



Meet the mayor

Join Mayor Jane E. Veron, Deputy Mayor Justin Arest and Village Manager Rob Cole under the Dine the Dale tent Wednesday, Oct. 20, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Residents are welcome to stop by, raise questions or concerns, or just enjoy casual conversation.

Forum, SBA on pot opt-out

The Scarsdale Forum membership Oct. 7 overwhelmingly approved a previously released committee report, which recommends the village take a wait-and-see approach by opting out of allowing marijuana dispensaries and on-site consumption establishments in Scarsdale.

Likewise, a quorum of the Scarsdale Business Alliance (SBA) board met Oct. 12, and voted unanimously for the village to opt out as well.

Co-president Marcy Berman-Goldstein said the SBA was asked to take a stand on the issue as the village must decide by Dec. 31 whether to opt out. The SBA decided to support opting out because there are "not enough rules and regulations in place [and] not enough information on aesthetics" to provide guidelines for any cannabis businesses that might want to locate in Scarsdale.

Parking permit priority

Any Scarsdale Village resident who purchases a Christie Place permit or a Station Premium permit prior to 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 1, will have a priority opportunity to renew their permit for 2022-23. All purchases to date for 2021-22 that qualify will also receive this benefit.

This opportunity is available only to Station Premium permits sold to residents, and to Christie Place Annual Resident permits. Permit holders must have purchased the permit by Nov. 1, and maintained their 2021-22 permit without it being returned or revoked during the 2021-22 permit year.

Applications must be received by Nov. 1. Permits are sold as first-come, first-served. Qualifying permit holders will be alerted in spring 2022 as to when and how they will have their priority opportunity for renewal.

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Doctors, educators prepare for flu season

By JONAH WALTERS

The 2021-22 flu season is officially underway and doctors and educators in Scarsdale and the wider region are preparing to respond to what might be "an early and possibly severe flu season," according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The influenza virus circulated at "historically low" rates during last year's flu season, according to a recent report from the National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS). Widespread masking in response to the COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to the unusually mild flu season, according to the CDC, because influenza transmission is similar to coronavirus transmission. But low rates of transmission last year likely resulted in reduced rates of natural immu-

Flu season occurs primarily from October through May, often peaking between December and February.

nity this year, which led the CDC to release a statement last week urging all people aged 6 months and older to receive the flu vaccine as soon as possible.

Flu season occurs primarily from October through May, often peaking between December and February. The New York State Department of Health has not yet published its first influenza activity report of the season, but data from the CDC already shows a handful of confirmed flu cases in the state.

Dr. Scott Bookner of Scarsdale Pediatric Associates said, while it is difficult to predict how severe any given flu season will be, it is unlikely this year will be as mild as last year. "People forget that before COVID hit, we were in the middle of one of the worst flu seasons in a long time," he said.

Children 5 and under, adults 65 and older, preg-
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Village jumpstarts budget process

By LINDA LEAVITT

SCARSDALE VILLAGE — At its regular meeting Oct. 12, the Scarsdale Village Board outlined plans for an accelerated, more collaborative and transparent budget process. The board also proposed amendments to the village code governing veterans' property tax exemptions and police residency requirements.

Mayor Jane Veron said, "This board and new staff leadership are hyper-focused on the future, and we have begun a comprehensive look at opportunities for improved service and governance."

"We have a lot of work ahead as we systematize, digitize and synchronize our efforts, but you will start to see the inner workings unfold as we get deeper into the fall."

— MAYOR JANE VERON

The new village treasurer Ann Scaglione and new village manager Robert Cole have been working on an approach to budgeting that integrates strategic and financial planning, Veron said. "We have a lot of work ahead as we systematize, digitize and synchronize our efforts, but you will start to see the inner workings unfold as we get deeper into the fall."

Cole said department heads would meet with trustees to explain their needs and justify their expenditures. Previously, department heads were interviewed by the trustees and answered questions but did not have a chance to educate them on details of the operations. Going forward, Cole said, trustees will "meet with staff and discuss objectives and how can we best align village resources to see if they are achievable."

In addition, the village manager said, budget documents will be "more informative and reader
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Amy R. Paulin
Member of Assembly

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Assemblymember Amy Paulin

PTA helps put DEI at forefront at SMS

By TODD SLISS

SCARSDALE — Diversity, equity and inclusion have permeated every aspect of Scarsdale Middle School in some way. And there is still more work to be done, according to Principal Meghan Troy and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Dr. Edgar McIntosh.

Middle school PTA president Leah Dembitzer, along with DEI Committee members Mayra Kirkendall-Rodriguez, Esthela Lecuona and Rachana Singh, hosted a Zoom presentation for parents to take a deeper dive into the various ways DEI is integrated into the lives of sixth through eighth graders in Scarsdale.

For its part, the PTA has started a parent-teacher book club (current read is "Crying in H Mart" by Michelle Zauner), with a list of other related resources curated by new school librarian Shana Frazin; supporting Multicultural Committee events; a DEI library book donation program; DEI Com-

mittee pages for different backgrounds on the SMS PTA website; supplying anti-bullying information; an upcoming parent self-portrait workshop to explore their own identities; in addition to supporting programming and trips for all grade levels.

"This year our PTA work is really centered on building our community after living through this ongoing pandemic that just doesn't seem to end, and the stress and isolation and difficulty that's now kind of part of our lives," Dembitzer said. "Reconnecting is an essential aspect of what I hope the middle school PTA will do in the 2021-22 school year."

Administration and board of education training has been a key focus for Scarsdale, which has hired consultants Dr. Derrick Gay, a diversity and inclusion strategist; Dr. Ellie Drago-Severson of Teachers College at Columbia University; and Dr. Dolly Chugh of New York University to help it navigate the board's three-goal Equity, Inclusivity and Diversity in Education policy.

McIntosh called them "well-regarded consultants."

Gay has begun working with McIntosh and Superintendent Dr. Thomas Hagerman and "is reviewing our documents and artifacts," according to McIntosh. Gay will be the keynote speaker on Nov. 2 for the district's superintendent's conference day and going forward he will do small group trainings with the board of education and building and district leadership.

Drago-Severson has been working with the administration and doing some "individual coaching" to help "create protocols that invite diverse voices to be brought forward and honored," McIntosh said.

McIntosh said that last week the district leadership team used some chapters from Chugh's book, "The Person You Mean to Be" to "help us navigate several case studies, including ones on implicit bias, transphobia, cultural insensitivity and hiring
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Stewart-Cousins sees positive changes in Albany

By MOLLY BOOKNER

REGION — Andrea Stewart-Cousins, New York State Senate majority leader and president pro tem, addressed residents at the Scarsdale library and on Zoom Oct. 7 during a Scarsdale Forum meeting.

Stewart-Cousins, a formidable trailblazer who currently represents Scarsdale, Greenburgh, and parts of White Plains, New Rochelle and Yonkers, first ran for New York State Senate in 2004, losing by just 18 votes in the longest unresolved race in New York State history, the majority leader said at the meeting last Thursday.

In 2019, Stewart-Cousins was elected by her peers to be majority leader and president pro tem and has led the most productive legislative session in New York State history.

Stewart-Cousins oversaw the passage of



Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins

groundbreaking legislation on issues including voting reforms, gun safety, women's rights and health care, immigration and DREAMers, the LGBTQ community, the justice system, sexual harassment in the workplace, climate change, tenant protections and affordable housing.

Recently, Stewart-Cousins served as New York's acting lieutenant governor, between former Gov. Andrew Cuomo's resignation and Gov. Kathleen Hochul's appointment of a new lieutenant governor.

"It was a difficult transition," Stewart-Cousins admitted, adding that she was one of the earli-

est voices asking Cuomo to resign. "I'm getting phone calls, and it's people trying to explain to me, from the administration, what the next scandal was going to be ... and why I shouldn't really pay attention to that," said Stewart-Cousins. "At some point, enough is enough," Stewart-Cousins said.

The majority leader went on to commend Gov. Hochul, who took office in August, saying, "I find her to be someone who is consistent, who is diligent, and really has in her heart, public service."

Stewart-Cousins specifically praised Hochul's efforts to improve the justice system by signing the Less is More Act.

The act, which was signed Sept. 17 during Hochul's third week in office, prevents parolees from being thrown back in jail for technical violations. A technical violation could be as simple as being
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Court moves taxpayers closer to SALT relief

REGION — The federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 eliminated the full deductibility of state and local taxes (SALT) and capped deductions at \$10,000. This law disproportionately hurts Democratic states like New York, where residents' state and local taxes often exceed \$10,000. Last week a U.S. Court of Appeals ruling brought the fight Assemblymember Amy Paulin has been leading against the SALT cap one step closer to victory.

In 2018 Paulin, who represents Scarsdale, authored and passed a law that allowed deductions for contributions to charitable reserve funds in order to give relief to residents who had just lost the SALT deduction. The law gave counties, local governments and public school districts the option to give a real property tax credit of up to 95% of the amount of a resident's monetary contribution to the reserve funds.

Later in 2018, however, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued regulations denying that a taxpayer who makes a contribution to a charitable reserve fund could receive a state or local tax credit. A subsequent IRS notice then announced that businesses would be entitled to a full deduction for their contributions, creating
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