

The Pelham Post

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Congressional Record
PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2026 No. 4

House of Representatives

RECOGNIZING SHORELINE PUBLISHING

CONGRESSMAN GEORGE LATIMER SPEAKING ON THE FLOOR

Mr. Speaker, in a world where local newspapers and radio stations are disappearing, it is valuable to recognize and salute those organizations that are continuing to provide information about our local communities' life and times.

In Westchester County we owe a public debt of gratitude to Shoreline Publishing, which serves the people of southern Westchester with five community newspapers; a countywide Jewish monthly newspaper and a full-color quarterly magazine, *Westchester Women*.

Under the leadership of president and publisher Edward Shapiro, Shoreline provides and information lifeline across out towns with the *Pelham Post*, *Scarsdale Sentinel*, *Harrison Herald*, *Larchmont Ledger*--as you can see, alliteration still has its appeal--and the *New Rochelle Review*.

Editors Cynthia Pena and Joyce Farrell ensure timely local news reaches the readers in each community, as well as the readers of *Westchester Jewish Life*, which is always available in the local synagogues and temples. Other key Shoreline executives round out the local team, including Lauren Levine and Mary DeYoung.

I thank Shoreline Publishing from the floor of the House of Representatives for continuing to keep local news at the forefront of our hometowns.

Organizational, Legislative Meeting Held at Town of Pelham



BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Pelham Town Supervisor Theresa Mohan convened the Monday, January 12th Organizational Meeting, the first item on the Agenda being approval of official undertakings of Municipal Officials for the year 2026. "This Resolution puts in place a blanket undertaking for the named officials and includes everyone on the Board and officers of the Town. It is covered by our current insurance policy," Mohan said.

"The second Resolution is adop-

tion of Rules of Order. Town Board is authorized under New York State law to determine the rules governing conduct of its meetings," Mohan concluded.

Beginning with appointments, Councilwoman Maura Curtin was named Deputy Supervisor.

The Recreation Commission established August 7, 1946 appoints five members, each serving a five-year term. The 2026 members are Aisling Bier, Kevin Fee, Daniel Green, Rosa Valencia and John Boyce.

continued on page 4



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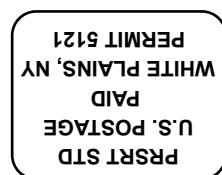
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The Picture House Presents a Special Black History Month Screening Series: Ain't No Back to a Merry-Go-Round

The Picture House Regional Film Center is proud to present a special Black History Month screening series of *Ain't No Back to a Merry-Go-Round*, an award-winning documentary that uncovers a powerful and largely forgotten chapter of the early Civil Rights Movement. The feature will screen on Monday nights in February at 7:00 PM in Bronxville, on February 2, 9, 16, and 23.

Directed by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Ilana Trachtman, the film tells the story of five Howard University students whose peaceful protest on a segregated carousel at Glen Echo Amusement Park in 1960 sparked one of the first organized interracial civil rights demonstrations in U.S. history. When white suburban allies joined Black students on the picket line, a groundbreaking partnership was born - one that drew national attention, provoked extremists, inspired lawmakers, and helped incubate future civil rights leaders, including Freedom Riders.

"This film is a remarkable reminder that meaningful change often begins with young people who are willing to act - and with communities that choose to



stand together," said Clayton Bushong, Executive Director of The Picture House. "Presenting *Ain't No Back to a Merry-Go-Round* during Black History Month aligns deeply with our mission to create shared community experiences through film while shining a light on stories that continue to resonate today."

Featuring never-before-seen archival footage and immersive storytelling, the documentary includes voiceover performances by Jeffrey Wright, Mandy Patinkin, Bob Balaban, Peter Gallagher, Dominique Thorne, Alyssia Reiner, Tracie Thoms, Lee Grant, and others. Four surviving protesters

reflect on the risks they took, the alliances they forged, and the enduring power of collective action.

The film's title is inspired by Langston Hughes' poem "Merry-Go-Round," a poignant meditation on segregation and childhood innocence that echoes throughout the documentary.

FILM DETAILS

2024 | U.S. | English | 89 minutes

AWARDS & HONORS INCLUDE:

- DC Black Film Festival – Best Documentary Feature
- Boston Jewish Film Festival – Audience Award
- St. Louis International Film Festival – Women in Film Award
- Atlanta Jewish Film Festival – Building Bridges Award
- Richmond International Film Festival – Outstanding Merit for Community & Civic Action
- San Antonio Black Film Festival – Best Documentary Feature

Tickets and additional details are available at thepicturehouse.org

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Save the Date for WINTERFEST '26!

WinterFest is coming back to Pelham in '26! On February 28th Pelham's very own musical and culinary talents will take to Daronco Town House to keep everyone warm and happy on a cold winter's night.

WinterFest is a celebration for all ages, with a full line-up of Pelham musicians, delicious one-pot dishes served up by Pelham chefs, hot cocoa and coffee, and the warmth of being together!

- Interested in performing? The stage is open for all youth musicians
- Want to share a favorite family recipe with your neighbors? Find out more about the One-Pot Tasting & Cook-Off.

Visit <https://pelhamtogether.org/events/2026/2/28/winterfest-2026>

Flood Mitigation, Pedestrian/Traffic Safety Key Topics at Pelham Manor Board Meeting

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Pelham Manor Mayor Jennifer Monachino opened the Monday, January 12th Board meeting, announcing the death of her mother, Annette Cowan Monachino. "Truly a more loving, compassionate, finer woman never walked the face of this earth. We will miss her



dearly," Mayor Monachino said. Monachino mentioned another loss, Minnie Varone, whose son Gregory was the Zoning Board Chair for many years prior to the present administration.

Monachino then introduced Deputy Mayor Bridget (Breda) Bennett. "Back in the fall I announced that on Boston Post Road there would be installed Leading Pedestrian Intervals, which gives pedestrians more time to cross the street, at the corner of Fowler Avenue and Boston Post Road and corner of Esplanade and Boston Post Road. I thank Police Chief Greg Sancho for his diligence and bringing it to fruition," Bennett stated.

"Also, right before the holidays in December I was very happy to attend Prospect Hill Elementary School's 5th grade D.A.R.E. graduation. For those who don't know what D.A.R.E. is, D.A.R.E. stands for Drug Abuse Resistance Education. Police Sergeant Thomas Ryan and Detective Robert Vogel talk to the 5th graders and teach them for ten weeks about making healthy life choices and dangers of drugs and alcohol," Bennett concluded.

"In November 2024 this Board approved the Monroe Street Climate Resiliency Project, supported by a NYS \$550,000 grant which is helping us with our stormwater mitigation and drainage plan," Trustee Maurice Owen-Michaane noted. "The project includes a full drainage analysis using updated modeling. The system is designed to perform under current conditions, encompassing Pelham Bay Parkway which has blockage underneath. It is designed to perform with or without that blockage. The Village continues to work closely with our State Senator and Village Manager. Construction is targeted for late Spring."

Organizational, Legislative Meeting Held at Town of Pelham

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Town Attorney and Prosecutor is Thomas Kleinberger, Town Engineer is James Vassalotti III, serving from January 1st to December 31st, 2026. The Town Controller is Samantha Losurdo. Stephen Conte was appointed Chief Constable; and Anthony Camardella, Lieutenant. Sergeant Constables include Michael Farley and Christopher Williams.

Molly Girolamo is Deputy Town Clerk and Custodian of Elections. Joseph Durnin is the Marriage Officer. Felix Anderson and Philip DeSimone are appointed as Caretakers. Arthur Scinta is the Town Historian.

During the Legislative Meeting, Curtin discussed a proposed grant for acquisition of a vacant lot near the Post Office

where the new headquarters for Town's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) unit could be based, housing the flycar and ambulance.

"We are working with the County and Legislature to support property acquisition, design and construction of a centralized emergency center for \$50,000, but we hope to get it for \$1," Curtin stated.

"Work is continuing in the build-out space for the clerks in the Town Hall," Councilwoman Kara McLoughlin remarked, regarding the Court. "I believe that we are waiting for quotes for bullet-proof glass. Philip DeSimone has been managing that project and moving it forward," McLoughlin noted.

Village of Pelham Trustee Anderson Lauds Village DPW



BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Mayor Chance Mullen called the Tuesday, January 13th Village of Pelham Board Meeting to order, beginning with a report by new Trustee/Department of Public Works (DPW) Liaison Allison Anderson, who said that she met with DPW General Foreman Robert Giustino, touring the DPW Facility and expressing appreciation for DPW's work and ongoing challenges.

Anderson expressed kudos for DPW's prompt removal of ice and snow over the holidays, keeping the roads safe. "Leaf collection concluded in mid-December but DPW is picking up remaining piles that were buried under the snow. No new leaf piles shall be put out; it may result in a summons. Next leaf collection window will be from March 15th through August 30th. The 2026 Sanitation and Recycling calendars are now available on the Village website, also in the Myvop app," Anderson stated.

"Flood mitigation projects for both North Pelham Watershed and Highbrook Avenue are continuing to move forward. We recently met with representatives from NYS Department of Transportation, where our engineers walked through both projects in detail to discuss the Village's request for easements for the new stormwater outfalls. We are up to 30% of the zoning phase and hope to reach 60% by middle of February," Scelza noted.

A Resolution was passed, adopting Local Law No. 1 to override the Real Property Tax Levy Limit.

Resolutions appointing new Police Officer Amol S. Sandhu and Deputy Village Clerk Giana Pizzutello were approved.

Resolution passed, calling for Public Hearing on Local Law No. 2 of 2026, adding new chapter to Pelham Village Code entitled, "Affordable Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing" which provides 10% Affordable Housing.

More Than 100 Residents Gather to Reclaim Pelham's Natural History, Sharing Stories of Place and Hope

More than 100 residents filled The Manor Club on January 8 for Reclaiming Pelham's Natural History: A Conversation with Eric Sanderson. The evening explored the town's ecological past, examined its present landscape, and invited active community engagement around a more climate-resilient future rooted in a shared sense of place.

Opening the evening, Tai Montanarella of the Environmental Coalition of the Pelhams (EcoPel), welcomed the audience and thanked The Manor Club and the Pelham Preservation & Garden Society for their collaboration in making the free event possible. Montanarella framed historical ecology as a way of understanding what Pelham was like before it was built—and how forests, wetlands, and streams continue to shape neighborhoods, water flow, and flood risk today.

Town Historian Art Scinta grounded the conversation in Pelham's present, using historic maps and images to show how local streets, parks, and waterways have changed over time. By contrasting early 20th-century homes surrounded by trees with today's streetscapes, Scinta illustrated the dramatic loss of tree canopy. He shared a personal memory of stepping off the Metro-North train less than two decades ago and walking home beneath a dark, forested canopy—underscoring the feel of a neighborhood that has been lost, along with the ecosystem services those trees once provided.

Landscape ecologist Eric Sanderson, author of *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City*, then took the audience deeper into Pelham's past, describing the region as part of a once-continuous Appalachian oak-hickory forest shaped by water, soils, and Indigenous use. He emphasized that historical ecology is not about recreating the past but about understanding how natural systems continue to influence communities today. "All history has a natural context," Sanderson noted, adding that neither nature nor culture is static.

Sanderson also observed that historical wisdom often comes through local storytelling rather than policy or technical reports—parables that show how past choices shaped the landscape and what those choices mean today.

Those ideas carried into the moderated panel and community conversation led by Suzann Michailoff of the Pelham Preservation & Garden Society, a certified Cornell Cooperative Extension Climate Steward. Panelists included Allison Anderson of the Junior League of Pelham, Art Scinta of the Pelham Tree Conservancy, and Anna Simonsen-Meehan of Pelham Vine Squad and Plant Pelham Native. They described how their organizations are restoring native plants, managing invasive-species, building bioswales and pollinator gardens, and planting native trees and shrubs to reconnect Pelham with its natural landscape.

During the reception, residents and local officials added their voices in conversation with panelists. Town Supervisor Theresa Mohan discussed the Village of Pelham's Natural Resources Inventory and the Town's pursuit of grant funding for a Pelham Street Tree Inventory and Management Plan, highlighting them as tools to help guide community restoration.



Neighbors who were unable to attend may still contribute through the community survey, which asks for stories about Pelham's past and the prompt: "In 20 years, what would you like Pelham's neighborhoods to look like if we planned with nature in mind—and what's one action we could take now to begin?" Together, community engagement, shared stories, and planning tools are beginning to form a living map of Pelham's sense of place—reflecting where the town has been and where it hopes to go.

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins Announces Leadership Transitions and Promotions

With a new year and a new term, Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins announced a series of leadership updates within County government, honoring the retirement of a senior leader and highlighting key promotions from within the organization.

Deputy County Executive Richard Wishnie will retire at the end of January after more than 50 years of dedicated public service to the people of Westchester County. Wishnie's long and distinguished career included an appointment to Acting Westchester County Executive, laying the foundation for his role as Deputy County Executive. Wishnie, who also served at the Westchester County Director of Emergency Services, was elected to the Westchester County Board of Legislators in 1993, where he served six terms representing the Town of Ossining, the Villages of Briarcliff Manor, Ossining, and Croton-on-Hudson, as well as portions of the Town of Cortlandt. Before his service at the County level, Wishnie served the Town of Ossining as Councilman from 1976 to 1979 and as Supervisor from 1979 to 1983.

Jenkins said: "Richard Wishnie's career has been defined by deep commitment, thoughtful leadership and a genuine love for public service. He helped guide this County through countless challenges with steadiness and integrity. His institutional knowledge, kindness and dedication have left a lasting mark on Westchester County. On behalf of our entire workforce, I thank Richard for his service and wish him the very best in a well-deserved retirement."

Wishnie said: "Serving the people of Westchester County has been an honor and a privilege. I am incredibly proud of the work we've done together and the dedicated public servants I've had the opportunity to work alongside. I thank County Executive Jenkins for his faith in me, and I leave knowing the County is in strong, capable hands."

Jenkins also announced leadership promotions that underscore Westchester County's commitment to developing talent from within.

Joan McDonald has been promoted to Deputy County Executive. McDonald brings decades of experience in public ser-

vice and infrastructure leadership, along with a deep understanding of government operations. She previously served as the Director of Operations, the New York State Commissioner of the Department of Transportation, and Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. She is also the Chair of the IDA and LDC, and the NYS Bridge Authority.

Jenkins said: "Joan's experience, judgment, and steady leadership make her exceptionally well-suited for this role. She has dedicated her career to strengthening communities, and her leadership will continue to be a tremendous asset to Westchester County."

McDonald said: "It is an honor to be appointed Westchester County Deputy County Executive. I greatly admire the leadership of Ken Jenkins, and look forward to working with him as he advances his agenda for Westchester County residents."

Emily Saltzman has been promoted to Director of Operations. Saltzman has served Westchester County for nearly a decade as the Deputy Director of Oper-

ations, and brings extensive experience from local and State government. She also serves on the Purchase College Council.

Jenkins said: "Emily's promotion reflects her deep institutional knowledge, strong leadership, and personal commitment to this County. She understands how government works and how to make it work better for the people we serve."

Saltzman said: "I am grateful to County Executive Ken Jenkins for the opportunity to continue serving the people of Westchester County. I look forward to working with our Commissioners, Directors, and the outstanding County workforce to provide programs and services to Westchester residents."

Under the leadership of McDonald and Saltzman, the Operations team guided the County through the COVID-19 response, oversaw the development of the County's \$2.5 billion budget, and launched innovative initiatives including the Housing FLEX Funds, the Local Transportation Assistance Program (LTAP), and the Department of Infrastructure Grants (DIG) Program.

The Next Play: High School Sports Through a Student's Lens

Evan Tran

Photographer, ETVisions Photo
etvisionsphoto.square.site



Dobbs Ferry Senior guard Anthony Ficarotta (22) commits a hard foul on Westlake Sophomore guard Chayton Velez (3).



White Plains Senior Guard Rocco Briante (0) is trapped in his own corner by Pearl River Senior guard TJ



Junior Matteo Crino Up-Ends his opponent, Sophomore Matthew Rodriguez in New Rochelle's decisive win over East Ramapo.

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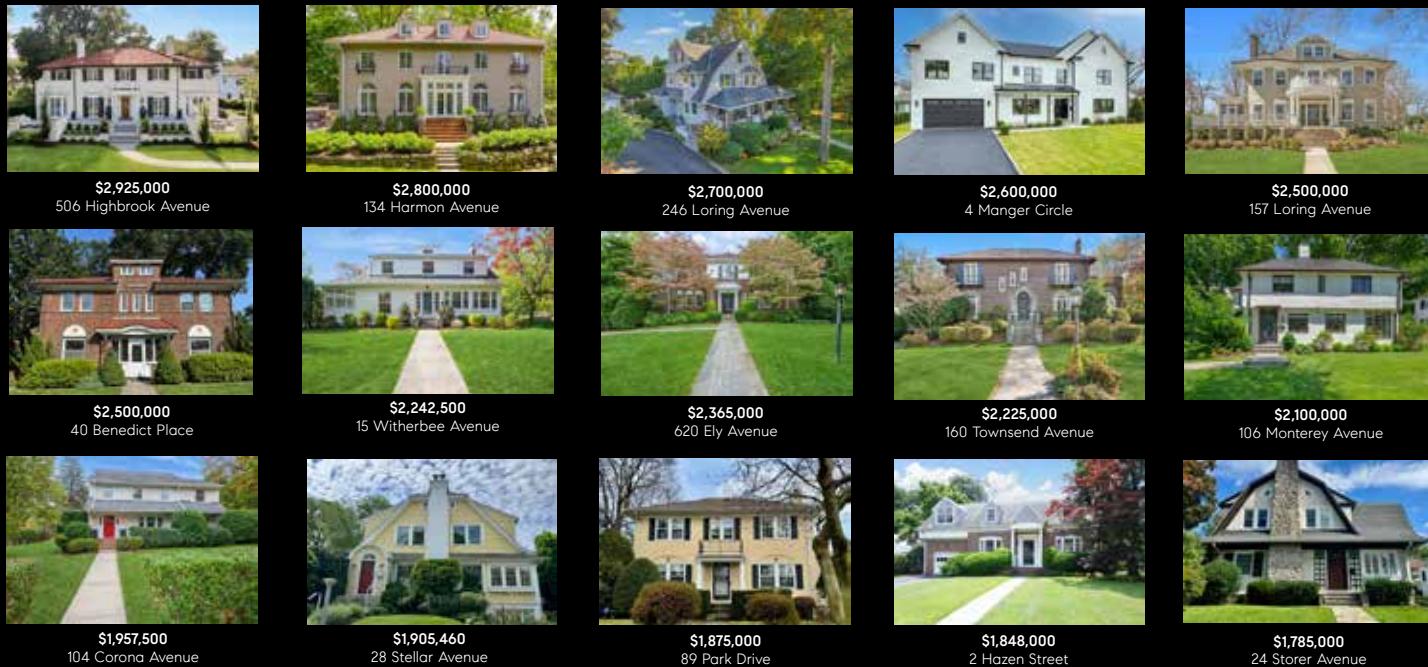


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Pelham Art Center Faculty Exhibition: "The Art of Practice"

Pelham Art Center's first exhibition of 2026, The Art of Practice, will feature a selection of diverse, forward-thinking artwork by its own teaching artists. This year's Faculty Exhibition explores "practice" as both process and pedagogy, inviting viewers behind the scenes of how work is made, taught, and sustained.

This exhibition is presented in loving honor of the legacy of Donna Ross, a cherished Pelham Art Center faculty member whose practice continues to inspire.

On display at Pelham Art Center from January 17-February 22, 2026. An



Opening Reception will take place on Saturday, January 17 from 12-2pm.

Participating Artists in the 2026 Faculty Exhibition Include: Sylvia Arakas (Beholder), Fiona Agababian, Diane

R. Boekman, Maria Campos, Jeanne Carreau, Elizabeth de Béthune, Frank Fanelli Jr., Helayne Friedland, Barbara Galazzo, Letizia Gentile, Sonika Gupta, Edgar Jerins, Barry L. Mason, Eleanor Grace Miller, Patricia Pardini, Donna Rose Ross, Ana Saura, Susan Saas, Sarah Shibah, Jen Silvester, and The Nerdy Duo.

Pelham Art Center's faculty features accomplished artists as well as curators, collectors, entrepreneurs, scholars, and essential voices within our community. They have sparked creativity in thousands of students, including graduates of top fine arts programs and recipients of prestigious awards and apprenticeships. Since 1970, Pelham Art Center's teaching artists have been dedicated to nurturing the creative potential of students at all levels.

Pelham Art Center is a non-profit educational and cultural institution committed to providing public access to see, study and experience the arts, foster lifelong arts appreciation and thereby strengthen the community. The Art Center was founded in 1970 and now serves more than 16,000 people each year. These events and

programs are made possible, in part, by ArtsWestchester with funds from Westchester County Government with the support of County Executive George Latimer. Pelham Art Center also receives funding from: New York State Council on the Arts, A State Agency, and Pelham Community Members and Annual Fund Donors.

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State Senator Shelley Mayer Passes Legislation to Improve Emergency Medical Services



State Senator Shelley Mayer announced that her bill, S.8806, which amends previously enacted legislation directing counties, working in coordination with cities, towns, villages, and other EMS providers, to develop comprehensive, countywide plans for coordinated emergency medical services, has passed the Senate unanimously.

This legislation builds on the EMS bill that was signed into law last year, sponsored by Senator Mayer and Assemblyman Steve Otis, by adding provisions requiring the Department of Health (DOH), in consultation with state and regional emergency medical services councils, to provide a model format for county plans and provides for DOH review and feedback to the counties. This bill gives counties a clear roadmap to assessing and improving EMS within their counties and will strengthen and improve EMS statewide.

State Senator Shelley Mayer said, "I am pleased that the State Senate has passed this important legislation to provide greater support to EMS providers across New York. This agreement between the Legislature and the Governor represents a meaningful step toward addressing the serious, statewide challenges facing our EMS systems, including the gaps in coverage and unacceptable wait times affecting communities both upstate and downstate. By establishing a framework for counties to better coordinate emergency services and supporting them throughout the review process, we are helping ensure that EMS providers have the tools they need to care for New Yorkers. I am grateful to my colleague, Assemblyman Steve Otis, for his partnership in this effort, and to the dedicated EMS professionals across the state, especially those in my district, not only for their service, but also for their longstanding advocacy. I look forward to this legislation coming before the Assembly."

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, "The goal of our legislation, and the Chapter Amendment approved today, is to advance the EMS reform process by asking local governments to work together to evaluate the status of EMS service in their areas and develop county plans to make sure every New Yorker has reliable emergency medical response. We believe that EMS planning statewide must respect the variation and flexibility that has been the hallmark of emergency response in New York. Counties, cities, towns, and villages will work together to draft plans that include the variety of public and private provider structures based on what local officials believe will be the most successful in their region. Our great appreciation goes to Governor Kathy Hochul, the NYS Department of Health, our municipal government, emergency service, and fire district organizations for working with Senator Mayer and me to move this important next step forward."

TABLE HOPPING with Morris Gut

February is loaded with foodie indulgences. The Chinese Lunar New Year, 'Year of the Fire Horse' celebration runs from February 17 to the 23rd. Many Asian eateries will be extending the festivities thru the month with special dishes and menus. Be sure to check ahead for exact dates, times, and pricing. Here are some tasty suggestions...

SOUP DUMPLINGS AT MISTER CHEN

Mister Chen in Mamaroneck and Scarsdale serves a modernized Chinese menu espousing popular traditional regional dishes. It is carving out a place all its own thanks to owner Paul Chen and his mom who is head chef. I was excited about the dumpling station where you can watch the cooks prepare a variety of Chinese dumplings from scratch. Take a careful bite and suck up that delicious warm broth, then savor the delicious pork or crab filling. If you are a novice, the staff will show you how. Have also enjoyed their Pork Belly Sandwich, meaty Spareribs, General Tsao's Chicken, spicy Kung Pao Chicken, and Jumbo Prawns with garlic sauce. There's even old fashioned Chow Mein. Mister Chen, 265 Mamaroneck Ave., Mamaroneck. 914-777-1212 www.misterchennyc.com

Aberdeen Seafood & Dim Sum, 3 Barker Ave., White Plains (914-288-0188), in the Residence Inn, will be offering a special Chinese New Year's menu. You can also celebrate with a run through their popular Dim Sum, or from the regular menu. www.aberdeenswhiteplains.com.

Ku Asian Bistro, 480 New Rochelle Road, in the Chester Heights section of Bronxville (914-668-8877), has a fine hand with their regional Chinese fusion specialties. 'Ku' is a Chinese word meaning 'fantastic', so let the chefs surprise you with their delightful Asian fusion flavors. From the Chinese kitchen try the Spareribs, Shrimp with Long Bean, Moo Shu Pork, Kung Pao Chicken, and General Tso's Chicken. Free parking. www.kuasianbistro.com

O Mandarin Chinese Cuisine, 361 N. Central Ave., Hartsdale (914-437-9168) will be serving the classics: Peking Duck, assorted Hot Pots, and hearty Mandarin Pork Shank, in their beautifully decorated dining room. Recommended by the Michelin restaurant guide. www.omandarin.com

ASIAN FUSION & VIETNAMESE & KOREAN & TIBET! Communities in Vietnam, Korea, Tibet, Thailand, and Singapore also mark the Lunar New Year. Local venues to check out:



Saigonese, 158 S. Central Ave., Hartsdale (914-288-9088), good spot for Spring Rolls, big bowls of Pho, Spareribs, and delish Bun Vermicelli Bowls with lettuce wraps. Closed in Lunar New Year's Day, Jan. 22. www.saigoneseartsdale.com

Jewel of Himalaya, 751 Central Park Ave., Scarsdale (914-874-5506) & 34 Triangle Center, Yorktown Heights; a tasty fusion of Tibet/Indian/Nepal cuisines serving Momo Dumplings and Stir-Fried Noodles. www.himalayarestaurantny.com

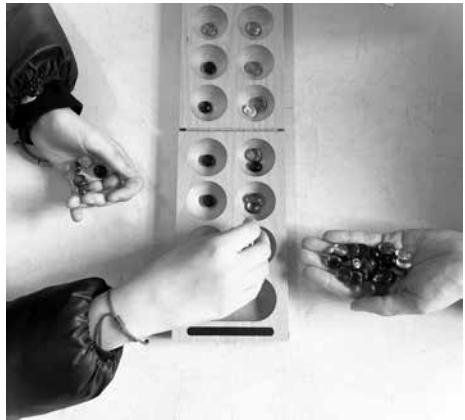
The Banh Mi Shop, 148 Mamaroneck Ave., White Plains (914-686-6888). Len Dang's specialties include Grilled Short Ribs, a variety of Banh Mi Sandwiches, great Brussels Sprouts with lemongrass and garlic, and Grilled Pepper Shrimp. www.thebanhmishopny.com

WANT TO COOK IT UP YOURSELF?

If you are an intrepid home cook and want to pull the old wok out of the closet and oil it up, you may want to visit big bustling H-Mart for a wide variety of pan-Asian products. They are located at 371 N. Central Ave., Hartsdale (914-448-8888). There is another H-Mart in the Highridge Shopping Center on Central Park Ave., Yonkers. www.hmart.com Though smaller, Top Asia Mart/New Golden Village Oriental Market, 365 Central Park Ave., Scarsdale (914-437-9795), would also be a good bet.

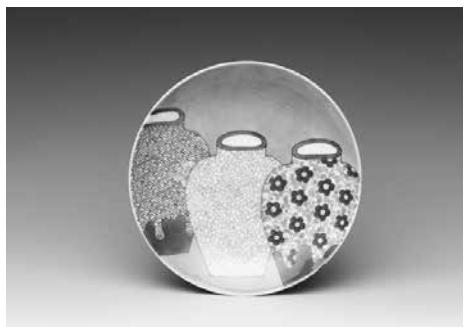
(Morris Gut is a restaurant marketing consultant and former restaurant trade magazine editor. He has been tracking and writing about the food and dining scene in greater Westchester for 30 years. He may be reached at: 914-235-6591. E-mail: gutreactions@optonline.net)

Calendar of Events



Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site Historical Games Tutorials: Mancala

The oldest game in our series, and one of the oldest in the world, dating back to 3rd century Egypt. This free, in-person event will take place on February 7th at 1:00 PM at Philipse Manor Hall State Historic Site at 29 Warburton Avenue in Yonkers. Other historical games will also be available for self-guided play. This program is open to all ages and is free for everyone! Pre-registration is recommended. Call 914-965-4027 or email philipse-manorhall@parks.ny.gov to register. All children must be accompanied by an adult.



The Met Explores the Artistry of Japanese Ceramics

The Infinite Artistry of Japanese Ceramics
Through August 8, 2027

The exhibition will present over 350 works, drawn largely from The Met collection, spanning more than 13,000 years of ceramic art in Japan. Visit https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-infinite-artistry-of-japanese-ceramics?promotion_code=&utm_campaign=2026_0113_Press

JPCeramic_PR&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Press

Love is in the Air, Gala Valentine's Concert

Sunday, February 15th

Irvington Presbyterian Church, 25 N, Broadway, Irvington at 3 pm

The newly formed nonprofit organization, Szabo Chamber Music Society will present a tour de force program of music inspired by love in a Gala Concert featuring nationally acclaimed singers Holly Thomas, soprano, Christopher Lucier, tenor, and Dr. Sandor Szabo, harpsichord, organ and piano. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for seniors and \$5 for students. Donations gratefully accepted and are tax deductible. For more information contact; szabochambermusicsociety.com, or mail to: szabochambermusicsociety@gmail.com, (908) 267-1980

Winter fun is in full swing at Alfred B. DelBello Muscoot Farm, which will host its annual Winter Festival on Saturday, February 7, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. People of all ages are invited to celebrate the season with hands-on activities, live music, tasty food and classic farm experiences. Visitors can watch maple syrup magic in action during tree-tapping demonstrations at 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. and visit the Sugar Shack from anytime between noon and 3 p.m. to learn how maple syrup is made. Guests can enjoy a variety of hands-on crafts and activities, including a snowflake craft station to add to the Winter Festival wall, and Collier's Candle Co. will demonstrate its clean-burning, eco-friendly candle-making process and help kids create their own rolled beeswax candle to take home. Muscoot Farm is on NY Route 100 in Katonah.

Muscoot Farm in Katonah and Cranberry Lake Preserve in North White Plains will offer Winter Mini Camps during February break, beginning Tuesday, February 17. Registration opens Monday, January 12 at 12 noon. Muscoot Farm's camp is offered to students in grades four through six and will run Tuesday, February 17 through Friday, February 20 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Families may sign up children for one, two, three or all four days. The program fee is \$75 per day or \$250 for the full, four-day program. Cranberry Lake Preserve's camp is for students in grades five through eight and will run from Tuesday, February 17 through Thursday, February 19 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The three-day session is \$225 per camper. Muscoot Farm is located on NY Route 100 in Katonah. Cranberry Lake Preserve is located at 1609 Old Orchard Street in North White Plains.

AT THE PELHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY



Crafty Adults: Memento Boxes

Monday, February 23, 7-8 pm

Join our resident artist/instructor Sara Mallach this month as we decoupage and decorate wooden cigar boxes to become functional, beautiful pieces to hold mementos and keepsakes. A perfect project for the New Year! This event will take place in-person at the Library and separate registration is required for each attendee. Visit <https://calendly.com/pelhamlibrary/crafty-adults-february-2026?month=2026-02&date=2026-02-23> to register. 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.



EcoPel's Winter Seed Sowing Workshop

Saturday, February 28, 10:30 am -12 pm

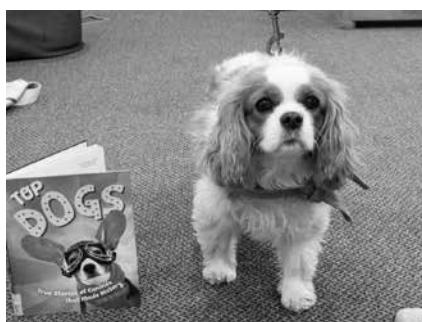
Learn how to start native plants and annual flower seeds during a hands-on workshop. Perfect for beginners and experienced gardeners, you'll grow favorites like blue vervain, golden alexander, coneflowers, cosmos, and zinnias, ready for spring planting! We'll use recycled materials to create mini-greenhouses, allowing plants a period of cold stratification. Space is limited for this event, and registration is required. Visit <https://calendly.com/pelhamlibrary/winter-seed-sowing-workshop/2026-02-28T10:30:00-05:00?month=2026-02&date=2026-02-28> to register.



Stuffed Animal Sleepover

Drop off Tuesday, February 17, 3:30-4:30 pm
Stuffed Animal Sleepover returns! Bring your favorite stuffed animal for a fun craft and bedtime story! Then, leave them for their overnight sleepover. When you pick them up on Thursday you'll get to hear all about what your stuffed animal friends were up to at the Library! This program is for children ages four and up. Registration is required. Parents can register their child by emailing Kathy at kpalovick@pelhamlibrary.org.

Please provide parent's name, child's name, age, and phone number. Space is limited, so sign up soon.



Canine Story Time

Thursdays in February, 3:30-4:30 pm

Join Lisa and her furry friend Freckle from The Good Dog Foundation for a special kind of Story Time. This time, it won't be adults reading to kids: it will be kids reading to dogs! Young readers ages six and up can sign up for 10-minute sessions, during which they will be able to read to Freckle, Lisa's adorable canine companion. This will give kids a safe space to become comfortable reading out loud. To

reserve a spot, join us at the Library on the day of the program, and see the librarian at the reference desk to sign up for your 10-minute session. We will start accepting reservations at 3 pm (not earlier!). First come, first served.

New Year's Resolutions

BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED
ELDER LAW ATTORNEY
SPECIAL GUEST CONTRIBUTOR:
JOEL KROOKS, ESQ.

As we enter 2026, there are important federal and New York State estate tax changes that should be on every client's radar. Whether you're updating an existing estate plan or starting one for the first time, understanding the updated exemption amounts, gift tax figures, and planning opportunities is essential to protect your legacy and minimize tax exposure.

Due to the One Big Beautiful Bill, the federal estate and gift tax exemption for 2026 is \$15 million for each individual, up from \$13.99 million in 2025. Thus, in 2026, a married couple can give away during lifetime or on death (or a combination thereof) \$30 million without incurring federal estate or gift tax.

New York, of course, has its own estate tax which kicks in for taxable estates over \$7.35 million, up from \$7.16 million in 2025. However, New York does not have a gift tax, although any lifetime gifts made within three years of death are "clawed back" into the decedent's New York taxable estate for purposes of calculating their New York state estate tax. New York's estate tax has a notable "cliff" provision: if your estate's value exceeds the exemption by more than 5 percent, the entire estate—not just the excess—is subject to tax. This makes precise valuation and planning critical for estates close to the exemption threshold.

In addition, each individual is still permitted to give \$19,000 in 2026 to as many people as they wish in any calendar year. This number did not increase from 2025. Thus, a married couple who has three children and seven grandchildren, can give \$38,000 (\$19,000 each) to each of them in 2026, an aggregate of \$380,000, without paying gift taxes or even having to file a gift tax return. Moreover, gifts made for educational or medical purposes are not subject to the \$19,000 limit so long as the gifts are made directly to the educational or medical provider. Annual gifting remains a highly effective tool to reduce the size of your taxable estate over time. Coordinating gifts with your overall estate plan can shift future appreciation out of your taxable estate and help avoid both federal and state estate taxes.

Lastly, beginning in 2026, new limitations will apply to charitable deductions for taxpayers who itemize.

Charitable contributions will be deductible only to the extent they exceed 0.5 percent of the donor's adjusted gross income (AGI). This means that smaller charitable gifts may not generate any tax benefit for itemizers unless total contributions rise above this threshold. As a result, clients may wish to reconsider the structure of charitable giving, particularly with respect to year-end contributions and donor-advised funds. Furthermore, taxpayers who claim the standard deduction will be eligible for an above-the-line charitable deduction starting in 2026. This provision allows deductions of up to \$1,000 for individual filers and \$2,000

for married couples filing jointly, providing a limited tax incentive for charitable giving even when itemizing is not advantageous.

If you do not yet have an estate plan in place, consider making it a priority this year to have one prepared by an experienced estate planning attorney. If your existing plan has not been reviewed recently—or if you have experienced significant life changes—now is an ideal time to revisit your strategy. With the updated 2026 exemption amounts in effect, coordinating with an estate planning attorney and your financial advisor can help ensure your legacy goals are preserved

as the tax landscape continues to evolve.

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.

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Westchester County Parks Launches New Events Website

Westchester County Parks has unveiled a new events website, which includes events that take place county-wide, at its 50+ facilities. The new site, parksevents.westchestergov.com, is also accessible from the parks homepage and provides a seamless way for residents to search for events and programming.

The new website allows users to filter Westchester County Parks events by location, facility, event type, fees, and day of the week, making it easier to find programs of interest and discover new events, activities, programs and parks for the whole family.

Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins said, "Westchester County Parks plays an important role in the quality of life for our residents, offering opportunities for recreation, education, and community connection across the county. This new events website helps ensure residents can easily access information about the programs and activities available in our parks year-round."

Westchester County Parks Commissioner Kathy O'Connor said, "With more than 50 facilities and hundreds of programs each year, this new events site makes it simple for residents to find activities that match their interests. Whether you're looking for a nature program, recreational activity, or family-friendly event, it's now easier than ever to explore what our parks have to offer."

By bringing all parks events together in one place, the new website helps residents more easily explore, participate in, and enjoy everything Westchester County Parks has to offer.



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PELHAM 2025: RESULTS THAT MOVED THE MARKET

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2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Two **\$3,000,000+** transactions
- Multiple **\$2,000,000+** sellers represented
- **\$30,000,000+** closed volume in 2025
- Active, off-market buyer network in Pelham

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Listed and closed by Capital Realty NY

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946 Esplanade

89 Park

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973 Plymouth

1091 Hunter

A curated summary of my 2025 Pelham sales is available at: capitalrealtyny.com/pelham.



946 Esplanade - Listed & Closed



400 Highbrook - Listed & Closed



973 Plymouth - Listed & Closed

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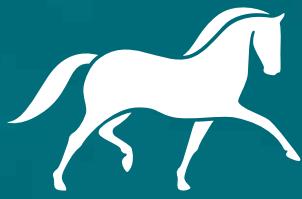


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