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Friday February 19, 2021

## FBI Child Porn Sextortion Investigation in Port Chester

Make Sure Your Kids Didn't Interact with Jose Zafra



Jose Zafra, photo from FBI

By Dan Murphy

The FBI Westchester County Safe Streets Task Force and Port Chester Police Department are asking for help in identifying possible victims in a sextortion investigation involving a man from Port Chester, New York. Investigators arrested Jose Zafra on January 9, 2021, and charged him with production of child sexual abuse material (CSAM), or what is commonly known as child pornography.

Based on the criminal complaint filed in the Southern District of New York, investigators allege Zafra asked for and received sexually explicit photos and videos from a 9-year-old girl in the Panama City, Florida, area. They also allege Zafra extorted his victims by using flattery, lies and other methods to get them to produce CSAM. Other victims have been identified across the United States to include Columbus, Georgia, and Austin, Texas. Agents believe there may be many other possible victims.

Zafra used the social media application Snapchat to communicate with most of his victims. His usernames include, but are not limited to, the following: Definitely jose, Bigdickdaddy Jose.zafra, Openshit,

If anyone has information about Jose Zafra, or believe they may have been a victim or know a victim, they are asked to call the FBI at 1-800-CALL-FBI (225-5324), or submit a tip online at <https://www.fbi.gov/>

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## How Derickson Lawrence Can Save Mount Vernon Taxpayers, City Employees Deserve Better



Derickson Lawrence

By Dan Murphy

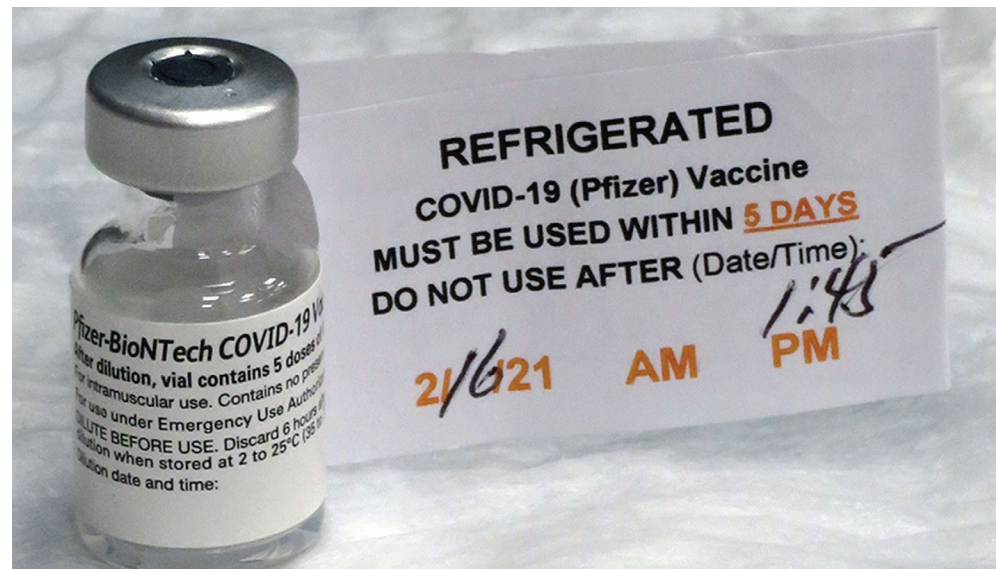
As a former resident of the great City of Mount Vernon, I am saddened to see the continued financial difficulties facing the taxpayers and City employees. For more than a decade, different Mayors and Comptrollers have blamed each other.

Now, one year after being elected, Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard is unable to determine the true financial health of the City she leads because of an inability by the current Comptroller, Deborah Reynolds, to share simple financial data like how much cash the City has on hand and what is the fund balance or surplus?

I trust Mayor Patterson-Howard, and believe that she is an honest public servant. But the problems of Mt. Vernon have become more serious over time. Mt. Vernon has lost its ability to borrow money, through bonding because Bond Rating services like Moody's have pulled their ratings on Mt. Vernon, i

*continued on pg 6-*

## How I Got Both COVID Shots by Valentine's Day



By Robert Kalfus, and photo (c) Robert Kalfus

I received a message from Montefiore Medical Center on Monday, January 18th, containing a link to register for a Covid-19 vaccination, offering a selection of dates and times. I had not been anxiously looking for a Covid vaccination, and so was at first suspicious that this link was valid to verify.

Clicking onto the link, I was offered a choice of dates and appointment times as early as two days later! "Too easy," I thought, but selected an appointment for my first shot, only three days later, at their vaccination center at Eastchester Road in The Bronx. I did not ask nor was told why I was offered a Covid-19 vaccination. I believe that my age, 68, and previous comorbidities, including a pulmonary embolism (blood clot which embedded in my lung), and having survived three previous cancers, caused me to appear on their higher risk lists.

I arrived at the large Montefiore medical building which has easy access and free parking. My ID was first checked in the building lobby entrance, and then again entering the second floor, where a line of about 20 people also waited, slowly moving down the hall to be screened by a Registered Nurse for any possible allergies or previous adverse reactions to vaccinations.

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## Westchester Speaks Out on Nursing Home Scandal

*"Crucial information should never be withheld from entities that are empowered to pursue oversight...Politics should not be part of this tragic pandemic and our responses to it must be led by policy, not politics. As always, we will be discussing next steps as a conference."*

**State Senate Majority Leader**

**Andrea Stewart-Cousins**

*"We should not have a one or two-party state. Andrew should resign."*

**SAM-NY Chair Michael Volpe**

*"You (Cuomo) did not tell the \*entire\* Senate or Assembly that there was a DOJ investigation, as the reason why you didn't share the nursing home numbers. I found out about a DOJ investigation with the rest of NY'ers in the @nypost story,"*

**State Senator Alessandra Biaggi**

*"The opportunity should exist for the majority of the people to say we want something different,"*

**Former Governor George Pataki**

By Dan Murphy

The revelations last week that New York State did not release the number of Nursing Home patient deaths because they "froze" and were worried about a Federal investigation, according to Governor Andrew Cuomo's top aide Melissa De Rosa, has resulted in a wait and see attitude from some democrats, with others calling for the Governor to be investigated, impeached, forced to resign, or at the least, have his COVID powers taken away.

De Rosa, who has been at Cuomo's side for more than a decade as his top advisor, said, "And basically, we froze, because then we were in a position where we weren't sure if what we were going to give to the Department of Justice or what we give to you guys, what we start saying was going to be used against us while we weren't sure if there was going to be an investigation."

Cuomo and his office went silent for three days until Feb. 15, when Cuomo said, "In retrospect, should we have given more priority to fulfilling information requests? In my opinion, yes, and I think that's what cre-

*continued on pg 7-*

## Stress and Your Heart Health During COVID



Dr. Alon Gitig

By Dan Murphy

February is American Heart Month and cardiologists from the Mount Sinai Health System are sharing tips on heart disease prevention to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke during COVID-19.

According to the American Heart Association, nearly half of adults in the United States—more than 121 million people—have some type of cardiovascular disease, yet it is preventable 80 percent of the time.

This week, Alon Gitig, MD, Director of Cardiology at Mount Sinai Doctors-Scarsdale and Mount Sinai Doctors-Yonkers, focuses on stress in our lives, and the impact it has on our heart health.

“One of the common sayings in popular culture is ‘you are going to give me a heart attack.’ Stress can impact our heart and our health, and during COVID, our stress has reached unprecedented levels, and can materialize in the psychological symptoms of depression, anxiety, or in anger and hostility. All of these will increase the risk of cardiovascular disease,” said Dr. Gitig.

“Studies have found that depression can increase the risk of a heart attack by two fold, while anxiety or an increase in anger and hostility can increase the risk of a heart attack six fold. Studies by the Mayo clinic have found that mental stress is the most powerful risk factor in heart disease; even greater than cigarette smoking.”

“In stressful situations, our bodies shift to fight the responses and over time a lot of things can happen that pose a danger to our heart health, including increasing heart rate while resting and higher blood pressure. During extremely stressful situations, blood pressure rates can go through the roof.”

“We also know that stress increases inflammation in our body and affects our immune system. Increases in weight gain and changes in our cholesterol lead to plaque formation in our arteries, lead to atherosclerosis.”

*We asked Dr. Gitig, what happens to us when our stress levels increase?*

“We know that impaired sleep is common and people can’t stop their minds from racing at night. Insomnia and the quality of our sleep is a powerful risk factor for heart disease over time.

“Especially during COVID, there is a lack of social and interpersonal connectiveness. If you don’t have that in your life there is a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. Over the past year, people have tended to retreat in their lives, and we all need to make a greater effort to connect with one another, even if its on Zoom.”

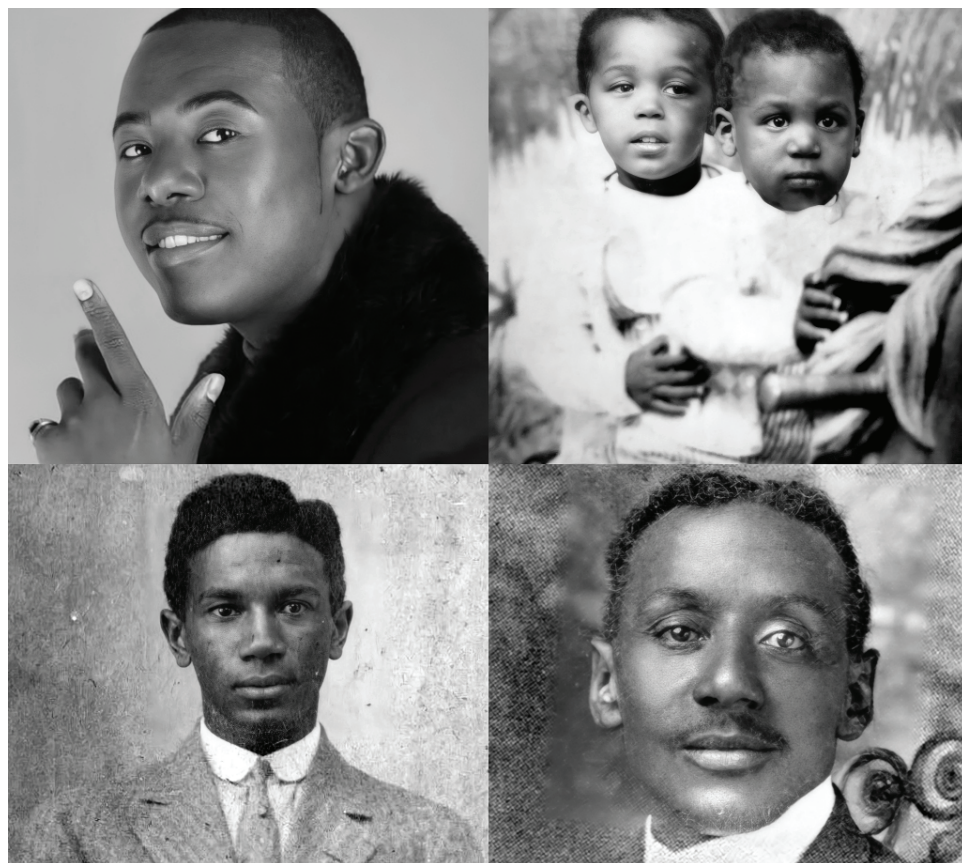
*What Can We Do About Reducing Our Stress?*

“While there is no Home Run theory or study, we do know about some very simple things you can do in your everyday life that can help your heart health.

**I-Simple Breathing techniques**, which have shown to help with feelings of stress can lower blood pressure by double digits. Breathe through your abdomen instead of with your chest. Use your belly to expand and take a deep breath, 5-6 times per minute. Breathe in through your nose, hold your breath, and then exhale through your mouth. If you can do this for 10-15 minutes per day, it will reduce your nervous activation and its very easy to

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## 2021 Black History Month Series: Tracing My Family Back Over 400 Years



*Clockwise: Dennis Richmond Jr, Michael Richmond & Dennis Richmond, Sr., John Sherman Merritt, and Joseph S. Glover.*

By: Dennis Richmond, Jr. (@NewYorkStakz)

After close to thirteen years of researching my family history, I have made remarkable discoveries. I know for a fact that on my father’s side of the family, my ancestors have been in New York and Connecticut for well over 400 years. I’m proud to say that I can place my ancestors in every period in American history. I’m excited to share some of what I learned.

My name is Dennis Richmond, Jr., and I was born in Yonkers, New York. My parents are both baby boomers. My grandmother, Joyce Watkins, was a Depression Era baby who came of age during the Eisenhower administration. She was a teenager when the movie Singin’ in The Rain was released. My great grandmother, Adele Matilda Merritt, was a child of the Progressive Era. She married the love of her life, Thomas Sinclair Watkins, Sr. in New Rochelle, NY, in 1934.

The year 2021 is significant in my family because it marks the 100th anniversary of my 2nd great grandfather, John Sherman Merritt’s death. Grandpa John worked four jobs and died of exhaustion at just 31-years-old in 1921. He’s buried in Putnam Cemetery in Greenwich.

The year 2021 is significant because it also marks the 200th anniversary of my 4th great grandfather, Abraham Merritt’s birth. He was born c.1821 and baptized at Second Congregational Church in Greenwich in 1831. Grandpa Abraham became a prominent landowner in the town. He owned 40 acres of land in 1880 when Greenwich had a population of fewer than 8,000 people.

Grandpa Abraham’s wife, my 3rd great grandmother, Huldah Peck Merritt (1833-1914), is buried in the African American Cemetery on North Street in Rye, NY. Grandpa Edward is buried there too. My family tree goes from my great grandmother Adele (1913-1977) to her father John (1889-1921), his father Edward (1871-1901), his father Abraham (1821-1880), his father Charles (1791-c.1860), and his mother Margaret “Peg” (c.1770-c.1829).

Grandma Margaret, born c.1770, is my 6th great grandmother. Margaret was born in Colonial Connecticut, and DNA links me to the Lyon family. It blows my mind to know that I can name colonial ancestors. Through my ancestor Margaret “Peg,” it’s likely that I’m descended from Thomas Lyon (c.1621-1690), one of the earliest settlers of Fairfield County, Connecticut.

Margaret “Peg” was a toddler during the American Revolution. She was around three years old during the Boston Tea Party and six years old when the Declaration of Independence was signed. When America received her freedom in 1776, Margaret and thousands of other Africans and Indigenous

People were still enslaved. On July 7th, 1790, Margaret was sold from Daniel Lyon, her “owner,” to Nathan Merritt, Jr. She was sold, “in consideration of the sum of fifty pounds New York money.”

When Margaret was sold, she was around 19 or 20-years-old, and George Washington was president of the United States. As a young enslaved Black woman to Nathan, Grandma Margaret gave birth to two sons, Grandpa Charles and Uncle Jack. Uncle Jack was born on Valentine’s Day in 1793. Grandpa Charles took the surname Merritt, and DNA links me to the Merritt family. I have bi-racial and tri-racial ancestors.

Sometime around c.1794, Margaret was sold from Nathan Merritt back to the Lyon family. Her new “owner” was Benjamin Woolsey Lyon. Margaret “Peg” had at least three slave owners by the time she was around twenty-four years old. Benjamin freed Grandma Margaret on April 12th, 1800. She spent the rest of her years with a former slave named Anthony “Tone” and the rest of her family.

History isn’t some magical thing that happened years ago. We carry history with us every day, and I’m happy to know some of mine.

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## What's Going on With the Port Chester School Board? Award Winning Program in Jeopardy

Port Chester parents, educators, and school board members, along with Port Chester Superintendent of Schools Dr. Edward Kliszus, are dumbfounded by a sudden, recent 3-2 School Board decision that would eliminate a signature Port Chester enrichment program that has been unanimously approved in the district for the past 10 years.

The global character education program, One World — founded in Port Chester and now operating in more than 200 schools in 10 countries — is a free and voluntary program popular with Port Chester students, educators, and parents alike. Just last month, the New York State School Boards Association awarded One World and Port Chester schools its 'Champions of Change' award for helping make Port Chester the first school district in America to achieve "carbon neutrality" through the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Climate Neutral Now program.

"Port Chester students have benefitted for more than a decade from One World's award-winning programming, and one hopes that the Board will consider supporting the program for the duration of this school year," Dr. Kliszus said. "It is a critical time - our high school students are currently building their college resumes and One World risks losing its grant funding for future years should the district no longer participate. One World has brought this district international distinction and pride and has been fully supported by the educational community. This is a program that can benefit students in any district. Like clubs, a diverse selection of courses, athletics, and the arts, this program opens a door, an opportunity, for a young person to find and engage their passions in a unique manner."

"The global character education that One World provides has given Port Chester students a clear leg up in life, and losing the program here would represent a terrific loss for local kids" said One World founder and Port Chester resident Joe Carvin. "Through One World, students have had the opportunity to interact with peers from around the globe, as well as with 21st Century thought leaders from Harvard University and elsewhere. There is only upside to One World's continued existence within the Port Chester-Rye Union Free School District, and I remain hopeful that the Board will again recognize that in its vote on Wednesday."

A letter has been issued to School Board Members from One World Board Chairman, former Rye Mayor Douglas French, and former Westchester County Legislator and One World Board Member David Gelfarb, laying out the facts of One World's case. The letter states, "It is abundantly clear that the reasons for the denial are a mere pretext to disguise that the decision was made in an effort to retaliate against Mr. Joseph Carvin, the founder and CEO of One World for having run for school board in 2020 against two of the boards dissenting votes, Mr. Thomas Corbia and Ms. Anne Capeci, and Mr. Carvin's public repudiation of Mr. Corbia's alleged controversial posts on Facebook in recent month."

"It is unconstitutional to to treat the One World organization adversely and to retaliate against it as a result of Mr. Carvin's constitutionally protected rights to run for office or to make public criticisms."

The letter also points out that BOE Trustees Corbia and Capeci have both voted in favor of using the One World Program on several occasions over the years.

More on this story in the weeks to come.

Send us your letters, opinions, announcements, story ideas and photos to [dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com](mailto:dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com)

## Nice Work if You Can Get It! \$48,000-\$75,000 Starting Pay



By Eric Schoen

There are job openings in Yonkers and Westchester. Let's start with the Yonkers jobs. The 2 in Yonkers are part time and pay \$48,000 a year and are for 4 years guaranteed. Maximum 12 years. Fully paid health insurance. With 12 years you get a pension and health insurance benefits for the rest of your life.

A car comes with the job filled with city paid for gas. You are supposed to use the car for city business, but no one really stops you from piling the family in the car and heading up to Ridge Hill in Yonkers to do shopping. Hey, at least you are supporting the local economy!

Depending on how many years you have on the job, seniority and the support of your colleagues, you can be selected for a leadership position. That comes with additional monetary support. Comes in handy during the holidays!

You control a budget of over a billion dollars. In actuality \$1.2 billion dollars spread out between the city and its' school system. Plenty of jobs are under your control. They are supposed to be open to everyone in Yonkers but nothing stops you from recommending someone for one of the jobs. Many people don't even live in Yonkers and get the jobs.

Yes, many of the jobs require one to take an examination and score high enough among fellow job seekers for appointment. But who knows how long it will take for an examination to be called for. Make up a new title and the examination is not called until it is scheduled by the State of New York. Chances are the questions on the exam will have little or nothing to do with the job you will actually be doing. So if you are a good test taker, you can score high and move up the ladder.

The jobs that don't require an examination, well they fall into a slippery slope. Some have specific jobs requirements that you must have. Many others have 'suggested' job requirements you should have for the job. And many of the jobs serve at the pleasure of the man in charge of the whole entity. Perish the thought that you would recommend someone for one of these jobs but it is not unheard of. Could even be a friend or relative. Chances are that person has a better shot at getting the job than the average 'joe schmo' on the street who might have far better qualifications.

Now there are certain requirements for the two job openings. Some are drawbacks where you could risk your life doing them. You must live in the particular district where the job is located. You are required this year to get only 150 signatures of people who live in the district nominating you for the job. They must be in the same political party as you. But getting those signatures this year might be

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# YONKERS TIMES

News in Yonkers and around Westchester

## Village & Town Officials Tell Local Summit, Despite Pandemic, Many Initiatives Underway

By Janet Bear

Following the State and County Legislators Address in January, our local officials, Mayors Walsh (Village of Larchmont) and Murphy (Village of Mamaroneck), and Supervisor Seligson (Town of Mamaroneck) spoke, via Zoom, at the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Local Summit's meeting on Tuesday, February 9th.

The three leaders spoke about the pandemic's impact upon their communities. Active Covid-19 cases increased following the holidays, and all the officials emphasized the need to wear masks, frequently wash your hands, not gather in large groups and maintain social distance. Budgets have also been impacted, with revenue decreases impacting bottom lines.

The officials are all working to keep their tax rates as low as possible given the current fiscal climate.

All three communities have reviewed their policing policies and procedures, and committees are preparing reports on Police Reform, Reinvention and Collaboration. Local residents, religious organizations, administrative boards and police departments have worked together on this process and final reports will be presented to the State by April 1.

Village of Larchmont Mayor Lorraine Walsh reported on the status of the two major building projects in the Chatsworth and Palmer Avenue area. Construction is well underway to replace the building on Palmer destroyed by fire over four years ago. On Chatsworth Avenue, building demolition has been completed and the foundation started for Centro, a 14 unit residential building, with retail space. There will be pedestrian access from Chatsworth Ave. to the parking lot on Wendt Avenue. Walsh stated the Village has issued a bond to purchase solar powered parking pay stations and, early this spring, will be implementing the parking study completed pre-pandemic. Revenue will be used to improve infrastructure relating to transportation (parking lots, bike lanes, etc.). Walsh reported that Trustee Malcolm Frouman would be stepping down in March and she has appointed Bridget Brennan to replace him. Frouman has been a valued member of the Village Board.

Village of Mamaroneck Mayor Tom Murphy, at the start of the pandemic, was concerned about the nutrition of local residents. "No child should go to bed hungry." Working with local volunteers, primarily through the Hunger Task Force, the Village offered a parking lot in Columbus Park for food distribution and saw a huge growth in demand for food. He is grateful for the caring support provided by the local communities. Murphy also reported that the Village is using funds from a \$400,000 reserve (funded by a recreation fee charged to local developers) to improve local parks. Swings have been installed in Columbus Park and they are reviewing other needs. Working with the Arts Council, the Village plans to develop a Memorial Garden that will be a living tribute to the outstanding efforts of local municipal employees and Village volunteers during this pandemic. Mayor Murphy recognizes the need to increase lower income housing and would like that to be a focus of the Village Board this year.

Town Supervisor Nancy Seligson reported that the Board has begun work on updating the Comprehensive Plan. A consultant (AKRF) has been hired and the Steering Committee will be introduced at the February 17th Board Meeting. Major issues to be reviewed include: Community Character, Recreation, Housing, Mobility (how does the public get around) and Sustainability. The Floor Area Ratio (FAR, a zoning tool) will also be reviewed. The public's participation is crucial and will be sought through social media and other outreach, beginning in April. Seligson was sorry to report that, after 38 years, the Town Administrator, Steve Altieri, is leaving. A nationwide search for a replacement has begun. Other Town projects include working with four local communities (Villages of Mamaroneck, Larchmont, Pelham and City of New Rochelle) and the county to consolidate the sewer operations under one owner to benefit our communities and the environment; and for later this year, redesigning the Town's website, and streetscape improvements to the area of Madison and 5th Avenues (near the entrance to 95).

During the Q&A, Mayor Walsh and Supervisor Seligson confirmed that curbside pickup of garbage, initiated at the start of the pandemic, will be permanent, resulting in cost savings and employee protections. (Seniors over 70 or people with disabilities can request an exemption). Also confirmed, the popular outdoor dining feature will continue in both Larchmont and Mamaroneck. When Mayor Murphy was asked about setting up a local vaccination spot to serve residents with transportation issues, it was agreed that this would be very beneficial. Westchester County Executive George Latimer shared that the County is collecting a list of potential vaccination sites throughout the County, and that when more vaccines become available, more sites would be set up to facilitate access.

This forum was co-hosted by the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Local Summit and LMC Media. To learn more about The Local Summit: <https://www.localsummitlm.org/>. *The next zoom program, on Covid-19, will be Tuesday, March 9, 8:00 am. A link to register for the program will be available on the Local Summit website shortly.*

## Heavy Snow Brings Back Winter Sports to Westchester County Parks

Dig out your skis and dust off your sleds, recent snowstorms and low temperatures have created conditions for winter sports at Westchester County Parks.

County Executive George Latimer said: "It's been a few years since we've seen so much snow in Westchester. This year you won't have to travel far for winter sports, there's plenty to enjoy right in your own backyard."

Cross-country skiing, sledding and ice skating are available across the park system. However, all activities are subject to the conditions at the individual parks and visitors must bring their own equipment. Admission and parking are free unless otherwise noted.

Commissioner of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation Kathy O'Connor said: "Covered in snow, our parks continue to provide Westchester County residents with outlets for recreation. We encourage you to bundle up and explore another side of our nationally accredited park system."

### Cross-country skiing is allowed at the following parks:

Blue Mountain Reservation, Peekskill  
Croton Gorge, Cortlandt  
Croton Point Park, Croton-on-Hudson  
Kitchawan Preserve, Yorktown  
Lasdon Park, Somers (8 a.m. - 4 p.m. only)  
Mohansic Golf Course, Yorktown Heights  
Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Cross River\*  
Cranberry Lake Preserve, North White Plains  
Maple Moor Golf Course, White Plains  
Marshlands Conservancy, Rye  
The Trails at Merestead, Mount Kisco  
Saxon Woods Park, White Plains  
Saxon Woods Golf Course, Scarsdale  
Dunwoodie Golf Course, Yonkers  
Lenoir Preserve, Yonkers  
Sprain Lake Golf Course, Yonkers  
Tibbetts Brook Park, Yonkers  
The North and South County Trailways, Yonkers to Baldwin Place

### Sledding is allowed at the following parks:

Croton Gorge, Cortlandt  
Lasdon Park, Somers (8 a.m. - 4 p.m. only)  
Tibbetts Brook Park, Yonkers  
Ward Pound Ridge Reservation, Cross River\*  
Dunwoodie Golf Course, Yonkers  
Sprain Lake Golf Course, Yonkers  
Saxon Woods Golf Course, Scarsdale  
Mohansic Golf Course, Yorktown Heights  
Maple Moor Golf Course, White Plains

### Ice Skating is allowed at the following parks, visitors are encouraged to call ahead for ice conditions:

Blue Mountain Reservation, Peekskill  
Mountain Lakes Park, North Salem  
Tibbetts Brook Park, Yonkers  
Twin Lakes Park, New Rochelle

Winter sports are permitted seven days a week during daylight hours. Covid-19 protocols remain in effect at all County parks. Visitors should continue to maintain social distance and wear masks when in the parks.

## WESTCHESTER RISING

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## Yorktown GOP Unveils 2021 "Dynamic Slate" of Candidates



Candidates L-R- Sergio Esposito (Town Council), Matt Slater (Town Supervisor), Dave Paganelli (Highway Superintendent) Luciana Haughwout (Town Council)

The Yorktown Republican Party held its annual nominating convention this past week which produced a dynamic and balanced ticket for the November election. Four candidates emerged with the Party's support following individual interviews with party leadership and nominating interviews with district leaders. This year's ticket is led by two incumbents in Yorktown Supervisor Matt Slater and Yorktown Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli. They will be joined by two small business owners in Luciana Haughwout and Sergio Esposito for Town Board.

"It is an honor to walk into Town Hall every day and serve the community I was raised in," Slater said. "The past 14 months have brought unprecedented challenges to this town but I am proud of how we managed them and put Yorktown in a position to come back stronger than ever."

Slater's first term as Town Supervisor has been defined by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the unprecedented challenges, the Yorktown native orchestrated a budget that held the line on taxes, executed key initiatives that made Yorktown a leader in combatting climate change and has ushered in unprecedented economic growth which is a cornerstone to his COVID-19 recovery plan.

Slater also formed the Reboot Yorktown Task Force to assist main street businesses reopen following the first wave of COVID-19 in the spring. The plan that was rolled out, which included the Destination Y Campaign and the proposed overlay district initiative, was dubbed the most developed municipal plan in Westchester County by Westchester Magazine.

Yorktown Highway Superintendent Dave Paganelli is closing out his second term. Paganelli has been praised for his successful management of infrastructure projects such as the Mohegan Avenue retaining wall and storm responses. Paganelli, who owned a local restaurant in Yorktown for more than two decades, has successfully grown the Highway Department's fund balance while upgrading the Department's aged fleet.

"I am very proud of my record of success and look forward to serving the residents of Yorktown for another four years," Paganelli said. "As Highway Superintendent my focus is always ensuring the safety of our residents while protecting taxpayers. I believe my record reflects these priorities which I will always put first."

Luciana Haughwout and Sergio Esposito, both first time candidates for town office, will be running for Town Board. Haughwout is a small business owner with extensive experience in commercial business development and President-elect of the Brookside PTA. Her husband Rick is an active member of the Yorktown Volunteer Ambulance Corps and they are raising their three young children near Sparkle Lake.

"Yorktown is an amazing community to live, to work and to raise a family," Haughwout explained. "These were the exact reasons my husband and I decided to raise our family here. I am excited and honored to be given this opportunity to serve my neighbors and can't wait to meet people along the campaign trail."

Sergio Esposito is no stranger to Yorktown. Currently serving as President of the Yorktown Chamber of Commerce, his tenure spans multiple administrations and his in depth knowledge of the business community and people of Yorktown has been invaluable. An immigrant from Italy, Esposito runs his own specialty business with a focus on information technology. Esposito's ties to the Yorktown community are not limited to just business as he has been an active volunteer for local sports clubs, serves as secretary of the Town's Ethics Committee and is an active member of the Yorktown Heights Volunteer Fire Department. One of Esposito's proudest contributions has been a partnership with Camp Sunshine to raise funds to help families with children that have life threatening diseases get help and counseling.

"I love this town and I want to do even more," Esposito said. "I raised my family here, grew my business here and want nothing more than to help foster an environment for families and businesses to experience the same successes I have. Yorktown is finally on the verge of greatness and I look forward to having a leadership role in this next chapter."

"The Yorktown Republican Party is excited to present this dynamic team that we believe represents the best our community has to offer," Republican Chairman Kevin Byrnes said. "Our ticket personifies strong leadership, private sector success and a community first mindset. Every Yorktown resident should be excited about the quality of our candidates."

## Stepinac and Iona Prep Renew Varsity Basketball Rivalry



Watch AJ Griffin play for Stepinac before he heads off to Duke

### First Game Set for February 26

In a much-welcomed development since COVID-19 concerns shuttered competitive high school sports nearly a year ago, the Stepinac High School and Iona Preparatory School varsity basketball teams jointly announced today that they will take to the hardwood basketball courts in the annual Classic Brother Stoldt Best of 7 Series trophy competition, starting Friday, February, 26 (see schedule below).

Both teams are at a standstill with scheduling of games as they compete in the NY CHSAA 'AA' league which is composed mostly of teams from the five boroughs that do not have health department approval to start playing yet.

Strict safety guidelines among the players and the coaching staffs will be adhered to throughout the match-up of the rival teams. Although no fans will be allowed to attend, they will be able to enjoy the games in real time via LocalLive TV coverage.

Iona Prep Athletic Director Bernie Mahoney said: "We are looking forward to having an opportunity for both teams to play again and to turn this into an enjoyable experience for both teams."

Stepinac Athletic Director Mike O'Donnell added: "After waiting for almost a year, both schools are excited to get these young men back out on the court in a safe way and continue a great tradition of our championship varsity teams, and huge rivals competing again in another great event."

The bleachers at the two high school gyms where the outstanding players of the Stepinac Crusaders and Iona Prep Gaels will square off will be populated with Fan Cutouts. For more information about the cost and other details of the Fan Cutouts, send emails to the respective school contacts: Ryan Mahoney at Iona Prep: rmahoney@IonaPrep.org and Patrick Maassaroni at Stepinac: pmaassaroni@stepinac.org.

Stepinac Head Coach, Patrick Massaroni stated: "This is a great opportunity for our players. They have waited eleven months to be able to play in a safe environment. This series will provide exposure for all involved to get recruited, excitement for both schools and the local community. Both schools have done a great job of working to put all this together for both school communities and their fans."

Steve Alvarado, Iona Prep Head Coach, noted: "Our players are grateful to finally have the opportunity to compete for Iona Prep and showcase their abilities. And to do so against their fiercest rival, Stepinac, under such a unique and unprecedented Best of 7 Series has them extremely excited! We are fortunate to be able to provide much-needed exposure for our players and show entertaining, competitive basketball games for our student body, alumni, fans of the program and Westchester County."

The team that wins the first of four games will take home the Brother Stoldt trophy. The schedule is:

- Game 1 @ Iona Prep - Friday, February 26th - Time TBA
- Game 2 @ Iona Prep - Tuesday, March 2nd - Time TBA
- Game 3 @ Stepinac - Friday, March 5th - Time TBA
- Game 4 @ Stepinac - TBD
- Game 5 @ Iona Prep (If necessary) - TBD
- Game 6 @ Stepinac (If necessary) - TBD
- Game 7 @ Iona Prep (If necessary) - TBD

## Letter to the Editor:

I learned recently that Governor Cuomo uses his pardon power to re-franchise New Yorkers who have fully completed their prison sentences. Why would we rely on such a cumbersome, temporary, and ad hoc method to handle something as serious as voting rights restoration?

We shouldn't and we won't! The New York State Legislature has introduced S.830 / A.4448, a crucial piece of legislation that would codify this process by automatically re-enfranchising New Yorkers who have served their prison time and need their voting rights permanently restored. I am writing to urge the State Legislature to pass S.830 / A.4448 and for my friends and neighbors to read up on this life changing piece of legislation.

The voting rights of nearly 43,000 New York citizens, nearly three-fourths of whom are Black and Latino, are not automatically restored under law even though they have completed their prison sentences and returned home to raise families, work jobs, pay taxes, and contribute to society. This is both unfair and easy to fix.

These citizens deserve to have a stake in their communities -- not be continually punished by having their voting rights denied.

Greg Rieves, Dobbs Ferry

### FBI Investigating Sextortion,, continued from pg 1-

gov/tips., or call the Port Chester Police Department at 914-939-1000. Port Chester residents are remembering Zafra when he was recently a student at Port Chester High School. It is important that all of us who are parents and who want our children safe to spread the word and make sure that this individual did not abuse anyone else in Westchester, and if he did, to make sure that he is put away for many years.

The FBI believes that Zafra has victims across the country, but also in Westchester and Rockland Counties.

## Section 3 Work Opportunity

MDG Design + Construction is currently seeking construction Section 3 eligible applicants for a moderate rehabilitation project, Kingsley House Located in White Plains, NY. Section 3 eligible applicants are invited to submit a resume for the work in the following trades:

- Electrician
- Carpenter
- Construction Laborer

Work is to be performed in White Plains under Davis Bacon Act (prevailing wage) requirements.

Section 3 residents are:

- Public housing residents or
- Persons who live in the area where a HUD-assisted project is located and who have a household income that falls below HUD's income limits.

For more Section 3 information: <https://www.hud.gov/section3>  
Eligible applicants must have an active Osha 30 card. If interested in applying, please send a resume with the position desired to: Jennifer Monaghan at JMonaghan@mdgny.com

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**Stress and Heart Health, continued from pg 2-**

incorporate in your life, while at your desk or in the morning while having coffee. There are lots of videos on YouTube about it. Also try to identify when you will have high levels of stress, perhaps a meeting with your boss. Take two minutes before that meeting and use these breathing techniques and check in with your body and reduce your internal thermostat," said Dr. Gitig.

**II-Meditation-**This is harder to include in your daily life but also accessible to learn on YouTube. Two of the most common types of meditation are Transcendental Meditation, TM, and mindfulness based mediation. Both reduce your stress levels and studies have shown they also lower your blood pressure. There is also a lower symptom of shortness of breath and your heart rate is also lowered.

"TM clears your mind, and Mindfulness focuses on a part of your body. Breathing techniques are the first step in mediation, and adding the thought process to your breathing is important. The power of the brain can help you in your heart health, and resetting your minds to more peaceful thoughts will reduce your stress levels."

**III-Yoga-**This is also easy to learn online and reduces stress levels, including blood pressure and lowers heart rates.

**IV-Exercise.** This will help your stress levels will go down and exercise during the day will help you sleep at night. While we are all stuck at home we need to find ways to carve out some time for some healthy activity. Exercise will lower your risk for cardio vascular disease.

During COVID there are more reports of higher stress levels. We all need to take stock of COVID and the impact on our lives. The increased stress from COVID is having a long term impact and it will absolutely increase cardio vascular disease, unless we do something to manager our stress better."

"We can focus on what we can control and respond to the reality of COVID by getting out of our comfort zone and try to find a few minutes every day to reduce our stress and improve our heart health. Look at your schedule and plan it out when can I find time to relax. If you can't find the time, take a warm bath and lock the door. Try to focus on what your body needs."

Alon Gitig, MD, is Director of Cardiology at Mount Sinai Doctors-Scarsdale and Mount Sinai Doctors-Yonkers. He is also an Assistant Professor of Cardiology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and Medical Director of the Heart Failure Management Program for the Mount Sinai Health Network.

For more information, visit [mountsinadoctors.org/westchester](http://mountsinadoctors.org/westchester).

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Notice of formation of ROTTINGPUMPKINLLC. filed with the SSNY on 11/30/2020. 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, PO Box 186 Armonk, NY 10504. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

Notice of formation of HAPPINESSJONESLLC. filed with the SSNY on 11/30/2020. 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, PO Box 186 Armonk, NY 10504. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

JAMES HARDEE ENTERPRISES LLC. Art. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 02/01/2021. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 20 Bonnefoy Place Apt.3 New Rochelle, NY 10805. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of formation of Miss DQ, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 01/19/21. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY is designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 154 Buena Vista Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of formation of Simple Wishes LLC. Filed with the SSNY on 01/05/2021. Office Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC: 300 Gramatan Avenue Apt G81 Mount Vernon, N.Y 10552. Purpose: any lawful purpose.

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Notice of formation of Panza NY LLC filed with the SSNY on 10/13/2020. 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, 640 Van Cortlandt Pk Ave Yonkers, NY 10705. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of formation of Byrd Enterprises, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/21/20. 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, 249 Hoover Road, Yonkers NY. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of Formation of Rella Electric, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with SSNY on 12/1/2020. Office location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to Christian Farella at 186 Stone Ave., Yonkers, NY, 10701 Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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Notice of Formation of 11 Lincoln Avenue LLC filed with the Secy. of State of NY (SSNY) on 12/22/2020. 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.

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Notice of formation of EVERYDIMECOUNTLLC. filed with the SSNY on 10/23/2020. 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. 442 North Avenue New Rochelle Ny 10801 . Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of formation of MASSIVE ATM LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 10/30/2018. 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, 1 Glenwood Ave, apt 6D, Yonkers, NY 10701. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

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Notice of Formation of Empowered Wealth, LLC. Art. Of Org. filed with SSNY on 10/1/2020. Office Location: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail process to: Empowered Wealth, LLC. 41 Dellwood Road, Bronxville, NY 10708. Purpose: to provide financial planning purposes.

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Notice of formation of ThirdByrd, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 12/23/2020. 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, 249 Hoover Road, Yonkers NY 10710. Purpose: Any lawful purpose.

**Classifieds**

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**Derickson Lawrence, continued from pg 1-**

part because there hasn't been a proper audit of the City's budgets for five years. And a multi-million dollar problem with Mt. Vernon's sewers has gone unaddressed for years.

The Mount Vernon Democratic Committee met to choose its next nominee for Comptroller. The results were Rev. Darren Morton, 52%; Derickson Lawrence 43%; former Mayor Richard Thomas-5%.

Rev. Morton is the Chief of Staff to Mayor Patterson-Howard, who was entirely in her rights to put up a candidate that she knew personally could perform the tasks of comptroller.

But, while we know and respect Mayor Patterson-Howard from her years of service in Yonkers as the head of the YMCA, we also know Derickson Lawrence for more than 25 years.

Lawrence is a long-time resident of Mount Vernon. He is an independent minded democrat, not beholden to anyone if he were to become the next Comptroller.

Lawrence's experience at KPMG, one of the Big 4 accounting firms in the country, and the gold standard for accounting practices. Most of all, Lawrence is honest public servant who just wants to help turn around the finances of his city.

Below is a letter that Lawrence sent out to Mt. Vernon residents.

"Mount Vernon residents have grown cynical of the musical-chair style politics of the same people, that are literally delivering unhealthy results.

No homeowner deserves to have public sewer backing up in their basement – a scenario that is becoming all too frequent in Mount Vernon, after years of neglect. Today, the choke points are all around us, spilling into the Hutchinson River, and now exacerbated by our comptroller's inaction.

I am Derickson K. Lawrence, and I am running for Office of Comptroller. In this letter, I'll share with you why I'm running; what the challenges are; how we fix them; and, why I am best suited for the role.

I am running for a couple reasons. The first is to bring a sense of urgency and context to the fiscal problems that we face. The second is to demonstrate that we can build a roadmap to fiscal solvency.

Now, I sounded the alarm two years ago when I talked about the issue of state intervention or bankruptcy. This was to warn of the potential crisis if no concerted or coordinated efforts were made to address the problems. Unfortunately, here we are! We have multiple crises. Two years ago, the three issues of mounting debts, late budgets, and gridlock, compounded an already unsustainable set of challenges brought about by the comptroller.

So today, Mount Vernon residents are tired. They are frustrated. They are saddened. Most residents are saddened because we just can't seem to get it together. We are trying to solve our infrastructure problems with our operating dollars – i.e., the 2021 Annual Estimate.

Other cities have the luxury of a capital plan. This is the process where we borrow and pay it back over time. But we don't have a rating so we can't borrow. Those are just some of the issues.

The road map, therefore, is to reinstate our rating. Here is my four-point plan. First, I am proud to be the person who assembled and led a group of independent citizens to craft propositions under the Charter Review Commission; and the voters responded overwhelmingly (over 95% voted) for Fiscal Accountability and Financial Transparency. That communication was loud and clear. Moody's cited lack of financial transparency as one of the reasons they pulled the ratings. Let us check that box. But that is not enough, the other was open audits.

Second, we need the right person to execute. What does that mean? We need a fiscal framework around City Hall so we can ensure fiscal compliance and accountability, i.e., the IDA, the URA, the Board of Water Supply and all the other departments - to ensure that they remain audit-ready.

An independent comptroller must chart that course. We are in 2021, yet 2016, 17, 18, 19 are still outstanding.

Third, we need to introduce multi-year financial planning. We cannot continue the silos of one year at a time.

Finally, in a phase 2, we need to digitize the effort in a package that brings us in the 21st Century. That means that City Council has one level of access, the mayor has a deeper level of access, and the citizens have a third--inter-active. And there must be automated reporting to the state and other agencies. We are so far from that today.

Why am I best suited? I have an MBA in finance. And I spent 5 years preparing startups for venture capital firms, and to private equity options for growth. The relevance here is, in that space, the focus is evaluating multiyear financial statements – Income Statements, Balance Sheet, Cash flow; to determine the quality of an investment.

But equally as relevant is my tenure as an auditor with KPMG – one of the nation's largest accounting firms. This effort involved several independent reviews of multi-client financials to determine GAAP conformity and to assess risks. So, I understand the value of internal controls, segregation of duties, and compliance. I have the broad skills to turnaround the comptroller's department.

Our beloved City of Mount Vernon is truly at crossroads, where there is no roadmap. We need a resourceful, and seasoned professional with finance and management experience, at the helm of the Office of Comptroller. That person also needs to be an independent (not an insider), consensus builder, and a problem solver, to work with the key branches of government. I have a demonstrable record of success in all three. If you are tired, frustrated, and saddened, I need your support for us to do better.

We can't win without your support. Voting for the same people gives us the same results," writes Lawrence. [www.dericksonforcomptroller.com](http://www.dericksonforcomptroller.com)

***I Got Both Vaccine Shots , continued from pg 1-***

Once screened, the actual vaccination process took less than a minute. Multiple vaccination stations were well prepared in a large open room with cubicles which looked like any office space. Each cubicle contained a seat for the patient, and the desk a tray prepared with a bottle of the Covid-19 vaccine, alcohol prep pads, and already opened bandages for each injected arm.

After vaccination, each nurse asked the patient, ‘Are you feeling OK?’ or ‘How are you feeling?’ and then every patient sat in a nearby Observation Room for the stated waiting period time of 15 to 20 minutes.

We all first heard of Coronavirus, and Covid-19 almost a year ago in February 2019. For the first time since February 2019, I left Montefiore feeling incredibly and profoundly grateful that I had survived the year without acquiring Covid. I know people who had acquired Covid, even a family member, and have read much about the effects, and was determined to do my best to not become infected, and to not infect anyone else.

I recognize how my habits and interactions have vastly changed since a year ago. I limited my excursions out; became very homebound, preferring the safety of home to the possibilities of being near or interacting with people who might have Covid; increased my shopping online and items for which I previously shopped, instead had packages delivered.

I am aghast of people who foolishly do not believe valid news and medical reports of the almost 500,000, almost half a MILLION Americans who as of this date had died of Covid.

Extensive and well-researched medical studies document that 40 to 50% of people who currently have Covid-19 are unaware they are infected. They exhibit NO symptoms, and are asymptomatic. Some of these people do not wear masks.

Those who deny and those who continue to spread Covid will prevent US from containing this disease. Until at least 70% of US are vaccinated, and protected against all strains of Covid, too many can become infected, infect others, sicken, be damaged by Covid, and die. Wear your mask, properly, and insist that others also do.

I am very grateful for all the work, the incredible intensive effort and expertise, and devotion to saving lives that researchers, epidemiologists, infectious disease control doctors, nurses, and people in all manner of specialties of which I am not even aware devoted to isolating, and controlling Covid-19, and creating, devising, manufacturing, and distributing a vaccine is record time, and now being offered for free to save people’s lives.

Well, not exactly for “free”. The various pharmaceutical companies, which fronted hundreds of millions of dollars, are being reimbursed and paid for their magnificent and successful work. Pfizer refused to take any of the offered “Operation Warp Speed” money offered by the US government, preferring to work unencumbered by any possible political interference or directives.

Before receiving my second Covid-19 vaccination, I was required to be tested for Covid due to a small, scheduled outpatient surgical procedure. I had always wondered if I had acquired Covid in the past year, and hoped that perhaps I had been exposed and hopefully my body’s immune system had developed antibodies! I was glad to be tested, and

I learned that I had not previously been exposed to Covid, and had not developed antibodies.

Now I was really eager to get that second shot!

I received my second shot of Pfizer/BioNTech’s Covid-19’s vaccine on February 12, and it was a far easier process not just because I knew to where I was going and what to expect. Upon arrival, I was sent right up, and no one was ahead of me....or behind me. I explained to the nurse that I had no adverse reaction to the first shot, other than feeling a little tired, and a slight headache for several hours, and received the second vaccination shot. I have worked as a full time professional photographer since 1973, and perceive and experience the world visually, recording and documenting what I see and feel.

Because no one else was waiting, I had a minute to make the photograph that you see with this article. Returning to my car parked in the nearby free garage, I felt I needed to sit and settle down for a while, to process how incredibly fortunate I’ve been to survive unscathed. Friday afternoon, I did have a headache and once again felt tired, and after eating, slept very well, more than I usually sleep. Saturday morning, I arose feeling great! but after being awake for an hour, I felt my eyes closing and so returned to sleep, for another four hours. No other side effects other than having slept a lot, which we all need.

I am excellent at pushing through and accomplishing things when I need to meet deadlines, but always listen to your body. When I woke after four hours, I felt great, except for a slight soreness in my arm at the injection site, which is to be expected.

I urge EVERYONE to be vaccinated as soon as possible. The life you save WILL be your own, and those of your loved ones, friends, neighbors, even the people with whom you argue. Remember that we all are created in the image of G-d, and all are valuable.

***Robert Kalfus lives in Yonkers***

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

particularly difficult task.

You would normally go door to door, apartment buildings and private houses and ask people to sign a petition nominating you for the job. It’s not such an easy task right now as we are in the middle of a pandemic. You have the federal, state, county and local governments telling you to stay in your house and if you go outside wear a mask, wash your hands and keep your distance, at least 6 feet from others.

How can you get 150 signatures which you or a Notary Public must witness? How can you do this from 6 feet away. That is if the person answering the door, someone you may or may not know actually opens it. But wait, our government leaders tell us not to come in contact with people who do not live in our households or are family members living in the household. You could be risking your life and you, god forbid could get Covid-19, the virus involved in the current pandemic. So what is this good paying job with excellent benefits with the drawback of getting ill by coming into close contact with those you don’t know? You can, if you live in the 2nd or 6th Yonkers City Council District become a Yonkers City Councilperson this year. The current City Councilpersons, Corazon Pineda Isaac and Anthony Merante are up for re-election this year.

This would be the the 3rd four year term for Pineda Isaac. But wait a minute. Didn’t she vote against extending term limits from 2 to 3 four year terms as a member of the City Council several years ago when the issue was before the City Council? These issues most of the times are decided upon by the voters. But 3 years ago a majority of the City Council approved extending term limits with Pineda Isaac and Council President Mike Khader voting against it.

Pineda Isaac was pretty clear that she was against the extension of term limits when she voted no. Could the pension and life time health benefits after 12 years have changed her mind. Or is it one of those only in Yonkers kids things, only in Yonkers. Or maybe she thinks the city needs her now more than ever. I have no answers friends.

When we go up to the the County level, all County Legislative seats are up for election this year. Pay is \$75,000 with additional compensation for leadership posts. Term is only 2 years. No car other than a shared car. Health benefits fully paid for.

You are charged with approving a County budget of \$2 Billion. Most of that is mandated by the state. But if you were to walk down the street and ask 100 people what a County Legislator does, I doubt half of them would be able to tell you one or two things the County is responsible for doing.

Friends this is nothing new. It reminds me of the time when the child of a Yonkers resident didn’t get into the college of choice he or she wanted. It was a private college somewhere in this great country of ours. They complained not only to college officials but also to then Yonkers Mayor Angelo R. Martinelli. Yes, the good Mayor could send a letter of recommendation to the college on the child’s behalf, but in terms of the decision as to whether or not the child would get in he played absolutely no role.

So, if you live in Westchester County or in the 2nd or 6th Yonkers City Council Districts there are good paying jobs with nice fringe benefits available to you. For the most part except for the one Yonkers district represented by Councilman Merante all you need is 150 signatures of Democrats in your district to get elected. You need to make up your mind very soon as you can start collecting those signatures March 2 and they must be filed by March 25.

The drawback, of course is that you and your supporters have to get 150 signatures going up to people you don’t know with the possibility god forbid of getting sick. This could have been changed by the people who are telling you not to interact with people you don’t know and to stay home, wash your hands, keep a six foot distance and wear a mask. Those in charge did lower the number of signatures you would need (normally it was around 500) but they shortened the time to get those signatures, cutting it in half.

Let me end with a quote from the Gershwin song ‘Nice Work If You Can Get it’ that was in the Broadway musical of that name and the Broadway musical ‘Crazy For You.’

Holding hands at midnight  
‘Neath a starry sky  
Nice work if you can get it  
And you can get it if you try!

Reach Eric Schoen at [thistooisonkers@aol.com](mailto:thistooisonkers@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](http://WVOX.com) and click the arrow to listen to the live stream or download the WVOX app from the App Store free of charge.

***Cuomo, Nursing Homes, continued from pg 1***

ated the void. But do I understand the pressure everyone was under? Yes.”

While the Governor admitted that more information about nursing home deaths should have been released, he has not yet admitted that it was a “Fatal” mistake to send COVID seniors back to nursing homes, when they could have been isolated somewhere else.

Democrats in the State legislature are preparing to remove the emergency powers granted to Cuomo at the beginning of the pandemic. A bill has to be introduced in Albany to do so, and is expected to come this week or next week, over Cuomo’s objections. “These are public health decisions. They’re not local political decisions, and they have to be made on a public health basis.... Look, whether a person died in a hospital or died in a nursing home. It’s -- people died. People died,” said Cuomo.

Derosa also tried to explain her comments. “I was explaining that when we received the DOJ inquiry, we needed to temporarily set aside the Legislature’s request to deal with the federal request first. We informed the houses of this at the time,” she said. “We were comprehensive and transparent in our responses to the DOJ, and then had to immediately focus our resources on the second wave and vaccine rollout.”

The most powerful democrat concerning Cuomo’s fate is Westchester State Senator and Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. As always, Stewart-Cousins was calm and did not make any rash decisions or comments, only releasing a statement, “Crucial information should never be withheld from entities that are empowered to pursue oversight. This was always about getting the truth and allowing information to guide our response. That is why we had multiple hearings and another hearing scheduled for this month. And why we requested this information in the first place. Politics should not be part of this tragic pandemic and our responses to it must be led by policy, not politics. As always, we will be discussing next steps as a conference.”

Other’s took a different view. Former Pelham Mayor Michael Volpe, now the Chairman of the SAM Party of NY, called for Cuomo to resign. “At SAM-NY, the newest political party in New York State, we have had an interesting week. A federal court of appeals declined our request for an injunction preventing the Governor, the legislature and the Board of Elections from limiting the number of political options for New York’s residents.

“We asked the court to overturn a law that will limit the voices of minor political parties; thereby giving New Yorkers fewer choices in making political election choices. Bad news for New Yorkers, who deserve transparency, accountability, reform and real problem solving. We should not have a one or two-party state. Why? Well, consider the other news this week.

“The Cuomo Administration “hid” the actual nursing home death toll numbers from federal authorities because of politics. One of the Governor’s top aides, Melissa DeRosa, admitted the lack of honesty, transparency and moral decency to the concerned and suffering families. This is simply unbelievable and unacceptable. The Governor and his direct reports — DeRosa and Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker should resign, and a federal Department of Justice investigation should commence immediately.

“The SAM solution is a careful investigation of this scandal; ultimately determining criminality and unveiling and following the connections between Cuomo and our “health care leaders” who we have placed our faith, trust and loved ones lives with.

“The Cuomo Administration was given certain “emergency powers” by the legislative leadership last year because of the pandemic. This allows the Governor board budget powers and authority — in contravention to the State Constitution. We now see what happens when an autocratic leader bullies, threatens and grabs power.

“The result? A bad decision by the legislature, who now, surprise, surprise, wants to take power back. This was a legislative abdication of responsibility from the start. Should those who were afraid to fight for New Yorkers from the start really be given “power” back?

The SAM solution is term limits for the Governor and the state legislature, and open and transparent budget negotiations every year.

“Another scandal in the Cuomo Administration (that was overshadowed by the nursing home coverup) comes from the NYS Thruway Authority (everyone knows all state agencies report to himself and his cronies) which was sued for \$961 Million, over the Mario M. Cuomo-Tappan Zee Bridge. The estimated \$4 billion dollar bridge (no one is sure what it cost) was completed with little transparency or accountability and with no real information of future costs for tolls.

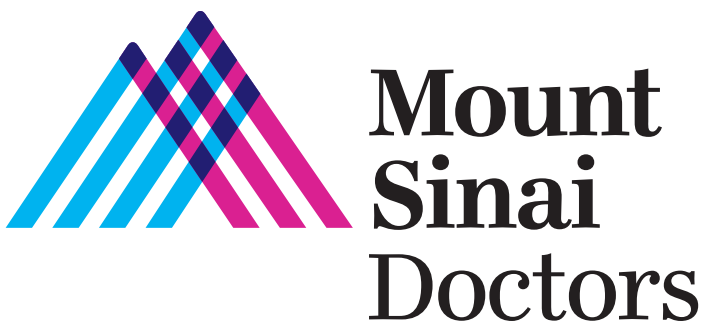
“The SAM solution would dedicate funds to local infrastructure first and would require full disclosure of all costs for larger projects statewide. And contractors who donate to elected officials are barred from bidding on state contracts.

“And one more story about dysfunction in our Empire State: The Cuomo Administration was asked to “fire” the elections commissioners in Oneida County after the debacle concerning the election in New York’s 22nd Congressional District. Essentially, a court had to step in to determine who won the November election between candidates Claudia Tenney and Anthony Brindisi.

“Why? Because the D’s and R’s in Albany have concocted a system where each county has a D and R election commissioner. Stalemates, cronyism, infighting, lack of reform, insufficient funding and resources result, and chaos prevail at Boards of Elections across the state. The SAM solution is independent, transparent and non-partisan BOE Commissioners for every county, “ wrote Volpe in an OP ED released across the State.

State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, who represents Pelham, tweeted, “No, @NYGovCuomo you did not tell the \*entire\* Senate or Assembly that there was a DOJ investigation, as the reason why you didn’t share the nursing home numbers. I found out about a DOJ investigation with the rest of NY’ers in the @nypost story Thursday night.” Sen. Biaggi also joined with a dozen other democratic state senators calling for Cuomo’s COVID powers to be removed.

Former Governor and Westchester native George Pataki said, ‘I think it would be appropriate to take a hard look at that (recalling Cuomo). I only think it should be used in extraordinary cases but when you really have lost confidence in the leadership in your state, I think the opportunity should exist for the majority of the people to say we want something different.’



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