

“I prefer small potatoes to large ones...”

Actor Ian McKellen
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Volunteers of the Month
Friends enhance ecosystem
at Waterfront Park
p 7

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August 7, 2026

RIVERTOWNS Dispatch

Local News,
Locally Sourced

WWW.RIVERTOWNSDISPATCH.COM ARDSLEY — DOBBS FERRY — HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON — IRVINGTON

\$2⁷⁵



HASTINGS

On the road again
Free rides to medical appointments resume
p 3



DOBBS FERRY

Calm after the storm

The view south from Waterfront Park in Dobbs Ferry after rain halted the Jazz Forum Arts concert by the Spike Wilner Quartet on the evening of Wednesday, Aug. 5. The Jazz Forum Arts Summer Concert Series continues every Wednesday at Waterfront Park through Aug. 26 and every Thursday at Matthiessen Park in Irvington through Aug. 27 — all starting at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit jazzforumarts.org.

Plaintiffs win interim exemption from aid-in-dying law

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL
DOBBS FERRY New York State officials agreed to temporarily hold off enforcement of the Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) Act, specifically for Cabrini of Westchester nursing home in Dobbs Ferry and 12 other Catholic institutions suing the State over the measure. The legislation, which went into effect statewide on Aug. 5, lays out a process for terminally ill patients to request a drug, which they must self-administer, for the purpose of ending their life. Gov. Kathy Hochul signed the act into law in February.

The law includes provisions to ensure that the person is mentally competent to make the request, and is not being coerced by someone who stands to benefit, financially or otherwise, from the person's death. While the MAID Act permits a healthcare provider who's unwilling to participate in providing the medication to opt out, it requires that entity to transfer a qualified

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ARDSLEY

Verizon gets an earful over cell service
p 5

“It’s about what people can do to make things wonderful.”

Roni Schotter of Hastings,
author of “Bibi Steps Out!”



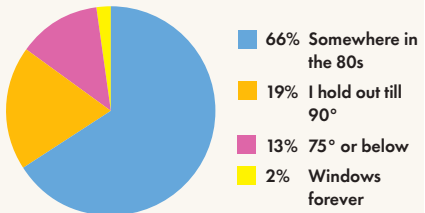
SPORTS

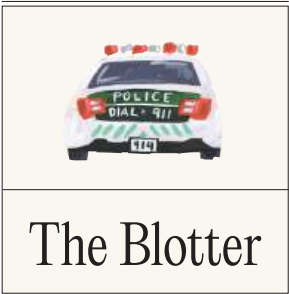
Irvington holds off Dobbs for third place
p 18

The Poll

At what outdoor temperature do you turn on the AC?

As answered by 157 readers of the Rivertowns Dispatch





The Blotter

ARDSLEY

Theft from vehicle: A handbag was stolen from an unlocked vehicle parked at the Village Green, 722 Saw Mill River Road (Route 9A), on Tuesday, July 28, between 4:45–5:45 p.m.

DOBBS FERRY

Theft from vehicle: Two unidentified men stole lottery

tickets and change from an unlocked vehicle parked on Price Street on Friday, July 24, at 4:25 a.m., based on security camera footage.

Theft from Mobil: A Children's Village resident shoplifted \$23.35 worth of items from the Shell station at 420 Broadway (Route 9) on the afternoon of Thursday, July 30. The items were returned and the resident was not arrested.

Mischief to vehicles: The passenger sides of two vehicles parked on Southfield Avenue were scratched on the evening of Friday, July 31.

HASTINGS

Vehicles entered: Unlocked

vehicles were entered on Farragut Avenue, Hamilton Avenue, Prescott Place, Prince Street, Ravensdale Road, Rosedale Avenue, and Summit Street between Sunday, July 26, and Monday, July 27. Change was stolen on Ravensdale. On Pine Street, a security camera recorded a man wearing a mask and gloves at 11:26 p.m.

Orchard incidents: Staff at the Orchard School, located at the Andrus Children's Center that straddles the border of Hastings and Yonkers on Broadway, reported that a student punctured a vehicle tire on July 27; a second student slapped a staff member on July 27; and a third student threw bleach on a peer on July 28.

Nissan damaged: The rear window of a 2024 Nissan Sentra parked on the northbound side of Warburton Avenue was damaged on Wednesday, July 29, between midnight and 12:30 p.m.

Suspended registration: A 41-year-old Mount Vernon resident was arrested for a suspended vehicle registration, a misdemeanor, and cited for tinted windows, a violation, on Chauncey Lane on the morning of Thursday, July 30.

Suspended license: A 22-year-old Manhattan resident was arrested for aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle in the third degree, a misdemeanor, on

Ravensdale Road on the afternoon of Friday, July 31.

Hit and run: An unidentified driver backed into a handicap parking space sign at Compass Self Storage, 1337 Saw Mill River Road, and left the scene on the afternoon of Saturday, Aug. 1.

IRVINGTON

Coyote encounters: Irvington residents with dogs encountered coyotes on Manor Pond Lane and Dunham Place on the morning of Sunday, Aug. 2. On Manor Pond Lane, a coyote followed a woman walking a dog, while on Dunham Place a man scared off a coyote that approached his dog on his property.

Two defendants plead guilty to vandalizing Tarrytown Lighthouse in 2025

SLEEPY HOLLOW — A 19-year-old White Plains resident and a 20-year-old Harrison resident pled guilty on Aug. 3 to setting a fire inside the Tarrytown Lighthouse at Sleepy Hollow in May 2025. The defendants were charged

with arson in the third degree, a felony, and criminal mischief in the fourth degree, a misdemeanor. In addition, each defendant was required to pay \$80,959.20 in restitution, starting with an immediate payment of \$50,000, and

to complete 150 hours of community service. If the defendants comply, and avoid further arrests, then they will be permitted to withdraw their guilty pleas to the felony in a year and be sentenced to probation on the misdemeanor

charge. If either of them violates those terms, then he will be sentenced to the felony. Two other defendants, who were 17 at the time of their arrests, were prosecuted in Westchester Family Court. Their cases are confidential.

Following repairs, the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation resumed tours of the lighthouse this past April. The County owns the lighthouse, which was activated on Oct. 1, 1883.

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Former F.I.S.H. volunteers take the wheel with TRA

Free rides to medical appointments resume

BY AMY BOCHNER

HASTINGS Drivers and riders from the Friends in Service Helping (F.I.S.H.) program, which offered Hastings seniors free rides to medical appointments, are being incorporated into a larger organization. As of this past week, residents who depended upon the volunteers of F.I.S.H. are now getting to their destinations, while also forming personal connections, via the Mount Kisco-based TRA Group.

Lynda and Martin Merchant, who had been running F.I.S.H. for the past three and a half years, suspended operations on July 1 over liability issues. At a meeting on July 20 at the James V. Harmon Community Center, representatives of the TRA Group, the Merchants, Hastings Senior Advocate Anne Russak, and Senior Council chairperson Joyce DeVilbiss discussed folding the Hastings program into the larger organization, which provides services to Westchester, Putnam, and Fairfield (Conn.) counties, including free rides for adults over 60 going to medical appointments.

As a result of this discussion, the Merchants urged the drivers and riders formerly affiliated with F.I.S.H. to register with TRA (Transportation Resources Access). This would allow drivers to operate under the insurance of the TRA structure, while also addressing coordinating challenges. The organization, which relies on volunteer drivers, has a history of absorbing and partnering with other local rider services in Westchester.

F.I.S.H. was launched at Hastings' First Reformed Church in 1968 by a parishioner named Lyle Johnson. In 1973, F.I.S.H. became formalized with leadership. The Merchants took over from Nancy Balaban, who was the coordinator for 11 years. According to Martin, at the time it ceased operating, F.I.S.H. had approximately 25 drivers and 30 riders, 12 of whom used the service every month. In 2026, riders used the service an average of 20 to 30 times a month.

The drivers, all volunteers, were liable for their passengers, which their insurance may or may not cover in the case of an accident, while Lynda Merchant was liable for everyone she was coordinating. After the couple discussed the situation with lawyers and car



Marty Merchant (right) picks up Jim Brennan in Hastings on Aug. 3.

insurance companies, they found it to be too much of a risk, and decided to search for a safer way to run F.I.S.H.

Although the long-running service is now defunct and the phone number will be removed from the Village's website, there is still an effort to maintain the personal nature of F.I.S.H. through the TRA.

Because drivers have complete control over their schedule and commitment, they can self-limit their trips to Hastings-area riders. There is also a built-in option for drivers to make accommodations for riders, allowing "extra-curricular" stops, like an ATM or a store before the final destination.

With F.I.S.H., Lynda Merchant would spend 10 to 20 hours a week managing and connecting riders with drivers over the phone or email. TRA has an online system to coordinate drivers and riders, giving drivers online access to all relevant information about the trip. Drivers have the choice of which rides they will take, and

these commitments are established through this online system, which also tracks and allows for mileage reimbursement/tax credit.

There is a required, no-cost registration and clearance process for drivers, who must also attend an orientation. After registration, the only requirement is that the driver needs to drive at least one person a month.

The experience of setting up a ride is also different for users. While F.I.S.H. only served seniors, TRA offers rides to people over the age of 60, as well as adults over 21 with low-vision issues. Riders must register for TRA, either online or by phone. This process includes signing a waiver of liability, which is kept on file with TRA. To set up a ride, the rider can communicate with TRA by phone, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Requests need to be made at least three days in advance, and can be made months before. Since TRA coordinates 100-plus rides each day, requesting early is important, and riders are limited to two rides per week

According to Martin Merchant, five or six of F.I.S.H.'s repeat riders have utilized TRA and "have nothing but good things to say, except that you really have to go [book] ahead of time." As for the regular drivers, 13 of the 25 attended an orientation and registration meeting on July 30, a second of which took place on Aug. 4.

Martin Merchant is hopeful that incorporating into TRA will keep the spirit of F.I.S.H. alive.

"Part of the disappointment that involved F.I.S.H. stopping its operations is that everybody, especially the people like [Hastings resident] Sue Smith who've been involved for decades, was sad to see that personal, neighborly, intimate touch go," he said. "But by the same token, as a driver, I can choose just to drive people from Hastings. So many of our riders who register through TRA may get the same drivers. The experience might be the same."

The phone number for TRA is (914) 764-3533.

DEC biologists discuss options with residents for coping with coyotes

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

IRVINGTON — In response to increasing complaints from local residents about the presence of coyotes, biologists with the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) state the threat from the animals has not reached a threshold to recommend their forced removal from the Rivertowns.

Members of the DEC joined Irvington Police Chief Frank Pignatelli and Dobbs Ferry Police Chief Manuel Guevara at Irvington Town Hall on Wednesday, July 29, for a conversation with residents about what action could be taken.

During the meeting, DEC biologists Wes Mason and John Milo, who work in the region of the state that includes

Westchester County, heard from a pair of Irvington residents concerned about the safety of humans and pets amid an uptick in coyote sightings. The two are calling for the DEC to implement a specific plan to curb their numbers. Irvington resident Susan Glickstern said sharing the woods with coyotes is acceptable, but their presence in private yards and streets is not.

"My dog is 18 pounds, never off leash, but every time I have to take him out at night to pee at 10:30 I am terrified," Glickstern admitted. "I don't know why I should live like that."

Irvington resident Anne Meyers shared that she also feels unsafe after seeing coyotes in her yard three separate times over

Continued on page 13

Cabrini

Continued from page 1

and interested patient to a new provider willing to grant the request.

In a lawsuit brought against the State on July 17 by Washington, D.C.-based law firm Becket Fund, Cabrini and 12 other Catholic institutions claim the opt-out process still goes against their Catholic faith. Most of the plaintiffs operate nursing homes, including the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, who run the Rosary Hill Home in Thornwood.

Becket Fund and their attorney, Laura Slavis, were set to have their first hearing before the Northern District of New York in Albany on Aug. 3. On July 30, Anne Narducci, U.S. District Judge for the Northern District, granted a temporary restraining order so that Cabrini and the other 12 other plaintiffs will not have to follow the MAID Act while the lawsuit is being resolved.

The restraining order states that while it's in place, the State cannot force the plaintiffs to provide a terminally ill patient with information about medical aid in dying or force them to evaluate a patient to see if they qualify for the medication. They're also not required to transfer a patient to another physician willing to provide the information, document requests for the use of medication for medical aid in dying, or permit the prescription of medication for medical aid in dying. The temporary order also allows the plaintiffs to subject "employees

to employment consequences or contractual liability for taking any action authorized by MAID that is inconsistent with Plaintiffs' sincerely held religious beliefs."

In July of last year, Cabrini became a member of the Carmelite System, a nationwide organization of nursing homes sponsored by the Carmelite Sisters of the Aged

"Families entrust their loved ones to us because they know our homes will be places of tenderness, dignity, and faithful care. We are grateful that we can continue honoring that trust and remain beside every resident until the very end."

Carmelite Prioress General Mother Mary Rose Heery

and Infirm. Carmelite is a plaintiff in the lawsuit, in addition to Cabrini.

"Families entrust their loved ones to us because they know our homes will be places of tenderness, dignity, and faithful care," Carmelite Prioress General Mother Mary Rose Heery wrote in a statement in response to the restraining order. "We are grateful that we can continue honoring that trust and remain beside every resident until the very end."

Slavis told the Dispatch that her clients in the lawsuit are concerned that even if they're allowed to opt out, by being required to transfer a patient to a facility that they know is willing to prescribe the

drugs, they'd be participating in a way that violates Catholic doctrine. They're worried that by complying with the law, they could lose the ability to call themselves Catholic institutions.

"The bishops are the ones who have the responsibility for ensuring that Catholic institutions are providing healthcare in

accordance with what the church teaches about the sanctity of life," Slavis explained. "They are the ones who allow institutions to say that they're Catholic. So, New York here is basically telling, not just these institutions, but the Church itself, 'You don't have the right to set your own rules.'"

The institutions take issue with being required to present the option of medical aid in dying and go through the assessment process to see if a patient is eligible for the medication. A section of the MAID Act reads that a healthcare provider "shall not be subject to civil, administrative or criminal liability, penalty or professional disciplinary action by any government

entity for taking any reasonable, good-faith action or refusing to act under the article, including without limitation, engaging in discussions with a patient relating to the risks and benefits of end-of-life options."

Slavis interprets that section as prohibiting a nursing home like Cabrini from taking action against an employee who counsels a patient about the benefits of assisted suicide, against the facility's wishes. The temporary restraining order explicitly permits this.

In an email to the Dispatch, a spokesperson for Hochul explained that religious institutions can restrict their employees from being involved in MAID. The spokesperson added that the state health department is working on regulations to implement the law "thoughtfully and responsibly."

The lawsuit also argues that the MAID Act puts New York at risk of losing federal healthcare funds, like Medicaid and Medicare, because federal law prohibits the use of federal funds for medically assisted death. New York is the 13th state, plus Washington, D.C., to legalize medically assisted death for terminally ill patients.

The temporary restraining order sets a new schedule for the lawsuit, giving the State until Aug. 20 to file an opposition to the institutions' attempt to be permanently exempt from the law, and a Sept. 8 deadline for the Becket Fund to submit a reply to the State's action.



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ARDSLEY

Greater Hudson Valley's Baseball & Softball Weekend

Saturday-Sunday, Aug. 8-9. McDowell Park, Macy Park, Pascone Park, and Ardsley High School. The tournament features championship games throughout the village.

Summer Concert Series: The Clapton Project

Saturday, Aug. 8, 6-8 p.m. Pascone Park. Free; bring a blanket or chair to sit on the lawn.

Planning Board Meeting

Monday, Aug. 10, 8 p.m.

Village Hall. Agenda available at ardsleyvillage.gov.

Senior Luncheon

Tuesday, Aug. 11, noon-1 p.m. Saw Mill River Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road. \$12 per person.

Architectural Review Board Meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 8 p.m. Village Hall. Agenda available at ardsleyvillage.gov.

Senior Event:

French Toast & Pancakes
Wednesday, Aug. 12, noon-1

p.m. Ardsley Community Center.

Humans of Ardsley

Sign up and/or share personal experiences for a storytelling workshop (\$25) on Oct. 4 followed by a live community event in December.

GiGi's Playhouse fundraiser

GiGi's Playhouse Westchester is hosting "Our Community Pints," a fundraiser at Captain Lawrence Brewing Company, on Thursday, Aug. 27. The local branch of the nationwide Down syndrome advocacy network is celebrating its 11th anniversary at the event, which begins at 5 p.m. at 444 Saw Mill River Road in Elmsford.

While all ages are welcome, adult attendees can purchase a wristband for \$10, which gives them happy hour pricing all night long. The evening will also feature a raffle with donated prizes from local businesses and supporters. According to GiGi's Playhouse Westchester executive director, Tracy Smith, "every dollar raised will go directly toward keeping our doors open and our programs free for the nearly 400 families we serve across Westchester and the surrounding counties."

— By Amy Bochner

Tree planting program survey

The Village of Ardsley is seeking residents' perspectives on a potential tree replacement and planting program through an online survey posted July 31.

The Village recently completed a Natural Resources Inventory, which found that Ardsley had lost a significant percentage of its tree canopy over the last decade. According to Mayor Steve Edelstein, this is the result of trees reaching the end of their lifespans as well as the increasing severity and frequency of severe weather.

To address this, the Village is interested in replacing the street trees lost in recent years.

"In addition to how they improve the visual interest of our street scales throughout the village, they are important for air quality and reducing energy," Edelstein said.

The rolling program would replace a limited number of trees every year, as determined in the annual budget. As a designated "Tree City," Ardsley is required to plant trees each year, and has focused its efforts on planting in parks owned by the Village. The new program would expand to the Village's right of way throughout residential areas.

The survey, which was uploaded to the Village's website and social media, asks what type of residence the respondent lives in, and whether or not their property has lost a tree within 10 feet of the roadway within the past 10 years.

The survey can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/38wcpbfu>

— By Amy Bochner

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



Priyam Reddy and Mayor Steve Edelstein check their cellphones on Elm Street, near the cell tower.

Verizon gets an earful over poor cell coverage

Efforts focus on cell tower off Elm Street

BY AMY BOCHNER

Ardsley residents and elected officials are making efforts to improve Verizon Wireless cellular coverage in the village, including with a petition launched on July 27.

Behind the petition, which as of Aug. 4

had 164 signatures, is Priyam Reddy, who moved to Ardsley in 2017 and has had cell coverage issues ever since. From the start, he expressed dissatisfaction to Verizon about the cell service in his home. The company offered an LTE extender, and conducted an analysis that found poor coverage on Ridge Road.

As a father of two girls, Reddy's concern about cell coverage in Ardsley has increased

over the years. "As I let them go to the parks, fields, or [sports] practice, I start to realize there's places where we go, like the high school, where there's no cell coverage," he said. "It became a safety concern [when] I'm leaving the girls. How do I get in touch with them if something happens?"

Reddy reached out to Verizon multiple times over the years about the poor coverage

Continued on page 16



Weeds be gone

Jen Nordhem of the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Steering Committee leads a volunteer effort to weed the monarch butterfly meadow at Pascone Park on Saturday, Aug. 1. The meadow was planted near the tennis courts in October 2025.

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DOBBS FERRY

Greek Mythology Minecraft for Ages 7-14

Monday, Aug. 10, 4-5:30 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library.
Registration required: childrens@dobbsferrylibrary.org.

Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 6:30 p.m. for

the workshop and 7:30 for the regular meeting. Village Hall.

Outdoor Concert:

Adi Meyerson

Wednesday, Aug. 12, 6:30-8 p.m. Waterfront Park. Family-friendly Jitterbugs Jam begins at 5:30. Cancellation due to

inclement weather announced by 2 p.m. at jazzforumarts.org.

Zoning Board Meeting

Wednesday, Aug. 12, 8 p.m.
Village Hall.

Pressed Flower Bookmarks for Tweens/Teens

Thursday, Aug. 13, 3-4 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library.
Registration required: teens@dobbsferrylibrary.org.

Summer Reading Finale Party

Friday, Aug. 14, 3-4:30 p.m.
Dobbs Ferry Public Library.

Featuring a screening of "Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs" with Paradise Shaved Ice.

River Jam and Food Trucks

Friday, Aug. 14, 7-9 p.m.
Waterfront Park. Featuring MEG performing originals and well-known covers.

— STUDENT BRIEFS —

CV collects school supplies

The Children's Village (CV) in Dobbs Ferry is collecting donations for its annual backpack drive, which aims to provide school supplies to more than 2,000 children and teens in its residential, behavioral health, education, and community-based programs. To contribute by Aug. 19, shop CV's registry on Amazon, make a financial donation, or host a supply drive. Regarding donations, \$50 buys one backpack with supplies; \$100 buys 10 unfilled backpacks; \$175 buys five backpacks with supplies; and \$250 buys 10 backpacks with supplies. For more information, visit <https://childrensvillage.org/school-supply-drive/>.

Georgia graduate

Kaitlyn Burt graduated from the University of Georgia.

Springfield dean's list

Brian Dann was named to the dean's list at Springfield College for the spring semester. Dann is majoring in sports management.

James Madison president's list

Caitlin O'Brien was named to the president's list at James Madison University for the spring semester. O'Brien is majoring in nursing.

SUNY Oneonta dean's list

Zachary Rock and Keegan Rosa were named to the dean's list at SUNY Oneonta for the spring semester.

Western New England president's list

Zein Wahdan was named to the president's list at Western New England University for the spring semester.

East Stroudsburg dean's list

Jenna Lacey was named to the dean's list at East Stroudsburg University for the spring semester.

James Madison dean's list

Carter Rowland was named to the dean's list at James Madison University for the spring semester. Rowland is majoring in computer information systems.

New Paltz dean's list

Melina Clifford, Adrian Curatolo Kobayashi, Elizabeth Distefano, and Michelle Lee were named to the dean's list at SUNY New Paltz for the spring semester.

SUNY Buffalo dean's list

Mathilde Brun, Dylan Klein, and Seungjin Yoo were named to the dean's list at SUNY Buffalo for the spring semester.

WPI dean's list

Michael Rodriguez was named to the dean's list at Worcester Polytechnic Institute for the spring semester. Rodriguez is majoring in mechanical engineering.

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com



Jeanne Cronin Ceccolini and Kathryn Slocum at Waterfront Park

Friends enhance ecosystem at Waterfront Park

— VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH —

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Waterfront Park is one of Dobbs Ferry's most popular outdoor public spaces, and in recent years part of its visual appeal has been due to the dedicated volunteers with the Friends of Waterfront Park, including co-presidents Kathryn Slocum and Jeanne Cronin Ceccolini.

Cronin Ceccolini and Slocum are founding members of the Friends, the nonprofit organization formed after major renovations were completed in 2015. That effort was led in large part by former Dobbs Ferry residents Marie and Arch McKellar, whose contributions registered in the millions of dollars. Slocum and Cronin Ceccolini, who live across the street from each other, have been co-presidents of the Friends for about four years, since the McKellars moved to Illinois.

During that time, the duo has focused on using private funds raised from neighbors and volunteer time from local residents — including some from Hastings and Irvington — to plant and maintain flowers throughout a broadening area of the park.

"They're not just regular flowers; they are flower beds full of native plants and pollinator plants, so we create some biodiversity at the park," Slocum told the Dispatch. "We're providing nectar for pollinators and shelter for wildlife."

Slocum applauds the Dobbs Ferry Department of Public Works for providing

maintenance in other ways, such as mowing the grass and repairing the sprinkler system.

"The Friends was established to do things above what the Village could do — keep a watchful eye on the park and do projects that we could privately fund," she explained. "So, we looked around the park and thought what was missing was flower beds."

The Friends maintain flower beds from Willow Point to the south to the 9/11 memorial at the center of the park. They buy native plants like short-toothed mountain mint, bee balm, black-eyed Susan, and aromatic aster from local nurseries.

Twice a month, they gather participants from a pool of about 50 volunteers for 2-hour Sunday morning gardening sessions. On average, 10 to 20 people turn out. Volunteers range from seniors to single adults to parents who bring their middle schoolers. There are also high school students fulfilling required volunteer hours for completion of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, or as part of various projects. As the volunteer pool has grown, the Friends have come to include experienced gardeners who have donated native plants from their own yards.

"We also encourage people who have no gardening experience who want to learn and are interested in plants, or are just interested in gathering at the waterfront with the great views and the camaraderie," said Slocum, who is also a member of the

Garden Club of Irvington.

"We have a garden shed that has lots of tools and gloves and paper bags that people in the group have access to," Cronin Ceccolini added. "So that makes it easy, so you don't have to take everything from your house."

Cronin Ceccolini and Slocum, residents of Dobbs Ferry for decades, are no strangers to volunteerism. Slocum, a retired nonprofit administrator, has served on the boards of the Dobbs Ferry Schools Foundation and Jazz Forum Arts, now based in Tarrytown. Cronin Ceccolini, who still works as a real estate broker, served on the Dobbs Ferry School Board for nine years and was a trustee of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. Both Cronin Ceccolini and Slocum are former presidents of the local cultural organization RiverArts. In their current roles, they joke that they've become so involved in maintaining Waterfront Park that it feels like their own backyard.

"This is my happy place," Slocum recently told her son, Graham, a 2009 graduate of Dobbs Ferry High School, during a walk through the park. "I feel a little bit of ownership now that I've been involved, working with all our volunteers helping to shape how it looks."

Slocum and Cronin Ceccolini encourage prospective volunteers to contact the Friends via their website (dfwaterfront-park.org) and donate time in any way they see fit, from gardening to helping maintain the organization's online presence.

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FALL SCHEDULE

**Fall classes
start the week
of 9/14**

Adults & Teens

CREATIVE TECH

Sparkle & Stitch - Wearable Tech

Explore wearable tech and e-textiles with microcontrollers, conductive thread, sewable LEDs and more.
Sundays 2 PM to 4 PM
Teens & Adults | Starts 9/27

Fab Lab: Light Jam Edition

Build your own holiday light controller. Learn basics of electronics, coding and CAD.
Tuesdays 7 PM to 9 PM
Teens & Adults | Starts 9/15

Free Fab Lab Social Drop-ins on 9/15, 10/20, 11/17, 12/8. Register online.

PRINTMAKING

Practice different printmaking techniques at your own pace
Sundays 4 PM to 6 PM
Teens & Adults | Starts 9/20
Drop-in option available for all class days. Register online.

KNIT & CROCHET

Learn to Crochet or Knit 6-Class Pack

Take 6 classes over 3 months to learn to knitting or crochet.
Wednesdays 5:30 PM to 6:45 PM
Teens & Adults | Starts 9/16
Free Fiber Social Drop-ins on most Wednesdays at 7PM. Register online.

WATERCOLOR

Learn the art of watercolor - perfect for beginners or intermediate students
Wednesdays
10 AM to 12 PM | Starts 10/7
Thursdays
7 PM to 9 PM | Starts 10/1
Saturdays
10 AM -12 PM | Starts 10/3
Drop-in option available for all class days. Register online.

Kids After-School

NEW STUDENTS

Maker Lab: Neon Sign Studio

Wednesdays 3:45 PM to 5 PM
Grades 2-3 | Starts 9/16
Fridays 5 PM to 6:15 PM
Grades 4-6 | Starts 9/18

**ALL STUDENTS
NEW & RETURNING**

Cardboard Engineering

Fridays 3:30 PM to 4:30 PM
Grades K-1 | Starts 9/18

Lego Robotics Lab

Thursdays 3:45 PM to 5 PM
Grades 4-8 | Starts 9/17

Creative Tech: Neon Sign Studio

Tuesdays 3:45 PM to 5 PM
Grades 5-8 | Starts 9/15

RETURNING STUDENTS

Maker Lab: Neon Sign Studio

Mondays 3:45 PM to 5 PM
Grades 2-3 | Starts 9/14
Mondays 5:15 PM to 6:30 PM
Grades 4-6 | Starts 9/14

BY INVITE ONLY

First Lego League Challenge

Thursdays 5:15 PM to 6:30 PM AND
Saturdays 1 to 2:15 PM
Grades 4-8 | Starts 9/17

Creative Tech: Autonomous Cars

Tuesdays 5:15 PM to 6:30 PM
Grades 7-8 | Starts 9/15



Farmers Market

Saturday, Aug. 8, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. Commuter Lot, Southside Avenue. For details, visit hastingsfarmersmarket.org.

Hastings on Jazz

Sunday, Aug. 9, 3–5:30 p.m. VFW Plaza. The weekly

summer series concludes with the Spike Wilner Quartet. Rain location: Hastings Public Library.

Movin' the Mind & Groovin' the Balance

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 1–2 p.m. Hastings Public Library.

Movement class for people with Parkinson's disease or balance challenges.

Mahjong

Tuesdays, 12:30–2:15 p.m., and Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Hastings Public Library. To play, call 914-478-

3307 or leave your name and number at the Circulation Desk.

Medici.TV Matinee: Classical Concert

Wednesday, Aug. 12, 1:30 p.m. Hastings Public Library. Streaming of Quator Elmire

and Quator Ebene playing Beethoven and Mendelssohn.

Senior Hors D'Oeuvres

Lemonade Social
Thursday, Aug. 13, 1 p.m. James Harmon Community Center. Email senioroutreach@hohny.gov.

 — STUDENT BRIEFS —

National Latin Exam

Seventeen Hastings High School students earned recognition on the National Latin Exam, an annual academic competition that honors students worldwide across three exam levels: Introduction to Latin, Beginning Latin, and Intermediate Latin Reading Comprehension. The honorees were:

Introduction to Latin — Jack Burstein (cum laude), Eliana DiBonaventura (gold medal, summa cum laude), Claude DiGerlando (silver medal, maxima cum laude), Robert Jennemann (magna cum laude), Valeriy Kulykov (silver medal, maxima cum laude), Landon Lee (magna cum laude), Henry Phillips (silver medal, maxima cum laude), Sadie Ratcliffe (gold medal, summa cum laude), Clara Sollars (magna cum laude), Chloe Spagna (magna cum laude), and Mar-cis Vanags (magna cum laude).

Beginning Latin — Ariela Eliasi (magna cum laude), Oona Khorsandi (magna cum laude), and Adelaide Sledge (cum laude).

Intermediate Latin — Reuben Belasco (gold medal, summa cum laude), Alex Emtage (magna cum laude), and Django Shih (gold medal, summa cum laude).

Alvernia graduate

Ivan Zhevnov earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Alvernia University on May 9. Zhevnov was recognized for excellence in finance at the honors convocation award ceremony and was named to the dean's list for the spring semester.

Colgate graduate

Camilo Granada Cossio earned a bachelor's degree in economics and applied math from Colgate University on May 17.

Stonehill graduate

Paige Martin earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Stonehill College on May 17, and was inducted into Lambda Epsilon Sigma honor society, and named to the dean's list for the spring semester.

Clark graduate

Cami Ratzkin graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in psychology and studio art from Clark University on May 18.

Adelphi graduate

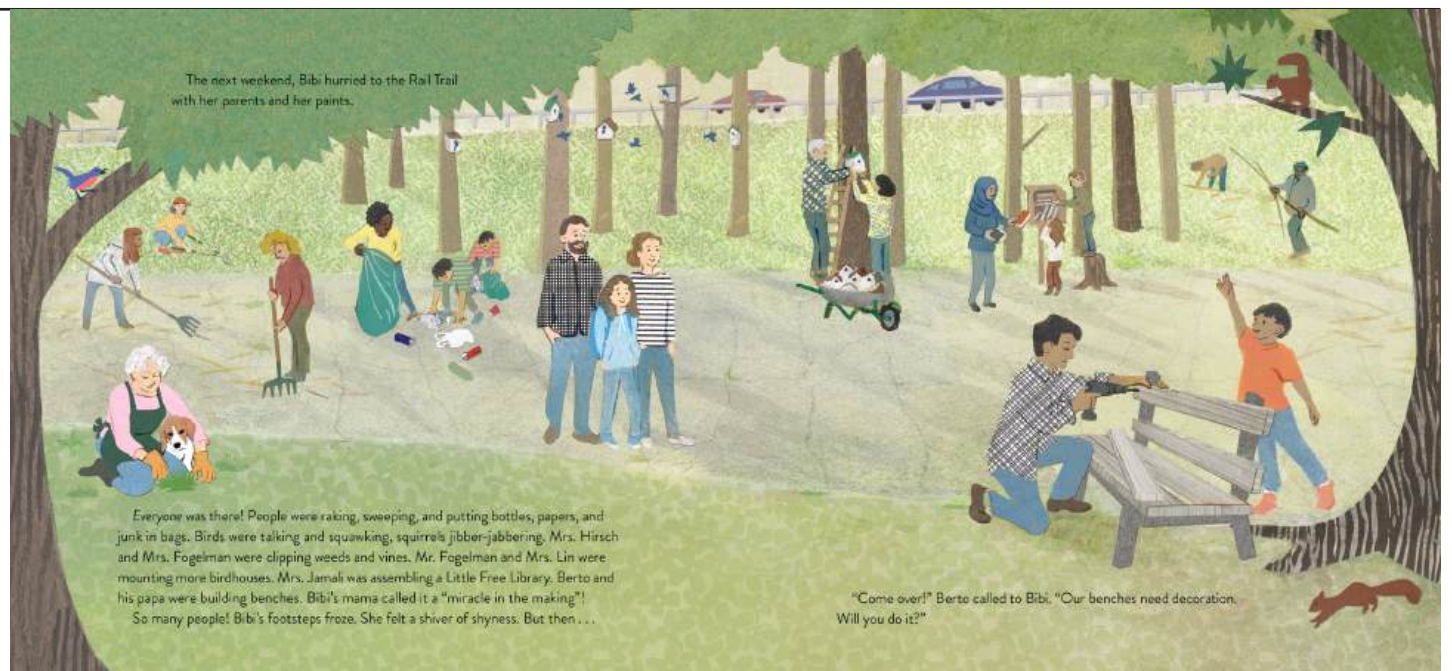
Claire Filipek and Xenia Hernandez graduated from Adelphi University on May 21.

Holy Cross graduates

Sabine Hinkaty graduated summa cum laude, while Conor Leyden graduated magna cum laude, from the College of the Holy Cross on May 22. Both were named to the dean's list for the spring semester.

Got news?

Email staff writer Amy Bochner at amy@rivertownsdispatch.com



A two-page spread from “Bibi Steps Out!”, written by Roni Schotter and illustrated by Christy Hale.

Trail beautification inspires self-discovery story

Author bases new book on efforts by former resident

BY AMY BOCHNER

Colorful and surprisingly shaped birdhouses are perched along the South County Trailway in Hastings, each created by former resident Steve Pucillo. The tiny structures, and the story of how a community rallied to revive the open space they occupy, is the heart of a new children's book, “Bibi Steps Out!” by author Roni Schotter of Hastings.

When Pucillo moved to the village in 2009, the paved bike and pedestrian path was overgrown with weeds and littered with trash. To help attract walkers, cyclists, and others, he volunteered with Groundwork Hudson Valley, cutting vines and planting trees. When the Covid-19 pandemic sent everyone into lockdown, the need for outdoor gathering spaces surged. At the same time, birdhouses began popping up on the trailway, all built by Pucillo.

Pucillo described “droves” of people stopping by to see the whimsical structures. With the increased interest, volunteers helped him further beautify the trail by planting butterfly gardens and building or decorating benches.

When Schotter, the author of 32 books, saw the birdhouses while on a walk with her husband, “little stories started to hatch in my head,” she told the Dispatch. This planted a seed that would grow into “Bibi Steps Out!” published by Candlewick Press on June 2, with illustrations by Christy Hale.

The story follows Bibi, a young girl too shy to join her neighbors enjoying a spring day. Instead, she finds comfort drawing pictures in the quiet of the abandoned and overgrown Old Rail Trail. While sitting by herself, she

sees her neighbor, Mr. Fogelman, putting up birdhouses. Soon, more and more of Bibi's neighbors are engaged in beautifying the trail. As she sees her community work together, Bibi gains the confidence to join them, painting flowers on a bench and playing with the other children.

What struck Schotter about the response to the South County Trailway birdhouses was “the miracle of people working together to make things better and beautify the world.” The character of Bibi, who is named after a kind medical assistant Schotter met, exemplifies the bravery of overcoming one's inhibitions to participate in a larger cause. While Bibi uses her drawing skills to help beautify the trail, “Everybody has their own art,” Schotter believes.

“It's about what people can do to make things wonderful,” she said. “Wonderful” is a word I use a lot because of what it means: full of wonder.”

In the book, the Pucillo character, Mr. Fogelman, gets his name from the Yiddish word for bird — *fogel*. Schotter's Jewish ancestry is central to “Bibi Steps Out!” with the words *tikkun olam*, or “repair the world” written above Mr. Fogelman's workshop. For Schotter, part of repairing the world means embracing diversity, which she also saw take place during the beautification of the South County Trailway. The intentional representation of different groups of people coming together also serves as an homage to Schotter's mother, who passed away when Schotter was 26.

“My mother's message to me growing up was always one of helping others,” she said. “It's beyond respecting others. It's admiring others. I recognize it often in a lot of my books, the kind of admiration of what other people do when they're working at their topmost best,

and what we all can do to make the world better.”

Even beyond the events that inspired the book, Hastings is embedded in every aspect of “Bibi Steps Out!” Hale's dedication is to Ed Young, the award-winning children's book author and illustrator who resided in the village for decades until he passed away in 2023 at age 91. Prior to his move to Hastings, the two were neighbors in Brooklyn. Hale's illustrations include houses on Schotter's street. One page describes the fictional trail as following the path of a defunct railroad, mirroring the real history of the South County Trailway, which follows the tracks of the former Putnam Division line of the New York Central Railroad.

Six years after Pucillo, now an Eastchester resident, built his birdhouses, he expressed gratitude to “all the people that volunteered their time on the trail, and for all the people that came to appreciate the trail.” He is “humbled” by Schotter taking inspiration from him, drawing parallels between his goals in creating the birdhouses and what Schotter has accomplished with her book.

“[She is] a writer who... wants to make people, and especially young people, aware of their surroundings, just as I tried to make that trail welcoming to the community,” he said. “While I was [on the trail], I put painted stones in all the butterfly gardens. When people came along with children, I would say, ‘Have your child take one of those stones home. I want to give them something to remember the trail by.’ And that's what Roni has done.”

Buy your copy of this local author's book at Picture Book:
www.picturebookny.com

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IRVINGTON

"Needles at Noon"

Saturday, Aug. 8, noon–1:30 p.m. Irvington Public Library.

"Acting Shakespeare: An American Odyssey"

Saturdays, Aug. 8, 15, and 22, 8 p.m. Irvington Presbyterian Church, 25 N. Broadway.

Free outdoor performances. irvshakespeare.org.

Stories in the Park for Kids

Monday, Aug. 10, 10:45–11:15 a.m. Scenic Hudson Park. If very wet ground or rain, the program will meet in the Irvington Public Library.

School Supplies Drive

Through Monday, Aug. 10. Drop off donations at Irvington Public Library.

Puzzling Times for Ages 5+

Tuesday, Aug. 11, 3:30 p.m. Irvington Public Library.

Register: irvingtonlibrary.org.

Sizzling Summer Stories for Toddlers

Thursday, Aug. 13, 10:45–11:15 a.m. Irvington Public Library. Register: irvingtonlibrary.org.

Jazz Forum Arts Summer

Concert Series

Thursday, Aug. 13, 6:30 p.m. Matthiessen Park Stage. Featuring drummer Tony Jefferson. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and at jazzforumarts.org.

STUDENT BRIEFS

County Clerk's Student Award

Dows Lane School second-grader Juliette Haddad was recognized for her kindness, leadership, and commitment to improving her school with the Westchester County Clerk's Student Award. The award honors students who demonstrate exceptional commitment to academic achievement and community service.

Juliette was praised for her positive contributions in her classroom and around the whole school, assisting at lunch, recess, and special area classes, including art, music, library, and physical education. She shares thoughtful ideas and suggestions with her teacher and school administrators through letters.

"Juliette had an idea about providing students with more time for lunch and recess," Principal Andrea Kantor said. "From her idea, we were able to update our timing for next year's schedule. Juliette embodies 'The Irvington Way' as she is courageous and engaged with others, contributing to our community."

Gold Star School

Irvington Schools Superintendent Mara Ratesic and Principal Andrea Kantor accepted Dows Lane Elementary School's 2026 National Gold Star Award during the National Association of Elementary School Principals National School Leaders Conference in Orlando, Florida from July 13–15.

The National Gold Star School Award recognizes schools that demonstrate excellence through three key pillars: established culture, empowered people, and optimal systems. Dows Lane was one of 57 schools nationwide selected to receive the award during its inaugural year.

SUNY Buffalo graduates

Justin Kim, Kaitlyn Krieger, Jaslyn Piacentino, and Alex Zelkas earned bachelor's degrees from SUNY Buffalo. Kim graduated with a degree in mathematics. Krieger graduated summa cum laude with a degree in criminology and was named to the dean's list for the spring semester. Piacentino graduated magna cum laude with a degree in criminology. Zelkas graduated summa cum laude with a degree in English.

Miami graduate

Justin Rodnick earned a bachelor's degree in sports management from Miami University on May 16.

Holy Cross graduate

Liam Lyons graduated cum laude from the College of the Holy Cross on May 22 and was named to the dean's list for the spring semester.

Hamilton graduate

John Carron earned a bachelor's degree in history from Hamilton College on May 24 and was named to the dean's list for the spring semester. In addition, he received a Dean Alfange Essay Prize on May 12. The prizes honor the students who write the best and second-best essays on a feature or an issue of American



Kamran Saliani performs a monologue from "Macbeth" that is part of "Acting Shakespeare."

Booth and Iago converge in 'Acting Shakespeare'

Adaptation incorporates American history

BY JULIAN MICHAEL CALDWELL

Irvington Shakespeare Company founder Kamran Saliani returns to the stage in his hometown with an expanded version of his one-man "Acting Shakespeare" at Irvington Presbyterian Church this Saturday, Aug. 8, and for two subsequent performances.

The production is Saliani's adaptation of

the show created and first performed in 1980 by actor Ian McKellen. The original "Acting Shakespeare" was a personal exploration of Shakespeare's material by McKellen, who is British, and Shakespeare's history and connection to England.

In his adaptation, Saliani, a 2012 graduate of Irvington High School, incorporates elements of U.S. history, portraying such figures as President Abraham Lincoln and his killer, John Wilkes Booth, alongside characters from Shakespearean plays, including "Othello," "Macbeth," and

"Romeo & Juliet." In doing so, Saliani takes inspiration from author James Shapiro's 2021 book "Shakespeare in a Divided America," which draws connections between U.S. history and Shakespeare. The 35 roles Saliani wrote into the current 90-minute "Acting Shakespeare" are nine more than in the 75-minute rendition he performed at Irvington Presbyterian Church in January.

"Shakespeare is one of those cultural connections that needs to continue on and become

Continued on page 16



New home for natives

Jess Harrison, Ana Aldana, and Steve Fondiller were among the volunteers who transferred native plants from planters on Main Street to a garden on North Eckar Street, alongside the Irvington Recreation and Parks Department, on Aug. 1. The effort was led by Harrison, who works as an arborist, horticulturalist, and landscape designer. Ten of the planters had included wooden butterfly sculptures painted by artists organized by the Irvington Arts and Culture Committee. The sculptures were auctioned off.

Got news?

Email staff writer Julian Michael Caldwell at julian@rivertownsdispatch.com

The Agenda

SATURDAY AUGUST 8

Concert in the Park

ARDSLEY

6–8 p.m. / Free. Pascone Park, 507 Ashford Ave. The summer concert series continues with the Clapton Project. Bring a blanket or chair to sit on the lawn. ardsleyvillage.gov/parks-recreation

The Thornwoods: Rock & Pop

ARDSLEY

8 p.m. / No cover charge. Saw Mill Tavern, 925 Saw Mill River Road. Reservations encouraged. smtavern.com

“Acting Shakespeare: An American Odyssey”

IRVINGTON

8–9:30 p.m. / Free. Irvington Shakespeare Company’s Backlawn Theater at Irvington Presbyterian Church, 25 N Broadway. Outdoor performances of the 90-minute one-man musical written and performed by company founder Kamran Saliani of Irvington. Also on Aug. 15 and 22. irvshakepeare.org

Writers’ Forum

TARRYTOWN

11 a.m.–1 p.m. / Free. Warner Library, 121 N. Broadway. Workshop for adults. warnerlibrary.org

Jazz Pianist Joey Alexander

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$40, \$35 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

Hudson River Flash Clean-Up

SLEEPY HOLLOW

10–11 a.m. Free. Horan’s Landing Park, 57 River St. Gloves and bags will be provided by Sustainable Sleepy Hollow. Sign up at bit.ly/SleepyFlash

Summer Saturdays: “Clay & Creation”

SLEEPY HOLLOW

11 a.m.–3 p.m. / \$18, \$15 for ages 18–25 and 65+, \$13 for children. Philipsburg Manor, 381 N. Broadway. Create pinch pots and paint tiles inspired by Dutch delftware. See a one-day-only exhibition of original ceramics by Thomas Commeraw, a free Black potter active in colonial New York. Purchase timed-entry tickets at hudsonvalley.org

Family Fun Day: “Sea of Wonders”

YONKERS

Noon–4 p.m. / \$20 for adults, \$10 for ages 2–10. Untermyer Park and Gardens, 945 N. Broadway. Featuring sprinklers, free ice cream, live animals, crafts, and games, plus pirate training and battle at 3:30 p.m. Purchase tickets at untermyergardens.org

Argentinian Guitarist Carlos Pagan

YONKERS

6 p.m. / Free. Untermyer Park and: Gardens, 945



Hastings on Jazz concludes its free summer concert series with pianist Spike Wilner and his quartet on Sunday, Aug. 9.

N. Broadway. Rain location: Saunders High School, 183 Palmer Road. untermyerperformingarts.org

Tavern Nights

CROTON-ON-HUDSON

5 and 7 p.m. / \$65. Van Cortlandt Manor, 525 S. Riverside Ave. Includes live music, tavern games, trivia, grazing board, entrée, dessert, and drinks. For ages 10+. Also 3 and 5 p.m. on Sunday. Purchase tickets at hudsonvalley.org

SUNDAY AUGUST 9

Outdoor Live Music: Chris & Sal

DOBBS FERRY

2–5 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com

Hastings on Jazz

HASTINGS

3–5:30 p.m. / Free. VFW Plaza, 558 Warburton Ave. The weekly summer series concludes with pianist Spike Wilner and his quartet. Rain location: Hastings Public Library, 7 Maple Ave. destinationhastings.org

“Poems For a Wish”

TARRYTOWN

Noon / Free. The Wish House, 832 S. Broadway. Book launch for Hudson Valley Arts Collective’s anthology in support of Make-A-Wish Hudson Valley. RSVP at eventbrite.com

“Raíces y Ritmo”

TARRYTOWN

3–5 p.m. / Free. Pierson Park, 238 W. Main St. Celebrate Mexican folklore and traditions through dance and music.

Trumpeter Akili Bradley

TARRYTOWN

4 and 6 p.m. / \$25, \$20 for students. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. jazzforumarts.org

TUESDAY AUGUST 11

Comedy Open Mic

HASTINGS

8 p.m. / One-drink minimum for performers. Divino’s Speakeasy, 524 Warburton Ave. Presented by the Dobbs Ferry Public Library. Intended for ages 18 and up. Sign up starts at 7:30.

Mindful Meetup

IRVINGTON

7 p.m. / \$35, free for unlimited members. The Lark, 50 S. Buckhout St., G107. The theme is “Reflect, Connect, and Grow.” thelark.club/events

Outdoor Concert: Mark Morganelli Quartet

SLEEPY HOLLOW

6:30–8 p.m. / Free. Horan’s Landing Park, 57 River St. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and the website. jazzforumarts.org

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12

Outdoor Concert

DOBBS FERRY

6:30–8 p.m. / Free. Waterfront Park. Featuring bassist and composer Adi Meyerson. A pre-concert family-friendly Jitterbugs Jam begins at 5:30. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and at jazzforumarts.org

Matinee Movie

TARRYTOWN

2–4 p.m. / Free. Warner Library, 121 N. Broadway. Screening of “Michael,” the 2026 musical biopic about Michael Jackson. warnerlibrary.org

Astronomy for Kids

YONKERS

2 p.m. / \$23 for adults, \$16 for seniors, \$14 for ages 3–18, free for members. Hudson River Museum, 511 Warburton Ave. “Artemis to the Moon and Back” will be shown in the planetarium. Recommended for ages 5–12. Reservations recommended. hrm.org

THURSDAY AUGUST 13

Outdoor Live Music: Vinny Piazza

DOBBS FERRY

6–9 p.m. / No cover charge. Hudson Social, 11 Station Plaza. hudsonsocial.com

Jazz & Latin Trio

DOBBS FERRY

7–9:30 p.m. / No cover charge. Mirabella Cocina Latina Restaurant & Bar, 1 Hamilton St., in Rivertowns Square. Featuring Hastings native and Grammy-winning saxophonist Peter Brainin. mirabellacocina.com/calendar-dobbs-ferry

“Life, Drawn”

HASTINGS

12:30–5:30 p.m. / Free. Upstream Gallery, 8 Main St. Opening of the juried show reflecting the world we live in. Reception Aug. 16, 2–5 p.m. On view through Aug. 30. Hours: Thursday–Sunday, 12:30–5:30 p.m. upstreamgallery.com

Riverfront Concert: Drummer Tony Jefferson

IRVINGTON

6:30 p.m. / Free. Matthiessen Park. Parking is not permitted in the Bridge Street lots. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and at jazzforumarts.org

Waterfront Concert

TARRYTOWN

7–9 p.m. / Free. Pierson Park, 238 W. Main St. Pablo Mayor performs Latin and salsa music from the ‘60s. Presented by the Tarrytown Recreation Department. tarrytownny.gov

Americana and Folk Duo: Watchhouse

TARRYTOWN

8 p.m. / \$53–\$77. Tarrytown Music Hall, 13 Main St. tarrytownmusichall.org

FRIDAY AUGUST 14

River Jam and Food Trucks

DOBBS FERRY

7–9 p.m. / Free. Waterfront Park. The summer

The Agenda

concert series continues with MEG performing dynamic blues, rock, jazz, and psychedelic originals and well-known covers. dobbsferry.gov/recreation-department

Movie on the Trail

DOBBS FERRY

8:30 p.m. / Free. Keeper's House, 15 Walnut St. Screening of "The Replacements." aqueduct.org

Outdoor Jazz: Corey Wallace

TARRYTOWN

6:30–8 p.m. / Free. Pierson Park, 238 W. Main. St. A pre-concert family-friendly Jitterbugs Jam begins at 5:30. Cancellation due to inclement weather will be announced by 2 p.m. on Facebook and at jazzforumarts.org

Modern Jazz: Chad LB

TARRYTOWN

7 and 9:30 p.m. / \$35, \$30 for students. The Grammy-winning saxophonist performs. Jazz Forum Club, 1 Dixon Lane. Also on Aug. 15. jazzforumarts.org

Open Mic

SLEEPY HOLLOW

7:30–10 p.m. / \$5 per performer. Philipse Manor Station, 300 Riverside Drive. Pre-register for free virtual and in-person audience seats for a hybrid performance hosted by the Hudson Valley Writers Center. Registration required. writerscenter.org

Coyotes

Continued from page 3

a three-week period.

"I love nature, but they [coyotes] do not belong in a suburban area, and you need an action plan that protects the humans in the neighborhood," Meyers urged. "I'm not suggesting you go out and kill them, but you need an action plan more than coexistence."

Milo and Mason explained that it's natural to see more coyotes out in the open during the pup-rearing season, which lasts from May through August. During this time, coyote pups are beginning to leave the den and wander the land to look for food before dispersing to live on their own from September through December. The biologists explained that coyotes will naturally stay away from humans out of fear, but that leaving garbage or bird seed out will attract coyotes, or rodents, upon which coyotes prey. Being friendly with coyotes or feeding them directly will also encourage them to be more comfortable around humans. The DEC encourages people to reinforce coyotes' natural fear by engaging in "hazing," which calls for scaring coyotes away by making loud noises or using tools like air horns and coins in a can.

"There has to be some behavior changes from the general public, as far as the hazing, the scraps of garbage, feeding pets outside," Mason explained. "I'd say most of

our issues come because somebody directly or indirectly is feeding these coyotes."

The DEC rates reported coyote sightings and interactions on a scale from category 4, which is a coyote solely being observed, to category 1, which is a coyote threatening or attacking a person or pet, or observed near children's play areas in midday. Mason emphasized that DEC does not recommend the removal of coyotes for category 4 incidents.

On June 12, one Irvington resident reported to police that a coyote approached their 2-year-old son outside before being scared off by the family dog. That evening, a coyote dug under a fence at a different Irvington home, entered a yard, and bit a dog. There have been no other reported attacks in Irvington since.

Mason and Milo stated that removal by a licensed trapper, which would be lethal, is an option, but not a total solution. Trapping is permitted in New York State, with no limits, from late October through mid-February. Milo also emphasized that the traps are "indiscriminate," meaning that they can catch assorted wild animals and pets.

"These groups [coyotes] when you are trapping them, do fragment, and the females go back into heat if their pups are gone," Milo explained. "You can't shoot your way out of a coyote problem. You can help lower the numbers a little bit, but for better or worse there's going to have to be some level of coexistence."

"Trapping will make a difference, but it won't make all of the difference," Mason added. "So, if trapping won't make all the difference, neither will the removal of one or two coyotes when those nuisance calls come in. If you have to pick anything, it's going to be the coordinated effort of trapping and also, as far as the remaining coyotes on the landscape, they have to be hazed."

Irvington Mayor Arlene Burgos and Trustee David Zwiebel, who were also in attendance, discussed the possibility of tracking the number of coyotes in Irvington and developing a Village-sponsored removal program similar to what is happening with deer. Until then, the DEC's recommendation for hazing to be the primary approach is still leaving some residents feeling wary.

"They're going to continue to breed year after year without any control because there are no predators," Meyers told the DEC biologists during the meeting. "The police are not going to do anything, you're [DEC] not going to do anything, the Villages may or may not." She added that because of such inaction, in five years the coyotes will "own the neighborhood."

"There's still a carrying capacity," Milo responded to Meyers' comment. "There are only so many calories on the landscape. They can't exponentially increase indefinitely, but of course we wouldn't like to see it go to the point where it is above the acceptance threshold of the community."

New Parent to Teacher Program

Turn Your Passion into a New Career

Inspired by involvement in your children's education? Become a teacher yourself!

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- Part time and fully online
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- Start teaching next year

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Wed., Aug. 12
1 pm



Wed., Aug. 19
4 pm



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BY KIDS



Dispatch



FOR KIDS

Make a Difference with Haven Colgate

BY GREY K., 11 & LEON R., 8



Have you ever thought, "How can I help my neighborhood ecosystem?" Did you know that

you can take action now? The Little Dispatch had an interview with Haven Colgate to talk about how she helps the environment. She is a volunteer, meaning that she works without getting paid. She

spoke to us about how she helps the ecosystem, and how we could help too!

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE. Reducing means buying less material and only buying stuff you need. This helps the earth because it takes a lot of water and energy to make stuff. Reusing means taking trash that you want to throw out and making it into things (upcycling), or using it again.

Recycling is a process where you can hand over your trash and then it gets turned into new things.

WORK TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY. Volunteer with a local group. Haven volunteers with her community to plant trees and replant the forest. She protects these trees by placing plastic tubes around them. She also organizes events to cut down

invasive vines and other invasive plants to keep them from destroying trees.

SPREAD THE WORD. Spread ideas to others to show that it's fun and enjoyable to be sustainable. If everyone thinks it's cool to be sustainable, then it will carry on for generations and ultimately help improve the environment.

The Marsh

By Grey K., 11

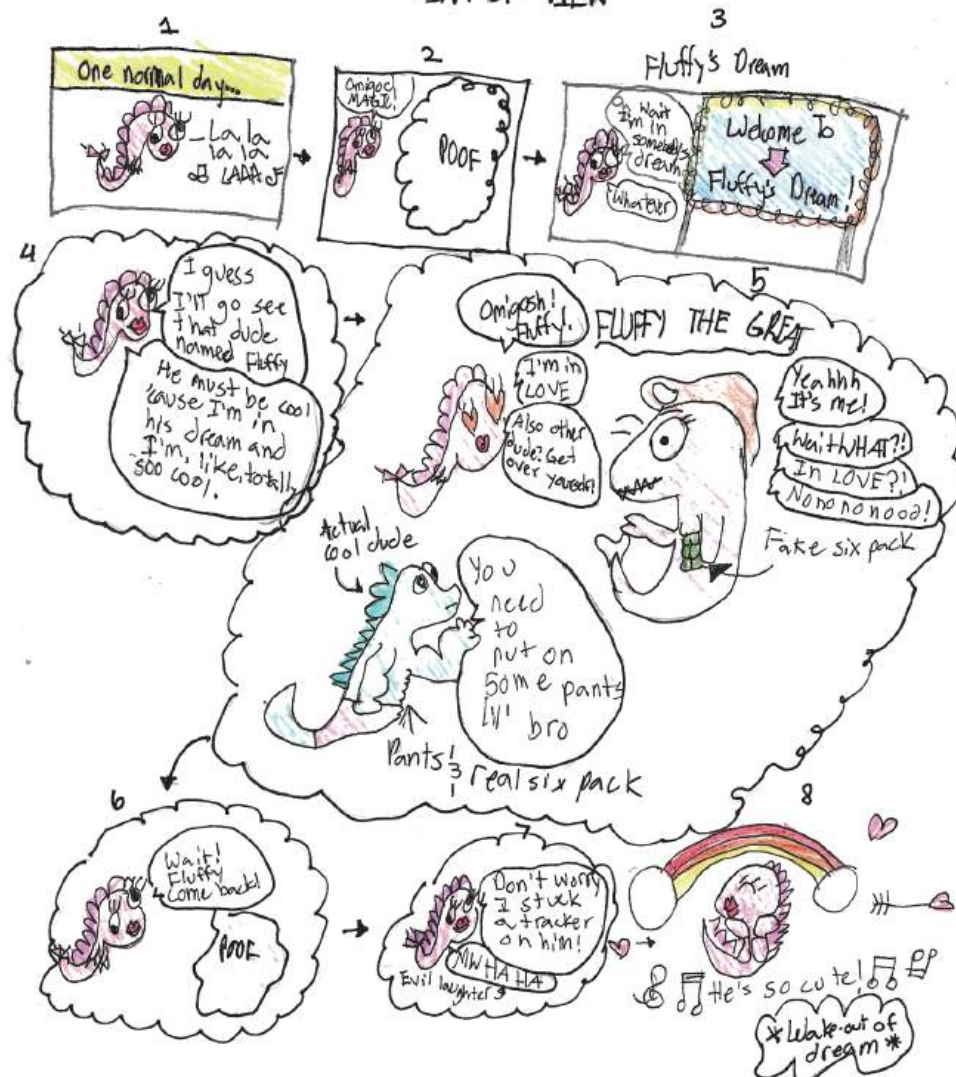
The murky water lay still in the sound of the midnight calls of birds, crickets, and other bugs. The smell of the swampy marsh hovered as an odd aroma. The sentinel statues lay as a shrine to the beings above. The moonlight shines through the damp leaves overhead.

The sparkling sky, crowded with glittery stars, was mirrored onto the blue, shining pond.

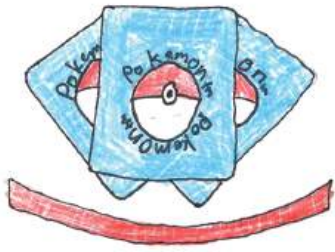
Fluffy's "GIRLFRIEND'S"

By Alya K., 10 and Sienna L.-E., 10

POINT OF VIEW



INSIDE A POKÉMON TRADING CARD SHOW



By Sebastian P., 11

The Project TCG Trading Card Show is a Pokémon card convention, a place where you can buy and sell Pokémon and even other card games. It takes place in Queens in New York City.

I drove with my dad to Queens, where we went to a parking garage. Then, we walked to the convention. Inside there were lots of different vendors selling Pokémon. At every table there was an overwhelming amount of Pokémon, old to new. You can buy single cards, fan art, and even sealed packs. The show is directed toward people who are into collecting and who care about pricing. The trading and buying system is based less on how you like your cards, and more about the actual market price.

Newer collectors might be overwhelmed due to all the different things to buy, from sealed packs to singles. Also, people can try to take advantage of you, especially if you're a kid, by suggesting you overpay for cards. Don't trade unless you know what your cards are worth.

I enjoyed the Project TCG Trading Card Show so much and I think it's a good experience for people who are into collecting Pokémon cards. Tickets cost \$10-\$15 and kids under 5 are free. Visit Project TCG online for tickets and event dates.



Beach Day

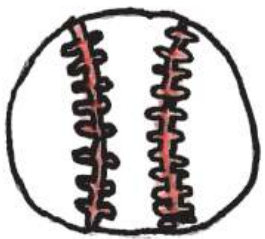


On a hot summer day, I'm going to the beach with my family. I hear seagulls, and I see them fly. I will never forget this wonderful trip.

-- Chloe K., 8



Cursed! Baseball's Most Infamous Legends



By Henry
H., 12

Art by Quinn



THE CURSE OF THE BAMBINO

One of the most famous baseball myths is the Curse of the Bambino. On December 26, 1919, Babe Ruth of the Boston Red Sox got traded to the New York Yankees. After the trade, the Red Sox went on to lose the next 86 seasons. Babe Ruth was an American baseball icon. He defined the sport of baseball in the 1920s. He had unheard of power at hitting and pitching. He transformed the game from a low scoring game to a power hitting spectacle. Popular nicknames are also "the great Bambino" and "the Sultan of Swat."

THE CURSE OF THE BILLY GOAT

The day is Saturday, October 6th, 1945. The Chicago Cubs were playing the Detroit Tigers in the World Series. Will Sianis planned to spend the game with his one-year-old baby Billy goat, Murphy, at Wrigley Field, where the Cubs play. One year earlier, Murphy, a baby goat at the time, fell off a truck and wandered into Will Sianis' restaurant, The Lincoln Tavern (now the Billy Goat Tavern). Will formally adopted the goat. When he got to the game, he was let in but not Murphy. So Will turned around and headed towards Wrigley Field, where he basically said, "You are going to lose this World Series and all the World Series after!" (Plus, a couple words I cannot repeat.) Later, he tried to sue the owner of Wrigley for damages, but he lost.

Verizon
Continued from page 5

where children play, however felt unsatisfied with the response he received. This spring, he reached out to Ardsley Mayor Steve Edelstein and Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner about working together to get a better response.

According to Edelstein, the quality of Verizon Wireless service in the village has been a source of frustration for years. When the village board was considering switching from parking meters to a parking app in 2023, “the problems with Verizon service was one of the main reasons we abandoned that plan and shifted toward the 3-hour free parking we currently have.”

At that time, he continued, Verizon told the Village they were working to co-locate their equipment on the T-Mobile tower on

Elm Street on the border with Dobbs Ferry. The Village received an estimate that the project would be completed in February or March 2024. Two years later, Edelstein said, Verizon has still “not installed on the tower, and in the view of residents, their service in the downtown area has gotten worse.”

The Village reached out to Verizon representatives, who indicated that there is an impediment to getting permission to use the tower.

“We continue to pursue the issue with Verizon on behalf of our residents,” Edelstein said. “We have been in touch with the County, which has been looking into the issue. Right now, we are seeking clarification from Verizon as to exactly what is holding up the project and have offered to assist them, to the extent we can, to get things resolved so they can move forward.”

After communications with account representatives led to little progress, Reddy,

with Edelstein’s encouragement, created the petition on *change.org* as a way to “quantify the impacts on the village.”

The petition urges Verizon to “prioritize the improvement of cellular coverage in Ardsley.”

“Access to dependable cellular service is no longer a luxury but a necessity, especially in an era where remote work and digital communication play significant roles in our daily lives,” the petition states. “Studies show that better cellular coverage boosts local economies and enhances public safety by enabling faster response times during emergencies.”

Josh Elkin, a resident of Ardsley since 2015, is among the signers. He shared with the Dispatch his experience with the cell coverage.

“It has deteriorated over time, and really for the last couple years has been in dire straits, resulting in dropped calls... by the high school, but particularly the downtown area with all those businesses.”

He described his perspective on the petition.

“I don’t know what levers we have to pull in order to help remedy the situation; certainly, I know people have been complaining, but it almost feels like it’s going nowhere,” he said. “I hope the petition raises awareness and can help identify what steps could actually be taken to resolve the issue.”

For Reddy, his goal is for the Village to get a commitment from Verizon by the end of the summer.

Edelstein stated that it is “mind-boggling that the largest cellphone carrier in the country cannot provide basic coverage in a populous suburb of New York City.”

“Our message to Verizon is simple,” he continued. “If you are in Ardsley, no, we can’t hear you now.”

The petition can be found at <https://c.org/nDcJpZegns>.

Acting Shakespeare
Continued from page 11

more accessible, and also as a baseline for people to play around with and build things off of,” Saliani told the Dispatch. Irvington Shakespeare Company, which Saliani launched in 2021, is the theater wing of a Pleasantville-based nonprofit called Centers for Independent Productions.

Saliani first debuted “Acting Shakespeare,” with a six-person cast, in 2021 before restructuring it as a one-person play in August 2025. Since then, he’s developed it further over the course of eight runs, including performances

at Pugsley Park in Peekskill in July and at the Pocantico Center in Tarrytown in June. The latest version, which he polished in May, ends with a monologue from Iago, taken from “Othello.”

Considered one of Shakespeare’s most infamous villains, Iago is “a master manipulator, charming, and people think there’s something to him, but he’s not perceived as an evil, wicked person at the beginning of the show,” Saliani explained. “And for me, that really captured the spirit of John Wilkes Booth in a lot of ways. Something was missing at the end of the show, for me at least, in the revelation of who he [Booth] was in his soul, and I think that

this Iago monologue really encapsulates that.”

Saliani began developing “Acting Shakespeare” in 2021 after coming across a grainy YouTube video of McKellen’s original and then reaching out to a former NYU Tisch School of the Arts professor to learn more about the production. After a chain of messages, Saliani received a letter from McKellen stating, “I prefer small potatoes to large ones, and I would be very happy for Kamran Saliani to revive ‘Acting Shakespeare’ at no charge.”

McKellen hasn’t attended any of Saliani’s performances, but if he did, Saliani says he “would hope that he’s proud and understands

that this show and his work is going to far outlive him and help build the next generation of people who experience Shakespeare, who really does reflect the world around us.”

ISC will stage “Acting Shakespeare” at Irvington Presbyterian Church, 25 N. Broadway, on Saturday Aug. 8 at 8 p.m., as well as the same time the following two Saturdays, Aug. 15 and 22. The performances include the option to purchase free community access tickets, while Saliani encourages those who can to buy tickets from one of six tiers, ranging from \$25 to \$1,000. To purchase tickets for all performances, visit irvshakespeare.org.

The Dispatch Classies are for person-to-person ads and notices to the community. Submissions are due by 12 p.m. Monday for that Friday’s paper. To purchase a classified notice, go to market.rivertownsdispatch.com/classies



PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Formation of Elster Rare Books & Art LLC filed with SSNY on 03/11/2026. Office Location: Westchester CountySSNY designated as agent of LLC upon whom process may be served. SSNY shall mail process to 12 Hazel Lane Larchmont, NY 10538. Purpose: any lawful act or activities.

NOTICE TO BIDDERS — ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION SERVICES

VILLAGE OF IRVINGTON REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS COMMUNITY REFORESTATION (CORE) GRANT ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION SERVICES CONTRACT #: 2026-41

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Request for Proposals for the Village of Irvington Communi-

ty Reforestation (CoRE) Grant Ecological Restoration Services project will be received by the Irvington Village Administrator’s office until 3PM on Friday, August 21, 2026. Respondents shall submit proposals in accordance with the submittal guidelines in the RFP.

The RFP document and all information relative thereto may be secured at the Irvington Village Clerk’s Office or downloaded from www.irvingtonny.gov. There is no cost for the Request for Proposal document. The Village will not be responsible for full or partial sets of contract documents, including any addenda obtained from any other source.

The Village of Irvington reserves the right to waive any informalities in the bids; or to reject any or all bids. No bidder may withdraw his bid within forty-five (45) days after the actual date of the opening thereof.

All questions should be directed to Karen Buccheri, Assistant to the Village Administrator at (914) 591-4356 or by e-mail at kbuccheri@irvingtonny.gov

Katie Bugna, Clerk/Treasurer Village of Irvington July 31, 2026

LEGAL NOTICE — 33 JEFFERSON AVENUE

VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON 7 Maple Avenue Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

The Planning Board Pursuant to the provisions of Section 295-143B & 295-120C.4 of the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson Zoning Code, Notice is hereby given that: A Public Hearing will be held by the Planning Board on Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 7:00 pm, in the Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 7 Maple Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. The Hearing will be held on the application of Ed & Marci Ponagai for the Subdivision of their property with Steep Slopes, as per Section 295-120 & 249 of the Village Code, for the creation of a new building lot located at 33 Jefferson Avenue. Said property is located in the R-10 Zoning District and is known as SBL: 4.80-74-6 on the Town of Greenburgh

Tax Maps. The Planning Board will, at this time and place, hear all persons in support of such matters and any objections thereto. Plans will be made available for review at the Building Department or on the Village web site, www.hohny.gov, on or about the Friday preceding the meeting date. Eva Alligood, Chair, PB

LEGAL NOTICE — 1 NORTH STREET

VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON 7 Maple Avenue Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706

The Planning Board Pursuant to the provisions of Section 295-143B of the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson Zoning Code, Notice is hereby given that: A Public Hearing will be held by the Planning Board on Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 7:00 pm, in the Meeting Room, Municipal Building, 7 Maple Avenue, Hastings-on-Hudson, New York. The Hearing will be held on the application of Mira Properties One North Steet, LLC, for Site Plan Approval, as per Section 295-104 of the Village Code, for the conversion of a commercial building

to a mixed-use building with four (4) apartments and one (1) commercial space with twelve (12) parking spaces located at 1 North Street. Said property is in the MR-C Zoning District and is known as SBL: 4.30-21-1 on the Greenburgh Tax Maps. The Planning Board will, at this time and place, hear all persons in support of such matters and any objections thereto. Plans will be made available for review at the Building Department or on the Village web site, www.hohny.gov, on or about the Friday preceding the meeting date. Eva Alligood, Chair, PB



HELP WANTED

HELP WANTED

Robert Legal Group — a local Special Needs Planning, Guardianship, Estate Planning, and Elder Law firm, and the official notary of the Rivertown Dispatch — is hiring a Paralegal/Legal Assistant. No legal experience needed;

we’ll train the right person.

The office is based at HudCo, the beautiful co-working space right here in Dobbs Ferry (where this very paper is put together!). Bright workspace, great coffee, and a real community of local professionals — and the job comes with a full HudCo membership, so you can use the space on your own time too.

We just ask for about 20 hours a week in person at HudCo; the rest of your hours are remote, on your own schedule. Great for anyone balancing school pickups or other commitments.

You’d help with correspondence, mailings, e-filings, scanning, and keeping case files organized for families we serve. Details matter, but we’ll teach you the rest.

Looking for: reliable transportation to Dobbs Ferry, organized and punctual, comfortable with Google Drive and cloud tools.

Competitive hourly rate. Send a resume and your ideal schedule to info@robertlegalgroup.com.

PHOTO WALL



DOG OF THE WEEK

Bullet is one of the Paws Crossed Animal Rescue’s Pets of the Week. Reach out to adoptions@pawscrossedny.org to learn more!



CAT OF THE WEEK

Juda is one of the Paws Crossed Animal Rescue’s Pets of the Week. Reach out to adoptions@pawscrossedny.org to learn more!

Opinion

The Dispatch welcomes letters to the editor about subjects related to the Rivertowns. Letters must be no more than 300 words, submitted by Monday at noon for that week's issue, and include the names, home addresses, and phone numbers of their writers. No letter is guaranteed publication. To submit a letter, visit rivertownsd Dispatch.com/contact-us

Yonkers sewage spill a failure of leadership, not just infrastructure

To the Editor:

On July 3, 2026 a power failure at the Yonkers Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant resulted in the discharge of approximately 39 million gallons of partially chlorinated wastewater into the Hudson. Health advisories were issued from New York City north through Westchester, beaches and businesses were closed, and residents were warned to avoid contact with river water.

This spill, an environmental disaster, has not been adequately addressed. It is shocking that a sewage system which supports major portions of the Bronx River Valley including parts of Yonkers, White Plains, Mount Vernon, Eastchester, Scarsdale, and Greenburgh did not have an adequate backup plan. Beyond initial warnings to stay away from the river, there have been no press conferences, no discussions, no plans, and little apparent concern for people or businesses who cannot use the river due to contamination. There has been no update on the Westchester County Government website since July 3.

Where is the leadership? During last year's debate for Westchester County executive, Ken Jenkins said that he had been investing in repairs to the aging plant. He also said that he had federal partnerships, including with George Latimer, that would help secure grants to address these issues. Where is the money? Where is the plan to prevent a disaster like this from happening again?

A quick question to A.I. results in several grants that are available from the state and federal governments. Our representative, Andrea Stewart-Cousins, is the New York State Senate majority leader. Why are critical infrastructure projects being ignored?

Elected officials must be held accountable for doing their jobs. There is something we

can do: vote these people out of office. Replace them with leaders who are qualified, willing to do the hard work of fixing real problems, and committed to being proactive in preventing future disasters.

Michelle Spiniello

DOBBS FERRY

Latimer's actions and inactions reflect loss of support for Israel

To the Editor:

There are reasons that support for Israel is cratering in this country and around the world, and George Latimer's actions, inactions, and acceptance of millions of dollars of AIPAC money epitomize those reasons.

Last fall, my son, an independent journalist, was attacked by a group of settlers in the West Bank. I called U.S. Rep. Latimer's office, hoping he could intervene to get help from the American Embassy, and was told I would receive a call back. I never did. I emailed regularly and finally received this from the congressman's office: "I relayed your concerns to the Congressman. Because of the shutdown, there is some disarray, as you might imagine. He will respond to you shortly." Never heard back despite continuing to call on a daily basis.

It is very moving that Mr. Latimer paid a visit to Israel after the massacre of Oct. 7, 2023. What is stopping him now from paying a visit to the West Bank communities enduring brutal pogroms on a daily basis by Jewish settlers supported by the IDF. If he'd like an itinerary, I'm sure his colleague Rep. Ro Khanna could provide one. Perhaps it could include a visit to the parents of the 7-month-old baby shot and killed by an IDF soldier with absolutely no accountability.

I'm a 77-year-old Jewish grandmother who had numerous family members killed in the Holocaust. If you've lost me, you've lost.

Sharon Diamond, M.D.

HASTINGS

Latimer supports funding for 'devastating actions'

To the Editor:

Letters regarding George Latimer's voting record in last week's Dispatch fail to address the more than \$14 million spent in support of him during the 2024 Democratic primary by the American Israel Political Action Committee (AIPAC) and its affiliated PACs.

Since Mr. Latimer's victory in the primary, AIPAC has invested millions of dollars to support the goal stated on its website: "leading the political fight to keep Congress pro-Israel, helping pro-Israel candidates win elections and helping defeat detractors of the U.S.-Israel relationship." The influence of special-interest money in American politics has become a significant concern. It seems naïve to believe that huge financial support from AIPAC wouldn't influence how politicians like Mr. Latimer vote on matters related to Israel. This includes his recent vote against cutting \$3.3 billion in annual military aid to Israel (unlike 103 other House Democrats).

Our congressman continues to support funding the Netanyahu government's devastating actions. No matter what one thinks about the right of the State of Israel to exist or about the critical need to address antisemitism throughout the world, it is unconscionable for any group or country to terrorize and murder noncombatants, including children. This isn't just the view of much of the world community. In June, The Guardian reported on a letter to the Netanyahu government signed by dozens of former Israeli leaders, including prime ministers and heads of Mossad, protesting what the signers called "Jewish terrorism" carried out "with almost complete impunity." The letter described violence in the West Bank as "reminiscent of similar crimes and pogroms committed against our people by other nations in eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries."

This cruelty violates international law, basic

ethical principles, and often, the laws of Israel itself. It should not be supported by our congressman or with our tax dollars.

Marla Hamberger, Paul Harris, Susan Harris, Martin Laskin, Judith Leipzig, Richard Schotter, Roni Schotter, William Seidel, Sandra Selikson, and Meg Walker

HASTINGS

Recognize needs of Israelis and Palestinians

To the Editor:

The debate over Israel's actions in Lebanon and Gaza often overlooks a fundamental reality — Israel did not start these conflicts. It is responding to years of T attacks by armed groups that openly seek its destruction.

Hezbollah in Lebanon has amassed a massive arsenal of rockets aimed at Israeli communities and has attacked Israel's northern border. Hamas in Gaza launched the October 7 terrorist attack, murdering civilians, taking hostages, and triggering a war that has caused immense suffering.

Every country has the right and responsibility to protect its citizens from terrorism. That does not mean every military decision should be beyond criticism, or that civilian suffering should be ignored. The suffering of Palestinian civilians is heartbreaking and deserves compassion. But that tragedy cannot be separated from the actions of Hamas and Hezbollah, which have embedded military operations among civilian populations.

A fair discussion must recognize both realities — civilians on all sides deserve protection, and Israel, like every nation, has the right to defend itself against organizations committed to its destruction. Lasting peace will require holding terrorists accountable, protecting civilians, and recognizing the legitimate security needs of both Israelis and Palestinians.

STEVE EPSTEIN

SCARSDALE

Ask the Dispatch. We'll Do the Research.

Have a burning question about our community, local issues, or something you've always wondered? Our team of journalists is ready to dig deep and find the answers you're looking for. Just ask the Dispatch.

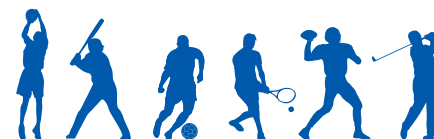


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Sports

EDITED BY ROB DIANTONIO

Irvington holds off Dobbs Ferry in third-place game

— O'HARA SUMMER LEAGUE —

BY ROB DIANTONIO

Alexis Im and Irvington had struggled at the foul line for much of the night, but when the Bulldogs needed her most, the rising junior delivered on July 30 at Irvington High School.

With Dobbs Ferry within one possession and less than 35 seconds remaining, Im grabbed a crucial defensive rebound and then sank two free throws to seal Irvington's 22-17 victory in the third-place game of the O'Hara Girls' Basketball Summer League.

Im's free throws capped a tense finish after Dobbs Ferry had cut an eight-point halftime deficit to three. The Eagles had an opportunity to tie the game, but Quinn Cronin's three-point attempt with 36 seconds left missed, and Im secured the rebound before extending the lead to five at the other end.

"I think what was key was just getting big rebounds and making two big free throws at the end," Irvington coach Kaitlin Degnan said. "It was kind of like a grudge match all game. We played hard and we didn't give up."

Rising junior Brooke Lee led Irvington with 10 points, including eight in the first half, as the Bulldogs finished the summer league with a 6-3 record and placed third for the second consecutive year.

Lee consistently created offense off the dribble during a game in which both teams struggled to score. She attacked the basket, generated transition opportunities, and helped Irvington build a 14-6 halftime advantage.

"Brooke Lee and Alexis Im are two people that are going to be key contributors in what we do in our offense this year," Degnan said. "Brooke takes the ball awesome off the dribble, as well as Alexis. I think the two of them are going to be a really good twosome for us, complemented by Lillian Duke."

Although Irvington led throughout the second half, Dobbs Ferry refused to let the game get away. The Eagles outscored the Bulldogs 11-8 after halftime and pulled within 20-17 when Cronin split two free throws with 1:24 remaining.

That comeback was another encouraging sign for a Dobbs Ferry team that won several games during the summer despite relying on a largely inexperienced lineup. Rising sophomore Bridget Turner and eighth-graders Cronin and Madison Hall were among the Eagles' most prominent players throughout the league.

"We're very young," Dobbs Ferry coach Kasey Grisanti said. "We're still kind of getting to know each other. But I think from the first game to this game, they have already come a long way. They're relying on each other more, learning together and giving all their effort."

Cronin led Dobbs Ferry with seven points



(Above) Irvington's Brooke Lee looks to convert a fastbreak as Dobbs' Bridget Turner defends. (Below left) Dobbs' Madison Hall looks to get past Irvington's Maddie Chafizadeh. (Below center) Dobbs' Sophia Ritch shoots. (Below right) Irvington's Alexis Im attacks the basket as Dobbs' Isabella Vicchio defends. Photos by Rob DiAntonio.



and helped keep the Eagles in striking distance during both halves. Grisanti identified Cronin, Turner, and Hall as three of the team's biggest standouts during the summer.

"They all know the game a little more, and they're very passionate about playing," Grisanti said. "Quinn and Bridget can both handle the ball, so that can be something this season

where they both kind of share that role."

Irvington also received an important performance from rising junior Alex Barth, who scored three points and made a significant impact on the boards. Degnan estimated that Barth collected between eight and 10 rebounds despite being one of the smaller players on the floor.

"Alex Barth was huge with the rebounds

throughout the whole game," Degnan said. "In a game like this when it's so low scoring and we're struggling to score, to have somebody be in there doing the little things was big."

Barth's work on the glass was particularly valuable because neither team found much rhythm offensively. Missed free throws

Continued on page 19

Sports

Kearns prepares for final run as quarterback for Dobbs

BY ROB DIANTONIO

Dobbs Ferry rising senior Jackson Kearns plays quarterback and is a team captain for the varsity football team. He is coming off an all-section season where the Eagles advanced to the Section 1 Class C championship game, falling to Bronxville. Kearns is also a high-scoring attackman for the boys' lacrosse squad. The Rivertowns Dispatch caught up with Kearns a month before the Eagles hit the gridiron for their opening game, which is slated for Sept. 3 against Hastings.

Going into your senior season, how do you feel you've grown as a quarterback since you first took over the position at the varsity level?

I think one of the things that I've improved on the most is being able to manage the game. It was one of the hardest parts of last season, especially with it being my first year playing quarterback at the varsity level. Having a full season of experience under my belt helps me feel much more comfortable going into this year.

What parts of your game have you worked on the most this offseason, and where do you think you've made the biggest improvement?

I've focused a lot on my speed and agility, but the main thing I've tried to focus on is being as good as I possibly can be at the small details. That's where I feel like I've found the most improvement.

The team had a great run last year but it ended with a tough loss to Bronxville in the section championship game. What did you take away from that game, and how much has it motivated the team this offseason?

It's been very motivating. We've been to the section championship the last two years and have come up short both times. Our only focus this offseason has been working as hard as we can to get back to that point.



Dobbs Ferry quarterback Jackson Kearns rushes for yards last season. File photo by Rob DiAntonio.

As a quarterback and a team captain, you're naturally in a leadership position. How would you describe your leadership style, and has

that changed as you've gotten older?

I've always tried to just lead by example, but I feel like as I've gotten older, I've grown

more of a voice. We also have a great coaching staff that provides us with the best leadership we could ask for, so a lot of the time, leading is just doing exactly what they're telling me to do.

What have you seen from the team during the offseason that gives you confidence you can make another run this fall?

There are a couple of things that give me confidence going into this year. We've had great energy and attendance at all of our off-season runs and lifts, starting back in January, and I know how much our coaches care and how much effort they've put in this off-season as well. I also know how badly we as players want to play and win for each other.

You're going to have some players stepping into bigger roles this season. What have you tried to do as a captain to help those guys get ready?

The main thing that we've been focusing on is building our chemistry. We go to the field on our own a lot, and they run routes while I throw. I'm confident in everyone who needs to step up as an athlete. It's mostly just about getting comfortable with playing together.

What do you enjoy most about playing quarterback, and what do you think is the most challenging part of the position?

My favorite part about playing quarterback is that I have the ball in my hands on every play. The hardest part about it is having to know every person's assignment on every play.

It's your final season playing football at Dobbs Ferry. When it's all over, what do you hope people remember about you and this senior class?

Dobbs Ferry is a great town with a very rich football tradition. I just hope that myself and this class of seniors do a good job of representing that.

O'Hara girls league

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and empty possessions kept the score low, but Irvington maintained its advantage by defending, rebounding, and creating just enough offense in transition.

Lee scored the game's first point by making one of two free throws before Cronin gave Dobbs Ferry its only lead with a left-wing three-pointer. Lee answered with a drive to tie the score, and Ava Ecklund followed with a three-pointer to put Irvington ahead 6-3.

Cronin converted another basket but missed the ensuing free throw, leaving Irvington with a 6-5 lead after the opening quarter.

The Bulldogs created their separation early

in the second. Lee scored off a steal with 8:24 remaining and then went coast to coast less than 30 seconds later, pushing the lead to 10-5.

Turner split two free throws for Dobbs Ferry before Lee made one of two at the line. Chloe Annicharico then connected on a right-wing three-pointer with 23 seconds remaining, sending Irvington into halftime ahead 14-6.

Dobbs Ferry began cutting into the deficit after the break. Cronin drove for a basket early in the third quarter, and Sophia Ritch scored to make it 14-10.

Barth answered by making two free throws, but Turner scored on a baseline drive to bring the Eagles back within four. Barth split another pair at the line late in the quarter, giving Irvington a 17-12 advantage entering the fourth.

Ecklund and Lee each made one free throw early in the final period to extend the lead to 19-12. Emi Lin then scored for Dobbs Ferry, and Hall hit a jumper with 2:01 remaining to pull the Eagles within three.

Lee made one of two free throws before Cronin answered at the line, setting up the decisive final sequence.

For Irvington, another third-place finish was encouraging because the Bulldogs entered the summer with a much younger group than the previous year, when the team had five seniors compete in the third-place game.

"It shows that we're where we need to be with our younger core of people," Degnan said. "The fact that all of them were consistently here shows a real positive for us going

into the rest of the summer and the fall."

Degnan also praised the progress of younger players such as rising sophomore Duke and eighth-grader Maddie Chafizadeh. She believes Irvington's quickness could become one of its biggest strengths, with Lee, Im, and Duke helping the Bulldogs push the pace and attack in transition.

Dobbs Ferry hopes to continue developing its young group by competing in a fall league. Grisanti said the additional games should help the Eagles become more comfortable with one another before the varsity season begins.

"It's huge," Grisanti said. "That's why I love playing in this league every summer. By the time the season is here, we already have it and we're a step ahead."



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