BY BOB DUMAS
EDITOR

In a standing-room-only meeting at the Mahopac Library’s community room on Sunday (Oct. 28) residents showed up to learn more about two proposed cell towers and how they can stop them—or at least get them moved to another location.

Danbury-based Homeland Towers went before the Planning Board last month seeking site plan approval for two towers—a 157-foot pole at 36 Dixon Road near McDonough Park, and a 180-foot pole at 254 Croton Falls Road. Both towers would be built on residential properties in residentially zoned areas—and therein lies the controversy: Some residents and town officials feel Homeland Towers didn’t do its due diligence in finding better locations for the poles.

Sunday’s meeting was organized by Mahopac resident Bob Buckley, who created a Facebook page called "No Cell Towers in Residential Neighborhoods in Carmel, NY," and was attended by dozens of homeowners who live in the vicinity of the proposed towers, as well as members of the Town Board, Planning Board and the Putnam County Legislature. Buckley has researched the issue, speaking with engineers and Homeland and town officials as well as examining both local and federal law.

Buckley explained that the 1996 Federal Telecommunication Act prohibits tower opponents from arguing safety and health issues, so he said Mahopac residents need to take a different tack.

"[The Telecommunication Act] makes it difficult for a planning board to say ‘no,’” Buckley said. “[Wireless providers] know that local municipalities can’t argue health and safety. You just can’t win.”

However, Buckley said, other strategies can be employed to convince Homeland to move the towers somewhere else before any legal battles are undertaken.

Buckley discussed at length the recently rewritten Carmel town code that addresses cell towers and antennae, pointing out that it breaks down into six categories, from the most desirable locations to the least desirable. He noted that these two towers’ proposed locations fall to fifth on the list because they are in residentially zoned areas.

Homeland is building the towers for wireless carriers Verizon, T-Mobile, Sprint and AT&T, and the property owners would collect rent from the carriers. The property at 254 Croton Falls Road is owned by Richard Diehl; the property at 36 Dixon Road is owned by John Spacarelli.

Buckley said he met with some Town Board members and a Homeland official to discuss alternative sites. A parcel of land owned by the town behind McDonough Park could be a palatable alternative for the Dixon Road tower, especially because the town would collect the revenue. An alternative site for the Croton Falls Road tower was found on Watermelon Hill Road, but Buckley said Homeland rejected it.

Buckley said he believes that Homeland hasn’t properly explored other possible locations outside of residential areas because the search would be costly to them.

“It’s a shell game,” he said. “But I am not selling out. No cell towers in residential areas, period.”

Buckley suggested that the Town Board can play a role by “squeezing” Homeland to comply with the town code regarding the hierarchy of tower locations.

“We need to apply pressure with legal [reasons], he said. “No emotional reasons. You won’t win the battle that way. But aesthetic [arguments] and the fact that home values will decrease will.”

Buckley, who lives on Eleanor Drive near the proposed Croton Falls Road tower, said he likes to sit out on his deck and...
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Mahopac couple gets 23 minutes of fame on ‘House Hunters’

HGTV show featuring Greg and Annette Brown aired in September

BY BOB DUMAS
EDITOR

Greg Brown took a job last year as a special education teacher at Mahopac High School. That meant that he and his wife, Annette, would need to find a home in Mahopac so Greg could be closer to his job.

This is the story of how Greg and Annette became “House Hunters” and mini-celebrity TV stars.

Greg, who coaches the varsity ski team in addition to his special ed duties, is from the suburbs of Philadelphia. Annette hails from Hopewell Junction in Dutchess County. They met while going to school at Penn State and have been together ever since.

“Annette is definitely my better half,” Greg admits.

With the new job in the school district secured, the couple began looking for a home in Mahopac. “We really liked the community, the price point [of houses] and the people who live there,” Greg said. “It seemed like a natural fit. Moving closer would give us a lot of flexibility. With a shorter commute, I could stay late after school and coach the ski team and stay after school for extra help. That freed up a lot of time.”

As they began their search for their new home, Annette got the idea that perhaps their journey would be a good match for the HGTV hit program, “House Hunters.”

“We are big fans of HGTV in general,” Greg said. “Not just ‘House Hunters.’ My wife would come home from work and I’d be watching TV and she’d say she’d rather watch something else. HGTV is a really good compromise,” Annette said they’ve seen so many “House Hunter” episodes, they are starting to watch the reruns.

“We’ve watched the shows where we already know how it’s going to end,” she laughed. “So, once we decided we wanted to move to this community, I thought, ‘Let me Google this to see if there are any opportunities [to get on ‘House Hunters’].’ I found the website where you can apply, and we were lucky enough to make it through all the interviews. It was a really great process. We knew what we wanted [in a house], so that helped us show up as a pretty dynamic couple and that made it easy for them as far as casting goes.”

Greg said he was caught off-guard when the “House Hunters” team said they’d like to interview the couple for a spot on the show.

“My wife did the application without ever letting me know,” he said. “I am kind of set in my ways and she said, ‘Well, we have an interview,’” and I said, ‘What are you talking about?’”

As for the actual process and how the show works, the Browns couldn’t discuss too many details because of the nondisclosure agreement they signed. They had already been working with real estate broker Laura Fasciglione, who works for Houlihan Lawrence based out of Jefferson Valley, so when the production team asked them if they had a broker, they enthusiastically replied, “Yes!”

“They asked them if they liked their agent and they said yes,” Fasciglione said. “It aired in September and I thought, I hope this helps me! I am putting [the link to the video] on the signature line of all my emails.”

Fasciglione said she was surprised how arduous the filming of the show was, considering it’s only a 23-minute episode.

“There were 30 hours of filming for 23 minutes,” she said. “It took two weekends. I was nervous in the beginning and it was 90 degrees out and we were freezing. The first day, we outside for an hour and a half and I was so cold I could hardly speak.”

Nonetheless, Fasciglione said that taking part in the show was a wonderful experience.

“We really had a good time,” she said. “I remember, I texted the director and said please don’t make me look like an idiot!”

“It definitely was a lot of work,” Greg agreed. “You don’t realize it until you get into it. The film crew and everyone was great, but we didn’t get to see a preview of the show, so we were watching it at the same time as the rest of America. We were very pleased with how it came out. It was nerve-wracking hoping everything would come out OK.”

Greg said he heard from friends and relatives via text messages in real-time while they were watching the program.

“In the beginning, we were watching it the same time as the rest of America. We were very pleased with how it came out. It was nerve-wracking hoping everything would come out OK.”

Greg said he heard from friends and relatives via text messages in real-time while they were watching the program.

The Browns say they were ultimately happy with the home they chose and their new neighborhood.

“I definitely love it here and my wife does, too. We are close to her family and get to see them a lot,” he said. “It’s a good location for us and the people on the block are incredible. Couldn’t ask for a better spot to live.”

Annette said that she and Greg have already bonded with their new neighbors.

“We have an amazing street,” she said. “There are parties and bonfires…we can’t imagine living anywhere else.”

And the Browns have already done some small remodeling projects around the property to put their stamp on it and make it officially their home.

“We painted the entire house and added trim and molding and installed a new water filtration system,” Greg said. “We installed proper drainage and regraded the lawn, put in a garden and added new fencing.”

Annette, whose job is in social-media marketing, also dabbles in the arts and throughout the episode she repeatedly said she wanted their new house to include a space where she could create an art studio and do her painting.

“I was looking for a space for my art and we found that,” she said. “I created an art company called Lucky Mountain Art with my mom and we take our art and sell it at street fairs, flea markets, art shows.”

“The ‘House Hunters’ experience is something the Browns will never forget.”

“We had a lot of fun doing it,” Annette said. “Laura really listened to our needs. And luckily, we are still pretty anonymous when we go around town, which is great.”

To view the Brown’s “House Hunters” episode, go to: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRIOCMnrLc4

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Bring your dogs, cats, and ferrets to a free rabies vaccination clinic on Saturday, Nov. 3, from 2–4 p.m. Sponsored by the Putnam County Department of Health, the clinic is being held at Brook Farm Veterinary Center, 2371 Route 22, Patterson, and is open to all Putnam County residents. Bring photo ID as proof of Putnam County residency, as well as proof of prior rabies vaccination. Tags are not acceptable. If you do not have proof of prior rabies vaccination, your pet will receive a one-year rabies vaccine. All dogs must be leashed and controlled. Any dog that may become aggressive must be muzzled. Cats and ferrets must be in carriers. For more information and directions, call the Department of Health at 845-808-1390 ext. 43160.

Mahopac Library Events

Horror Story Book Group Saturday, Nov. 3, 10 a.m. This group, led by Heather Powderly, meets on the first Saturday of each month to read and discuss horror novels. On Nov. 3, the group will discuss "The Cabin at the End of the World" by Paul Tremblay, pick up a copy of the book at the library’s Circulation Desk. Drop-in group; no registration needed. Visit www.mahopaclibrary.org for more information.

Artists’ Reception Sunday, Nov. 4, 2–4 p.m. Public reception for the Third Floor Gallery exhibit entitled: "The American Dream," in the veteran’s perspective. This show features mixed-media work by Ron Whitehead. Whitehead’s show will remain on view at Mahopac Library through Nov. 30. For further information visit www.mahopaclibrary.org.

3D Pen Glowing Constellations Wednesday, Nov. 7, 4:30 p.m. This event is for grades 3-5. Use our 3Doodler Start pens to create a glowing constellation. Registration is requested; register online at www.mahopaclibrary.org, or call 845-628-2009, ext. 100. Mahopac 101 Thursday, Nov. 8, 1 p.m. This is a basic Medicare overview for those individuals who are turning 65, are losing group/employer health coverage and who need to enroll in Medicare for the first time, need/want to change their current plan, or are receiving Extra Help (Part D) or would like to learn about Extra Help (Part D) and the Medicare Savings Program (Part B). This free program is presented by Jackie Gallagher. Registration requested; register online at www.mahopaclibrary.org, or call 845-628-2009, ext. 100.

Teens Who Care Thursday, Nov. 8, 3:30 p.m. Join us once a month to plan future activities that will make a difference in your community. Coordinator will be given for all meetings and special events. For further information visit www.mahopaclibrary.org, and click the ‘Get Involved’ link to download a Teen Volunteer Application. For questions and additional information call 845-628-2009, ext. 136.

Medicare 101 Thursday, Nov. 8, 10 a.m. Join us once a month to plan future activities that will make a difference in your community. Coordinator will be given for all meetings and special events. For further information visit www.mahopaclibrary.org, and click the ‘Get Involved’ link to download a Teen Volunteer Application. For questions and additional information call 845-628-2009, ext. 136.

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Legislator Joe Castellano gave himself a 14%, $5,000 raise for a part-time job. As Chairman of the Legislature he now makes over $50,000!

Castellano voted each of the last six years to increase your County property taxes.

Castellano voted to balance the budget on the backs of County retirees by taking away health care benefits.

I will never take a pay raise ... ever. The solution to not making enough in public service is not giving yourself a raise, it’s not running for re-election.

I will never vote to appoint family members or close friends to taxpayer funded jobs.

I will fight to allow the public to speak before legislative votes.

I will be transparent on the personnel portion of the budget, especially the parts showing patronage jobs and self-serving pay raises.
District 7 Legislature candidates face off at debate
Castellano and Reing deliberate county issues

BY BOB DUMAS
EDITOR

Incumbent Republican Joseph Castellano will face Democratic challenger Scott Reing in the Nov. 6 election for the District 7 seat of the Putnam County Legislature. District 7 includes parts of Mahopac, Southeast and the village of Brewster.

The two faced off during a Putnam County League of Women Voters debate last week at the Mahopac Public Library. The candidates talked about their qualifications for the office and fielded questions from the standing-room-only audience.

Here is an edited account of the debate:

JOSEPH CASTELLANO

Castellano was first elected in 2012 and seeks his third term in the legislature. He is a public servant with over 23 years’ service in county government. He currently works as program coordinator for the legal division of the state Supreme Court in White Plains. His wife and two daughters moved to Brewster over 20 years ago.

Castellano was named deputy chair of the legislature three years ago and last January he was unanimously voted as chairman.

“Under my tenure with the Putnam County Legislature we have passed five budgets, all under the Albany tax cap—soon to be six—and eliminated $17 million in short-term debt, and $15 million in long-term debt,” Castellano said. “I am proud of the Putnam County properties that we helped improve over the last six years—Putnam County Golf Course, Tilly Foster Farm, and the Putnam County Bike Trail.”

SCOTT REING

This is Reing’s first time running for public office. He is a Mahopac resident with two children who says he wants to make the county the best it can be for as long it can.

“I don’t want to just meet the tax cap, I want to try to not raise taxes,” he said. “I am not satisfied with 2 percent raises, I want 0 percent raises. Putnam County has raised your taxes for the past six or seven years. I know I don’t sound like a Democrat when I say this, but I don’t want to raise taxes. If I didn’t like a challenge, I wouldn’t be running as a Democrat in Putnam county.

My plan is to cut spending where we can, raise non-tax revenue where we can,” he added. “There are other ways [to raise money] and we need to investigate them. I will work in a bipartisan way.”

What kind of businesses would you support coming into the community?

Castellano

We are always for smart growth in Putnam County. We want to make sure people are able to do business in Putnam County and we are willing to help any way we can. I would love to see businesses come here and we try our best at the legislature in any way we can to help ease the process.

Reing

“I would support any kind of business that brings jobs and money to our community. One problem we have in Putnam is that our sales tax is higher than surrounding counties. It’s 1 percent higher than Westchester. We need to work to make it fair for our businesses and our consumers that we can make as much money as neighboring counties.”

Castellano

That 1 percent [extra] sales tax represents $15 million. If we cut $15 million from that sales tax, we would have to make some really deep cuts in our system. It’s just not possible. We have looked at it and talked about it and tried to remove it but at the end of the day it’s a smart way to conduct business. We would have to increase the taxes on [homeowners] to cover it.

Reing

Just because something is difficult doesn’t mean we shouldn’t do it. It doesn’t mean we shouldn’t investigate how to do it. There are seven different counties across New York that have investment fees for when people move in that would raise far more than the 1 percent. I am not even suggesting that we remove the entire 1 percent… but half a percent would be nice. For other revenue, we could slap advertising on county buses. We can raise revenue without raising anyone’s taxes.

What do you see as your role as legislators, as opposed to that of the county executive?

Reing

I don’t think my job is to work with the executive; it’s to be a check on the executive. Legislative bodies are there to check the executive … they are there to check the emperor. I don’t want to act as a rubber
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enjoy the scenery, but if the cell tower is built that will change. “Sitting on my back deck is heaven, but this would affect my view,” he said. “This definitely impacts property values.”

Bryce Fiero, who said he lives about 1,000 feet from where the Croton Falls tower would be located, suggested that another strategy to fight the proposed locations would be to argue the pole’s proximity to historical sites. “The Old Mahopac Playhouse is near there—and that is historical,” he said. “We have great laws; we just need to enforce them. No hardship has been established by Homeland for needing to put the towers in residential areas. It is going to be an eyesore.”

The town code limits cell towers in residential areas to 50 feet, with a 50 percent increase under certain circumstances, bringing it to a maximum of 75 feet. The two proposed towers would exceed that limit by 75 to 105 feet and thus require a variance. Buckley said he was told the tallest trees in these areas are around 80 feet, so the Croton Falls Road tower would rise 100 feet above the tree line.

Verizon and the other carriers said the towers are needed to fill voids in coverage in these areas. “The area has bad coverage right now, I am not afraid to admit that,” Buckley said. But, he added, that hasn’t always been the case.

“There is no question that my service has been decreased,” he said. “For five years I had great service. Now, it drops out all time. Seems like something is going on.”

Buckley had praise for town officials, including town planner Jim Cleary, building inspector Mike Carnazza and town engineer Rich Franzetti for the work they’ve done on the site-plan applications. The Planning Board, he noted, has hired a wire- less communication consultant named Ron Graiff to help them with the technical aspects of the applications.

“I spoke with [Homeland officials] and they said they liked [Graiff], that he is good to deal with,” Buckley said. “I don’t know if that is a good thing. We want someone who is looking out for the town 100 percent. I would ask the Town Board and Planning Board to reconsider and get someone who is ruthless and not in that loop.”

Supervisor Ken Schmitt told the crowd that he was opposed to the proposed location of the towers and though he couldn’t speak for the rest of the Town Board, he believed they were as well.

“These are bad locations,” he said. “We have been proactive on this issue and support your efforts. We are genuinely going to try to stop these cell towers from being constructed in residential neighborhoods. They have to say why they have not chosen a higher-priority site and clearly, they haven’t done this.”

Schmitt pointed out that the FCC Telecommunication Act contains a “shot clock” clause, under which the Planning Board has 150 days to approve the project once the application is completed. However, Schmitt noted, the Planning Board has declared the application incomplete, so the clock has not yet started.

Buckley urged audience members to show up at the next Planning Board meeting when Homeland Towers is on the agenda.
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Time for change

O

ver the last several decades, an
unrepresentative share of vot-
ers in both Putnam County
and the town of Car-
mel, pandered to by the
Republican Party, have
determined election out-
comes and influenced the
distribution of services.
Seniors, especially, have
had a disproportionate
effect.

However, in 2017, a
surprisingly robust showing of Putnam
County Democrats and independents
elected a political novice, Bob Langley, to
the office of sheriff, defeating Don Smith,
many county residents and the
Republican National Committee.
This singular defeat of a popular Republican
may well serve as a portent of things to come as two locally entrenched
and patently conservative Republican offi-
cetheors seek reelection, and Democrats
stir, awakening from their long, drawn-out
sleep.

Democrats are angry about the incen-
diary, partisan climate engendered by
Donald Trump and the Republican Party.
Their lack of humanity and persistent
choice of money over morality is both
troubling and upsetting. Adding to the
frustration is a do-nothing, Republican-
controlled Congress, almost entirely
focused on cutting taxes for the rich and
wasting down healthcare.

Democrats are also up-in-arms over
Republican politicization of the federal
courts and, in particular, the Supreme
Court. The wholesale appointment by
Republicans of evangelical jurists, bent on
a traditionalist interpretation of the
Constitution, ignores the reality of a
fast-changing world and the blending of
American values. Republican appoint-
ments will, in all probability, result in the
erosions of individual freedoms, including
a women’s right to reproductive choice.

Putnam County Democrats can’t do
much about Trump and the national
Republican Party this Election Day, but
they can send local Republican leadership
a strong message: You are complicit by
supporting Trump, and, under your long-
term exclusive leadership, Putnam County
is standing still. It’s time for change.

After seven years under County Execu-
tive MaryEllen Odell, Putnam County has
stopped growing. Popu-
lation is static, while the percentage of senior
unique citizens living on fixed
 incomes has increased
dramatically. Economic
development is almost
nonexistent, as is small
business creation. The commercial tax
date is stagnant. The underemployment
of women and young adults, and a sparse
influx of new jobs into the county, is
impacting family size; so is the cost of
housing. There are no higher edu-
cation and job training opportunities.
As the county’s population decreases, school
enrollment and the state’s per-pupil fund-
ing does as well, affecting the quality and
quantity of educational services rendered.

These factors create a domino effect, influ-
encing the downwardward of the Putnam
real estate.

For Putnam County to comply with
state law, which requires a balanced yearly
budget, and to keep taxes below the state-
 improvised tax cap, Odell raids the county’s
general fund on a yearly basis. During
her tenure, Odell has depleted the stand-
by reserve by better than 50 percent of
its value. In her newly proposed budget,
Odell is, again, using $4 million of the
reserve to pay for general operations.

Spending down reserves, and the lack of a
cogent plan to deal with future budgetary
shortfalls, is a precarious financial prac-
tice. Reserve funds are best used to pro-
tect the budget against known risks such
as lawsuits, storms, or even gross financial
mismanagement.

The best and the brightest young adults
in Putnam County quickly realize they
must move elsewhere to establish their
homes, families and careers. And, as Put-
nam County grams and its commercial tax
base narrows, it runs the risk of becoming
disproportionately taxed and devoid
of youthful vigor. It’s time for change.

Maureen Fleming is the Democratic

Opinion

The lull before the storm

I

t’s less than a week now until
the midterm elections. How the
politics of the next two years will
shape up is still being fought over,
day to day. And, yet, oddly, after the
manic weeks of the Kavanaugh hearing
and its aftermath, the atmos
phere seems calmer, like it
is in a fake lull.

But it is only a fake calm. The
bruaha over Saudi’s brutal murder
of Jamal Khashoggi lasted a week,
until the Saudis finally admitted to
the deed, which allowed the noise to
quiet down. What political fallout will
 occur we have yet to see. President
Trump, for the moment, is deferr-
ing to Congress to decide the U.S.
response to the murder.

The odd thing about that case was
that despite Khashoggi writing occa-
sional columns for the Washington
Post, he was in no way a liberal or
reformer. The media, though, has done
their best to lend him those creden-
tials posthumously.

In fact, Khashoggi was actually a
supporter of the anti-reform Muslim
Brotherhood, which advocates for
more Islamic fundamentalist control
of Saudi society. He was in disagree-
ment with Crown Prince Mohammed
Bin Salman in part because of his strong
Prince’s alliance with Israel against
Iran, in part because of his strong
animus against Israel.

And his attempt at modernizing Saudi
society. He was in disagree-
ment with Crown Prince Mohammed
Bin Salman, who
inherited power after his father’s
death in 2015.

The Prince’s chief rivals for the job
is in a fake lull.

Bin Salman is my friend and, thereby,
shares my assumptions. However, this
leads Ignatius into making unwar-
ranted assumptions about Jamal
Khashoggi.

Moreover, according to Die Welt,
Khashoggi had a past that included
even more­ly work in the Saudi
intelligence services. As a result, it
is speculated he was privy to “dan-
gerous secrets” about corruption
or misconduct in the royal family.
Khashoggi was also the media officer
of Prince Turki, one of Mohammed
Bin Salman’s chief rivals for the job
of Crown Prince within the Royal
Family. These two clues, to my mind,
provide a more focid lead for uncov-
ering the reasons he was killed.

Now for a pivot. Can we talk about
PC culture?

Lately, the slightest time anyone
in public life makes a wrong statement—
a statement that offends the peren-

ually offended—that person gets
the axe. Immediately. A minute,
tough. I want to qualify my state-
ment. Most of the time that person
only gets the axe if they are not politi-

cally useful to the reigning political
narrative.

Case in point, Megyn Kelly. Last
week, she discussed white people
dressing up as black celebrities
who are, specifically on Halloween,
for this she got fired from
NBC—a decision, by the way, that
will cost them a fortune to the tune of
$69 million.

In fact, Khashoggi was actually a
supporter of the anti-reform Muslim
Brotherhood, which advocates for
more Islamic fundamentalist control
of Saudi society. He was in disagree-
ment with Crown Prince Mohammed
Bin Salman in part because of his strong
Prince’s alliance with Israel against
Iran, in part because of his strong
animus against Israel.

So, portraying Khashoggi as some
kind of romanticized Arab reformer,
as no less a commentator than David
Ignatius did in a column last week
in the Washington Post, is flat out
incorrect. On the other hand, Ignatius,
whose beat is foreign policy editori-
als, is a strong opponent of Moham-
med Bin Salman, in part, because he
strongly supported President Obama’s
Iran deal. And he doesn’t like the
fact that President
Trump quashed that
deal and supported
Saudi Arabia in
place of Iran. So,
Ignatius seems to be
making a moral leap
that the enemy of
my (in this case,
Mohammed
Bin Salman) is my friend and, thereby,
shares my assumptions. However, this
leads Ignatius into making unwar-
ranted assumptions about Jamal
Khashoggi.

Moreover, according to Die Welt,
Khashoggi had a past that included
even more­ly work in the Saudi
intelligence services. As a result, it
is speculated he was privy to “dan-
gerous secrets” about corruption
or misconduct in the royal family.
Khashoggi was also the media officer
of Prince Turki, one of Mohammed
Bin Salman’s chief rivals for the job
of Crown Prince within the Royal
Family. These two clues, to my mind,
provide a more focid lead for uncov-
ering the reasons he was killed.

Now for a pivot. Can we talk about
PC culture?

Lately, the slightest time anyone
in public life makes a wrong statement—
a statement that offends the peren-

ually offended—that person gets
the axe. Immediately. A minute,
tough. I want to qualify my state-
ment. Most of the time that person
only gets the axe if they are not politi-

cally useful to the reigning political
narrative.

Case in point, Megyn Kelly. Last
week, she discussed white people
dressing up as black celebrities
who are, specifically on Halloween,
for this she got fired from
NBC—a decision, by the way, that
will cost them a fortune to the tune of
$69 million.

In fact, Khashoggi was actually a
supporter of the anti-reform Muslim
Brotherhood, which advocates for
more Islamic fundamentalist control
of Saudi society. He was in disagree-
ment with Crown Prince Mohammed
Bin Salman in part because of his strong
Prince’s alliance with Israel against
Iran, in part because of his strong
animus against Israel.

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NYSEG destroyed her pine tree

To the editor,

I live at 2 Alan Dr. in Mahopac. In September, my trees were trimmed by NYSEG around the electrical lines—butchers pretending to be qualified.

I had a magnificent pine tree on the corner of my property (Wood Road and Alan Drive). The NYSEG crew destroyed one side of this tree. As of today, it looks like it is leaning over. I fear with the next snow storm this tree will topple over.

I sent emails and pictures to the Highway Department, Councilman Barile (no response at all) and the town supervisor. The secretary for the town supervisor called and said this tree is not their responsibility and I should call NYSEG. I did and received no response. I feel this tree should be taken down before it topples over.

Marie Ciffone
Mahopac

A solution for Route 6/6N traffic arrow

To the editor:

Back in July of this year, the state Department of Transportation took away the right-turn arrow at the Route 6/6N fork in Mahopac. I don’t know where things stand with this issue, but I believe there is a potential solution as simple as a traffic sign. That sign would be placed under the “STOP HERE ON RED” sign that is currently installed and it would read, “AFTER STOP RIGHT TURN PERMITTED ON RED.” As per www.safe.ny.gov: “At many intersections in New York State, governed by traffic lights, you may make a right turn when the light is red. You must come to a complete stop, check the intersection for vehicles and pedestrians, and proceed to make a right turn when it is safe to do so.”

I would prefer the return of the right-turn arrow (to help alleviate the traffic buildup often all the way back to the library), but if that’s not going to happen, this simple sign may be a viable solution and I encourage those in charge to look into the legality of such a sign.

In the meantime, I will honor the “Right Turn on a Red” rule.

Michael Cole
Mahopac

The old tradition of blackface was an appalling custom, which exacerbated prejudiced norms, and existed to use comedy only to denigrate black people. Thank God we are past that awful epoch in American history.

But surely white people dressing up as black people they admire is just the opposite of this! Megyn Kelly mentioned as an example Luann de Lesseps, from “The Housewives of New York,” dressing up as the fabulous Diana Ross. That caught my attention because I have been a huge fan of Diana Ross for decades. Really, who isn’t? In college, I constantly blasted her music for dorm-wide dance parties.

If someone wanted to dress up as Martin Luther King, say, because they admired him, isn’t this the exact opposite of dressing up in blackface to denigrate blacks? Furthermore, isn’t this a necessary step in assimilation and equalizing of the different races in this country—that you can draw on the entire national past for inspiration?

Instead, it is seen as cultural appropriation and an exercise of white privilege. And insensitive in general.

No wonder many Americans continue to feel strong aversion to the take no prisoners extremism of PC culture!

Mara Schiffren

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Mara Schiffren is a writer, certified functional medicine health coach and Clear Beliefs coach. You can reach her at mara.schiffren@gmail.com

Contact Us
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Putnam County

Carmel Diner
63 Gleneida Avenue, Carmel
Wednesday, December 5, 2018 10 am

Mahopac Public Library
668 Route 6, Mahopac
Thursday, November 8, 2018 11 am
Thursday, November 15, 2018 2 pm
Thursday, December 6, 2018 5:30 pm

Town of Patterson Recreation Center
65 Front Street, Patterson
Tuesday, November 13, 2018 10 am
Tuesday, November 20, 2018 10 am

Westchester County

DoubleTree by Hilton
455 S. Broadway, Tarrytown
Monday, November 26, 2018 5:30 pm

Greenburgh Public Library
300 Tarrytown Road, Elmsford
Wednesday, November 14, 2018 5:30 pm
Monday, November 19, 2018 1:30 pm

Jefferson Valley Mall
(Community Room, next to Mall Management Office)
650 Lee Boulevard, Yorktown Heights
Thursday, November 1, 2018 2 pm
Monday, November 5, 2018 6 pm
Tuesday, November 6, 2018 2 pm

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Y00051_3925_M
Dear Dr. Linda,

With the elections in a few weeks, our kids are seeing and hearing more about politics than I think I ever experienced in my entire life. The other night at dinner, our 8-year-old asked, “What does politics mean?” Our 10-year-old said that they have parties, but that he didn’t really know what that meant either. My husband and I didn’t know how to answer them. Actually, we don’t remember much about American history from our days in school. What can we do to teach them about our country, so they don’t end up as ignorant Americans like you didn’t learn much.

The problem with a lack of historical facts and knowledge is that Americans live in a democracy and we have an obligation to vote. Therefore, it is critical that our citizens are educated about our rights as individuals and the functions of our federal (and state) governments, including how they overlap and don’t.

So, what do you do now to learn it and ensure that your children are educated in our country’s history? First of all, your children will be following the same curriculum you went through. Learn it with them. For example, instead of them rushing through their social studies homework alone, join them. Instead of saying, “Did you do your homework?” Look at it, not only to see if they actually are learning anything from doing it, but as parents who would like to learn from it yourselves. Before you know it, you and your children will be talking and arguing with each other (respectfully, I hope) about the impact certain people or events had on our nation over the past four centuries.

When your children are learning about Native Americans such as Squanto and Sagacawea, learn about them too. Learn about Harriet Tubman and the points of view of both those in the Union and Confederacy when they’re working on the Civil War. Use your local library. Librarians will be able to help you find good books about a variety of topics to read together. For example, “My Brother Sam is Dead,” is an excellent book to read together when your kids are learning about the Revolutionary War. Our ancestors were people, just like us.

Also, as you follow your children’s curriculum, plan day trips or longer trips to historical cities. Visit Plymouth, Mass. to see where the Pilgrims landed. Visit Boston and walk on the Freedom Trail to learn how the colonists lived. Visit Williamsburg, Virginia to experience the arguments our forefathers were having about leaving England. Visit the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. Every town, city and state are filled with historic sites. Pick up a copy of the Constitution and begin by reading the Preamble together. It is only one sentence, but it’s a long one. Begin with the title. What is a preamble? A constitution? Go online to find out. Then take your Preamble apart, phrase by phrase, and talk about each phrase. When all is said and done, put it all together again and talk about how sometimes accomplishing all the parts can present issues that our senators and representatives argue about, with the idea that together, we can form a “more perfect union” that maintains liberty for every citizen. I’ve included it here, so you can begin right now.

“We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

When you’re finished, tackle the Constitution itself. Have fun learning with your children. Don’t be surprised if you find that you’re enjoying learning American history now when you couldn’t stand it when you were in school.

Dr. Linda
KOSBERG
FROM PAGE 10

candidate for Putnam County Executive. Currently, Maureen is the town of Kent supervisor. An attorney with extensive governmental experience, she is also a certified teacher. When her children were small, she returned to the workforce as an elementary educator before returning to the practice of law. She understands the demands of balancing work and family life in Putnam, especially when parents are commuting.

Fleming is a futurist and is expert at incorporating cutting-edge theory into practice. She has held taxes flat over her three terms in office, reducing debt service by 38 percent and adding $1.4 million to the general fund. At the same time, public services have improved dramatically.

Fleming is committed to bringing the same professionalism, fiscal discipline and public service that she has delivered in Kent to residents and business owners throughout Putnam County.

Scott Reing is the Democratic candidate for District 7 of the Putnam County Legislature, which comprises the village of Brewster, part of the town of Southeast and a portion of Mahopac.

Reing, the father of two young children, is a self-employed, practicing attorney focusing on tax law and real estate law. Over the past year, Reing has made it his business to closely examine and understand the effect high property taxes are having on his community and the inherent frustrations of inefficient government.

The primary reason Reing decided to get involved in local politics was that all the Putnam County legislators, as well as the county executive, are Republican. According to Reing, a government with only one point of view, without civil argument and debate, cannot serve the best interests of its residents and is little more than a meaningless rubber stamp.

Reing also feels that Putnam’s sales tax rate of 8.38 percent—higher than that of all surrounding counties—puts Putnam businesses at a competitive disadvantage, and that an inflated salary of over $40,000 for legislators, along with upwards of 25 percent in perks, is outrageous compensation for part-time work. According to Reing, there’s too much waste, too much spending, and not enough careful consideration of the facts.

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Serving the Community for Nearly 40 Years

By Bob Dumas

Incumbent Republican MaryEllen Odell and Democratic challenger Maureen Fleming showed they would have very distinct differences in how they will govern if elected when they met during a League of Women Voters-sponsored debate held at the Mahopac Library last week.

The two candidates laid out their qualifications for the job and fielded questions from the crowd on the issues confronting the county. Here is an edited account of the debate:

MaryEllen Odell

Odell has served in county government for the past 12 years after being appointed to the legislature to fill an empty seat.

“Prior to that I was a working mom and a community organizer,” she said.

Since becoming county executive, Odell said, she’s proud of the work she’s done for veterans and enhancing the programs they receive.

“Most importantly, I am very proud of our senior services,” she said. “Putnam County’s senior population is on the up-tick. They’ve paid their dues to society. They’ve paid their taxes. We need our grandparents to stay here. It is one of the reasons we have invested so much into our senior centers and the programs—to give back.”

Odell addressed her administration’s fiscal responsibilities, noting that Moody’s has given the county an Aa2 bond rating.

“We eliminated $17 million worth of short-term debt; we have reduced our long-term debt by 15 percent,” she said.

“We have also eliminated our pension costs, which is responsible government. That move saved the taxpayers $775,000. We do all that with the increased pressure of unfunded mandates. Of every dollar, 70 cents goes to Albany for programs that we are not responsible for.”

Maureen Fleming

Fleming, the supervisor for the town of Kent, is an attorney and a certified teacher.

“We moved to Putnam County because we wanted a better life,” she said. “We chose it for its open space and beauty and we love it here. I want to stay here, but we wanted a better life,” she said. “We moved to Putnam County.”

“Prior to that I was a working mom and a certi/f_i  ed teacher. Fleming showed they would have very different visions for the job and fielded questions from the crowd on the issues confronting the county. Here is an edited account of the debate:

Fleming

One of the ways we can help improve the roads in Putnam County is by actually using the Highway Department employees for their [true] function. We have diverted them to do work at Tilly Foster Farm, at the Putnam County National Golf Course, and taken them off the important infrastructure jobs that they were hired to do. We are not deploying them properly.

The Route 6 project was actually a state project, it wasn’t a county project. It was done with county funds. We can do better by keeping our employees in the [jobs] they were hired for.

With all the money we pay in gas tax, how do we ensure our tax dollars are invested in infrastructure? Odell

We do a very good job in Putnam County with the roads. I believe we have 114 miles of them. We have bridges and culverts and MS4 (stormwater) requirements. My administration was one of the organizers creating the bubble compliance for MS4, which is critical for our infrastructure. It is why some of our lakes are suffering from the blue-green algae because our roads and infrastructure have been taking on too much salt and fertilizer and pesticides.

We count on a lot of our resources for roads and bridges to come from Albany funding, but the funding has just not been there. While we have seen an increase in the number of mandates, we have seen a decrease in the amount of funding coming to us making sure our roads are safe. We were able to obtain a grant to pave Route 6, a critical part of town. You have to stay on Albany to get money for our roads. We all work together to try to find every dollar we can.

With all the money we pay in gas tax, how do we ensure our tax dollars are invested in infrastructure? Odell

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Taxes and expenditures at the center of the discussion

By Bob Dumas

Odell and Fleming clash in county executive debate

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Odell
My opponent slashed her own [Kent] highway budget. The highway superintendent of Kent constantly calls me to ask for more resources. He struggles with the supervisor because [Fleming] had reduced his funding over time.

Fleming

The highway superintendent talks frequently about the good relationship that [we] have. And through the efforts of the Town Board, we have actually purchased millions of dollars’ worth of equipment. We have bought a number of trucks; we have worked collaboratively even though he’s a Republican and I'm a Democrat.

How do we get big businesses to move here and how would you address the need to get more jobs in Putnam County?

Fleming

We want to encourage small businesses—the mom and pop—but we also want to bring smart business development into this community that pays a good wage. That is something I’ve really been working on in the town of Kent. I have been working with Clancy Relocation & Logistics to create a 4,000-square-foot warehouse there. They are an amazing employer. We are working with a group to bring two hotels, a water park and a convention center and a truck stop. Those will bring jobs.

Odell

One of the most exciting initiatives that I have brought to the table is the PILOT program—Putnam Invests in Leaders of Tomorrow. We budget for about 40 to 45 positions for our local youth to find employment during the summer months. It is extremely successful, and we’ve seen many of our interns move on to careers. It is called building a succession plan.

We also have the opportunity to have an international company, the Alexandrion Co., who have identified Carmel as a place they would like to invest $40 million in a very exciting project that will bring tons of jobs of all different skill sets. And it will also be a destination, a point of attraction for Hudson Valley. Alexandrion is truly an exciting and telling moment for Putnam County.

What are you going to do to reduce property taxes?

Odell

We will continue to do the same thing that we’ve always been doing. We are going to pay down our debts; we’ve been very aggressive with that. Bringing good sustainable growth here will lower our property taxes. Raising sales taxes lowers property tax. It’s not very complicated. [We are] looking at Envision Brewster and being partners with the team in Brewster—revitalizing that area and taking advantage of the Hudson Valley hub of commerce. We are working in partnership with the MTA, something county government has never done before. [We are] building a strong relationship with the [New York City] Department of Environmental Protection, which helped us transform the Putnam County Golf Course and Tilly Foster Farm into the beautiful sustainable destinations that they are today.

Fleming

It is interesting to listen to the county executive talk about what she is going to do since she has been in office since 2011 and hasn’t done any of those things yet. Our taxes in Putnam County have gone up 10.94 percent during her administration. Every year, not only does she raise taxes but she takes from the general fund [the fund balance], so she doesn’t have to raise them more.

I will look at the budget line by line. We cut fat, we stop cronyism, we stop patronage jobs. We eliminated all that [in Kent] and it makes a difference. I would stop throwing money into projects like the golf course, which the county executive said is on solid financial ground. Yet we anticipated $172,000 in revenue and we are $223,000 in the hole.
The Mahopac Fire Department held its annual Open House on Saturday, Oct. 20. Residents were greeted by members of the fire department, emergency medical services and fire police, in addition to many friends from neighboring agencies. There were all kinds of demonstrations, from car extractions to forcible-entry displays, and the kids even got a chance to operate a fire hose.

Local police agencies were on hand with their K-9 units for all the kids to admire, along with the Mahopac Falls FD dive team and the Red Cross Disaster Team, who were there to answer questions. And one of the biggest attractions, of course, were the fire-truck rides.

There was plenty of food and beverages—hot dogs, popcorn and more—available for the hungry attend-ees who stopped by the firehouse to have fun and learn about the department and fire safety all at the same time!

MVFD member D.J. Fiorio helps Ryan Eeles who stopped by the firehouse to have fun and learn about judicial candidates in your area.

MVFD member Ron Smith serves up some hot dogs.

Visitors check out the Putnam County Emergency Response Team vehicles.

From left, County SPCA Chief Ken Roos, County Executive MaryEllen Odell, Hank Schleicher, county legislators Carl Albano and Joe Castellano and state Assemblyman Kevin Byrne.

From left, sheriff’s deputies Charlie Johnson and Claire Pierson, and Carmel Police Officer Neil Brown.

PHOTOS: BOB DUMAS

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MVFD member G.J. Thames helps Ryan Eisley at the firehouse on Ryan’s 3rd birthday.

Members of the MVFD perform a car-extraction demonstration.

Mahopac FD holds annual open house

Winterization • Shrink Wrapping

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Winter Storage In A Locked, Secure Yard
Winterization • Shrink Wrapping

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The Harlem Wizards will bring their basketball comedy hijinks to town on Friday, Nov. 30, to raise money for the Mahopac girls basketball program.

Wizards team member John “Big J” Smith came to the school district on Monday, Oct. 29, to visit with the kids and promote the upcoming game in which the Wizards will take on members of the Mahopac faculty.

“Big J” has been with the Wizards since 2011. He’s played in 25 countries in six years. He last played in Western Australia SBL. He won the CUNY championship in college and was 18th in rebounding in the US D-3 League.

Tickets for the Nov. 30 game at the high school are $16, $25, and $35 for “courtside-plus.” They are available online only at https://harlemwizards.thundertix.com/events/133289.
MMS students use their ‘wings’ to spread inclusive culture

Instead of their usual Friday morning classes, Mahopac Middle School (MMS) students began their day with a lesson on the scientific theory of the Butterfly Effect, the notion that a single flap of a butterfly’s wings can play a significant part in generating a tornado a great distance away.

However, the focus was not on the butterflies but the students learning that tiny acts of empathy and inclusion do in fact make a difference. This was the launch of the Wingman Program, part of Dylan’s Wings of Change, an organization founded by the parents of Dylan Hockley, a 6-year-old victim of the Sandy Hook shooting.

As explained to MMS students by his father, Ian Hockley, Dylan was a child with autism, who was often misunderstood or excluded. However, he was able to “navigate the world and enjoy life so much more when those around him would step up and be his wingman.” He emphasized that “on the good days, people didn’t focus on the differences and made connections, and Dylan’s demeanor changed to positive.”

The middle school has a group of students who have committed to take the lead in their school to counter rejection, exclusion and isolation with acts of compassion. These “wingmen” went through an application process that included a written rationale for why they want to be part of the program. Parents and caregivers provided their signatures on the applications as a commitment of support for their student-wingman.

“It was interesting to read why our participating wingmen wanted to be part of the program,” MMS reading teacher Christine McNeil said. “Several of the students wrote that they feel excluded or disliked by fellow students and wanted to be part of something that makes a positive change in our school culture.”

Learning about the program from her daughter’s school in Connecticut, McNeil brought it to MMS three years ago and participation grows each year.

MMS Principal Tom Cozzcrea aims for the Wingman Program to help instill a positive change with how students make choices, particularly pertaining to social media and vaping.

Middle school students are “reaching a new level of independence,” he said. “It’s a perfect time to show them that they can impact the world with smart and healthy choices. The more positive change we introduce students starting right now, the more negative effects we avoid.”

Underscoring the value of the Wingman Program, popular motivational speaker Ed Gerety spoke to students about creating a positive school culture with acts of kindness and respect. This high-energy and interactive presentation instilled the “butterfly effect” with real-life testimonials, group participation like creating a “rainforest” with hand motions and one MMS student coming before his peers of about 400 to call his mother to say he loved her and appreciated all she does for him.

The values the Wingman Program imparts are meant to affect students’ lives beyond the classroom and encourage them to “live and lead your life with gratitude, respect, kindness and a belief in yourself and one another. To play big in the game of life, go for your dreams and seize the day,” Gerety said.

One wing flap at a time.

For more information, visit www.mahopac.k12.ny.us and follow @eMahopacSchools on Twitter and @MahopacSchools on Facebook.

Article provided by Mahopac Central School District

Motivational speaker Ed Gerety gets his point across to MMS students.
The month of October brings a smile to the faces of the many firefighters of the Mahopac Falls Fire Department (MFFD) because that is when they get to interact with the children of the school district. Rolling out on a well-tuned schedule prepared by firefighter Bill Lindsey, MFFD fire prevention coordinator, Lindsey’s assistants greeted the many children brought outside the school to learn earlier this month. This year brought the return of the safety trailer, a self-contained unit that illustrates the dangers that can occur in the home and how to deal with them. Wide-eyed youngsters flocked to see the big, shiny firetrucks and ask questions. One of the big thrills for the kids was to meet Sparky the Fire Dog and have a picture taken with the fire-prevention mascot.

**Article provided by Mahopac Falls Fire Department/Jack Casey**
Byrne and Gashi to vie for state assembly seat

BY BRIAN MARSHHAUSER
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Voters in the 94th Assembly District will have a choice when they go to the polls Nov. 6, between the incumbent Republican Assemblyman Kevin Byrne and Democrat challenger Vedat Gashi.

Byrne, a graduate of Carmel High School, was elected to the Assembly in 2016 and seeks his second term. He and his wife reside in Mahopac.

Gashi is a real estate attorney from Yorktown who clerked for Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor when she was serving in the 2nd District Court of Appeals and was later nominated by the United Nations to serve as chief legal advisor to the prime minister of Kosovo as the country sought to establish its independence.

We sat down with both candidates for a Q&A to get their perspectives on the issues of the day. Here’s what they said:

Kevin Byrne (R, C, Ref)

Byrne was born and raised in the 94th Assembly District. He grew up in Putnam Valley and graduated from Carmel High School. He earned a B.A. from the University of Scranton and M.P.A. from Marist College, concentrating in health care administration.

He served as a member of the Putnam Valley Town Planning Board; deputy district director to a former congresswoman; a regional director for the American Heart Association; president, firefighter and EMT with the Kent Volunteer Fire Department; and an assistant Scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America, where he earned the rank of Eagle Scout. He is married to Briana (another Carmel High School graduate) and now resides in Mahopac.

Since first elected in 2016, Byrne has served as the ranking member on the Assembly’s Aging Committee, as a member of the Health, Transportation, Government Operations, Banks, and Labor committees, as well as the co-chair of the Assembly Republican Conference’s statewide Task Force on Critical Infrastructure and Transportation.

What are the top issues facing Assembly District 94?

1) Tax relief. We have the highest total tax burden of any state in the nation. This is the primary cause for people fleeing the state of New York and our current out-migration crisis. Since 2011, over one million people have left the state of New York. Gov. Cuomo has attributed this to the weather, but if you believe that then I have a bridge to name after you. Pennsylvania, Vermont, and many other states face harsh seasons as well, but don’t face the same affordability crisis we see here in New York. The main contribution to our state’s out-migration crisis is New York’s top spot as one of the highest taxed and least business friendly states across the country.

2) Job creation. Regulatory burdens, high taxes and mandates are crushing our businesses. New York State is ranked as the second-worst state towards business in the country. We need to reverse this trend to grow jobs and create more opportunities for New Yorkers.

3) Public corruption. Backroom deals and pay-to-play scandals have become too common. New York State is ranked as the second-worst state towards public corruption. We need to establish meaningful tax relief and job creation.

Kevin Byrne

Why are you the best candidate to represent this district? I am beholden to no special interest or political power structure. I believe in limited government, lower taxes, and protecting all our Constitutional freedoms. While other candidates rely on outside money and special interests from NYC to run their campaigns, I rely on the hard-working people of Northern Westchester and Putnam County.

I have always put the people of this district before anything or anyone else. Because of this, I’ve already received the endorsement of many organizations including the Business Council of New York State, the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), NYS Fraternal Order of Police, NYPD PBA, Westchester’s Affiliated Police Association, AFL-CIO, New York State Teachers’ Affiliated Police Association, PBA of NYS, Uniformed Firefighters Association, Unification Firefighters Officers Association, New York State Rifle and Pistol Association, Utility Workers Union of America Local 1-2, ConservAmerica, NYS Nurses Association, PBA of NYS, and more. You can support me on the Republican, Conservative, or Reform Party lines this Nov. 6.

There are many ways to define corruption, but New York is usually at or near the top of many of these rankings lists. What do you say to these reports? For weary voters, what might you say to give them hope in their government? I have always contended that the biggest roadblock to addressing the many issues facing our state government is public corruption. So long as public officials use the power of their office for their own personal gain, every New Yorker will continue to pay a “Corruption Tax.”

We’ve paid the Corruption Tax many times over. We paid it...
Lions set up collection boxes for used glasses

In just about any home, one can find a pair of eyeglasses that are no longer being used. That same pair of eyeglasses can change another person’s life, which is why the Lions Club started its Recycle for Sight program.

Throughout the year, Lions and other volunteers collect used eyeglasses and deliver them to regional Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers (LERCs). LERC volunteers clean, sort by prescription strength and package the glasses. Recycled glasses are distributed to people in need in low- and middle-income communities where they will have the greatest impact.

Donated glasses can change someone’s life: helping a child read; an adult succeed in his job; a senior maintain her independence.

Residents can drop off usable eyewear at Mahopac Lions Club–sponsored collection boxes throughout the community. Collection boxes can be found at these locations:

- Mahopac Library, 668 Route 6
- William Koehler Senior Center, 180 Route 6
- Tompkins Mahopac Bank, 630 Route 6
- Putnam County Savings Bank, 151 Route 6

Vedat Gashi (D, I)

When Gashi was 4 years old, his family came to New York because his parents wanted to give their children a chance at a better life. After graduating Lakeland High School, Gashi attended Connecticut College and then Seton Hall for law school. During law school, he clerked for Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, when she was serving in the 2nd District Court of Appeals, as well as now-retired Congressman Lee Hamilton.

After passing the New York State Bar, Gashi joined the US/EU effort to establish the state of Kosovo and was nominated by the United Nations to serve as chief legal advisor to the prime minister. After independence had been secured, he came back to Yorktown and followed in the family footsteps to become a real estate attorney and continues to practice to this day. Gashi still lives and works in Yorktown with his wife, Vjosa, and his two kids.

What are the top issues facing Assembly District 94?

The biggest issue we face in Putnam and Westchester all revolve around taxes. With the federal government placing a limit on the SALT deductions—state and local property taxes eligible to be deducted from federal taxes—our communities are going to be hit hard in April.

When the Assembly passed legislation that would offer assistance to help with this massive tax increase, where was our assemblyman? He voted against it. One of my top priorities in Albany will be to fight for the taxpayers of our community to make sure we aren’t being nicked and dined out of our homes.

Why are you the best candidate to represent this district?

This race is about change. One party has had control of this district going on 100 years. It is time for a change.

Our community is tired of the hyper-partisanship they see in Washington and it is trickling down into Albany and our communities. I earned the support of the Independence Party because I believe in compromise and common-sense solutions. I am a gun owner—I believe in the Second Amendment—but I believe in common-sense gun laws such as prohibiting convicted domestic abusers from owning guns.

Our district deserves an assemblyman who will represent the entire district, not just the select few that fall into his part of the political spectrum.

There are many ways to define corruption, but New York is usually at or near the top of many of these rankings/lists. What do you say to these reports? For weary voters, what might you say to give them hope in their government?

For far too long, New Yorkers have had to put up with corruption on both sides of the aisle. New Yorkers deserve better than this. This is part of why I am running for office for the first time, I will bring a new way of doing business to Albany.

My family came to this country to pursue the American Dream and that did not include scamming the taxpayers of our community. As your assemblyman, I pledge to bring honor, dignity, and respect back to our New York politics.
Top-seeded ’Pac volleyball team stunned by No. 8 Ossining in quarterfinals

BY SKIP PEARLMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Mahopac’s volleyball team wasn’t in top form Monday (Oct. 29) when it hosted Ossining in the Class AA quarterfinals and it ended up costing the Indians dearly. Mahopac, the No. 1 seed, fell to the Pride (8th seed) in five sets, 3-2.

Ossining (13-7) advanced to the Nov. 1 semifinal round. Mahopac ends its season at 17-2.

Mahopac coach Jay Melville and the Indians knew that Ossining, led by one of the section’s top—and most dynamic—players in Mychael Vernon, was a tough draw.

“Overall, we had probably our worst passing day of the season,” Melville said. “And Ossining has the best player in the section (Vernon). We gave her too many chances to beat us... We had no answer for her. We had a difficult time passing, and we gave them too many opportunities to attack. And they took advantage.”

Mahopac won the first game, 25-16, but the Pride responded with a 25-18 victory in game two. The Indians took game three, 25-18, to tie the match at 1-1. Mahopac then took game four, 25-22, to lead 3-1.

Ossining rallied in game five, taking it 25-20 to force a fifth and deciding set. The Pride went on to win that set 15-12.

“The turnover rate was too high,” Melville said. “It was hard to keep them out of the 15-20 point range.”
VOLLEYBALL
FROM PAGE 26

19, but after Ossining won the fourth, 25-18, the ‘Pac couldn’t find a comeback, and dropped the fifth, 25-20.

“The girls were extremely disappointed,” Melville said. “But Ossining does have the best player in the section, and they were in the finals last year. Their record is not indicative of how good that team is. That was a very tough one-vs.-eight matchup.

“But we didn’t have one of our better matches,” the coach added. “And we really picked a bad time to do it. When we had our chances we played well, competed with them. On another day, if we’re passing better, I think we beat them.”

The Indians beat No. 16 New Rochelle in straight sets the prior Friday in the first round of the tournament, 25-18, 25-13, 26-24.

Cara Vikus had 17 kills, Bella Marinelli had 12 kills, Jenna Palmiero had 18 digs, Gabby Rocchio had 13 digs, Angela Garofalo had 11 digs and Francesca Cammarata had 33 assists for Mahopac.

See more volleyball photos page 38

Is Your SI Joint Causing Your Back Pain?
A common problem that’s too often overlooked...

Q: What is the SI Joint?
A: The full name is the sacroiliac (sa-kro-’i-lē-,ak) joint, and there are two of them, one on either side of your tailbone. They connect the triangular bone at the base of your spine, called the sacrum, with the iliac bone of your pelvis. The SI joints are the keystone of the body, or the center of gravity. Their job is to support and transmit the weight of your upper body to your legs and pelvis.

Q: How Does the SI Joint Cause Pain?
A: SI joint dysfunction occurs when the ligaments of either joint are injured or worn away. This can cause pain in your butt as well as in your lower back, groin, thigh and side. Most people with SI joint dysfunction experience severe pain when they get up from a seated position, then feel better when they walk.

Q: What Causes SI Joint Dysfunction?
A: Osteoarthritis, rheumatologic and auto-immune diseases, traumatic injuries and pregnancy can cause SI joint dysfunction. And some people get it after they’ve had surgeries such as hip replacement or spinal fusion.

Q: How Does the Doctor Diagnose SI Joint Dysfunction?
A: Since most back pain is caused by a spinal problem, the doctor first rules out the spine by doing imaging like X-rays and MRIs. There are also physical exam maneuvers that can pinpoint trouble in the SI joint.

Q: How Is SI Joint Dysfunction Treated?
A: Physical therapy, weight loss, trunk-strengthening exercises like yoga or Pilates, and anti-inflammatory medicines are the first lines of treatment. If these don’t help, doctors inject a steroid and local anesthetic into the joint, a procedure called SI joint injection. If there is still no improvement, doctors perform a minimally invasive surgery called SI joint fusion. Titanium implants are inserted across the sacroiliac joint through a 3-cm incision to lock the joint in place so it can’t move anymore. The surgery takes about an hour and is done under general anesthesia at Northern Westchester Hospital. For the first three weeks after surgery, patients walk with crutches or a walker. After six weeks, they resume normal activities.

Did you know?
25 percent of people who have back pain suffer from SI joint dysfunction, not a spinal problem.
Volleyball photos from page 27

Mahopac coach Jay Melville talks strategy to his team during a time out.

Mahopac’s Caroline Feeney blocks the ball at the net vs. New Rochelle.

Halston Media is looking for more sports reporters and photographers to join our freelance team. Students are welcome. If interested email sports@halstonmedia.com.
'Pac rolls to win in emotional final game

BY SKIP PEARLMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

After a slow start out of the gate in Friday night’s season finale, the Mahopac football team shifted into gear to pull away with a convincing 42-7 home win over Scarsdale.

Senior team captain Tim Cegielski had a career night, rushing for 206 yards and five touchdowns. Senior captain and quarterback Anthony Corrado threw for a touchdown and added 67 yards rushing, and senior receiver Reahl Allen caught three passes and had one touchdown.

Mahopac coach Dominick DeMatteo pointed to an emotional night for the team’s seniors as one reason the team took time to find its momentum.

“The kids were very caught up in the moment,” DeMatteo said. “It was the last football game for a lot of seniors. They were very emotional and we kind of opened like the deer in the headlights in the first half. We talked about it at the half, and in the second half we shifted into gear and pulled away.”

“Slow start, easy win”

SEE FOOTBALL PAGE 30
half they came out and played the way they’re capable of playing. We got points early in the half and played with a lot of emotion, and all of our seniors got to play.”

Scarsdale opened the game with the ball, and drove the field for a touchdown, before being outscored 42-0 the rest of the way.

Mahopac’s Drew Riolo broke loose on the Indians’ first play of the game, and put them on the Scarsdale 4 yard line, with a Cegielski TD run tying the game halfway through the first.

Cegielski scored on another run a minute into the second, and the Indians started to pull away with a TD five seconds before halftime, when Corrado found Allen on a fourth down from the 20, good for a 21-7 halftime cushion.

The second half was all Mahopac.

“Tim finished with a strong night,” DeMatteo said. “He had a big second half, and Corrado also had another solid night. Riolo had a good night as well with a good return and a solid overall performance.”

But DeMatteo said the story of the game was senior tight end/linebacker/punter John Dundon.

“He had high expectations before getting injured on the first play of our first game of the season (collarbone),” the coach said. “He was cleared to play, and we got him into the game on kickoff coverage, at tight end, and he played as our lone captain in the game—just for this game. It was a pretty special moment for him, the senior class, and the team. He was going to be one of our key guys.”
BY SKIP PEARLMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Mahopac varsity girls soccer team were hoping this was their year to make some noise in the Class AA soccer tournament.

But the Indians’ season ended in heartbreak last Tuesday, Oct. 23, in the quarterfinals, when host and No. 4 seed Clarkstown South scored the game’s only goal on a well-executed corner kick to give the Vikings a 1-0 win.

South freshman Caroline Guarino converted the opportunity, scoring on a header, assisted by Grace Harnish, 15 minutes into the game. That allowed the Vikings to play their preferred style: falling back on defense to protect any lead they get.

“We knew their strength, and that is set plays,” Mahopac coach Ross Fumusa said. “So they try to force throws, corners, direct or indirect kicks. They’re very physical, and once they score they settle back on defense to protect the lead, and they’re very good at that.”

So the Indians had their work cut out for them.

Mahopac had several good scoring chances, but was unable to push anything through.

“We threw everything we had at them,” Fumusa said. “We had a handful of good opportunities; we just couldn’t score.”

Clarkstown South went on to lose to Arlington in last Sunday’s (Oct. 28) championship game.

Mahopac, which closes its season at 12-6, ended last season with a semifinal loss to the same Vikings.

“The girls were definitely disappointed,” Fumusa said. “They wanted to go farther. The last two years we knocked off the No. 1 and 2 seeds, so the expectations for this year were so high.”

“The loss was tough for everybody,” he added. “Especially our seniors. But we learn from it, and we have a lot of players coming back. So the kids are already focused on making a run next year.”
‘James and the Giant Peach’ boasts superstar songwriters

BY BRUCE APAR
GUEST WRITER

Before there was “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” (aka Willy Wonka), there was “James and the Giant Peach.”

Both are the creations of prolific children’s author Roald Dahl, whose first book was James, then came Charlie. They are among the beloved characters and fantastical stories — which include Matilda, The Witches, and The BFG — that have accounted for a quarter-billion copies sold of Mr. Dahl’s timeless books.

“James and the Giant Peach” comes alive on stage thanks to vibrant, imaginative scenery and a splendid cast of local talents from Yorktown, Cortlandt, Croton, Mahopac, Millbrook, Thornwood, Bedford Hills and other parts of the Hudson Valley region.

In this amusingly offbeat, superb adaptation of the Roald Dahl family classic, the audience is first introduced to the characters by Ladahlord (Nick Calver, Mahwah, N.J.). As the tale gets underway, James (Jake Sperling, Bedford Hills) is sent by his conning aunts to chop down their old fruit tree, where he discovers a magic potion that turns a meek peach into a super-size peach on steroids! Suddenly, James finds himself in the center of the gigantic fruit, where there are human-size insects, sporting equally outsize personalities.

The giant peach falls from the tree and rolls into the ocean, where the crew encounters sharks and each other’s crankiness. Thanks to James’ quick wit and the musical talent of the onboard orchestra, the crew makes their way back to land.

La Land, and composed the music for Hugh Jackman movie The Greatest Showman. They also scored the musical theater adaptation of TV holiday classic ‘A Christmas Story.’ Quite an impressive resume for a couple of 33-year-olds.

“James and the Giant Peach” is performed 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 17-24; 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 23-25 at the Yorktown Stage, 1974 Commerce St., Yorktown Heights. For tickets, call 914-962-2155 or yorktownstage.com

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you’ll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here’s How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

\[ \begin{array}{ccc} 9 & 3 & 7 \\ 8 & 2 & 1 \\ 1 & 9 & 4 \\ 7 & 3 & 1 \\ 5 & 4 & 6 \\ 2 & 8 & 9 \\ 6 & 1 & 5 \\ 4 & 6 & 3 \\ 7 & 9 & 2 \end{array} \]

Sudoku puzzle solutions are on page 35, Puzzle solutions on page 35.

Sudoku puzzle solutions are on page 35, Puzzle solutions on page 35.
Consolidating accounts can lead to clear financial strategy

None of us can completely control all the things that happen to us.
Yet, when it comes to achieving your long-term financial goals, including a comfortable retirement, you do have a great deal of power – as long as you follow a clear, well-defined financial strategy. And one way to help build and maintain such a strategy is by consolidating your financial accounts.

Over the course of their lives, many people pick up a variety of financial accounts from multiple sources. They might have a few IRAs from different providers, a couple of old 401(k) plans from past employers, an insurance policy (or two) purchased many years ago, and a scattershot of stocks, bonds, certificates of deposit and other investments.

If this picture describes your situation, you may want to think about consolidating. For one thing, having a variety of accounts can run up a lot of fees. Furthermore, you’ll have lots of paperwork to keep track of all your accounts, including several different tax statements. Plus, just by having so many accounts, you risk forgetting about some of them – and if you don’t think you’d ever forget about your own money, consider this: Well over $40 billion in unclaimed cash and property, including 401(k)s, pensions and IRAs, is awaiting return to the rightful owners, according to the National Association of Unclaimed Property Administrators.

But beyond reducing your possible fees, paperwork and potential for lost assets, consolidating your accounts with one provider can give you a centralized, managed account that is easier to track and manage.

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4) The Late Gordon Kaplan By Robin Anne Joseph — a widow makes an unusual request of the Rabbi at the funeral of her husband. Featuring Ann Gulian, Jess Beveridge, Bruce Apar. Directed by Robin Anne Joseph

To purchase tickets online, visit YorktownStage.org. For more information, call 914-962-0606 or email barryysproducer@gmail.com.

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unifying investment strategy, one that can help you in the following ways:

- Diversification – If you own several different financial accounts, including IRAs, 401(k)s and online accounts, you might have many similar investments within them. You might even own a cash-value insurance policy containing investments that closely track the ones you have in the other accounts. This type of duplication can be harmful, because if a market downturn primarily affects one type of asset, and your portfolio is dominated by that asset or similar ones, you could take a big hit. But if you have all your investments in the same place, a financial professional can review your holdings and recommend appropriate ways to diversify your investment dollars. Be aware, though, that while diversification can reduce the impact of market volatility on your portfolio, it can't guarantee profits or protect against all losses.

- Staying on track – With all your accounts in one place, you'll find it easier to keep the big picture in mind and make the moves necessary to help you progress toward your financial goals. Two main actions include buying or selling investments and adjusting your portfolio to make it more aggressive or conservative, depending on your situation.

- Avoiding mistakes – If you own several separate accounts, you could see a loss in one or more of them and overreact by selling investments that could still be valuable to you. But with a consolidated investment platform, you can see more clearly that the impact of a loss may be small, relative to the rest of your holdings.

As we've seen, consolidating your investment accounts with a single provider can have several advantages. So think carefully about bringing everything together – you may find that there's strength in unity.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Tom Casey is a licensed securities adviser associated with Edward Jones, located at 163 Route 6 in Mahopac. He can be reached directly at 845-621-8647.
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PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE
VOTE TUESDAY NOVEMBER 6TH
www.FlemingforPutnam.com

Paid for by Fleming for Putnam