase contained the AK-47.

Later, after the interviewing agents had left the interview room, MEHDIYEV asked to speak with the agents again, and then told the agents that the AK-47 was his, and that he had been in Brooklyn because he was looking for someone. At that point, MEHDIYEV invoked his right to counsel and stated that he would not discuss the matter further at that time.

Iranian journalist Masih Alinejad is an award winning Iranian-American journalist, who has been a vocal critic of human rights under Iran. She lives in exile in NYC.

Last year, Federal prosecutors charged four foreign agents with attempting to kidnap Alinejad. The defendants live in Iran and were never apprehended. The plan, according to the indictment, was to lure Alinejad to another country where she would be kidnapped.

Then SDNY US Attorney Audrey Strauss said, “A U.S. citizen living in the United States must be able to advocate for human rights without being-targeted by foreign intelligence operatives.”

## The Loft Announces Two More Monkeypox Vaccine Clinics in Westchester Aug. 11 & 18



### LOFT Announces 3rd and 4th, 1st Dose, Monkeypox Vaccine Clinics



The LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Center in partnership with the Westchester County Department of Health announces that it will be hosting third and fourth, first-dose, on-Campus Monkeypox vaccination clinics in partnership with the Westchester County Department of Health on Thursday, August 11th and August 18th. Appointments can be made from the hours of 9:30 AM-4:30 PM for adults 18 years of age and up. Information on the second dose will be given to each vaccinated person after their first dose. These clinics are strictly for first-dose inoculations only. The LOFT strongly encourages any and all members of the community who believe they are at risk to get vaccinated immediately. The vaccination is free of charge.

The addition of these first-dose clinics is in response to the surge in demand for vaccinations. The first, first-dose clinic held on July 28th had a 100% fill rate, with all available vaccines being used. The second, first-dose vaccination clinic’s appointments were filled within hours and similar fill rates are expected.

“The really good news is that our community is taking this seriously and getting inoculated. We know there are many more in the community still waiting to get vaccinated and we are working as quickly as possible to meet this demand. We are truly grateful to be partnering with the Westchester County Department of Health—they have been well organized and highly responsive in meeting our community’s needs.” says, Executive Director, Judy Troilo.

New York State Governor Kathy Hochul issued an Executive Order declaring a State Disaster Emergency in response to the ongoing monkeypox outbreak. The World Health Organization, The CDC, and the New York Department of Health have all emphasized the importance of having people who are at risk be vaccinated. Monkeypox can be transmitted through simple skin contact when someone’s skin rubs/brushes against an infected person’s skin. Infection can also occur by touching infected clothing. Please note, that it can also be transmitted via genital contact but is not considered a sexually transmitted infection. Condoms, dental dams, PrEP, birth control, microbicide lubricants, and antibiotics typically used to treat STI’s will not protect a person from infection. To learn more about Monkeypox, click here.

If you are unsure whether you need the vaccine or have questions related to your health, please consult with your physician or medical practitioner.

To learn more about how the vaccine works, click here.

To make an appointment for the third, first-dose clinic at The LOFT on August 11, 2022: click here.

Appointment slots for the fourth, first-dose clinic on August 18th clinic will be released soon.

The LOFT LGBTQ+ Community Services Center is located at 252 Bryant Ave., White Plains, NY 10605.

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# No Tuition Increase for SUNY Westchester Community College



**Westchester Community College**  
State University of New York

## Westchester County Executive George Latimer Announces Increased County Support for the Community College Mission to Help Students Achieve Academic and Career Goals and Enter High-Wage, High-Demand Jobs in the Region

SUNY Westchester Community College (SUNY WCC) is holding the line on tuition for the 2022-2023 school year. The flat tuition reflects ongoing challenges faced by students and families who are struggling with rising costs due to inflation and uncertainty surrounding COVID. Annual full-time credit-student tuition is \$4,730 and the lowest tuition among colleges in the region.

The operating budget includes an increase in county sponsor support, which is significant because the college budget relies increasingly and predominantly on student tuition. Expanding public support for SUNY WCC as a vital partner in meeting economic development objectives preserves the college's role in providing affordable educational pathways to bachelor's and advanced degrees, delivering short-term workforce training necessary for job growth, and facilitating access to high wage, high demand jobs in our region.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said: "Every dollar counts. In Westchester County, we are working hard to combat rising costs by finding new and innovative ways to provide relief. This news, coupled with the County's additional support to SUNY WCC, is another way we are looking to lessen the burden on taxpayers and help all of us thrive in our home community. I thank Dr. Miles, the SUNY WCC Board of Trustees and the Board of Legislators for their collaborative approach to find solutions that will best benefit the people we all serve."

Chair of the SUNY WCC Board of Trustees Dr. LeRoy Mitchell said: "The Board conveys deepest thanks to County Executive Latimer, President Belinda Miles, and their teams for working together on a plan that reduces financial burdens on students, balances the operating budget, and positions the college for long-term future viability. The responsibility to keep the community college accessible and affordable is among the most fundamental responsibilities of the Board of Trustees."

SUNY WCC President Dr. Belinda Miles said: "The County's extraordinary gesture increasing its sponsor support is a heartening demonstration of confidence in SUNY Westchester Community College and its central role uplifting our region by providing economic advancement opportunities for individuals and businesses. Our partnership in keeping tuition affordable for students and families is a cornerstone of the community college mission to keep students on the path to high-quality higher education and is especially impactful as we expand academic degree pathways at our new Yonkers Campus this fall."

BoL Chairwoman Catherine Borgia: "If rising prices on everyday purchases are already significantly influencing consumer behavior, imagine what a tuition increase would mean? It means postponing graduation and delaying one's higher income earning potential. The Board recognizes the role that SUNY WCC plays in providing upward mobility to students who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford a college education. Those students deserve support and access now more than ever."

SUNY WCC's lowest-among-peers tuition is a strong investment at a time when New Yorkers with student loan debt owe an average of \$37,678. SUNY WCC students are eligible to apply for need-based federal and state financial aid that covers tuition, and the WCC Foundation distributes more than \$2 million in scholarships annually. In 2022-2023, eligible students can receive federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds to offset any impacts from COVID-19.

Legislator Vedat Gashi said: "SUNY WCC is a valued institution for its socio-economic impact on our County, and I am more than happy to be a part of approving its funding. We thank our County Executive George Latimer for his leadership and support, as well as SUNY WCC President Dr. Belinda Miles and Vice President and Dean of Administrative Services Brian Murphy, for their vision in moving the college's mission forward."

SUNY Westchester Community College offers convenient options for all learners, with six locations across the county, and with classes offered weekdays, evenings, and weekends. A new Yonkers Campus opens in fall 2022 in a brand-new, state-of-the-art facility at the iconic Cross County Center offering a full array of student services and more than 140 classes in degree pathways that can be completed entirely in Yonkers. Anyone interested in applying to SUNY WCC, whether for degree programs or short-term workforce development, should visit [www.sunywcc.edu](http://www.sunywcc.edu).

Legislator Margaret Cunzio said: "As an educator, I firmly believe education is the foundation of our society. With today's vote, we are proving our dedication to higher learning by making SUNY WCC one of the most affordable community colleges in the state."

# Be A Democrat For A Day, Aug. 23



By Eric Wolf Schoen

You've always wanted to be a Democrat for a day. August 23 is the day to do it. And it's for a good cause at that. A little noticed clause in the redistricting for Congressional and State Senate Races give you the power to do it.

You know about the controversy regarding redistricting this year. Yonkers would have been put together with Mahopac where my cousins live, almost an hour away in a Congressional district. A judge ruled the redistricting illegal, and ordered a master to come up with a fairer plan. He did that, and part of the plan gives you the right to change political parties by affidavit at the polls on the new Congressional and State Senate Primary Day, August 23.

Now that certainly is not a prime day for a Primary as many people are on vacation and frankly, who would think there would be a Primary at the end of August. So turnout will be low. But those lucky to be around can switch their political party from Republican, Conservative or Independent and vote in the Democratic Primary.

Now the question is why would you want to do it. Many of you including this writer are unhappy with the current incumbent Congressman, Jamaal Bowman. He is in a Primary that day with County Legislator Vedat Gashi who long ago announced his intentions and Catherine Parker, a new comer to the race who may act as the spoiler if her candidacy picks up any speed.

Not only are Democrats unhappy with Bowman but a lot of Republicans, Conservatives and Liberals and members of other parties are too. So on August 23, you go to your polling place, fill out an affidavit and those unhappy with Bowman can vote for I hope Mr. Gashi. This same technique is being used in the Jerald Nadler/Carolyn Maloney race by a newcomer to the politics who is picking up quite a few supporters and may just win the Primary beating two strong incumbents who are tied neck to neck in the polls.

Again, no one is asking you to change your registration permanently. You have been given permission by the crazy political system and courts to change your registration for the day. There is nothing that says the day after the Primary you can't switch back.

But if you are like me and many others who are unhappy with Congressman Bowman, his vote against the infrastructure bill to pay for fixing our crumbling roadways, his absence from Yonkers and lack of appearance around town unlike his predecessor, Eliot Engel, his lack of attendance at his own neighborhood meeting, our wonder where he even lives in the district he represents, his alignment with the ultra liberal AOC wing of the party, I could go on and on with the reasons why he is not representing the people of Westchester the way they deserve. Eliot Engel brought home the bacon through funds for his district and exceptional constituent service.

Jamaal Bowman is not even bringing home the bologna. At a recent event even House Speaker Nancy Pelosi indicated she was unhappy with Bowman's vote against the Infrastructure Bill. I know people who have tried to meet with him about issues of importance to this country and the community and he is not available. This is unacceptable.

So on August 23, Democrats, Republicans, Conservatives and Independents and all voters can show they want change in Washington and a Congressman who truly represents the people of Yonkers and Westchester County. Go to the polls, tell them you want to change your party to Democrat, fill out the affidavit, vote for Vedat Gashi and we will have a Congressman in Washington who will make us proud.

By the way, you may wonder why the State Board of Elections or Westchester County Board of Elections is not sending out a mailing bringing this simple change to voters attention. That would make too much sense!

### Hot Topics:

New York City Speed Cameras by schools have been turned on 24 hours a day. People wonder why we don't have speed cameras in WESTCHESTER. It's simple. To get speed cameras you need a home rule message by the local officials to our state officials who have the power to enact speed cameras. And boy oh boy do we need them. Not only by schools but by places where cars are zooming by. Lately that seems like everywhere you go.

The revenue that would be generated at \$50 a clip? Much more than the revenue generated by the unfair Red Light Cameras. And the speed cameras are more accurate than red light cameras and hard to fight in court. Speeding on our nations roads is out of control, causing many accidents that would not be happening if people would follow the laws.

*continued on pg 6-*

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## Mount Vernon Library to Host Comic Expo on Saturday Aug. 7



Do you love comics? Did you grow up reading comic books or go to the movies and thrill at watching your favorite comic book characters come to life? Are you an enthusiastic gamer or anime follower? Perhaps you submerge yourself into new worlds of sci-fi and fantasy. If any of these descriptions apply to you, or you are just plain curious, here is your chance to experience the realms of comics and pop culture firsthand among a community of people who share your passions!

After a two-year hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mount Vernon Public Library is hosting its fourth annual Comic Expo on Sunday, August 7 from 1:00 pm to 7:00 pm on South First Avenue between First and Second Streets in Mount Vernon, New York.

Comic Expo is a free pop culture event featuring vendors, artists, entertainers, children's activities, gaming tournaments, anime viewings and more! Cosplayers will be present throughout the day showing off their costume finery and interacting with attendees.

Anticipation is building, and MVPL predicts that this year will be bigger and better than before! The Mount Vernon Public Library Comic Expo will bring out those passionate about comics, gaming, anime and sci-fi. From our K-pop dance challenge, Kids Comic Clubhouse, top notch entertainment and more, Comic Expo is free to the public and filled with fun activities.

There will be a cosplay costume contest with a \$500 Grand Prize for contestants aged 13 and up. Cosplay, the dressing up as a character from a movie, book, or video game, especially one from the Japanese genres of manga and anime, is a popular attraction at comic conventions worldwide, and our cosplay contest is sure to be a smash. There will also be a junior cosplay contest for children under 12. Professional cosplayers Rizuki, Spike Schumacher and Tranquil Ashes will be in attendance as judges for this year's Cosplay Contest.

A variety of food and refreshments will be available for purchase from food truck vendors.

Comic Expo has been made possible, in part, with funding from NYS Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow.

### Abortion protestors going to jail, continued from pg 1-

The case was before Judge John Collins in White Plains City Court, and was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Celia Curtis of the Trials and Investigations Division.

The three men were members of Red Rose Rescue, a pro-life group that conducts protests to abortions across New York State. Members of Red Rose were in the courtroom for the sentence, and posted on Facebook what two of the defendants said. Will Goodmans closing statement - "We are here for the equality of all people from the beginning of life to the end of life and for the solidarity we can share with the mom, the child, and the father and we are here to help"

As Will Goodman was escorted out of the courtroom he proudly said - "Vivo Christo Rey"

Mathew Connolly refused to speak to be in solidarity with the unborn whose voices were unjustly taken from them.

Father Fidelis said in his closing statement - "Isaiah said woe to those who call good evil and evil good. Woe to those who call abortion a right. (Addressed to the judge) You disallowed the justification defense and that injustice was compounded by the jury and also by the sentencing you have given, I plead the blood of Jesus on this court room"

The judge replied - "You quoted judgement day in your case and today is your judgement day"

Will Goodman and Mathew Connolly are open to visitors but Father Fidelis is not. Please keep these heroes in your prayers," wrote Red Rose Rescue on Facebook.

## Democrats, Republicans and Independents Unite to Build a New Political Party



Three democracy reform groups merge to create the unified Forward Party, plan rapid expansion ahead of 2023 national convention

After working in parallel to strengthen democracy, the Forward Party, the Renew America Movement, and the Serve America Movement have announced the merger of their three organizations to create the launchpad for a transformational American political party under one name: Forward.

The merged group – comprised of leading national Democrats, Republicans, and Independents – will build a new kind of political party that represents the interests of the majority of Americans who reject extremism and division. Forward advisors include former U.S. presidential candidates, members of Congress, governors, cabinet officials, entrepreneurs, and grassroots leaders, in addition to thousands of volunteers in all 50 states.

The new Forward Party is launching a national building tour this fall to hear from voters and begin laying the groundwork for expanded state-by-state party registration and ballot access, relying on the combined nationwide network of the three organizations. Forward plans to achieve legal recognition in 15 states by the end of 2022, twice that number in 2023, and in almost all U.S. states by the end of 2024. The tour will culminate in a national convention in Summer 2023.

Three priorities will unite the broad coalition and will serve as the springboard for policymaking by eventual Forward Party candidates and leaders: A Vibrant Democracy; A Community of Personal Freedom; and A Fair Flourishing Economy.

The group has pledged to recruit solutions-oriented candidates to run for office – especially in local, state, and national races where political extremists do not reflect the majority of Americans. While Forward will not have its own candidates in the 2022 midterm elections, the group announced it will support select candidates in November who stand up for our democracy, even if they come from outside the new party.

This will be a political home for the moderate majority of Americans who want to move past the era of divisiveness and do-nothing politicians – so that our government starts working again. This party will look and feel different. Forward will be a place that celebrates diverse viewpoints and creativity, allowing everyone to chart their own path.

The new Forward Party will be ready for liftoff at a national convention in Summer 2023, and in the meantime we are inviting Americans to join us – now – in fixing our broken political system. Forward volunteers and supporters are already mobilizing in communities across the country, thanks to the combined efforts of the three organizations that are merging to make this possible. And this fall, we are hitting the road with a national tour to hear your ideas and begin seeking state-by-state party registration and ballot access (15 states this year and nearly all 50 states within two years).

We will be recruiting solutions-oriented candidates to run for office, at all levels. At the same time, we will actively embrace unifying leaders who stand up for our democracy, even if they come from outside our party, including in this year's midterm elections.

The Forward Party will stand for doing, not dividing. That means rejecting political extremes and working together to take real action on every important issue for the unrepresented majority in American politics.

We have no illusions about the difficult mission before us, but we are forging ahead with the passion, optimism, and urgency this moment demands. Americans of all stripes will build this groundbreaking movement – and take our country in a better direction.

Not Left. Not Right. Forward. Join us.

The new Forward Party team includes veterans of successful presidential campaigns from both major parties, long-time operatives in the "new politics" space, and democracy reform champions. The organization plans exciting announcements in the months to come.

For more information, please go to [www.fwdtogether.org](http://www.fwdtogether.org)

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# Democrats and Republicans Debate in Races for Congress in Westchester

By Dan Murphy

More than 10 republican and democratic candidates for Congress, seeking to represent Westchester County voters in two different Districts (NY-16 and NY-17) participated in three different Westchester League of Women Voters debates. The debates can be seen online by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/lwvwestchester>. In the 17th District, Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney is seeking re-election, and is facing a challenge in the democratic primary from State Senator Alessandra Biaggi.

Rep. Maloney, who is also Chair of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, DCCC, has the endorsement of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and many local and regional unions.

State Senator Biaggi has the endorsement from AOC (Congresswoman Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez) and the Working Families Party.

During the debate, Maloney said that Biaggi's views are too progressive and that she is disconnected from moderate democrats in Northern Westchester and Rockland.

Biaggi said that Maloney is out of touch with the democratic party and that support for programs like Medicare for All, and A Green New Deal are more popular and supported by a majority of democrats in the district.

Maloney pointed to his support for Israel and his rejection of defunding the police but supporting police reforms. Maloney listed several projects and initiatives that he has worked on for Westchester, Rockland and Putnam Counties.

"The Rescue Plan, the Infrastructure bill, the Climate Plan, these are real results. Banning oil barges from the Hudson River, we did that together. The gun safety legislation, lowering prescription drug costs, protecting social security and Medicare, pre-existing conditions, and we must enshrine Roe v. Wade into federal law," Maloney said.

Biaggi said that more power should be given to the people and less power given to corporations. "We need to make sure that we are getting big money out of politics. Restoring trust by proving that we are fighting for working families. Being committed to institutional reforms like ethics reform, and overturning Citizens United, and Supreme Court reform."

Recent polling has Maloney comfortably ahead of Biaggi in the upcoming primary on Aug. 23.

Five republicans are seeking to be the GOP's nominee in the 17th District. The favorite in the race in Assemblyman Mike Lawler who currently represents Rockland County. One of Lawlor's opponents from Westchester is Bill Faulkner, a councilman from Somers.

Other republicans running in this primary in NY-17 are Jack Schrepel, Charles Castiglio and Shosana David, who did not participate in the debate.

While Lawler has most of the local republican endorsements, and has raised the most money, Faulkner is also mentioned favorably by many Westchester republicans we have spoken to. Faulkner originally was running for Congress in the 16th district when the original district lines ran from the Bronx north into Somers.

But after a NY Judge tossed out those lines, new lines were drawn that put Faulkner in the 17th district, and in a GOP primary against Lawler. Many Westchester republicans have called on Faulkner to get out of the race in 17 and run in 16, but so far he has refused. A few republicans we have spoken to say Faulkner could be a future republican candidate for Westchester County Executive.

In a five-way race in this GOP primary, anything could happen.

Back to the 16th District, and another multi-candidate democratic primary. The incumbent Congressman Jamaal Bowman is running for re-election. He is being challenged by two Westchester County Legislators; Vedat Gashi and Katherine Parker.

Gashi got into the race early, Parker is a late arrival. The fourth democrat in this race is Harrison attorney Mark Jaffe.

The debate between the four candidates is also on the Westchester LWV website. Most democrats we speak to believe that Bowman is very difficult, if not impossible to beat, with three democrats running against him, and "splitting the vote of those democrats opposed to Bowman," as one Westchester democrat told us.

Currently, republicans have a 'placeholder' candidate on the ballot in NY-16; John Ciampoli, a longtime republican and attorney from Long Island. While the 16th district is heavily democratic, most political observers believe that the Westchester GOP should find a candidate.

**Editor's Note: In the July 29th issue of Yonkers Rising newspaper, we printed a story titled, "In Yonkers, the Race for Congress is between Bowman and Gashi." In that story we spoke to several Westchester democrats and Yonkers democrats who wanted Gashi to have a chance to face off against Bowman one on one, and were critical of Parker and Jaffe for getting into the race.**

**Our story faced push back from the political consultants hired by the Parker campaign, who disagreed with the story and emailed their objection. Based on their opposition, we have decided not to run the story in Westchester Rising, but we ask our readers to read the story in its entirety at: <http://yonkerstimes.com/in-nyonkers-the-race-for-congress-is-between-bowman-and-gashi/>**

## Letter to the Editor: Re: Eric Schoen Column on Bail Reform

Eric, I read your column in the July 22nd, 2022 edition of Yonkers Rising. You hit the nail on the head in regard to each of the issues that you addressed. I was wondering if you were a professional carpenter in a previous life.

In regard to bail reform, although I am not aware of a related poll, please be informed that I have repeatedly contacted Senator Mayer, Assemblyman Pretlow, Assemblyman Sayegh and once to Senator Stewart-Cousins regarding the assault upon civilization inflicted by the criminal empowering, wrong thinking, misguided legislations of Bail Reform and Raise the Age. Please be informed that the vast majority of individuals with whom I have spoken have expressed outrage at what they perceive to be the complete disregard for the law abiding that these legislations have inflicted. As far as I am concerned, those who voted for these legislations are accomplices to the low life, criminal parasites who prey upon the law abiding.

Jerry Longarzo, Yonkers

# Stepinac HS Senior Commits to Play Football for Harvard



On July 27, Stepinac High School rising senior Jack Donahoe of White Plains, pictured left committed to play football for Harvard University. "But, that development, as impressive as it is, is just part of the extraordinary Ivy League week that this academically and athletically top performing student has just experienced," said Paul Carty, Principal. In addition to Harvard, Donahoe received offers from Yale, Princeton, UPENN and Cornell.

In the space of just a week, five top Ivy League universities came knocking on Donahoe's door, "a rare achievement for any high school student anywhere in the U.S. but not surprising given the rigor of his curriculum and stellar record," noted Frank Portanova (Class of '93), Vice Principal for Academics and Curriculum.

As a member of Stepinac's championship Crusaders varsity football team, the 6'2", 190- pound Donahoe has played as an effective safety. In three years of play, he recorded 40 solo tackles (68 total) as well as two interceptions. "But Jack is an accomplished all-around athlete as well," head coach Mike O'Donnell said, citing his CHSAA championship wins in track, triple jump and all-league lacrosse.

And academically, his stats are equally jaw-dropping: He has attained a 4.1 cumulative GPA. Jack has been a member of Stepinac's groundbreaking Honors Academy, a unique-in-the-region, three-year small learning program that provides academically top performing students with opportunities for advanced studies in four disciplines: engineering, finance/economics, health sciences, and law.

During the recent fourth annual Honors Academy Symposium on Space Colonization, Donahoe (on behalf of the Finance/Economics Academy) presented the analysis for the recommended form of monetary currency to drive the Mars economy.

He has also been a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math National Honor Society, and made the first honor roll in nine successive trimesters. (There are three trimesters per academic year.)

"On behalf of our very proud Stepinac family, we congratulate Jack on his remarkable achievements and wish him continued success, following in the steps of Stepinac's distinguished alumni," said Fr. Thomas Collins (Class of '79), President.

## Their Reality Could One Day Be Our Reality

By Ivy Reeves

We cannot turn on the news without seeing a violent crimes and murders or stabbing. The media cannot cover all the shootings occurring every day in America.

Since 1996, there have been forty-eight school shootings in middle and high schools out of that, thirty-seven of the shooters were 18 years of age and under. More than 311,000 students have experience gun violence since Columbine.

America holds the record for mass school shootings which unfortunately been around for way too long and seem to be getting worst. There are people who believe gun control and legislation is necessary in the attempt to stop this trend. After all America has more guns than people. Some citizens believe we should arm the teachers, armed guards, and metal detectors, while Gun Violence Researcher, Garen Wintemute says, "the key to preventing gun tragedies and stopping gun violence is to treat them like a public health disaster."

The Second Amendment of the United States of America which allows citizens to keep and bear arms will be difficult to amend, change or eliminate, so now we must find other ways to meet this challenge.

On Tuesday July 12th, 2022, a dinner meeting took place at Silvio's restaurant in Yonkers NY. The meeting was a private affair focusing on the preparation for an unfortunate school shooting in the city of Yonkers. The purpose of the meeting was to galvanize significant department heads who are sincere visionaries and forward thinkers to discuss and implement a plan. Critical to the success of such humanitarian safety issues, ego, pride, and selfishness was left behind so that we could embrace, compassion, care, empathy, and sympathy among the group.

Those in attendance were commissioners and heads of departments in both the city of Yonkers and Westchester County along with community leaders and students. The group plans to meet again this month with a plan for the 2022-2023 school year. It was important to pull this exclusive group together after watching and reading and watching devastating news of school shootings over the past few years and realizing that this could happen in any town, village, or city. The fact is their reality could become a reality in our city. Therefore, it was important to pull this group of first responders, commissioners, mental health workers, community leaders and students together to design preventive measures to stop children and other innocent people from getting injured and or killed.

Selected officials were not invited to the first meeting because they may politicize the event to appear initiative-taking, proactive and caring when in essence, they've been in office for quite some time and shootings have been taking place on for years, yet they have not come together to organize a plan to help protect our children and or residents. The group will meet again this month to summarize the plans, activities, and events to activate the next steps for this upcoming academic year.

"If Fail to Plan, You Are Planning to Fail" - Benjamin Franklin  
The author is a community advocate in Yonkers.

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## White Plains Hospital Screenings Under the Stars Continues with Boss Baby 2 Family Business



White Plains Hospital Screenings Under the Stars presented by Westchester County Parks and Sharc Creative continues with the family comedy, Boss Baby 2: Family Business (2021-PG) on Wednesday, Aug. 17, at Kensico Dam Plaza, Valhalla.

County Executive George Latimer said, "Summer is far from over, continue to enjoy the warm weather with another outdoor movie! Take this opportunity to get outside and spend some quality time with family and friends."

Parks Commissioner, Kathleen O'Connor said, "It has been so wonderful seeing the residents of Westchester come together to enjoy all of our fun events. Join us at our very own 'Central Park' for another delightful night of family entertainment."

The gates open at 5:30 p.m. and movies begin at sundown. Event is rain or shine. Admission and parking are free. Moviegoers should bring blankets, folding chairs, and a picnic. Refreshments will be available for sale.

The other movies in the series are:

Spider-Man: No Way Home (2021-PG 13) on Saturday, Sept. 17, at Glen Island Park, New Rochelle

The Addams Family 2 (2021-PG) on Friday, Oct. 21, at Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson

The White Plains Hospital Screenings Under the Stars is presented by Westchester County Parks and Sharc Creative with Westchester Parks Foundation, and support from Westchester Talk Radio, 100.7 WHUD, 107.1 The Peak, Palisades Mazda, The Premier Collection, Look Dine-In Cinemas, Valley Bank, Hamlethub, Robison, LLP, Inspiria Outdoor Advertising, and Westchester Magazine. Movies may be cancelled due to inclement weather conditions.

### AGENDA FOR ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

#### PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:

THE CITY OF YONKERS ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS MEETING SCHEDULED FOR TUESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2022 AT 6:00 PM, WILL BE HELD IN YONKERS CITY HALL, 40 SOUTH BROADWAY, 4TH FLOOR (building is handicapped accessible). PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR INFORMATION AND UPDATES WWW.YONKERSNY.GOV .

#### OPEN CONTINUED HEARING

# 5794 – Improvement to a Non-Conforming Use & Area Variance – Mathew Valade, P.E., on behalf of NYC DEP, owner, on premises known as 100 Central Park Avenue, Block: 8002, Lot: 1, Zone: T (B30519)

JOSEPH CIANCIULLI  
CHAIRMAN, ZBA

#### *Eric Schoen, continued from pg 3--*

With the recent billion dollar lottery where we may never find out who won because of a state law in Illinois that doesn't require winners to reveal their identity, maybe it's time New York institute such a law. It is annoying when you win and you have callers trying to sell you financial products. A Robert Schoen won a lottery prize, he was not listed in the phone book, my mother was listed as R. Schoen and for years she got calls from salesmen looking for Robert Schoen.

Nancy Pelosi at press time is in China and now Taiwan. Why doesn't she stay home and fix the problems in this country?

President Biden's Covid diagnosis is just a reminder that Covid is still with us, you have to be careful, and that Americans can get free Covid tests from their pharmacy or through government sponsored programs to stay safe! At least 6 per family member.

Will you miss the green sprite bottle. There go the environmentalists again. To be honest it never dawned on me that the sprite bottle was green. I don't drink a lot of soda which explains it.

A woman in New York City got arrested and out of jail 100 times for shoplifting. Shoplifting attempt number 101 she got into an altercation with police officers and finally today she is in jail with bail. What's wrong with our system. Let me remind you that all these shoplifting episodes are part of the reason why the cost of food and everything is going up. If you see someone shoplifting say something to the person or a store employee.

As the MTA considers whether to lift the mask mandate on the subways, I say no. It's so dirty down there you should really be wearing an oxygen mask or a gas mask let alone a K95 mask!

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

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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 October 22, 2021, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Lobby of the Westchester County Courthouse, 111 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, White Plains, NY on August 15, 2022 at 9:30AM, 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 50855-2019 72689

Notice of formation of Color It Black, LLC. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/28/2022. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the Color It Black LLC, 33 Cliffside Drive, Yonkers, NY 10710 Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of formation of Sweeney Tech, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 06/16/2022. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 14 Alta Place, Yonkers, NY 10710. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Formation of LNE CONSTRUCTION, LLC filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 6/21/2022. Office loc.: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The address SSNY shall mail process to James Saisa, 25 Harvard Ave., Yonkers, NY 10710. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of formation of Sutton E.L.S Ent, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 08/18/2021. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 103 McLean Avenue Apt.# 3b, Yonkers NY 10467. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of Ari Cleanse and Glow LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 7/12/2022. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Ari Cleanse and Glow 414 s 3rd Avenue, Mount Vernon NY 10550. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

Notice of formation of LaceMafia LLC Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 4/20/2022. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 7014 13th Avenue, Suite 202 Brooklyn, NY 11228 . Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of Formation of INNER THEIA LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 03/01/2022. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Inner Theia LLC at 5 Aspen Road, Scarsdale NY 10581. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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## All About Joel Comes to Kensico Dam Plaza Aug. 13, for Robison Summer Concert Series



The Robison Summer Concert Series continues with David Clark's All About Joel, a musical tribute to Billy Joel, on Saturday, Aug. 13, at Kensico Dam Plaza in Valhalla. County Executive George Latimer said, "Take a trip down memory lane during this great performance. Grab your family, friends and dancing shoes for a night full of the Piano Man's classic pop songs!"

Parks Commissioner Kathleen O'Connor said, "Here's another chance to come and enjoy Kensico's great lawn with a New York State of Mind on a warm summer evening."

All concerts will be ticketed-admission events, with purchase available by online pre-sale only. Tickets are \$10 per person. Children 5 years and older require a ticket. Pre-purchase tickets online only at <https://maingatetickets.com/events/view/1303>. Tickets will not be available for purchase onsite on the day of the event.

Seating will be general admission style.

Gates open at 6 p.m., concerts begin at 7 p.m. and parking is free. Please bring blankets and lawn chairs for seating and coolers are permitted.

The final concert of the series is:

Friday, Aug. 26 | 45 Riots and SAGE – A one-night festival of blazing R&B, jazz, soul and dance!

The Robison Summer Concert Series is presented by Westchester County Parks and Share Creative with Westchester Parks Foundation, and support from Westchester Talk Radio, 100.7 WHUD, 107.1 The Peak, Garcia's at The Capital Theater, Hamlethub, Palisades Mazda, The Premier Collection, Inspira Outdoor Advertising, and Westchester Magazine.

Kensico Dam Plaza is located at 1 Bronx River Parkway, Valhalla. For more information, call 914-864-PARK or visit [parks.westchestergov.com](http://parks.westchestergov.com).

### Yorktown, Trader Joe's, Par 3 Golf, continued from pg 1-

contract passed with paltry accomplishment—an inexcusable degree of inaction.

4. Under the contract, the Town is entitled to enter the golf course to inspect, observe or monitor any aspect of the licensee's operations. No need for disguises and none were used.

Despite years of delays, the Town Board sought to work with this developer to advance this golf course's completion. Instead, we have received excuses and false promises while the developer or its employees violate our ordinances, including by having employees unlawfully live in this Town park and by operating without a proper building permit since 2019.

The time has come for RC Recreation Development and its principals to acknowledge that they have been incapable of completing this project. Their lawsuit makes outlandish allegations to shift public attention away from their failure. I will take on any fight to protect taxpayers from abuse," wrote Slater in a letter to Westchester Rising, explaining his side of what is expected to be a long legal battle.

And in the meantime, the course will remain closed. Some reports have only 3 of the 9 holes complete.

But Slater's comments about this "is not a political campaign, sabotage, abuse or disparagement," is exactly what RC Recreation Development LLC is alleging, writing in the complaint, "But then Slater took office in January 2020. Styling himself after prominent conservatives like Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis, Slater used his position as Town Supervisor as a bully-pulpit from which he routinely and repeatedly (but baselessly) disparaged RC and/or the golf course, often joined in this spiteful chorus by Esposito."

Councilman Sergio Esposito is also named in the lawsuit with Town Building Inspector John Landi.

The case is assigned to Judge Melissa Loehr, Acting Supreme court Judge. The attorneys are for the Town Adam Rodriguez of the well known Westchester firm of Bleakley Platt For RC Development William Hurst, of Young, Sommer in Albany. More on the details of the lawsuit next week.

## Big Brothers Big Sisters of Westchester Names Jennifer Miller Chief Development Officer

Although Big Brothers Big Sisters of Westchester County, Inc. (BBBS) is continually growing its family of Big and Little matches, today, the mentoring organization added a new individual to its team of employees. Jennifer Miller of Westchester begins her post as Chief Development Officer, a new position for the regional charity, boasting an impressive decade-long career in the non-profit sector.

"The decision was certainly an easy one with Jennifer's impressive leadership skills and strong background in fundraising," said Valerie Brown, executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Westchester County, Inc. "She will be an immense asset to our group and we look forward to a most productive second half of the year."

In her new position, Miller will oversee the entire BBBS fundraising effort and manage relationships with its financial partners. Her specific responsibilities will include planning fundraising events, interacting with new and current donors to encourage ongoing contributions, and seeking out opportunities for financial support through grants and sponsorships.

Prior to accepting the position at BBBS, Miller served for eleven years at the American Heart Association-Westchester Chapter starting as a regional director and quickly advancing to senior regional director and most recently, executive director. In her variety of roles, she identified and cultivated donors, built community partnerships to support the national Go Red for Women, Heart Walk and Wear Red Day campaigns, and developed educational strategies for major public health issues, such as women's health, hypertension, nutrition security, tobacco and Covid-19.

"Words can't express how excited I am to help take the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization to a new level of success by expanding our support network to reach and positively impact more youth across Putnam and Westchester Counties!" adds Miller. "I look forward to creating many innovative initiatives that appeal to all of our key audiences and target markets."

Miller is a graduate of Denison University in Ohio and earned an advanced degree from Yale University. An active contributor to her community, she volunteers her time as a puppy socializer for Guiding Eyes for the Blind and lends her grant writing skills to the YMCA Family Camp. Miller is a past Board member at the Juvenile at the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) and past PTA President at Yorktown Heights.

Visit [www.bigswestchester.org](http://www.bigswestchester.org) for more information.

### Whistleblower Fired , continued from pg 1--

At a hearing to determine if Court Officer Campbell should be fired, the hearing report states, "Clerk Thompson led several laughter yoga exercises during the class. One of the exercises – the "army greeting laughter" exercise – prompted the circumstances of this proceeding. Clerk Thompson and the participants marched around the courtroom and saluted each other while laughing. Sergeant Gatt, Officer Ryerson, Officer Campbell, and even Clerk Thompson testified that her saluting and marching, and some of the participant's marching, resembled salutes and goose-stepping associated with Nazi Germany soldiers."

Court Officer Campbell, shocked at what he saw on his video camera, "admitted using his personal cell phone to record video from the court security monitor depicting part of the class. He also admitted that he texted the video from his personal cell phone to his fellow officers on the same day as when he recorded the video, on October 2, 2019."

Campbell testified, "I saw the chief clerk of family court, Kate Thompson, marching around the courtroom for probably approximately 30 seconds or so in an army-like nature, being described lightly as a Nazi salute." The activity "disturbed" him, and he reported it to Sergeant Gatt as the exercise was happening. According to Officer Campbell, Sergeant Gatt watched the court security monitor and did nothing in response to watching the class.

Campbell said that he did not alter the video which has been confirmed by a video expert. Forensic Scientist and video expert Drew Caprood viewed the video provided to Yonkerstimes.com. He opined, "I examined the video, and it is legitimate and unaltered."

The reason Campbell shared the video with his fellow court officers was to make sure "they at least had a heads up that this is the actions that we are dealing with."

In an interview with the Inspector General's office, who was tasked to conduct an investigation, Campbell added, "I take my job seriously and I reported it to the supervisor and as with other issues. It seemed to go on deaf ears. In the past if something like that had happened, I would have been advised to do an unusual occurrence report or do a summary of the situation and forward it to my supervisor. There was nothing done..and I didn't want it coming back and somebody saying I'm not doing my job...I feel like part of my duty is to watch the video and see what is going on in the courtrooms."

For five months after the incident, no action was taken against Clerk Thompson or against Court Officer Campbell. But, according to the hearing report, "On March 15, 2021, a person with the email address [gradylittle514@gmail.com](mailto:gradylittle514@gmail.com) emailed Judge Marks, copying Chief Judge DiFiore, writing, "Maybe the Warren County Family Court Chief Clerk and her clerks shouldn't be goose stepping around the courtroom throwing up the Nazi salute. News would love this . . . One of the videos had a voice in the background saying, what sounds like, "Sieg Heil," and the other video depicting the exercise does not have sound."

So what did Chief Judge DiFiore do with this video? Did she take action against the person who initiated the Nazi march, Clerk Thompson? No, no action was ever taken against Thompson, who still has her position today.

But actions were taken against Campbell, which included an order confiscating his guns and suspending his gun permit in May, 2021, two months after the video landed in DiFiore's computer. Campbell's license was suspended by Deputy Chief Justice Vito Caruso. This action prevented Campbell from performing his duties as a licensed Court Office, and he could only work in an unarmed position.

Several legal scholars question the decision to pull Campbell's gun permit because he took a video inside the courtroom, claiming that one has nothing to do with the other. Campbell should not have been considered a risk to the community because he took a courtroom video of this sort.

The other question raised in this investigation was who sent DiFiore the recording? Campbell has testified that it was not him. "I took the video, I shared it with my officers, my co-workers that I work with, I did not send that video to Mr. Marks and Chief Judge DiFiore. I did not do that sir." Testified Campbell.

After losing his gun permit, a hearing in then held to determine if Campbell should be fired. The Office of Court Administration, OCA, called for Campbell to be fired. But the hearing officer Matthew Lerner disagreed, writing in his decision. "The Petitioner strenuously argues that Officer Campbell should be dismissed from his service as a New York State court officer. While I recognize the seriousness nature of Officer Campbell's actions on October 2, 2019, I cannot recommend his termination. Numerous mitigating factors set forth below support a lesser discipline than termination."

"I credit Officer Campbell's testimony that he wanted some way of documenting that he was performing his duties and saw and acted accordingly when witnessing odd behavior in one of the courtrooms," wrote Lerner, who recommended that Campbell be placed on probation for six months, and that he be directed to remove or delete any copies of the video. After issuing his recommendation, Lerner resigned his position as a hearing officer, and Campbell was not suspended but was fired, three weeks later, on May 23, 2022, by the Hon. Norman St. George, who was appointed Deputy Chief Administrative Judge by Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence K. Marks, with the consultation and approval of Chief Judge Janet DiFiore.

It is also important to note that Court Office Campbell received a positive job performance from his superior on March 28, 2022, two months before he was fired. "CO Campbell handles all members of the public and court staff with respect. Is able to diffuse tense situations and takes appropriate action if that does not work," reads his evaluation.

Officer Campbell has filed an Article 78 Legal proceeding in Albany where he is seeking his lost wages and his job back, and his gun permits restored.

Many of those in the legal community that we spoke to were disappointed in Judge DiFiore for her decisions concerning this incident. Specifically, why she turned her focus on Campbell and not Clerk Thompson.

"There is nothing funny about anything to do with the Nazis and the six million Jews they killed. I am ashamed of what she did or did not do. As a practicing attorney in New York State, I do not wish for my name to be published for possible retribution," said one Westchester attorney.

Another NYC lawyer told us, "He (Campbell) did not deserve to be fired. Just the opposite, I applaud his actions and find him to be a true whistleblower. She (DiFiore) is tone deaf. This is hate speech occurring in a New York State Courtroom."

Forensic Scientist Michael Archer, who has expertise in religion and hate crimes remarked, "The only thing laughable about the video is the Chief Clerk's preposterous explanation."

The other marchers in the court room, whose identity we cannot FOIL to find out who they are, haven't said a word and remain quiet in the hopes that they will keep their jobs.

No criminal charges were ever filed against Campbell, 40, who served as a Court Officer for more than six years before his decision to record abhorrent behavior in a court room that he took an oath to protect, resulted in his termination.

Clerk Thompson testified that, "she was unaware her marching during the class could be viewed as imitating Nazi Germany soldiers," and has yet to express any remorse for what she did.

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