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Some Teachers Not Ready to Go Back to School



Several Westchester school districts and teachers unions are calling for classes to begin online in September, with an October return to school

By Dan Murphy

With a back to school date in Westchester of September 8 for most school districts, several teachers unions have called on the first month of school to be held online, with in person learning beginning in October...hopefully.

In the New Rochelle School District, Superintendent Laura Feijoo wrote, "As difficult as this decision is, I feel it is my obligation as your Superintendent to place the health and well-being of teachers, staff, students and their families above all else. As much as I'd like students to learn in their classrooms, we do not know enough about the COVID virus at this time to be confident that people will be safe to return to our schools as a hybrid model would require."

In the Yonkers Public Schools (YPS), while the teachers union (Yonkers Federation of Teachers, YFT) has also called for online learning in September, YPS Superintendent Dr. Edwin Quezada, realizing the challenges that many of the districts 27,000 students have with online learning, has not yet agreed to cancel the opening of classrooms the day after Labor Day.

And most Westchester schools are sticking to their plans of holding a hybrid model of learning that has most students coming into schools 2 days per week, with online learning 3 days per week. With pressure mounting from teachers unions, most of who are uncomfortable returning to the classroom in three weeks, the change would have to be made by local Superintendents and their school boards as soon as possible, so that parents can plan their schedules for the fall.

In the YPS, the Yonkers Federation of Teachers, (YFT) and the other two bargaining units, in calling for remote learning in September, also claimed that they were not involved in the process of creating a back to school plan.

Parents and taxpayers in Yonkers were surprised and disappointed by the

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Westchester's Glamour Couple's 2012 Plantation Wedding Criticized



Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds live in Pound Ridge

By Dan Murphy

One of Westchester's most attractive couples, Hollywood stars Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds, have come under criticism for the location of their 2012 wedding. The couple exchanged vows at the Boone Hall Plantation & Gardens in South Carolina.

The 330 year old Plantation, located in Mt. Pleasant, SC, a few miles from Charleston, is aware of the controversy surrounding Lively & Reynolds wedding and the owners are concerned. "We treasure all our relationships with couples that have chosen to get married at Boone Hall, and, when needed, respond to them in private, honest, and personal discussions to address any concerns they may have. The discussions are heartfelt as we want to listen and put love and respect at the center of any issues that arise. We will always work to be a part of the solution for our couples, not a part of the problem," wrote the plantations owners. .

The Southern estate, founded by Englishman John Boone in 1681, has stood for 339 years -and in addition to hosting high priced private affairs, also operates educational programs about its role in the history of slavery. Included on the grounds are cabins and other historical item.

Rumblings about the plantation wedding of Lively and Reynolds began in 2018 after Reynolds made positive comments about the Movie Black Panther, resulting in online attacks calling him a hypocrite for his plantation

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Is 42 Years in Prison Enough Time for any Crime?



Bonnie Minter with her son Jason

By Dan Murphy

The recent parole granted to Samuel Ayala, for the rape and murder of two women in South Salem has reignited the public debate over how many years served for the most severe crimes is enough, and are some crimes so severe and brutal, that there should never be parole.

The 1977 murder of Bonnie Minter and Sheila Watson in South Salem was a shock to everyone who lived in Westchester. Ayala and Profit entered the home of Watson, and raped and murdered the two mothers, shooting them 11 times as they attempted to crawl for their children, who were in a room down the hall.

We lived in Yorktown at the time, as a ten year old, I remember I my mother talking about the crime. As a young mother herself from the Bronx, my mom could not understand how a crime of this severity could have occurred in any of the quiet towns of Northern Westchester, where there were many more farms, and fewer homes, than there are in the county today. Perhaps that is why these men so brazenly decided to commit their crimes.

Samuel Ayala, age 26, Willie Profit, 25, and James Walls, Jr., 26, all from South Norwalk, CT, were captured three days later while trying to return the blue cargo van they had rented. All three men had previous records of criminal behavior of varying degrees of severity, including armed robbery and drug dealing.

In the 1978 trial Judge Richard Daronco went on the record at sen-

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Should We Cancel Con Ed? Can We Do It?

"Every Single Storm is always the same with Con Ed ...There is little or no preparatory activity and the post storm reaction is abysmal."

Eastchester Supervisor Tony Colavita

"Con Edison's response to Isaias in Westchester has been wholly inadequate—a management fiasco. We need to unplug Con Edison and replace it,"

Assemblyman Tom Abinanti

By Dan Murphy

For those who have lived in Westchester for decades, it has become baffling that every few years, after a big storm, our electric service provider seems more and more unprepared and ill equipped to turn our power back on. For most of Westchester, that service provider is Con Edison, but in Northern Westchester and Putnam its NYSEG. And both continue to have problems getting their customers out of the dark as one day turns into four days and into a second week.

Many Con Ed customers in Westchester have had enough, most notably in Yonkers, where is some homes the lights didn't come on for 10 days. They want Con Ed 'cancelled' "fired" or "replaced."

Longserving elected official in Westchester are also running out of patience at Con Ed. Eastchester Supervisor Tony Colavita recently wrote a letter criticizing Con Ed, but also asked State Senator Shelley Mayer and Assembly member Amy Paulin to take action against the utility.

"I have been Eastchester Supervisor for many storms during all seasons," Colavita writes. "Every single storm is always the same regarding Con Ed's preparation and response. There is little or no preparatory activity and the post storm reaction is abysmal."

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CleanFresh Laundromat Offers Modern, Clean Convenience



Modern, immaculate interiors at CleanFresh Laundromat

By Dan Murphy

In today's age of COVID, Westchester residents demand that any place they shop be clean and safe. CleanFresh Laundromat, a modern, convenience-focused laundromat that services the greater Yonkers area, has accomplished that goal.

Customers can expect a wide variety of benefits when they step into their Central Park Avenue location, starting with a clean, sleek appearance reminiscent of today's popular fast-casual eateries. The cozy environment creates an appealing area to knock laundry off of your to-do list, which you can easily do in one of their 130 machines (making it the largest laundromat in Yonkers to boot).

CleanFresh also tries to find helpful ways to ensure your laundry isn't just a disruptive element of your day. Free wifi and ample seating makes it easy to justify a mid-day trip to the laundromat, as you can bring along your laptop to do some work or do some online shopping. Ample parking means you won't have to drive around the block a few times for an opening, and you won't have to haul your heavy clothes hamper too far.

If you're the trusting type that doesn't need to watch your laundry like a hawk, you can even run some errands with the knowledge that you'll get a text alert when your load is completed. Best of all, you likely won't have to wait that long (or suffer multiple washes and dries) thanks to the state of the art, high-efficiency machines in use. Convenience is key, and CleanFresh has it in spades.

For those who detest doing laundry themselves, CleanFresh also has offers for you — namely their industry-leading Wash Dry Fold service. Also known as drop off laundry services, all you have to do is just swing your clothes by and let the CleanFresh team take care of the rest. They'll take your preferences, including if you have any allergies to detergent fragrances, and take your clothes off of you for a fee. Then, you can come back a few days later to pick up your clothes, making this the easiest laundry day you'll ever have.

All things considered, if you're looking for a new place to do some laundry, CleanFresh is definitely worth a closer look. They really do try to think of everything you'll need when waiting for your laundry, and if something is missing you can always bring it up to an on-site employee or through an online message. It's hard not to love a less-disruptive laundry experience with a heavy focus on customer service, and this up-and-coming Yonkers staple gives exactly that.

The laundromat of the future is here, and its safe, clean and convenient. CleanFresh Laundromat is located at 1745 Central Park Avenue, Yonkers. Call (914) 361-1313, or visit, Clean-FreshLaundromat.com/, for more information.

COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FREE BACK TO SCHOOL

VACCINES BY APPOINTMENT AUG 24 & 31

During National Immunization Awareness Month, the Westchester County Department of Health reminds parents and guardians that now is the right time to plan a visit with their child's healthcare provider. This will help ensure children have the vaccines they need for a healthy start in school, whether they are at home or in the classroom.

For families with no insurance, ChildHealth Plus or Medicaid, the Westchester County Health Department can help. Call the County Health Department at (914) 995-5800 to find out if you qualify for vaccines at no charge. Visits are by appointment only on Aug. 24 or 31 at the Health Department clinic at 134 Court St. in White Plains.

All parents and guardians should check on whether they or their children have missed any vaccines due to appointments postponed because of COVID-19 concerns. Some vaccines require more than one dose.

Navigators available through the Health Department can help families and individuals sign up for the health insurance they need. Those without a regular doctor can learn where to go for ongoing primary care. For more health insurance information, call (914) 995-6350.

Lowey Honors Rev. Founding Mother of Hudson River Healthcare



(L to R): Reverend Jeannette J. Phillips; Congresswoman Nita Lowey; Anne Kauffman Nolon, CEO of Hudson River Healthcare

Congresswoman Nita Lowey recently honored the Reverend Mrs. Jeannette J. Phillips of Peekskill with a Congressional proclamation citing her "tireless dedication to providing affordable healthcare."

Reverend Phillips is the last surviving founder of Hudson River Healthcare. In 1975, she and three other African American women known as the founding mothers worked with the community to start a health center to address the desperate shortage of accessible, affordable and quality healthcare services in their City.

Forty-five years later, that health center has grown into Hudson River Healthcare, the largest network of federally qualified community health centers in New York and third largest in the United States. Today, HRHCare provides primary and preventive health services to over 245,000 patients per year at 43 locations across the Hudson Valley, Long Island and all five boroughs of New York City. Through these services, Hudson River Healthcare seeks to improve the health and wellness of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, or ability to pay.

"As a founding mother of Hudson River Healthcare, Reverend Jeannette Phillips has dedicated her life to improving access to affordable health care for families across the Hudson Valley," said Congresswoman Nita Lowey. "She helped the health center grow into one of the largest health care networks in New York, serving thousands of people in need of help, regardless of background. Her incredible 50 years of experience -- serving her neighbors and always advocating for others -- is inspiring to us all. Her legacy will live on through those she worked with and served at HRHCare."

"The Reverend Mrs. Jeannette J. Phillips is directly responsible for giving generations of New Yorkers access to critical health services that they otherwise would not have. She paved the way for many community-based healthcare leaders and is a prime example of the power of fortitude, service and advocacy. We are so grateful to Congresswoman Lowey for recognizing Reverend Phillips and celebrating her legacy," said Anne Kauffman-Nolon, CEO of Hudson River Healthcare.

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County Election Task Force Makes Recommendations for Voting Improvements

Expanded early voting hours; a multimedia campaign to encourage early voting; multi-lingual video instructions for how to vote absentee; changes in procedures to increase the number of available workers; drop boxes for returning absentee ballots; necessary voting equipment; and information-sharing partnerships with community organizations -- these are just some of the recommendations for improving voting this November contained in a newly issued report from the Board of Legislators' Election Information Gathering Task Force.

The Task Force was created by Board Chairman Ben Boykin in response to voting challenges that emerged during the June 23 primary elections. The Task Force is co-chaired by Legislators Catherine Borgia and Vedat Gashi. The other Task Force members are Vice Chair Alfreda Williams and Majority Leader MaryJane Shimsky. The Task Force gathered information from more than 100 public comments and committee meetings with voter advocates and the Westchester County Board of Elections Commissioners.

The 21-page report details some of the things that went right and some of the things that went wrong during the June primaries, as election officials dealt with unprecedented events relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Challenges included multiple State changes to deadlines and absentee voting procedures, difficulty in recruiting and training poll workers, and changes in the availability of many regularly used polling locations.

Other recommendations in the report include technology investments to help streamline opening and recording of mailed ballots and improvements to the Board of Elections website.

Taskforce Co-Chair Catherine Borgia said, "The Board of Elections faced an extremely difficult set of circumstances in June because of COVID. We have to assume the situation will be similar this fall, but voter turnout will be much higher. Although the Board of Elections has the sole power and responsibility over the conduct of elections, we hope the information and recommendations we've assembled will be helpful to the BOE. The Board of Legislators stands ready to be a partner to the BOE in making sure voters in Westchester have the greatest possible access this fall."

Taskforce Co-Chair Vedat Gashi said, "The impact of the pandemic on the June primaries was something no one could have been fully prepared for. However, we still have more than 10 weeks before early voting begins in the general election and the experiences of the June primaries to learn from. This report pulls together what we've learned since June and I hope the information and recommendations will be valuable to the Board of Elections going forward."

Read the full report at <https://westchesterlegislators.com/images/Newsroom/2020/eigt-final-report.pdf>.

County Executive George Latimer commented on Facebook, "Asking the Governor, when he issues an Exec Order to allow for mail-in ballots for the November Election, to also mandate every County BoE establish drop-boxes for mail-ins. If the Post Office is being underfunded on purpose to suppress mail in voting, we need an alternative in place. Our County Administration will provide the money for the boxes and the extra security to protect them if authorized by the State.

"We cannot play Russian Roulette with the 2020 Election. The confidence people have in democracy hinges on a fair election not one rigged by those who want to maintain power. We're only one county, with limited authority, but we are making unprecedented outreach efforts where we can. Poll inspectors, polling sites, staff to handle mail-in ballots, establishing drop boxes, marketing early voting vigorously... that's what we're seeking to do."

With COVID 19, Would Mom Send Me to School?



By Eric W. Schoen

My readers with children have difficult decisions to make over the next few weeks. Should they send their children back into the buildings of the Yonkers Public Schools or other area schools in September? Should the children distance learn via computer from home?

Should the students go to school 2 days and distance learn at home the other days. Should The students distance learn at home 5 days a week. Some parents are talking about home schooling. The wealthy are examining home schooling pods, in which groups of three to 10 students learn together in homes under the tutelage of the children's parents or a hired teacher.

This COVID 19 pandemic has sure screwed up our lives. Little children are asked to put on masks, and unlike Halloween most aren't colorful and they can't take them off all day. How many of remember going trick or treating or marching in the school parade with uncomfortable face masks that as soon as the activity was over would come right off.

But the masks children and adults are wearing in 2020 are not for fun. They are to keep us safe. How do you explain what's going on to a 5 year old? Or older children. You just can't. They have never experienced a pandemic before and neither have we.

So my sister and I on an outing discussed a simple question. With Covid 19 in our midst and so many people, mostly elderly and those with existing health condition falling ill, many of them dying, would our mom send us to school in September?

In our house these were the decisions mom for the most part made as she was a stay at home mother, finishing her teaching career when my sister and I came along. Dad earned a decent income, we weren't rich but she was able to stay home and care for us.

Maybe because of her education to be a teacher and the time she spent teaching the young grades, when school was in session we were expected to be in school. My parents never took us out of school for Disney vacations or other trips parents take their kids out of school for today. Not that our parents could afford some of the elaborate 'holidays' parents lavish their children with in the 21st Century.

We were content with spending the last week in August and Labor Day in the Catskill Mountains, eating the delicious food and playing Simon Says or learning how to do the Hustle. Just watch the movie Dirty Dancing and this was the life we and thousands of others capped off our summer with.

It's amazing that so many people because of COVID 19 are returning to escape the city to the fresh air and open space the Catskills provide. A real estate market that hasn't been hot for years, mainly due to the reluctance of the state to introduce Casino Gambling is now thriving. Houses, bungalows and 'cookaliens,' small shacks where families would spend the summer months are attracting city folk in bidding wars to obtain a place away from it all.

Not to digress, the only times we were not in school is when we were sick, back to school 24 hours after our fever broke. If we took off for any Jewish Holiday the Yonkers Public Schools were not closed, we had to be in our seats at Temple Emanu-El then on Rumsey Road, or participating in holiday related activities with our family and friends.

School was very important to my parents, both graduates of the Yonkers Public Schools. And to my grandparents, grandma also a Yonkers High School Class of 1918 graduate. The importance of school resonated with my parents friends and they never kept their kids out of school for Mexican vacations.

Since mom volunteered in the School 13 Office with her friend Antoinette Costantini, if I was a little sick she would take me to school and be there in case I got sicker and had to go home.

So my sister and I chatted just the other day if mom who believed when school was open we were to be in class would have let us go to school with COVID 19 pandemic affecting everything that we do from grocery shop to trying on clothes in a fitting room.

And we agreed mom nor dad would let us go near a classroom with so many unanswered questions about the Coronavirus that exist as I write this column. I heard the Superintendent of Schools, my friend Dr. Edwin Quezada talk about bidding wars for PPE (personal protection equipment) and the hope that sufficient quantities would be available by the opening of school on a ZOOM call where parents could learn about the plans for September and have their questions answered.

The ZOOM call had spaces for 500 callers to participate. Less than 300 parents and guardians participated. That's because many homes in Yonkers don't have computers. I heard the district was waiting for 4000 computers. That's not enough for 27,000 children. In 30 days New York City Public Schools got over half a million iPads for students to do distance learning at home. NYC found the money, why not Yonkers.

Now we have 5 year olds waiting for the school bus on Elm Street. We are busing so many children from West Side to East Side because the school buildings on the West Side can't accommodate the numbers of students who live on the West Side. With Covid 19, would you put your beloved child on a school bus wearing a mask, told to look forward and not talk with their friends.

We can never forget that Yonkers is over 4000 students on top of the number of students our classrooms can accommodate. Our buildings are old. Fancy filtration systems out of the picture. With more kids enrolling due to the heartless closure by the Archdiocese at the last minute of 2 Yonkers Catholic Schools, even more students are added to the equation.

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County Work Group Releases Webinars on Schools Reopening, Health and COVID-19

The Westchester County School Reopening Work Group, created last month by Westchester County Executive George Latimer and Director of Operations Joan McDonald, released four "webinars" geared towards assisting the County's more than 40 school districts with the health and facilities elements of their reopening plans.

The webinars are drawn from workshops previously presented by the Work Group, with nearly 400 school officials, administrators and staff attending. The webinar topics include: COVID-19 Reporting and Contact Tracing, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), Facilities and Systems, Kitchens and Cafeterias.

The workshops were developed in conjunction with school superintendents across the County, led by Workgroup Co-chairs Joseph A. Glazer, Deputy Commissioner of the County's Department of Community Mental Health and Joseph Ricca, Superintendent of the White Plains School District.

The workshops are available on the Westchester County Health Department website, along with other information related to the work being done to address COVID-19. The workshops join the recently released "Frequently Asked Questions" guide, which is also available on the website.

Latimer said: "Providing information and guidance is one of the best ways Westchester County government can support schools as they work toward a safe and successful reopening. By developing informational materials and sharing them with the schools and public alike, the County can help everyone be safer and understand the responsibilities of being safe in school."

Glazer said: "The Work Group's purpose is to help Westchester's school districts meet their health and safety needs and mandates as we move toward reopening. We are continuing to pursue our collaborative effort to help ensure safe schooling for students, faculty and staff."

Ricca said: "These work groups allowed educational professionals to coordinate, firsthand, with our county partners, in a collaborative setting focused on a safe and healthy reopening of school facilities. There are so many considerations with regard to opening school facilities, to be able to work together has been a tremendous advantage to our Westchester County school districts."

The County Health Department website can be found at: <https://health.westchestergov.com/>.

Empire City Casino -MGM Resorts Announce Continuation of Racing at Yonkers Raceway through September 12th

Empire City Casino by MGM Resorts ("Empire City") and the Standardbred Owners Association of New York ("SOA"), the organization representing horsemen at Yonkers Raceway, announced an agreement to extend racing at the historic harness track through Saturday, September 12th. This will allow for the New York Night of Champions to proceed as scheduled on September 12th, which will showcase the best trotters and pacers bred in New York State

"In partnership with the SOA, we are excited to be able to continue harness racing operations despite the continued closure and loss of revenue from our casino operation," said Ed Domingo, senior vice president of Empire City. "This agreement further demonstrates our commitment to the sport and to the men and women employed by the horse racing industry."

Racing prize purses are funded primarily through gross gaming revenue generated by Empire City Casino and casino operations remain suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With limited funds available in the prize pool and no continued funding stream due to the casino closure, racing operations were expected to cease in August. However, MGM Resorts has agreed to continue racing operations and the SOA will contribute \$1.2 million to purses from their reserve fund to allow the sport to continue operating through September 12th.

"We recognize the hardships our horsemen have suffered during the pandemic," said Joe Faraldo, president of the SOA. "We have chosen to take \$1.2 million from our treasury in order to supplement the purse account and allow us to continue racing until the NYSS Night of Champions September 12th."

While the agreement allows for the preservation of the New York Sire Stakes races, several other stakes races scheduled for later in the year will be eliminated because of the limited purse funds. Those cancellations include the Yonkers Trot and Messenger Stakes.

The racing schedule at Yonkers Raceway was interrupted earlier in the season with a temporary closure of the track due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Live racing operations resumed June 22nd with extensive health and safety protocols in place. Pursuant to state and health guidelines, spectators are not permitted at Yonkers Raceway but races are simulcast and available for viewing and wagering online at www.EmpireCityBets.com.

For more information on the race schedule, please visit www.EmpireCityCasino.com.

The Challenges of in Person Learning During the COVID -19 Pandemic

By Dr Lento

With the exception of New York City public schools, all other large city school districts are opening using 'Remote Learning' while thousands of small suburban school districts are opening for in person instruction.

The nation's leading doctors and scientists at the CDC with the support of the AAP (American Academy of Pediatricians) and the White House have given very specific guidelines school districts must adhere to in order to open during this Pandemic.

Schools provide students a myriad of services from sanitation to nutrition, safety, medical and educational instruction.

Most schools have a very high student to staff ratio with many districts sustaining new shortfalls in staffing due to COVID-19 making meeting CDC guidelines almost impossible to meet.

To examine this topic let's use the average of 1000 students per school which can be adjusted for your specific school and resources but the ratios will be very close. You can find the size of your specific school and district on your state or school district websites. Using this number here are student to staff ratios.

- 1- Custodians: 250 to 1
- 2- Food service employees: 200 to 1
- 3- Transportation personnel: 40 to 1
- 4- School Nurses and Security: 250 to 1
- 5- Teachers: 34-50 to 1
- 6- Administrative Assistants: 175 to 1
- 7- Administrators: 250 to 1

As we see, the ratio of school personnel to students is extremely imbalanced which the Pandemic has exposed.

So, what are the real challenges with returning to in person learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

With depleted resources (and the numerous additional resources needed) the uncertainty of schools being able to adhere to CDC and AAP guidelines is at best, an uphill battle.

This ratio is comparable to going to a sporting event, concert, movie or the theater, each of which have been banned during this Pandemic. Opening schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic while keeping entertainment venues closed is contrary to the guidelines by the CDC.

Keeping your children safe in accordance with the Pandemic guidelines by the CDC and AAP will place an inordinate physical and financial strain on our schools that simply cannot be met without a substantial influx of new funding.

For example, the Yonkers Public School District in NYS will need nearly \$11,000,000 to acquire the PPE supplies mandated by the CDC to reopen SAFELY and additional funding to rehire recently released staff while needing more.

New York State alone has nearly 700 school districts serving nearly 3,000,000 students. Even using a conservative number of \$2,000,000 per school district for PPE supplies New York State would need roughly \$1,500,000,000 in new funding for school districts.

The costs listed above might also include repairs such as broken windows but would not include such things as the repair of or installation for new portable HEPA air filter systems now required.

The cost of a portable HEPA air filtration system per classroom costs approximately \$1300.00

In New State there are nearly 5000 schools and roughly twenty to thirty thousand classrooms. Each portable HEPA AIR filtration system would cost about \$1300.00 per classroom. This does not include the costs for hallways, bathrooms, stairwells, Gymnasiums, Auditoriums or office spaces.

All aspects of a normal school day during this Pandemic will drastically alter the length of time your children will be in school. Temperature checks alone could take up to one to two hours each day. In urban areas this could result in long lines on city streets effecting student safety as well as disrupting traffic, work schedules and public services. Dismissal will also cause similar delays as students will have to be dismissed in small social distancing groups. This could easily add an additional hour or more to the school day. We might be looking at a 10 to 12 hour school day.

In order to comply with social distancing mandates students will not be able to access bathrooms as needed and will require adult monitoring. Schools simply do not have enough bathrooms to follow the mandated guidance for social distancing.

School reopening plans call for students to eat at their desks. How will custodians clean up meals without interrupting instruction and without hiring additional custodians?

Serving breakfast and lunch to students in their classrooms would be a logistical impossibility and disrupt learning time. Eating in the cafeteria would not meet the social distancing mandates.

The School Nurse would be limited to how many students can be seen and school safety officers would have to violate social distancing mandates to break up student altercations.

School reopening plans are calling for students to remain in one classroom all day requiring teachers to travel from room to room. Who will supervise students during teacher transition times?

Lastly, who will substitute for teachers when they will not expose themselves to such an environment of uncertainty?

Our summary is that untold amounts of new resources based on the CDC and AAP guidelines will be needed. The school day will have to be significantly extended and will impact the public at large while addressing a shortage in staffing concerns..

Isn't it more sensible, cost effective and safe to keep schools closed until we truly have COVID-19 under control?

Joseph S. Lento is a licensed teacher of Orchestral Music and School District Administration. In 2014 he was named a National Teacher of Arts and Humanities by President Barack Obama.

WESTCHESTER RISING

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Notice of formation of Enticing Entities, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on July 22, 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, 300 Gramatan Ave, Ste G81, Mt. Vernon, NY 10552. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.09/04

Cancel Con Ed, continued from pg 1-

“Sadly, the changes we fought for after Hurricane Sandy, and in subsequent storms have not resulted in meaningful improvement and we cannot undergo this again,” State Senator Shelley Mayer.”

Colavita explained that while the Town’s work crew had cut away fallen trees and debris from roadways and power lines, Con Ed arrived four days later to fix the power. “Our residents had to remain without power because of managerial incompetence.”

In his letter to Sen. Mayer and Assembly member Paulin, Colavita calls on the state to craft laws which will “provide for penalties and remuneration to rate payers for failure to timely restore service. The key is that the funds paid or credited to customers must not be included in any future rate increase but come from anticipated profits and dividends to shareholders. The penalty cannot be permitted to be rolled into a rate increase. “

While Colavita calls for Con Ed to pay back their customers for their incompetence, Assembly member Tom Abinanti has had enough and wants to “unplug” Con Ed.

“Con Edison’s response to Isaias in Westchester has been wholly inadequate—a management fiasco. In the short run, we need Con Ed to re-arrange its management – to put in place people who will better prioritize, bring in the necessary workers and coordinate with local governments to restore power to our communities. In the long run, we need to unplug Con Edison and replace it with a new power provider for Westchester.”

“Con Ed has stripped its workforce to a mere shadow of what it used to be,” said the Westchester Assembly member. “Con Ed’s business model is to profit its shareholders at the expense of the public’s safety. Con Ed’s reliance on ‘mutual aid’ from neighboring utility companies has again been proven to be a faulty strategy which does not timely deliver enough on-the-street workers.”

County Executive George Latimer has called for a ‘Reserve Corps’ of crews to be created and on call for the next storm. “Clear to me that the single biggest reason why it takes so long for power to be restored is lack of manpower. The utilities do not have sufficient permanent workforce to put enough “boots on the ground” in the first 48 hours after a weather incident.

“Therefore I am proposing the creation of a UTILITIES RESERVE CORPS. Recruited from utility worker retirees and other sources, they would receive an annual stipend and receive annual updated training a week per year, and be called upon to provide immediate emergency deployment much the same way the National Guard or Army Reserve works. There are a thousand details to work out, but the current system does not allow utilities to staff up year-round the manpower they need for the yearly incidents that may occur. We simply need more workers available at the front end of the post-storm recovery. The next hurricane is just one more letter in the alphabet away.”

State Senator Shelley Mayer stated, “This storm has demonstrated the inadequacy of our utility companies, our telecommunications providers and frankly, the Public Service Commission, in protecting New Yorkers. With the announcement of joint State Senate and Assembly hearings, we should promptly come up with new approaches to force policy change, exact fiscal penalties, and drastically improve communication and oversight. With some modest exceptions, most of our local utility and telecommunications companies have failed Westchester’s consumers. Year after year, many utility companies seek rate increases to make investments in infrastructure and storm resiliency, but almost a week after Tropical Storm Isaias, tens of thousands of my constituents are without power, many of whom are vulnerable. And incredibly, internet and phone company providers, providing essential services during this pandemic, failed to communicate with customers at all while thousands went without phone and internet service now essential for their lives and livelihoods. Local residents, and elected leaders charged with serving them, deserve to understand what went wrong and how things will be improved to ensure this pattern does not continue year after year. Sadly, the changes we fought for after Hurricane Sandy, and in subsequent storms have not resulted in meaningful improvement and we cannot undergo this again.”

Arab-American Yonker Firefighter Files Lawsuit Against Department

Alleges Wrongful Suspension and Racial Slurs

Lt. Kime, his supervisor, immediately responded, “He should have put down sand n-word” from Federal lawsuit against YFD

By Dan Murphy

A federal lawsuit filed last week in Federal court alleges that a Yonkers Firefighter, David Daoud, was wrongfully suspended for 35 days after speaking out and filing a complaint against another YFD Officer who used a racial slur in his presence.

The lawsuit, and the story behind it are a bit confusing, because more than one members of the YFD is involved and more than one slur is involved, painting a bad portrait of the Yonkers Fire Department only one year after similar allegations were made in the department.

The Yonkers Fire Department is the defendant in the suit. Daoud has been employed with the YFD since 2013.. He is an Arab-American and lives in Eastchester.

The timeline of events, which was filed as part of the lawsuit, is as follows: On October 12, 2018, Plaintiff was assigned to work the day tour at Yonkers Fire Station 13.

While Plaintiff was having lunch with his colleagues, including two supervisors, Lts. James Callahan and Daniel Kime, one of his colleagues asked Plaintiff how he identified his ethnicity on the entrance exam. Plaintiff responded that he selected Caucasian as he is Middle Eastern and that was listed under Caucasian.

Lt. Kime, his supervisor, immediately responded, “He should have put down sand n-word” Plaintiff was shocked and appalled by his supervisor’s use of a racist slur in front of his colleagues and another supervisor. Lt. Kime went on to say words to the effect that Plaintiff should not be sensitive about his use of the slur because there are firefighters in Plaintiff’s firehouse who brag about having killed Arabs while they were in military service.

Upon information and belief, Lt. Kime subsequently went on to relay the incidents to Plaintiff’s colleagues and supervisors in a way that misrepresented events and damaged Plaintiff’s reputation by claiming that Plaintiff had instigated an argument with Lt. Kime and had been insubordinate. Plaintiff complained to Deputy Chief of Personnel Daniel Flynn about the deeply humiliating discriminatory incident. On or about January 18, 2019, Callahan, told Plaintiff that Kime was merely “ribbing” him.

In January 2019, Firefighter Union President, Barry McGoey shared a memorandum via text with Plaintiff in which Lt. Kime merely received a written reprimand as discipline for his discriminatory actions.

Upon information and belief, instead of investigating the incident promptly and taking appropriate disciplinary action, Defendant delayed the investigation and prolonged the disciplinary process in order to allow Kime to retire with no discipline as planned in March of 2020.

On August 27, 2019, Plaintiff was summoned to meet with the Inspector General of Yonkers for an alleged egregious offense on the part of Plaintiff. A complaint against Plaintiff had apparently been lodged two to three weeks before.

Plaintiff was told that he is being investigated for using the slang term “nigga” on a social media platform. The complaint against Plaintiff was investigated by the Inspector General. This is out of the ordinary since all investigations of an employee of Defendant’s takes place internally within the Fire Department.

Upon information and belief, the investigation was conducted by the Inspector General rather than internally in retaliation for Plaintiff complaining about the discrimination that he had endured. On or about September 10, 2019, Plaintiff complained that he is being retaliated against.

In a Notice of Discipline dated December 16, 2019, Plaintiff was informed that he would be suspended without pay for thirty-five days causing him and his family undue financial hardship.

City Council President Mike Khader said, “Disheartened to read about the alleged retaliatory actions of our fire department toward one of its own. We have a great city workforce, however today I renew my call for the implementation of mandatory implicit bias and sensitivity training. There is no room for racism or discrimination in the city of Yonkers, this culture must change. If we continue to ignore this problem, these issues will become systemic in every department.”

Any comments on this story please email dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com.

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Notice of Public Hearing on Appeal Before The Zoning Board of the Village of Tuckahoe, New York

Notice is Hereby Given that the Zoning Board of Appeals, of the Village of Tuckahoe, will hold a public hearing on Wednesday Evening, at 7:30 PM on September 9, 2020, at the Village Hall, 65 Main Street, Tuckahoe, New York, to consider the application of:

The Balchunas Residence, residing at 91 Lincoln Ave., Tuckahoe, NY 10707, who appeals the decision of the Building Inspector, who denied the issuance of a building permit to widen the existing driveway with a new retaining wall.

The property is located at 91 Lincoln Ave., Tuckahoe, NY 10707, and is also known as Section 47, Block 2, Lot 35.

The nature of the application is for the following relief: the condition that open parking spaces cannot be in the front yard.

All interested parties are urged to attend this public hearing at which time they will be afforded the opportunity to express their views and or submit written communications to the Village Clerk or The Zoning Board of Appeals, 65 Main Street, Tuckahoe, NY 10707

Date 08/17/2020
Adam Balchunas, Applicant

Notice of Public Hearing on Appeal Before The Zoning Board of The Village of Tuckahoe, New York

Notice is Hereby Given that the Zoning Board of Appeals, of the Village of Tuckahoe, will hold a public hearing on Wednesday Evening, at 7:30 PM on September 9, 2020, at the Village Hall, 65 Main Street, Tuckahoe, New York, to consider the application of:

Parkview on Columbus LLC, residing at 153 Alta Vista Drive, Yonkers NY 10710, who appeals the decision of the Building Inspector, who denied the issuance of a building permit to:
Section: 4-3-6 Floor Area Ratio
Section: 4-3.4.6 Buffer
Section: 5-1.2 Off Street Parking

The property is located at: 356 Columbus Ave., Tuckahoe, NY 10707, and is also known as Section 46, Block 4, Lot 73.

The nature of the application is for the following relief: To create living space in northside basement and provide off street parking with landscaped buffer.

All interested parties are urged to attend this public hearing at which time they will be afforded the opportunity to express their views and or submit written communications to the Village Clerk or The Zoning Board of Appeals, 65 Main Street, Tuckahoe, NY 10707
Date: 08/11/2020

Notice of formation of R. BURGESS CONTRACTING, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 07/16/2020. 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 Rohan Burgess, 12 South 15th Avenue, Apt. 4, Mount Vernon, NY 10550. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Legal Notices

Notice of formation of Bess Boys Apparel, LLC filed with the SSNY on 08/04/2020. 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, 448 South 7th Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10550. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of Formation of FINE EVENTS, LLC. Arts of Org. Filed with SSNY on 6/29/2020. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of the process to the LLC: 4 Martine Avenue, Suite 919, White Plains, New York. 10606. Purpose: Any lawful act or activity.

Formation of 1935 Central Park, LLC filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 7/9/2020. Office loc.: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to 1354 Seneca Ave., Bronx, NY 10474. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

Notice of Formation of BROAD HOWARD LLC Art. Of Org. filed with the SSNY on 6/22/2020. 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, C/O CHUCK LESNICK, 15 Albemarle Place, Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of Formation of LESNICK OZ FUND LLC Art. Of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/27/2019. 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, 15 Albemarle Place, Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Plantation Wedding, continued from pg 1-

wedding.

And in 2019, an effort was underway to have their wedding photos removed from Pinterest. Comments like, "for me having a wedding at a plantation is like having a wedding at a concentration camp just bad taste, i dont even understand the desire to have it there."

After the outcry, Online wedding services including The Knot removed the plantation from their photos and possible wedding locations.

Color of Change, a civil rights group, wrote --"The wedding industry makes hundreds of millions of dollars in profit by promoting plantations as romantic places to marry, and in doing so, routinely denies the violent conditions Black people faced under chattel slavery," wrote Arisha Hatch, Color of Change Vice President. "Plantations are physical reminders of one of the most horrific human rights abuses the world has ever seen, which, over the course of the Atlantic Slave Trade, enslaved 10.7 million Black people in the Americas."

Last month, the couple posted the following statement - We're ashamed that in the past we've allowed ourselves to be uninformed about how deeply rooted systematic racism is We've been teaching our kids differently than the way our parents taught us. "We want to educate ourselves about other people's experiences and talk to our kids about everything, all of it...especially our own complicity." The couple has three children together.

Reynolds added in an interview, "It's something we'll always be deeply and unreservedly sorry for," Reynolds told Fast Company about the wedding. "It's impossible to reconcile. "Years ago we got married again at home—but shame works in weird ways,"

The couple has donated \$1.2 million to both the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights. They live in Pound Ridge, with their three childrenxx, on a 1.8 acre garden estate. Prior to that, they lived in Reynolds home in Bedford, so the Westchester lifestyle suits them.

Like all Hollywood stars, they prefer their privacy, which they get on the quiet back roads of Pound Ridge and Bedford. And when they travel into town for groceries or Ice Cream for the kids, they remain undercover and most of the towns residents respects their privacy.

One favorite spot is The Inn at Pound Ridge, where chef Jean-Georges' has created a restaurant -attraction that includes the Reynolds-Lively family and their neighbor, Ralph Lauren,

Lively ran a website called Preserve, which sold handmade and historic items, some of which came from Bedford, until 2014.

Eric Schoen, continued from pg 3-

Our mom would have probably called our pediatrician, Dr. Vincent Spinelli for advice on whether a child should be sent to school in this pandemic we face if she had any question about sending us to school. And parents, your children's doctor is an important part of the equation in the decision you will soon have to make.

Thoughts of my grandparents came to mind. They lived through the Great Depression. Grandma's brother was an orthopedist across from St. Joseph's Hospital for years. Dr. Wolf. I am named after him, Eric Wolf Schoen. You took your shoes off when you entered Grandma's house. You could eat off the floor. You could actually eat off the carpeting.

Would my grandparents, grandmas hair perfectly coiffed, strong believers in education let my mom teach with what's going on. She was their only daughter. As grandpa who came through Ellis Island would say to mom, to me or my sister, 'you dasent (don't) do that. They would never let her enter a public or private school building. And my mother would never let her daughter, a gifted educator for over 35 years serving as Assistant Head of School for one of the most prestigious private schools on the Upper East Side of Manhattan enter a school building today.

If you are a teacher with comorbidities or on in years thinks seriously about whether you should enter a school building in September even if the student population will be less than 50%.

My thoughts have nothing to do with the Competence of the Superintendent, Principals, Teachers and support staff who work in our great district and have worked countless hours to come up with a plan. My thoughts have to do with the unknown and sadly what's to come. Be safe! And pray!

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 Floss, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 4/29/2020. 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, 520 Pelhamdale Avenue, Pelham, NY 10803. Purpose: Any lawful purpose

Back to school, continued from pg 1-

request by the YFT, and as a result, accusations of misconduct have come forward that many Yonkers teachers were not teaching their students in on-line classes in the spring. These accusations have come directly from parents on Social Media, but also from sources within the YPS administration and from educators who were disappointed in the unprofessional attitude of their colleagues.

The letter and statement from the YFT, CSEA and YCA reads in part, "Local unions representing educators and school staff in Yonkers Public Schools today demanded the district coordinate with staff on responsible safety protocols before schools reopen. To date, district officials have engaged in virtually no coordination with labor leaders on its reopening plan."

YFT President Samantha Rosado-Ciriello said, "Yonkers Public Schools officials refused to share their plan with any of the three unions representing district employees until after it was submitted to the State and posted on their website. That is completely unacceptable. Our members and the students we serve deserve better than this. We have less than four weeks to work things out and then we will have to consider what our options are."

Superintendent Quezada, in his letter, provided evidence that all of the unions were involved in the reopening plan and that Rosdao Ciriello's claim was "inaccurate." "From mid-June through July there were 9 meetings with our union officials, 3 with the YFT, 4 with the CSEA and 2 with the YCA. Clearly, there was no refusal to share information. Given its scope, comprehensiveness and only 3 weeks from the time school districts received the NYSED and Department of Health guidelines and assurances to develop plans, The Plan was not finalized until the July 31 deadline. Therefore, it was not feasible to provide it beforehand," writes Quezada, who reminds the unions that a planning committee made up of six stakeholders was created in May, that included all three unions and that fact is included in the final Re-opening plan submitted to the State Department of Education, on pg. 10.

"On May 12, 2020, Dr. Edwin Quezada, Superintendent of Schools, announced the creation of six stakeholder planning committees to collaboratively research, discuss, and construct the best approach to address concerns and implement strategies to reopen schools. The six committees [Academic, Operations, Emotional Support, Health and Safety, Special Populations and Communication] completed their research and work between May 18 and June 9, 2020." Each committee included representation from every key stakeholder group. This highly inclusive approach included participants selected by the official organization/union representing those stakeholders: 7 Trustees, 18 Central Office administrators, 18 School/YCA administrators, 36 Teachers/YFT, 18 CSEA, 18 Parents/Yonkers Council of PTAs and 40 students. These committees met a total of 38.5 hours over 26 days. The feedback gathered was disseminated to each committee member. The Plan was developed with this feedback."

Quezada added in his letter that the plan came from stakeholders "equally across all stakeholder groups. The issues and concerns of parents and families, or those of unrepresented employees, are just as valid and compelling as the concerns of staff represented by unions. It is not in the formulation of a reopening plan, but in its implementation, given its potential effect on terms and conditions of employment, that labor unions status must be recognized through impact bargaining. That status has and will continue to be duly recognized. Multiple meetings with our unions have already been scheduled," wrote Quezada.

The YFT, CSEA, and YCA submitted a four phase approach to reopening: Keep student learning online and bring back staff in September, have teachers meet with families and students before opening, welcome back students in October, and continue to reassess.

Dr. Quezada responded to each of the four phases, stating that the unions, "four-phase approach to reopening Yonkers' school buildings, offers some insightful recommendations and some insurmountable challenges." Phase I-Bring Back Staff in September—"The District is in total agreement that all staff should be in their assigned school building on September 1. The Superintendent's Conference Days are built into the school calendar for this purpose. As outlined in The Plan's Hybrid and Online Remote Instruction models, staff in school buildings is essential. It ensures efficient and effective student instruction across content area subjects and coursework and the delivery of student services," writes Quezada.

It is important to note this part of Quezada's letter, which was underscored by other stakeholders to Yonkers Rising. "The teachers will be coming back to school in September, with or without students," said one educator. "While a great many of Yonkers teachers did their job online from home, others took advantage and either didn't work with the students in a productive way online or didn't choose to learn or educate themselves about online learning. Some did not show up for work online and because of that, they should have to come back to school on September 8 and work online from in school."

Phase 2-Proposal: Teachers and students and family meet individually to discuss the school year. "To "individually" meet students and families may be desirable during these challenging times. Unfortunately, it is impractical and inequitable for our families without technology and/or connectivity or the resources to physically come to a school. As noted in The Plan, this outreach will be accomplished daily by school personnel. Hybrid Instruction, which is how we plan to begin on September 8, has Flex Day Wednesday built into the students and teachers weekly schedules to accommodate this work," writes Quezada.

Quezada's reasoning that teachers cannot meet with 27,000 students and one of their parents, in two weeks or two months, underscores the rationale for returning students to school in September. "I understand that some Yonkers teachers are hesitant to come back, but many parents in Yonkers need the help. Their children aren't learning, and the family is stressed out. Many have not participated at all in online learning. The parents are too busy working and trying to keep a roof over their heads," said one Yonkers teacher.

Phase 3-Proposal: Welcome back students to school in October. "According to the unions, they are suggesting phasing in in-person instruction by providing only Online Remote Instruction in September and Hybrid Instruction beginning in October. This approach would exacerbate the existing detrimental impact on our students resulting from the loss of three months without in-person instruction coupled with the adverse impact on their social-emotional growth and development."

Quezada also explained that the YPS must get approval by the NYS Education Department, whether they would approve phasing in in-person instruction as suggested by the unions. Currently 180 instructional days are required for students, and online learning at home for September could impact the number of holidays and the Foundation Aid received by the State. "Possible furloughing of dedicated hardworking school-based CSEA employees because children are not in school. This may include nurses, school safety officers, clericals, aides, bus monitors, food service workers, among others. Many of these employees reside in the City of Yonkers," writes Quezada.

While the YFT letter points to a poll in which 40% of parents don't want their students to go back to school, the majority of parents and students in the Yonkers Public Schools want to go back and have accepted Quezada and Lopez's plan. And a Supermajority of Taxpayers in Yonkers want teachers to go back to school with students in September. You can also include several Police officers and other city personnel that we have spoke to, who are considered "essential workers" and have been working on the front line for more than six months.

They also want the teachers to come back. "It's time for them to come back. Our COVID numbers are way down. We've been out in the streets for six months, and the kids need to be in school," said one Yonkers cop.

The one way in which the YFT could be successful is if Governor Andrew Cuomo decides to implement a month of online learning for every school in New York State. Some school districts, and teachers' unions, here in Westchester, (New Rochelle for one), and in New York City, have suggested the same. And the powerful NY State Teachers United Teachers, NYSUT, certainly has the Governor's ear.

And for any family who wants to keep their children home this fall for complete online learning, all school districts will provide that option.

Is 42, Years Enough, continued from pg 1-

tencing to explain that his 25-years to life sentence was the maximum he could give, making it clear to future parole boards that the vicious murderers belong behind bars for life. Samuel Ayala and Willie Profit received two concurrent 25-to-life sentences; James Walls, who was reportedly outside in the getaway vehicle at the time, received one.

All three became eligible for parole in 2002. Profit died — still in prison — in 2016. Walls was paroled earlier this year, and his release was supported by the families, believing more than four decades behind bars was sufficient time served for his role in the crimes.

But for the children of Bonnie Minter, Ayala should serve his entire life in prison. One of the children of Bonnie Minter, Jason Minter, has written about his tragedy in the past and is now standing up to rally support to get Governor Andrew Cuomo to overturn the recent decision of the NY Parole Board in granting a release to Ayala, who has served 42 years in prison. He is set to be released in September.

"It was mid-March 2020. COVID 19 panic was sweeping the country. There was talk of releasing those at high risk from prison early. Meetings became remote-access only. My sister, Maggie, and I grew anxious regarding our regular 18-month task of keeping the man who brutalized us as young children, and raped and murdered our mother and her friend Sheila Watson, locked up until the end of his life.

"In the past, we had been able to meet with a parole board member to give an emotional, and sometimes harrowing statement, as victims. But now, we were told by New York State that our impact statements were to be made over the phone only. We reasoned that with our statements and overwhelming public support, that Samuel Ayala, given the sheer viciousness and barbarity of his crime, would never be considered for release. Ayala was the ring leader in the beating, rape, and murder of our mother and her friend, which we and Sheila's two children witnessed in a brutal home invasion in 1977 as three and six-year-olds.

"We knew Ayala lied to the parole board during his interviews and figured he would be disqualified for release. He said he was frightened for his own life on the day of the crimes because his companions were pressuring him. Still, we knew from our personal experience on that day as well as testimony from others, that He was the mastermind of the crime.

"We attended the many, many years of repeated parole board hearings. We know the board was aware that Ayala joked and laughed at his prowess during the rapes. They also knew that we very vividly remember his cackling laughter as he raced down the stairs and through the house that day after personally firing the multiple bullets that killed both my mom and her friend as they crawled away. Children saw this. Children heard this. Children do not forget these kinds of details.

"Six years ago, when the board asked Ayala if he hadn't run out of bullets, would he have killed the four young children present so that there were indeed no witnesses, he did not answer. His silence said it all.

"We pleaded with the board members, letting them know how we would live in fear if Ayala were ever released—he is a remorseless sociopath. It occurred to us that our statements might have less power without being able to meet face to face. Yet, we continued to hope for the best. We can only speculate that COVID and the lack of in-person accessibility might have impacted our ability to resonate with the board as it had in previous years.

"We are unable to get the transcripts of Ayala's board meeting for many months now, as the bureaucracy is slow, so we can only speculate the reasons for the board's release. We're not sure where he will go. It is possible Connecticut or Westchester, though he has family in Texas. If Ayala was fair game to be released despite everything that we have mentioned above, who wouldn't be considered for parole?"

State Senate candidate Rob Astorino called on the NYS Parole Board to resign for their Parole and upcoming release of Ayala. "Westchester hasn't forgotten Bonnie Minter and Sheila Watson, or their children," Mr. Astorino said, "These loving families were visited by true evil that day, suffering the worst imaginable nightmare. But New York State Parole Board members clearly have forgotten the innocent victims here, and for that they should resign in disgrace. Samuel Ayala is a stone-cold killer and rapist, and this decision is as alarming as it is nauseating. Mr. Ayala will also have his voting rights restored under New York's new "progressive" criminal justice policies, the former county executive noted.

"Under one-party rule, New York has become a state that takes the side of criminals over the rights of victims and law-abiding citizens and that cannot continue," Mr. Astorino said. "Cashless bail and other so-called criminal justice reforms are erasing years of public safety progress right before our eyes. Parole decisions like this one are an abomination. Westchester weeps for Sheila Watson, Bonnie Minter, and their surviving family members today. We will never forget what they suffered at Mr. Ayala's hand."

In 2007, Jason Minter wrote about the murder of his mom for Westchester Magazine. In that story he explains the emotional and painful results of his mother's murder. Clearly, 13 years later, Jason Minter has not forgiven Samuel Ayala.

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"I read your article regarding the above with interest as Thomas A. Brogan was my grandfather. I do remember hearing that Pop had, briefly, owned the building which had housed the brewery and sold it soon after. As to the implication that he'd been somehow involved in anything nefarious and/or alcoholic does seem far fetched as he was a lifelong teetotaler and held that belief rather strongly. He did know a good real estate opportunity however. Did your investigation include the ownership of Mr. Schultz's widow's residence on White Plains Rd? I believe that property is now part of Concordia College," writes the relative of Brogan.

Former Yonkers City Judge Richard Sweeney wrote about Dutch for Yonkers Rising a few years ago. "On Sept. 29, 1930, city workers discovered a series of hoses throughout the sewer system that carried beer from the Yonkers Brewery. Schultz was killed in 1935 by Murder, Inc., because they were afraid that Schultz was going to have prosecutor Thomas Dewey killed. Thomas Brogan purchased the Yonkers Brewery in 1936. In 1938, the brewery declared bankruptcy. Frances Flegenheimer, Schultz widow, sued Brogan to recover the value of cash loans, stock and a mortgage made to the prior owners of the Yonkers Brewery."

That lawsuit was eventually thrown out of Westchester court because Frances was attempting to secure monies made through an illegal transaction. But that lawsuit, which was covered extensively in the papers, deserves a story of its own.

Another twist to the Dutch Schultz story comes from former FBI Director James Comey, who grew up in Yonkers and whose family members served in the Yonkers Police Department. Comey, in an interview last year with Irish Times, said that his family told a story about how his grandfather William Comey rose to become Yonkers police commissioner and how he battled with bootleggers, who were funneling contraband beer in hoses between Yonkers and the Bronx.

"Even though my grandfather liked beer, he ordered his men to cut the hoses with axes and let the beer run into the sewers" — a move that prompted death threats and an armed guard on the family home. The moral of the story is, the rule of law and integrity matter more than friendship, your love of beer or anything else. My grandfather is as an early hero of mine because of a commitment to higher values," said Comey, whose story is disputed by some of our friends in the YPD, who claim that Comey's grandfather didn't rise to Chief until the 1940's, long after the beer stopped flowing underground.

Anyone with information about Dutch, or Brogan, or the Comeys of the Yonkers Police Department, may contact me at dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com, so that we can tell the entire story.

And if you want to raise a glass and have a beer in Dutch's name this summer in Yonkers, what better place to do so than at Yonkers Brewing Co., located in downtown Yonkers, a block or two away from where the Dutchman's trucks moved the bootlegged beer.

Have a Beer This Summer on Dutch!



Dutch Schultz

By Dan Murphy

This time every summer, we like to tell the tale of mobster Dutch Schultz and his connection to Westchester, and Yonkers. Schultz, who was known as “the beer baron” of New York City during the days of prohibition in the 1920s and 30s, worked his way into Yonkers and began secretly brewing real beer, not near beer, during the span when alcohol was illegal.

Schultz was able to purchase the Yonkers Brewery, which at the time was making non-alcoholic beer, also known as ‘neer beer’ in the downtown location of Chicken Island, located next to City Hall. How Schultz was able to ‘buy’ the Yonkers brewery was told in the book, “Dutch Schultz” by Ted Addy.

“Dutch Schultz and the two Weinbergs, Bo and George, drove to Yonkers. Joe the brewer had agreed to an appointment, knowing full well that Schultz was in the beer business, and realized that without the trade of beer runners, his plant would not make a great deal of profit.”

“I don’t want to buy half barrels, I want the whole brewery,” Schultz said pleasantly. “What are you offering,” asked Joe. “We’ll be generous, \$32,000 for the works,” said Dutch.

“What? Said Joe in disbelief. ” You have no idea what this brewery is worth.” Upping the offer, Dutch said, “I’ll buy the whole works for \$75,000.

‘Editor’s Note: Joe the brewer should have taken the \$75k and got out of the business. Instead he said “Go buy yourself a popcorn wagon. I’ll be broke if I sell at these prices,”

“We’ll give you 24 hours to think it over,” said Dutch, who left and instructed his attorney, Dixie Davis (who is rumored to be the author of this book under the pseudonym Ted Addy) to set up a dummy corporation, leaving Schultz entirely out of the matter. Controlling interest was placed in Davis’ name.

Two men took Joe the brewer to the Dutchman’s office in the Bronx. At that meeting, Schultz and his thugs beat up Joe until he agreed to sell the brewery, but for much less than the \$75,000 he was offered a few days ago. “My stock is in the safe at the plant.” Joe called his brother at the plant and told him to sign the shares away.

“What about the money, the 32,000,” asked Joe. “There was some expense bringin’ you here pal. You just picked up the tab. Here’s your change.” Schultz tossed Joe a half dollar,” end of book excerpt. So the Yonkers Brewery, according to the book, was stolen by Dutch Shultz for 50 cents.

The more interesting parts of the story, come when Schultz was somehow able to run tubes through the water and sewer lines in Yonkers, so that his beer trucks could pick up the beer at locations away from the brewery and away from the eyes of the public and law enforcement. How Schultz was able to get the tubes installed had to involve someone on the inside of Yonkers government, either from City Hall, or the Police Department, or both. The biggest figure in Yonkers politics for more than 50 years was Tom Brogan, who served as the Yonkers Democratic Chairman, and served as a “Boss Tweed” figure in the City, controlling every job and anyone who wanted to run for office. In last year’s story, we put two and two together, and speculated that Brogan had to approve any deal to run beer through the pipes of Yonkers. But our speculation was met with a denial by a member of the Brogan family who reads Yonkers Rising.

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