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Friday January 28, 2022

Congressman Bowman Arrested in DC Protest “Lowey and Engel Never Got Arrested”



Congressman Jamaal Bowman, placed under arrest at the U.S. Capitol on Jan.

By Dan Murphy

For more than 30 years, most of Westchester County was represented by two democratic members of Congress; Nita Lowey and Eliot Engel. And while Rep. Lowey and Rep. Engel were considered liberal members of Congress, neither Lowey or Engel were arrested during a protest for causes that they held dear.

That is why the Jan. 20 arrest of Westchester Congressman Jamaal Bowman, with 25 others, including faith leaders and youth who had been hunger striking in support of passage of the Voting Right Act, is of interest.

The non violent protest resulted in the arrest and release of Rep. Bowman on the same day. On Twitter, the US Capitol Police wrote, “Just before 12:00 pm, demonstrators started blocking one side of the North Barricade outside the U.S. Capitol. We have already issued them three warnings. The demonstrators refused to move out of the driveway, so we are making arrests. We made a total of 27 arrests for Crowding, Obstructing or Incommoding (DC Code § 22-1307), and one for violating U.S. Capitol Police Traffic Regulation Section 16.3 (Crowd Control).”

Rep. Bowman has been an outspoken supporter of protestors in demanding that the U.S. Senate pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Act named after the civil rights hero. On Jan. 19, efforts in the U.S. Senate to pass the Lewis Voting Rights Act failed, as did an effort to change the filibuster rules. Senate democrats needed 60 votes, and the motion to end debate failed 51-49, with every democrat except for Senator. The makeup of the Senate is 50 democrats and 50 republicans, with Vice-President Harris breaking the tie in democrats favor when a simple majority is needed.

Democratic Senators Joe Manchin, and Kyrsten Sinema both oppose changing the Senate rules concerning ending debate.

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Jewish Educator Fired by Westchester Temple Over Blog Critical of Israel Files Lawsuit



More Than 45 Prominent Jewish Leaders Sign Letter in Support of Jessie Sander, left

By Dan Murphy

On Jan. 25, Jessie Sander filed a lawsuit in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Westchester County, against Westchester Reform Temple (“WRT”), two of its rabbis and its executive director, for wrongful discharge pursuant to Section 201-d of the New York State Labor Law.

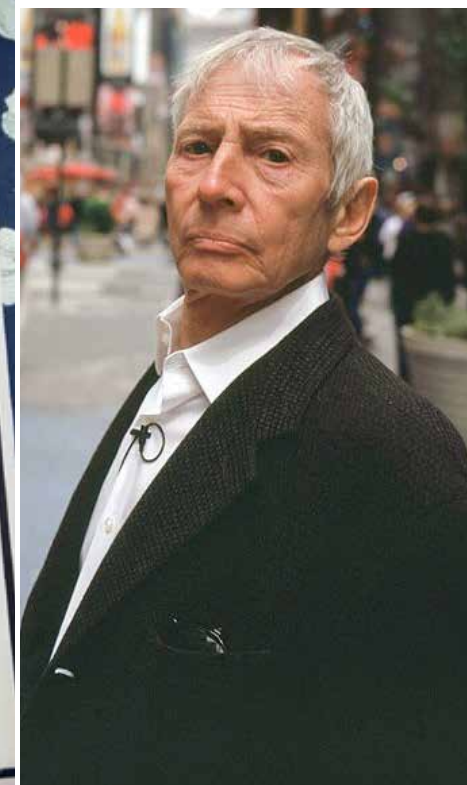
As set forth in the complaint, Ms. Sander started work in early July 2021 as a secular Jewish educator in WRT’s school, the Jewish Learning Lab (“JLL”). She was hired to teach and tutor the Hebrew language and to assist and support the development of social, cultural and community service programs for WRT teens. Nothing in the job or job description required any adherence to any particular point of view about Israel or its policies toward the Palestinians.

Nevertheless, WRT fired Ms. Sander after less than three weeks on the job, not for any teaching deficiencies or criticisms she received, but allegedly solely because of a blog post she and a friend had written months before her WRT employment began that severely criticized the State of Israel for its May 2021 bombardment of Gaza. In that post, Ms. Sander affirmed her passion for Judaism, her investment in building Jewish community, and her commitment to fight for justice for all Jews; and identified herself as an anti-Zionist opposed to what she believed to be a legalized apartheid regime in Israel at odds with Judaism or any other religion.

After reading the blog post, the Rabbi who had hired her and who directs the JLL met with Ms. Sander, engaged in a frank discussion of their respective views, and told her that he and WRT’s school embraced a “wrestling with Israel” position and welcomed diverse thinkers and that she should never work at a place that would fire her for her beliefs, 90% of which he agreed with. Immediately after that meeting, the Rabbi wrote an email to the Senior Rabbi and to the WRT president – which he shared with Ms. Sander — summarizing the meeting, expressing complete confidence in Jessie as an educator, and stating that she would be a good role model for WRT’s students.

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DA Rocah Releases Durst Report: “He killed her (Kathie) in Westchester.” Family Claims Coverup Pirro’s Lack of Effort When She Was DA Called into question



By Dan Murphy

On Jan. 19, nine days after the death of Robert Durst, Westchester County District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah released an Investigative Report detailing certain facts gathered during the investigation into the murder of Robert Durst’s first wife, Kathleen McCormack Durst, in South Salem, New York, on January 31, 1982.

Robert Durst died at the age of 78 in a California prison after being convicted of killing his second wife, Susan Berman. Durst was long suspected of killing his first wife Kathie Durst in their South Salem cottage but evaded conviction on her death.

Shortly after taking office in January 2021, DA Rocah’s newly formed Cold Case Bureau and the New York State Police resumed the investigation into the disappearance of 29-year-old Kathleen Durst. As a result of the extensive and thorough investigation, Robert Durst was charged by a Westchester County Grand Jury in an indictment on November 1, 2021, with Murder in the Second Degree.

“While nothing can provide the transparency of a public trial, that option is unavailable given Robert Durst’s recent death. In an effort to provide as much transparency as possible, my Office is issuing an Investigative Report that summarizes facts, not subject to grand jury secrecy, that were gathered during the investigation into the disappearance of Kathleen Durst and sheds some light on why it took nearly 40 years to charge Robert Durst with her murder,” DA Rocah said. “These are all things about which there has been much speculation over the years and I believe that sharing facts with the public, where possible, is the best way to enhance public trust in our criminal justice system.”

The report provides details about the investigation into Kathleen Durst’s disappearance conducted in 1982, and how statements made by Robert Durst soon after Kathleen’s disappearance led police to initially believe that she was last seen in

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Former Salesian HS Teacher Charged With Sending Naked Videos, Sex Acts to 15-Yr Old



Two recent social media photos of Mariela Barajas

By Dan Murphy

On Jan. 24, Westchester County District Attorney Miriam E. Rocah announced that former Salesian High School teacher Mariela Barajas was arraigned for disseminating indecent material to a 15-year-old.

Barajas, 22, of Mount Vernon, was charged on January 24, 2022, in Mount Vernon City Court with Disseminating Indecent Material to Minors in the First Degree, a felony. The Westchester County District Attorney’s Office made the arrest following an investigation, with assistance from the Mount Vernon Police Department and New Rochelle Police Department.

While employed at the New Rochelle school, in December 2021 and January 2022, Barajas engaged in a series of sexually explicit conversations with the male victim on Instagram and Snapchat. During the conversations, the defendant sent the victim naked videos of herself engaged in sexual acts.

Barajas is scheduled to appear again in Mount Vernon City Court on February 14, 2022.

The case is being prosecuted jointly by the Trials and Investigations Division Cyber Crimes Bureau and the Special Prosecutions Division Child Abuse Bureau. If anyone has been a victim or has further information on this case, please contact the District Attorney’s Office at (914) 995-TIPS.

The charges against the defendant are merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The District Attorney’s Office encouraged anyone who has been a victim or has information on this case to contact its team at 914-995-8477.

“Salesian High School respectfully declines to comment on recent reports regarding the alleged conduct of a former employee, except to state that the matter has been referred to civil authorities and the school is fully cooperating with those authorities,” the school said in a statement. “Our central concern, as always, remains the safety and wellbeing of the young men in our care. We encourage anyone who has information about the alleged conduct to contact the Westchester County District Attorney’s Office or the President of Salesian High School.”

New Rochelle Girl Scouts Win Ridge Hill “Branches of Joy” Holiday Tree Competiton



Ridge Hill is excited to announce the three winners of the second annual holiday tree decorating contest, Branches of Joy! Taking top prize and receiving the most votes is The New Rochelle Girl Scouts with 3,458 votes, Paws Crossed Animal Rescue was recognized with the “Bright Idea” Creativity Award, and Scouts BSA Troop & Pack 47 was recognized with the “Donation Superstars” award collecting the most non-perishable food donations for Feeding Westchester – for the second year in a row! With seventeen community groups working together, they collectively exceeded the initial goal of 5,000 total votes for this program resulting in a \$5,000 donation for Feeding Westchester as well as generous donations of non-perishable food.

“I am excited to share that the second annual Branches of Joy was once again a huge success, which is all due to the community organizations’ participation, creativity, and hard work,” said Meghann Hongach, General Manager at Ridge Hill. “We were delighted at the chance to bring so many of our community partners together to benefit an important local cause and continue a joyful, holiday tradition.”

The winners of this competition have not only been awarded an enviable trophy and a package of treats from Ridge Hill’s shops and restaurants, but they have raised money for a truly worthy cause. Ridge Hill recognizes the struggle that too many community members are facing right now to put food on the table. Teaming up with Feeding Westchester to help those facing food insecurity, Ridge Hill pledged to donate \$1 to the organization for each vote counted and encouraged food donations throughout the program.

This unique competition included an interactive activity of decorating trees, which were showcased indoors to create a beautiful holiday window display on Market Street. Decorations were handmade, and each team was able to create its own theme. Participating groups have been recognized for their support on Ridge Hill’s website and social media channels.

Visit --

17-Year Old Shot, Killed by 16-Year Old in New Rochelle, Arrest Made

On Tuesday January 25th at about 3:38pm, New Rochelle Police received a call of a shooting that had just occurred on the corner of 4th Street and Washington Ave. Upon arrival Officers located a 17-year-old male victim with multiple gunshot wounds. Officers administered First Aid and the victim was transported to a hospital where he underwent emergency surgery and succumbed to his injuries.

Suspect information was immediately developed, and New Rochelle Detectives were able to locate and arrest a 16-year-old male suspect near Glen Place and Beechwood Avenue, who was found to be in possession of a 9mm semi-automatic handgun.

This is an active investigation and the charges and any potential new information or developments will be announced in a future press release.

Both the victim and the suspect are New Rochelle residents and their names are being withheld due to their ages.

The City of New Rochelle and the New Rochelle Police Department offer their sincere condolences to the family of the victim.

Anyone with further information on this incident is asked to call the New Rochelle Police Department at 914-654-2300.

Yonkers Man Charged With Threatening to Kill a Westchester County Police Officer



A Yonkers man was arrested last week (Jan. 21) and charged with threatening to kill a Westchester County police officer.

Hector Gonzalez, 20, of Cedar Place was charged on Thursday with Aggravated Harassment 2nd Degree, a misdemeanor. He was arraigned today in Yonkers City Court and released on his own recognizance. An Order of Protection was issued barring him from any further contact with the officer.

Gonzalez is accused of obtaining the officer’s cell phone number and making an anonymous call on Sunday to threaten the officer’s life while also referencing his family. Westchester County Police had no previous contact with Gonzalez. It is believed he obtained the phone number after the officer provided it to another person during an investigation.

The threat was investigated by detectives from the General Investigations Unit, who unraveled the multiple steps the caller had taken to try to hide where the call originated and who was responsible.

Gonzalez surrendered yesterday afternoon at County Police headquarters in Hawthorne.

“I commend our detectives for their thorough investigation that identified a suspect in this disturbing incident,” Commissioner Thomas A. Gleason said. “We will not tolerate threats to the safety of our officers and will pursue these matters fully if they occur.”

Gonzalez is due back in Yonkers City Court on Feb. 24.

NY Attorney General James Provides Guidance to New Yorkers Following Expiration of Eviction Moratorium

New York Attorney General Letitia Jame issued guidance to remind New Yorkers of the various rights and protections for residents following the expiration of New York’s eviction moratorium on January 15, 2022. Though landlords are now able to start new eviction cases, proceed with existing cases, and issue eviction warrants against some tenants, New Yorkers still have some protections under state laws and access to rental assistance programs to help keep them from losing their homes as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues.

“As New Yorkers continue to struggle with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that individuals are aware of their rights so they aren’t left out in the cold,” said Attorney General James. “Although our state’s eviction moratorium may have ended, the guidance we are issuing today highlights the various measures that are still in place for New Yorkers to prevent eviction and stay in their homes. My office remains committed to protecting New Yorkers, and we will continue to do everything we can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of New York residents.”

New York state’s eviction moratorium previously stopped landlords from filing new eviction cases and proceeding with pending cases through January 15, 2022 for tenants who signed a hardship declaration. While the moratorium has elapsed, New York state residents can still apply to have their rent arrears paid by the state under the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Residents of Rochester and Monroe County, Yonkers, Onondaga County, and the towns of Hempstead, Islip, and Oyster Bay, must apply for emergency rental assistance through their local programs. For more information, including where to file an online application and to find out where funds are still available, New Yorkers are encouraged to visit ERAP’s website.

In her continued efforts to protect New Yorkers and their rights, Attorney General James highlights the following information regarding New York’s eviction protections as of January 16, 2022:

There is no automatic stay of eviction effective under New York state law at this time. Tenants whose cases were stayed because they had filed a hardship declaration should check with the court to find out the status.

New eviction cases can be filed without the landlord being required to provide the tenant a state hardship declaration form. Eviction cases that were previously stayed when tenants filed a New York state hardship declaration form can now proceed in court, unless an ERAP application is still pending.

Eviction proceedings where a petitioner-landlord or respondent-tenant has applied for rent arrears assistance under ERAP will be stayed until a final determination is made on their application by the New York Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Landlords who have received emergency rental assistance on behalf of a respondent-tenant must submit notice to the court where the eviction proceeding is pending.

Landlords may not charge late fees for rent that was due from March 20, 2020 through June 24, 2021 and may not seek these fees in an eviction proceeding.

Attorney General James also highlights other tenant protections under New York law, including: Landlords must serve written late notices and a 14-day written rent demand before starting any nonpayment eviction case in court. Landlords must also serve notice and bring a court proceeding against tenants whose leases or rental agreements have expired (without a right to renewal).

If a tenant pays the full amount in rent before the hearing date on the non-payment petition, the landlord must accept payment and the proceeding must be dismissed. Courts have the discretion, for good cause, to stay or vacate a warrant, stay re-letting or renovation of a premise for a reasonable period of time, and restore tenants to possession. Courts also have the discretion to grant an occupant a stay of up to one year by taking into consideration factors such as serious illnesses and extenuating life circumstances.

It is illegal for landlords to harass or force tenants into vacating their apartments by denying or interrupting essential services or taking other actions interfering with the use of their dwelling. This conduct may constitute illegal eviction under law. Visit <https://ag.ny.gov/coronavirus/tenants-rights> for more information.

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Teatown's s Eaglefest Returns Feb. 4-6

End Gun Violence? Time to Work Together!



Teatown's 18th Annual Hudson River EagleFest will be February 4, 5, and 6, 2022!

We look forward to celebrating together with bald eagles as they descend upon Hudson River during their annual winter migration.

Join us for this amazing three-day festival, as we host in-person programs at Teatown, guided bird walks at Croton Point Park, and a series of engaging virtual presentations.

The line-up of presenters includes:

- Christine Peyreigne, who became a falconer when she was just 16 years old and started hunting with her red-tailed hawk, Theron;
- Brian Bradley, one of the greatest lure falconers in the Northeast;
- Anne Swaim returns to present her virtual and popular "Raptor for Rookies" program.

Teatown's own birds of prey will also make their usual unforgettable appearances.

The in-person programs will have limited capacities and will be held outdoors, so be prepared to dress warmly. Snacks and hot beverages will be available for purchase in Teatown's Visitor Center. Our Nature Store will be stocked with amazing "all about the birds" merchandise, including books, games, toys, and our exclusive, new-design Teatown EagleFest T-shirts.

Please note that all programs and activities are subject to restrictions or cancellations due to health regulations. Teatown follows all official guidelines regarding masks, capacity, and vaccination.

Visit <https://www.teatown.org/events/eaglefest/> for more info and to register.



by Eric W. Schoen

Eric Adams, the new Mayor of New York City has had a tough few weeks. The biggest issue he is dealing with? Gun Violence. The situation in New York City is out of control. And if we don't watch, it will spill over into the suburbs though some say it already has.

Mayor Adams earlier this week issued 'The Blueprint to End Gun Violence.' Google it. It is a comprehensive report that everyone involved in the Criminal Justice System needs to read. Citizens of New York. The cop on the street. Those who work in our Court Systems including the Judges. Mental Health professionals. State Legislators and the Governor. Local Elected officials and Judges. Members of Congress and while we are in Washington, President Biden too.

Why? Because let's be clear. The problem, a long time in the making is not going to be resolved unless everyone works together to resolve it. You always like to give the new guy a chance but we are at the point of break. If everyone doesn't work together, more companies will move out of New York and it's suburbs. More people will move out. Fewer people will visit New York and it's suburbs out of fear. The already Covid fragile economy will plummet.

Do I like to write about guns? Probably as much as I like writing about liver-wurst. But I'm tired of reading headlines like I saw in this paper last week. 'Attempted Cop-Suicide Results in Police Shooting and Injured Officer. I'm tired of New York City Police Officers getting killed and injured in the line of duty. Officer Jason Rivera, 22 years young shot and killed while responding to a domestic incident in Harlem. A second officer, Wilbert Mora, 27 years young has died as I sit writing this column. Please keep these officers and their families in your prayers.

Some of those involved in solving this problem are bitching and moaning about the details in Mayor Adams report. It's up to us to keep the pressure on them to put the common sense solutions Adams outlined into action. Whether it be our State Legislators who came up with this crazy bail reform everyone agrees is a disaster to a Court System with a backlog of 4000, yes 4000 gun cases. And as the saying goes, if they can't stand the heat get the hell out of the kitchen!

Let's take a look at some of the common sense solutions Adams has come up with. We need to put roadblocks on every river and entrance to New York City and it's suburbs to keep guns out. We need more police on the streets, not fewer as some were advocating several years ago. Adams proposes Neighborhood Safety Teams in the 30% of the precincts where 80% of the violence occurs. A good place to start.

Officers Uniformed and those without uniforms with body cameras so we can make sure when a crime occurs, the officers are doing their jobs. Nothing is perfect, but we have the technological tools in 2022 to be sure things are being done correctly.

The New York State Police were sent to New York City as a punishment to former Mayor Bill DeBlasio as he wouldn't play along with Andrew Cuomo. You remember the former Governor of New York State who resigned over a litany of misdeeds too long to list. Adams proposes to expand the partnership with New York State Police who are responsible for patrolling our roads coming into the city and suburbs which is how many illegal guns arrive. State Police can do spot checks at points of entry.

So many of those roaming the streets of New York have mental health issues. Our Mental Health system in this country is broke. On a practical level you and I can understand. Due to low reimbursements from insurance companies it was practically impossible to find mental health services whether it be a psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker who accepted your insurance prior to Covid. Forget it now. Adams proposes to take the millions, probably over a billion dollars DeBlasio and his wife wasted in the ThriveNYC program to provide support for the homeless on the street. He wants to revisit laws to get people impacted with mental health illness the help they need. When Doctors and Judges recommend hospitalization for the mentally ill he wants it to happen.

Adams promises Judicial appointments to consist of individuals who vow to keep violent criminals who use guns off the streets. 16 or 17 year olds arrested on gun charges? Law enforcement would ask the individual where they got the gun. No answer? Their case goes to Criminal Court versus the current Family Court.

Can you believe if you sell 10 or more guns in a year it is a Class B Felony? Adams wants it lowered to 3 by State legislation defining the possession of 3 or more guns as evidence of gun trafficking not just merely gun possession.

The New York State Courts are a disaster where Adams wants reform. In 2019 there were 405 criminal verdicts. In the first half of 2021 a mere 18! Crazy or what. Backlog of 4000 gun cases. Incredible!

Adams wants Lawyers, Public Defenders, Legal Aid, Assistant District Attorneys back into the court rooms. The 6 foot distancing rule in the courts should be changed to 3 feet just like it is in our schools. Good enough for the kids, good enough for the grownups.

With the current bail reform legislation Judges don't have the tools to keep the community safe. He wants judges to take dangerousness into account when detaining a defendant. We constantly read about the revolving door letting those who should be in jail out. And judges who want to keep inmates incarcerated because of the danger they pose to society without the legal tools to do so.

While Brooklyn Borough Presidents Adams started the 'Safe Shopper' program expanding camera technology to catch criminals. He wants to take the program city wide. Hopefully this will stop some of the shoplifting we see and hear about not only in New York City but in communities throughout Westchester. Sadly retailers say it's part of doing business. And stores have big signs telling

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Yonkers St. Patrick's Day Parade to Return March 19, 2022



WE ARE BACK!

Meet me on McLean
March 19th 2022

Yonkers St Patrick's Day Parade

By Dan Murphy

After a two-year COVID postponement, the Yonkers St. Patrick's Day Parade is scheduled to return on McLean Avenue on March 19, 2022 starting at 1pm.

"On March 19th 2022 at 1pm we will once again march up the Emerald Mile. Please join us in this celebration of our Irish heritage. All sign ups will be approved by the LOM committee and band's will be contacted after signing up here for confirmation & contracts. "Your feet will bring you where your heart is." Irish proverb," said the Yonkers St. Patrick's Day Parade on McLean Ave. committee in an email-Facebook post.

A sign up page for those interested in participating can be found at the link below:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdFSUfBEuLrIwIkeU3k0AyKgbNIYTXBY4vPqtv7Uib5tezvvg/viewform>

"We are thrilled to be back, it has been such a long two years in so many ways. The parade will be a celebration of so many things and we welcome all to join us," said Deirdre O' Mara

The last scheduled Yonkers St. Patrick's Day parade was on March 21, 2020, but was cancelled at the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

The Grand Marshall Patricia McCrudden, and her aides for the 2022 parade have waited two years to march up the Emerald Mile. The Aides to the Grand Marshall are: Annmarie Acosta, Father William Cleary, Joan Henchy, Timothy Hodges, Sean P. Mayer, Richard McSpedon, Jr., William J. Saich, Nancy Walsh.

McLean Avenue in Yonkers has earned the nickname "The Emerald Isle," and in a few years, the Yonkers parade on McLean has become one of the best in NY.

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Latimer Announces New COVID Vaccine Clinic in Yonkers

On Jan. 21, Westchester County Executive George Latimer announced that he is adding COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics at the County Health Department in Yonkers to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The County Health Department will offer free COVID-19 vaccines in Yonkers and White Plains, and COVID-19 PCR tests at the County Center through the end of February. First and second doses and booster shots are available at both locations.

COVID-19 Vaccines at Westchester County Health Department Clinic in Yonkers:

The County will offer COVID-19 vaccines on Mondays, beginning on Monday, Jan. 24, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., in the Yonkers Clinic at 20 South Broadway, 2nd Floor. Appointments are encouraged but walk-ins are welcome. (There is no clinic on Feb. 21.)

- Schedule a Booster Vaccine (Ages 12 and over)
- Schedule a First Dose Pfizer Vaccine (Ages 5 and over)
- Schedule a Second Dose Pfizer Vaccine (Ages 5 and over)
- Schedule a First Dose Moderna Vaccine (Ages 18 and over)
- Schedule a Second Dose Moderna Vaccine (Ages 18 and over)
- Schedule a Johnson & Johnson Vaccine (Ages 18 and over)

COVID-19 Vaccines at Westchester County Center in White Plains, afternoons by appointment only, Wednesdays through Fridays and on Saturday, Feb. 12, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Schedule a Booster Vaccine (Ages 12 and over)
- Schedule a First Dose Pfizer Vaccine (Ages 5 and over)
- Schedule a Second Dose Pfizer Vaccine (Ages 5 and over)
- Schedule a First Dose Moderna Vaccine (Ages 18 and over)
- Schedule a Second Dose Moderna Vaccine (Ages 18 and over)
- Schedule a Johnson & Johnson Vaccine (Ages 18 and over)

COVID-19 PCR Tests

COVID-19 tests will be available at the County Center through February. To schedule a test, go to www.westchestergov.com/health.

Bowman Arrested, continued from pg 1-

The protestors were organized by Un-PAC, and #Hungerstrike4democracy. Another progressive group, Frontline, posted, "Congressman Jamaal Bowman was arrested outside the Capitol as part of a voting rights protest. So police can't arrest a bunch of right-wing terrorists storming the Capitol and killing officers, but they can manage to arrest a standing Congressman at his place of work because he supports voting rights."

After his arrest, Rep. Bowman issued the following statement:

"It's a shame that, 58 years later, we are here fighting for the same darn thing as Dr. Martin Luther King," Rep. Bowman said. "Here is our charge in the coming weeks: We have to pass the For the People Act in the Senate, and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act in the Senate. The House has already done its job, so the Senate has to step up and do its job. But the Senate is not going to do its job if we do not exercise our unlimited power as the people of the United States of America."

"Throughout the last year, my first year in Congress, I've spent a lot of time thinking about how we, as a people, can defend ourselves from the insidious steps elected officials across this country are taking to deny us our right to not only the ballot box but to a better, safer, and more equitable future," said Congressman Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D. (NY-16).

"I've thought about our elders, whose sacrifices and determination, fuel me. I've thought about our ancestors, whose blood runs through me. I've thought about everything Black people, generation after generation, have already put on the line for our freedoms and rights. I've asked myself, 'what would Fannie Lou Hamer say and do in this moment if she were still with us?' 'What about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. or John Lewis or Claudette Colvin?' More than anything, they'd want legislation passed and signed into law. Short of that, they'd want actions, sit-ins, and marches. They'd be proud to see activists from groups such as Un-PAC, Until Freedom, Our Black Party, The Workers Circle, and Black Voters Matter giving this fight their all. They'd also want to disrupt the country until our cries are heard. I honor their legacies and their work—the thousands of steps they've marched on tired feet and the countless times they put their lives on the line so that their sons and daughters could live to fight another day. Without them, there is no me — the first Black Congressperson to represent my district in American history. So one thing must be made clear: I will not stand by and I will not stay quiet while the fate of our democracy continues to hang loosely by a thread that the Senate is hellbent on tearing apart."

"With everything that has already been fought over and for, there should be no reason people have to take to the streets, go on hunger strikes, or plead with our government to act in their best interest. But that isn't the case. The House did its part to pass critical voting rights legislation and legislation like the Build Back Better Act that would completely transform every community in America, particularly communities of color that have been historically left behind. Still, there are 52 members in the Senate who are a direct threat to our democracy and are standing in the way of progress. I had no choice but to join people and activists outside the Senate this week who are also tired and frustrated with our government."

"I was arrested alongside over 20 people, including youth hunger striking for our democracy. And I will do it again and again and again," said Rep. Bowman.

The response to Bowman's arrest from Westchester democrats was mostly in favor. "Thank you Congressman Bowman for standing up on Voting Rights. In the words of the late, great, John Lewis: MAKE GOOD TROUBLE," said one Westchester Democrat.

Another Democratic elected official said, "Speaking out and protesting for what you believe in has been a part of American democracy for centuries. Congressman Bowman is following that democratic tradition in an effort to get the Voting Rights Act passed. And I support him in that effort."

A few Westchester dems we spoke to thought that Bowman, "was grandstanding and getting arrested to get into the news." Another Yonkers Dem said, "This is how progressive democrats get it done today. It's not like Nita Lowey or Eliot Engel got it done. And neither way is necessarily right or wrong. It's just different, but it will take a while for some in Westchester to get used to it."

Alzwell Social Club Offers Virtual Interaction and Support for People with Dementia & Caregivers



The Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter offers a variety of social programs for people with dementia and their loved ones. Among them is the AlzWell Social Club, originally held in person in Westchester County, and now held virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. This interactive program seeks to engage participants through a variety of activities.

It is facilitated by Debbie Marks Kahn, ATR-BC, LCAT, an art therapist whose specialties include working with geriatric and dementia populations. She said the group began around five years ago thanks to a private grant. Participants in what was then an in-person intermittent Sunday Social in White Plains wanted something to do when it wasn't held.

"They wanted the program to be similar, including plenty of music, dancing and socializing. I changed and expanded it once we got started and saw what we really needed to do," she said.

The AlzWell Social group is now held on selected Saturdays throughout the year. Marks Kahn said it fulfills a variety of needs for the participants.

"We fill a social need where people form great loving relationships with others in the same situation. We fill a musical need, where we hire musicians and dance therapists so our attendees can express themselves. We fill an expressive, spiritual, supportive, creative and psychological need. Our art psychotherapists offer supportive and creative groups for our participants."

She said COVID has significantly affected the format.

"During the pandemic, we have been forced to hold our groups on Zoom. Due to our inability to focus for long times on a computer screen, we cannot stay with our clients for as long."

While conversation over lunch that was part of the in-person program is no longer possible during COVID, the event still begins with conversation.

"During the first part of our group at 1 p.m., we start with an open discussion so members can discuss their week. Then we mix it up with various activities," she said. These include sensory stimulation exercises designed to engage the caregiver and the person with dementia. An example of this would be a scented hand lotion massage with guided imagery, which she said can help bring up lost language and memories.

"I have taught this technique I created to staff in hospitals and nursing homes and assisted living facilities all over New York State," Marks Kahn added.

Other activities include relaxation techniques and deep-breathing exercises to help those with early- or moderate- stage dementia manage their anxiety. Participants may do some mindfulness practices, such as counting or focusing techniques. They are also encouraged to reminisce and speak about their memories. She said she is requesting participants' stories with a possible future compilation in mind.

"At 12:30 p.m., we continue with dance therapy and movement to music," said Marks Kahn. This is followed by the support group part of the program at 2 p.m.

"We begin with a quick check-in and discussion and then do progressive muscle relaxation or a five-minute stretching exercise. Then we have an art therapy experiential, which includes creative writing, dialogue and deep breathing exercises. Depending on the topic of the day, this could be followed by a discussion about any challenges or successes. Then we have our closing, where we produce a positive group affirmation."

She said the support group provides an opportunity for participants to make new friends. "Participants from the support group have become really good friends that take care of each other," she said. "Some of them call and email each other. And some used to go out with together until the pandemic hit. I cannot tell you how impactful our group meetings have been to our participants. We have become a lifeline to many of them."

She said the group seeks to make everyone feel important and supported. "After being with us, we want everyone to feel calmer and in control of themselves, loved and warm inside, like a great big hug," she said.

Prescreening and pre-registration are required to participate by calling the Alzheimer's Association at 800.272.3900. Those already screened can reach out directly to Marks Kahn at dkahn28@aol.com or 914.629.4464. Visit alz.org/hudson-valley for more information.

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Westchester County Employees Donate Supplies to Bronx Families Impacted by Fire



Donation Drive Took Place at County Office Building, Social Services District Offices and Public Safety

Westchester County employees came together after learning of the devastating fire in the Bronx on January 9, claiming the lives of 17 people, including 8 children. Donation boxes were set up at the Michaelian Office Building, district offices of the Department of Social Services and Department of Public Safety Headquarters. The weeklong drive that took place from January 14-21, garnered more than 800 pounds of donations including diapers, blankets, pillows, clothes, toiletries and non-perishable food.

VIDEO IS AVAILABLE HERE: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4JrS6xDP_Q

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said: "I am proud our employees saw the need and stepped up to give back to our neighbors in the Bronx. Some even rallied their churches and schools to obtain these necessities. Westchester has always had strong ties with the Bronx and this showing of service is the epitome of community going beyond borders. Our hearts remain with the survivors and families left behind in this tragedy and we hope these donations can help them start over, rebuild and heal."

The donations were delivered by employees with the Department of Public Works and Transportation to PS-85 Great Expectation School, where many of the children impacted by this fire, attended.

Third grade teacher Lindsay Moss, a Westchester County resident, said: "It's heartbreaking what these families are going through and we want them to know we are here for them. These donations, from water to the blankets, pet food, clothes and toys will really help lift their spirits. We want them to know we care about them and we are here for them. This is not a short term effort, we are going to support them for a long time."

NYP Hudson Valley Hospital Events in February

Join us at these virtual events in February! As part of our ongoing commitment to community health education, we offer these virtual opportunities to learn from and engage with our clinicians.

See the full Events Calendar for support groups and other events at <https://events.nyp.org/hudsonvalley>

Chocolate: From Bean to Bar
Thursday, February 3
12:00-12:45 PM

In this class, we will learn all about chocolate, including how it is made, and the regions where it grows. You will also learn about its potential impact on heart health and watch our chef make some sweet and savory chocolate-based recipes.

Sensational Super Bowl Snacks
Tuesday, February 8
3:00-3:45 PM

In preparation for Super Bowl Sunday, learn how to make fun and healthy snacks that are easy to make ahead so you can relax and enjoy the kickoff.

Valentine's Day: Loving Your Heart
Thursday, February 10
12:00-12:45 PM

Learn the most recent nutrition and tips for heart health, as well as recipes that nourish your heart with a special Valentine's Day menu.

Physician in the Kitchen: Advancements in Cardiology
Tuesday, February 15
12:00-12:45 PM

Join Giora Weisz, MD, an interventional cardiologist with New York-Presbyterian Medical Group Hudson Valley and director of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at NYP Hudson Valley Hospital, to learn about advances in technology. Heart-healthy recipes will be shared.

Heart Health Around the World
Thursday, February 17
12:00-12:45 PM

In this class, we will focus on France, a country with one of the lowest rates of heart disease, and learn about their healthy habits and recipes. This program is presented in collaboration with the Ossining Library.

Bar Mitzvah at Age 57 for Former FBI Agent, Prosecutor, and NFL- NBA Executive



Rabbi Mendy Hurwitz completes wrapping of the arm tefillin for M. Quentin Williams. Photo (c) Robert Kalfus

by Robert Kalfus

Former Yonkers resident Michael Quentin Williams recently addressed the Yonkers Police Dept. how to "train law enforcement how to serve better, not to police better." At that meeting, Yonkers Police Dept. Chaplain Rabbi Mendy Hurwitz learned the facts of Quentin's life: born and raised by a non-observant Jewish mother who soon after he was born, Quentin was abandoned by his biological Black father from St. Kitt's, and then abandoned by his mother's family. Quentin was raised by loving grandparents and supportive community members. Quentin was further supported by educators and coaches who saw quality, promise and greatness in him, and believing to him, helped him to succeed.

M. Quentin Williams' story began with his mixed-race upbringing in New York poverty: Quentin attended and graduated from Yonkers' Charles E. Groton High School, with activities in the National Honor Society; Football; Track & Field; and Swimming; won admission to Boston College with a Football scholarship and graduated from Boston College, with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, where he was active in Varsity Football and Track. In the late 1980s following graduation, Quentin worked for two years as a bouncer at New York nightclubs, but prodded by a mentor, who told him that being a bouncer would not be his life's career, Quentin applied to law school, and graduated with a law degree from St. John's University School of Law, with a Juris Doctor law degree in 1991.

Starting in 1992 for almost four years, M. Quentin was a Special Agent for the FBI in New Haven, CT, investigating Federal criminal matters, and then worked as an Assistant US Attorney from 1995 to 1996 as a Trial Attorney in the Criminal Division. Quentin then moved into a career as an executive with the National Football League and the National Basketball Association.

At the Yonkers Police meeting conclusion, Rabbi Hurwitz asked Quentin if he had any Jewish education, or if he had had a Bar Mitzvah. Quentin's answer "NO" to which Rabbi Hurwitz offered a Bar Mitzvah to him if he was interested. Quentin replied that he was interested! Quentin at age 57 had his Bar Mitzvah this past Sunday morning at the Chabad of Yonkers. A Bar Mitzvah means when young people taken upon themselves the responsibilities of learning and obeying the commandments of Jewish law, customs and observances. Girls have a Bat Mitzvah at age 12 due to their earlier maturation, and young Jewish boys have their Bar Mitzvah upon reaching age 13. Rabbi Hurwitz explained that things happen on G-d's time schedule, and now was the appropriate time for Quentin's Bar Mitzvah at age 56.

Rabbi Hurwitz draped a four fringed prayer tallit on Quentin's broad shoulders, as he helped Quentin recite the prayers and explained the significance of the tallit's four fringes. Quentin next donned the tefillin's black boxes on his arm, and then his forehead, reciting the prayers and began the shacharit morning weekday prayers, led by Rabbi Mendy Hurwitz's son, Chaim.

Concluding the morning prayers, Quentin spoke to the men and women who came to honor him. Visibly moved, at times stopping to wipe tears from his eyes or recover his composure to speak, Quentin said "I speak at this Bar Mitzvah in honor of my grandparents, who changed my life", for the better. "It was difficult in the beginning. For the first five years of my life they did not accept me. My grandmother was born into foster care, and she was ashamed of the foster care in she grew up in Chicago. Her whole life, she was always trying to please people. And when she lived in Eastchester, she felt her neighbors would be very embarrassed by the fact that she had a black grandchild. We were not allowed to go over to their house. My grandfather, on the other hand, he lived with her, so he had to do what she said. He wanted to embrace me. And then my (younger) brother came along, when I was six years old, they embraced both of us. They turned 180 degrees. So in honor of them, and in honor of the humility shown by my grandmother, in being that second mother to us and being able to embrace us, it changed my life and it changed my brother's life."

Quentin thanked the many people who attended the Bar Mitzvah, including Jay Brustman, one of Quentin's mentors who encouraged him; members of the Yonkers Police Dept.; Yonkers Police Dept. Commissioner John Mueller, and the many people who attended law school with him or served as US Federal Attorneys.

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Eric Schoen, continued from pg 3-

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) # 2022 – 03
 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PEST CONTROL SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE AT VARIOUS PROPERTIES OWNED OR MANAGED BY THE MUNICIPAL HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR THE CITY OF YONKERS
 The Municipal Housing Authority for the City of Yonkers (“MHACY”) is soliciting proposals from qualified firms for Pest Control Service and Maintenance for MHACY at various sites as specified in this Request for Proposals (“RFP”).
 This RFP package contains submission requirements and terms and conditions and other pertinent information for submitting a proper and responsive proposal. This RFP is the only information provided to prospective bidders (hereinafter “Responders” or “Respondents”) and is available online starting January 31, 2022 at www.mhacy.org/about/procurement/.
 There will be a site tour for interested parties on February 17, 2022, time to be determined, starting at 1157 Central Park Avenue, Yonkers, NY. The RFP questions deadline is February 23, 2022 at 11:00AM Eastern Standard Time (EST). Any and all questions must be emailed to procurement@mhacy.org by the deadline. No telephone calls and/or written communication sent via mail will be accepted.
 Proposals must reach MHACY no later than 3:00 PM (EST) on March 1, 2022. Late submissions will be handled in accordance with the provisions in Form HUD-5369B.
 Proposals will be evaluated on the criteria stated in the RFP. Negotiations may be conducted with contractors who have a reasonable chance of being selected for the award. After evaluation of the proposal revision, if any, the contract will be awarded to the responsible firm(s) whose qualifications, price and other factors are considered to be the most advantageous to MHACY.
 MHACY reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and waive any irregularities or informalities if it is in MHACY’s best interest to do so. MHACY reserves the right to cancel this RFP or to reject, in whole or in part, any and all proposals received in response to this RFP, upon its determination that such cancellation or rejection is in the best interest of MHACY.
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customers not to shop in the reusable bags they bring into stores. Why? Because people are bringing in reusable bags, putting their groceries in them and walking out without paying. In previous columns I warned you about that.

Adams proposes to increase Crime Stopper awards, the cash rewards for anonymous information leading to arrest. It works around the world. Why not New York?

I’ve only touched on a small number of the ideas in the Adams report. I highly recommend that you Google it and read it. I doubt there will be much you disagree with.

The gun violence situation in New York can turn a progressive Democrat like me into a Conservative. That will probably happen to you no matter where you fall on the political spectrum. The only way we will solve gun violence in New York whether it be in the City or throughout the State is for all those that are part of the solution to step up to the plate, acknowledge when they were wrong and collectively work together to make the city and state great again.

If you are a player and part of the solution and not willing to come to the table, the nationwide unemployment rate is low. There is a big demand for individuals with Commercial Drivers Licenses to transport goods and services. Pay is pretty good. And you really can’t destroy a city, the suburbs and a state in desperate need of help.

Again, please pray for Officers Rivera and Mora and their families. And pray for the safety of Police Officers in Yonkers, Westchester, New York City, New York State and our country!

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

Notice of formation of youRmore LLC LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 07/09/2020. 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, 10 Dassern Drive Apt I Dobbs Ferry NY 10522 . Purpose: Any lawful activity.

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

Notice of formation of Gelpdawg Media LLC..Articles of Organization filed with the New York Department of State on 12/01/2021. Office location: Westchester County. The New York Secretary of State is designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served upon him or her to the company c/o United States Corporation Agents, Inc., 7014 13th Ave, 202, Brooklyn, NY 11228. Principal business address: 428 Marlborough Rd., Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful acts.

Notice of formation of JGS Notary Services LLC Articles of Organization filed with the SSNY Office on 10/28/21 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 : C/O JGS Notary Services LLC , 588 Warburton Apt 2 Yonkers, NY 10701 Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of formation of LOREDANA VICARI PHOTOGRAPHY LLC Articles of Organization filed with the SSNY Office on 10/6/21 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 : C/O LOREDANA VICARI PHOTOGRAPHY LLC , 125 Dunwoodie Street Yonkers, NY 10704 Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of formation of a Limited Liability Company Love Jones 360 Experience LLC Articles of Organization filed with the SSNY Office on 9/23/21 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 : C/O Love Jones 360 Experience LLC , 41 Ridgeview Terrace Elmsford, NY 10523 Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of Formation of Jovanna Realty LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 5/14/2021. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Jovanna Realty LLC, 100 Riverdale Ave., Apt. 8C., Yonkers, NY 10701 Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

Notice of formation of Aiyana’s Creations LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/20/2021. Office: Westchester County. United States Corporation Agents Inc., 7014 13th Avenue, Suite 202, Brooklyn, NY, 11228 designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. US Corporation Agents Inc shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 127 Ramsey Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of J’s Admin, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 1/12/22. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Julia Rea 69 Dale Ave Apt 6 Ossining, NY 10562. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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Durst, continued from pg 1-

Manhattan. Those statements were discredited through the statements of other witnesses, and later by Robert Durst himself, while additional witness interviews revealed information about multiple alleged incidents of domestic violence by Robert Durst against Kathleen Durst. In addition to information learned from witness interviews, the report also details some of the physical evidence recovered during the investigation, including a handwritten note that was found in the South Salem home shared by the couple. Despite this evidence, the case went cold.

As discussed in the report, New York State Police Investigator Joseph Becerra and the Westchester County District Attorney's Office resumed the investigation into Kathleen Durst's disappearance in 1999. During this time, Inv. Becerra debunked the belief that Kathleen Durst was seen in Manhattan on the night she disappeared, which shifted the focus of the investigation away from the narrative suggested by Robert Durst in the period after Kathleen disappeared. Investigators conducted numerous interviews during this period, but were unable to interview Susan Berman, Durst's friend, before she was murdered in December of 2000.

The report also discusses crucial facts and evidence that were revealed during the production of the HBO documentary "The Jinx" and Robert Durst's prosecution for the murder of Susan Berman in Los Angeles, which resulted in his conviction on September 17, 2021. Shortly thereafter, Durst was indicted for the murder of Kathleen Durst, nearly 40 years after her death.

"Those of us in law enforcement, who are always seeking to better serve victims, can and should look at how this case was handled and what, if anything, we can learn about the crucial early stages of criminal investigations when individuals with status, wealth and power are implicated," DA Rocah said. "By learning from past investigations, we can better assure the public that no one is above close scrutiny of law enforcement and that domestic violence victims, like Kathleen Durst, can be saved before their abuse ends in death. In the end, I hope that the charges that were filed in this case send a powerful message that no one is above the law and no victim's case should be forgotten."

Cold Case Bureau Chief Laura Murphy, Chief Investigator Daniel McKenna, and Bureau Chiefs Nadine Nagler and Maria Wager handled the investigation. They worked collaboratively with New York State Police, and now former Investigator Joseph Becerra, who spent 22 years investigating Kathleen Durst's disappearance, other Criminal Investigators in the District Attorney's Office, the FBI, the Westchester County Department of Public Safety, Westchester County Department of Laboratories and Research, and law enforcement agencies from across the country. The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office also assisted in the investigation.

New York State Police Investigator Joseph Becerra said his biggest regret in this case "is not knowing where Kathy is just so we can give her family final closure."

Other questions from the media included the role that former District Attorney Jeanine Pirro's office played in Robert Durst not being charged with his wife's murder until 2021. DA Rocah said that her office wasn't "putting blame on anyone," but said that "tunnel vision" from some in law enforcement—and was hoping that in Kathie's memory—we have no evidence to conduct any type of investigation and i'm focused on what my team did once we got here—its really important in kathie's honor to focus on domestic violence victims everywhere and to try and better serve them.

Carl Vergari was DA when Kathie Durst was murdered in 1982, and Pirro was DA in 1999 when Becerra began to uncover additional evidence and leads in the case.

The family of Kathie Durst was not satisfied with the report issued by DA Rocah, but it appears that there anger at Robert Durst not being charged with Kathie's death years ago is focused on others than the current Westchester DA. The statement from the The McCormack family and their attorneys reads:

We "were not invited to DA Rocah's press conference. No one from the Westchester District Attorney's Office even informed the McCormack family that DA Rocah was having a press conference today. There is absolutely no doubt that Robert Durst murdered Kathie in South Salem, New York on January 31, 1982. The evidence to prove this beyond a reasonable doubt has been available for almost forty (40) years.

There have been numerous individuals, including members of the Durst family, that have knowingly and intentionally participated in a criminal conspiracy to help Robert Durst avoid prosecution. Today, the Westchester County District Attorney has sanctioned those illegal acts and attempted to explain away how money, power, and influence allowed a killer to escape justice. Through her misrepresentations and omissions, DA Rocah must now be considered part of the cover-up. She should resign immediately.

Had the McCormack family been invited to today's press conference, they would have explained not only the impact that Kathie's murder has had on their lives, but also the damage that has resulted from law enforcement's failure to treat the victims of this crime as equal before the law.

The McCormack family will further address this and other issues on January 31, 2022, the 40th anniversary of Kathie's murder. In the interim, we ask the public to consider why the current Westchester DA and her predecessors remain unwilling to tell the truth about why it took nearly forty years for Robert Durst to be charged." end of statement.

A story from The Guardian claims that Kathie's family wanted then DA Pirro to go to California and interview Susan Berman before her death, but that Pirro refused. Other published reports question what if anything Pirro did which led to the conviction of Robert Durst for other crimes, even though she wrote a book taking credit for his arrest.

Other strange questions and connections about the case include Bill Stevenson and his ex-wife Jill Biden, now First Lady Jill Biden, spent a weekend with Robert and Kathie Durst and Stevenson claims they witnessed abuse from Robert upon Kathie.

District Attorney Rocah did everything in her power, in our view, to put the case of Kathie Durst to an end. She released a 12-page report on the investigation into the disappearance of Kathie Durst, linked here.

But it's a case that won't go away, even after the death of Robert Durst.

Latimer Taps Former County Legislator Wishnie as Emergency Services Commissioner



Former County Legislator Richard Wishnie, left, has been serving as Acting Emergency Services Commissioner since 2020

County Executive George Latimer is pleased to announce he will be appointing former County Legislator and current Acting County Emergency Services Commissioner Richard Wishnie as the Department's permanent commissioner – removing the 'acting' title after over a year of exceptional service in that role. Wishnie had held the acting post since November 2020 when Latimer named him and Susan Spear to lead the County's emergency services response.

Latimer said: "Richard is a true Westchester public servant. He has dedicated his life to serving the people of this County, and in this past year, has shown how far his service is willing to go. As the County worked to combat and mitigate COVID-19, Richard worked closely with the team at DES to ensure all municipalities had supplies, answers and support from our Administration."

Wishnie was elected to the Westchester County Board of Legislators for six terms beginning in 1993. He retired in December of 2005. Wishnie has an extensive record of public service in Westchester County. Prior to becoming a County Legislator, he served the Town of Ossining as Councilman from 1976-1979 and as Supervisor from 1979-1983. He has served as Chairman of the Ossining Open Door Health Centers, Westchester Health Source, the Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps, and the Ossining Red Cross Disaster Team.

Wishnie said: "Working in the Latimer Administration with Deputy Director Susan Spear and the dedicated team at DES has been my utmost privilege. I am thrilled to continue this role on a permanent basis so we can serve the people of Westchester."

Wishnie presently volunteers as a Director with several health care and business organizations. He is a member Board of Directors of the Westchester Medical Center, Chairman of the Bon Secours Charity Health System Board of Directors, Vice Chair and Treasurer of the Health Alliance Board of Directors, a member of the Board of Directors of the Westchester County Association, Vice Chair of the Mid-Hudson Ambulance District and Chair of the Westchester County Police Board.

Wishnie has also served as an Officer and Director of the Ossining Chamber of Commerce, President of the Ossining Jaycees, Director of the United Way of Northern Westchester, a member of the Briarcliff Manor Volunteer Fire Department, and a Town of Ossining Auxiliary Police Officer. He is the former Director of Operations of the New York State Workers' Compensation Board (1983-88), and served by appointment of the Governor to a Temporary State Study Commission on Workers Compensation Special Funds.

The Department of Emergency Services consists of four divisions: Fire Services, Communications (60 Control), Emergency Management (OEM) and Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The Fire Services division is comprised of four units: fire training, fire inspection, special operations and fire prevention and protection. The division administrators, coordinates and maintains the fire training program that is available to Westchester County's 58 fire departments.

The Emergency Communications Center commonly referred to as "60 Control" provides primary dispatch services for 52 fire departments and 32 EMS agencies in Westchester. The center is staffed 24 hours, seven days a week to handle fire and EMS mutual-aid requests going in and out of the county.

The OEM works with local, state and federal government to prepare Westchester for disasters. During a major emergency, OEM may activate the county's Emergency Operations Center, a state-of-the-art facility where the county, local municipalities, hospitals, utilities work together to keep the County safe.

The EMS division collaborates with local, regional and state agencies to enhance the effectiveness of the county's Emergency Medical Services system, by providing emergency preparedness training, mutual aid coordination and incident management assistance during large scale events.

Jewish Educator Fired, continued from pg 1-

One week later, however, that same Rabbi called Ms. Sander to another meeting, this time with the WRT executive director, where the Rabbi fired her. When she asked why, the executive director told her that "it's just not a good fit."

The facts set forth in the complaint make clear that Ms. Sander was fired solely because of the blog post she co-authored. The Labor Law makes it unlawful for "any employer" to 'discharge from employment' any "individual" because of her "legal recreational activities," "outside work hours, off of the employer's premises and without use of the employer's equipment or other property." Such recreational activities include "any lawful, leisure-time activity, for which the employee receives no compensation and which is generally engaged in for recreational purposes, including but not limited" to "hobbies." Ms. Sander, like many Americans and Jewish Americans, blogged as a hobby, without compensation, and this particular blog post was authored and published months before she began work at WRT.

More than 45 prominent Jewish Americans, including rabbis, scholars, and educators, have signed an Open Letter to WRT, urging the Temple to reinstate Ms. Sander. The letter states, in part, "If, as appears to be the case, Ms. Sander was fired because someone objected to her blog post, we urge you to reconsider your decision. You are surely aware that Ms. Sander's views are shared by a growing segment of the Jewish community, who understand or are grappling with the role of Zionism in the dispossession of the Palestinian people from their homes and land. Their commitment to Palestinian justice is fully consistent with the Jewish values of, and commitment to, pursuing justice that they learned in Hebrew school and from their families. We are certain that there are many educators within the Reform movement with views similar to those expressed by Ms. Sander. The Reform Jewish community – and all Jewish communities – need educators with the passion and moral compass of people such as Jessie Sander. You surely understood that when you hired her. We urge you to reinstate her."

Sander co-founded a website titled makingmensches.com, whose mission is to educate and learn with fellow white Jews to build more welcoming communities. On the website is a blog, and the blog post in question, which can be found at the following link, <https://makingmensches.medium.com/israel-wont-save-us-moving-towards-liberation-d0590cf41561>, is a tough criticism of Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people, and the 2021 bombing of Gaza.

Sander writes with co-founder Elana Lipkin, "As co-founders of an American Jewish organization seeking to confront the Jewish community's racist practices and beliefs, we must speak out against israel's most recent attack on Gaza... We believe our role as white American Jews is to resist the American-israeli military-industrial complex and the ways in which American Jewish support for israel has enabled the genocide in Palestine to continue. Making Mensches believes in the right of Palestinian self-determination and rejects the Zionist claim to the land of Palestine."

But at the end of the post, they write, "Our anti-Zionist journeys, while difficult, have been nothing short of essential to strengthening our passion for Judaism. Being anti-Zionist has made us even more invested in building Jewish community and fighting for justice for all Jews."

A simple search of Sander's works and writings by WRT could have, and should have been done prior to her hiring. And her comments about Israel and Palestine have the support of many American Jews, including the 45 (and counting) prominent members of the American-Jewish community.

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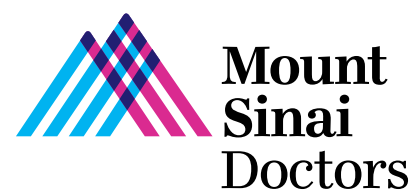
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