

# Yonkers Rising

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Friday December 1, 2023

## City Bonds \$12 Million to Pay for Settlements Under New York Adult Survivors Act & Car Crash

By Dan Murphy

The Yonkers City Council, at their Nov. 28 meeting, approved the bonding of a total of \$12 Million to pay for settlements related to the NY Child Survivors Act, and from a fatal car crash in 2015 that included a YPD pursuit.

One bond was for \$10 Million to pay for “various settled claims,” the largest is for a high speed chase through downtown Yonkers on Nov. 23, 2015. A car driven by Charlene Stinson was struck by another vehicle, which was stolen and driving erratically. The Yonkers Police were in pursuit of the stolen vehicle when the stolen vehicle hit Stinson causing her death.

Despite the fact that the YPD was not directly involved in Stinson’s death, they can be brought into the civil case.

One of the settlements approved by the council was for \$1.5 Million to the Estate of Charlene Stinson. And there may be more settlements coming arising from this accident.

A \$2 Million Bond was also approved by the council to pay for “settled claims pursuant to the NY Child Victims Act.” Both the City of Yonkers and the Yonkers School District were named defendants in the following suits:

- John-Jane Doe-a \$450,000 settlement for abuse at Emerson Middle School in the 1970’s
- Jose Quinones-\$450,000 for abuse as a student at School 23 in 1980.
- Robert Nowak-\$500,000 for abuse as a student at Emerson Middle School in the 1970’s
- John-Jane Doe-\$600,000 for abuse as a student at Emerson Middle School in the 1970’s

November 29, 2023: The New York Adult Survivors Act window to file older sex abuse lawsuits has now closed. The law led to a significant influx of over 3,700 lawsuits, as survivors of sexual abuse seized the opportunity to file civil claims, irrespective of when the abuse occurred.

The New York Adult Survivors Act (ASA) became law in Nov. 2022. The ASA eliminated the statute of limitations on all sex abuse civil lawsuits involving adult victims for one year. That window closed on Nov. 29, 2023.

Sex abuse can range from groping to forcible rape and must include both physical touching, and lack of consent. All of the acts involved teachers at Emerson Middle School and School 23, but teachers names were not provided.

City Councilwoman Corazon Pineda-Isaac explained, “while the public is not privy to executive session, our attorneys made it clear that this was the best

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## Yonkers Resident Arrested for Hate Crime Assault -Robbery

*Caught ripping down Hostage Posters, Then Attacks Woman, Rips Off Star of David Chain in NYC*



*NYPD Crimestoppers Photo of Stephanie Gonzalez, center, which resulted in her arrest for hate crime assault and robbery*

By Dan Murphy

A Yonkers woman was arrested for hate crime assault and attempted robbery when she and another women were confronted after ripping down posters of hostages held by Hamas on street poles. The incident occurred in NYC on Nov. 9 around 10pm at 82nd Street and Riverside Avenue.

Stephanie Gonzalez, 25, of Yonkers is accused of assaulting a woman who confronted her and Mehwish Omar while they were taking down the posters. According to police, the two repeatedly hit the woman and pulled a Star of David necklace off her neck.

One of the two yelled at the victim, “F\*%@%k Israel, and f\*^&k your white privilege.”

The incident was recorded on a cell phone, and the attack resulted in popped blood vessels in the victim’s eye.

Gonzalez and Omer were charged on Nov. 20, 11 days after the incident. The NYPD and Crimestoppers issued a wanted poster on social media of the two. Both were released without bail after appearing in Manhattan Criminal Court.

The case is currently being investigated by the NYPD- Hate Crimes Task Force.

According to the ADL of New York, “Since the Israel-Hamas war began, there’s been a dramatic surge in antisemitic incidents and an increasing awareness of antisemitism in the U.S compared to last year, according to new ADL research. We found a 316% increase in antisemitic incidents compared to a year ago, and 70% of Americans view Jew-hatred as a growing problem now compared to 49% a year ago – that’s an increase of one-third. On campuses across the country, there has been a 900+% increase in incidents compared to the same time a year ago. Encouragingly, we also found 47% of Americans are personally motivated to address antisemitism today, up from 38% a year ago. It’s validating to see more people opening their eyes to the stark reality of Jewish life in America – but let’s be clear: with an increase in incidents, recognizing the problem of antisemitism is only the first step.”

## Yonkers Celebrates the Holidays!



*above-the tree is prepared at Ridge Hill with dancers celebrating. below: the Cross County Center has its tree aglow and also has a skating rink for all to enjoy.*



## Untermeyer Gardens Conservancy Presents Grand Holiday Illumination; Dec. 8 Opening

At Untermeyer Gardens, the grand finale for the year, as always, will be the Grand Holiday Illumination. Simply put, it is one of the most beautiful sights around: a glittering jewel box in a monumental setting against the night sky, with music to make your spirits soar—truly what the holidays should be about.

The Illumination will run nightly from December 8 through January 1. Opening night is especially dramatic, which starts at 5:30 on December 8. Please note that admission is free, as is the hot chocolate. Please bring your family and friends for a magical and unforgettable end-of-year treat.

This event has quickly become a must see in Yonkers for the Holidays! See you there!.

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



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

By Dan Murphy

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a release, the OCM stated, “Today, the New York State Cannabis

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**Giving Thanks and Appreciating Spirituality**



**Dana Reiley, Shaned and Leah Spielman, photo by Robert Kalfus**

By Robert Kalfus

Rebbetzin Chanie Hurwitz of the Chabad of Yonkers/Greystone Jewish Center organized a special Challah baking event, in support of Israel and honoring her 40th birthday. The Rebbetzin exceeded her goal and on Sunday, November 19th more than 40 women each had sufficient bowls and supplies gathered to bake Challah.

Toby Lewis, a professional Challah baker and noted lecturer and educator came to teach everyone how to bake the perfect Challah! She delved into the spiritual aspect of the baking and how it’s a special mitzvah specifically for the Jewish woman, with each ingredient having meaning. While the dough rose the women gave tzedaka (charity), and read chapter 121 from the book of Psalms for the protection of the soldiers in the IDF. The women then danced in unity to two wonderful songs Am Yisroel and Mi Shemaminim.

It was an amazing event, to see the women and girls from the Yonkers Jewish community coming together and uniting in prayer for the IDF soldiers and for all Jews around the world!

**Yonkers Gives Back for Thanksgiving**



Above: State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins handed out more than turkeys at ShopRite in Yonkersto those in need thanks to partnership with ShopRite and community organizations. Among those receiving turkeys were dozens of grandparents who participate in the Senator’s annual “Angel Project,” which pairs grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren with “Angels,” donors from the community who help fulfill their holiday wishlist.

Below: Mayor Mike Spano hosted the 12th annual Mayor’s Thanksgiving Turkey Drive at the Yonkers PAL. Bags of food for a Thanksgiving feast were handed out We are all one community. “We should all continue to take care of each other during this time of Thanksgiving and always. Yonkers PAL,” said the Mayor who thanked Yonkers Contracting, ShopRite, Valley Oil Co., Fidelis, and PCNY for their donations.



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## Yonkers Public Library Wins Prestigious State Award for Reading Buddies Program



The New York State Regents Advisory Council on Libraries announced that the 2023 Joseph F. Shubert Library Excellence Award has been awarded to Yonkers Public Library (YPL) for the Summer Reading Buddies program.

The Joseph F. Shubert Excellence Award is given annually to recognize the achievements of libraries and library consortia in New York State. This year, members of the Regents Advisory Council on Libraries 2023 Shubert Award Committee unanimously voted to award the 2023 Shubert Award to YPL. The award was officially presented on Nov. 3, 2023 at the New York Library Association Conference in Saratoga, NY by State Librarian Lauren Moore.

“Yonkers Public Library is a great example of using resources within the community to meet a need in the community the library serves,” said Grace Riario, Chair of the Regents Advisory Council on Libraries.

Summer Reading Buddies is an intergenerational reading and mentorship program, offered in partnership with the Family Service Society of Yonkers and hosted at YPL’s Riverfront Library, located in downtown Yonkers. The program trains volunteer mentors (who are mainly older adults) in the best practices around reading with and to new readers, many of whom are first generation English speakers.

“We’re honored to receive this award, and we share it with a great partner in the Family Service Society of Yonkers.” said YPL Library Director Jesse Montero.

“Summer Reading Buddies does everything we love to see library programs do - encourage reading, connection, and fun in our community. And nothing compares to the excitement and energy in the library when the program is in session,” said Nancy Maron, Library Board President.

Originally launched in 2004, Summer Reading Buddies delivers resources and convenes community partners including Yonkers Public Schools, local STEM organizations, financial and health literacy partners, elected officials, and more. This enables the program to extend beyond reading into offering wraparound services for families, including nutritional support, parenting workshops, fun and inviting programs and spaces, and intergenerational mentorship and relationship building.

Combined, the program not only provides the educational benefits of reading but the physical, social and emotional health of the participants. In 2023, the Yonkers Public Library hosted 110 mentors and 397 students for each of its six weeks, with students reading 1,822 books. While doing so, the library also distributed 350 meals per day to families in need, for a total of 6,228 meals over the course of the program.

“This recognition celebrates not only Yonkers Public Library’s and Family Service Society of Yonkers’ accomplishments through Summer Reading Buddies but the shared enthusiasm, dedication, and innovation that have fueled this initiative that is making a lasting impact on our community,” said Anietra Guzmán-Santana, Senior Director, Family Service Society of Yonkers.

“Congratulations to Yonkers Public Library for this outstanding achievement, recognizing YPL’s continuous efforts in making our libraries a place of learning, both educationally and emotionally,” said Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano. “Thanks to YPL and FSSY, I look forward to Summer Reading Buddies each year and connecting with an eager young reader.” This is YPL’s first time receiving this prestigious award. As the 2023 Shubert Award winner, YPL will receive \$1,000.

## Pumpkin Cheesecake?

By Eric Wolf Schoen



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**President and CEO of Yonkers Family Y Stepping Down**



**Lucria Ortiz**

The Yonkers Family YMCA announced that its President and CEO, Lucria Ortiz, will be stepping down as of December 8th. She has accepted the role of President & CEO of a New York City national non-profit serving youth.

"Since joining the Yonkers Family Y in November 2019, Lucria has been instrumental in steering our organization through unprecedented challenges, especially in light of the pandemic," said Emily Ramos, the Yonkers Family Y's Chief Volunteer Officer. "Perhaps even more impactful has been Lucria's influence on the organizational culture of our YMCA."

"She has created a coaching culture, nurturing a resilient and dedicated team that will continue to uphold our mission. Including myself, Lucria has grown the Yonkers Family YMCA Board from 5 to 16 professionals and community leaders who will set the future strategic vision of the organization. Her legacy will be felt for years to come."

During her tenure, Ortiz increased government and private funding by \$600,000 in pandemic years 2020 to 2021, in order to serve 14,000 meals (an increase of 75%) and firmly established the Y's weekly food pantry program; reached more youth with violence prevention work in SNUG neighborhood zones; created new programs to address youth mental health including Project Breathe; was awarded \$500,000 in anti-violence funding that the Y passed through to support powerful community-based organizations including 914United, WeArtOne and Exquisite Dance Force; and acquired the management of 12 city-wide community gardens expanding to 14 under her tenure, cementing the Y's commitment to healthy living.

Ortiz also secured \$1.3M in capital funding for the pool, building structural repairs and a mobile anti-violence RV that will begin programming in 2024. She steered and oversaw major facility renovation to the roof, full-service kitchen (after a devastating fire) and five residence common bathrooms.

Beyond her work at the Y, Ortiz became a strong voice for equity in the city, helping drive the City's first ever Equity Officer appointment, who advises the Mayor and city staff on all matters from a diversity, equity & inclusion lens. As a Board member of Nonprofit Westchester, she chaired and helped build Peer to Peer, New York state's first ever affinity group for nonprofit employees of color. Ortiz was appointed by the New York State Human Rights Commissioner to the Hate and Bias Prevention Regional Council. Ortiz's scope increased beyond New York state when she was named to the National Board of the YMCA of the USA in 2022, where she provides oversight on strategy, vision and governance of the nationwide YMCA movement.

"It has been an immense privilege and honor to serve the residents of Yonkers, a vibrant city full of servant leaders. I have learned so much and developed great friendships with activists, organization leaders, business owners, corporate partners and elected officials. Leading the incredible servants at the Y has been most fulfilling and all of the Ys accomplishments during my time must be attributed to the entire team. I will take this meaningful experience with me and pour into youth locally and nationwide in my next role," said Ortiz.

The Yonkers Family YMCA Board of Directors, in partnership with Y-USA, will begin its search to fill the role of President & CEO in the upcoming weeks and appoint an interim CEO during the transition. An announcement regarding the Interim CEO is forthcoming.

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**Joe Forlivio Remembered In Yonkers**



Joseph Forlivio, a lifelong resident of Yonkers, died on November 14, 2023. He was 94 years old. "CYO Joe" is survived by his beloved wife of 69 years Elsie Bolash Forlivio, his 4 sons; Joseph, Steven, Peter and Michael, his eight grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

He was an inventor, inventing the built in car seat, a carpenter by trade, he was also the manager at CYO Lanes, Yonkers bowling champion for 5 years, served hundreds of CYO wedges a day to students at Saunders High School and owned a hot dog truck on Yonkers Ave., for many years.

Mr. Forlivio, a very hard worker, worked up until he was 80 years old and was driving his car up until two weeks prior to his passing.

Arrangements entrusted to FLOWER FUNERAL HOME INC., 714 Yonkers Ave. with visitation Friday 1 to 5 pm. Religious service Saturday morning 10:00 am in funeral home chapel, followed by an interment at St. Joseph's Cemetery. WWW.FlowerFH.com.

**Port Chester Man Arrested by Yonkers Police In Shooting of Off Duty NYPD Officer**



**Bryan Martinez**

The Yonkers Police Department has arrested a suspect in the shooting incident of an off-duty New York City Police Department Officer that occurred on Nov. 14. Yonkers Police Officers responded to a report of shots fired in the area of the Saw Mill River Parkway and Tompkins Avenue. While responding to that location, a second call was received from

a local hospital reporting that a male was being treated for a gunshot wound to his arm. Units responded to both locations, securing the victim as well as locating a crime scene on Tompkins Avenue at Railroad Avenue, just east of the Saw Mill River Parkway.

Detectives from the Major Case Squad, Crime Scene Unit, and Digital Forensics Unit responded to the scene to investigate. The investigation yielded that the victim was sitting in traffic in his vehicle at the above location, waiting to enter the Saw Mill River Parkway. While sitting in his vehicle, the victim was approached from the rear by a suspect who fired approximately 13 gunshots at him before fleeing. One of these rounds struck the victim in his right arm. The victim then drove himself to an area hospital for treatment. This victim, whose name is not being released by this Department, is a 27-year-old male resident of Yonkers. He is also a Police Officer with the New York City Police Department who was off-duty at the time of the incident. He was treated and later released.

Shortly after the shooting, the YPD was able to identify a vehicle wanted in connection with the shooting and, with the assistance of the Westchester County Police Department and Westchester County Real-Time Crime Center, were able to locate this vehicle in Port Chester. Just after 4:00 PM on November 14, the YPD, along with members of the Westchester County Police Department, FBI Westchester Safe Streets Task Force, and Port Chester Police Department, took a person of interest into custody. 30-year old Bryan Martinez was arrested on Nov. 16

The investigation has determined that this was a targeted attack that stemmed from a personal dispute between the victim and Martinez, who were known to each other as acquaintances through family Martinez. is charged with Attempted Murder 2nd Degree, Assault 1st Degree, Assault 2nd Degree, and Criminal Possession of a Weapon 2nd Degree. Police Commissioner Christopher Sapienza stated, "We do not stand for acts of violence in this City, let alone violence that amounts to gunshots being fired at an off-duty Police Officer. I applaud our Detective Division for their outstanding work and we thank our law enforcement partners to solve this case and remove yet another violent offender from our streets."

**On This Day in Yonkers History...**



**The Habirshaw Wire and Cable Company**

**By Mary Hoar, City of Yonkers Historian, President Emerita Yonkers Historical Society, recipient of the 2004 Key to History, Member of the Yonkers Landmarks Preservation Board, and President Untermyer Performing Arts Council**

Monday, December 4th:

1944: Just as a conference on extending the subway to Yonkers using the abandoned Putnam Division tracks was to begin, Chairman of the NYC Board of Transportation John Delaney labeled the project "unprofitable and useless." He said the location of the tracks not only would be useless for NYC residents, the Board of Transportation "would never propose, advocate or utilize such a route for rapid transit purposes." He added, New York City was not "empowered to by law to construct or operated beyond the city boundaries and could not lawfully extend this service to Getty Square." Harold McLean, the Central's legal representative, pointed out NYC was not interested in extending the line, and reminded those gathered New York had started condemnation of the line right of way since it bisected Van Cortlandt Park.

1937: Henry Bonn Interests, which had purchased 700 lots valued at over \$500,000, announced their plans to build a colony of 200 private homes called Revere-at-Crestwood; the name was selected because all homes would be built in colonial design. The proposed community, in the Grandview Park section of Colonial Heights, was bounded by Oakland and Harvard Avenues and Colonial and LaSalle Drives. The builders promised to construct 25 homes on Biltmore Avenue, all to be finished by March.

Tuesday, December 5th

December 5, 1888: Trustees of the Leake & Watt's Orphan House purchased 33 acres of land in Yonkers to build a new home.

1937: A "new bell" rang for the first time at its new home, St. John's Lutheran Church on Hudson Street. The bell was the very same bell that rang on the old Yonkers Dock 35 years earlier, to warn people boats were docking, and, if they wanted to get on them, they needed to hurry up! When Yonkers rebuilt the dock, the bell was discarded. Mr. Greenhaugh took it and later donated it to the church!

1952: Mayor Kristen Kristensen announced the City of Yonkers received 2,000 Japanese cherry tree seeds, a gift from school children of Japan! Kristensen gave the seeds to Park Superintendent Louis Tartaglione to be planted in the city's greenhouses by Trevor Park; they would be transplanted in city parks in the spring, with special ceremonies to mark the occasion. Program sponsors were the Japanese Parents and Teachers Association, the Japanese Travel Bureau and the United Nations Association of Japan.

Wednesday, December 6th

1944: Two Yonkers men, serving in the Pacific Theater for almost three years, were decorated by their commanding officer Major General George Griner. Lieutenant Colonel Hauck was presented a Bronze Star for his meritorious service during the Saipan operations; Staff Sergeant Frank Esposito of Oak Street, injured by an exploding land mine in the same operation, was presented the Purple Heart Medal.

1944: Lieutenant Darwin Day, Jr., of Elliott Avenue, pilot of a Navy Seventh Fleet PBY Black Cat able to land on water, was credited with saving 26 crewmen from a torpedoed US destroyer. Day found the 26 men clinging to a seven-person life raft, landed and managed to get all men on his plane, even though in enemy range and under fire.

Thursday, December 7th

1905: The main attraction of local "Yonkers Amusements" was James O'Neill's impersonation of "The Count of Monte Christo" at Yonkers Music Hall. O'Neill was the father of the rising young author, Eugene O'Neill.

1936: After Habirshaw won the bid for Yonkers' waterfront property, plant expansion was assured! They offered \$14,000 at the public auction, the only bid; the underwater land at Irving Park had been valued at \$17,500.

1942: Private First Class Frank Suchy of Nepperhan Avenue, with the Hawaiian Ordnance Battalion, was pleasantly surprised when he read the many accolades for The Herald Statesman's "Bumpers for War" program in the Honolulu newspaper! He not only sent his parents the clipping, but also asked them to pass along his congratulations to The Herald Statesman for its "splendid effort" in finding an important way for Yonkers citizens to help the war effort.

*continued on pg 6-*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notice of formation of Jaylee's Beauty Lounge, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 10/29/23. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, 55 Cole Street, Ste. 101, Yonkers, NY, 10710. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

**To Our Readers:**

**If you know of someone who could use a little Holiday Cheer this season, please submit a letter to the editor explaining why this person should be a part of your favorite Christmas, Chanukah, or Kwanzaa kindness. Or write us about your favorite holiday memory. The best letter will receive a gift card to give to that special person. Email your letter to dmurphy@risingmediagroup.com.**

**Settlements continued from pg 1-**

decision and outcome for the city.”

Councilman John Rubbo said, “We heard some of the details of these cases, and the outcome could have been 10 times this number. Be assured that this body has done its due diligence.”

**Yonkers History, continued from pg 5-**

Friday, December 8th:

1932: Because they wanted to ensure all employees stayed employed, the 350 outdoor construction workers of the Yonkers Lighting Company voluntarily adopted a five-day work week, giving up their hours of Saturday work.

1936: To insure a clear title to Habirshaw's recent purchase of land, William Wallin, attorney for the Phelps Dodge Corporation, stated approval was needed from the State Legislature; his legal opinion was it wasn't clear Yonkers had a legal right to sell land under water without state sanction.

Saturday, December 9th:

1930: Yonkers own Les Hart, Captain of the undefeated Colgate football team, was a star of the Colgate-NYU charity game played at. Colgate, the best scoring team in the Eastern Division, won by a score of 7-6.

1942: Yonkers' first group of teenagers was inducted into the service, after passing Army physical tests held at Grand Central Palace. The boys who passed were immediately inducted, but they had the option to go home for one week before reporting to duty.

Sunday, December 10th:

1917: The Westchester County Commission of General Safety asked all Yonkers residents who owned binoculars or spyglasses to send them to Washington for the Navy.

1955: Sheldon Pollock, Chairman of First National Bank's Board of Directors, announced the bank would open a branch office in the Yonkers Train Station by Larkin Plaza! The office was set up across from the ticket window, and the branch would have windows in the station and on the arcade leading to the bus terminal. Except for safe deposit boxes, the branch would have full banking services!

Questions or comments? Email YonkersHistory1646@gmail.com.

For information on the Yonkers Historical Society, Sherwood House and upcoming events, please visit our website www.yonkershistoricalsociety.org, call 914-961-8940 or email info@yonkershistoricalsociety.org.

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

Notice of Formation of [THE NAVIE THERAPY GROUP L.L.C], LLC filed with SSNY on [08/29/23. Office: [WESTCHESTER] County. SSNY designated agent of LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail a copy of the process to LLC: [200 Bloomingdale Road, Suite 1A, White Plains, NY 10605]. Purpose: any lawful act or activity.

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

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

Notice of formation of D & E Guest Reality Management, LLC. Arts. of Org. filed with the SSNY on 09/15/2023. Office: Westchester County. SSNY designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it may be served. SSNY shall mail copy of process to the LLC, D & E Guest Reality Management LLC, 79-81 Main Street, P.O. Box 1100, Yonkers, NY 10702. Purpose: Any lawful activity.

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

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## S.I.C. Film School Launches in Yonkers



### Hologram Studio Serving Youth and Education

On Nov. 28, S.I.C. Film School launched the world's first hologram studio to serve youth and education in Yonkers. With only a handful of hologram stages worldwide, S.I.C. Film School has the 2nd hologram stage in the East Coast and the first and only in the Hudson Valley Region.

S.I.C. Film School is the first and only campus located inside a Major Studio Development, scheduled to open in 2024. Set above 22 sound stages and 2 million square feet of production space - S.I.C. overlooks Hollywood on Hudson, the largest studio complex in the United States.

The S.I.C. education platform, has one of the most innovative and disruptive models in modern arts education, which prioritizes lower tuition, higher engagement and post graduate opportunities. What sets S.I.C. even further apart is its investment and focus on technology in storytelling. As the first school in the World to have a campus in the Metaverse – S.I.C. has been at the forefront of Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Extended Reality in arts education.

Hezues R, Founder and CEO of S.I.C. Film School states, "Giving disadvantaged youth access to the most cutting-edge tech is the best way we can equip them for jobs of the future."

The studio is located at 1 Larkin Plaza. SIC Film school has also pledged to give away 1,100 holograms for free to local youth, valued at \$20k each for a total of \$22 million.

For more information visit - <https://www.sicfilmschool.com/>

## It's Not Water Under the Bridge. It's \$18 Million

By Ron Matten

As many of you have heard, there was a Yonkers City Council public hearing to amend the 2023/2024 Capital Plan by \$18 million. The purpose of this increase is to repair or replace our malfunctioning water meters.

The system for reporting and recording water usage in the City of Yonkers has been inadequate for years. Only four employees were responsible for reading over 30,000 water meters within the six Yonkers' water districts. At best they read 5,000 meters per report cycle. Water usage was billed twice a year and most of us received estimated bills.

In 2013, Mayor Spano announced the city would be automating the process. This was to be a significant improvement. Yonkers entered into an agreement with Muller Water Systems and Keystone Utility Systems. Mueller supplied the units and Keystone installed them. This was a massive project executed by Anthony Landi. Mr. Landi should be applauded for leading the installation effort.

Unfortunately, within five years of installation, some residents started receiving massive, inaccurate water bills. Now, massive, inaccurate water bills are a common occurrence. It is not only costing us an additional \$18 million, but also additional resources within the Water Department to solve these regularly occurring billing issues.

When Yonkers Public Schools overbooked state aid and caused a \$55 million budget deficit, Mayor Spano correctly requested Inspector General Brendan McGrath to investigate. This \$18 million amendment represents a similar failure and burden on the taxpayers. I am urging the City Council to call for an investigation, so we can avoid repeating a failure and hold our vendors accountable, if appropriate. If others would like to join me, I have included the email that I sent to each one of our Yonkers representatives.

Dear Yonkers City Council Member:

In 2013, the City of Yonkers entered into an agreement with Keystone Utility Systems and Mueller Water Products to install the Mi.Net L advanced meter infrastructure system. This was an excellent idea and was applauded. Up to this point most bills in the city were estimated, as 83% of the water meter customers would receive an estimated bill each cycle. With a staff of four, it was impossible to read all the meters and provide accurate bills under the old system.

Within five years of installation, customers started receiving inaccurate automated bills. Apparently, there is some defect in either the meter or reader which causes the meter to read multiple times. Obviously, this is causing some anxiety among our residents, particularly among our senior homeowners. The Water Department has been very understanding and helpful in dealing with these overcharges, but this must be causing the City additional work in rectifying the accounts.

I understand that there is an amendment to the Capital Plan in the amount of \$18 million to solve the issue. I applaud that this is being solved, but we should also understand how we got here. Not only to avoid it in the future, but to hold our vendors accountable, if we have an actionable case. Both Keystone Utility Systems and Mueller Water Products are still in business. These meters started failing within five years.

I am urging you to request the Inspector General to commence an investigation into the purchase of the original water meters. Liam McLaughlin's Office should determine:

- Was the original engineering specification adequate?
- Did the City of Yonkers Project lead follow the proper purchasing procedures?
- Did the product meet its reported claims?
- How could the process have been improved?

The Yonkers taxpayers deserve answers. For \$10 million, Yonkers could have hired 10 employees to read water meters for a decade.

Respectfully Submitted, Ron Matten

## Young New Yorkers Urged to Walk With God



By Dennis Richmond Jr., pictured above

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

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

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

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

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

### Cannabis, continued from pg 1-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Maria Regina Students Provides Thanksgiving Meals for Yonkers St. Peter-St. Denis' Food Pantry**

**CSEE Owls Capture Two Championships**



*The CSEE Flag Football team celebrates their championship*

Loading up the truck with Thanksgiving food were (l to r in the truck) Shannon Burke and Grace Proaño and, facing away from the camera, Colleen Carey—all from Yonkers.

In the spirit and meaning of Thanksgiving—to love, care and share—the students of Maria Regina, the renowned all-girls Catholic high school, donated and packed more than 200 bags of food including frozen turkeys and canned goods that were delivered to St. Peter/St. Denis Church's Food Pantry in Yonkers.

As a result of the school's annual Thanksgiving Food Drive, families in need including children who are served by the parish, were able to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving Day meal.

The Charter School of Educational Excellence's Owls volleyball and flag football teams finished their seasons by winning league championships.

"Both teams performed tremendously. The girls' volleyball team ended their season 22-3 and they won their league's championship. The boys' flag football team ended their season 10-1," said Michael DeSimone, the school's athletic director, who oversees about 150 games over the fall sports season. "This schedule allows students to compete. We have multiple teams representing our school daily and we have an outstanding parent support group that helps with away games."

At the November 17 flag football league championship, the Owls beat the top-ranked Pharos Academy of the Bronx 13-6.

The K-12 Charter School of Educational Excellence has 21 sports teams in its middle and high schools. Besides volleyball and flag football, the sports programs include soccer, basketball, baseball, softball, cheerleading and track. Students can participate in several sports through the fall, winter and spring seasons.

DeSimone, who joined the school in 2011 and helped launch the school's sports programs, said the most popular sports are boys' basketball, girls' softball, girls' volleyball and boys' flag football. DeSimone intends to introduce junior varsity teams for freshman and sophomores in 2024.

"Our goal with these programs is to give every student an opportunity to participate at the level that is most comfortable for them. That could be an interscholastic sport, an intermural sport or an afterschool activity. The students have choices," said DeSimone.

The Charter School of Educational Excellence successfully propels student athletes into college, with several former students playing at the NCAA level. One standout is Tyler Roche, a redshirt junior at Georgia State University and a pitcher for the baseball team.

**2023 CHRISTMAS TREE & HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS**

12/1 4:30 - 5:30	Downtown/Waterfront BID • Getty Square
12/1 5:00 - 8:00	UPAC • Untermyer Gardens
12/1 7:00 - 9:00	CHAT • St. George/Longvue Terrace
12/4 6:00 - 8:00	MAMA • Conor Park
12/4 7:00 - 8:00	Crestwood/Girl Scouts • American Legion Plaza
12/6 7:00 - 8:00	The Luther Burbank Club • Rumsey Rd
12/7 6:00 - 8:00	South Broadway BID • Lincoln Park
12/8 5:00 - 8:00	Untermyer Conservancy • Untermyer Gardens
12/10 3:00 - 5:00	Cedar Knolls Colony • Darcy Park
12/12 5:30 - 7:30	Chabad of Yonkers • Boyce Thompson, North Broadway
12/13 5:00 - 6:00	Chanukah Menorah Lighting • City Hall
12/15 4:00 - 8:00	Pre-Kwanzaa Celebration • City Hall

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