Death with Dignity or Assisted Suicide?

By Dan Murphy

The Medical Aid in Dying Act was introduced in New York State this year. An Act that allows mentally capable, terminally ill patients who request to end their own lives to do so peacefully and with dignity. It is the first step towards a more compassionate end of life.

The bill, which was signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo, allows patients who are suffering from a terminal illness to request a doctor's prescription for a medication that will end their life. The law also includes safeguards to ensure that patients make an informed decision and that the prescribing physician is trained in palliative care.

The bill has been controversial, with some arguing that it is a slippery slope towards euthanasia. However, advocates argue that it provides a humane and compassionate way for patients to die.

The bill is set to take effect on July 1, 2021. It will allow patients who meet specific medical and ethical criteria to receive a prescription for a medication that will end their life. The patient must be terminally ill, have a diagnosis of a terminal illness, and be in the last six months of life.

The bill also includes safeguards, including a 72-hour waiting period and two independent medical evaluations.

On Valentine’s Day, Love Is in the Air in Yonkers

Yonkers Rising photographer Dennis Davis captured the love between two Yonkers couples that have intertwined their marriage and are celebrating the romantic Valentine's Day.

It's time for love to change our political clocks and realize that the political decisions for the Yonkers democratic and republican parties are being made now, and not in May. Here, love is the political update.

City Councilwoman Corazon Pineda-Isaac has not ruled out running for the County Legislature seat currently held by Virginia Perez, who announced her retirement. If she would not seek re-election, Pineda-Isaac had wanted to face off against Perez in a democratic primary, but it's not time for change of political clocks and realizing that political decisions are being made now, not in May. Here, love is the political update.

Patriarch of Political Dynasty, an American Life Well Lived

Leonard N. Spano, former Westchester County clerk and longtime state political leader, died at the age of 88 on Feb. 10, was a legendary figure in both Yonkers and Westchester politics and the man who turned the name “Spano” into a Westchester political dynasty.

The debate over medical aid-in-dying continues, in New York State and across the country.

By Dan Murphy

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What better place to celebrate the release of “The LEGO Movie 2” than at LEGOLAND Discovery Center Westchester? The attraction includes LEGO rides, a play area, a 4D cinema and a gift shop. For more information, visit westchester.legolanddiscoverycenter.com.

"Westchester Loves to Read" is a yearly competition that asks students from grades kindergarten through grade five, “Westchester Loves to Read.” Log their reading time, this year beginning Oct. 1 and ending May 5. Students who read 4,000 minutes a day, or roughly 15 to 20 minutes a day, will receive a free pass to Playland Park’s Opening Day. It’s as simple as that: “We are very pleased to announce Park, Child, Stuaff Judith Isbell and Benjamin Larsen, wonderful gifted musicians, for donating their talents to us to help raise funds for the renovation project,” said the Rev. Victoria Sirota from St. John’s, who presented proclamations from County Executive George Latimer to the performers. The efforts continue to raise funds for the stained glass restoration efforts. For more information, visit the church, and “Mother Vickie,” or visit www.yonkerschurch.org.

St. John’s Episcopal Church in Getty Square recently hosted a candlelight concert, which helped raise funds for the renovation project. “We are very pleased to announce Park, Child, Stuaff Judith Isbell and Benjamin Larsen, wonderful gifted musicians, for donating their talents to us to help raise funds for the renovation project,” said the Rev. Victoria Sirota from St. John’s, who presented proclamations from County Executive George Latimer to the performers. The efforts continue to raise funds for the stained glass restoration efforts. For more information, visit the church, and “Mother Vickie,” or visit www.yonkerschurch.org.

"Biscuit" Author Helps Promote 'Westchester Loves to Read'

In an effort to further promote the county’s “Westchester Loves to Read” program, County Executive George Latimer was joined by “Biscuit” author Alyssa Capucilli to open an afternoon reading with school children at Yonkers Public School 13. Capucilli’s availability was made possible through a partnership with the Discovery Center Westchester. Capucilli was born in Brooklyn in 1957. For more information, visit: www3.westchester.gov/westchester-loves-to-read.
Westchester County Executive George Latimer has made a bold proposal that will have to be approved by state legislators in Albany before the next six weeks, which will see a state-wide property tax deadline. Latimer said that in exchange for the sales tax increase, the county would not raise property taxes for the next two years.

The “Westchester County Property Taxpayers Protection Act” is designed to stabilize the county finances for 2020 and 2021 and keep property tax rates at current levels by having the Latimer Administration submit two budgets, for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, that will not include any increase in the county property tax levy; replenish the county reserve fund, and raise the bond rating back into A-AAA.

Latimer, who made the proposal on Facebook last weekend, pointed out that Westchester’s large cities (Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle and Mt. Vernon) would not have their sales tax increased because they already pay a rate of 8.5% – the rate that would go into effect for the rest of the county if approved. This is important because one of the arguments traditionally against a sales tax increase is that it negatively affects lower-income and poorer residents. Latimer pointed out that residents in those towns of Westchester’s four big cities already pay a higher rate of sales tax.

While Westchester has the highest property tax rates in the United States, its current sales tax rate of 8.5% is still lower than neighboring towns on Long Island, and in Rockland and Putnam counties.

Latimer also made some altering but important changes to Westchester County’s current state of affairs. “If the proposal is included in the 2019 state budget as we have requested, the County Board of Legislators will act on the proposal,” he said. “Westchester cannot meet its annual financial obligations without steady new revenue. We will fall into state fiscal control, with bond rating dropping further. Anyone who tells you otherwise is simply not telling the truth.”

“Westchester cannot raise property taxes at any significant level – we have reached a saturation point, given school and local taxes, as well. In my first year, we kept our levy rate below neighboring countries such as Rockland and Putnam, but this level is unsustainable. We need new property tax revenue to deliver our services.”

“This plan is prudent and plausible and avoids us undertakin further disastrous service cuts, massive layoffs and irresponsible one-shot all of ass tax. There will be more to talk about in the days to come. I will explain the plan in any forum. If you want honest talk from an official, here it is: I’m not here to pande to four or five percent, but rather to work together on all side to stabilize our future on the need of you. I welcome the two-way dialogue,” said Latimer for Yonkers, Latimer’s proposal made of a sales tax increase for no county tax increases for two years be a good deal for the city, its residents and businesses, who will not have to raise their sales tax increase and who will now have their county taxes flat for two years.

There has been no comment yet from county legislators from Yonkers or from state senators in representing the city. The plan must be approved by the State Senate, Assembly and the governor.

For Yonkers, Latimer’s proposed trade of a sales tax increase in exchange for two years with no county property tax increase.

Latimer Proposes 1% Sales Tax Increase
Good News for Yonkers?

By Eric Schoen

It was 10 years ago, maybe a little more. I was at Fort Lauderdale, Fla., flying over the Everglades, heading the Florida Keys. I made a right turn from “Sunshine state A1A, who did I see but Len Spano, the most important person I would ever see, and I smiled and said “Great, thanks. Good to see you.”

So many family friends have retired or wanted in Florida, leaving the cold and snow of Yonkers and the north. But I was really happy to see Len, relating in the sunshine of Florida as folks shivered back home. He and his wife, Josephine, welcome the two-way dialogue, “said Latimer. “This plan is prudent and plausible and avoids us undertakin further disastrous service cuts, massive layoffs and irresponsible one-shot all of ass tax. There will be more to talk about in the days to come. I will explain the plan in any forum. If you want honest talk from an official, here it is: I’m not here to pande to four or five percent, but rather to work together on all side to stabilize our future.”

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For the past 10 years, Groundwork Hudson Valley has been changing the way young people see agriculture and greater public thinks about the availability of fresh, healthy food in urban areas through educational programs on the Science Barge, which is an urban farm and education center floating on the Hudson River that is off the grid and runs solely on renewable energy. A variety of fresh produce is grown in these gardens by high school students learning farm farming growing methods like aquaponics, hydroponics and aeroponics. The Science Barge and its greenhouse are educational models of sustainable agriculture and renewable energy, where students are able to witness the sustainable food grown, as well as the fresh fruits and vegetables. And in addition to the educational programs run on the Science Barge, GWV’s education team provides hands-on interactive science lessons in Yonkers public schools. These in-school programs align with New York State Next Generation Science Standards and supplement the STEM education provided in Yonkers public schools. One of GWV’s most unique in-school programs is the “Feed Your Future” program.

Three years, Groundwork Hudson Valley’s Science Barge team became local ambassadors of the bar; thus, GWV’s education, and with the support of their education and promotional content, developed its own, unique school program called “Feed Your Future.” With generous funding from the Junior League of Bronxville, the “Feed Your Future” program engaged the support of the Groundwork Hudson Valley empowering communities to reclaim and revitalize environmentally and economically under-served neighborhoods. Based in southeast Yonkers, GWV partners with residents, city officials, schools, businesses, and other groups to make neighborhoods more livable and sustainable through an array of cross-disciplinary environmental projects. These projects include improving and maintaining parks, rivers (such as the Saw Mill River), trails and other public spaces; providing educational models of sustainable agriculture and connect nutrition to greater success in academic work and their future careers.

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The Fourth Precinct Community Council will hold its monthly meeting Thursday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. in the Fourth Police Precinct, 53 Montefiore Place, Yonkers. Captain Costello, the presiding commander, and his staff will be present to address matters of concern. Everyone who lives or works in the area served by the Fourth Police Precinct is invited. The meeting will not be held if Yonkers schools are closed due to inclement weather.

YPL Celebrates Black History Month

The Yonkers Public Library continues its month-long celebration of Black History Month with the following upcoming events:

A book discussion featuring “The Hate U Give” by Angie Thomas for ages 12-19 on Sunday, Feb. 18 at 2:30 p.m. at the Library 1, Will Brunch, 1500 Central Park Ave.
A movie featuring “The Hate U Give” on Tuesday, Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. at Riverfront Library.
An African dance class for all ages Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. at Riverfront Library.
A talk with an African-American genealogist in Manhattan whose work focuses on New York City and Westchester County families. Guest speaker Meryl Schumacker is a board-certified genealogy expert for adults and teens Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m.
An African-American genealogist expert for adults and teens Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m. at Riverfront Library. Learn how to perform research using New York in the library for our family search group. Guest speaker Meryl Schumacker is a board-certified genealogist in Manhattan whose work focuses on New York City and Westchester County families. Guest speaker Meryl Schumacker is a board-certified genealogy expert for adults and teens Saturday, March 7 at 2 p.m. at Riverfront Library.
In honor of Dental Health Month, Dr. William Limongelli is offering free dental treatments to residents of Yonkers and surrounding communities. Feb. 20 through his eighth annual Free Emergency Dental Treatments event.

Limongelli schedules the first 20 callers every day from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. to come to his office at 172 South Broadway in Yonkers. 

Applications for the Patricia Mangold Scholarship now are open.

Applicants must be planning to pursue further education. The first prize is $1,500. The second prize is $500.

Applicants will present a project showing understanding and appreciation of the history of Yonkers. They may include photographic montage, video, mixed-media, etc. A bibliography must be included with written essays. Submit one copy of the application (available upon request from the Yonkers Historical Society at YHSavancement@gmail.com) and the project to Yonkers Historical Society, Patricia Mangold Scholarship Awards, P.O. Box 190, Yonkers, NY 10710.

Applicants may mail or email (YHSavancement@gmail.com or via MangoldSociety Awards, P.O. Box 190, Yonkers, NY 10710) the application and project postmarked no later than March 15, or may drop it off before the deadline in the YHS office in the Grist Mill Library, 190 Central Park Ave., Yonkers. Call the office in advance at 914-961-8940 for opening hours.

The popular RKO Proctor Theater on South Broadway, which believe it or not is still buried underneath the National Council of Jewish Women's Banner, the Forward's weekly companion publication.

Dr. William Limongelli will offer free dental treatments on Feb. 20.

On this Day in Yonkers History...

Bird Count

The Great Backyard Bird Count will take place Saturday, Feb. 16 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lenor Preserve on the Deadstock Street Farm. Bird Count in Yonkers, a local group that enjoys and promotes birding, is sponsoring the event.

On Tuesday, Feb. 19, also at Lenor Preserve, there will be a “full moon walk” and campfire from 6 to 9 p.m. Enjoy a guided night walk under the light of the full moon to explore the preserve’s plants and animals and their habits. Following the walk, take in the nighttime beauty of the preserve while enjoying beverages and blankets and sit around to enjoy the fire. For more information, call 914-866-8561.

Friday, Feb. 21

Dr. Limongelli Hosts Annual Free Dental Day

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YHS Mangold Scholarship Deadline is March 15

The book talk by author Mary Calvi originally scheduled for Feb. 13 has been postponed and will take place Sunday, Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. at the Riverton Library in Yonkers.

The Foundation for the Yonkers Public Library would like to express our deepest condolences to the family and friends of Leonard Spano, a pillar of the Yonkers and Westchester community for many years.

On this day, first-time visitors only will be allowed to enter and exiting the complex.

Bird Count, Moon Walk

At Lenor Preserve

“Boy, was he good!” Mrs. Booth said at the end of the day. "He's the greatest and fairest man I've ever seen." The teacher was referring to a Yonkers’ cowboy, whose name was Jack Fisher. He won the first round of the tournament with a 10-8 decision over a young man, who later bolted out of the court.

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Feb. 20, 1947: The men and women in the Adult Study Club, an offshoot of the Yonkers English as a second language class, held a birthday party for a member of their class. 79-year-old Lena Steilzer, one of the club were President Lena Steilzer and Vice President Samuel Katz. Lena Steilzer was born in Yonkers from Yonkers Historical Society.


Feb. 13, 1930: Public Safety Commissioner Frank Devlin ordered Yonkers police to wear the new “V-type” coats and made it official equipment of the Yonkers Fire Department.

Feb. 20, 1942: After hearing about the sinking of the USS Juneau, the U.S. Navy ordered every ship to display the “V” flag to show the nation’s support for the United States.

Feb. 18, 1944: Female employees of the Yonkers Union Carbide Company were given a suspended sentence. Boote ordered because of a strong chemical odor pervading the air in their complex.

Feb. 21, 1940: At the start of the strike, the Smith Carpet Factory walked out in support of the union. By the end of the strike, 80 percent of the employees joined the union by the end of the strike.

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Rally at Riverfront For NYS Farmworkers

Allies and activists, farmworkers and labor leaders, along with students and members of the full community, will gather at the Yonkers Public Schools Auditorium on Thursday, February 14, at 6:30 p.m. Roberta Jacobsen, the Yonkers Board of Education President, the Rev. Steve Spano of First Presbyterian Church, and the Yonkers Kiwanis Club will offer opening remarks, followed by a presentation oriented toward teachers on the basics of organizing and unionization.

The rally will culminate in a call to action to elected officials and the public to join the fight for justice for those who work on the farm. The rally will be an opportunity to register for the February 21 rally to be held at Fordham University, and will be a chance for teachers to learn about the need for farmworkers' rights.

For more information, contact Yonkers Kiwanis Club at 914-654-1683.
Loving My Blackness

By Dennis Richardson Jr.

There is no unanimous answer to the question of what it means to be a human being. For many, being black is a constant struggle to be recognized as more than just a name.

One major problem for Rodriguez is that he was going to run and challenge Alvarado briefly served as Yonkers city councilman, and former City Councilman Wilson Terrero concede the decision to report back to me on the feasibility of the task. In line with our local government, the Democratic Party is split on this one.

Casanova on whether we believe because of how they happen to look into the community, ready to take on the challenges and willing to put in the required effort to do so. I’ve launched an exploratory committee to report back to me on the feasibility of the task. In line with our local government, the Democratic Party is split on this one.

Mayor and former City Councilman Wilson Terrero concede the decision to report back to me on the feasibility of the task.
Free AARP Tax Counseling Available to Seniors

The City of Yonkers Office for the Aging, in addition to the New York Library, will offer a Tax-Aide program from April 1 through April 15.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is a program that helps people of all ages who have tax questions. Volunteers have the time to review taxes with a tremendous amount of experience in doing tax returns and are available to help people file their tax returns at no cost. The tax returns are reviewed by trained tax preparers who can provide tax assistance and advice without cost and under no obligation.

Your local bank, credit union, or other financial institution

AARP is a nationwide organization that provides a variety of services to older Americans. It offers a free income tax preparation service through AARP Tax-Aide to those who qualify. The service is available to people who have incomes of $54,000 or less.

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Len Spano was a dominant force in the political world. As the father to a family of political lifetime, Len Spano was a true champion of the public service, and a true hero of the community. Len Spano raised 16 children in Westchester County. He is also survived by his sister Rosemary (Deidra), Joanne (Vincent Finnegan), Gabriela (Linda), John (Evelyn), MariaElena, Eleanore, Isaac, Debbie (Brad Hedgeman), autoly (Alex), Laura Mayant, Wendy (Bill Mollohan). He also passed away peacefully surrounded by his family of 16 children, 42 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren, Mr. Spano's legacy will live on.We will miss his presence and your friendship.

Len Spano started the tradition of getting his family together in the political campaigns, and that involvement planted the seed for Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who is now the Senate majority leader, and that involvement planted the seed for Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who is now the Senate majority leader.

Len Spano was a great man who always showed a tremendous amount of kindness to all. He was a special leader in the County of Westchester and had a great family, and that involvement planted the seed for Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who is now the Senate majority leader.

Len Spano was respected by members of all political parties. He was great to work with. We will miss you, Len. We will miss your personal story about Len Spano.

Len Spano was an early riser at St. Anthony of Padua Church on Park Hill Avenue in Yonkers. Len Spano was buried at Mount Hope Cemetery in Westchester County. We will miss your presence and your friendship.

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Len Spano was respected by members of all political parties. He was great to work with. We will miss you, Len. We will miss your personal story about Len Spano.

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Montessori 27 Named School of the Month

Mayor Mike Spano, YPS Superintendent Dr. Edwin Quezada, RCE President the Rev. Steve Lopez, City Council Majority Leader Michael Sabatino and Assemblywoman Nader Sayegh with students and staff at Montessori School 27.

Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano recently presented the 2019 School of the Month award to Montessori School 27. Joined by Yonkers Board of Education President the Rev. Steve Lopez, Superintendent Dr. Edwin Quezada, Principal Moira Gleeson, and Montessori School 27 teachers, teaching assistants and students, Spano paid special tribute to a school he described as one of Yonkers’ most unique.

The school follows the Montessori philosophy, developed by Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori. Montessori instructional materials allow children to learn at their own pace through discovery activities and individualized work plans. Students at the school are grouped in multi-age classes that support a non-competitive, cooperative learning atmosphere.

“Montessori 27 is one of our most unique schools,” said Spano. “Montessori 27 places an emphasis on the individual student. The type of learning environment fosters a strong sense of community and collaboration among students (School 27 family). I’m proud of the work Principal Gleeson and her staff are doing for the children of our city.”

School 27 was commended for its 2018-19 school year successes, including a nearly 30 percent improvement in New York State English language arts and math assessment test scores.

The mayor also recognized several clubs and activities at the school, including the extracurricular Chess Club, Book Club, Golf Squad and Yoga Club; the school’s greenhouse, which is maintained by the students and gives them the opportunity to observe and study botany and horticulture through hands-on experiences; and Montessori 27’s Black History Month celebration, which showcases the diversity in the City of Yonkers and beyond.

Montessori School 27 also works closely with several private and non-profit partners, including Philips Manor Hall, Greyston Bakery and several private and non-profit partners, in-