

The Pelham Post

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Trustee Solomon Points to Statewide EMS Crisis



BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Mayor Chance Mullen called the Tuesday, December 9th Village of Pelham Board of Trustees Regular Meeting to order, welcoming new Trustee Allison Anderson.

Trustee Russell Solomon discussed the statewide crisis that is threatening Emergency Medical Service (EMS). "As you know, I am a member of New York Conference of Mayors' (NYCOM)

Employee Relations and Public Safety Committee. Two Bills sitting on NYS Governor Kathy Hochul's desk can make a difference for EMS. Ambulance services are closing almost every week in our State.

"Since 2019 we have lost 17.5% of our active EMS responders statewide. In Westchester County we have 45 EMS agencies trying to serve nearly one million residents. It costs \$2,673 on aver-

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Public, Legislative Meetings Held in Town of Pelham



BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Pelham Town Supervisor Daniel J. McLaughlin opened the Monday, December 1st Public Meeting, discussing the proposed 2026 Town Budget. "The Budget, under the Tax Levy Limit allowed us to increase our Budget by \$85,000; that's what the 2% Tax Cap gave us," McLaughlin stated.

"It is a little hard to keep under for various reasons; one is our medical expenses," McLaughlin continued. "Our

medical expenses went up by \$72,000, .85% of the Tax Levy; our insurance went up \$95,264. Then we add in salaries, we tried to get a 3% raise; salaries are \$46,405 or .54% of the Tax Limit. The ambulance increase is \$56,392.

"The NYS Retirement System, which we have no control over, was \$54,143, which is .64% of the 2%. Even though revenues are going up by \$342,000, taxes are only going up by \$270,000," McLaughlin concluded. The 2026 Prelimi-

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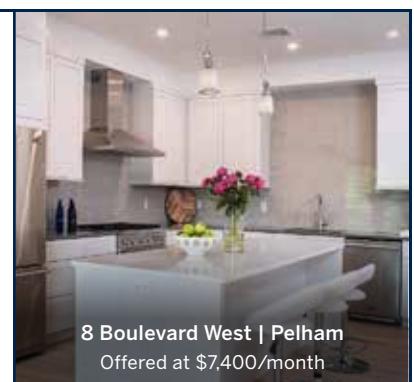
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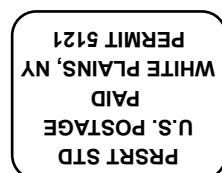
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New Police Officer Sworn In, Two Significant Losses in Pelham Manor Community Announced



BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Pelham Manor Mayor Jennifer Monachino Lapey called the Tuesday, December 16th Board meeting to order, swearing in new Police Officer Tariq Abdullah.

Abdullah began his law enforcement career in 2024 as a Police Officer with Mount Vernon Police Department and is bilingual in Arabic and English.

Lapey mentioned two losses in the community, Anthony Senerchia, who passed away on Tuesday, December 2nd, whose son Joseph served on the Board of Trustees and former Code Enforcement Officer Charles Barone whose son Greg was Chair, Zoning Board of Appeals.

Trustee Maurice Owen-Michaane pointed to a \$2.141 million dollar stormwater mitigation grant; \$550,000 for a Monroe Street Resiliency Grant; \$404,000 for water retention; \$720,000 from Dorimitory

Authority State of NY (DASNY) for sewer improvements and \$150,000 for solar panel installation.

Village Treasurer Kyle Booth reported that the Village's Fund Balance was \$13,206,148.76.

"During November, the Village received significant revenue totaling \$403,270, distributed by Westchester County as the Village's share of the 2025 third quarter sales tax. The most substantial expenditure for the month was the \$2,447,422 payment to the NYS Local Retirement System for the Village's 2026 annual invoice. Another notable expense was a \$201,443.33 payment to Peter Landi, Inc. for the Highbrook Avenue drainage improvement project," Booth concluded.

"Our hearts go out to those affected by the horrific incident at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia," Lapey stated, referring to the 15 Jewish shooting victims killed on Sunday, December 14th. "It

makes us mindful of our Jewish community here in Pelham Manor."

"I was in contact with Rabbi Benjamin Resnick and the folks at Pelham

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Ella Stephens and Caitlin Brant Recognized as Rotary Scholars of the Month



Left to right: Rotary President Bob Rendon, Scholars of the Month Ella Stephens and Caitlin Brant and Rotary member and PMHS Principal Sean Llewellyn

Rotary Club of the Pelhams recognized PMHS seniors Ella Stephens and Caitlin Brant as Marilyn Stiefvater Scholars of the Month for December.

Rotary member and PMHS Principal Sen Llewellyn introduced the two students:

Ella Stephen is active in Science Research, athletics, music, and volunteering. She is a starter on both the varsity volleyball team as well as for a national travel team. Ella is a section leader for the Concert Chorus and member of the select Chamber Chorus, Vice President of the Class of 2026, secretary of the French Club, Vice President of the Psychology Club, Co-Vice President of the Breast Cancer Awareness Club, and a Peer Mentor. She also volunteers at the Pelham Children's Theater. As a student in the Science Research program, Ella earned first place in behavioral science at the Somers Science Fair and has authored papers on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and anxiety. Recently, Ella has worked as a Breast Cancer Research Intern at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa, Florida, working over 200 hours.

Caitlin Brantis has excelled in a wide range of pursuits including art, music, science, and athletics. She is a member of the National Honor Society and three additional academic honor societies, and an AP Scholar with Distinction. Caitlin is a founding member of the Pelham Robotics Team and has served as Safety Captain, Electrical Subteam Lead, Branding Lead, and President and helped lead her team to a Rookie All Star Award at the NYC FIRST Regional competition. Caitlin is Vice President of the Women in STEM Club, Vice President of the Computer Science Club, and a member of the Pelham Math Team. She is also an active member of Chorus and a capella group the AcaPelicans for which she is also social media manager. As a member of Science Research, she has pursued engineering-based projects and spent two summers in internships. Caitlin has also played Varsity Volleyball and is a member of the Varsity Cross Country team. In addition, she is a talented artist, engaged in graphic design projects, murals, and set design.

In addition to recognizing outstanding PMHS students every month, during the school year, the Rotary Club of the Pelhams awards a \$20,000 scholarship in June to a graduating PMHS senior. All PMHS seniors may apply for the scholarship. Applications will be available in the PMHS Guidance Office in the spring.

For more information or apply to be a member, visit pelhamrotary.com

Jenkins Signs 2026 Budget in Face of Historic Fiscal Pressure from Federal Government

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins officially signed the 2026 Westchester County Budget. The \$2.5 billion dollar, tax cap compliant, budget cuts almost all County Department budgets by 8%, including the County Executive's budget, and eliminates 180 positions, essentially cutting the County workforce by almost 5%.

Jenkins said: "Let me be clear: this budget was not shaped by ideology or politics, but by reality. In uncertain times, our responsibility is to lead, and this budget does exactly that. The \$2.5 billion dollar budget was shaped by one of the most challenging financial climates we have faced in years. The difficulties of 2025 will carry into 2026 and likely beyond, and this budget reflects the hard, necessary choices before us. This budget is a direct response to Trump turmoil coming out of Washington."

Deputy County Executive Richard Wishnie said: "Westchester County has approached this budget with clear eyes and a commitment to protecting our residents. The fiscal instability created

in Washington has forced counties across the nation to make extraordinarily difficult decisions, and Westchester is no exception. Yet even in the face of historic pressures, we crafted a responsible, disciplined spending plan that preserves essential services, avoids layoffs, and keeps faith with the people who rely on us every day."

Director of Operations Joan McDonald said:

"As County Executive Jenkins has stated, 2026 will be a challenging year on multiple fronts for Westchester County government. To insure that we did not go into the County reserve fund and to insure that we are property tax compliant, we instituted an



County Executive Ken Jenkins

average 8% reduction in operating costs across all County departments; instituted a hard hiring freeze and eliminated 180 positions from the County workforce. We are able to do this without compromising Westchester County delivery of services."

Deputy Director of Operations Emily Saltzman said: "The 2026 Westchester County budget balances fiscal responsibility with the preservation of vital

programs and services for our children, families and seniors."

Budget Director Larry Soule said: "This budget reflects a disciplined, data-driven approach to governing in an extraordinarily volatile fiscal envi-

ronment. With federal actions driving up costs and constraining revenues, we scrutinized every line of the budget, made across-the-board reductions, and instituted a hiring freeze to ensure long-term stability. The result is a fiscally responsible, tax-cap-compliant plan without compromising the programs residents rely on."

Westchester County Board of Legislators Chairman Vedat Gashi said: "This balanced budget would not be possible without the input of residents from every corner of the County and the partnership of County Executive Jenkins. We are operating in a moment of unprecedented instability created by the Trump Administration. The Board has done everything possible to protect essential services, provide for our most vulnerable neighbors, and keep Westchester on stable financial footing. I am deeply thankful to everyone who made their voices heard throughout this budget process."

Legislator and Chair of the Board's Budget and Appropriations Committee

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Westchester Nonprofits Sound Alarm on Rising Poverty and Basic Needs Crisis

Westchester Children's Association (WCA), the county's leading independent voice for the children and youth of Westchester, held its 2nd Annual Poverty Pulse Panel Discussion on Thursday, December 11 at the YWCA in White Plains, NY. The discussion was led by a panel of nonprofit leaders who convened to confront what they describe as a widening disconnect between official poverty data and the lived experience of families across Westchester County.

The WCA's newly created online dashboard gathers timely data from five partner organizations: 914 Cares, Feeding Westchester, The Sharing Shelf, West Hab, and United Way of Westchester and Putnam. The dashboard shows that despite newly released data from the Federal Government which points to a drop in the Poverty Rate in 2024 from 11.1% to 7.4%, the demand for basic services like food, housing, and basic essentials



continues to grow.

Limarie Cabrera, Director of Data, Finance, and Operations for WCA noted, "the Federal Poverty Rate is not only a delayed measure, but it has not been updated since its creation in the 1960s when food was the primary expense, and it doesn't adjust for regional costs of living." She added, "Despite the decrease

in the Poverty Rate, demand for essential services has been increasing."

The discussion revealed steep increases in requests for essential services including food, clothing, diapers, rental assistance, and utility support.

"I don't believe the poverty numbers," said Deborah Blatt, Founder and Executive Director of the Sharing Shelf. "This year we experienced a 45 percent increase in demand at some points. Month after month, we saw at least 100 additional requests for clothing. The need keeps rising."

Food insecurity trends echoed the same urgency. According to Tami Wilson,

COO of Feeding Westchester, "Last year we moved 21.1 million pounds of food. The year before that, 23.2 million," said Wilson. "Those numbers reflect our resources, not the need. If you gave us \$50 million tomorrow, we would still have families waiting for food."

Additionally, helpline and social service responders are receiving increasing pleas from households who have exhausted all other options. "More callers are from working households. It's not that people aren't trying or aren't working," said Avery Zuvic of the United Way of Westchester and Putnam. "Some are working two jobs and still can't afford utilities or food. They come to us because they've already tried everywhere else."

The panel shared that rising demand strains nonprofit capacity and exposes systemic gaps for families whose incomes don't qualify them for assistance but they still struggle to afford basic needs.

According to Sarah Carmona of 914 Cares, The Urban Institute recently calculated that Westchester County requires more than 8 million diapers per year just to meet need among low- and moderate-income families, a figure nonprofit

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Trustee Solomon Points to Statewide EMS Crisis

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age to provide an ambulance transport. Reimbursements average \$1,147, a \$1,526 gap. Medicaid reimburses just \$329 per transport.

Assembly Bill A 2177 and Senate Bill S 1515 removes EMS costs from Property Tax Cap, giving municipalities the flexibility to adequately fund life-saving services. A 8086 and S 7501 requires a statewide EMS assessment and County-level spending to identify gaps and coordinate long-term solutions. It will finally designate EMS as an essential service, the same way we treat Police and Fire Departments. Police, Fire and EMS are the three legs of public safety. You cannot have two strong services and one broken and expect the system to stand.

"Governor Hochul needs to sign these Bills before December 31st. Call or email NYS Assemblywoman Amy Paulin, NYS Senator Nathalia Fernandez and Governor's Regional Representative Brandon Lloyd."

Resolution adopting Local Law Number 5 repeals Chapter 2B of Pelham Village Code, "Community Choice Aggregation (Energy) Program." Another Resolution calls for a Public Hearing on Local Law No. 1 of 2026 to override the Real Property Tax Levy Limit established in General Municipal Law Section 3-c.

Finally, Anderson is drafting a new Sustainability Advisory Board/Climate Smart Communities Task Force for discussion at the January 2026 meeting.

Public, Legislative Meetings Held in Town of Pelham

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nary Budget passed and Public Meeting closed.

Next, McLaughlin convened the Legislative Meeting, beginning with Committee Reports. Councilwoman/Deputy Supervisor Rae Szymanski mentioning the Certificate of Need (CON) for ambulance service meeting on November 19th. New York State approved the CON, according to Szymanski.

Szymanski then said that there were 79 November Emergency Medical Service calls (EMS); 35 in Pelham; 37, Pelham Manor, 4 on the Hutch, 2 on I-95; 2, Bronxville; 3, Eastchester; Tuckahoe, 1 and 1 in New Rochelle. Average Response Time, 5 minutes 3 seconds; On Scene

Time, 17 minutes, 3 seconds; Transport Time, 13 minutes, 5 seconds; Turnaround Time, 29 minutes, 3 seconds. Szymanski added that the Employee Manual has been completed, containing a dress code policy. "The Manual not only protects the employee, it protects the employer," Szymanski noted.

In the Recreation Report, Councilwoman Kara McLoughlin remarked that the Pelham Recreation Department presented the prestigious Dr. John Marshall Award to Joanne Case on Tuesday, November 18th for her leadership across Pelham Youth Tackle and Pelham Little League.

More Than \$800,000 in Arts Grants Awarded to Westchester Organizations

New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer announced that 37 arts organizations across Senate District 37 have been awarded a share of \$802,578 in state grants through the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). These awards come as part of a broader \$161 million commitment to the arts fund in the FY2026 New York State Budget.

The funds will help the recipient organizations maintain operations, launch new programs and initiatives, and expand public access to the arts. It also builds the NYSCA Reserve Fund to help deliver funding to organizations during financially challenging times.

State Senator Shelley B. Mayer said, "I am delighted that 37 arts organizations across my district will receive grants from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). This support will help ensure that members of our community will have access to artistic opportunities – through music, the visual arts, dance, and more. Investing in the arts is an investment in our state's future, especially for the young people whose creativity and passion deserve to be nurtured. This funding strengthens our community, encourages young people to explore opportunities, and ensures art is accessible to everyone. I thank NYSCA for these allocations, Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins for fighting for this funding, and Governor Kathy Hochul for including it in the final New York State budget."

Among the recipients in SD37 are: ArtsWestchester; Ballet des Ameriques School and Company for dance; The Clay Art Center; Concordia Conservatory; Neuberger Museum of Arts; Hoff Barthelson Music School; Jewish Community Central of Mid-Westchester; Music Conservatory of Westchester; New Choral Society of Central Westchester; Rehabilitation Through the Arts; SONGCATCHERS; Steffi Nossen Dance Foundation; The Dial Magazine; The Emelin Theatre for Performing Arts; The Rye Arts Center; Westchester Children's Chorus, Inc.; and Westchester Philharmonic.



NYS Senator Shelley Mayer

80 New Members Inducted into the National Honor Society

The PMHS Knight & Lamp Chapter of the National Honor Society welcomed more than 80 new members at its induction ceremony held on Monday, December 8. The ceremony featured remarks by Sean Llewellyn, Interim PMHS Principal, Dr. Cheryl Champ, Superintendent of Schools, Jackie DeAngelis, President of the Board of Education and Kim Lundy, who serves as the NHS Advisor.

To begin the ceremony, Marie Kuznetsov performed a stirring rendition of The National Anthem. Class of 2026 NHS President Arman Brummett then made introductory remarks and spoke about Scholarship before introducing Class of 2026 NHS Vice President Kiran Schwaderer, who spoke about Service. Class of 2027 NHS Vice President Joni Pulaj then spoke about Leadership and Class of 2027 NHS President Aanika Roy spoke about character before leading the inductees in the membership pledge.

Congratulations to all of the new and returning members!

This year's inductees are:

Class of 2026: Sean McGovern, Robert North, and Sina Rassi.

Class of 2027: Rachel Agbenyega, James Alexander, Edie Albarella, Laighton Austin, Nicoletta Beltecas, Marcus Blackburn, Amelia Blake, John Boyle, Lila Carpenter, Timothy Case, Shiloh Castro, Sydney Comerico, Eleanor Condon, Natalie Coscia, Travis Cross, Samantha Cullen, Cole DeDomenico, William Douglass, Jack Duffy, Ryan Feldman, Grace Ferreri, Lola Gaenzler, Courtney Gilmartin, Cathleen Ginsburg, Rafeale Good-

year, Gregg Gramshi, Tina Guo, Daniela Haberman, Aileen Henry, Isaiah Hewlett, Oscar Higgins, Lukas Hlavacek, Shylah Horan, Leo Hyde, Andrew Jenner, Emerson Jerabek, Luca Johnson, Josephine Kagan, Evan Kaplan, Gavin Keating, Todd Kerman, Marie Kuznetsov, Adam Lee, Gerald Logan, Zoe Lubin, Ciara Lynch, Nicasia Mangiafridda, Caitlin McGovern, Keilana McLean, Marco Mele, Dario Morovic, Finnegan Mullen, Conor Murray, Emma Namba, Jack Nataraj, Claret Onuh, Olivia Parker, Callie Pascale, Christopher Passante, Syrus Preftakes, Aine Proffitt, Joni Pulaj, Audrey Pursel, Keller Pursel, Claire Reed, Sophia Riviello, Maya Roff, Stewart Rollan, Alessandra Romeo, Aanika Roy, Jonah Saks, Luca Shaw, Anna Shiels, Nishika Singh, Thomas Spadafora, Ziqing Su, Jordan Sullivan, Julianne Torina, James Vasami, Matteo Veronelli, Conor Waters



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Jenkins Signs 2026 Budget in Face of Historic Fiscal Pressure from Federal Government

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Jewel Williams Johnson said: "Today, with the County Executive signing the 2026 Budget, we conclude one of the most difficult budget seasons in recent memory—marked by federal decisions that slowed the economy and strained our local revenues. Working together, the Board of Legislators and the Administration made hard but necessary choices: every department absorbed cuts, hiring was frozen, and our non-profit partners faced significant reductions, even as we worked to restore support and protect critical investments in child care and maternal health. As Chair of the Budget and Appropriations Committee, I am grateful to my colleagues, County Executive Ken Jenkins and his team, our staff, the County workforce, nonprofit partners, and every resident who engaged in this process. Together, we remain grounded, collaborative, and prepared to meet whatever the future may bring with Westchester families at the heart of

every decision."

Majority Leader David T. Imamura said: "I am happy to support a budget that prioritizes the working people of Westchester. This budget keeps tax increases to a minimum while delivering essential services. At a time when the federal government uses human suffering as a weapon, we have been able to mitigate at least some of the harm imposed by this administration on Westchester residents."

Vice Chair José I. Alvarado said: "Today's signing by County Executive Jenkins marks the culmination of a year-round effort to address the diverse needs of our residents during times of unprecedented federal instability. As Vice Chair, I'm proud that this budget demonstrates financial accountability and our deep commitment to the well-being of the people of Westchester. Despite difficult decisions including department cuts and workforce reductions, the 2026 County

Budget prioritizes childcare assistance, health programs, and support for our most vulnerable neighbors while keeping the tax increase as modest as possible."

Majority Whip Terry Clements said: "With County Executive Jenkins' signature, the 2026 County Budget becomes a testament to our shared commitment to both fiscal responsibility and the priorities of Westchester families during one of the most challenging budget seasons we've faced. With critical investments in childcare assistance, health programs, and resources for domestic violence survivors and food insecurity, I'm proud to support a budget that protects essential services for our community while limiting the property tax increase."

County Departments to Undergo an Average of 8% Savings Across-the-Board

- Hard Hiring Freeze and Elimination of 180 Positions - \$28 million

- Reductions in Contracts, Technical Services and Expenses - \$34.5 million
- Reductions in Overtime/Hourly - \$11.6 million
- Right Sizing Social Services Relief - \$5.2 million
- Reductions Equipment - \$4.5 million
- Reductions Materials and Supplies - \$2.6 million

Increasing Costs

For the 2026 adopted Operating Budget, the County is facing unavoidable financial pressures from the federal government that are largely mandated or tied to essential services.

The main contributors include:

- Rising Healthcare Costs - \$46.4 million
- Pension Growth - \$14 million
- Transportation and Utilization for Children with Special Needs - \$10 million
- An Increase in Debt Service - \$13 million

Prioritized Essential Services

Despite the mounting financial pressures, Jenkins remained committed to protecting the programs that residents rely on most, maintaining essential services, ensuring that funding continues for the programs that support those most in need, from vulnerable children to critical social services and community resources.

Program funding will include supporting food security efforts, ensuring that victims of domestic violence have the protection and resources they need, offering free vaccine clinics, recycling opportunities, and maintaining free workforce development programs and services including our One Stop, local job fairs, job training and entrepreneurial support. The County has also budgeted to include continuing senior nutrition programming and our TIPS telehealth initiative, and keeping our mobile crisis teams and youth mental health programming in place. Additional Allocated Dollars:

- Low Income Child Care - \$16.6 million
- Access to Counsel Eviction Prevention Programs - \$3.7 million
- Child Care Scholarships - \$2.5 million
- Mental Health Clinic - \$1.5 million
- Federally Qualified Health Centers - \$1 million
- Maternal Health - \$500 thousand
- HERRO Program - \$300 thousand

The \$2.5 billion dollar, tax cap compliant budget means that the average homeowner will pay roughly \$3 dollars more per month to sustain the level of service they have come to expect and deserve.

Jenkins said: "The chaos and uncertainty coming out of Washington forced hard choices on Westchester County and on every other level of government. Here in Westchester we met that moment with discipline, honesty and resolve. We cut where we had to, protected what matters most, and delivered a budget that keeps Westchester County stable, compassionate, and fiscally sound."

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Table Hopping with Morris Gut: My Favorite Culinary Encounters of 2025!

I enjoyed many fine culinary experiences this past year. Here is a short list of favorite dishes and dining venues you should try not to miss in 2026! Winter Farmers Markets, too...



HEARTY SUNDAY ROAST DINNER AT JILL'S

Partners Ro Flanagan, Shane Clifford and Chef Brendan Donohue, proprietors of popular Jack's Bar & Kitchen, a popular Irish American tavern in Eastchester, premiered Jill's Bar & Restaurant in Mamaroneck, across from Harbor Island Park. Jill's, a colorful ode to modern Ireland, serves a winning combination of gastropub favorites and modern-American

can and European specialties along with a good dose of hospitality. The Fried Chicken Sandwich is a winner. There's also Truffle Parm Fries, Chili Roasted Cauliflower, Lobster Cobb Salad, Braised Beef Short Ribs, Ahi Tuna Bowl. Hearty Sunday Roast. Jill's, 100 W. Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck, off the corner of Mamaroneck Ave. Happy Hours. Weekend brunch. Closed Mondays. 914-341-1776 www.jillsbarandrestaurant.com

INDIAN STREET FOODS AT MUMBAI KATTA

Anita Gawde is a dynamo. At one moment she is greeting entering patrons, the next she disappears into the kitchen, the next she is on the dining room floor touting her menu: the tasty street foods of regional India. Anita and her husband Jayant Gawde have been marking their 1st. Anniversary with vibrant specialties plated with pizzazz. We recently feasted on a tasty tour of savory small plates: Samosa Chaat, Sabudana Vada, delectable Chicken Kathi Roll, ending with their delicious Chicken Masala and crispy crust Shrimp Fry. The Kesar Phirni, their version of rice pudding, was a festive dessert. Anita and her friendly staff will

help you with the menu. Mumbai Katta, 227 Westchester Ave., Port Chester. 516-953-3265 www.mumbaikatta.com

ITALIAN OUT OF A DINER AT TRATTORIA VIVOLO

Cited by Forbes Magazine, Chef-owner and personable host Dean Vivolo serves his robust regional Italian cuisine out of a vintage diner just across from Harrison's Metro-North station. Sit at the counter, tuck into a booth, or take a table in the rear greenhouse and enjoy the surprising contemporary and traditional flavors emanating from his kitchen: tasty thin-crusted pizza; Crostino di Polenta topped with wild mushrooms, gorgonzola, and tomato sauce; Linguini Nere with bay scallops; Grilled Lamb Chops; Lasagna Bolognese al Forno; and wonderful Spaghetti a la Vongole. Fine wine list. Sparkling lights in the evenings. Seasonal outdoor patio. Free parking. Trattoria Vivolo, 301 Halstead Ave., Harrison. 914-835-6199 www.trattoriavivolo.com

TENDER BRISKET & BURGERS AT SMOKEHOUSE TAILGATE GRILL

Partners Mike Hoffer and Justin Zeytoonian re-opened their new industrial-designed BBQ restaurant in The Rockwell, a new building along North Ave., New Rochelle, near IONA. It is directly across from the shuttered original which they founded in 2007. The well-edited menu includes a good selection of craft beers along with signature Tacos, BBQ Chicken and Racks of Ribs. Recently, we ordered their popular Brisket, and it was flavorful and tender. The Tomahawk Burger is prepared with Pat La Frieda beef and is a satisfying winner. The original Smokehouse Tailgate Grill is located at 587 North Ave., New Rochelle, not far from IONA College. (914-813-8686). Their second location: Smokehouse Tailgate Grill, 320 Mamaroneck Ave., Mamaroneck. (914-341-1655). www.shtailgate.com



ARTISANAL PIZZA FENICE

In just 3 years, John Gristina, proprietor of Pizza Fenice in Pelham, has become a pizzaioli to be reckoned with. The

buzz about his traditional and non-traditional pizzas and Italian/American fare have reached across the area often drawing lines of patrons to his cozy take-out pizza shop. (There are a few tables if you can score them.) Our recent indulgence: his Sunday Sausage & Peppers Pizza was an entirely decadent experience loaded with flavor. We finished it over two days. A must try! Pizza Fenice, 304 5th Ave., Pelham. 914-633-3332. www.pizzafenice.com

WINTER FARMERS MARKETS RIGHT NOW

So, winter just started and you miss visiting your favorite farmer's market. Some of our most popular markets operate all winter, and while you may not get all the spring/summer/fall harvest can produce, it's still a good place to pick up a variety of artisanal goods such as meats, cheeses, jams, breads. Here are some markets worth a winter's drive. Check ahead for times and dates. Happy grazing:

Larchmont Winter Farmers Market, Metro-North upper lot, Chatsworth & Myrtle Blvd., Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., year-round. www.downtoearthmarkets.com

Hastings-on-Hudson Winter Farmers' Market, Commuter Parking Lot, across from Metro-North station. 134 Southside Ave., Hastings-on-Hudson. Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. www.hastingsfarmersmarket.org

Pleasantville Farmers Market, Metro-North Parking Lot, 10 Memorial Plaza, Pleasantville. Saturdays, 8:30 a.m. to 12, through March 2026. www.pleasantvillefarmersmarket.org

Irvington Winter Farmers' Market, Main Street School Auditorium, 110 Main St., Irvington. Sundays, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. www.theirvingtonfarmersmarket.org

Gossett's Farm Market, Gossett Brothers Nursery, 1202 Rt. 35, South Salem. Year round. Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. www.gossettbrothers.com

Cold Spring Indoor Farmers Market, Boscobel House and Gardens, 1601 Rt. 9D. Garrison. Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. www.coldspringfarmersmarket.org

(Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at: 914-235-6591. Email: gutreactions@optonline.net)

Contribute to Pelham's Crocheted Community Banner

In honor of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the Battle of Pell, we are creating a crocheted community banner that will be revealed in the fall and displayed at the Town of Pelham Public Library. Whether you've been crocheting for decades, or you've never picked up a hook before, we welcome you to participate! You can...

...stop in for your weekly Fiber Fridays or monthly Stitching Saturdays

...sign up for a take-home kit with yarn, a crochet hook, and instructions for how to complete your own square at home

...contribute a square of your own design (please see below for parameters)

...sign up for a mini-crochet lesson during Stitching Saturdays (please call or email in advance to ensure availability)

The deadline to contribute a square is September 5, 2026. No exceptions. To sign up for take-home kits or mini-lessons, or for any other questions, please email Tash at ngross@pelhamlibrary.org.

Parameters for Banner Squares

Each square must measure ~5x5 inches. We recommend using a H/5.0mm size hook. All colors are accepted, but reds, whites, creams, and blues are suggested. Your square can be one color, or multi-colored. Your choice! We recommend using acrylic or acrylic-blend yarn.

To contribute your square, bring it to the Town of Pelham Public Library c/o Tash Gross before September 5. Be sure to attach a note with your name, so we can credit you properly when the banner is displayed.



Disinheriting a Family Member from Your Estate Plan



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED
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SPECIAL GUEST CONTRIBUTOR: AMY C.
O'HARA, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

Disinheriting a family member is a sensitive and often emotional topic. It must be handled carefully. Many people assume that they are entirely free to leave their property to whomever they choose. However, New York law has specific rules that protect spouses and restrict the ability to disinherit them. Understanding who can be disinherited, how to do it properly, and the potential challenges involved can help ensure that your estate plan truly reflects your intentions and is upheld after your passing.

The most important limitation under New York law concerns spouses. A spouse cannot be completely disinherited unless there is a valid prenuptial or postnuptial agreement in which the spouse waives the right to inherit, or they signed a waiver of right of election in line with state law and requirements. Otherwise, even if you write a Will leaving your spouse nothing,

New York's "right of election" gives the surviving spouse the legal right to claim approximately one-third of the estate. This includes probate assets, those that pass under the Will, as well as certain non-probate assets, that pass outside the Will, such as joint accounts, payable-on-death designations, and even certain property transfers made before death if done to intentionally deprive the spouse of inheritance rights. This rule underscores a key principle of New York law: spouses are protected and disinheriting one is legally difficult unless both parties knowingly agreed to it in advance.

Children, on the other hand, do not have the same protections under New York law. Many people are surprised to learn that a parent is legally permitted to disinherit an adult child for any reason, or for no reason at all. The key is clarity: a Will must make it unmistakably clear that the omission was intentional and not accidental. Estate litigation often arises when someone is left out of a Will with no explanation, leading disinherited family members to challenge the document.

When someone decides to disinherit a child or other family member, the Will should directly address the decision. Sometimes a person writes: "I make no provision for my son John, not for lack of affection, but for reasons personal to me." Other times, the document simply states that the individual is intentionally

excluded or that they are receiving \$1 to clearly demonstrate awareness and intention. Contrary to popular belief, leaving someone \$1 is not necessary, and in some cases can even be insulting. A well-drafted statement of intentional omission is usually sufficient and preferable.

It is also important to understand that disinheritance does not automatically prevent legal challenges. A disgruntled family member can still attempt to contest the Will by claiming that the person who created it lacked mental capacity, was unduly influenced, or did not execute the document properly. The more contentious the family dynamics, the greater the risk of post-death litigation. To minimize challenges, individuals should take additional steps, such as executing the Will under attorney supervision (which creates a legal presumption of validity), and adding a "no-contest clause," which states that any beneficiary who challenges the Will risks losing their inheritance. A no-contest clause can deter challenges, but it only works if the person being discouraged has something to lose; if they were already receiving nothing, they have no incentive to refrain from contesting.

Additionally, many people forget that disinheritance in a Will only applies to probate assets. If a family member is named as a beneficiary on a life insurance policy or retirement account, or as joint owner of a bank account, those assets

pass outside the Will. Therefore, part of effective disinheritance is ensuring that all beneficiary designations, account titles, property deeds, and trust documents consistently reflect the estate plan.

Disinheriting someone is rarely done casually. Whether the motivation is estrangement, financial irresponsibility, lifetime gifts already made, or personal reasons, it is wise to consult with an experienced estate planning attorney to ensure that the wishes are expressed legally and effectively. Outside of spouses, New York law allows individuals broad discretion, but it also provides protections and safeguards to prevent unjust or accidental outcomes. Crafting a careful and thoughtful estate plan not only ensures that your intentions are honored but also reduces the likelihood of painful disputes among those you leave behind.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 "Lawyer of the Year" by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the "Best Lawyers" in America since 2008. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC). Krooks is past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914-684-2100) or by visiting the firm's website at www.littmankrooks.com.

Project Community: Celebrating 40 Years of Impact

families.

Programs Making an Impact

-- Project CHILDD – A long-standing program providing social and recreational opportunities for children and young adults with developmental differences. Project CHILDD integrates creative expression, art instruction through hands-on workshops. Program Director Lauren DiDomenico states that one of the greatest strengths is the meaningful friendships formed with the participants through the support of committed teen mentors.

-- You & Me Program – Unique to Pelham, this program is a community safety initiative designed to support individuals with developmental differences by strengthening understanding, preparedness, and trust between families and local law enforcement. Through a voluntary registry shared with Pelham and Pelham Manor Police Departments, families can provide photos and key behavioral information so officers have immediate, informed access in the field—helping to prevent misunderstandings and promote safe, respectful interactions.

"Project Community started with nurses who saw that prevention and healing didn't just happen in hospitals—they happened in homes, classrooms, and playgrounds," said Anne Frost, founder and long-time community health advocate. "Forty years later, we're still driven by that same mission: to build a healthier, more connected Pelham for everyone."

In celebration of its 40th year, Project Community is expanding its partnerships and programming—continuing to meet the evolving social, emotional, and behavioral needs of Pelham's youth and

The program helps ensure that police officers recognize individuals as community members in need of support and safety, not suspicion.

-- Teen Program for Health Education and Wellness – Serving students across the tri-state area and extending into the Lower Hudson Valley through a school-based partnership model, this program provides youth-focused workshops on responsible social media use, anxiety management strategies, and personal safety related to the effects of substance use and assault prevention. Project community is proud that these initiatives are supported by Senator Nathalia Fernandez and Assemblywoman Amy Paulin.

-- Annual PC Color Run – One of Pelham's most anticipated family events, the Color Run brings together hundreds of residents for a morning of energy, laughter, and color—all to support local youth and family programs. The event embodies Project Community's values of joy, inclusion, and togetherness, while raising essential funds for its programming and outreach.

"Our programs are about more than

services—they're about belonging," said Anne Frost, Board President. "For 40 years, we've created safe, welcoming spaces where our young children, teens, and families feel supported and valued."

Community Partnerships and the Road Ahead

Project Community continues to build collaborations with local public school districts, local Pelham-based organizations, and various civic groups to strengthen access to wellness, mentorship, and prevention initiatives.

"This milestone year reminds us that caring for our community takes all of us. Every volunteer, donor, and partner helps make our mission possible—and together, we're shaping the next 40 years of community care," said Stephanie Otero, VP Project Community.

Stay tuned for upcoming anniversary events, family programs, and community celebrations throughout the year.

For updates, visit www.projectcommunity.us or follow Project Community on social media.

Westchester Nonprofits Sound Alarm on Rising Poverty and Basic Needs Crisis

continued from page 4

leaders say demonstrates how official poverty measures underestimate real hardship.

Housing also remains a key issue for families. "The poverty rate on paper does not reflect the lived reality of families struggling to keep a roof overhead in Westchester." According to Elissa Ramos of Westhab, "In June of this year our shelter capacity was at 90%. In 2024 it was at 71% and we are seeing more and more people. And a spike in families."

Despite rising need, panelists emphasized continued commitment, innovation, and collaboration across organizations. The YMCA's Executive Director Tiffany Hamilton asked participants, "What will you do with this data? Will I use it to influence and inform grants to tell the whole story of what exists in one of the wealthiest counties in our country? Will I use the data to inform legislation and advocacy agenda that yields real results? Because the children are watching, who will take this data and use it to change various systems."

Adam Rabinovitch, Executive Director of WCA, concluded the event with a call to action to join Westchester Children's Association advocacy efforts to strive towards the goal of cutting child poverty in half by 2032. "This will take policy changes including expanding cash assistance to meet basic needs and ensuring child tax credits are received by families that qualify for them. We all must continue to rise up and support our children."

Anyone can sign up to receive advocacy alerts from WCA at www.wca4kids.org and learn more about poverty in Westchester by visiting the Poverty Pulse Dashboard on the site.

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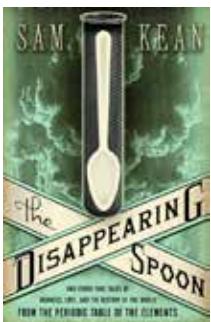
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What's Happening at the Pelham Public Library



Pelham Ignites the Elements Book Club Saturday, January 10, 2-3-2 pm

Please join us to explore The Disappearing Spoon by Sam Kean on January 10th! This fascinating book is full of quirky stories about the periodic table, surprising chemical discoveries, and how elements have shaped our world. Led by Pelham High School students, this discussion is appropriate for teens and adults and marks the first in our series of chemistry-themed book discussions. In collaboration with MINDSET, Inc and the Pelham Public Schools, this is part of the year-long celebration of STEM Pelham Ignites the Elements.

Registration is free but please sign up to reserve your spot!



Defensive Driving

Saturday, January 24, 10 am-4 pm

Instructor Sam Eskander will lead a defensive driving course in-person at the Library. This course will qualify you for a discount on your insurance and point reduction on your license. This course is six hours. There will be a 30-minute lunch break (please bring your lunch) and two 5-minute breaks (morning and afternoon). Cost is \$35 in cash per participant. Registration is required. To register email kpalovick@pelhamlibrary.org.



Crafty Adults: Love Garland

Monday, January 26, 7-8 pm

Join our resident artist/instructor Sara

Mallach this month as we make sweet heart shaped garlands to bring a little cheer to our spaces during the winter doldrums. This charming felt project is sure to be a keepsake Valentine decoration for years to come. This event will take place in-person at the Library and separate registration is required for each attendee. Sign up early, as space and supplies are limited. Please note the time change. Class now begins at 7 pm. Please arrive on time as late arrivals disrupt the class.



Narcan Training with Sun River Health Thursday, January 29, 7-7:45 pm Be prepared, save a life! Join Sun River Health for a free training on Narcan, the lifesaving antidote for opioid overdose. You will learn about emerging trends and issues related to overdose, harm reduction and meeting addiction with compassion, the risks of overdose, and how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose. You will also receive other helpful resources, as well as your own free Narcan kit. Registration is required for this in-person event.



Tai Chi at the Library

Tuesdays in January, 10:30-11:30 am

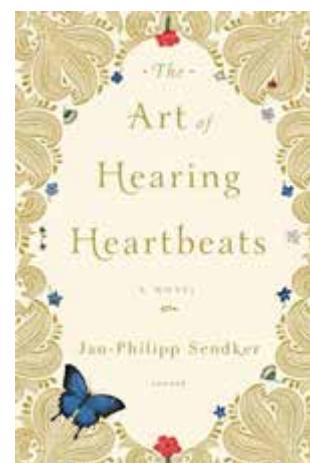
Join Master Yao-Wah Chan for beginning Tai Chi. He has over 40 years of experience teaching throughout New York City and Westchester, and is trained in multiple Chinese disciplines. Tai Chi is a series of slow, gentle, and meditative body movements that can help you reduce pain, increase flexibility, improve balance, and cope with stress. These classes are walk-ins that do not require preregistration. Please note the time change. Class now begins at 10:30 am.



Mah Jongg

Tuesdays in January, 12:30-3 pm

Join us for a drop-in Mah Jongg program for adults ages 18 and up. This program is for participants of all abilities who know how to play American Mah Jongg. No beginners, please. The Library will provide Mah Jongg sets, but please bring your own Mah Jongg card. The Pelham Recreation Department is offering beginner Mah Jongg classes. For more information, visit their website or call them at 914-738-0153.



Adult Hybrid Book Clubs

The After-Dark Book Club will be taking a break in January but will return on February 5 at 7:30 pm to discuss The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead and on March 3 at 7:30 pm to discuss The Briar Club by Kate Quinn. The 2nd-Friday Book Club will meet on Friday, January 9 at 10:30 am to discuss The Art of Hearing Heartbeats by Jan-Philipp Sendker and on Friday, February 13 at 10:30 am to discuss Colored Television by Danzy Senna. To join, email library@pelhamlibrary.org.



Fiber Fridays

Every Friday, 1-3:30 pm

Love to knit or crochet? Gather your needles, hooks, and yarn, and join us every

Friday afternoon for an informal needle-work group for adults and teens. Knitters, crocheters, and needle point enthusiasts of all abilities are welcome, but please note that no instructors will be present.



Digitizing Days are Wednesdays

This program for digitizing photos has been a great success. Bring in your family photos and our librarians will assist you with scanning them to a USB drive using our high-speed scanner. Appointments are required for a 45-minute session. To learn all of the details and to register, please visit the website.



Musical Adventures at the Library with Concordia Conservatory

Join storytellers and musicians from Concordia Conservatory for this special Thursday Morning Story Time! This event is made possible by the sponsorship of the Conservatory Music Outreach Fund. Registration is not required, but this is a popular program and spaces fill up quickly.



Baseball Cards

Saturday, January 31, 2-3 pm

Why do kids love collecting baseball cards? Come learn more with local high schooler and collector Henry! Learn how baseball cards work, explore player stats and baseball history, get ideas for how to organize your own card collection, and show and tell your own favorite card. This program is for kids. No trading is permitted.



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