

914INC.

Q4 2016

Holiday  
GIFTING  
Etiquette

**NICHE COMPANIES**  
How Narrow Thinking Yields Wide Returns

# 914 INC.

2016

# WOMEN IN BUSINESS

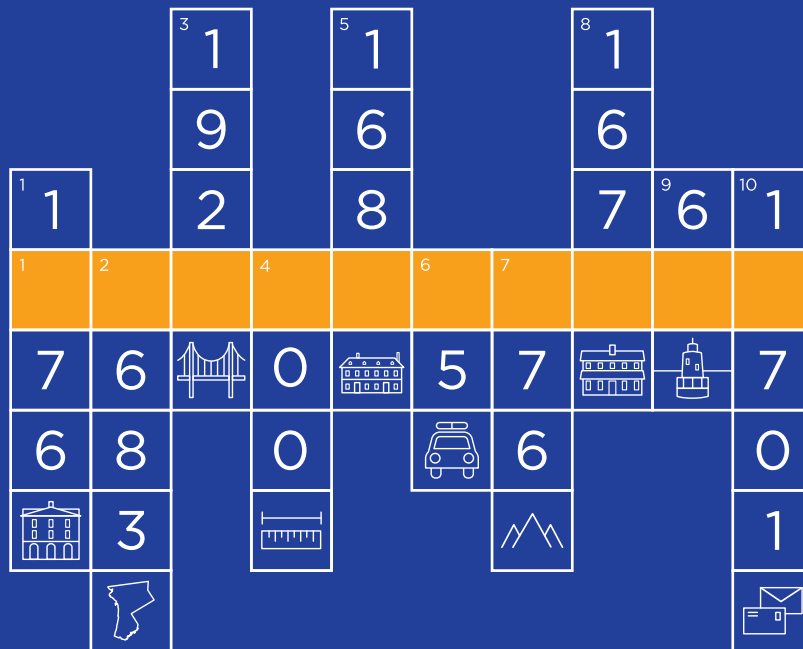
**18** of Our Most  
Accomplished  
Executives,  
Entrepreneurs,  
Government, and  
Nonprofit Leaders

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ELDERCARE**

Published by Westchester Magazine



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BROADWAY  
THEATRE**  
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scenes of its  
financial success



DOWN

1. The year when Kykuit was designated as National Historic Landmark
2. The year when Westchester was founded
3. The year Bear Mountain Bridge was completed
4. Size of Westchester in Square Miles
5. The year when Philipse Manor Hall was built
6. The number of local police agencies in Westchester
7. The highest elevation in Westchester County in feet
8. The year when Rye's Timothy Knapp House was built
9. The height of Tarrytown Lighthouse in feet
10. Zip Code of Yonkers, Westchester

ACROSS

1. ?

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# Women In Business

These 18 distinguished women – including a regional bank president, the owner of an excavation company, the director of an esteemed college-leadership institute, a lawyer-turned-entrepreneur, and many others – represent some of Westchester’s most innovative minds.

By Alyson Krueger, Kate Stone Lombardi, Elaine Pofeldt, Gale Ritterhoff, and Kevin Zawacki

76

## Finding Your Niche

Westchester entrepreneurs provide insight on how they filled holes in the market with their smart ideas for niche businesses.

By David Levine

82

## Roundtable: Purpose Over Profit

Seven of the county’s top nonprofit leaders discuss the state of their sector in a thought-provoking roundtable.

Edited by Amy R. Partridge



(L to R) Mary Gadomski, Paula Mandell, and Tierney Saccavino-Payne

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# Departments



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Who we saw at Westchester's best business events

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**By Jerry McKinstry**



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**By Dave Donelson**

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## 102 Office Space

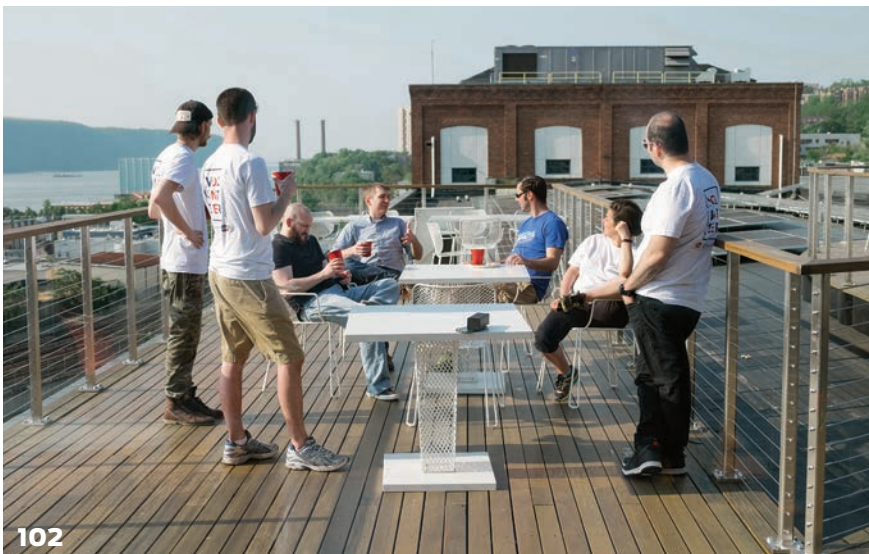
### No Digital Divide Here

A look at IAC Applications' collaborative Yonkers workplace **By Amy R. Partridge**

## 104 Off the Clock

### Hitting the High Notes

Rachel Eckhaus goes from being a Port Chester CFO to a principal piccolo player. **By Gale Ritterhoff**



102

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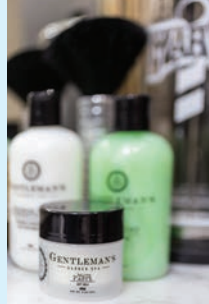




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## Girl Power!



A few days before the photo shoot for this issue's Women In Business cover story, I realized my 8-year-old daughter would be off from school on that date for Rosh Hashana. After an unsuccessful attempt to secure a babysitter, I did the multi-tasking working mom thing and brought her along with me to the shoot, at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel in West Harrison. Armed with an iPad, a stack of books, and copious coloring materials, I expected to field puerile complaints of hunger and boredom all day while attempting to maintain my professional demeanor in front of our honorees.

But, in addition to falling in love with the hotel's funky-chic décor and the visible-from-the-lobby indoor pool, my daughter was fully smitten with the roster of impressive women she eagerly watched throughout the day. She even posed with one honoree — the incredibly gracious Rita Mabli, CEO of United Hebrew of New Rochelle — standing on a stool and resting her hand on Mabli's head (much to the dismay of our hair stylist!). As we wrapped the shoot, she anointed the day as "way cooler than school," and I couldn't help but hope it would become a formative experience for her, illustrating that when she's old enough to launch her own career, she'll have no gender-based limits on what she can accomplish.

This empowering message is probably not the one that the 18 honorees we've selected for our 6th annual Women In Business story grew up with. Nevertheless, they've proven through their careers that whatever hurdles or restrictions they may have faced as women, they were ultimately not enough to hold them back. From the president of one of our nation's most prestigious liberal-arts colleges and the COO of a major local hospital to two high-profile bankers, an entrepreneur excelling in the male-dominated world of landscape construction, and numerous nonprofit leaders working to make Westchester a better place (and others, too), this year's Women In Business honorees are a diverse — and distinguished — group.

As we celebrate their achievements, starting on page 58 — and in person at our Women In Business luncheon on Nov 17 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Tarrytown — I hope that the next generation of female movers and shakers is watching.

**Amy R. Partridge**  
Executive Editor

## BY THE NUMBERS



**\$75,770**

The cost for DeCicco & Sons to upgrade all six of their locations to accept the new **EMV chip cards** (page 24)



**42**

The number of years Bill Stutler and Bob Funking have been running the **Westchester Broadway Theatre** (page 36)



**2**

The number of times Yonkers-based niche business **Cybra** has switched its product focus to keep up with changing technological demands (page 76)

**1 in 7**

The number of people in Westchester who work in the **nonprofit sector** (page 82)



Amy R. Partridge photo by Stefan Radtke

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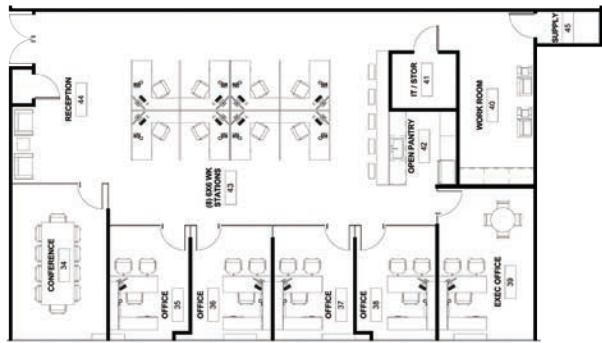
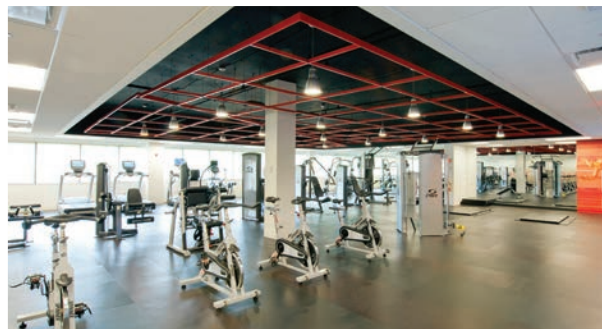
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4th Annual Small Business Awards, White Plains

914INC. hosted its 4th Annual Small Business Awards at The Crowne Plaza in White Plains on Sept 22. More than 200 guests attended the event, which honored 14 Westchester organizations that have displayed consistent success and outstanding devotion to excellence. *Top Left:* the 2016 winners of the Small Business Awards. *Top Right:* Amy R. Partridge, executive editor of 914INC., and Small Business Award winner Ronnie Ram, president and CEO of InspiriaMedia Group. *Bottom Right:* County Executive Rob Astorino addresses the event's attendees.



Photo by Sara Strauss

New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce

14th Annual Women of Excellence Awards, New Rochelle

The New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce held its 14th Annual Women of Excellence Awards Dinner on Sept 29 at Beckwith Pointe in New Rochelle. The event recognized five successful women with ties to the New Rochelle community. *Pictured:* New York State Senator George Latimer; Assemblywoman Amy Paulin; honoree Catherine Francese, head of religious instruction at Holy Name of Jesus; honoree Tara Rosenblum, journalist and news anchor at News12 Westchester; honoree Cindy Gallagher, chairwoman of Whitney Media; and Chuck Strome, city manager of New Rochelle.



Photo by Susan Nagib of SUSA Designs

Houlihan Lawrence

Grand Reopening, Bronxville

Houlihan Lawrence celebrated the grand reopening of its historic Bronxville brokerage office on Sept 15 at the Bronxville office. The structure was first acquired in 1888 and served as the birthplace of Houlihan Lawrence. *Pictured:* Stephen Meyers, president and CEO of Houlihan Lawrence, and Chris Meyers, managing principal of Houlihan Lawrence.



Photo by Harrison Edwards



Ginsburg Development Companies

Groundbreaking, Yonkers

Representatives from Ginsburg Development Companies joined with city officials to break ground on a luxury rental apartment building in the Greystone neighborhood of Yonkers on Aug 30. *Pictured:* Michael Sabatino, Yonkers City Council minority leader; Wilson Kimball, Yonkers commissioner of planning and development; Deputy Mayor Steve Levy; Martin Ginsburg, founder and principal of Ginsburg Development Companies; and New York State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

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Photos by Lynda Curtis

⤴ **Westchester County Association (WCA)**

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On Sept 28, the WCA presented Health Tech '16: Fueling Innovation in Westchester. The conference was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel in Tarrytown and included keynote speakers Michael J. Dowling of Northwell Health and former US senator Tom Coburn, MD. *Top:* William M. Mooney Jr., president and CEO of the WCA; Senator Coburn; former congresswoman Sue Kelly; Bill Mooney III, director, Westchester County Office of Economic Development; and Bill Cuddy, chairman of Blueprint for Smart Growth at the WCA. *Bottom:* Guy Liebler of Simone Development Companies; Iya Khalil of GNS Healthcare; and Bill Harrington, chairman of the WCA.



⤴ **Business Council of Westchester**

**Annual Dinner, Rye Brook**

The Business Council of Westchester held its annual dinner on Oct 6 at the Hilton Westchester in Rye Brook. The dinner welcomed more than 700 guests and included Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, as its featured speaker. *Pictured:* Ralph A. Martinelli, publisher of 914INC.; Mercedes Garcia of MasterCard Worldwide; and Elizabeth Bracken-Thompson of Thompson & Bender.



⤴ **Byron Place Associates LLC**

**The Cambium Showcase, Larchmont**

Byron Place Associates LLC hosted an exclusive showcase of the penthouse model residence in its newest luxury condominium, The Cambium, in Larchmont on Sept 14. *Pictured:* Darren Sukenik, licensed associate real estate broker for Douglas Elliman; Susan Joyce, licensed real estate salesperson for Douglas Elliman; and Ben Glazer, licensed associate real estate broker for Douglas Elliman.



Photo by John Vecchiolla

⤴ **NewYork-Presbyterian/ Lawrence Hospital**

**16th Annual Golf Tournament, Scarsdale**

NewYork-Presbyterian/ Lawrence Hospital held its 16th Annual Golf Tournament at the Quaker Ridge Golf Club in Scarsdale on Sept 26. The outing raised \$170,000 to benefit the hospital. *Pictured:* Golf Co-Chair John Evanko, MD; Golf Co-Chair Michael Meyers; NewYork-Presbyterian/ Lawrence Hospital president Michael J. Fosina, MPH, FACHE; Golf Co-Chair Conrad van Tienhoven; and Golf Committee member Mike Pytosh.

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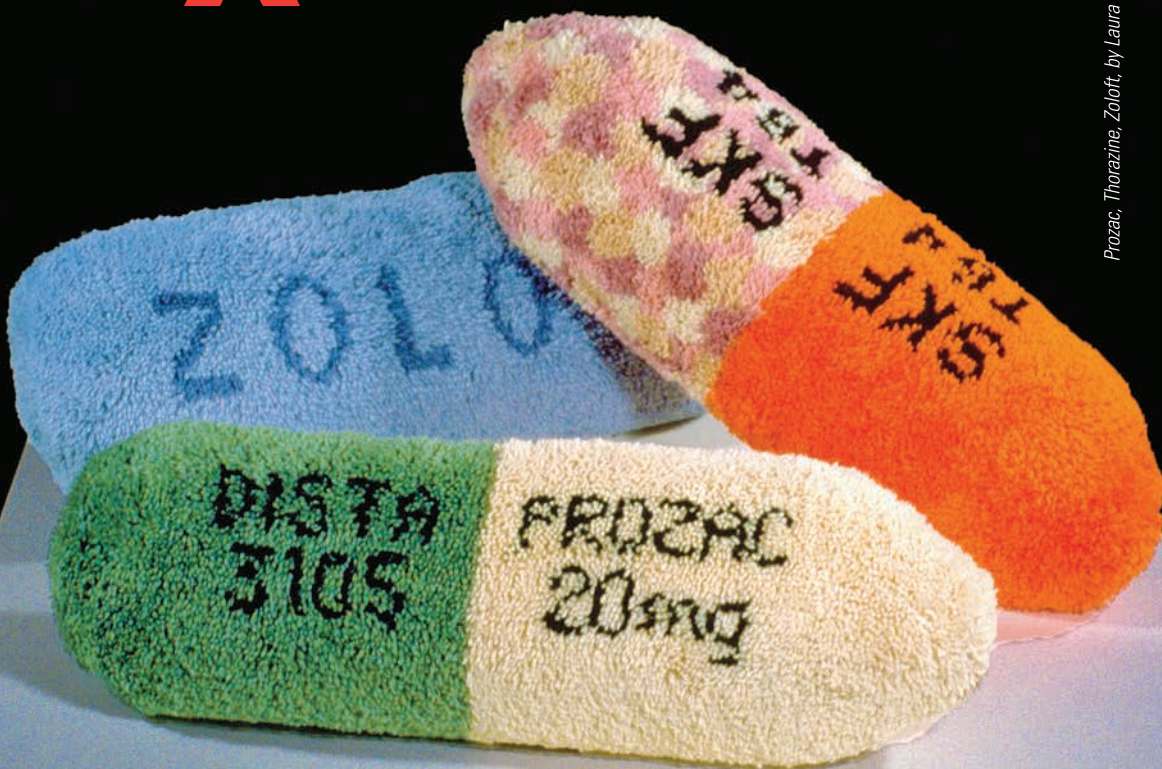
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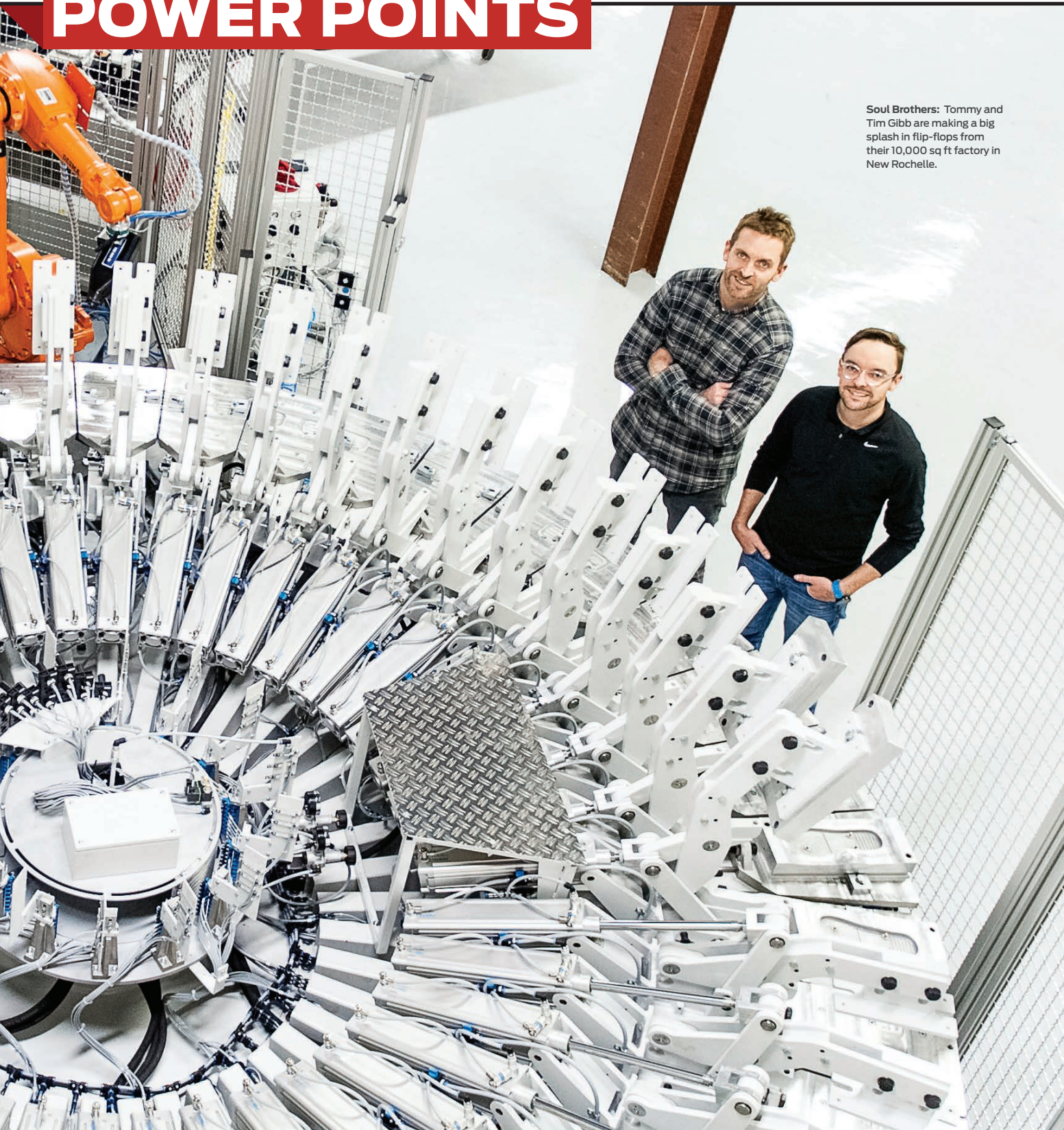
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# POWER POINTS

**Soul Brothers:** Tommy and Tim Gibb are making a big splash in flip-flops from their 10,000 sq ft factory in New Rochelle.



## Made in NewRo

Manufacturing finds a home in New Rochelle, where the Tidal New York brand of flip-flops is produced using domestic materials.

### Plus:

Get to know  
Orange Bank &  
Trust  
page 22

Cancer  
research heats  
up in Scarsdale  
page 27





## INC.Quiry

# Orange is the New... Bank

Michael Gilfeather, president and CEO of Orange Bank & Trust, discusses the bank's expansion into Westchester and his plans for success in a new market.

By Amy R. Partridge

It's been a busy few years for Michael Gilfeather at the helm of Orange Bank & Trust—a company that first opened its doors in 1892 in Middletown, NY, under the name Orange County Trust & Safe Deposit Company. Gilfeather has overseen the bank's recent expansion into Westchester (with locations in White Plains, Mount Pleasant, and Mamaroneck since September 2015) and Rockland, as well as its rebranding, for only the second time in its 124-year history. As a self-described "Westchester guy" currently in his "dream job," Gilfeather is committed to bringing his bank's customer-focused, business-banking model to the Westchester marketplace.

### Why is this the right time to expand into the Westchester market?

The idea of moving south to bigger markets in Westchester and Rockland was [always] the thinking. Also, the

**"...Part of our appeal is that we attract customers who feel their bank should know who they are."**

— Michael Gilfeather, president and CEO, Orange Bank & Trust

ongoing consolidation of banks in the marketplace [was another driver]. There's a lot of fallout when big retail banks continue to get bigger. It's appealing [for customers] to bank instead with a smaller institution.

### What kind of results has the bank seen here so far?

It's no easy thing to up and change [banks], yet I've been pleased by our immediate acceptance by customers.

### Are there any specific challenges to the business-banking environment here?

Our challenge is being new to the market. How do we crack through? The big retail banks are so dominating to

the marketplace mindset. So, we get our business one [customer] at a time. Westchester is very big, but we have an appeal due to our focus on business banking and the customer. Also, we hire people with exceptional skillsets who truly understand our services.

### What motivated you to change the bank's name for only the second time in its history?

The idea had been bubbling about for a while. We're not the first bank to change its name by removing a provincial tie to one area. [We knew that] Westchester was a much different demographic. We did focus groups and had lot of names to consider. In the end, having the word "Bank" in the title was very important. Also, preserving "Trust" was important; our trust department is integral to our success. Rebranding any company supports growth and new energy. The actual color orange, too, has been shown to have a positive impact on people.

### How is the bank able to remain community-based and thrive amidst competition from big banks?

A big part of our appeal is that we attract customers who feel their bank should know who they are. Our customers tend to be larger, and we want them to feel they have access to the

top. Our banking relationship is not just at the customer-service level but also the senior level. Technology has also helped the smaller banks keep up: We have the mobile capabilities and other bells and whistles that bigger banks have.

### What are your goals for the bank in 2017?

To continue expanding while remaining "people first." The other important thing is our trust business. Trusts go hand in hand with business owners, as they have to think about how to transfer those businesses. Lastly, we'll continue to focus on being a premier, high-touch business bank. Hopefully that's what people will know us for.

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## Manufacturing

## Shoes With Soul

A pair of brothers produces a new flip-flop — with a difference — right in downtown New Rochelle. **By Laurie Yarnell**



Does the world need another flip-flop? Brothers Tommy and Tim Gibb, the entrepreneurs behind the Tidal New York brand of flip-flops, say yes — provided it's one that marries fashion with comfort and is made in America from domestically sourced materials. "When the tidal wave of manufacturing comes back to America, we want to have a boat in it," explains Tim.

With 20 years' experience sourcing footwear production globally, the Gibbs were convinced they could build better flip-flops — right in New Rochelle. The brothers are also committed to creating long-term job opportunities and employing veterans whenever possible. It's part of the company's three core values: "Make it better. Make it here. Make a difference."

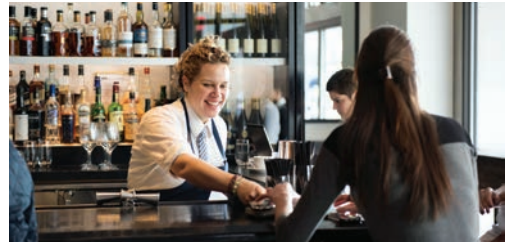
After founding their company in May 2014, the Gibbs opened their state-of-the-art 10,000 sq ft factory the following February, with the first shoes manufactured that May. In its first 12 months, it shipped 51,000 pairs of

shoes with just six employees.

So how can Tidal compete against brands made overseas in Asia and South America with lower labor costs? "We invested a lot in infrastructure, automated processes, and technology," says Tommy. "We don't have a long labor line, and we're crazy efficient." All design, manufacturing, labeling, warehousing, and shipping and receiving are done at the New Rochelle facility.

Retailing for around \$26, Tidal flip-flops, which are sold in department stores and online. They get their fashion cred from a high-res printing process that turns out progressive graphics, as well as designs by such art icons as Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat. The brand also focuses on comfort, boasting components like a Wave-foam sole, found in high-performance athletic midsoles, as well as molded arch support and engineered treads, for greater traction.

What's the next wave for Tidal? Look for category expansion and other lifestyle product spinoffs.



## Wages

## Tipping Point

Are gratuities on the way out?  
**By Samantha Garbarini**

Industry-leading restaurateur Danny Meyer shook up American dining culture last year by eliminating tipping at his award-winning Manhattan restaurants. "Tipping has created an economic and emotional divide between kitchen workers and tipped workers, who over the past 30 years have seen their hourly pay go up by 350 percent in fine-dining restaurants," says Meyer. By contrast, he adds, pay has only gone up by 35 percent for kitchen workers.

It's a chronic problem, particularly in New York State, where the Department of Labor prohibits front-of-house staff from sharing tips with kitchen staff. Meyer has implemented a so-called hospitality-included policy in some establishments — eliminating tipping and raising menu prices by roughly 20 percent — and has seen an increase in revenue and retention among kitchen workers.

Wolfert's Roost in Irvington has been the case study for Meyer's philosophy in Westchester. "I am a believer in making sure my staff is appropriately compensated," says chef and co-owner Eric Korn, who recently eliminated tipping at his establishment. "[It's] about implementing employee pay that doesn't rely on tipping for a living." It's too soon to tell, however, if this will become the industry standard, he adds.



## Retail

## Swipe or Dip?

Many local businesses are currently navigating the future of credit card technology  
**By Kevin Zawacki**

These days, paying with a credit card presents a dilemma: Do you swipe or dip?

As a growing number of Westchester merchants transition from accepting traditional magnetic stripe credit cards to chip, or EMV, cards,

shoppers may find themselves fumbling to pay the right way. But for local merchants, the stakes are higher than an awkward moment at the register: Switching to EMVs is about cost versus security.

Chips provide "the security of a computer embedded in the payment card," says





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**POWER POINTS**

Philip Andreae, a vice president at Oberthur Technologies, a global digital-security company with expertise in EMV.

Although chip technology has been around for 15 to 20 years, it still hasn't reached peak adoption here at home, explains Chiro Aikat, senior vice president of product delivery, EMV at MasterCard in Purchase. "The US is one of the last markets to migrate to chip technology," he notes.

There's been no mandate from governments or banks for businesses to adopt EMV, Aikat says, but there are motivations — like policies that heighten fraud liability if merchants don't accept chip cards. There's also the matter of cost. EMV chip readers generally cost between \$200 and \$400 each, which can add up for merchants with multiple locations using multiple machines. Many options are turnkey and simply require new software, but for businesses with complex point-of-sale locations, new hardware may also be in order.

"We have not only seen the big guys — the WalMarts, Targets, or Macy's — enable the chip," Aikat says, discussing growing adoption over the past year, "[Millions of adoptions] represent local and regional merchants."

One of those regional merchants is DeCicco & Sons, whose six gourmet supermarkets dot Westchester and Putnam. "All DeCicco & Sons locations currently accept chip cards," says DeCicco's IT director, Paul Heskstad, who estimates a total pricetag of \$75K for upgrading to EMV cards. "We range from 6 to 11 registers per store, so cost, excluding customer chargebacks, ranged from \$9,652.40 to \$16,029.40 per location.

"These technologies will help combat fraud, so while they're slower and a bit more cumbersome, customers generally understand why it's become necessary," he adds.

Rockwood & Perry Fine Wine & Spirits, on Warburton Avenue in Hastings-on-Hudson, is still waiting to upgrade. Rockwood's credit-card processing company hasn't switched to EMVs, explains Peter Rockwood, the shop's president.

"Anything that can help us avoid fraudulent activity is good," he says. "I'd like to have more protection."

A couple miles up the road in Dobbs Ferry is the 83-year-old Rochambeau Wines & Liquors. General Manager Jeffrey Woody notes it's often a merchant's discerning eye, not chips or stripes, that spots fraud.

"If somebody is buying big jugs of liquor, and they look like they can't afford it and pull out a Platinum American Express card — chances are that's not a Platinum American Express card," Woody says.

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Startup Spotlight

# Cutting-Edge Cancer Research in the Heart of Scarsdale

One of Westchester's newest businesses is making a big impact — with a small team.

With just three staff members, Sapience Therapeutics in Scarsdale may appear small at first. But the trio behind one of Westchester's newest businesses is doing some of the most important work in medicine today, unlocking treatments for the deadliest forms of cancer.



"We're focused on unmet-need oncology," says Pelham's Barry Kappel (left), founder, president, and CEO of Sapience. The company's current goal?

Creating an effective course of treatment for glioblastoma multiforme (GBM), the most severe form of brain cancer. Sapience is currently developing ST-36, a drug that battles GBM tumors.

Sapience may be new to the biotechnology scene (they incorporated in 2015), but it has already generated buzz, especially with shareholders like Columbia University and Celgene Corporation.

Kappel has an imposing résumé: He has an MBA from Cornell and a PhD in Biomedical Sciences, plus a background in entrepreneurship and venture-capital work, in addition to six years heading up business development at ContraFect Corporation.

Even with all that talent, Kappel and his team aren't entirely alone: They are supported by a powerful network of advisors. Among them are oncology experts from Columbia University, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, and Weill Cornell Medical College.

Assembling this team wasn't as difficult as it might seem, Kappel notes. "There's extraordinary need for the types of programs we're bringing forward, which [provide] completely new approaches to treatment."

**Business:** Sapience Therapeutics  
**Location:** Scarsdale  
**Founder:** Barry Kappel  
**Founded:** 2015  
**Employees:** 3

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## POWER POINTS

### By The Numbers

## 4 To Know

The numbers behind the news.

By Jesse Andreozzi

## \$303 million

The proposed Westchester capital budget for 2017. County Executive Rob Astorino's spending plan represents a 9% increase over the current budget and aims to improve and maintain the county's parks, roads, bridges, and technology infrastructure, as well as create roughly 3,000 new jobs.



## 300

The number of jobs that the completed \$35 million renovation of the formerly vacant Boyce Thompson Center will bring to the Yonkers community when it opens in the spring. So far, 11 tenants, representing several local medical practices, have leased space within the 85,000 sq ft complex. Nearly 30 percent of space remains available for possible restaurant and retail establishments.



## 200x

How much faster one-gigabit-per-second broadband service than a typical broadband connection. The Westchester County Association (WCA) recently announced its plans to bring this lightning-fast service to residents and businesses in New Rochelle, Mount Vernon, Yonkers, and White Plains by 2021, via a unique public-private partnership with the four Westchester cities. Data-intensive businesses, such as healthcare and law, will benefit greatly from this project, which is expected to cost \$750 million over a three- to five-year development period.

## 50 years

How long Westchester County has gone without a new dental school. Touro College University System put an end to that drought when it unveiled its College of Dental Medicine at New York Medical College in Hawthorne this past September. Touro expects to accommodate 440 students and service more than 80,000 patients a year.

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Does the Scaffold Law protect construction workers or harm developers? Depends on whom you ask.

**Issue**

# Battle in the Skyscrapers

1885 New York labor statute draws arguments for and against change

By **Dave Donelson**

The Business Council of Westchester (BCW) and the NY State Trial Lawyers Association are among the powerful lobbying groups that face off in Albany this year over NY Labor Law 240, otherwise known as the Scaffold Law, originally passed in 1885 to protect workers who perform tasks in high places. One side contends the 19th-century law destroys contractor and developer profits and hurts the state's economy, while the other believes it saves lives.

Both are probably correct.

Simply put, the Scaffold Law requires employers on building sites to provide a safe working environment for laborers working at heights. Case law has defined that liability as also

applying to building owners who employ the contractors, as well as to just about any sort of "gravity-related" accident, such as a tool falling on someone below. About 10 years ago, according to broker Ken Furst, co-owner of Levitt-Furst Insurance in Tarrytown, the number of claims and lawsuits under the law exploded.

"It's a loophole some lawyers have exploited to benefit themselves," says Furst, whose firm specializes in construction insurance. "We handle some of the biggest contractors in New York, and their premiums have quadrupled since the Scaffold Law has been exploited in the last 10 years."

Insurance rates are largely driven by claims paid and, according to *New*

**"It is about people who are injured getting fair and reasonable compensation"**

—Anthony Pirrotti Jr., president of the Westchester affiliate of the NYS Trial Lawyers Association

*York Law Journal*, 14 of the 30 largest settlements in 2012 were for cases that involved falls from ladders or scaffolding. Awards ranged from \$3 million to \$15 million.

The Scaffold Safety Coalition says Furst's conclusion is faulty because New York insurance costs are high across all categories of construction — including those where the Scaffold Law doesn't apply, like road construction and paving.

While insurance-claims data are proprietary, job-related injury rates are published. Of 42 states where injury data is available from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, New York's nonfatal injury rate (4.58 per 100 construction workers) is better than 36 of them for 2000-2011. Statewide, there were 45 fatal construction deaths in 2014, not all of which were fall-related. New York is the only state with a law this stringent, so defenders of the Scaffold Law point to the data as proving its effectiveness in protecting workers.

"This is not about people profiting," says Anthony Pirrotti Jr., president of the Westchester affiliate of the NYS Trial Lawyers Association. "It is about people who are injured getting fair and reasonable compensation." When someone is paralyzed due to a construction accident where the fault, according to the Scaffold Law, is on the contractor for failing to provide proper safety equipment, "Someone's got to pay for that," Pirrotti says. "Should that person have to be on Medicaid, so the public pays instead of the contractor who is at fault? Are they supposed to go into subsidized housing because they can't afford to live as they did before?"

The largest issue with the current law is "absolute liability," which provides that any negligent action by the injured worker, such as failure to use safety equipment or being at the job site inebriated, is virtually irrelevant in court. "Essentially, the injury itself proves the job site is unsafe," says Tom Stebbins, executive director of the Lawsuit Reform Alliance of NY, the nonprofit organization lobbying with the BCW.

Pirrotti contends that the law contains defenses for the contractor in the form of "sole proximate cause" and "recalcitrant worker" defenses. If an inebriated worker is injured on a job site and sues for damages, Pirrotti says, "The sole proximate cause defense

would totally obliterate that person's right to recovery." The same would hold true if a "recalcitrant worker" refused to use safety equipment the contractor provided.

BCW executive vice president and COO John Ravitz says of the absolute liability factor: "We're not looking to repeal Labor Law 240.



Tom Stebbins

We just want to reform one section." Stebbins explains: "We're looking for comparative negligence. We want to keep the law as it is, but add: 'Nothing in the law shall absolve the plaintiff of culpability for his own injury.'"

As expected, Pirrotti opposes that change. "If you put comparative negligence into the law," he says, "you are shifting the burden and putting it back on the worker, who is going to be forced to work in an unsafe manner."

Furst is against comparative negligence for a different reason: "Changing the law to allow degrees of liability will just bring in more legal fighting." The workers' compensation system, he says, already protects workers: "If an employee gets injured, he or she should be compensated through workers' compensation, end of story."

## Hotspot

# New Life for Mount Vernon West

Is Mount Vernon a hotspot for commercial development? Given the city's sometimes beleaguered reputation, some might find that hard to imagine. But not MacQuesten Development, the Pelham-based construction-and-development company that is riding a wave of change in a key part of Westchester's third-largest city.

"It reminds me of Harlem 25 years ago," says MacQuesten managing director Joe Apicella. "The ingredients are the same: proximity to the city, good zoning, a densely populated area. We're going where nobody wanted to go, and we will reap the benefits of being there first."

MacQuesten's plans center on the transit-oriented development zone being created around the Mount Vernon West Metro-North station. In July, the company purchased the old train-station building for \$3 million, then acquired a one-acre parcel next to it that was once home to a gas station. One block away, at 30 Mount Vernon Avenue, the company's 81-unit, 11-story workforce-housing project, The Modern, broke ground last year and topped out in August. Apicella believes it will be fully leased when it opens in January. MacQuesten also owns other plots in the area.

"We'll knock down the old, decrepit train-station building," Apicella explains, "and build a 30,000 to 40,000 sq ft retail center that will integrate a bank and other uses, like cafes, supermarkets, and the like,



The development at 22 S West Street will include higher-income and workforce-income units, plus retail space.

which will serve not only commuters but the residents in the neighborhood." MacQuesten is encouraging Metro-North to update the railroad's ticket booth and track area that connects with the building.

"We're going to break ground next spring on a 174-unit residential mixed-use development on the former gas-station site," Apicella adds. The \$71 million 20-story residential building at 22 S West Street will include higher-income and workforce-income units, as well as some retail space. "We also want to build parking there for both the train-station site and the apartment building," Apicella notes.

Key factors in bringing MacQuesten — and other potential developers — to the area include the city's willingness to rezone 46 acres to transit-oriented development. In addition to awarding density bonuses, to incentivize development, the city is handling environmental-impact statements through a generic form, according to Apicella.

Apicella adds that the transformation of Mount Vernon West is the direct result of a partnership: "We are working with the mayor and city council to make what was the back door of the community the front door of the community." — DD

## Profile

### Flying Above the Crowd

Jonathan Gordon, CEO, Admiral Real Estate



For a man who relaxes by piloting an experimental two-seat plane through the skies over Westchester, Jon Gordon has a very down-to-earth explanation for his success in commercial real estate: "It's our perseverance and the empirical approach we use."

Gordon founded his Bronxville firm, Admiral Real Estate Services, with his wife, Jessica Munzel, in 1997 and has closed more than \$800 million worth of deals in the NY-Metro area. A recent \$4.4 million transaction his company put together was the sale of 153 Main Street, a two-story building in Mount Kisco that now houses Exit 4 Food Hall, as well as other retail and office tenants.

Gordon's strategy is data-driven. "If you wanted us to lease a shopping center for you, for example, we would run a retail demand-gap

analysis that shows how much is spent on a particular prospective tenant's SIC [Standard Industrial Classification] code by demographic and economic groups in the geographic area served by your property." The analysis would also show what competitors the prospect would have, possibly revealing an opportunity for them in the new space. This approach has helped Gordon win the CoStar Power Broker of the Year award for the last six years.

"Westchester has fared much better than most parts of the country on the retail end," Gordon reports. One help has been some municipalities' loosening of retail zoning restrictions for food and entertainment tenants who bring foot traffic to retail areas. "Certain [towns] get it and are doing quite well," he says, "like Bronxville, Scarsdale, and Tarrytown."

Gordon's data-driven strategy doesn't exclude the personal touch. "I spend 75 percent of my time on the phone," he says. "Whether those calls are putting people together, keeping up with the latest deals or negotiating fine points of a deal, I enjoy them all." — DD



## An All-Star Talent

With big-name clients like John Madden, Dick Vitale, and Bob Costas, Sandy Montag is a power hitter in sports management. His new agency, White Plains-based The Montag Group, has him at the top of the game. **By Jerry McKinstry**

**W**hen famed sports agent Sandy Montag played for his high school basketball team, he didn't like being idle for long — even when sitting on the bench.

Montag kept statistics, wrote up games notes and then strung together articles for his high school newspaper in Tenafly, NJ. And for \$25 a pop, he

tapped away on his Smith Corona, writing game stories and box scores for *The (Bergen) Record*.

"I was a hustler and a creative person and made things happen," Montag says during a meeting at The Ritz-Carlton building in White Plains, headquarters for his sports-management, marketing and consulting firm, The Montag Group.

With an array of pictures, awards, and large-screen TVs, his office could easily double as an ESPN studio.

Montag started his business pursuits young, selling T-shirts, delivering bagels and lox, and acting in TV commercials (Geritol and PDQ chocolate drink) while still in grade school. And he loved sports; he considered Madison Square Garden a second home.

Today, at 53 and married with two grown children, little has changed for the Ardsley resident. "I still get a huge thrill going into an arena," says Montag, who often finds himself at MSG, MetLife Stadium, or some other sports cathedral where one of his clients is performing. "I love the arena, the live event."

### The Ultimate Deal-Broker

Montag has built a career out of building careers, showing up and brokering deals, even ones few people thought possible, which is why he is considered one of the leading sports, talent, and broadcasting agents in the US, if not the world. As president and CEO of The Montag Group, a business he started in 2014 after decades with famed sports agency IMG (previously known as International Management Group), Montag focuses on consulting, advising, content development, media strategy, and contract negotiations in the areas of sports, entertainment, and lifestyle. With six employees and more than 50 clients, Montag negotiates tens of millions of dollars in deals for his clients each year.

He sees himself as more than just an agent: a career-guidance counselor coaching a roster of current clients, such as legendary former Oakland Raiders coach/retired NFL color-commentator John Madden, ESPN college basketball broadcaster Dick Vitale, and NBA analyst and former player Mark Jackson, as well as former coaches Bob Knight, of Indiana Hoosiers fame, and Tom Coughlin, who won two Super Bowls with the New York Giants. But his sweet spot is with sports broadcasters, including the familiar faces of Bob Costas, James Brown, Jim Nantz, Erin Andrews, and Scott Van Pelt along with other well-known names.

Montag spent more than 30 years at IMG in New York City, where he



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developed a reputation as the go-to guy for tough but fair negotiations and for always watching out for his clients' interests. As of his 2016 departure from IMG, Montag represented roughly 70 percent of the company's broadcast talent, inking multimillion-dollar deals for marquee names and behind-the-scenes talent while maintaining strong relationships with players, network executives, commissioners, and team owners. (IMG was acquired by WME for \$2.4 billion in 2015; Montag could have stayed to run the talent division but left amicably to start his own company.)

One of his most famous licensing deals, considered among the largest in sports history, almost didn't happen: John Madden's eponymous

in sales each year, of which Madden and Montag get a percentage. Though Montag won't say just how much either he or Madden makes from the game, he offers, matter-of-factly, "It's like having a No. 1 movie every year; it's worked out from a business standpoint."

Montag got his start while working as a gofer for Madden after graduating from Syracuse University in 1985. Traveling alongside the iconic sports figure — who, famously, opted for trains and buses because he won't fly — Montag not only learned the Xs and Os of football, but of life. The job consisted of research, lots of it, in an era when cellphones and the Internet didn't exist. That meant Montag spent his weeks speaking with

After a few years on the road with Madden, Montag landed an assistant's job at IMG with Madden's help. That's where he learned the intricacies of sports management and eventually became Madden's agent. While there, Montag worked with Madden on a series of book deals; the first-ever "Madden Cruiser," an RV that was part-office, part-home and logged roughly 200,000 miles a year; and a series of lucrative career moves for the 14-time Emmy winner. But it was Madden's move from ABC's *Monday Night Football* to NBC's *Sunday Night Football* that really garnered lots of headlines. It meant the famed announcer had "touched all the bases" at the Big Four networks throughout his career — CBS, NBC, ABC, and Fox. And Montag helped make it happen.

"He was always a businessman," Madden says of Montag. "He's a guy who can help you and take you to the highest peak."

While their relationship started out revolving around work, it evolved into a father-son/friend dynamic. In Madden's 2006 Hall of Fame speech in Canton, OH, he said as much: "[Montag has] been with me for over 20 years. You know, I mean, *agent*, *smagent*. He's a friend, a very good friend. I thank him for everything that he's done for me."

Montag has also done a lot for retired NBC Sports chairman Dick Ebersol, who relied heavily on Montag to help make his dream of bringing *Sunday Night Football* to NBC a reality.

As part of that negotiation, Montag secured talent both in front of the camera and behind the scenes (producers, directors, etc.), having also played a role in brokering a separate deal that sent Al Michaels to NBC in exchange for giving ABC the Ryder Cup matches, Olympic highlights, and the rights to a 1920s cartoon, "Oswald the Lucky Rabbit," which was created by Walt Disney and considered to be the precursor to Mickey Mouse (and long coveted by Disney, ABC's parent company).

Ebersol considers Montag the top sports-broadcast talent agent because he's eager to solve problems, helps his clients achieve their goals and has an "unfailing ability to bring people together."



**"Whatever success I've had has to do with the relationships and the Rolodex I've developed over the years."**

— Sandy Montag, President and CEO, The Montag Group

video game with EA Sports, which is estimated to have sold upward of 100 million units since it was created in 1988, took many years to get off the ground because Madden wanted it to be realistic. Madden and Montag patiently waited for the technology to catch up to Madden's vision of what the game ought to be. Now, it's a product that generates \$400 million

players, coaches, and fans; hanging out in hotel lobbies, at tailgates, and in local mom-and-pops; and occasionally talking about life and chewing the fat over some Miller Lites — something Madden (who had been a pitchman for the product) refers to as "The Hang" and an important part of the job.

"I realized early that he was something special," says Madden.

"I believe, without question, that he is the best sports talent agent that I have ever worked with," Ebersol says. "No one comes close to Sandy."

Montag believes one of his strengths is that he sees opportunities where they exist, even when others do not, and he has the patience to wait for them to come to fruition. "I don't believe in the word 'no'; deals are never dead," he says. "You have to believe that you can make stuff happen."

### A Personal Approach

That's precisely how he ended up partnering with Ari Fleischer, President George W. Bush's press secretary, after the Pound Ridge resident announced he was leaving the White House. Montag, a C-SPAN junkie who appreciated Fleischer's regular sports references during press briefings, cold-called him to see if there was some work they could do together. Remarkably, Fleischer returned the call, and the two began working on a communications partnership that involves media strategy, media training, and crisis communications with players, teams, and leagues. It has been going strong since 2004.

Not only is Montag honest, smart, and levelheaded, he is well-liked and respected in the world of sports, Fleischer says. "Sandy is a bona fide throwback who values personal relationships. What he is showing is how to be successful in today's world, with nice old-fashioned values."

Montag returns client calls every day and prefers face-to-face conversations over email (he never closes a deal that way). He doesn't like to sit, instead opting for a standup desk. And in a superstitious business like sports, he shows up, greets his clients on the field, along the sideline, in the booth, or wherever they expect to see him. In fact, he shook Tom Coughlin's hand in the tunnel for most Giants home games, Montag says. Why? Because career coaches are superstitious, too.

There's nothing superstitious about his formula for success, though. It's best to deal with decision-makers — team owners and network executives — he says, because they have a global perspective and know what they want, which makes deal-making far more efficient. "I like negotiating top-down," he explains. And he always lets the other person make the first offer.


What's his best advice? "You will learn more by listening than by talking," he says. "Some of the best leaders are listeners." ●

*Former journalist Jerry McKinstry is managing director of The November Team, a political strategy firm in Westchester.*

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# Making Sure the Show Goes On

Westchester Broadway Theatre has been a smash-hit with audiences since opening in 1974, as well as a commercial success. Here's how they've done it.

By Elaine Pofeldt

▲ Co-owners Bill Stutler and Bob Funking have run Westchester Broadway Theatre for 42 years. They focus on crowd-pleasing musicals to drive ticket sales and experiment with new revenue streams to boost profits.

Bill Stutler was in the market for a new line of work when he and his wife happened to attend a dinner-theater production in his hometown of Huntington, WV, in the early 1970s. Stutler, then a Thornwood resident, had been fired from his job in advertising after having worked on accounts from Arm & Hammer and Alka Seltzer to Rockefeller's presidential campaign. *I'd like to do a business on my own now*, Stutler thought.

The idea of running a dinner the-

ater seemed appealing to Stutler, who'd once dreamed of being a movie director. He approached his friend Bob Funking, who'd also recently been fired from an advertising job, about opening one in Westchester. Funking, a gourmet cook, was game.

By 1974 they were up and running, opening An Evening Dinner Theatre in Elmsford with their debut show, *Kiss Me Kate*. Today, the theater, later renamed Westchester Broadway Theatre, brings in \$6 million to \$8 million in annual revenue, supporting 120 employees. As

its name suggests, it is known for bringing Broadway performers to Westchester. "We didn't know it was going to be this large when we started," Stutler says.

Nor did they know how long their new foray would last. Since the theater began its run 42 years ago, it has held nearly 200 mainstage productions and nearly 1,000 special events and concerts. "We're the longest-running Equity theater in the state of New York," boasts Stutler. "We run 52 weeks a year. We've outlasted many Broadway theaters."

## A Challenging Start

But getting to this point was not easy. After the duo raised \$7,500 from friends and took a small government-backed loan to get started, they realized they needed a lot more money to develop and open the theater in the shell of a building that a developer had made available. It ultimately cost them \$400,000. That meant reaching out to other connections.

"Bob happened to mention what we were doing" to an acquaintance, recalls Stutler. Funking's contact, a businessman from New Jersey, was interested in investing, as was his business partner. The two men, who ran a portable-restroom business, had sold property in Florida and needed to reinvest their earnings to avoid penalties. "They put in \$100,000 to start," says Stutler.

That allowed Stutler and Funking to hire a builder. They also recruited Judith Chafee, an architect who had designed Funking's vacation house in Massachusetts and whose work often appeared in *Architectural Digest*, to design the interior. "The design of the building greatly influenced that of the interior, and we attribute a lot of our success to that," Stutler notes.

Not long after they began building, local officials got worried and put a stop to the project. "They thought we were opening a strip joint," says Stutler. To win supporters, Stutler and Funking began presenting their idea to influential members of the community, including producer-director William Hammerstein (son of the legendary lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II), whom they persuaded to join their board. A relative of William who had worked in the advertising business with Stutler and Funking became

their spokesman, helping the theater win favor in the community.

After a four-month delay, An Evening Dinner Theatre finally opened, with a culinary-school graduate as chef. After nearly two decades in that space, the theater moved to a new building in the area that boasted a larger performance space and brand-new technology. Renamed Westchester Broadway Theatre, the venue opened in 1991 with *A Chorus Line*.

For culture lovers, the theater has been a welcome addition to the county: great entertainment without the trek into the city. To keep theatergoers coming back, the partners chose productions with a hit track record. "The most popular are shows like *Chicago*, *Grease*, and *West Side Story*," Stutler reports.

They also focus on attracting top-quality talent from Broadway. "We go into the city and spend a week casting with a director, choreographer, and musical director," explains Stutler. "For a 21-person show, we might see over 350 people. We've always agreed on the people in the roles we have. We've been successful on that basis."

The theater has also recruited talent from the TV and movie world, including actor Scott Bakula of *Star Trek: Enterprise* fame; director Rob Marshall, a six-time Tony Award nominee; director-choreographer Rob Ashford, also nominated for multiple

Tonys; and director-choreographer Kathleen Marshall, whose Broadway productions include *Kiss of the Spider Woman*.

The theater is organized as a business, not a nonprofit, though, Stutler deadpans, "Many times there are no profits."

Costs are varied. Investing in state-of-the-art technology has been a large expense for the partners. The sound system and lighting cost more than \$1 million in cumulative investments, according to Stutler.

"We also have food costs, energy costs; people don't realize how many costs there are," Stutler adds. "We're combining a restaurant and a theater, so we have backstage crews, kitchen chefs and cooks, box-office people, salespeople, PR people, financial people — it's quite a large operation." Payroll is the biggest cost, he says, followed by rent and food.

While there have been lean years when Stutler and Funking had to trim their budget, "We haven't really been to the point where we were going to give up," says Stutler. By keeping close track of advance sales, they always have a good picture of how the theater is doing, he explains, noting that group-ticket sales are particularly important.

The theater's team is well aware they are competing for attention against movies, local theater groups, and restaurants.

Currently, theatergoers pay \$50 to see a show or \$84 to see a show and have dinner, with a choice of five to seven entrées. It's a bargain compared with Manhattan theater prices, he says.

### New Revenue Streams

To keep Westchester Broadway Theatre sustainable, Stutler and Funking have experimented with their business model. To add to revenues, they are actively promoting a corporate membership with local partners, including Bank of America, Con Edison, financial-services firm MBIA, real-estate-investment trust Mack-Cali, Stew Leonard's, and the White Plains Police Benevolent Association.

The theater also offers four luxury boxes, which are popular among their corporate clientele. (Renting the boxes costs a maximum of \$125 per person, including a more expansive menu and wine recommendations.)

In addition, the theater stays full by offering a variety of performances on Monday and Tuesdays, when it doesn't hold regular shows. "We do anything we can think of," says Stutler. "We had [singer-drummer] Vincent Talarico and his band on Columbus Day; we have lots of comedy nights. We're in contact constantly with talent agents who book these kind of acts." There are also two matinees during the week, on Wednesday and Thursday, in addition to the regular matinee on Sunday.

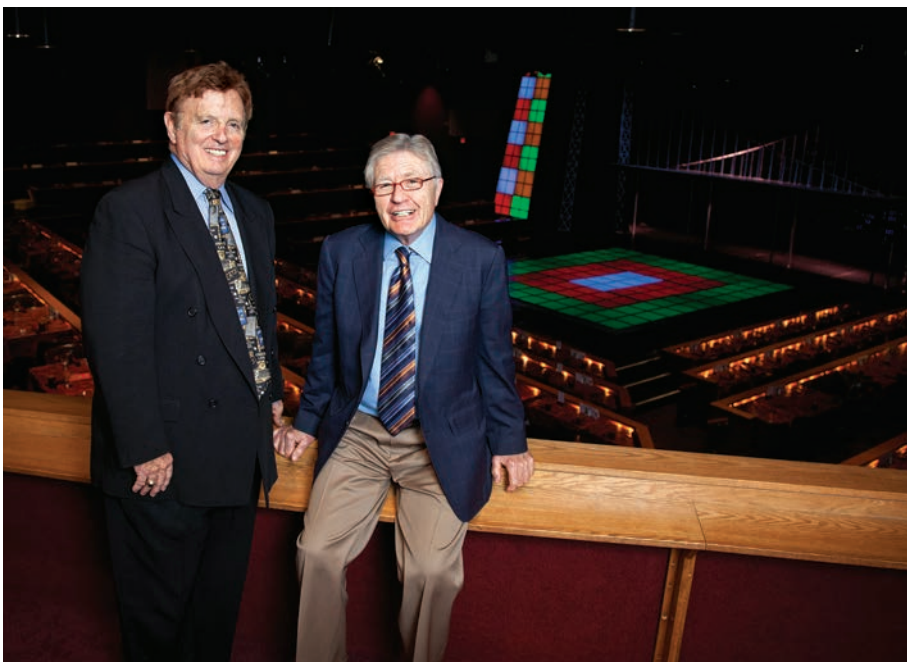
But the core of the theater is the musicals it chooses, and Stutler is constantly on the hunt for crowd-pleasers. *Saturday Night Fever*, featuring the music of the Bee Gees, will run through the end of November. Then comes a holiday show called *Christmas Inn* for four weeks, followed by a return of *Saturday Night Fever* in January. Next year, the theater will feature a relatively new show, called *The Keys*, which has been produced at Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, CT, and Long Wharf Theater in New Haven.

"It's 'Jersey Girls,'" says Stutler. "They're trying to raise money to save a mobile-home beach resort. It's got all of the great hits of the '70s. Also, we finally got *Mamma Mia*, which starts in March. Then, we're doing a show we haven't been able to get for 38 years, *Annie*."

Then, Stutler pauses a moment. "It's a tough business to be in," he says. "You're starting a new business with every show." Fortunately, that's a challenge he and Funking have mastered many times before. ●

**"We're the longest-running Equity theater in the state of New York. We run 52 weeks a year. We've outlasted many Broadway theaters."**

— Bill Stutler, (below left) co-owner, Westchester Broadway Theatre



Freelance writer Elaine Pofeldt is a frequent 914INC. contributor.





First Light Home Care has seen rapid growth in its business of caring for seniors at home.

# Boomers Bring Economic Boom

Westchester's aging population spurs tremendous growth in the eldercare industry. **By Dave Donelson**

Little did they know or care at the time, but the procreatively inspired World War II generation shaped one of the fastest-growing industries in Westchester when they gave birth to their baby-boomer offspring. Those boomers are now oldsters, retiring from the workforce, dealing with health issues and adjusting accordingly where and how they live. That has made eldercare, which encompasses everything from home-health and companion care to nursing homes and hospice services, a burgeoning sector in the county's economy — and it's likely to grow even more in the future.

Driving that growth, of course, is the aging of our population. Since 1960, the number of Westchester residents aged 65 and older has grown at nearly twice the rate of the rest of the population. The 2010 census showed

that group representing almost 15 percent of the county's total population, a number projected to rise to nearly 19 percent by 2040. Those same projections, by the way, show population declines for 5-to-14- and 25-to-64-year-olds.

Like any growing market, eldercare is attracting a wealth of new businesses eager to tap into it. And the growth has spurred change among institutions that have served in eldercare for decades. "We have diversified from our original mission, to include many levels of care," explains Rita Mabli, president and CEO of United Hebrew of New Rochelle. "People are simply living longer, and they have more health issues. Coincident with that, they need more care."

United Hebrew today cares for more than 800 people every day, including residents, home-based

**"People are simply living longer, and they have more health issues. Coincident with that, they need more care."**

— Rita Mabli,  
President and CEO,  
United Hebrew of  
New Rochelle

clientele, assisted-living and nursing-facility patients, as well as short-term rehab patients.

Independent seniors can live in two fully occupied apartment houses at United Hebrew, both of which have a two- to three-year waiting list. "We also just opened the only free-standing memory-care pavilion for assisted living in Westchester," Mabli reports. "Our original memory-care unit kept incurring a waiting list, so we built Willow Gardens."

Persons reaching age 65 now have an average life expectancy of an additional 19.2 years, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services, and most of them have at least one chronic condition. That's one big reason healthcare has grown to become Westchester's largest employer.

Those chronic conditions also

challenge eldercare providers, says Matt Anderson, president and CEO of The Osborn in Rye, who points to “the increasing level of illness, often multiple conditions, which so many [elderly] are dealing with.” The Osborn, which is home to 435 residents on its lush 56-acre campus, serves an additional 500 clients through short-term and outpatient rehab and provides 12,000 hours of home care each week.

“The increasing number of seniors, and with that, the increasing number of people with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia,” he adds, will challenge institutions well into the future. (According to the Alzheimer’s Association, the number of Americans living with the affliction is expected to triple by 2050.) “At The Osborn, we have a dedicated care wing, the H.O.P.E. Center, as well as services available for people at varying stages of dementia.”

Along the spectrum of eldercare are multiple business opportunities. Home care is an increasingly growing part of the business, since it has a relatively low cost of entry for new operators, is fairly scalable, and fits well into Medicare’s long-term goal of treating more seniors at home. That’s one big reason it’s the fastest-growing franchise opportunity in the country, as reported by the *Wall Street Journal*.

Local entrepreneur Vincent McMahon opened a First Light Home Care franchise in Mount Kisco in 2012. His 80 to 100 aides provide help with the activities of daily living that often become more difficult as a person ages. “Most of our clients are in their 80s and older,” he explains.

The NYS Department of Health has 319 listings for agencies licensed to provide home-care services in Westchester, 86 of which are located in the county. Competition is a big hurdle, but according to McMahon “the bigger hurdle is finding quality aides and caregivers.”

Another growth segment in the industry is luxury assisted-living. There are currently more than 30 licensed assisted-living communities in the county, with many more on the way. One of the newest is The Ambassador in Scarsdale, a \$45 million development with 95 apartments for assisted living, plus



**“It’s easy to see the appeal of very high-end retirement communities for the five-percenters who can afford it, but we’re looking more to the moderate middle market.”**

— David Gentner, CEO, Wartburg

## Bringing Hi-Tech to Eldercare

White Plains firm debuts a patient-monitoring solution

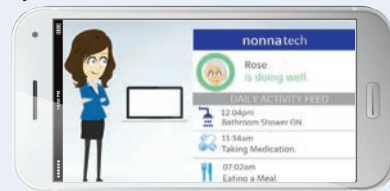
Nonnatech, winner of part of a \$1 million innovation grant from the NYC Economic Development Corporation, promises to revolutionize home care and other segments of the eldercare business, according to owner Gary German, who is based in White Plains. “Our solution is the only remote patient-monitoring solution that utilizes unobtrusive connected sensors and predictive analytics and machine learning,” he says.

German’s family operated senior-living communities for many years. When his grandmother suffered a stroke and then had problems with caregivers at home, he was inspired to develop the technology.

“These sensors are in the bed, in the wheelchair, in the kitchen cabinet, in the refrigerator,” he explains. “Our software allows family members and clinicians to spot the early onset of a problem.”

The predictive algorithms can reduce healthcare costs by catching problems like infections and disrupted sleep patterns before they lead to emergency-room or acute-care visits.

The product came to market in 2014 and has been used in pilot programs by several Westchester institutions, including Wartburg in Mount Vernon. It’s available on a monthly subscription basis. —DD



22 for memory care. It reached full occupancy less than one year after opening in 2015, according to general manager Jean Dunphy.

At The Ambassador, a studio apartment with base services starts at \$7,000 per month; rates run up to \$15,000 for full services, like bathing, dressing, medication management, and escorting to activities. The Alzheimer’s program (at \$10,000 per month) has a wait list.

Steven Krieger, partner at The Engel Burman Group, which owns and manages The Bristol Assisted Living communities, which includes locations in Armonk and White Plains, points to home values as an underlying economic reason the luxury assisted-

living segment is growing so rapidly in Westchester. “With median home values rising, most people [who sold homes in which they had built a lot of equity] could afford to move to an assisted-living community like ours,” he explains.

Krieger also notes: “People are generally coming to live at The Bristol at an older age. Right now, the average age of a new resident is 87 years old. To put that into perspective, the average age was 82 when we opened our first community in 2000.”

The segment of the industry that’s floundering is the nursing-home business. The county has 45 of them, but they’re being squeezed by Medicare, Medicaid, and private

## Aging Westchester = Growing Eldercare Market

Year	Residents aged 65+	% of Total Population
1960	74,828	9.3
2010	139,122	14.7
2020	154,879	16.1
2030	178,376	18.4
2040	179,537	18.6

Source: US Census Bureau, projections by Cornell University Population Center

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## Eldercare Employment

The sector consists of nearly 20,000 workers in the county



Home Healthcare Services	6,290 employees
Nursing-Care Facilities	7,704 employees
Continuing-Care Facilities	1,350 employees
Assisted-Living Facilities	1,317 employees
Other Service for Elderly	2,371 employees
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,032 employees</b>

*Source: US Census Bureau, 2012 County Business Patterns*

insurance companies to shorten patient stays and convert to a managed-care model of payment, resulting in several sales and mergers, as well as conversions from nonprofit to for-profit operations. St. John's Riverside Hospital in Yonkers, the Hebrew Hospital Home in Valhalla, and Fieldhome in Cortlandt Manor have all been impacted by these changes.

"The for-profits are buying up the nonprofits in our industry like crazy," confirms United Hebrew's Mabli.

The Wartburg in Mount Vernon represents the other end of the success spectrum. The full-service continuing-care organization celebrated its 150th anniversary this year and opened a new outpatient rehabilitation clinic in its \$31 million, 75,000 sq ft rehab and adult day-services center. The 34-acre campus also includes market-rate and affordable senior housing, post-acute nursing care, memory care, and home-care services.

CEO David Gentner says the organization's eyes are firmly fixed on the future. "As we look ahead, we will provide services to populations who live as independently as possible for as long as possible."

He also expects to make a significant announcement about a new facility to be built on the Wartburg campus early next year that will appeal to the middle market. "When we look ahead to the future of independent housing, we're going to focus on the middle-income boomer. It's easy to see the appeal of very high-end retirement communities for the five-percenters who can afford it, but we're looking more to the moderate middle market."

Other Westchester eldercare developers have busy drawing boards, too. Purchase College has announced plans to build a 385-unit senior community on its campus in partnership with Life Care Services and Senior Care Development LLC. Artis Senior Living has proposed a 72-bed memory-care facility in Hastings-on-Hudson, while Capital Seniors Housing is negotiating to build a 101-unit senior-housing facility on the former site of Frank's Nursery & Crafts in Greenburgh. A 16-acre property that once housed Good Counsel High School

and Academy in White Plains has been purchased by George Comfort & Sons, who are planning to turn it into a mix of family, senior, and dorm-style housing.

But not every development is welcomed with open arms. A group of residents this year

filed a challenge in state court to a Maryland developer's plan to build 160 units of senior housing on the site of a former rock quarry in West Harrison. Brightview Senior Living, the developer, operates 35 similar facilities, including one in Tarrytown.

Eldercare in Westchester is a thriving industry driven by favorable demographics and economics. The service-heavy industry is not all dollars and cents, though, according to The Ambassador's Jean Dunphy. "If the hands that provide the care are not kind, and the administration doesn't see it as a service business, then all you have is a hotel with services." ●

*Freelancer writer Dave Donelson is a frequent contributor to 914INC.*



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A progressive community located minutes from New York City where personal ideals are celebrated and you won't be pressured to conform to an established lifestyle. Instead, you'll find a culturally diverse community that values freedom of thought. Like the many influential writers, artists, and entrepreneurs who found inspiration in New Rochelle in the past, a new generation of creative minds is reaching for the stars; they are pushing boundaries, imaginatively bending rules, and experiencing the pride of ownership that comes when each voice, each personal mark, helps shape and define the community's whole.

In fact, everything about New Rochelle is defined by an "anything's possible so pursue your dreams" attitude. No excuses—just an abundance of inspiration and initiative. The ongoing transformation of Downtown and the Waterfront is tangible proof. The community has long recognized the symbolic and literal importance of redefining this city center into a walkable Downtown that leans urban without being too gritty—a Downtown whose star is rising with emerging artists, aside loft apartments, expanding office and retail space, and a diverse restaurant scene.

New Rochelle's open-minded attitudes and support for the individual have shaped a culturally diverse and eclectic community. Varied backgrounds, ethnicities, and ideas have blended into a flavorful modern-day

melting pot. Because original thinking is celebrated, education is a top priority resulting in a nationally recognized public school system. Youthful optimism and an influx of fresh ideas continue to be nurtured with the presence of three thriving higher education institutions—Iona College, Monroe College, and The College of New Rochelle.

Individual ideals are also actively supported by the business community. Entrepreneurs are attracted first by the energy of new ideas followed by the support and engagement of leaders willing to make things happen. Extensive planning incentives and resources have been put in place to ensure the success of all businesses, from start-ups to large established businesses to retail. New Rochelle's Industrial Development Agency and Corporation for Local Development stand ready to assist the growth of businesses and non-profits. And they all collaborate, enhanced by popular community activities such as outdoor summer movies, family fun nights, and cultural events to stimulate New Rochelle's economy.

Naturally, the easy accessibility of nearby New York City also contributes to New Rochelle's ideal location. In 30 minutes, you can be transported by a Metro-North train into the heart of Manhattan with its unbridled energy, entertainment, and culture. If you want to take a bite out of more than "The Big Apple," LaGuardia Airport is just a few minutes away, also thanks to Metro-North. And at the end of your day or trip, the train can return you to New Rochelle where shoreline views of Long Island Sound, leafy neighborhood streets, and beautiful parks make it hard to believe just minutes ago you were in the middle of the nation's largest city. The welcoming attitude, walkable Downtown, and abundant entertainment will make you

wonder why you ever left home at all.

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**growth.** The City's newly reformed zoning system ensures a predictable, professional approval process, and environmental pre-clearance increases speed and efficiency. Private incentives are linked to public interest to support the arts, connectivity, preservation, and green design.

In declaring "New Rochelle is open for business," Mayor Noam Bramson notes, "Our plan lays out a comprehensive vision for a thriving city center where all of us—whatever our means and tastes, whatever our idea—can find a place to shop, a place to work, a place to meet, or a place to live. It's a vision for sustainable growth that makes our region greener and more competitive. Shaped from street-front to skyline by the best urban design. And with financial terms that fund specific public benefits and put taxpayers ahead."

He adds, "But our plan is also more than just a vision; it's also a detailed roadmap for accomplishing that vision, because it provides developers with the clearest path ever for investing successfully in New Rochelle. Every expectation and requirement is defined up front, the environmental review is already completed, the zoning provides for flexibility in response to the market, and the approval process places professionalism ahead of politics.

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—MAYOR NOAM BRAMSON

New Rochelle's Master Development Agreement with RDRXR has paved the way for the large-scale renovation of the City's Downtown. Their first project is a 28-story multi-use building at 587 Main Street with 280 residential units, 16,800 square feet of retail space, and an approximately 10,000-square-foot black box theater. The groundbreaking for the project that reflects the historic façade and marquis is scheduled for late November.

The projects have created a ripple effect in the outskirts of Downtown. The Lombardi building at 111 Park Avenue, for example, has brightened North Avenue, the City's main north/south thoroughfare, melding Old World charm with modern amenities. On Huguenot Street, millennial housing will anchor the downtown's eastern gateway and to the west, and a residential project is under way for 393 Huguenot Street. Monroe College also has announced the opening of a Barnes and Noble college bookstore at New Roc City by the end of the year.

New Rochelle's waterfront revitalization plan continues, with the City

Council approving the relocation of the aged City Yard from prime waterfront property in the city's East End to two locations near Interstate I-95. Twining Properties also unveiled their vision for "Pratt Landing" at Echo Bay that would blend retail, office, hotel, and residential space, leaving corridors with unobstructed water views.

### Winning with Innovation

**Trend-setting innovation.** The City's innovative programs and initiatives pair perfectly with its ambitious development, while also attracting a new generation. New Rochelle residents and visitors never have to run out of power while living life on the go, thanks to the City's innovative new approach to smart technology. This summer whimsical Soofa charging stations and benches arrived at four locations throughout New Rochelle. Not your traditional park bench, the modern outdoor charging stations and benches use solar power to charge small electronic devices (including cell phones) through USB ports. Bringing urban furniture to public spaces, Soofas have been installed in high-pedestrian areas, providing best services and supporting community interaction.



**SOOFA BENCHES ALLOW RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO CHARGE MOBILE DEVICES ON THE GO.**

In partnership with P3GM, a leading public-private smart city project developer, and E3Think, an urban developer focused on technology, economics, and design, New Rochelle will launch a new Bike Share program in spring 2017 as yet another step in the City's commitment to sustainable transportation alternatives. The first of its kind in Westchester, the Bike Share program will help reduce emissions, traffic, and parking congestion,

promoting healthier residents in the process. Through the efficient and fun program, 100 smart bikes and 12 stations will be installed in high-traffic areas throughout the City. Unlike other traditional dock-dependent efforts, this smart bike technology relies less on expensive docking stations and enables users to find, rent, and return bikes using a mobile app with GPS location capabilities.

### Embracing the Entrepreneurial Spirit

**A vital investment in the future.** The City's Ideally Yours brand has been adopted by businesses new and old. As the first point of contact for existing and new business owners, the City's Business Ambassador, Lisa Davis, serves as the face of New Rochelle, assisting with a wide variety of services, from providing information about applying for grants or loans to bringing issues to City departments for effective resolution. A new "Ideal Business Guide" puts valuable information about opening and operating their own ideal business in New Rochelle right at the fingertips of budding entrepreneurs.

"My role is to help New Rochelle businesses be more successful," Davis explains. "I help them make connections with other businesses and to partner with local and state agencies and financial institutions for valuable resources. Ideally, we'll be able to grow existing businesses and incent new business development

by providing useful assistance and paving the way for more direct communication and support between the City and business owners." Lisa Davis can be reached at (914) 654-2189 or LDavis@NewRochelleNY.com.

The Downtown Business Improvement District (BID) continues to be an anchor for business development, artists in residence programs, and family and cultural events. Representing Downtown New Rochelle's 800

businesses and property owners, the BID remains passionately focused on its goals of economic development, new opportunities, and new investment in New Rochelle's bright future that's destined to be Ideally Yours.

Learn more at [www.NewRochelleNY.com/Development](http://www.NewRochelleNY.com/Development).

## THE HAMMEL

The four-story Hammel luxury rental building and its five-story counterpart across Burling Lane are just the start. A mini neighborhood is rising on a triangle along Burling Lane, next to the Downtown core.

ELD Properties is planning a seven-building enclave of mostly six-story buildings that will present a



THE MILLENNIA, THE NEXT LOW-RISE LUXURY RENTAL BUILDING IN THE WORKS, IS TARGETED FOR 30-YEAR-OLD PROFESSIONALS.

transition from the low-rise buildings to the north and the towers of more than 20 stories that will continue to rise Downtown.

"The development of Downtown New Rochelle has really begun," says Anthony Hammel, a partner in the company with his brother William and investor Dr. Robert Leaf. "And you're going to see a lot more. The city leaders like to say they're open for business, and they mean it."

ELD is focusing on high-end residences, with each building catering to its own population. The next one to rise will be the Millennia, its design targeted for 30-year-old professionals, with a koi pond, trees, and plants in a center atrium that will rise all six stories to a roof of glass pyramids. "It's going to have a beautiful glass roof with a series of pyramids that will let in light," Hammel says. "From afar, the roof will appear to be a work of art."



## Partnering with the New Rochelle Community to Improve Campus and the North Avenue Corridor

Since its founding, Iona College has collaborated with New Rochelle, working together to bring academic, economic and cultural vitality to the city. With the \$150 million *Iona Forever* campaign, Iona will continue to serve its students and be a good neighbor to its good neighbors.

Iona College, the city's second-largest private employer, adds up to \$250 million a year to the economy of the city, region and state, according to a study commissioned by New York's Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities.



The College opened the new North Avenue Residence Hall (above) in August 2016, providing a home for more than 300 students as well as new commercial space on street level.

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IONA COLLEGE RECENTLY OPENED ITS NEW NORTH AVENUE RESIDENCE HALL.

The Hammel, aimed at a slightly older demographic, boasts the look and feel of a hotel with luxury appointments, including ample crown moldings and soft music in the lobby.

"We're drawing people from Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens," Hammel notes. "New Rochelle is a great location. It has some of the best parks in Westchester. And the train station is phenomenal, sitting right in the heart of Downtown. That's something many other cities don't have. And it's something you can't replace."

## IONA COLLEGE

Iona College has been expanding its on-campus population for years, even as the city of New Rochelle plans to transform its core.

This semester, the seven-story North Avenue Residence Hall opened along the city's major north-south artery, allowing Iona to house approximately 250 more students on its campus. That came four years after the opening of East Hall, another dormitory.

With Downtown New Rochelle just a short trip to the south, the dramatic growth planned there, with more restaurants, shops, and activities, will make it even more of an attraction to the young adults who come to Iona from throughout the region as well as considerable distances.

"Every step forward that New Rochelle takes is a step forward for

Iona," says Todd Wilson, the college's spokesman. "That's especially true as we recruit from around the New York metro area, from out-of-state, and even internationally."

The proximity to Downtown has always been a draw for many of the college's 4,000 students, who can easily get there on the college's Gael Express shuttle to the City's train station. Once there, they take in movies at the at the 18-screen Regal Multiplex at the New Roc City entertainment center, or take in lunch or dinner at local eateries. Some of the restaurants even accept the college's meal plan, including Applebee's,

Texas Roadhouse, and Posto 22, along with several establishments closer to campus on North Avenue.

As Downtown grows into a livelier urban center, it will offer students more chances for recreation, and more opportunities for those who grow to appreciate the City so much that they want to begin their new lives there after they graduate.

"Incoming students look for more than the academics and campus activities," Wilson adds. "They want to know it's in a nice area, with plenty of things to do nearby."

## PINE BROOK FITNESS

Residents moving to Downtown New Rochelle won't have far to go if they want to try their skills swinging a tennis racquet, taking an exercise class, or climbing a sheer rock face.

Just outside Downtown, on Rhodes Street, residents can explore Pine Brook Fitness, with tennis courts, unique exercises classes, and a 40-foot-high rock-climbing wall—the only one in the New Rochelle area—offering challenges from the relatively easy- to expert-level overhang climbs. The newest facet to the multi-sports center is the fitness component, with classes that are expanding to accommodate children.

"New Rochelle is an up-and-coming city," says Valerie Ferrara, Pine Brook Fitness Site General Manager. "A lot of people are coming here from



PINE BROOK FITNESS ADDS A HEALTHY HOT SPOT TO A WALKABLE DOWNTOWN.



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the New York area and from other places. New restaurants are opening. It's becoming such a hot spot. And many people are coming here to get fit."

The exercise program offers popular group classes, including Zumba Strong, Barre-Pilates Fusion, and Spin. But in concert with Pine Brook Fitness' other activities, it can also offer classes unavailable elsewhere that focus on building specialized skills. Classes, for instance, can include tennis tournament training and bouldering, which is rock climbing to shorter heights with no ropes, over safety mats.

The center is increasingly involved in the New Rochelle community. It offers free "Boot Camp" exercise sessions at the Saturday Downtown Grand Market in October, has hosted a ramen-eating contest with Roc-N-Ramen restaurant, and plans to display art from the New Rochelle Downtown Business Improvement District's Arts at 5 Anderson initiative.

And more will come, Ferrara says. "We've very community driven," she notes. "As the Downtown grows, we will be offering more events that both new and longtime residents can enjoy."

## RADISSON

New Rochelle's reinvented Downtown may be on the horizon, but the revamped Radisson Hotel New Rochelle is already essentially complete. A three-year makeover of the 10-story hotel with office space mostly



THE NEWLY RENOVATED RADISSON HOTEL NEW ROCHELLE ADDS EVEN MORE SPARKLE TO THE REINVENTED DOWNTOWN.

wrapped up in March 2016. The Mediterranean restaurant NoMa Social hosts a wealth of regular

events, including a weekly salsa night on Thursdays, twice-monthly painting nights, and weekend events that change constantly just to mix it up. Bands, DJ's, Tarot card readers, comedians, and other entertainers delight guests.

"We try to keep it fresh and on a rotating basis," says General Manager Colby Brock. "There's always something different going on for the weekends."

The hotel opened more than 40 years ago in an ideal spot. Although in an older building, the Radisson shines with all the upgrades the owners have made to keep the property as current as if it were built today. Many of the 129 rooms feature views of the Long Island Sound just to the east or the Manhattan skyline to the south.

"The location is amazing," Brock says. "It doesn't get any better than this if you want to be close to New York City, the Bronx or Connecticut, the airports, the beaches, the Bronx Zoo, or Yankee Stadium."

The city development will bring many new residents and professionals who can dine at NoMa Social, or whose visiting families can stay in the hotel. The Social Room is perfect for celebrations—bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings, even a 50th anniversary celebrated by a couple with their large family; it is the most electrifying party room in Westchester. Digital mapping adorns all the walls in the Social Room and half of NoMa Social, allowing floor-to-ceiling images to be projected, showing the celebrants, landscapes, videos, or even a live Instagram stream of a party as it takes place. With endless possibilities, the images can show the skyline of Paris or San Francisco or even, as it evolves, Downtown New Rochelle.

## MERCEDES-BENZ

In the 10 years that Mercedes-Benz of New Rochelle has sold its luxury automobiles in the New Rochelle area, the company has put down roots in the community.

"This is an amazing area," says General Manager Joe Gallagher. "The location is spectacular. You're right on Long Island Sound and there are some great restaurants and family-owned stores in the area."



MERCEDES-BENZ OF NEW ROCHELLE IS CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SELLING LUXURY AUTOMOBILES IN THE NEW ROCHELLE AREA.

He draws on the City's population to fill out the dealership's staff of more than 100 employees. The business looks to local schools including Salesian High School and Iona College, where they discover employees who work in several areas. Some perform technical or mechanical work, others handle accounting, and still others serve in the reception area, where their friendly faces are the first customers see.

"They have great outgoing personalities," Gallagher notes. "People come in and they're greeted with these big smiles."

The City also has a great demographic mix for Mercedes-Benz, Gallagher says, with people coming to look for everything from their certified pre-owned models to the top-of-the-line models as well as the newest models just being launched.

The dealership demonstrates its commitment to the community by supporting and sponsoring such local organizations as the Boys and Girls Clubs of New Rochelle, the March of Dimes, the New Rochelle Police Foundation. The Downtown development, he observes, will amplify the community's assets.

"You have this beautiful development plan coming, and everyone is going to benefit from it," Gallagher explains. "It's really going to bring more life to New Rochelle."

## NISSAN

To Anthony Panarella, the owner of Nissan of New Rochelle, the City's plans for sweeping Downtown development are continuing to elevate the profile of a city that's already a great place to live and operate a business.

"New Rochelle is a great city to live in, with its easy commuting options and access to theater and restaurants and other things that people," he says. "The new development is going to bring more of the assets to the City and more people to experience the area."



ANTHONY PANARELLA, OWNER AND EXECUTIVE MANAGER OF NISSAN OF NEW ROCHELLE.

Nissan has sold and serviced cars on Palmer Avenue for 15 years. Panarella took it over two years ago and revived the business, which now employs 72 people and devotes itself to customer service. He also invested in the community, supporting Little League and donating four all-electric Nissan Leaf cars to the City under its GreeNR environmental program. Along with the cars, he installed charging stations for electric vehicles in the garages at the Metro-North train station and New Roc City.

The shop has also served as a location in the New Rochelle Council on the Arts' annual ArtsFest weekend. In addition, taking an interest in the City's progress, Panarella supports the City's plan for a bike-sharing program much like the Citi Bike program in New York City.

"More development brings a greater awareness of the City and all it has to offer," he adds. "And that helps us all."

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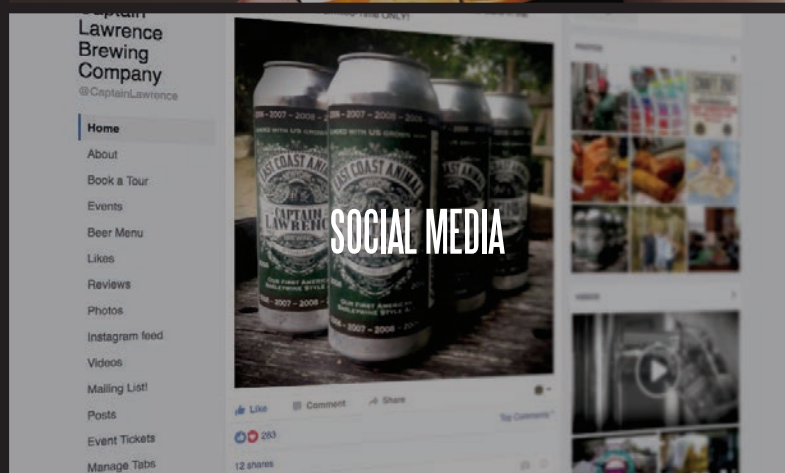
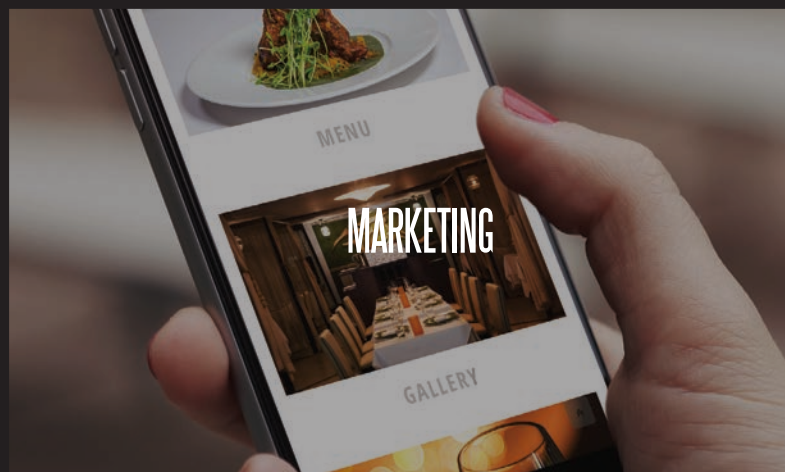
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### Mercedes-Benz of New Rochelle

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Contact Business Ambassador Lisa Davis (914) 654-2189 or [Ldavis@newrochelleny.com](mailto:Ldavis@newrochelleny.com)

## Cardinal Dolan Delivers Inspiring Message at BCW Annual Dinner



Cardinal Dolan addressing a record crowd at the BCW Annual Dinner.

Timothy Cardinal Dolan captivated a crowd of more than 700 business and political leaders with his inspiring message about faith and morals in business at the Business Council of Westchester's Annual Dinner held October 6 at the Rye Town Hilton.

Describing Westchester as a "real slice of the heart of America," he added, "To have Westchester as part of my flock, means the world to me." Jokingly referring to the packed room as a "two collection crowd," The Archbishop of New York, interspersed his more serious message with one-liners that kept the audience entertained.

Cardinal Dolan said while he did not consider himself a business leader, but was he happy to talk about "the role of faith and morals when it comes to being a good leader."

"The three essentials to being a good effective leader, are soul, mind and heart," said Dolan, who pointed to the three most recent Popes John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis as role models for these three qualities.

He thanked business leaders for their contributions to the community and their charitable works. "We need to be whole people - the soul, the mind, the heart," he said.

Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, a protégée of Cardinal Dolan's, opened the evening, thanking the Cardinal for his leadership in pressing for the Educational Tax Credit legislation in New York State.

BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon said the Cardinal exemplified the evening's theme of leadership. "He blends compassion with commitment to make New York a better place for us all to work and live," she added.

John Ravitz, Vice President and COO of the Business Council of Westchester, who introduced the Cardinal, called him "an undisputed global leader" with a "strong belief in fostering economic development and creating jobs for young people."



## BCW Hits a Grand Slam with Exclusive Derek Jeter Event

In what will be his only Westchester appearance this year, New York Yankees Legend and five-time World Series champion Derek Jeter will be the featured speaker at a special program being presented by The Business Council of Westchester in partnership with Steiner Sports Marketing. *The Captain's Return 2 New York* program will be held Tuesday, December 6 at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown from 6 to 9 p.m.

Since retiring from baseball two years ago, Jeter has become a successful entrepreneur, launching *The Players' Tribune*, a digital platform that has attracted billion of views from fans eager to hear from the more 1,000 sports professionals who post regularly on the site.

BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon said while there will be plenty of sports talk, the presentation will also give the audience some insight into how Jeter has been able to successfully translate the leadership skills he developed in baseball to his new business endeavors. "This is an amazing opportunity for our membership. Not only is it a rare appearance of one of the top sports celebrities of all time, but the chance to hear from a true leader who has been able to reinvent himself as an entrepreneur of incomparable talent," said Gordon.

For tickets and information about sponsorship opportunities, visit [thebcw.org](http://thebcw.org).



# Message from the president...



**Marsha Gordon**  
President and CEO  
The Business Council of Westchester

2016 has been an incredible year for the Business Council of Westchester and for our members! We continue to be the catalyst to help our members build, connect, and win!

We helped our members BUILD their businesses by offering more program-

ming, seminars and advocacy initiatives that address the needs of all sectors of our membership. We have helped them CONNECT to new customers and clients through informative and strategic programs that speak to all sizes and types of business. Finally, we've continued to change to meet the ever evolving business landscape in Westchester with a special focus on our emerging leaders through our Rising Stars Alumni which continues to grow and help our members succeed and WIN.

From the Green Business Challenge to our Workforce Development programs to our advocacy initiatives to our Leadership Conversation and Speakers series, we have provided nearly 100 signature opportunities all dedicated to create real value and return on investment.

Thanks to BCW Executive Vice President John Ravitz, we reached new heights this year delivering access and advocacy to our members at all of the top levels of state and local government.

We have delivered the highest level of government influencers to connect with our members. Our Political Leadership Series featured the very top leaders in state government including Lt. Governor, State Senate Majority Leader, State Assembly Speaker, and Gov. Cuomo's top aide. We also presented programs featuring the County Executive, the County Legislature and the mayors of Yonkers, White Plains, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle.

We have embarked on our strategic planning process by asking our members to identify the areas that were most important to them and to the future Westchester's economy. From these efforts we have established and prioritized a series of new initiatives which we plan to announce soon in more detail.

At the BCW we're helping our members Build, Win and Connect. Stay tuned as we roll out the details of our strategic plan in the months ahead. The best is yet to come in 2017!

## Assembly Speaker Outlines What's On Tap in Albany

Continuing its commitment to offering informative programs featuring today's top political leaders, the BCW recently hosted a special presentation by Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie who fielded questions on a wide range of topics of interest to the business community.

Among the topics discussed during the program held September 21 in Rye Brook were paid family leave, raising the minimum wage, the Scaffold Law, and the state's tax cap and its impact on local business improvement districts.

Heastie gave a candid assessment of the issues legislators face in Albany and talked about what lies ahead for this year's legislative session. He said he

was most proud of the gains made this year toward improving the state's crumbling infrastructure and the investment in education

Heastie defended an increase in the minimum wage, which the BCW and other business groups have opposed, saying that it would ultimately help the state's economy by reducing poverty. "I've always felt that one of the best ways to stimulate the economy is to put money into people's pockets," he said.

John Ravitz, Executive Vice President and COO of the Business Council, served as emcee and moderator of the program.



Front, from left, BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon; Taryn Duffy, Director of Public Affairs, Empire City Casino; BCW Chairman Anthony Justic; Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie; Assemblywoman Sandra Galef, and Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti. Standing, from left, Thomas Leslie, Managing Shareholder, Greenberg Traurig; White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach; Assemblyman Gary Pretlow; BCW Executive Vice President and COO John Ravitz, and Assemblyman David Buchwald

# MTA Chief Shares Details of \$29.5 Billion Transit Plan

In an exclusive BCW Political Leadership Series presentation, BCW members and guests got a sneak preview of the MTA's \$29.5 billion, five-year capital program, the largest and most comprehensive in the organization's history.

"It's not lost on me or our leadership team that many of you spend a lot of time waiting for a train in one of our stations. We want to make sure there are stations that have better connectivity, that are cleaner and safer facilities," said MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas Prendergast to a packed audience in Rye Brook on July 15.

\$2.3 billion specifically for Metro-North – is the largest-ever investment in MTA infrastructure. The program will focus on fortifying and modernizing an outdated transportation network that includes Metro-North, Long Island Railroad, New York City Transit subways and buses, and MTA bridges and tunnels.



MTA Chairman Thomas Prendergast addressing BCW audience

Of particular interest to Westchester commuters is a plan to bring Metro-North into Penn Station via the New Haven Line, while adding four new stations in the Bronx. The project includes \$700 million for access to Penn Station and will result in a faster commute to Manhattan's West Side and a faster reverse commute

to Westchester's growing employment hubs.

The capital program – which includes

# Swinging Good Time at Annual Golf Outing



From left, Noel Muyskens, MVP Basketball Camp; Marc Miller, Westchester Knicks, and Kevin Bovey, Westchester Knicks

More than 120 of Westchester's top business and community leaders were on hand September 27 for The Business Council of Westchester's Annual Entergy Day of Golf held at the Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains. In addition to a relaxing day of golf and networking, members and guests enjoyed a BBQ lunch, cocktail reception, buffet dinner with awards and raffle prizes.



Entergy foursome included, from left, BCW Director Kenneth Theobalds; Dan Cook; Ken Dell Orto and Glenroy Smith



From left, Jamie O'Connell, BNY Mellon Wealth Management; Cathleen Stack, Hudson Valley Gateway Association of Realtors, and Marcia Clark, Content Machine, LLC



From left, Deputy County Executive Kevin Plunkett; BCW Director Wiley Harrison; BCW Director Jon Dorf; BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon; BCW Chairman Anthony Justic and BCW Director James Schutzer.

# Business in Action

## Cruise Connections

July 12, Aboard the Hornblower Hybrid Yacht



From left, Mike Shyne, White Plains YMCA; BCW Executive Board Member Cynthia Rubino, YMCA of Central & Northern Westchester; BCW Director of Special Events Amanda DePalma; Executive Board Member Douglas Singer, Falcon & Singer PC; and Executive Board Member George Lence, Nicholas & Lence Communications

## Political Leadership Series

July 15, 800 Westchester Avenue, Rye Brook



Front row, from left: New York State Assemblyman Steven Otis; BCW Chairman Anthony Justic; Nyack Mayor Jen White; MTA Chairman and CEO Thomas Prendergast; Mount Vernon Mayor Richard Thomas. Back row, from left: Nicholas & Lence Communications President George Lence; New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson; New York State Assemblyman David Buchwald; and BCW Executive Vice President and COO John Ravitz.

## Women's Leadership Forum

August 30, 800 Westchester Avenue, Rye Brook



From left, BCW Executive VP and COO John Ravitz; Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, and BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon

## Fall Seasonal Soiree by Strategies for Wealth

September 7, Empire City Casino, Yonkers



From left, Vincent D'Addona, Strategies for Wealth; BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon; Taryn Duffy, Empire City Casino; Kelly Biondi and Joe Long, Strategies for Wealth

## Annual Dinner, October 6, Hilton Westchester, Rye Brook



From left, Joanne Fernandez of Entergy; James O'Toole of James O'Toole Consulting and Mercedes Garcia of MasterCard Worldwide



From left, BCW Executive Vice President and COO John Ravitz; BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon; County Executive Robert Astorino; Timothy Cardinal Dolan and BCW Chairman Anthony Justic



# THE 2016 WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS

Honoring the Top Female Executives,  
Entrepreneurs, Government, and Non-profit  
Leaders in Westchester County



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
**KATRINA  
M. ADAMS**  
USTA Chairman,  
CEO & President

### 2016 HONOREES:

Pamela Anderson  
Rosa Cappa-Rotunno  
Angela Ciminello  
Robin Colner  
Mary Gadomski

Jamie Imperati  
Karen Lawrence  
Jennifer Lofaro  
Rita Mabli

Sharon Mackey McGee  
Karen Mackey Witherspoon  
Paula Mandell  
Kathy Meany

Stacey Petrower  
Denise Povolny  
Tierney Saccavino  
Stacey Tompkins  
Maria Valente

Date: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2016 | Time: 11:30AM – 2:00PM

Location: THE DOUBLETREE BY HILTON, TARRYTOWN

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6th Annual



**Women**  
**IN**  
**BUSINESS**  
2016

**Meet 18 of Westchester's most  
powerful executives,  
entrepreneurs, and government  
and nonprofit leaders.**

**By Alyson Krueger, Kate Stone Lombardi, Elaine  
Pofeldt, Gale Ritterhoff, and Kevin Zawacki**

**Photography by Stefan Radtke**

**Makeup by T. Cooper, using MAC Cosmetics, and  
Ashley Lauren Beauty Lounge**

**Location: Renaissance Westchester Hotel, West Harrison**





EXECUTIVE

# Paula Mandell

SENIOR VICE  
PRESIDENT &  
AREA EXECUTIVE

M&T Bank

**N**ot many tellers rise to supervise regional bank presidents. But Paula Mandell, senior vice president and area executive at M&T Bank, did just that — a meteoric career for anyone, let alone for a woman during an era when the industry was dominated by men.

A newlywed at 19, Mandell thought banking sounded “professional” and still remembers her teller’s weekly salary of \$70 in the early 1970s at Bankers Trust. Following several promotions, Mandell was handpicked for the bank’s internal training program in Manhattan, setting her on track to go into commercial banking. After having two sons and moving to the suburbs, Mandell joined M&T in 1992, continuing to climb the ranks. As Tarrytown-based Westchester regional president, Mandell played a vital role in building the bank’s business. With her elevation to area executive in 2015, she became responsible for M&T’s business in Connecticut, Rockland, and New Jersey, in addition to Westchester. Her area includes more than 1,100 M&T Bank employees and 110 branches, holding almost \$15 billion in total deposits.

For Mandell, banking is not just crunching numbers. “It’s really more about relationships,” she says. “Understanding our customers’ needs, helping them grow their businesses and helping them through hard times.”

— Kate Stone Lombardi

“[Banking is about] relationships, understanding our customers’ needs,... and helping them through hard times.”

In 1996, when Tierney Saccavino-Payne joined Acorda Therapeutics, the Ardsley firm was a far cry from the 600-person biotech powerhouse it is now. New to the region, the public-relations pro had gone to a temp agency in New York City looking for work and ended up assisting Acorda's founder and CEO, Ron Cohen, MD, in launching the company.

"He was renting a supply closet from a head-hunting firm and crammed two desks into it," says Saccavino-Payne, then 38 years old. "I realized after a few weeks I was sitting in this supply closet, very excited about going to work every day."

Fast-forward to today, and Acorda has built a reputation for developing innovative drugs to treat neurological conditions, such as Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis. As executive vice president of corporate communications, Saccavino-Payne has shaped its brand and messaging and is known for developing communication strategies that bring key stakeholders, such as researchers and the local community, together.

Saccavino-Payne has also championed Acorda's Scientific Excellence Award, which encourages STEM education in Westchester, Putnam, and Fairfield, with the hope of attracting new talent to the field.

"Our passion for improving the lives of patients is the only definition of success that matters here," she says.

— Elaine Pofeldt

**EXECUTIVE**

# Tierney Saccavino-Payne

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS**

Acorda Therapeutics

A portrait of Tierney Saccavino-Payne, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top and a large, ornate gold necklace. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a textured stone wall.

“Our passion for improving the lives of patients is the only definition of success that matters here.”



ENTREPRENEUR

# Maria Valente

OWNER  
Chocolations

**M**aria Valente used to dread attending her law-school reunions. She felt alone among her classmates in working hard to secure a prestigious degree and not using it. Valente had another dream: to turn her chocolate-making hobby into a career.

But she was too full of self-doubt to go for it until her early 40s, when she decided to give in to her nagging thoughts. She enrolled in entrepreneurial training at the Women's Enterprise Development Center and perfected her craft at the French Culinary Institute. "I jumped in and never looked back," she says.

In 2006, she opened up her first storefront, a 400 sq ft space that employed six people. By 2011, she was ready for something bigger: a 1,600 sq ft venue in the heart of Mamaroneck. She added a party room on the lower level, to host children's birthday parties, last spring. And it's not just the size of her store that has grown: Her business saw a 200 percent increase on Valentine's Day 2016 from the previous year. The *New York Times* and NBC's *Today* have both featured her success.

Now, when attending her law-school reunions, "I had so many people fascinated to know how I started a business and got out of law, because it was their dream to do the same," she says. "It opened my eyes that what I am doing really is something to be proud of."

— Alyson Krueger

“It opened my eyes that what I am doing is really something to be proud of.”

EXECUTIVE

# Kathryn Meany

DIRECTOR, WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Manhattanville College  
School of Business

“I’m so passionate about what we’re doing, and there’s so much we want to accomplish.”

The women sitting around green-felt-covered tables studied their playing cards and poker chips, plotting their next moves. Las Vegas? Try the second annual summit of The Women’s Leadership Institute (WLI) at the Manhattanville College School of Business. Earlier, Director Kathryn Meany had welcomed 160 professionals to the event. There’d been more typical fare — inspirational speakers and networking opportunities. But poker lessons focusing on risk-taking?

“We played poker because we want to teach women how to be assertive, strategic and to build their confidence when they’re sitting around that table... that board table,” Meany explains.

The exercise was vintage Meany, an innovative trainer, performance consultant, and coach. After an international career with corporate, government, and nonprofit clients, Meany is now focused on helping professional women in Westchester develop leadership skills through workshops, networking events, webinars, and the annual summit.

Despite having the knowledge and skillsets to lead, Meany says, women often lack the confidence, financial acumen, and negotiation skills to rise to the next level. To provide that training, she and Dr. Anthony Davidson, former dean of the Manhattanville College School of Business, developed the leadership institute.

Launched in 2015, the WLI offers a women’s-leadership certificate program, the only one like it in the Metro area. “I’m so passionate about what we’re doing, and there’s so much we want to accomplish,” says Meany.

—KSL





EXECUTIVE

# Denise A. Povolny

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
AND BUSINESS BANKING  
SALES LEADER

KeyBank



“Even though we’re a large, regional bank, we operate with a community mindset.”

This fall, Denise Povolny and her staff spent several days stranded in sub-zero temperatures with meager supplies. They weren’t lost in the Arctic; the group was participating in a corporate team-building exercise in Pennsylvania. But for Povolny, senior vice president and business banking sales leader at KeyBank, it was an innovative way to unite her growing team.

“It gives you, as a leader, the opportunity to see how people work in teams,” Povolny says.

When KeyBank acquired First Niagara in summer of 2016, Povolny went from covering the Hudson Valley district to all of Eastern Pennsylvania, too. With that broad swath of land came eight new direct reports, more than doubling her staff size.

“I asked for a challenge,” Povolny says.

If her history is any indication, she’s certainly up for it. Povolny joined KeyBank in 2009 and quickly transformed the Hudson Valley business banking team into a powerhouse: By 2012, her group was the highest-performing team at KeyBank.

Povolny is devoted to maintaining KeyBank’s small-town approach. “Even though we’re a large, regional bank, we operate with a community mindset,” she says. “We put a lot of money and sweat equity into the communities.”

— Kevin Zawacki



“Forward is my favorite direction.”



**NONPROFIT**

# Angela Ciminello

**VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING** Wartburg

“I don’t think I have ever heard any child say, ‘I want to be a fundraiser when I grow up,’” jokes Angela Ciminello, vice president of development and marketing at Wartburg, a senior-care provider in Mount Vernon. “I was no different, but I did know at a young age that I liked to help people. My mother says I was the champion of the underdog.”

At 23, Ciminello was the associate director of the Annual Fund at her alma mater, Iona College. When she got pulled over for speeding one day, instead of getting a ticket, she managed to solicit a donation from the police officer. Ciminello next worked for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, raising money for blood-cancer research. She went on to serve as director of development at Burke Rehabilitation Center in White Plains.

In February 2014, she joined the team at Wartburg as head of development. Her initial goal was to raise \$670,000 to help Wartburg expand its programs and services. Her team wound up raising \$1.47 million. She courted 52 new donors and received the organization’s largest-ever donation from a private foundation, \$116,250, which allowed Wartburg to expand its Creative Aging & Lifelong Learning Program for those suffering from dementia and Alzheimer’s.

One of her biggest accomplishments was raising funds to produce a documentary about Wartburg’s work. It aired on PBS’ *Visionaries* last year and this year won a Telly Award.

“If something seems insurmountable, I think of ways to overcome said obstacle,” she says. “Forward is my favorite direction.”

— AK



**NONPROFIT**

# Rita C. Mabli

**PRESIDENT & CEO**  
United Hebrew of  
New Rochelle



“My mission is to inspire [my] staff.”

Successful business leaders generally share a handful of key characteristics: ambition, innovative spirit, drive.

But for Rita Mabli — president and CEO of United Hebrew of New Rochelle — one particular trait trumps all others: compassion.

“We pride ourselves on being kind people who care for you like family,” says Mabli, who has been at the helm of United Hebrew for more than 35 years. For Mabli, building a team of world-class caregivers is a top priority. “My mission is to inspire staff and bring out the best in them,” she explains.

United Hebrew’s sprawling seven-acre campus is devoted to caring for others, from its affordable housing for the aged to its skilled nursing-care facilities. Its

staff of 700 care for some 1,000 residents and clients daily.

Mabli’s focus on compassion isn’t at the expense of ambition and innovation, however. Her appointment as CEO in 1994 was historic: Mabli was the first female CEO at United Hebrew. She’s made an outsized impact ever since. Mabli has been instrumental in opening an award-winning assisted-living program on campus and developing United Hebrew’s certified homecare agency.

Mabli’s most recent project is Willow Gardens Memory Care, the United Hebrew assisted-living facility dedicated to Alzheimer’s patients, which opened in June. “It’s the only non-profit, free-standing memory-care pavilion in Westchester,” Mabli says. “We’re proud to be able to offer that.”

— KZ

**NONPROFIT**

# Pamela I. Anderson

**CEO**

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson

**P**amela Anderson wants every piece of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson's (GSHH) literature to represent the girls they serve: "freckled, fat, skinny, black, white, Asian, Hispanic," she says. Diversity, along with reaching out to underserved populations, is this CEO's passion.


Anderson attended her first Girl Scout meetings as a baby, accompanying her aunt, a troop leader in Harlem. As a Girl Scout in the Bronx, Anderson learned to build her first fire in Van Cortlandt Park. Now she's come full circle.

She spent most of her career in the financial-services industry and became one of the few black female managing directors at JPMorgan Chase's asset-management division.

After the 2008 financial collapse, Anderson was ready for a change, and Girl Scouts was a perfect fit. As CEO, Anderson manages 65 full-time and 85 part-time and seasonal employees at its Pleasantville location. She oversees seven counties in the lower Hudson River Valley, serving roughly 30,000 girls, about half of whom are in Westchester. Anderson is committed to breaking down barriers to scouting — there are now even troops at homeless centers. Under her leadership, GSHH has seen the largest growth in Hispanic communities within Girl Scouts in New York State.

Wherever troops meet, the goal is the same: developing leaders of courage, confidence, and character. "We're not building widgets," says Anderson. "We're building girls."

— KSL

A full-length photograph of Pamela I. Anderson, CEO of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson. She is a Black woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a blue short-sleeved dress and a long, ornate necklace. She is standing next to a white tufted leather chair, leaning her hands on the armrest. She is smiling and looking towards the right of the frame.

“We're not building widgets, we're building girls.”

EXECUTIVE

# Stacey Petrower

PRESIDENT

NewYork-Presbyterian/  
Hudson Valley Hospital

Stacey Petrower doesn't usually pad around the hospital in slippers. But when Hurricane Sandy barreled into town in 2012, she was vice president of operations at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell, the only level-one trauma center that remained open on the East side of Manhattan. Petrower spent five straight nights there; one evening, while making rounds, she met Manny, an environmental-services worker. She asked if his family was okay. Recalling the story, she chokes up.

"This man said, 'I have a basement apartment that's completely flooded. But things can be replaced. I'm supposed to be here, helping people,'" Petrower recalls.

Manny's words perfectly echo Petrower's own commitment to the job. Now president of NewYork-Presbyterian/Hudson Valley Hospital, she's managing the community hospital with both hands-

on care and an eye toward future growth.

Petrower's first job in healthcare was in 1992, at Mount Sinai. Supervising seven women who'd "been in the job longer than I'd been alive" was an exercise in humility and leadership. When the nurses saw that Petrower was willing to help anywhere — even fixing a faulty bedside table with her own screwdriver — she won their respect.

In her 13-year career at NewYork-Presbyterian, Petrower has been mentored by strong leaders and now guides other women moving up the ranks. In July 2016, she assumed her current role, which makes her responsible for overall leadership at the Cortlandt Manor site, as well as at satellite medical locations. "What I love about operations is that you do something different — not every day, but every hour," Petrower says.

—KSL

“What I love about operations is that you do something different — not every day, but every hour.”





**EXECUTIVE**

# Karen R. Lawrence

**PRESIDENT**

Sarah Lawrence College

“That is a legacy I feel good about leaving.”

**K**aren Lawrence, president of Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, describes her life as “very full.” A widely respected scholar of English and Irish literature, Lawrence juggles her passion for James Joyce with activities like hosting student dinners — and visiting her husband, Peter, a physician who runs a vascular-disease center at the University of California. “I’m on Platinum on American Airlines; he’s on Executive Platinum,” she jokes.

No relation to the founders, Lawrence, a Yale graduate who has led the college since 2007, will be stepping down from her role next summer after an impressive run. She’s maintained the college’s commitment to providing a personalized liberal-arts education, with seminars encompassing about 90 percent of the school’s courses. She has broadened the college’s academic offerings while strengthening ties to the community through programs like an urban-design class that contributed to the reimagining of Yonkers’ downtown. The

college also joined the NCAA’s Division III during her tenure.

Her accomplishments include the most successful fundraising campaign in the college’s history (more than \$120 million to date), with Barbara Walters donating \$15 million in February 2015 — the largest gift Sarah Lawrence has ever received.

The school has also become more diverse under her watch, with students of color now constituting 30 percent of the student body. “That is a legacy I feel good about leaving,” she says. — EP

The logo for "ENTREPRENEUR" is displayed in a bold, white, sans-serif font, centered within a red rectangular background.A portrait of Stacey Tompkins, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, wearing a dark blue blazer and black heels. She is sitting in a dark leather chair in a modern, well-lit interior space with contemporary decor, including pendant lights and a wooden table.

# Stacey Tompkins

**PRESIDENT & OWNER**  
Tompkins Excavating

**W**hen Stacey Tompkins is hiring, she looks for more than just an impressive résumé. As president and owner of landscape-construction company Tompkins Excavating, she views employees as extended family.

"We spend a lot of time recruiting and training the right people," Tompkins says. That means finding individuals who are talented, yes, but who also share Tompkins' values.

That attention to detail has paid off. Since Tompkins stepped into the role of president, in 2013, growth has become a defining characteristic at the company. Over the past several years, revenue has more than doubled, to a projected \$1.8 million. And the company has won accolades for both its business savvy and philanthropy.

"We're looking to diversify the portfolio of work we're doing," Tompkins explains. Her goal is more commercial projects. So far, so good: Tompkins is currently developing a shopping center in Peekskill that will feature national brands, like Family Dollar and AutoZone.

Tompkins has long played a role in the family business: Her husband, Mark, founded the company in 1986. But when she stepped into a leadership role, she brought an impressive skill set to bear full-time.

"I came with a lot of management experience from my past life," Tompkins explains of her background in corporate dining. Her diverse pedigree translates into a powerful leadership style: "Honest, fair, direct, and compassionate," in her own words.

— KZ

“We spend a lot of time recruiting and training the right people.”



# Jamie Imperati

**PRESIDENT & FOUNDER**

Professional Women of Westchester



“I have an army of hundreds of women who have my back, and I have theirs.”

Shortly after Jamie Imperati became pregnant with her second child, she couldn't stop thinking about the big questions plaguing most women: Could she keep her career in sales and marketing and still give her children enough attention? Was it possible to have a work/life balance?

Sometimes her thoughts drifted to the fact that women are generally raised as nurturers; how, then, could they succeed in the same business environment with men? One solution kept popping up: more groups to help women attempt to navigate these challenges.

So, six years ago, Imperati created Professional Women of Westchester (PWW), to bring enterprising women together to network, learn new skills, and encourage one another. The organization currently has 400 members who meet 11 times a year, to share war stories and listen to experts imparting advice on things like how to master social media, marketing, or sales.

Most rewarding is when women contact Imperati to tell her they are doing business with a woman they met at a PWW event or that they got a new job from a contact they formed there. "We all have doubts when we forge a new path, but now I have an army of hundreds of women who have my back, and I have theirs," Imperati says. —AK

# Sharon Mackey McGee & Karen Mackey Witherspoon

CO-OWNERS

Mackey Twins  
Art Gallery



“We wanted to provide an environment where everyone felt important.”

One step into the Mackey Twins Art Gallery in Mount Vernon, and *Teacup Fishing* takes your breath away. This large, yarn-embroidery portrait of a young girl, by Ruth Miller, is just one of the eye-popping works displayed and offered for sale by Sharon Mackey McGee (*above, left*) and Karen Mackey Witherspoon. Identical twins and longtime art lovers, the two have made it their mission to support artists of color and to reinvent the gallery experience in the process.

Former English teachers, the twins initially found fine art financially out of reach. “We would buy one, pay that off, and then immediately purchase another,” says Mackey Witherspoon. The system worked so well, the two decided to make that opportunity available to others, opening the Mackey Twins Art Gallery in 2004. Art shows feature live music, wine, and no sales pressure. “We wanted to provide an environment where everyone felt important, no matter what they were able to purchase,” says Mackey Witherspoon.

Helping artists thrive and introducing people to the joy of owning art are the twins’ top priorities, outweighing their profit margin. “Let’s say it’s a good thing we kept our full-time jobs,” adds Mackey McGee, who is executive director of continuing and professional studies at the City College of New York. Mackey Witherspoon is vice president of government, community and cultural affairs at the same institution. “I don’t think what we do is a perfect business model, but it’s ours,” jokes Mackey McGee.

— Gale Ritterhoff

EXECUTIVE

# Jennifer Lofaro

PARTNER

Bleakley Platt & Schmidt, LLP

“I would like the opportunity to encourage or empower others to succeed.”

Jennifer Lofaro has played many roles in the world of law, from paralegal to partner. But one thing has always remained consistent: her relentless work ethic.

As a paralegal in 1995 at White Plains firm Bleakley Platt & Schmidt, LLP, Lofaro quickly earned a reputation in the commercial real estate department as a major talent.

“I learned how to do the closings, learned how to manage the transactions,” Lofaro recalls. In short time, she was interacting with clients. It was a good fit, she felt. So, in 2001, she enrolled in Pace Law School, earning a law degree in the evenings while continuing to work full-time as a paralegal. “It was definitely grueling,” she recalls.

Today, Lofaro specializes in real-estate law at Bleakley Platt & Schmidt, the same firm where she started. She was named partner in 2015 and has played a major role in growing the firm’s commercial real estate practice. Lofaro has an impressive command of closings, commercial financing, leasing, lenders, and acquisitions across Westchester and beyond.

What’s next? Lofaro says Westchester’s real estate market is finally gaining momentum after the 2008 recession, and she sees busy years ahead. She’s also quick to cheer on aspiring attorneys. “I would tell current paralegals that if they are contemplating a law degree, they shouldn’t let anything hold them back,” she says. — KZ



**ENTREPRENEUR**

# Robin Colner

**FOUNDER & CEO**  
DigiStar Media

“It is critical in this job market to do social media very well and have a balance of skills.”

**D**on't ask Robin Colner to reveal the social-media site she likes best. "That's like picking your favorite child," says the founder of DigiStar Media, a Harrison-based digital and social-media marketing agency that helps businesses and professionals generate leads and sales using social media.

Armed with her Wharton MBA, Colner launched her firm in 2010, after noticing that many business owners and professionals needed help

creating and implementing effective social-media marketing strategies.

Her fast-growing company now serves more than 50 clients in fields including e-commerce, financial planning, law, retail, hospitality, and community service. Among them is global real estate firm Houlihan Lawrence, based in Rye Brook. She provides individual training that is available to its more than 1,200 agents.

A veteran marketer, Colner in her earlier career brought new products

to market for financial-services firms like American Express, at which she invented an innovative consumer-investment program.

Three years ago, Colner launched the Digital and Social Media Professional Certificate Program at Fordham University's School of Professional and Continuing Studies to close the digital-skills gap among professionals in the county. "It is critical in this job market to do social media very well and have a balance of skills," she says. —EP

NONPROFIT

# Mary H. Gadomski

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT &  
COMMUNITY RELATIONS

VNS Westchester

“Visiting patients at home is a great opportunity to effect change.”



It's very important that you like how you spend your days, and I really do," says Mary Gadomski, director of business development and community relations for the Visiting Nurse Services in Westchester. An incredibly dedicated RN, she has spent the past 35 years helping to grow VNS Westchester, expanding its service area to include Putnam, Rockland, and Dutchess Counties, as well as the Bronx, almost tripling the number of patients, to 10,000 a year.

Gadomski's passion for homecare began in college, she says, where she learned that "Visiting patients at home is a great opportunity to effect change. You're working with the patient, as well as the families and caregivers," she explains. Positive change is all important to Gadomski, who is the force behind many community-education initiatives, including the Ask the Visiting Nurse program at senior centers, a tobacco cessation program, and a Nurses of the Future scholarship. She's humble about her accomplishments over her 25-year tenure with VNS Westchester: "You just arrive in the morning and tackle it all," she says.

Gadomski never forgets that working in healthcare "means that you are dealing with people's lives. It's a demanding role that it's my privilege to play."

— GR

**ENTREPRENEUR**

# Rose Cappa-Rotunno

**PRESIDENT** The Event Department

**F**ounder of The Event Department, Katonah resident Rose Cappa-Rotunno is probably best described as a money matchmaker — someone who brings together those who want to give and those who truly need to receive. Her company is on track to help raise \$2 million this year for organizations such as Habitat for Humanity of Westchester, My Sisters Place, Latino U College Access, and Girls Inc.

After graduating from Pace University with a degree in international business, Cappa-Rotunno decided to take a different path. “I got into the idea of working for the greater good,” she says. She began her career with such nonprofits as United Way and the United Negro College Fund, forging relationships that set the stage for the launch of her own firm 17 years ago.

The Event Department now coordinates some 30 events per year, 95 percent of which are fundraisers. She accomplishes all of this with only two full-time employees and seasonal interns, by tapping into the talent pool of local stay-at-home moms “who have amazing backgrounds” when she needs help. In fact, her company logo is the triskele, a Celtic symbol that represents the power of women.

While enjoying the creative side of her business, she never loses sight of what’s at stake. “These events are the cornerstone of the budget for a lot of these organizations,” she explains. “It’s quite serious, but you can definitely meet your goals and have a good time.”

— GR ●



“I got into the idea of working for the greater good.”



# Finding Your

# NICHE

**Niche businesses find holes in the marketplace and fill them — profitably**

BY DAVID LEVINE

**B**usiness axiom No. 1 says that the customer is always right — which is never more true than when customers tell you they need something but can't find it anywhere. That's the a-ha moment, the big bang of a new, niche marketplace.





For Matt Schulman, that moment occurred while he toiled as a salesperson for a big beer distributor. A supplier mentioned his unhappiness with how distributors were handling his smaller, craft-beer accounts. “There’s a need for a smaller company,” he told Schulman. “You should start one.”

Harold Brand has had two such moments. While running a technology-marketing company in 1990, a client asked about something new, called bar codes. “It wasn’t on our radar at all,” Brand says. He developed a bar-coding product; it worked, and they discovered that “thousands and thousands of companies needed this.” Fast-forward about 10 years, when customers asked about another new need: radio-frequency identification (RFID) chips. “They told us: ‘You’re the experts in bar coding, so obviously you are also experts in RFID,’” Brand says. They weren’t. Yet.

Jeffrey Hermann’s big bang took place in his bathroom. A friend asked for an aspirin, and upon opening Hermann’s medicine cabinet, commented, “It looks like a pharmacy in here.” It would be nice if there were some way to keep medications private, Hermann thought, because, “People have been snooping in medicine cabinets for a hundred years.” More recently, spurred by the epidemic of prescription opioid addiction in this country, he realized security was even more vital than privacy.

These three Westchester entrepreneurs, and many more like them locally, discovered a niche, a hole in the marketplace in need of a product or service that didn’t quite exist. They

*These entrepreneurs aren’t just building a better mousetrap. They are discovering an entirely new species and trapping that.*

aren’t just building a better mousetrap. They are discovering an entirely new species and trapping *that*.

Phil Thorp, a counselor at SCORE Westchester, the national small-business consulting and mentoring nonprofit, defines a niche company as “having something that competitors don’t have, anything that has a unique customer set or that differentiates you from your competitors.” Of course, every business thinks it is different from its competitors — Joe’s Pizza, Joe will tell you, is *nothing* like Anthony’s Pizza — but that’s not always true. “The first thing we ask people who come in here is, ‘Do you have a niche?’” Thorp says.

## GETTING STARTED

Schulman initially laughed when first encouraged to start his own beer-distribution company. “I thought he said it in jest,” he says, “but it planted a seed.” He and his brother, Eric, both worked in the beer business and, being in their 20s, were fluent in the



**The four founders of Sarene Craft Beer Distributors are well positioned for success in the booming craft-beer market.**

## WHICH NICHE? AUDIO SERVICES

**Who:** Sharc Creative

**What:** Creates customized audio that can be used for on-hold messaging, radio advertising, digital marketing

**Where:** Purchase

**Why:** Andrew Castellano, CEO/owner, (*far right*) a rep at WFX radio for many years, started Sharc as a side business in 2001, when clients asked him to put advertising jingles on their on-hold message systems in place of radio stations — which might advertise a competitor — or ear-pudding music. When he left his job in the volatile radio business in 2014, he expanded Sharc to include advertising, promotions, and, recently, live broadcast/podcasts of business-centric events on Westchester Talk Radio. “This is a radio-station-on-the-run; we come to you,” he says. “There are lots of tremendous marketing companies out there, but we have tried to carve ourselves out as the go-to guys for audio.”



## WHICH NICHE? DIVORCED MEN

**Who:** SimplyHome2

**What:** An interior decorating firm aimed at helping recently divorced men set up new homes.

**Where:** Armonk/Bedford

**Why:** Tanhya Schimel, of Armonk, and Patty Frischman, of Bedford, have seen men struggle to establish new homes for themselves and their children. "I am divorced and Tanhya has stepchildren," Frischman says. "We saw men living with a rug and couch and TV but nothing else — living like bachelors again — and that wouldn't feel like home for kids traveling between two homes. As mothers and business owners we wanted to ease their transition." They not only decorate, they furnish linens, cookware and dishes, and equip play spaces with gaming consoles. "Many men don't know what goes into a home, from school supplies to favorite books or movies or grocery shopping," Schimel says. Men dealing with this life transition, along with work and kids, don't want to think about this, Frischman says. "We come in, so they don't have to. That's what separates us from other decorators."



burgeoning craft-beer scene. But the distributors they worked with weren't. "They were too busy selling brands like Miller or Coors or Budweiser, and it's hard for smaller brewers to grab their attention when they are selling millions of cases of Corona," Schulman says.

When he was passed over for a promotion in 2013, he decided to act. He recruited his brother, his cousin, and his best friend from college, and together they formed Sarene Craft Beer Distributors, which was located in New Rochelle until relocating to the Bronx in the fall, due to their growing business's need for more space.

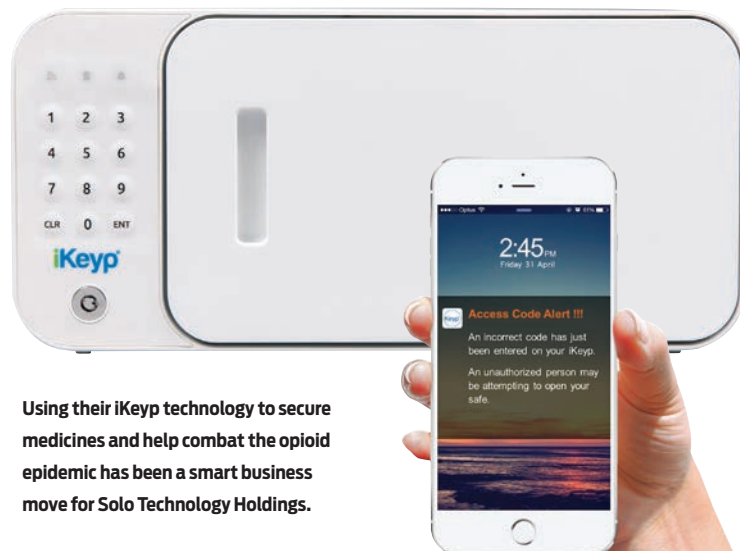
They put their own money in and got a loan from the Small Business Administration. That can be difficult for any new small business, especially

one in an untested market. "But we checked all their boxes," Schulman says. They were experts in their niche, passionate about their product and had some skin in the game, making them a good risk.

Hermann, founder and CEO of Solo Technology Holdings, in Purchase, has 30 years' business experience in software and telecommunications. He envisioned a product, now called iKeyp, which is a personal safe that installs easily into a medicine cabinet (or elsewhere) and connects to the Internet, to provide owners with real-time security alerts, as well as medication reminders. He convinced his friend Mitch Danzig to leave a finance position at Deutsche Bank to become president and COO. "I didn't know the extent of

the opioid epidemic, and I fell in love with the idea," Danzig says. "The only thing out there was a product that was not smart, not secure, not the deterrent I would want with a teenage child."

For his part, Brand transformed his Yonkers-based technology-marketing company, Cybra, into a product-development company, to meet the bar-code and RFID needs of his customers. Making the pivot wasn't easy at first, he admits: "It was a big, big deal for us, but we did it." A former VP in the IT department of the defunct bank Manufacturers Hanover, Brand and his partners withstood a period during which the success of RFID was questioned. "We hung on, and it turned around, and now everybody is adopting it or planning to adopt it," he says.



Using their iKeyp technology to secure medicines and help combat the opioid epidemic has been a smart business move for Solo Technology Holdings.

*"[A niche company is one that has] something that competitors don't have, anything that has a unique customer set or that differentiates you from your competitors."*

— Phil Thorp,  
counselor at SCORE Westchester



New Crystal Restoration's Lisa Cordasco (center) — with HGTV's *Property Brothers* — uses nontoxic products to appeal to special-needs families.



Many niches have a short shelf life. "If it really is a great idea, someone else will come in and attack," Thorp says. "The key to a successful business is to find another niche that the customer set has." Brand has already staked that out: auto-ID, the technology behind the much-anticipated "Internet of Things," or IOT. "That is the third wave we are moving into, with a new product for that coming out this fall," Brand says. "We keep reinvent-

ing ourselves, but this time we saw the IOT potential and decided to run for it, to lead from the front."

Reinvention is critical for any small business looking to exploit an untapped market. When Louis Cordasco founded his restoration company in 1960, "He was the first of his kind," his daughter, Lisa Cordasco, says. "He was a one-man band," providing services to clients of insurance companies who had suffered damages. "He did everything himself, writing estimates, marketing, sometimes doing the work," she says. By the time he retired, in 2008, and Lisa took over the family-run company in Port Chester, there were many national restoration chains in the marketplace. She found a way to differentiate her company, by providing environmentally friendly restoration services using nontoxic products.

"As a single parent with a special-needs child, I have a strong focus on health and safety," explains Cordasco, who renamed the company New Crystal Restoration. "I investigated and use products in the industry that pose no harm to people, pets, or the

environment." She says her products are safe, effective, and no more expensive than those used by the bigger companies and franchises. "We want to be branded locally as combining the old traditions of my dad with cutting-edge products," she says. "We are focusing on building relationships with the special-needs community, and we place high value on the fact that they have to be safe."

Such personal relationships can help a niche business find its audience. Solo Technology Holdings, for example, has partnered with The Stutman Switalski Group, a company that provides substance-abuse prevention programs throughout the country. Robert M. Stutman, a former special agent with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, and Judge Jodi Debbrecht Switalski, a former prosecutor who became a leader in the fight against synthetic drugs and the opioid epidemic in Michigan, serve on iKey's advisory board. "We believe partnering with experts like them will help solve the problem [of opioid abuse]," Danzig says. "We want to educate people that they have to keep

*"We are focused on building relationships with the special-needs community, and we place high value on the fact that they have to be safe."*

— Lisa Cordasco, President, New Crystal Restoration

## WHICH NICHE? LITHIUM

**Who:** alpha-En

**What:** Manufactures pure lithium for use in batteries and other applications.

**Where:** Tarrytown

**Why:** "The next major advance in the energy field most likely will be in the battery field," says Jerry Feldman, founder of alpha-En. Today, rechargeable lithium-ion batteries are heavy and limited. So-called lithium-air batteries would be far lighter, more powerful, and cheaper. "They call it the holy grail in the industry," Feldman explains. Big research centers around the world are working to develop them. Feldman's company has several applications for the production of purified lithium and other associated products, which they think will help those researchers find that holy grail. "Making these batteries is not a simple thing, and we feel we can alleviate some of the problems by using pure lithium," says Feldman, who calls himself a "serial entrepreneur." "Our technology will hopefully enable the energy storage revolution."



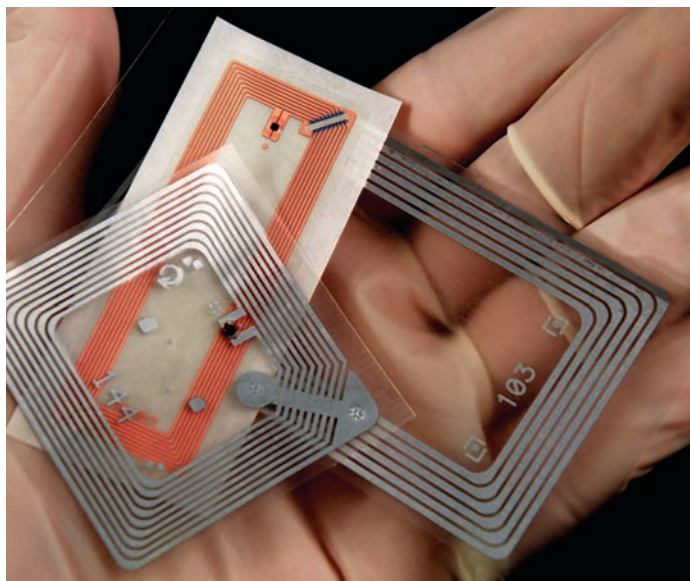
their medication safe.” They also want these partners, while providing their prevention programs, to present the iKeyp safe as a partial solution. “We believe the majority of the public is not educated about this problem,” Hermann says. “If we can get the message out, we will quadruple our market size.”

## STAYING ON TOP

Once a niche business proves itself successful, it’s only natural that competitors will move in. How does a small, niche company maintain its advantage? “You have just described capitalism,” says SCORE Westchester’s Thorp.

We can’t afford to get crushed by those guys,” he says. How will he avoid that? “We have to build our own niche of IOT and do things that they aren’t doing. People will ask us: ‘Why do business with Cybra and its 20 employees instead of IBM?’ It’s finding the parameters — which constantly change — that differentiate us and communicating that to customers,” Brand says.

Success has its own landmines, as well. With growth comes increased costs, which have to be controlled carefully, Thorp says. Schulman agrees. Sarene has grown to employ about 25 employees. “We have doubled in size every year for three years, and managing growth is our biggest challenge,” he says. “We



## THE JOY OF NICHE

Being a small, niche company allows Schulman and companies similar to his to stay nimble and make quick decisions. “At a big distributor, you get hung up. You need to talk to a manager, then he has to talk to his manager,” he says. “We don’t need approval from anyone. If you need a truck, you go get a truck.”

For older businesses, other companies in the market space can become almost like family. Cordasco says her father’s contacts in the insurance and contracting fields have also had children who are now her contacts. “We have relationships with industry players that grow generation by generation, and now my nephew has relationships with his peers,” she says. “We have developed a nice rapport in our B-to-B relationships.”

Perhaps best of all, niche markets also give entrepreneurs a sense of purpose. “I was in finance with Deutsche Bank, but I wanted to do something different and make a difference,” Danzig says. Passion for a product or service, be it medication safety, cutting-edge technology, or really good beer, makes business fun. “I used to come home from Manufacturers Hanover tired,” Brand says. “If I had it to do over again, a smaller company environment gives much greater satisfaction. We are always competing against ourselves to do better. It’s that drive to excel that keeps me young.” ●

*David Levine is a frequent contributor to Westchester Magazine and 914INC. He wrote about franchising in the Q1 2016 issue.*

**Being early to market helped Cybra become a leader in RFID technology.**

## WHICH NICHE? EYELASHES

**Who:** Body Beautiful of NY

**What:** Eyelash extensions

**Where:** Mount Kisco

**Why:** Gineann Creaney learned

about eyelash extensions in cosmetology school. “It was very new a decade ago, more for celebrities, models, and wealthy people,” she says. She developed her own, simpler technique and found clients among “busy businesswomen trying to juggle

family life and work life and still look decent at the end of the day,” she says.

She moved her shop, which she owns with her mother, Alison Creaney, from Putnam County to Westchester four years ago, to be closer to those women.

“Our biggest problem is that there aren’t enough of us to service everyone,” she says. “It’s hard to keep up with how it’s growing. It becomes irreplaceable in a lot of women’s lives. They say they will not give up their lashes.”



One way may be to get a patent or trademark on the product, if possible. Solo Technology Holdings has a patent pending on its safe’s installation process, which it says requires no tools. But patents aren’t foolproof, Thorp adds. “If someone copies it, what can you do, sue?” That’s expensive, especially if it’s a big company with deep pockets and an army of lawyers behind it. “They can drive that person out of business,” Thorp says.

Brand sees similar dangers in the IOT space. “With IOT, it’s not just small players; we’re up against the real giants — Apple, Google, which are investing billions in this.

are all sales guys, so sales have been relatively easy for us. The hard part is making sure all our suppliers are happy and that we are growing with them.” Schulman — who recently learned his great-grandfather was a moonshiner who had been arrested during Prohibition (“Alcohol distribution apparently runs in our family,” he laughs) — has extended his company’s reach from Albany through Long Island and is moving to an entirely refrigerated fleet of trucks. “We will be the first I’m aware of in New York [to use these trucks],” he says, “to make sure our beer arrives as fresh as possible.”



# PURPOSE

We convened seven of the county's top nonprofit leaders



**Edited by Amy R. Partridge**  
**Photography by Ken Gabrielsen**  
Location: KOI Creative Space, White Plains

# OVER PROFIT

for a candid discussion on the current state of the sector in Westchester.



*(L to R) Joseph A. Stout, Alana Sweeny, Janet Langsam, Joanna Straub, Alan Trager, Daniel Blum, and Eve Larner*

**PARTICIPANTS:**

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**JANET LANGSAM**

CEO

ArtsWestchester

**EVE LARNER**

Vice President, External Affairs

Westchester Community College

Executive Director

WCC Foundation

**JOSEPH A. STOUT**

Executive Director

Westchester Parks Foundation

**JOANNA STRAUB**

Executive Director

Nonprofit Westchester

**Robert Schork:** What do you think is the biggest misconception among people in the for-profit business world about the nonprofit sector?

**Joseph A. Stout:** That [nonprofits are] not a real business.

**Alana Sweeny:** That it is inefficient and that it's not as worthy as something that is making a profit.

**Alan Trager:** That we don't use the same skills to run our businesses, that all the things that make a successful business do not apply to a nonprofit, which is anything but true.

**Eve Lerner:** We all have to be effective stewards of our missions, and that does mean using effective business practices and various systems and accountability. So we really are more of a business than meets the eye. We have to ensure continuity, ensure leadership and be innovative at the same time.

**Joanna Straub:** One of the things that we talk about a lot is having a double-bottom-line in the nonprofit sector. So while you're required to balance books financially, of course — despite the numerous challenges that are facing any kind of nonprofit fundraising or fee generation — we also are obligated as part of our mission to impact the community or make change.

**Stout:** Someone once said that "not-for-profit" gives the wrong impression; we are really just tax-exempt businesses. I thought that was a pretty good description.

**Janet Langsam:** We need to change the thinking out there, that we are "a charity." We are service organizations.

**Stout:** Some of the biggest companies in the county are nonprofit.

**Blum:** We aligned with Northwell Health two years ago. It's the largest private



**ALANA SWEENEY**

President & CEO

United Way of Westchester and Putnam

**ALAN TRAGER**

CEO

Westchester Jewish Community Services

**INTERVIEWERS 914 INC.**

**ROBERT SCHORK**

Editorial Director

**AMY R. PARTRIDGE**

Executive Editor

**Daniel Blum:** There's a common misconception that we are less essential as an economic driver, which is anything but the case.

**Sweeny:** There's a fellow who wrote a book — Adam Braun, *Pencils of Promise* — we had him at our nonprofit summit last year, and he talked about how it's a misnomer to say "not-for-profit," that we should be saying we are "for-purpose." For example, in the business sector, if you put money in your infrastructure, that is considered being very smart; if you do that as a nonprofit, it's considered to be overhead, and it's looked down upon.

employer in New York State. It's a \$10-billion-a-year business with 61,000 employees. Not-for-profit, tax-exempt.

**Langsam:** The only difference [between us and for-profit businesses] really is that whatever profit we might have at the end of the day goes back into our mission and services. We're all businesses. We live by the same rules, and we balance our budgets.

**Trager:** Another misconception is that because we're mission-driven, it means salaries, benefits, and all that, get sacrificed. But at the end of the day, no money, no mission.

**Schork:** Is it a challenge to convince your benefactors or the outside world that in order to remain competitive and viable you have to pay salaries commensurate with the for-profit world? Or is there the assumption that because it's a nonprofit, people should work on the cheap?

**Trager:** The notion is that [employees] just have to accept that they are likely going to make less than they would in the for-profit world. But the reality is there are certain functions an agency must perform for which we have to compete with the for-profit world — HR, IT, etc. [Many of us] rely on the government for most of our funding or philanthropic dollars, and they don't always recognize that a competitive wage often entails much greater funding. So it's a problem all the way around.

talent...and it's really hard right now. As a nonprofit, a lot of [what we do] is about the people.

**Trager:** Eighty-two percent of our budget is salaries, and we pride ourselves on having excellent staff and providing excellent services. So when people say WJCS is terrific, they are talking about the quality of our staff. Also, [for-profit businesses like] McDonald's can sell more hamburgers and raise more funds to increase their salaries. We have inherent limits in terms of our ability to get additional cash to pay staff. That's an issue that makes it difficult for us to compete with the for-profit world.

**Langsam:** I want to echo what Joe [Stout] said about funding: People don't want to fund general operating. When you go for a grant,

it's about the project. ArtsWestchester is one of the few organizations that does fund general operating for the arts; there is an enormous infrastructure that has to be maintained. A museum or a theater needs to be safe, secure, environmentally sound, etc.

**Schork:** Does the fact that we are in Westchester, one of the most expensive metropolitan areas, exacerbate the issues with respect to finding talent?

**Blum:** People consider physicians to be among the more highly compensated people in the community, and when I interview physicians, they express concern about living in Westchester, too, trying to find an affordable place. So it's an issue. We've actually been working with some of



**Stout:** Everybody wants to give you money for a program, but nobody wants to give you money to pay the bills. But we have to pay people to do our mission. I have found that to be the biggest challenge of trying to raise funds, trying to do so in a way that people understand there is a cost to doing business.

**Blum:** We're a healthcare organization, so we have our own micro-market for talent. Some of our staff have exquisite skillsets, and some of our staff members are food-service workers, or in environmental service, or engineering. Our local market here has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, so we're all competing for

**“We all have to be effective stewards of our mission, and that does mean using effective business practices and various systems and accountability.”**

— *Eve Lerner, Vice President, External Affairs, Westchester Community College/Executive Director, WCC Foundation*

our local municipalities to do some community planning, to figure out if there is a workforce-housing solution for nonprofits and other community organizations. [The hope is to] create a critical mass of people who might need that housing and present a value proposition to a developer and a community to build housing that would suit people who have more modest incomes.

**Trager:** We're talking about the staff we employ, but we have to remember it's not monolithic. A lot of our workforce is in very low-paid professions. For, say, social workers, who work in mental-health clinics, the salaries we offer, based on the contracts we have, make it really difficult to live in Westchester.





**Amy Partridge, 914INC:** What are some of the other challenges of operating a nonprofit in Westchester County?

**Trager:** People tend to forget that there are huge needs in Westchester. There is this line sometimes that happens north of New York City. For example, the Robin Hood Foundation doesn't fund Westchester; it funds New York City. And there are times when even the folks who live in Westchester County forget how much we need added resources in a lot of our communities.

**Sweeny:** Even people who live in Westchester who have foundations, they will fund in New York City, and nationally, but leave Westchester out of it. For example, we are doing a lot of work in Yonkers right now. You can walk over the border into the Bronx, yet there are many organizations, including those in Westchester, that will not fund those things that are going on in Yonkers. [Many of the foundations assume that in New York City] the poverty is terrible... or the graduation rates... or the reading scores. But if you take certain pockets of Westchester, they have equal troubles, yet they're not open to the same funding opportunities that are in New York City.

**Stout:** That's also the case with some of the multinational corporations [located in Westchester]. They'll spend money around the world, but it's hard to get money for right here.

**Blum:** Last year, we incurred over \$10 million in bad debt, in charity-care, and millions more in in-kind care, to our community. And we don't make that up with philanthropy. We take in a few million dollars a year in philanthropy; usually, it's earmarked for certain projects and not uncompensated care. So our challenge is to create some margin to fund depreciation, as well as offset the things we're doing. If we were more of a for-profit thinker, we would try to merchandise most remunerative forms of care, whether that's in best interest of the patients or not. But as a nonprofit, we have a much different form of a mission, and today, with value-based care, we're focusing more on prevention, health, wellness — things that [the hospital] does not get paid for. So it's a challenge.

**Langsam:** Another thing I would say is looming is that the people who support our agencies are aging, and there isn't the same sense of responsibility, generosity, in that next generation. Our challenge is in cultivating and trying to find a group of people who can succeed the last generation.

**Trager:** I agree it's a challenge, but it's more about engaging those donors in a different way. Today, people [don't just want

to donate]; they want to own the programs more; they want to direct it more; and they may want to roll up their sleeves and get involved. So they may be just as generous, but they want to do it in a different way.

**Sweeny:** You see so much more where people are going to the Web to check things out or making their donations to something they have a personal connection to. We also see that donors want to be engaged in other ways, like volunteering; it's very different from 25 years ago. When you have seniors being one of the largest groups on Facebook now, you know the world is operating a bit differently. That's a challenge for nonprofits because they may not be as well versed in some of the technological things, for example.

**Schorl:** Obviously, you all operate in diverse fields and industries. Is there a cohesive nonprofit sector here that works together?

**Langsam:** I believe there is a well-crafted nonprofit community here in Westchester, where it's balanced between health and human services and the arts and parks, etc. It seems to be a very vibrant nonprofit system, and that is encouraging.

**“[Nonprofits] are a huge employer, a huge driver of the economy. In addition,...we play this underpinning role of providing essential services that make the community thrive.”**

— Joanna Straub, Executive Director, Nonprofit Westchester



**Sweeny:** That is one of the very strong things about the nonprofit community in Westchester. We partner; we do things together. For example, with United Way's 211 helpline, we sat down with Westchester Community College because they want to be able to keep their students in school and graduating, and very often the [solutions to issues] that are keeping them from graduating [come from] other resources, outside the purview of the school. We've also been talking with people [in the healthcare sector] about how to work together to try to meet the needs of their clients.

**Langsam:** We also try to partner with some of the other human-services sectors. For example, arts and healing have become a very important aspect of hospitals and medical care today. So we've been partnering with many of the health organizations to bring art therapy to their patients or to bring some services for home-care.

**Sweeny:** Also our nonprofit community support one another. So, we have a number of training opportunities: Pro Bono Partnership does a lot of training; Nonprofit Westchester does a lot of training. We have a huge nonprofit summit, which brings about 700 people each year just for that training. They can get that cutting edge and learn to respond in a cost-effective way to the changing donor [profiles], or changing methodology, or changing government regulations, or HR regulations and systems.

**Schork:** How do nonprofits contribute to the economy, business community, and quality of life here in Westchester?

**Straub:** We did a study a couple years ago at Nonprofit Westchester, commissioned from Johns Hopkins, and one in seven people in the county worked for nonprofits. Half of that is healthcare, but the other half is human services, the arts, environmental organizations, and a variety of other services. So we're a huge employer, a huge driver of the economy. In addition to that direct economic impact, we play this underpinning role of providing those essential services that make the community thrive. We give people the services that they need, so they can progress, maybe reach their full potential and contribute back to the community.

**Blum:** [Phelps Memorial Hospital] is about a quarter-billion-dollar corporation. We spend about \$125 million a year on salaries. Those people have lunch, and breakfast, and dinner every day. We budgeted \$33 million just this year on capital acquisitions. Those are construction jobs, technology buys, all kinds of stuff. So if you add up the small, medium, and large size of all the for-purpose providers, we're a major economic engine in this county.

**Langsam:** We have an economic-development function in the county; we are part of what is lovingly called "quality of life" — what businesses and corporations count on to attract people of quality to work here. We contribute \$156 million in economic impact to the county. Imagine Westchester without the arts. Imagine Westchester without all of the services provided by so many different nonprofit organizations. Without us, where would those services come from?

**Sweeny:** We're really supporting business in many ways. Whether it be providing childcare when you're at work, or eldercare, or, in the case of 211 and United Way, trying to have people not lose time at work because they've been connected to those resources usually offered by the nonprofit community. So, we actually are serving business at the same time we're doing our mission work.

**Larner:** I think of Westchester's nonprofits as this enormous network of intertwining relationships. We all support an enormous network that gets things done here. There's a cyclical way we support each other. We just completed a very comprehensive report on what we call "middle-skills gaps" in Westchester. Because a number

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— Alana Sweeny, President & CEO, United Way of Westchester and Putnam





**“The only difference between us [and for-profit businesses] is that whatever profit we might have at the end of the day goes back into our mission and services.”**

— Janet Langsam, CEO, ArtsWestchester

of employers — especially in some of the fastest-growing areas in the county, such as health and hospitality — have indicated they need these middle-level workers, it’s often somebody who needs work and has some degree but less than a bachelor’s. This report, funded by JPMorgan Chase, really helped us identify where those fields and specific jobs are. So we partner with business, using that kind of information to develop a new curriculum.

**Sweeny:** We’ve been working with business, as well in taking a look at career ladders. Because what often happens is that people, especially young people, will look and say, “I’m only qualified to do ‘X,’ and I only want to do ‘X’ for the rest of my life.” They don’t see the whole picture of where they can go. What education do you need for that [next level]? Where in Westchester can you get that education to be able to move up the ladder, into something that’s going to help you to support yourself and your family in a better way? So we’ve been working on career ladders for the health segment; we’re going to do it for technology;

and we’re working on it for the non-profit sector.

**Straub:** In addition to hiring all these people and having an economic impact in that way, we often run programs and services and provide them at a lower cost than a for-profit or a government entity could. We’ve gotten really good at service delivery, so we can save a lot of money. Mental-health clinics, for example: Nonprofits manage that, not the county, and they have seen significant progress.

**Trager:** There’s a tendency sometimes to think there are [only] certain types of people who take advantage of nonprofit agencies. Everybody in Westchester is impacted by all of us in nonprofits. Most people have a family or friend who is impacted by mental-health issues, or LGBTQ issues, or childcare issues, or someone has healthcare or school needs, etc. There’s nobody not affected by these sectors. Yet, somehow [nonprofits] fall into this perception of being some kind of an add-on, as opposed to being as embedded in the fabric of our society as any other sector.

**Langsam:** We’re essential.

**Trager:** Yes, we’re essential providers and businesses in the county, and we make our county richer, more vibrant; we make Westchester what it is. The notion of what Westchester would be without us is inconceivable.

**Langsam:** Since 1995, the economic impact of the arts in Westchester has grown 189 percent. That’s because people go out to a show or a movie at the [Jacob] Burns [Film Center] or whatever. They go out to dinner and are spending at local restaurants. It’s a very integrated activity, and it boosts tourism. Also, [our efforts are] keeping residents in Westchester, spending their entertainment dollars here.

**Trager:** We’re a community-based organization, with 750 to 800 employees; a \$40 million agency, 82 percent of it spent on staff. That’s a lot of money going into the community. And in terms of [the number of] people we impact, it’s like 20,000, but I’ll bet if you add up everyone around this table, we’re talking a six-figure impact.

**Larner:** At WCC, we have between 12,000 and 13,000 students studying every year, and that’s just our for-credit population. When you think about the delivery of education, we supply scholarships to students, [and those scholarships] are the difference between getting a higher education or not. We’ve conducted a study in the past indicating that most of our gradu-



ates stay in Westchester: They live and work here. So without the opportunity to advance themselves through education, think how much poorer our county would be, in many different ways.

**Langsam:** There's one other piece that has not been mentioned, and that's revitalization of neighborhoods. One of the important things the arts do is go into neighborhoods where the housing stock is perhaps deteriorating. It isn't just the arts; often, in a marginal community, the nonprofit is the one that stays there, continues to offer services, continues to build community spirit, etc.

**Trager:** I'm thinking about how important we are to the county, and I would argue that [adequately funding nonprofits] is both the right thing to do and the financially wise thing to do. Funders need to recognize us and adequately fund us and pay for the salaries we need, the infrastructure we need, the administrative overhead we need. Our funders, particularly the government, need to recognize that and step up.

**Partridge:** How well is that support coming back to you, from both the business community and the county government?

**Blum:** I think they care, both the elected officials and those in private business. But to a certain extent we are taken for granted, and there is this assumption we'll figure it out. We'll make it work.

**“Somehow, [nonprofits] fall into this perception of being some kind of add-on, as opposed to being as embedded in the fabric of our society as any other sector.”**

— Alan Trager, CEO, Westchester Jewish Community Services

But there is a fragility to what we do. There comes a point when you can't figure it out anymore; that's why three hospitals within the last decade have closed in this county alone. Adding value to people's lives is a common element of everybody's mission here. But it needs to be underwritten somehow. For example, we do about 300,000 ambulatory encounters; some of those are simple blood tests. If no one is paying for your blood test, we still take your blood. We do the same test as somebody who is highly insured. The same is true of everybody here, so there needs to be a rational, consistent funding methodology to ensure these services are offered.

**Straub:** I agree there is a lot of support for nonprofits and the work we do here. But the challenge [on the government-funding side] is when you're the elected official whose constituents are railing about property taxes.... It's very complex. Everyone wants to do right, and what we're trying to do is get all the people at the table, to figure out how we do right by everyone in the community.

**Langsam:** [Regarding] support from the community and the corporate

community, it isn't just about funding. There is some moral support we'd like to have, too, speaking out on our behalf, understanding the importance of what we do.

**Blum:** There's also a lot to be very grateful for in Westchester. We've all found that there are people in this community who really make a difference. Individually, they step up to the plate; they're charitable and giving, engaged and concerned, sincere. They want to see good things happen. We have about 180 volunteers, who commit themselves regularly to providing services within the hospital. So, we are really blessed in this community to have people who are willing to put themselves out there to give their time and make a difference.

**Trager:** I couldn't agree more. If we ended this conversation on a negative note, we'd have misrepresented ourselves. As someone who's been at my agency for a long time, we've benefited incredibly from the human spirit of Westchester. In so many ways, they have enriched our agency and, as a result, the county. ●

## WHERE TO EAT

# At the Copacabana: Port Chester's Hot Dining Spot

If only your appetite had no limit. Then you could go on eating at Copacabana Brazilian Steakhouse as long as you wanted. Because the procession of meats on large skewers never stops—14 varieties, including flank steak, pork, and chicken sausages and the perfectly seasoned top sirloin steak. As long as you're ready for more, it all keeps coming. The restaurant calls it a "meat parade."

That's the main attraction at the Brazilian churrascaria—a downtown Port Chester favorite for the past decade.

"We pride ourselves on our service, on the quality of our meats—and on being the best churrascaria in Westchester County," says owner Luiso.

The meal starts with appetizers from the salad bar, including peel-and-eat shrimp and tomatoes with mozzarella cheese. The meat course comes with side dishes—rice, beans, fried bananas, salsa, and yucca flour. If you prefer a single entrée, there's classic Brazilian fare, including moqueca (a fish stew), and for a modern twist, salmon with passion fruit sauce.

For the perfect drink to complement the meal, try a tangy caipirinha, the national drink of Brazil. Copacabana's version was voted Best of Westchester in 2015.

With all that, it may be surprising that people have room for dessert, but they often do, Luiso says. It could be that the various versions of cheesecake, flan, and mousse, all made in-house, are just that irresistible.

Diners enjoy the meals in a lively room with gold-yellow walls. A patio section fills with fun-loving soccer fans for televised games. Luiso plans a tiki bar out back to open next spring. But the restaurant's newest venue is its wine bar, centered around a granite slab on wine barrels.

"This is going to be a big hit," Luiso predicts. When complete, the wine bar will add one more feature that makes Copacabana guests feel like they are, in fact, in Brazil!



CHURRASCARIA  
*Copacabana*

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"Not Your Average Italian Joint"  
— *Westchester Magazine*, April 2016

2047 Boston Post Road, Larchmont, NY 10538  
914.630.7800

[lennyssteakhouse.com](http://lennyssteakhouse.com)

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Lenny's Seafood and Steakhouse, using only the freshest of ingredients, features premium dry aged cuts of meat, line caught seafood, and house-made pastas and sauce to create a memorable meal. The restaurant also includes two full bars, two private dining rooms, two fireplaces, and a private parking lot with valet parking available. Lenny's 20 years of experience comes from owning and operating IL Castello in Mamaroneck, attaining the highest ratings from diners and critics alike.

### **Modern Restaurant & Lounge**

310 Huguenot St, New Rochelle  
(914) 633-9479  
[www.modernrestaurant.com](http://www.modernrestaurant.com)  
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Modern Restaurant & Lounge combines great Italian food, a warm, friendly and incredible ambiance, and the personal touch to create the perfect place for business lunches and meetings as well as corporate parties, specialty events, or off-premises catering. A New Rochelle tradition for decades, Modern Restaurant's Huguenot location features private rooms and high-tech equipment for presentations. Owners Anthony Russo and Sebastian Aliberti give a personal touch to each event, creating custom menus to meet your needs. The stunning yet simple décor rounds out the family experience.

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Orangetheory, the latest boutique-fitness craze, hits Westchester

**Plus:**  
Corporate holiday gift-giving, solved page 100

On Your Desk

# Office Hacks

3 great tricks to make workplace life a little easier. **By Paul Adler**

A day at the office can turn from tedious to untenable in a matter of moments. To make the grind a bit more bearable, we sought out some of the most useful hacks to use in and around the workplace.



**TAPE TO CLEAN THE KEYBOARD**

After the third cookie from the office birthday party, the keyboard can get a little crummy. Simply fold tape over and use it to clean between the keys.



◀ **BINDER CLIPS TO HOLD HEADPHONES**

Binder clips are super-functional; what better way to put them to use than holding those precious headphones? Hats and small purses will also be happy to hang out.



◀ **BINDER CLIPS FOR CARDS AND CORDS**

With this nifty trick, binder clips are shown doing double-duty: arranging and ordering messy cords while holding those oh-so-valuable business cards.

Beauty

# Here Comes the Groom

Men's pampering is on the rise in Westchester. Here are some of the county's top spots for the finest cuts, shaves, and other treatments.

Men's grooming has hit fever pitch in Westchester, where it is practically de rigueur that gentlemen in the corporate suite spend a little extra time pampering themselves. With this rise in acceptance has come a fleet of top-tier salons, spas, shaving shops, and men's treatments throughout the county, all of which offer new ways for guys to spruce up.

Spas are a great introduction to the world of grooming, and **The Ritz Carlton, Westchester** (White Plains 914.467.5885; [www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/new-york/westchester](http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/new-york/westchester)) boasts some of the highest-end treatments aimed specifically at men. Along with several massage options, including a muscle-recovery massage and relaxation massage, the spa offers a men's facial, activity-recovery treatment, and "Power Hour" treatment, featuring a full-body salt-and-oil exfoliation. All ministrations are conducted in The Ritz's posh on-site spa.

Sometimes all a man needs is a quick shave and a great cut. **Sebastian's Barber Shop** (Tarrytown 914.909.0231), a 2016 *Westchester Magazine* Best of Westchester Readers' Pick, excels in the tonsorial arts. **Central Barber Shop** (Hartsdale 914.723.1945) also offers a no-fuss, no-frills atmosphere for guys simply looking to clean up their 'do's. **Gentleman's Barber Spa** (White Plains 914.390.9222; [www.gentlemansbarberspa.com](http://www.gentlemansbarberspa.com)) boasts a more refined version of the above, with hot-towel wraps, straight-razor



shaves, and rehydrating face masks. Or, grab a quick edge up and eyebrow wax.

**Richard Scott Salon and Day Spa** (Mount Kisco 914.242.1700; [www.richardscottsalon.com](http://www.richardscottsalon.com)) blends the best of what spas and basic barbershops have to offer. Scott prefers a wealth of men's services, including manicures, pedicures, keratin treatments, waxing, massages, and numerous facials and body treatments. They even provide hair-replacement services for execs looking to eschew the dreaded comb-over — or laser hair removal, should you have a little too much of a good thing. The salon also specializes in hair coloring and body bronzing for those who want to seem like they spent a day at the beach rather than in the boardroom.

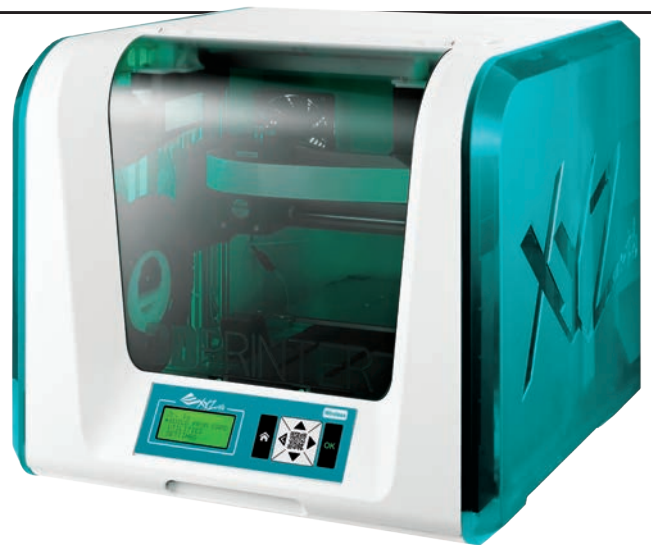
**The Art of Shaving** (White Plains 914.993.6494; [www.theartofshaving.com](http://www.theartofshaving.com)) provides an excellent all-in-one source for men's shaving and skincare essentials. The Art of Shaving's grooming products, in particular, are standouts. The 2013 Best of Westchester winner boasts a popular beard-maintenance set, which includes a peppermint beard wash, peppermint beard conditioner, and premium classic beard oil.

Men with a closer shave can also pick up straight razors, safety razors, five-blade razors, and even shaving brushes. The company's shaving kits are a hot commodity, as well as are their shaving creams, shaving soaps, and aftershave. Holiday-gift-inspiration, anyone? — PA

**Plugged In**

# Whizzy Holiday Gifts for Tech Fans

Presenting the latest and greatest in high-tech gizmos, gear, and gadgetry **By Steve Ditlea**



**Inspire the next generation of makers**

Plant the seeds of tomorrow's maker culture by giving the gift of 3D printing. No need to be a genius to use XYZprinting's **da Vinci Jr. 3D Printer**, an off-the-shelf intro to this hyper-local production method of the future. Proof? Preschool tikes at the John Paulding School in Tarrytown recently turned original designs into hi-tech, in-depth reality — personalized name tags, actually — using desktop-sized three-dimensional plastic-filament printers. Guided by teens from affiliated Sleepy Hollow High School, these wunderkinds mastered computer-assisted-design software and fully dimensional printing — technology expected to revolutionize manufacturing forever. Available from Office Depot, \$299

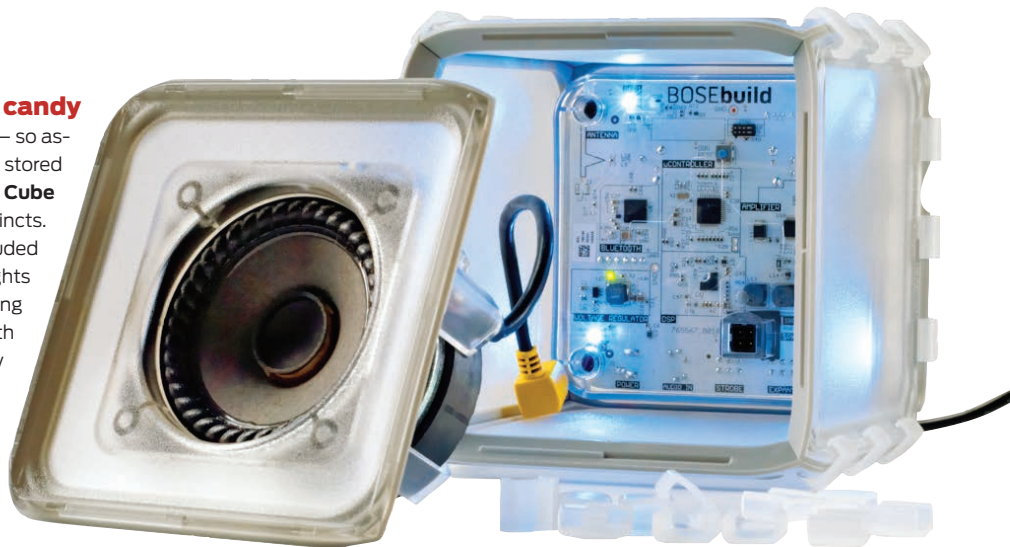


**Computer-on-a-stick eases travel**

To road warriors, even a featherweight laptop computer may feel like a millstone while on the go. Now, any TV or monitor with an HDMI slot can serve as the display for a full-powered Windows 10 PC the size of a pack of gum. Intel's second-generation **Compute Stick** packs a fast processor, copious memory, great graphics, advanced Bluetooth connectivity, and three USB ports. Just plug in for presentations, spreadsheets, email, Web browsing, and other work, or off-duty gaming and streaming. Available from Staples, \$135 and up

**Build-it-yourself ear candy**

Bose Corporation is opening up its box of tricks — so assembling awesome audio outlets for streaming and stored sounds becomes easy. The **BOSEbuild Speaker Cube** was inspired by its company founder's tinkering instincts. No tools necessary. Just press together the included electronics board, sonic cone, and accompanying lights to create a unique, personalized multimedia listening experience. Help is available from a phone app with clear step-by-step instructions and insights into how great sonic reproduction is created. Available from [www.build.bose.com](http://www.build.bose.com), \$149



**VR goggles give a glimpse of tomorrow**

For gamers and gearheads: Oculus Rift heralds the first **practical immersive headset**, a decades-long goal for head-tracking, fast-video displays needed to make virtual reality (VR) a reality. In surround-view VR, a computer-generated world can be experienced above, below, and all around. Great games and pioneering news documentaries already transport users to places they've never been before — when connected to a late-model, loaded PC. Someday, this will be as quaint as a vintage stereopticon, but it's today's most advanced intro to the entertainment-and-information medium of the future. Available from Best Buy, \$599



Dressed 4 Success

# Cool Coats for Cold Days

Two of this winter's sharpest looks for the cold commute to the office

Chase Away the Blues

Burberry, White Plains Men's Wool Cashmere Trench Coat in Bright Steel Blue \$1,895  
www.us.burberry.com



Chevron Chic Ted Baker, White Plains

Women's Mahar Chevron Long-Line Coat in Gray \$669  
www.tedbaker.com



Etiquette

# That's a Wrap

Corporate holiday gift-giving guidelines from one of Westchester's foremost experts **By Laurie Yarnell**

Holiday gift-giving at work can be an etiquette minefield," says Mamaroneck's Melissa Leonard, an etiquette-and-protocol consultant for 20 years. While the gift-giving culture can vary from one office to another, she adds, gifts are usually a nicety, not a necessity. Not sure what or whom to buy for? Leonard offers these eight expert tips:

1. If new to the company, ask someone with more tenure if gifts are discouraged or welcomed.
2. Accompany any gifts with handwritten notes thanking the recipient(s) for their help.
3. Just say no to gag gifts and potentially offensive gifts, like those with any sexual, political, or religious connotations.
4. Give Amazon, Visa, or specialty gift cards, to ensure your gift is something the recipient really wants.
5. Check out shops like HomeGoods for discounted but nicely presented gourmet teas, mugs, stationery, and gourmet chocolate items — the last can be served to guests if not to the

intended recipient's taste.

6. Consider a donation to the recipient's favorite charity in their honor, for a thoughtful and meaningful gift.
7. Stash some small items — like \$10 Starbucks gift cards — in your desk, to reciprocate any surprise gifts you receive.
8. Do sufficiently admire — and write a prompt handwritten thank-you note — for anything you receive. And definitely do not re-gift it to someone else in the office!

## WHAT TO SPEND?

**The Boss:**

Usually not necessary, says Leonard, but never more than \$40 to \$60

**Executive Assistant:**

\$75 to \$200

**Support Staff:**

\$50 gift cards

**Colleagues:**

\$10 to \$20 (or bake something)

**Secret Santa:**

Within the spending limit, usually \$30 max

## Travel

# A Winter Wow

Private skiing at southern Vermont's Hermitage Club at Haystack Mountain offers Westchester's big spenders a splurge-worthy experience.

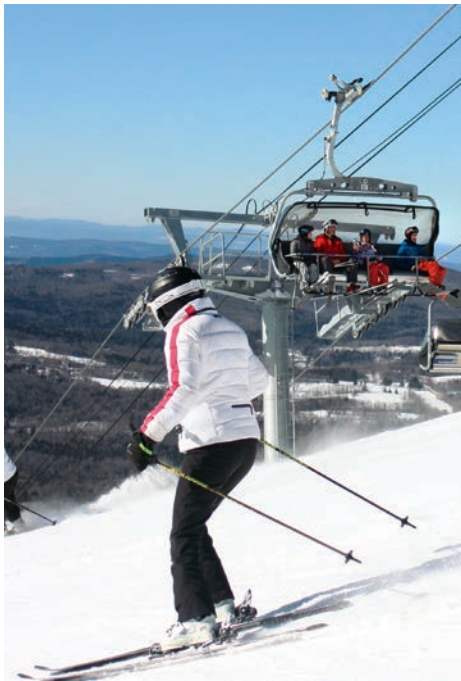


Members pay handsomely to belong to the exclusive 1,400-acre Hermitage Club at Haystack Mountain in Wilmington, VT, whose crown jewel is its own private mountain. But discerning nonmembers seeking some of the best within-a-drive-from-Westchester snow conditions — including always perfectly groomed corduroy, plus superior amenities and impeccable service — can enjoy this luxurious resort enclave during a stay at one of its charmingly restored historic inns.

Private skiing has its privileges, including an enviable absence of lines at the Doppelmayr-heated bubble lift (one of the only ones in the US) that delivers skiers to the summit in less than six minutes. Nestled in the serene mountains of the Deer Valley, the Hermitage also offers excellent cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling, boarding, ice skating, tubing, and old-fashioned horse-drawn sleigh rides under the stars.

Après ski, savor the fine dining; decompress in the tranquil spa; work out in the fitness center; or just sip a hot toddy in front of a cozy fire. For elegantly appointed guest quarters, gourmet fare (save room for a decadent s'mores milk shake for dessert) and direct transport to the mountain minutes away, consider Hermitage's posh White House Inn, where a winter stay ranges from \$275 to \$1,040 per night, depending on date and type of accommodation. High rollers can access the inn via plane or helicopter on the Hermitage's private landing strip. — LY

*Hermitage Club, 183 Gatehouse Trail, Wilmington, VT, 802.464.7734; www.hermitageclub.com*



## Fitness

# Get Full-Body Fit — Fast

Boutique-fitness chain Orangetheory hits White Plains, bringing its one-hour whole-body workouts.

With CrossFit, spinning, and barre classes all the rage, it is no secret that boutique fitness is on the rise in Westchester. Enter Orangetheory, an increasingly popular new take on whole-body fitness that combines cardio with muscle-building resistance training. White Plains is set to welcome the first Orangetheory location in the county, where time-crunched fitness buffs can find new ways to tone their bodies — even during a lunch break.

Paul Blanchard, co-owner with Alan Damashek of the new White Plains location, explains that Orangetheory — which has expanded to several countries across the globe since its inception in 2010 — is simply a one-hour whole-body workout in which heart rate, as well as both cardio and weight training, are prioritized.

"Everybody in the class wears a heart-rate monitor, so you can see your results in real time," explains Blanchard. "It's half-cardio and half-strength-and-power. The workout is different every single day of the year, and, subsequently, people see amazing results."

Blanchard adds that the key to this varied workout lies in reaching what the company refers to as The Orange Zone. "The goal of the activity is that you spend 12 to 20 minutes at 84 percent of your max heart rate," he explains. "If you spend that period in the Orange Zone, you burn the most calories from fat and create what is called the after-burn, when you burn more calories at rest over the next 36 hours."

— PA

*Orangetheory, 245 Mamaroneck Ave, White Plains  
914.729.0996; whiteplains.orangetheoryfitness.com*







## No Digital Divide Here

IAC Applications' Yonkers HQ helps foster company-wide collaboration. **By Amy R. Partridge**

**W**hen IAC Applications relocated its corporate headquarters from downtown White Plains to this three-story, 40,000 sq ft Yonkers space in 2013, it was because of the location's combination of historic style and modern convenience. After a renovation designed by Ferris Architects of Westport, the

space — originally built for the Otis Elevator Company in 1853 — now houses 140 employees, all of whom collaborate on IAC's popular suite of products, including desktop utilities, browser extensions, and mobile applications. The space well reflects the company's fun-loving, creative, urban vibe.



◀ **The cafe, right off the roof deck (and near the ping-pong table and arcade!), serves several purposes:**

It's a communal dining area, a space for one-on-one brainstorming sessions, and the de-facto gathering spot for company-wide meetings and happy hours. (Other fun internal events include holiday parties, office Olympics, various lunch-and-learn sessions, and bring-your-dog-to-work days.)

▶ **A graffiti wall, painted by Klaugus Gallery, funks up this conference room.**

Other conference rooms are also uniquely adorned: One has a LEGO wall; another boasts oversized, gilt-framed classical paintings with anachronistic modern-era details.

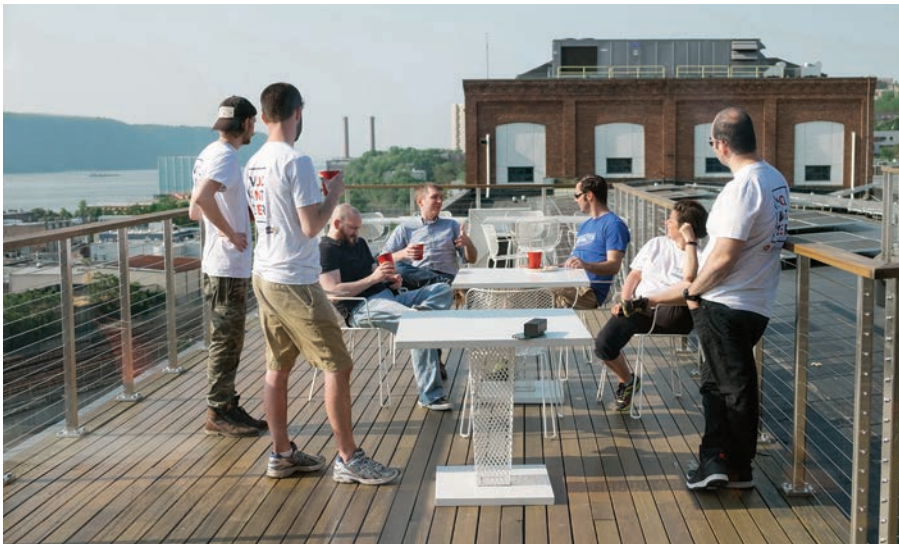


▶ **As a company with creativity and innovation in its DNA,** having an open-office workspace concept was a must. The leadership team wanted to be sure the space would promote the cross-pollination of ideas among the various departments housed here, which include marketing, technology development, creative, sales, and customer support, among others.



▼ **The former Otis Elevator Company building still holds its red-brick charm.**

Though IAC operates in the digital era, its redesign stayed true to the building's original aesthetic. Employees love the location — walking distance to the Yonkers train station — and the building's dedicated parking lot.



▲ **Rooftop drinks and yoga, anyone?**

The roof deck, overlooking the Hudson River, is a favorite among employees. It's used for meals, meetings, social events, and Wednesday evening yoga sessions — as well as an impromptu outdoor workspace.



▶ **This striking nook, near the main-floor kitchen,**

serves as another eating-and-meeting space. Food perks include daily bagels and fruit, a catered lunch once a week, pastries on Thursdays, and a well-stocked snack pantry.



## Hitting the High Notes

Playing piccolo with the Westchester Symphonic Winds is a 'spiritual' pursuit for Strauss Paper Company CFO Rachel Eckhaus.

By Gale Ritterhoff

Who doesn't love the rousing piccolo solo in Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever"? Its sheet music reveals a crazy roller coaster of notes — over 122, to be exact. It's an intimidating piece to be sure — just ask Rachel Eckhaus, who is often called upon to perform it in public, before cheering crowds.

A professional numbers-cruncher by trade — she's the CFO of janitorial-supply firm Strauss Paper Company in Port Chester — Eckhaus is also the principle piccolo player for the Westchester Symphonic Winds (WSW), a group of 60 amateur musicians she helped found 29 years ago. The busy single mother of two remains dedicated to the ensemble, which performs three concerts each year as the ensemble-in-residence at the Tarrytown Music Hall, plus the always-sold-out Fourth of July celebration at Caramoor.

Eckhaus' musical career began in elementary school in New Rochelle when she picked up the flute and later the piccolo, despite a decided lack of encouragement from those

within earshot. "A newbie on the piccolo is like a newbie on the violin — quite jarring," she admits. A private teacher helped Eckhaus learn to love the instrument, which gets "much better parts," than the flute, she says. New Rochelle High School's band program solidified her passion while surreptitiously planting the seeds for what would become Westchester Symphonic Winds.

The ensemble was born after Eckhaus bumped into a former NRHS bandmate, Robert LaPorta, on the train. The two had taken to commiserating about how much they missed playing and how few opportunities there were to do so.

Like many musicians, they had put down their instruments for day jobs. Eckhaus had assessed her professional potential long ago, while attending a summer flute program at Tanglewood as a teen. "All 25 flute players there were older and played circles around me, yet they were still struggling to succeed," she recalls. Vowing to "play only for fun," she went



Piccolo player and CFO Rachel Eckhaus helped found the Westchester Symphonic Winds 29 years ago. Today, the group — comprising "doctors, lawyers, computer programmers, music educators, and former military" — performs several concerts each year.

on to earn an accounting degree but was musically unfulfilled until that fateful train ride. Efforts to "get the band back together" began with contacting NRHS alums, and Westchester Symphonic Winds grew from there to the well-established, dedicated roster it enjoys today. "We have doctors, lawyers, computer programmers, music educators, former military... an amazing group of people," Eckhaus says, who all gladly donate their time and talent.

Eckhaus' employers at Strauss paper are extremely supportive, she says, understanding how much she needs "her music thing." Rehearsing and performing with WSW is "spiritual," she claims, like "spa time." "I'm not Mom; I'm not CFO; I'm not the boss," she adds. "Nobody's pulling at me. I just sit there and play. I couldn't ask for a better hobby." ●

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