

# Westchester Rising

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Friday December 1, 2023

## “The House Majority Runs Through New York’s 17th Congressional District”

House Speaker Johnson to Visit Westchester to Support Congressman Mike Lawler; Westchester Democrats Endorse Mondaire Jones; Gereghty Still Running



Rep. Mike Lawler



former Rep. Mondaire Jones

By Dan Murphy

The 2024 Congressional elections will determine if republicans can hold their 6-seat majority, in the House of Representatives, (soon to become 5 after the expulsion of Rep. George Santos). In New York State, republicans picked up congressional seats in New York City, Long Island, and Westchester.

So, the outcome of whether current republican Speaker of the House Mike Johnson remains in power next year, of whether democrat Congressman Hakeem Jeffries gets the gavel, will likely come down to NY, and could come down to Westchester’s 17th District, and the reelection efforts of Congressman Mike Lawler.

New York’s 17th Congressional District

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Liz Gereghty

## Two Westchester Elections Show You Vote Counts Belmont Leads by 1 Vote in Harrison, Rende leads in North Castle by 3 Votes story on page 4

Support the Amore Pizzeria & Italian Kitchen “You don’t have to be jewish to support Israel”



A new customer for Amore Pizzeria and Italian Kitchen, with the Israeli Flag flying in the background. Photo from Facebook

By Dan Murphy

Note: We found out about this after reading a story by Martin Wilbur in the Westchester Examiner.

The Amore Pizzeria and Italian Kitchen in Armonk recently received some protests when they decided to hang an Israeli flag outside their restaurant after the attacks by Hamas against Israel on Oct. 7. Owner Mark Mazzotta said that while he expected some negative reaction, he received a larger than expected protest and boycott, with some customers walking out, cancelling reservations, and refusing to pay for their orders.

Mazzotta was obviously nervous about the initial response but has refused to take down the flag. All he wanted to do was support the Jewish community and his loyal customers for 30 years. But now the Armonk community have rallied to support Amore, with a increased number of customers coming in to offer their support with the purchase of a meal.

Customers have come from Scarsdale and beyond, including this reporter, who bought a Chicken Francese dinner, and it was great. The owner repeated to me what he told another reporter, “You don’t have to be Jewish to support Israel.” Support the Amore Pizzeria & Kitchen if you feel the urge to do so. They are located at 1 Kent Place, in Armonk, phone number 914-273-3535.

And remember, boycotts can work both ways. A similar boycott on a Long Island diner for flying the Israeli flag resulted in a outpouring of customers.

## Scrooge Steals 12-Year Old Girl’s Wheelchair

Non-Profit Donates New One; Public Donates \$6,500 on GoFundMe Help Find this Grinch!



above: video of thief placing stolen wheelchair in maroon Honda SUV. below: Aliyah Rivera

By Dan Murphy



A sad holiday crime has turned into good news for 12-year-old Aliyah Rivera, from Ossining. Aliyah, who is fighting a rare neuro condition Acute Flaccid Myelitis, had her electric wheelchair stolen on Nov. 16.

Aliyah and her family left the electric wheelchair outside minutes before she was to go to school. The thief is recorded on video in a maroon Honda SUV. He gets out and looks in Aliyah’s backpack and finds her notebook and a laptop. He took all of it and sped away.

The family noticed that the thief looked and found a notebook and a laptop, so “he knew it was a little girls wheelchair.” A GoFundMe page was set up to raise funds for a new wheelchair.

Link- [https://www.gofundme.com/f/please-donate-to-help-replace-stolen-wheelchair?utm\\_campaign=p\\_cp+share-sheet&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook](https://www.gofundme.com/f/please-donate-to-help-replace-stolen-wheelchair?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook)

The GoFundMe page reads, “12-year-old Aliyah Rivera has been fighting Acute Flaccid Myelitis for most of her young life. She has the kindest and biggest heart and maintains a positive attitude throughout numerous surgeries, tremendous hurdles, and many medical challenge’s. Aliyah considers herself lucky to be able to

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## Lawsuit Against NYS Cannabis Licensing Settles Westchester License Holders Can Open After Judge Signs Off



John Ruggiero, Founder, Elevate Cannabis NY with NYS Cannabis Control Board Chairwoman Tremaine Wright | Photo from Elevate Cannabis NY November 27, 2023

By Dan Murphy

An “agreement in principle has been reached between the NYS Office of Cannabis Management, OCM, and a four disabled Veterans, over the procedure in which licenses to operate cannabis dispensaries were awarded in New York state.

The lawsuit, filed in August, resulted in NYS Supreme Court Judge Kevin Bryant issuing a restraining order barring the issuance of new licenses, (called CAURD licenses), but also halting the OCM’s ability to finalize licensing and opening of about 40 applicants who were ready to open.

The lawsuit and the injunction crippled the early stages of the legal Marijuana industry in New York. At the time of the injunction, OCM approved 436 provisional licenses, and 27 of those have opened; 13 are in New York City and none have opened in Westchester.

The NYS OCM Board met on November 27 and passed a resolution approving the settlement which resolved that the Board “approves entering into a settlement agreement and stipulation of dismissal for the Fiori Action and Coalition Action.”

Disabled Veterans Carmine Fiore, William Norgard, Steve Mejia and Dominic Spaccio filed the suit. They argued that when OCM first opened the window only to applicants who had been convicted of a prior Marijuana related offense, the state violated the rights of disabled veterans and other New Yorkers to apply from the outset.

Details of the settlement have not been released, and the settlement is not final until it is approved by all parties and Judge Bryant.

In a release, the OCM stated, “Today, the New York State Cannabis continued on pg 7-

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Rye Country Day School Senior Cole Denson Named Con Edison's Scholar-Athlete of the Week



Cole Denson

By Dan Murphy

Congratulations to Cole Denson, a senior at Rye Country Day School, for being named Con Edison's Scholar-Athlete of the week. Denson plays running back and defensive back for RCDS, and in their recent MIFL Championship game victory (38-6) against Poly Prep, Denson rushed for 203 rushing yards, with 4 touchdowns.

In 2023, Cole has rushed for 1118 yards and has amassed a total of 24597 yards rushing, receiving and returns after punts and kickoffs. He is the captain of the football, basketball and track & field, and has been a 3-sport athlete all 4 years.

Cole is one of 15 Juniors and Seniors elected as a Peer Leader. The Peer Leaders also teach Life Skills to the 9th grade students. This class focuses on navigating high school years, handling situations in and out of school.

Denson is also a member of the RCDS Math Team, Debate Team and Concert Choir. He has completed 6 AP courses and has a weighted GPA of 4.23.

Recruited by several Ivy League Schools, Cole has decided on attending Duke University and will attempt to "walk on" to the football team.

"As a student of color who is an incredible leader and mentor to others at our school, Cole's journey is marked by consistent social maturity, academic excellence, athletic prowess, and active participation in diverse extracurriculars. He approaches all his commitments with enthusiasm and consistently goes above and beyond expectations, not only for personal success but also for the benefit of his peers.

"In the classroom, Cole has a deep commitment and engagement with academics. His ability to foster camaraderie and unity extends to all his extracurricular involvements. Because of his own background and diverse interests, Cole possesses a remarkable talent for bringing individuals of varying backgrounds, interests, and grade levels together to achieve common goals.

"Younger students are drawn to him due to his genuine investment in their growth. Cole's leadership is most evident in his role as a three-sport Varsity captain. Cole is a fierce competitor, not for individual glory but because he wants to succeed for his team and his broader community. Throughout his time at RCDS we have seen Cole mature and embrace the responsibilities of an upperclassman, and now as a clear leader in our school.

He takes this honor seriously but will never boast about positions or titles that he carries. He does what he does because he cares. He cares about always being his best self, and he cares about collective achievement. His unique blend of determination, humor, and leadership qualities makes him an exceptional individual who undoubtedly leaves a positive impact on those around him," writes Aimee Rincon, Associate Director of College Counseling, Rye Country Day School.

AAPI Coalition Advocates for Inclusion of Asian American History Taught in Westchester Schools



County Legislator David Imamura, at podium; Assemblyman Nader Sayegh is far left

A group of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) organizations, advocates, and elected officials recently called on Westchester County public school districts to integrate AAPI history into their regular annual curriculum. This call to action comes at a time of increased hate incidents and violence directed at the AAPI community, fueled by the COVID pandemic. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing minority population in both Westchester County and in the nation.

The importance of teaching AAPI history was pinpointed by the AAPI Needs Assessment conducted in 2022 by the County's Asian American Advisory Board. 800 Asian Americans were surveyed about their experience living in Westchester County. Feelings of isolation and a lack of belonging were identified, along with anxiety regarding the uptick in anti-Asian sentiment. By promoting school curriculum as well as lobbying to recognize Diwali and Eid as official school holidays, the hope is to address these concerns proactively.

Legislator David Imamura, Westchester County's first Asian American Legislator, spearheaded Wednesday's event. He said, "Today we are launching a campaign calling on every public school district in Westchester to include AAPI history as part of their curriculums, and to add Diwali and Eid to their school calendars as holidays. The time has come for schools to no longer just talk the talk, but to walk the walk when it comes to Asian Americans. When Korean grandmothers are assaulted on the street in White Plains, when Filipino women are viciously attacked in the lobbies of their Yonkers apartment buildings, our County must take a stand that Westchester's Asian American residents are valued and protected. Ensuring that Asian American history is taught to our children and that Asian American holidays are celebrated and recognized are necessary steps towards that goal."

New York State Assemblyman Nader Sayegh said, "In the New York State Assembly, I've been proud to support various initiatives to support our diverse communities. A hallmark of my time in office has been promoting cultural diversity and combatting polarization through greater understanding. Whether it's participating on the cricket pitch or taking legislative action, including co-sponsoring legislation Governor Hochul recently signed to celebrate Diwali in New York. Now is the time to build on this momentum and support our Asian American and Pacific Islander neighbors in urging all our leaders to promote further reforms in our schools and communities so we can fully recognize the innumerable contributions and traditions of one of our fastest-growing diasporas."

Westchester County Asian-American Advisory Board Co-Chair Marjorie Hsu said, "Our children deserve to learn our rich history as Asians in America, that we have earned a seat at every table. And all our children need to learn about the Chinese Americans who built the first transcontinental railroads, the Japanese-Americans who fought in WWII even as their families were interned in camps. All children should learn to respect our diversity of ethnic and cultural traditions through celebrating the Lunar New Year, Eid and Diwali, in addition to Western holidays. Only by understanding each other's cultures can we embrace our differences in order to combat hate together."

Other participants included Ardsley School Board Member Vikas Agrawal, India Center of Westchester President Jagruti Patel, Edgemont High School Senior and Westchester Youth Congress Co-Founder Janice Lin, City of White Plains Youth Bureau Deputy Director Bhavana Pahwa, Board Member and Co-Vice President of Advocacy for OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates' Westchester & Hudson Valley Chapter, William Kaung, and County Legislator Tyrae Woodson-Samuels.

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## Another Hit & Run by Former County Employee

Two recent incidents of drivers hitting a pedestrian and driving away from the scene of the accident involved one former County Employee and one current county employee who was immediately fired.

Last month, we reported on the case of former Deputy County Executive Neil DeLuca, who is charged with hit and run in Mt. Pleasant.

On Nov. 18, David Ford, who was a staff member for the Westchester County Board of Legislators, was arrested by White Plains police in connection with a hit-and-run in that city.

Ford drove away after striking the victim, who was not seriously injured, according to police. Ford was arrested and charged with a misdemeanor and was released. He is the grandson of David Ford, longtime Chairman of the Mount Vernon Democratic Committee.

The Board of Legislators quickly suspended Ford and released a statement which said, "The Board of Legislators suspended the employee effective immediately. Our thoughts are with the victim. We are cooperating with the White Plains Police Department." Ford was listed as a Social Media staff member in the Communications Department of the County Board of Legislators.

No other information has been made available, and no other media reports other than the basic info. Even those in county government don't know, and wonder, why Ford was suspended so quickly, and why "they are so tight lipped on this." We have FOIL'd the police report for more information.

## Pumpkin Cheesecake?



By Eric Wolf Schoen

I hope you had a nice Thanksgiving filled with food, friends, family and fun. I happen to like turkey, gravy on the side and not sliced too thin. Cream of turkey soup, candied yams, a vegetable like broccoli or thin sliced zucchini in tomato sauce to make you feel like you are eating healthy. Dessert could be apple pie, pecan pie, bread pudding or the myriad options available. A delightful meal particularly when there is turkey leftover for sandwiches the next day, doused with good deli mustard.

Now I know there are many of you out there who despise turkey. The meal can consist of ham, prime rib, and some just like a simple lasagna. I'm not a pumpkin person, so what's up with all this pumpkin soup and worse, pumpkin cheesecake. Most of the restaurant menus I saw featured both pumpkin soup and the offending pumpkin cheesecake. At \$100 a person! Most of us love cheesecake, so why add pumpkin too it. It might be on display at your local supermarket with other desserts, but does anyone go into a grocery store and ask, 'Where's the pumpkin cheesecake?'

I love carving a pumpkin for Halloween, decorating pumpkins, putting them out as decoration sizes small to large on the porch, but I don't think there are many folks obsessed with pumpkin soup or cheesecake. I will eat pumpkin pie as long as it doesn't taste 'pumpkin' with whipped cream on top. Let me know if you disagree with me!

Speaking of food, we lost CYO Joe over the holidays. Whether it was making wedges at the old CYO on South Broadway including his pizza wedge, fresh Orza Italian bread with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese and spices toasted to perfection (a big hit at Yankee Stadium); wedges at his shop on Nepperhan Avenue when the CYO closed or frankfurters from his umbrella clad stand on Yonkers Avenue near Sinatra Funeral home, he kept Yonkersites fed well for many years. Up until a few weeks ago I would run into him at the McDonalds on Yonkers Avenue where I go when I am in that neck of the woods for my piping hot, burn your mouth coffee.

A lot of things have gone on during our Thanksgiving break. Here are just a few of them.

The House Ethics Committee has refused to investigate our old buddy Congressman Jamaal Bowman who pulled the fire alarm delaying a budget vote in D.C. Both Republicans and Democrats on the committee voted not to investigate the bazaar activity of Bowman which only shows you that political parties mean nothing. Washington is one big happy family, you do x for me and I will do y for you. Sad as his actions could have caused people to get injured, psychologically affected and things much worse. He pretends to be a friend of Israel, but his votes and actions speak louder than his words.

As we go to press our other friend George Santos looks like he is being thrown out of Congress. His lying and other unethical and illegal activities are so bad Democrats and Republicans are voting to get rid of him. Given the behavior of our politicians in the Bowman case, Santos must have done really bad things. Which we know he did embarrassing the institution to the point he has become a daily joke in the media. I still can't believe that in this day and age he was not properly vetted by the Republican Party before he was nominated. Shame on those involved in his sham.

The Supreme Court approved an Ethics Code for the body with no one to enforce it. Time and again we have heard of vacations and other special treatment given to the Supremes, but I guess they feel no one on the planet can properly monitor their activity to keep them in line with the new code. And we vest in them the power to make important decisions that affect our lives? Pathetic.

The people who pick up cans and bottles with 5 cent deposits on our New York streets want the deposit fee increased to 10 cents. With all the folks coming into our country, there is a lot of competition for cans and bottles with a deposit attached. Do these people vote? Do you think those of us who do vote want the deposit fee increased. The legislators those of us who vote elect need to keep this in mind if it comes before the State Legislature. I am all for recycling but come on. Stop nickel and dimeing the electorate!

Speaking of recycling I hope by now you have visited our Cross County Target and had your order packed up in one of their recyclable shopping bags. Stronger and sturdier than many and they can be reused many times. The trendy people in Yonkers carry their Target purchases and items they carry around with them in a bag in a Target recyclable bag.

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## Eastchester Police Arrest Three Romanians for Stealing a Senior's ATM Card



Bengoi 8/18/89



Iftima 4/7/1983



Turcanu 7/31/83

On Nov. 15, at 2pm, the Eastchester Police Department was notified of a scam in which a senior citizen's debit card was stolen. The victim reported to police that they had just left the Stop and Shop store on White Plains Rd. and after leaving they were approached by unknown individuals in the parking lot.

The individuals claimed there was a mix up at check out and they owed the victim money. They quickly pretended to give the victim money, while stealing the victim's ATM card from their wallet. An investigation revealed that the suspects had arrived at the store and had not purchased any items.

Working in concert, two females and a male suspect waited in line and watched the victim enter their debit card pin at check out. The suspects exited the store, followed and approached the victim and subsequently stole their debit card.

The suspects then fled the area. The suspect's vehicle was identified, stopped and found inside the vehicle were stolen cards from previous victims.

Arrested were Laura Bengoi, Loredana Iftima and Robert Turcanu all with a last verifiable address in Romania. The defendants were charged with Grand Larceny 4th degree, Criminal Possession of Stolen Property 4th degree and were released on their own recognizance. We would like to recognize the work of our patrol and detective divisions as well as the Pelham Manor Police Department which lead to the quick apprehension of the suspects.

Beward of Scams!

### Wheelchair stolen, continued from pg 1-

go to school even though she depends on a motorized wheelchair and crutches to get by each day. On the morning of 11/16/23, as the family was going through their routine of getting Aliyah downstairs and outside for the bus, a man drove up to their house and took both the wheelchair and the backpack (that included her laptop and school supplies) from their front yard. Aliyah, who never gets down, is crushed and her family and friends are devastated for her. While they are a proud family, replacing the wheelchair and purchasing another laptop are not expenses they were prepared for so close to the holidays. This is where we are asking the community to come together in a collective effort to help them replace these items that are so crucial to Aliyah's day to day," reads the GoFundMe page.

A few days later, a Brooklyn non-profit voted to buy Aliyah a new wheelchair. Bill and Karen Santo of the Christian J. Santo Legacy Foundation will present Aliyah with her new wheelchair on Dec. 2.

The GoFundMe funds raised, (\$6800 so far) will be collected by Aliyah's grandmother, who I'm sure will still put it to good use.

The Ossining Police Department are investigating but need your help. Anyone with information on who this Grinch is can call them at 914-941-4099.



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## Yonkers Fuelco Says Thanks to Veterans With \$1.99 a gallon gas



**Fuelco's Danny Eljamal and his mother Haifa Eljamal at their Yonkers service station**

Fuelco's Yonkers station launched its first annual Thanks to Veterans event on Tuesday with \$1.99 a gallon gas and refreshments for veterans and active service members.

"Veterans of the United States Armed Forces made tremendous sacrifices to ensure that we can live in a free and prosperous country," said Danny Eljamal. "This is my family's expression of appreciation to local veterans, so we decided to launch our annual event between Veterans Day and Thanksgiving as a gesture of gratitude."

During the event, Fuelco offered veterans free coffee and cupcakes from the Cupcake Cutie Boutique in Mount Vernon.

Fuelco partnered with the Westchester Veterans Service Agency and its FAVOR Discount Program to offer local veterans the special gas deal. The FAVOR program is an opportunity for local businesses to show support for U.S. troops while cultivating a new customer base.

"I'm happy that our FAVOR program has attracted businesses like Fuelco. They've been very generous, and they've done a great job," said Westchester Veterans Service Agency director Ron Tocci, who attended the event. "Fuelco's gesture sets an example for other merchants, and it reminds people that we owe veterans something."

According to GasBuddy.com, Fuelco consistently has the lowest gas prices compared to its competitors. All customers can download the Fuelco app from the company's website to receive everyday low prices on gas and healthy alternative foods at Fuelco's Foodsmart convenience store.

Fuelco-Foodsmart's locations are 651 Bronx River Road in Yonkers and 85 Virginia Road in Valhalla.

Coupled with its Foodsmart convenience store, the Fuelco service station combines deeply discounted gasoline and a variety of organic, gluten-free, and fair-trade snacks, along with convenience store staples.

The Eljamal family owns over 20 gasoline station locations, mostly located in Westchester County. Haifa Eljamal also controls a company operating two restaurants at the Westchester County Airport. Discussions are currently underway on how the restaurants can donate a percentage of their yearly profits to a veterans' charity designated by the Westchester County Service Agency.

## Court Rejects Challenge to Yorktown's New Zoning Rules

The NY Supreme Court rejected a legal challenge to Yorktown's modernization of its zoning rules in certain business corridors. Justice George E. Fufidio ruled that the Yorktown Town Board acted legally and appropriately in 2021 when it adopted zoning overlay districts for its economically struggling business hamlets.

Fufidio wrote in his November 21 decision that the Town Board "took into account the foreseeable needs of the community and was guided by the Town's Comprehensive Plan and sound zoning principles, as well as by State and Local laws with which they were in compliance and the whole plan was carried out in a proper, careful and reasonable manner."

The legal action was filed by Protecting Yorktown's Quality of Life Foundation and four of the foundation's supporters. Supervisor Tom Diana called Justice Fufidio's decision a vindication.

"The current and former members of the Town Board were thoughtful, deliberate, and respectful of all our obligations under the Town's Comprehensive Plan. We adopted this overlay zoning ordinance with the goal of bringing an economic rebirth to our business hamlets that have struggled for years because of changes in the retail landscape," said Supervisor Diana. "This overlay zoning is intended to position Yorktown businesses for success, and that's where we are headed."

The adoption of the overlay district in Yorktown Heights allowed the owner of the former Soundview Preparatory School campus at 370 Underhill Ave. to propose a mixed-use development with 148 residential units, 11,000 square feet of commercial space and the preservation of the property's historic mansion. The Yorktown Planning Board has approved the developer's site plan.

Assemblyman Matt Slater was Yorktown's supervisor at the time the overlay zoning was adopted. "The court's ruling validates the great care we used to craft an economic development plan that will revitalize the Yorktown Heights business district," said Assemblyman Slater. "The Overlay District law has been the key to attracting millions of dollars in new private investment in Yorktown Heights, and it will continue to transform our town and grow the local commercial tax base."

In May, the Town Board approved an agreement with the Soundview school developer that will deliver a full reconstruction of the intersection at Route 118 and Underhill Avenue. The developer, Underhill Soundview LLC, committed \$225,000 to the Town to fund public park improvements and more than \$625,000 toward the estimated \$1.2 million cost of redesigning and building the new intersection.

## Two Westchester Elections Show Your Vote Counts: Belmont Leads by 1 Vote in Harrison, Rende leads in North Castle by 3

By Dan Murphy

Never again should any Westchester resident believe that their vote doesn't count, after watching two local election on Nov. 7 be decided by one vote and by three votes.

The biggest election shocker came in the Town of Harrison, where former Supervisor Ron Belmont ran as a write-in candidates, and after the final count from the Board of Elections, won by 1 vote!

Belmont appears to have defeated the current Supervisor Rich Dionisio by one vote, with democrat Mark Jaffee way behind.

More than 2,000 Harrison voters cast their ballot by write in vote, and most of those votes were accepted, despite attempts by Dionisio's attorney to disqualify them.

Belmont's popularity in Harrison, after serving as Supervisor for 10 years and before that as Recreation Commissioner for 30 years, was proven in the vote totals.

One of Belmont's biggest supporters in Harrison told us, "This shows that Ron Belmont is one of the most respected elected officials in Westchester. If he wanted to run for higher office, the sky's the limit."

More than 5,850 votes were cast in Harrison.

The other razor tight election from Nov. 7 was in the Town of North Castle, where democrat Supervisor candidate Joseph Rende has defeated his republican opponent, Barbara DiGiacinto by 3 votes.

DiGiacinto is a North Castle Councilwoman, who has two years remaining on her term. More than 3,160 votes were cast in North Castle.

### To Our Readers:

If you know of someone who could use a little Holiday Cheer this season, please submit a letter to the editor explaining why this person should be a part of your favorite Christmas, Chanukah, or Kwanzaa memory. The best letter will receive a gift card to give to that special person. Email your letter to [dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com](mailto:dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com).

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## Letters to the Editor:

As many of us get older, especially senior citizens we realize that America has drifted far from its moorings of faith in God, personal freedom, equal justice, due process of law and respect for private property.

Today our nation is dominated by a self anointed ruling class of intellectual, political and financial elitist would be ruling class that fuels our views faith in God, our sacred Constitution and Bill of Rights with utter contempt.

we the people have witnessed an insidious assault on our nations historic principles by career politicians, Entrenched bureaucrats, dishonorable judges, illegal aliens, and the powerful special interests that control them.

We are now confronted with the hard truths that our elected officials and courts refuse to recognize and protect the unalienable rights and freedoms of individual Americans, or the sacred Constitution and Bill of Rights that has guaranteed them for 230 years.

Today a large percentage of Americans and illegal immigrants are dependent on government for their economic welfare, happiness, and security. We have forgotten that government produces nothing and has nothing of value to give us that it does not first take from someone else who works for it.

Today we elect and appoint government leaders and judges who rarely demonstrate the virtues of integrity, Personal responsibility, and respect for individual rights and private property that were cherished and guiding principles of our forefathers.

It is a tragic fact that the overwhelming majority of Americans no longer expect honesty, accountability, and lawful conduct from our nations leaders. Our republic and our freedom are in peril. We must act now if we are to successfully defend our nation against the powerful forces of tyranny and injustice that have become entrenched in our federal and state governments. there can be no middle ground – either we Will reclaim and secure freedom, or that brief moment in human history when man experience his rightful dominion over government will pass forever. We all must work together regardless of political party. One nation under God to restore this great country to its founding principles. if we as a nation do not move quickly. The freedoms we surrender today are the freedoms our grandchildren and future generations will never know existed.

A quote from one of our founders Thomas Jefferson."Who will govern the governors? There is only one force in the nation that can be depended upon to keep the government pure and the governors honest, and that is the people themselves.

They alone, if well-informed, are capable of preventing the corruption of power, and of restoring the nation to its rightful course if it should go astray. They alone are the safest depository of the ultimate powers of government."

*Anthony, Futia, N. White Plains.*

## Westchester Innovation Network Will Partner With Georgian Bay Accelerator in 2024



*Rebecca McAllister and Robyn Keystone*

The Georgian Bay Accelerator (GBA) will partner with the Business Council of Westchester's Westchester Innovation Network (WIN) in 2024 to match Canadian innovators with U.S.A. businesses and institutions.

The first Georgian Bay-WIN collaboration will pair The Active Reader, an early childhood literacy web platform, with the YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester in White Plains.

"We're passionate about advancing high-growth companies in the Georgian Bay area, and we know that building a successful business takes more than just capital—it takes ideas, momentum, and a supportive community. That's why a partnership with WIN gives our accelerator's participants and alumni companies the essential community support that they need to advance their business goals in a North American marketplace," said Peter Heinke, Managing Director of the Georgian Bay Accelerator.

The Collingwood, Ontario-based GBA prepares Georgian Bay businesses for global success with world-class mentorship and connections, matching young companies with seasoned business and sector executives and founders that can fast-track growth. WIN's goal is driving economic development, innovation, and growth in Westchester County.

"As WIN enters its third year, we are very excited about bringing a new group of innovators to Westchester County, where they will have the opportunity to test their products and services in real-world situations that will give the innovators valuable feedback as they refine and scale their concepts," said BCW president and CEO Marsha Gordon.

Rebecca McAllister and Robyn Keystone founded The Active Reader, which is based on scientifically proven literacy-teaching methods consisting of easy-to-adopt exercises, multi-sensory activities and daily routines.

"Since graduating from the South Georgian Bay Small Business Enterprise Center's (SBEC) Starter Company Program and entering the GBA, we have had the privilege of working with a wide range of mentors that have empowered us as entrepreneurs and helped us rethink and build The Active Reader so that we can grow on a global level. This match with the YMCA and WIN will help us reach that global stage," said Keystone.

The YMCA of Central and Northern Westchester will welcome The Active Reader to its Early Learning Center to test the platform with preschoolers.

"Working with the WIN innovators has allowed the YMCA's staff to learn about new technologies and consider how we can incorporate these innovations into the work we do," said Cynthia Delfino, president & DEO of the YMCA of Central & Northern Westchester.

Since its start in 2020, the GBA has advised over 20 companies through the Accelerator. These companies have generated more than 100 jobs and seen on average a 300% increase in revenue.

To learn more about becoming an Innovation Partner or joining the WIN program, visit <https://thebcw.org/westchester-innovation-network>.

### 1963-White Plains and JFK: A Moment in Time

November 22nd marks the 60th Anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's assassination. Where were you when JFK was shot? Only one out of four Americans can answer that question. I am one of them.

Being a young child hanging out at my grandmother's house which served as her full-service rug sales and cleaning services business venue, I was baffled and upset by the wide array of emotions I saw that day at Z.N. Saradjian Rug Co.

Once the news broke interrupting my afternoon TV cartoon series watching, I recalled the urgency and distress being said by all the adults running about the store. A bookkeeper condemning Communists for what had happened in Dallas. A delivery driver shouting out blame at the KKK. Then someone said Hoover had the ability to mastermind killing the Free World's leader in Dealey Plaza.

All stayed that day watching a small black and white television set for what inevitability became, sadly the outcome. The announcement of President Kennedy's passing at Parkland Hospital. The capture of a lone gunman, Lee Harvey Oswald. Who two days later, would also die at Parkland having been shot while in police custody by night club owner, Jack Ruby.

JFK had gone to Texas to shore up support for his forthcoming re-election campaign. In fact, when he ran for President in 1960, JFK campaigned in our city. Why not? New York was not a blue state but a swing state. He won the Empire State 53% to 47% over Richard Nixon. In crimson red Westchester County, Kennedy garnered 43% of the vote compared to 1956 Democrat candidate Adlai Stevenson's 27% mark.

The Westchester County Historical Society has an image of JFK in a motorcade going through White Plains central business district. In this historian's judgement the picture looks as it was taken on Main Street.

JFK's assassination was a gut-punch to the Nation's spirit. Memorials were erected in many spots of the USA to permit some sense of collective closure to this horrifying event. One such plaque sits on the former White Plains High School property now Highlands Middle School.

It's 2023 a majority of Americans believe there was a conspiracy to kill JFK.

Despite enactment of the 1992 JFK Records Act which mandates release of the files pertaining to the killing. The documents, particularly those by FBI and CIA, have been delayed and parceled out piecemeal. Purportedly, in the name of national security, what actually happened in Dealey Plaza 11/22/1963 is being kept from the American public.

All we can do now to find some solace is to view the memorials and ponder who really perpetuated this criminal act.

*John Vorperian is the White Plains Historical Society's past president. He is also host of Beyond The Game seen on White Plains Community Media.*

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

You work very hard to earn the money you give to charity. Tuesday was Giving Tuesday, the day many people open their checkbooks and make charitable donations. Make sure before you give money to charity that the charity is legitimate and the money spent being used efficiently and effectively to help those in need. There are so many fraudulent charities out there that the IRS and many states have tools on their websites to help you determine if your charity of choice is legitimate. Make use of those tools before you send a cent.

The Cannabis licensing program in New York State is back up and running. If you don't like the smell tell those smoking around you that it offends you and you would appreciate if they could take their weed and smoke it away from where you are.

There are way too many campaign signs littering our streets almost a month after Election Day. Coming out of Home Depot I saw the illegally placed, attached with thick scotch tape signs of our friend Nick Speranza who did not win his quest for judgeship. He is among many offenders who have not removed their signs placed on private property, a no no! For signs legally placed it's time they be removed.

Chanukah starts the evening of Thursday, December 7 and continues to Friday, December 15. Let me be the first to wish our readers who celebrate this joyous holiday a very Happy Chanukah. With what is going on in the Middle East many people wonder what they can do to support Israel.

Go online and Google search PRODUCTS MADE IN ISRAEL. Your purchase of the products which could consist of something as simple as tea biscuits to more elaborate items shows your support for the Israeli people at this critical time. Continue donating to reputable charities supporting Israel.

And make sure your menorahs are shining bright in the window of your house or apartment. Take out the electric menorahs you have in the closet for years and safely put them in the window. Decorate your house or apartment door with holiday appropriate decorations. Little ways you can show your support for Israel and the Jewish people.

And of course pray that there is no more loss of life and that the tragic events we read in our newspapers and watch on television will come to an end and Peace will reign in the Middle East and throughout the world.

Reach Eric Schoen at thistoosyonkers@aol.com, follow him on Twitter (X) @ericyonkers or friend him on Facebook Eric Schoen...just look for him in the picture with Joan Rivers!

Notice of formation of Jaylee's Beauty Lounge, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 10/29/23. 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, 55 Cole Street, Ste. 101, Yonkers, NY, 10710. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of RyPlunk LLC Arts. Of Org. filed with SSNY on 7/28/2023. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to the LLC, 104 Seminary Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

Notice of Formation of 326 PROSPECT AVE LLC. Articles of Organization filed with SSNY on 03/24/2023. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Brian Caldwell at 130 Franklin Avenue, Harrison, NY 10528. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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**UNITED HEBREW OF NEW ROCHELLE NAMED A US NEWS 2024 BEST NURSING HOME**

High Performing' Rating Places United Hebrew Among Top 19% in Nation  
Rita Mabli, President & CEO of United Hebrew, a leading senior care campus in New Rochelle, announced that its skilled nursing facility has been recognized as a 2024 Best Nursing Home by U.S. News & World Report for both short-term rehabilitation and long-term care, placing it among the nation's best.

U.S. News evaluated more than 15,000 facilities nationally on an array of patient and resident outcomes including care, safety, infection rates, staffing levels and health inspections. Only 19% of skilled nursing facilities across the nation achieved this coveted designation.

"We take great pride and feel deeply honored to achieve this ranking, a recognition that underscores the dedication and hard work of our committed staff in delivering high-quality care to our residents," stated Rita Mabli, President/CEO. "Navigating the search for a professional and reputable skilled nursing home can be a daunting task. This acknowledgment offers families essential guidance during the decision-making process."

Nursing homes recognized by US News & World Report achieve better outcomes. The U.S. News data shows that facilities earning the highest-performing rating achieve the following:

- 28% fewer emergency department visits
- 14% fewer hospital readmissions
- 27% fewer infection control-related hospitalizations
- 44% higher rate of successful discharge to the community
- 57% fewer major falls

In addition to this latest recognition by U.S. News & World Report, United Hebrew recently made Newsweek's list of 2023-2024 Best Nursing Homes. Ms. Mabli attributes these recognitions to its committed expert staff members who are dedicated to helping seniors lead vibrant lives with purpose. Says Mabli, "Our compassionate and highly-trained staff truly care about our seniors, and that is what sets us apart."

**For more information, call (914) 632-2804 or visit www.uhgc.org.**

SUMMONS Supreme Court of New York, Westchester County U.S. BANK TRUST NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, NOT IN ITS INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUT SOLELY AS OWNER TRUSTEE FOR VRMTG ASSET TRUST, Plaintiff, -against- UNKNOWN HEIRS OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; ALECIA NATALEE MOORE, POSSIBLE ADMINISTRATRIX AND HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; ALECIA NATALEE MOORE, AS NATURAL GUARDIAN OF DK A/K/A DDM A/K/A DDM A/K/A DM, MINOR HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; KENTON MOORE, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; KADIA MOORE DAVIS, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; TANEISHA MOORE ISAAC, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; TAMARINE MOORE HENRY, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; JASON MOORE, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; LUSAN MOORE, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; KYLIE MOORE, HEIR AND DISTRIBUTE OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH MOORE A/K/A KENNETH ARTHUR MOORE; NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION AND FINANCE; UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (SOUTHERN DISTRICT) O/B/O INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE; PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK; SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBORHOODS LLC; "JOHN DOE" AND "JANE DOE" said names being fictitious, it being the intention of Plaintiff to designate any and all occupants of premises being foreclosed herein,, Defendants. Index No. 63827/2023 Mortgaged Premises: 55 Vernon Avenue Mount Vernon, NY 10553 Section: 165.81 Block: 4029 Lot: 12. To The Above Named Defendant(s): YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to answer the Complaint in the above entitled action and to serve a copy of your Answer on the Plaintiff's attorney within twenty (20) days of the service of this Summons, exclusive of the day of service, or within thirty (30) days after service of the same is complete where service is made in any manner other than by personal delivery within the State. The United States of America, if designated as a Defendant in this action, may answer or appear within sixty (60) days of service. If you fail to appear or to answer within the aforementioned time frame, judgment will be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the Complaint. NOTICE OF NATURE OF ACTION AND RELIEF SOUGHT THE OBJECTIVE of the above captioned action is to foreclose on a Mortgage to secure \$400,000.00 and interest, recorded in the Westchester County Clerk's Office on April 2, 2007 under Control Number 470810667, covering the premises known as 55 Vernon Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10553. The relief sought herein is a final judgment directing sale of the premises described above to satisfy the debt secured by the mortgage described above. Plaintiff designates Westchester County as the place of trial. Venue is based upon the County in which the mortgaged premises is located.. NOTICE YOU ARE IN DANGER OF LOSING YOUR HOME If you do not respond to this summons and complaint by serving a copy of the answer on the attorney for the mortgage company who filed this foreclosure proceeding against you and filing the answer with the court, a default judgment may be entered and you can lose your home. Speak to an attorney or go to the court where your case is pending for further information on how to answer the summons and protect your property. Sending a payment to the mortgage company will not stop the foreclosure action. YOU MUST RESPOND BY SERVING A COPY OF THE ANSWER ON THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PLAINTIFF (MORTGAGE COMPANY) AND FILING THE ANSWER WITH THE COURT. FRIEDMAN VARTOLO, LLP 1325 Franklin Avenue, Suite 160 Garden City, New York 11530, Attorneys for Plaintiff.

Formation of 25 COUNTY ROUTE 62 LLC filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 10/6/2023. Office loc.: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The principal business loc. and address SSNY shall mail process to is Floann and Raymond Landeck, 79 Pembroke Dr., Yonkers, NY 10710. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of formation of a Limited Liability Company TM Studio Ink LLC Articles of Organization filed with the SSNY Office on 08/18/2023 Office Location: Westchester County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to : 5 Palisade Avenue Yonkers, NY 10701 Purpose: Any lawful purpose. Latest date upon which LLC is to dissolve: No specific date.

Notice of formation of a Limited Liability Company 2023 Holdings LLC Articles of Organization filed with the SSNY Office on 08/21/2023 Office Location: Westchester County. SSNY has been designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of process to : 5 Palisade Avenue Yonkers, NY 10701 Purpose: Any lawful purpose. Latest date upon which LLC is to dissolve: No specific date.

Notice of formation of D & E Guest Realty Management, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 09/15/2023. 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, D & E Guest Realty Management LLC, 79-81 Main Street, P.O. Box 1100, Yonkers, NY 10702. Purpose: Any lawful activity.



## Why Has The Medical Aid-In-Dying Act Never Been Brought to a Vote in New York?

By Stacey Gibson & Laura E. Kelly

When Garrison resident Stacey Gibson's husband Sid was dying in agony in 2014 from a horrific progressive motor neuron disease, he requested medical aid in dying to bring his suffering to a close.

When Mount Kisco resident Laura Kelly's father, Larry, was at the end of his battle against Stage 4 colon cancer in 2015, he, too, asked for medical aid in dying so he could die at a time of his choosing, in peace, with his family around him.

Neither man was able to get his wish because medical aid in dying is not legal in New York. Their deaths were unnecessarily traumatic for both them and their families.

When Laura read about Stacey and Sid Gibson's travails in a local newspaper, she joined Stacey in her advocacy for the Medical Aid in Dying Act, first introduced in New York 2015.

We began our advocacy eight long years ago, assuming that a humane bill that allows a terminally ill, mentally competent adult with a prognosis of six months or less the option to obtain prescription medication they can decide to take to die peacefully in their sleep if their suffering becomes unbearable, would quickly pass in our state.

We were wrong. Year after year, the legislative session ends in Albany and we learn that yet again the Medical Aid in Dying Act has not even been brought up for a vote. Why has this painstakingly well-vetted legislation, already in effect for years in 10 states (including nearby New Jersey, Vermont, Maine, and Washington, D.C.), not had a fair hearing in New York?

One big reason the legislators give us is that, although New York State polls show a majority support for this legislation across our state, the representatives are not hearing enough support personally for this bill from their own constituents.

When we are out in the community, we have learned that folks simply assume that this bill will become law in our state, and are often surprised it isn't already. Unfortunately, assumptions haven't proved to be enough. Far too few of us are taking the step to actually call or write our representatives and make it clear we expect our NYS Senator and Assemblyperson to support this law.

We all need to be advocates for terminally ill people who have enjoyed control and autonomy throughout their lives and now may want this same freedom to have self-determination at a very critical life moment. None of us knows what the future holds for us, but we should be able to have access to as many options as possible.

The new legislative session in Albany opens in January 2024. Too many terminally ill New Yorkers have already suffered while dying as they waited for our legislators to act. This must be the year we pass the medical aid-in-dying option for all New Yorkers.

Contact your representatives today and tell them you want the Medical Aid in Dying Act A995/S2445 to become law in 2024. And tell your friends and neighbors throughout the state to call today. Then call your representative next week. And yes keep calling throughout 2024 until this bill becomes law. Every call and letter is tallied. Make your voices heard.

We cannot afford to wait any longer.

**Stacey Gibson and Laura E. Kelly are volunteer co-leaders for the Lower Hudson Valley region of New York on the statewide campaign to pass the Medical Aid in Dying Act. Stacey is a resident of Garrison. Laura is a resident of Mount Kisco.**

---

*Lawler, Jones, continued from pg 1-*

includes northern Westchester, Rockland and Putnam Counties, and a small part of Dutchess County.

Lawler was elected in 2022 by 1900 votes, defeating Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney. Due to redistricting, Maloney "relocated" from the 18th district to the 17th, losing to Lawler.

Maloney's decision (endorsed by then House Speaker Nancy Pelosi) forced Congressman Mondaire Jones to not run for reelection in the 17th. Rep. Jones ran in a NYC district and lost the democratic primary two years ago.

Now Jones is back to take on Lawler, in an interesting contest between a current and former Congressman. Both Jones and Lawler live in Rockland County.

Jones has already raised \$1.1 Million, and recently got the endorsement from the Westchester Democratic Party. "The Westchester County Democratic Committee is proud to join the Rockland County Democratic Committee in endorsing Congressman Mondaire Jones. As a Member of Congress, Mondaire brought hundreds of millions of dollars to the 17th District for schools, housing, health care, and infrastructure, as well as transformative community projects. He effectively advocated on behalf of everyday people in his district by lowering prescription drug costs, funding law enforcement at record levels, passing the most significant gun safety legislation in a generation, and negotiating passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Mike Lawler has accomplished nothing positive for the 17th District, and in fact has made life worse. While masquerading as a moderate on television, he recently voted to make MAGA extremist Mike Johnson Speaker of the House, and he has voted against abortion without exception for rape or incest. We need Mondaire back in Congress, where he has a pragmatic record of delivering results, and we look forward to working alongside him as he builds a people-powered campaign to save our democracy, keep us safe, lower costs, and protect basic freedoms," said Westchester County Democratic Committee Chair Suzanne Berger.

But Jones will have at least one democratic opponent next year. Liz Whitmer Geregthy, a small businesswoman and former School Board trustee in the Katonah-Lewisboro school district, is running an active campaign. In a recent NY Times interview, Geregthy said that she was not getting out of the race to endorse Jones.

Geregthy has portrayed herself as moderate democrat, in the mold of her sister, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer. In the times interview she inferred that Jones' more progressive views would be used by the Lawler campaign as negative ads. "If you got tired of the Sean Maloney ads last year, we'll at least have some more variety if he's the candidate," said Geregthy.

The Jones campaign notes that only Jones has received Neither of Jones' Democratic primary opponents have announced any in-district endorsers whatsoever. A third announced candidate is Bedford Councilwoman MaryAnn Carr. Former Speaker Pelosi has endorsed Jones.

Geregthy received the endorsement from Emily's List, the powerful abortion rights group, and from Congressman Eric Swalwell.

"The House majority runs through New York's 17th Congressional District. This is a Biden seat, and Democrats outnumber Republicans. If you want to flip the House, then join me, because we must flip this district first. I am a mother, former school board member, and the Democrat running to defeat MAGA Mike Lawler and flip #NY17. This district is a toss-up, and I need your help to flip this district, and the House, blue. This district was decided by less than 1,900 votes in 2022," said Geregthy.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson will attend a fund raiser for Lawler in Bronxville next week. Democrats will try to use the fundraiser to tie Lawler to the conservative right wing of the republican party. But Speaker Johnson's appearance is also an indication of how important this House seat is.

One unknown in the Congressional races for 2024 in New York State is what the boundaries of each district will be. In 2022, NY Democrats had their proposed congressional district maps struck down by the NYS Court of Appeals, resulting in a special master drawing a revised map that enabled republicans to win 11 seats. Democrats are attempting to have the redistricting process reopened in time for the 2024 elections. The Independent Redistricting Commission, IRC, was created to make the redistricting process independent from the legislature in favor of an equally bipartisan body.

The IRC is made up equally of republicans and democrats. Recently, the IRC has been unable to agree on new boundaries, which is the reason for the special master, litigation, and republican congressional wins.

Democrats are asking the court to allow the IRC another chance to fairly redraw the lines. The Chair of the IRC is Westchester Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins. If the court grants the request, then Jenkins and the IRC will have a chance to try and redraw the congressional lines in Westchester, and districts 16 and 17.

Congressman Jamaal Bowman represents the Westchester residents in the 16th District, (most of mid-lower Westchester). County Executive George Latimer is considering a primary challenge against Bowman.

## Young New Yorkers Urged to Walk With God



By Dennis Richmond Jr., pictured above

*In the bustling streets of New York, where the buzz of social media often dictates trends, a growing number of young individuals are expressing a keen interest in spirituality. However, this fascination tends to lean towards angel numbers, manifesting, and crystals, with a noticeable absence of posts featuring verses from the Bible or passages from the holy Quran.*

*Amidst this trend, I decided to take a different path. On November 19th, 2023, at Grace Baptist Church in Mount Vernon, New York, a life-altering event unfolded. I was baptized, marking a profound shift in my perspective and a newfound connection with spirituality. I feel different, and I don't regret it at all.*

*This sentiment echoes a powerful message for the young people of New York — a plea to consider a different source of solace and guidance. Life in the modern world is rife with challenges, including crime, war, pain, and poverty. The invitation is clear: find a place of worship and engage in fellowship with others. While crystals, horoscopes, and sage may offer a sense of guidance, my message emphasizes the existence of a higher power. There's a GOD that sits high and watches low.*

*I want to conclude with a poignant biblical verse, Psalm 23:4, serving as a source of strength and comfort. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Let this serve as a reminder to young New Yorkers that amidst the chaos of contemporary life, a spiritual foundation can provide solace, strength, and a sense of purpose.*

*As the trend leans towards unconventional practices, I'm advocating for a return to the age-old wisdom found in traditional religious teachings. Like the old folks say, that, "Old Time Religion."*

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*Cannabis, continued from pg 1-*

Control Board (CCB) voted to approve an agreement to be presented to the New York State Supreme Court to allow for the continuation of New York's Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensary Program (CAURD). If the Court approves the settlement agreement, the State's 436 provisional CAURD licensees would be allowed to open storefronts once the remaining portions of their applications is confirmed; the Office of Cannabis Management had been legally prevented from further processing or issuing these licenses since August 7. The CAURD program is the first in the nation to allow those who were directly harmed by cannabis prohibition to make the State's first cannabis sales.

"We launched the CAURD program squarely focused on realizing the commitment made by the MRTA, that those most impacted by prohibition would have a meaningful opportunity to participate in New York's cannabis market. Today, we are one step closer to resolving litigation brought forth by equity entrepreneurs and our medical operators who felt that they were being left behind. Now that we have opened up licensing to all equity entrepreneurs and provided a clear pathway to participation in the adult-use market for our medical operators, we are able to continue to move this program forward together," said Chris Alexander, Executive Director of the Office of Cannabis Management.

"New York's cannabis market was designed to be the most equitable market in the world. We remain undeterred by the challenges of standing up that new market, and believe that the expansion of licensing opportunities and the inclusion of our medical operators will collectively ensure the success of the adult-use program and the expansion of the medical program. I have been deeply inspired by the grit and tenacity of our CAURD license holders. I want to thank Governor Hochul for her steadfast commitment to this effort, and we look forward to working together with licensees and partners across the industry to shape this new chapter in New York's cannabis story."

"Today's approval of the settlement agreement by the New York State Cannabis Control Board marks a momentous step forward in our mission to cultivate a diverse and inclusive cannabis market," said Tremaine Wright, Chair of New York's Cannabis Control Board. "Once this settlement is approved, we are hopeful those impacted by the injunction will be empowered to open their storefronts and embark on their entrepreneurial journeys, bringing us closer to our goals."

Since August 7, the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) has been enjoined from further processing or issuing CAURD licenses. If the assigned judge approves the terms of the settlement agreements, the injunction will be lifted. The settlement terms are outlined in agreements that must be approved by the judge before they can be effective. The plaintiffs will submit the agreements to the Court immediately after they are signed by all the parties.

The Social and Economic Equity groups listed in the MRTA include: Individuals from a Community Disproportionately Impacted; Distressed farmers; Service-disabled veteran-owned businesses, and minority-owned businesses; and women-owned businesses, end of OCM statement.

Hopefully, the settlement will allow the 40 CAURD recipients who were waiting for five months to open as soon as possible. Many had invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into their business and were only waiting for a site visit and final approval.

Many marijuana growers in upstate New York have also had their businesses severely impacted by the delays. "Some 436 provisional licensees have had their business planning and rollout halted to a dead stop and New York State cannabis licensees throughout the supply chain have similarly been impacted by the delay of the retail rollout," said Wright.

In Westchester, several CAURD license holders will vie to see who will open shop first. Elevate, located in Mt. Vernon, is one operator that was ready to open over the summer but has been waiting. Other applications in Yonkers and Peekskill are moving forward.

We will review the applications and temporary CAURD holders in Westchester and revise this story.

One interesting and confusing development in the legal marijuana roll out was the recent opening of a Cannabis showcase market in White Plains this month. This temporary, legal location, at 244 Main Street, White Plains, will be open until the end of the year, and was designed by the OCM to allow cultivators and license holders to sell their product to get the market moving. New Paltz has had a similar market open since the summer.

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**12 Year Old White Plains Girl Lights Up Westchester's Winter Wonderland**

**'Tis the Season for Merrymaking at Historic Hudson Valley**



**Front Row: Valerie Williams (mom); Brianna Gilzene (sister); Iyana Gilzene; Snowball the Elf, Back Row: Dwight Gilzene (dad); Robbie Dog; Santa Claus; Westchester Parks Foundation (WPF) Chairperson Seth Mandelbaum; Dr. Matthew Pinto Section Chief, Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital, a member of the Westchester Medical Center Health Network; Deputy County Executive Ken Jenkins**

Westchester's Winter Wonderland Drive-Thru Holiday Light Extravaganza, returned to Kensico Dam Plaza on Friday, November 24th bigger and better than ever with thousands of more lights, a second light tunnel, and New Live Character Snowball the Elf

Westchester Parks Foundation welcomed a special child to help light the tree, twelve-year-old Iyana Gilzene, from White Plains who received a kidney transplant in September at Westchester Medical Center Health Network Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. She is in 7th grade at Highland Middle School.

The festive celebration takes place six consecutive weeks through December 31, 2023. This year's event will have extra early times slots available Monday-Thursdays starting at 5:30p.m. and on Saturday - Sundays starting at 4:00p.m. \*End times vary per night. Tickets are \$35 per vehicle.

Proceeds from this event benefit WPF and allow the organization to further its mission to advocate for and invest in the preservation, conservation, use and enjoyment of 50 parks, trails and open spaces within the Westchester County Parks system. When purchasing tickets, guests were able to donate additional fund to Westchester Parks Foundation to help expand its Camp Morty program for disenfranchised youth along with Westchester Medical Center Health Network Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. For complete information and to purchase tickets, visit [wwinterwonderland.com](http://wwinterwonderland.com).



**Jonathan Kruk performing Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol" Photo by Tom Nycz**

**By Dan Murphy**

Westchester families can get into the spirit of the holiday season at several Historic Hudson Valley venues, starting with Dicken's Christmas Carol on December 2. Nestle into the historic Old Dutch Church and let master storyteller Jonathan Kruk, complete with musical accompaniment by Jim Keyes, regale you with his adaptation of Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol." Performances take place on Dec. 2-3, 9-10, 16-17. Tickets are available now! <https://tickets.hudsonvalley.org/events?view=calendar>.

On December 16, from 10 am-3pm, enjoy a Victorian Christmas celebration and a festive tour of Washington Irving's Sunnyside, all decked out in holiday finery. Sip on wassail, hot chocolate, and sample seasonal treats and try your hand at making holiday crafts, such as paper cones and ornaments. The premium package includes a Washington Irving felt ornament and our brand-new candle, Olde Christmas. Advanced Tickets Required: \$35-\$85 Tickets are available now: <https://tickets.hudsonvalley.org/holiday-boutique.../7866>

Tours of Philipsburg Manor, Union Church, and Washington Irving's Sunnyside are available on weekends through December 17.

A Holiday Tea Party on Dec. 9 and Dec. 16, at Phillipsburg Manor, smores, Hot Cocoa and Cider, are all upcoming. Visit [Historichudsonvalley.org](http://Historichudsonvalley.org) for more information.

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