

## FEATURES



**Westchester County  
Executive George Latimer  
visits Wartburg  
Page 6**



**Mt. Vernon's Lincoln Lounge  
closes once again  
Page 7**



**Mount Vernon City School  
District expands school  
uniform policy  
Page 10**



**Zeta Nu Omega Chapter  
sponsors mini-model UN  
conference at Mercy College  
Page 20**

## Mt. Vernon's Gold Star Mothers monument to be redesigned

Story by Joe Parisi

**O**n Monday, May 28, at the end of the Memorial Day parade, Mount Vernon city officials, along with elected officials, and the members of the Central Committee for Veterans Affairs (CCVA), flocked to Hartley Park for the end of the parade ceremony at the gazebo.

After speeches, the mayor and city officials, along with veterans, presented Mount Vernon Gold Star Mother Carmen Palmer with a gold commemorative pin.

After the brief ceremony, Palmer walked over to the area where the Gold Star Mothers monument is situated and was shown a new rendition of the proposed Gold Star Mothers monument.

David Abrevaya, an artist who works for Mayor Thomas, is redesigning the unfinished monument.

The city has been working over eight years to finalize the project due to a lack of funding. Recently, State Assemblyman Gary Pretlow promised to generate the necessary funding to finally complete



**Carmen Palmer being presented a  
commemorative gold pin**

the well overdue monument.

After reviewing the rendition of the newly designed monument, Palmer stated: "I am very pleased with the proposed

*Continued on page 6*

## School District honors its athletes for 2017-18 school year

Story by Joe Parisi

**T**he Mount Vernon City School District handed out 19 awards to its student athletes Thursday at the district's year-ending Sports Awards Celebration. Students from all sports attended and were celebrated at the dinner.

"All of our student athletes have again accomplished so much this year, both in their respective sports and in their academics," Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton said. "They all are to be commended for their work ethic, their diligence and their perseverance, which will lead them to great things in their futures."

Mount Vernon High School Principal Ronald Gonzalez thanked the superintendent and the Board of Education for their



**Senior Jason Douglas-Stanley (right) receives William Davis Basketball  
Award from boys basketball coach Bob Cimmino**

*Continued on page 5*



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- Prepare and distribute Annual Water Quality Report to inform residents about the water they drink.
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- Conduct Valve Exercising Program as a means to evaluate defective valves in the system so they can be repaired or replaced. This will ensure proper operation in an emergency.
- Read meters and generate bills. Investigate cause of unusually high or low bills.

Board of Water Supply  
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## Board of Education honors very special student athletes



*Members of the Pioneer League's Mount Vernon Knights being honored*

**F**or this team, winning was never the priority. Instead, the Pioneer League's Mount Vernon Knights provided its members with an opportunity to represent their district in a positive way. But on June 19, at the Mount Vernon City School District's Board of Education meeting, the team was recognized with medals just the same.

"We need to recognize all students because that's who we're here to serve," said Adriane Saunders, President of the Board of Education. "Receiving these medals made these student athletes feel so proud. In the Pioneer League, everybody's a win-

ner!"

The Pioneer League is a Hudson Valley division of the New York State Special Olympics. Mount Vernon had a team decades ago, revived the program, and has been under the guidance of head Coach Rocco Alianiello for the past two years. "Coach Rocky", as the kids know him, was presented with a plaque for his service as were his assistants.

"There's nothing more special than getting the opportunity to work with the most special students in the whole district," he said while accepting his award from Saunders.

The Knights participated in a to-

tal of twenty-five competitions this school year in four sports; indoor soccer, poly-hockey, basketball and volleyball. They faced teams from New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, White Plains, Somers, Carmel, Ossining, Lakeland and Woodlands. But it was always a mutually supportive environment.

"They not only supported their teammates, they supported members of the other teams as well," said Rachel DePaul, Assistant Director of Special Education. "Reinstating this program provided students who otherwise wouldn't play sports an opportunity to take part and thrive!"

### *Continued from page 1*

support throughout the year and told the student athletes that their efforts bring pride to Mount Vernon.

"We are the epitome of student athletes," he said. "Among us we have sectional champions and we have exceptional students. We are representing Mount Vernon - we're doing it on the track, we're doing it on the basketball court, and we're doing it in the classroom. Thank you to all of our student athletes for making me proud and thank you for making the City of Mount Vernon proud."

The 19 awards given to students Thursday were:

Tony Veteri Coaches Award (leadership, determination to succeed, hard-working): Demetre Roberts and Naje Lovell

Ed Williams Sportsmanship Award (exceptional sportsmanship): Joshua Powell and Krystal McFarlane

Gloria T. Coleman Memorial Award (determination to succeed, history of community service and academic achievement): Fernando Medina and Ericka Pierce

Teddie Wieland Scholar Athlete Award (outstanding academic and athletic achievement): Joshwa Zincke and Zarayli George

Dave Rider Track and Field Award (selected by boys/girls track coaches): Joshua Zincke and Jamika Hypolite

Arthur Sean Rose Football Award (selected by football coach): Wander Castro

Andre Frank Baseball Award (selected by baseball coach): Jaheed Davenport

Julie Feldman Scholarship Award (outstanding female sportsmanship, determination to succeed, works to greatest potential): Jamika Hypolite

Friends of Julie Feldman Scholarship

Award (outstanding female sportsmanship, determination to succeed, works to greatest potential): Azlie Lavandier

William Davis Basketball Award (selected by basketball boys coach): Jason Douglas-Stanley

Alex Cunningham Award (selected by wrestling coach): Tremaine Bogle

Donny Dendy Memorial Award (willingness to help others, community service, academic success): Khalid Armstrong and Diara John

Lloyd & Shirley Wallace Memorial Basketball Award (selected by girls basketball coach): Calilah Hines

Marcquis Abney Memorial Basketball Award: Demetrius Lee

Marcquis Abney Memorial Football Award: Deronimus Kilgo

Shamoya McKenzie Memorial Girls Basketball Award: Camryn Brooks

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers are encouraged to send us letters expressing their viewpoints on any issue. Letters should not contain inflammatory or provocative language and will be subject to editorial review. Please keep your letters brief and not to exceed 300 words. Your name and address must be included, but will be withheld upon request.

### SUGGESTED NEWS ITEMS

We welcome all suggestions concerning news we should cover in our newspaper. Please call the Editor with suggestions at 914-584-6386.

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## Westchester County Executive George Latimer visits Wartburg



County Executive George Latimer (c) with Wartburg board members and staff

County Executive George Latimer recently visited Wartburg to talk with residents and staff to learn more about the healthcare and residential options provided by Wartburg in lower Westchester County and the Bronx. County Executive Latimer met with Wartburg President & CEO, Dr. David J. Gentner, Wartburg board members, and other senior staff to learn about the focus of post-acute rehabilitative outcomes and hospital partnerships as well as other innovative programs such as the Creative Aging & Lifelong Learning program, the SeniorU partnership with Concordia College, and the Institute for Music and Neurologic Function.

"It was great to be able to provide an overview of Wartburg's vision for caring of older adults to the County Executive. I was especially excited to highlight our plans for a modern rental option with its secure campus environment and excellent access to transportation," said Gentner.

County Executive Latimer also spoke to Wartburg's Meadowview Assisted Liv-

ing facility residents. He highlighted the programs available in the county and the proposed changes he is considering to ensure the oldest members of the community live with the independence and dignity they so richly deserve—a mission that clearly aligns with Wartburg's. The talk ended with Dr. Gentner presenting the County Executive with a proclamation making him an honorary resident of Wartburg.

The County Executive also visited Wartburg's Adult Day Care program where he reunited with clients he has known through his career as a public servant in the region. He was welcomed with open arms—literally! He spoke about his passion for senior causes, jokingly saying he is not far from being a senior at 64 ½ years old. He stated he was happy to be able to affect the changes needed to ensure that seniors have the programs and services needed to maintain a good quality of life in his newly appointed role as County Executive.

Continued from page 1



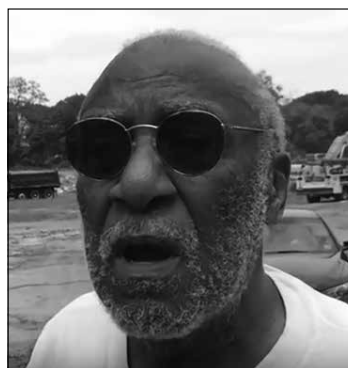
Carmen Palmer and David Abrevaya standing by renditions of newly designed Gold Star Mothers monument

new design."

Palmer's son, Marine Cpl. Bernard

Gooden, died at age twenty-two in Iraq back in 2003.

## Ernie Davis: "The city put tennis courts rent on hold"



According to former mayor Ernie Davis, the city failed to abide by certain promises it made to the owner of the tennis courts after the signing of a 15-year contract. "We

would put the roof on; we would do the infrastructure; we would put the glass in; and they would take care of the interior."

Consequently, the city never did what they promised to do and made a deal with the tennis court owner. "You do not have to pay the city rent until we keep our end of the bargain," Davis told the owner of the tennis courts. It was stipulated in the contract, according to Davis.

"The city started to do work on the tennis courts until Davis was ousted as mayor by Richard Thomas, and the promised work by the city was never completed.

Mayor Thomas has publicized that the owner of the tennis courts owed a substantial amount of rent money, obligating the city to remove the bubble. But according to Davis, they were justified in not paying the city rent.

## Mayor Thomas makes key leadership appointments

As part of his continuing effort to improve municipal services and fight the property tax burden, Mayor Richard Thomas has hired three seasoned professionals, with extensive public and private sector experience, to take on leadership positions in city government.

The appointments are:

- Daniel P. Jones to serve as the Commissioner of the Buildings Department. Jones comes to City Hall with more than 25 years of experience in the utilities, engineering, and construction industries, as well as related fields. His extensive technical and management back-

ground includes jobs at Consolidated Edison, General Electric, PSEG/PSEGLI, and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection. Jones received his Bachelor's and Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from the Polytechnic Institute of New York University.

- Brett Erasmus to serve as Commissioner of Management Services. As head of Management Services, his duties include producing the annual budget, overseeing information technology and providing resources and support to the city's other departments. Erasmus' professional background includes working for Deutsche Bank and

Price Waterhouse Coopers in the areas of finance and global and capital markets. A native of South Africa, Erasmus received his bachelor's degree from Nelson Mandela University and his MBA from New York University's Stern School of Business.

- Cranson D. Johnson to serve as Deputy Commissioner of Taxation and Assessment. Johnson has expertise in property valuation, auditing, and business analysis. He has worked for Fortune 500 companies, including Sprint Corporation, where he served for decades in account retention, project management, and business analysis. John-

son received his Bachelor of Arts from Baruch College.

"I am proud and honored that these three individuals have chosen to serve the people of Mount Vernon," Mayor Thomas said. "All three are seasoned professionals with the levels of expertise that will help us deliver on our goal of providing residents with services that are efficient, responsive and sensitive to the high burdens placed on taxpayers. Professionalizing our city departments is one way my administration is working to strengthen the local economy and deliver value to the people of Mount Vernon," said Mayor Thomas.



## "Failure to pay rent forced city to remove tennis bubble," said Mayor Thomas



*The collapsed tennis bubble at Memorial Field*

**M**ount Vernon has taken down the grandstands at Memorial Field because they were decayed and in disrepair. Just recently, they continued their aggressive actions by reclaiming the tennis bubble and breathing new life into the future of Mount Vernon's iconic Memorial Field.

"The goal is to build a new and better Memorial Field, one that is actually open to the public and available for our people to use. The new Memorial Field will host families, let our children play, let our aspiring young athletes practice and compete in a facility that they deserve. We are building a multi-purpose complex with a regulation eight-lane track, tennis courts, and accommodations for football, soccer, lacrosse, concerts, and activities. It will be a field where dreams are realized and champions are made."

"Some people have asked questions about why it was necessary for the tennis bubble to be removed. For months, my administration has been in discussion with

the private operator, who leases the facility, about our serious concerns. The operator has failed to pay any rent for years owing the city hundreds of thousands of dollars, they have failed to provide adequate access to our children to learn and play, and they have failed to address the city's concerns which they were on notice since February of this year. They have breached their contract with the city. Despite our numerous attempts to work with them, they refused, leaving the city with no option," added Mayor Thomas.

City Councilman Marcus Griffith said that the mayor failed to follow the required procedures to take down the tennis bubble, just as he did with the grandstands. "We're concerned because the bubble did not have to be taken down in that way," Griffith said. "It's a \$1 million bubble that was paid for by the owner of the tennis courts."

The mayor's actions is expected to lead to a lawsuit by Kela Simunyola of Kela Tennis.

## Board of Legislators votes to raise age for tobacco sales to 21

**T**he Westchester County Board of Legislators has voted to raise the age limit for the sale of tobacco and related products in Westchester from 18 to 21.

The measure will prohibit the sale not only of cigarettes and tobacco products but also e-cigarettes and vaping products to those under 21.

The measure passed Monday night on a bipartisan basis by a vote of 16-1.

Westchester is just the latest to raise the age for tobacco sales. Earlier this month, the town of New Castle raised the age there to 21. Last month Rockland County

did the same. New York City established 21 as its age limit in 2013.

Many counties across New York have already established 21 as the tobacco-sales age limit – from Cattaraugus in Western New York to Schenectady County upstate to Onondaga County in Central New York to Suffolk County on Long Island.

Lawmakers believe the new measure will dramatically reduce the number of new smokers and the likelihood of new additions to vaping products, some of which have a higher nicotine content than cigarettes.

## Mt. Vernon's Lincoln Lounge closes once again



**T**he Lincoln Lounge, located at 209 Stevens Avenue, has shuttered its doors for the second time in the last three years.

The current owner completely renovated the longtime favorite and iconic Italian

Restaurant when he took over the helm three years ago. Many are surprised that he is closing after such a short period. The restaurant has been in existence for the last 65 years, and many don't expect it to open ever again.

## Westchester Rent Guidelines Board passes significant increases

*Story by Tamara Stewart*

**T**he Westchester Rent Guidelines Board (WRGB) wrapped-up its hearing season on June 18 at Mount Vernon City Hall. Following presentations by Tenant and Owner Members, and a rebuttal by one of the Owner Members, the Board unanimously passed significant rent increases. Tenants whose leases renew between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019, will have the option of paying 2% for a one-year renewal, or 3% for a two-year renewal. This year's increases are the highest guidelines passed since 2014.

This is the second year in a row that the WRGB didn't have a full complement of Members. Normally, the Board is comprised of two Tenant reps, two Owner reps, and five Public reps. Due to two vacancies, there were only three Public reps on the Board this year. The Westchester County Board of Legislators Appointments Committee interviewed and recommended two new Public reps, however, DHCR did not approve the new appointments in time for them to be seated and vote on this year's guidelines.

Tenants were at a disadvantage last year, when they were solely represented by then-brand-new Tenant Member Jean Anderson of New Rochelle.

Long-time Tenant Member Rev. Emma Jean Loftin-Woods was ill and did not participate in the proceedings. Nevertheless, with support from fellow tenant advocates, Anderson was able to deliver modest increases for tenants: 1% for one-year, and 1.5% for two-year lease renewals.

Despite Loftin-Woods' return, this year's results were disappointing to many tenants and their advocates. According to former WRGB Tenant rep Genevieve Roche, "The kindest spin one can put on this travesty of a result is that, regrettably, Ms. Loftin-Woods never resigned from the Board as she repeatedly promised over the last few years. Now that her term has expired, tenants deserve new representatives who will promote, rather than hurt, their interests. That, and having the Board schedule testimony sufficiently after landlord survey numbers are released, and schedule the vote sufficiently after Board presentations, both of which would allow for considered analysis of the facts before setting new rates. I am optimistic next year will be better."

The Building Realty Institute videotapes all of the Westchester Rent Guidelines Board hearings and meetings, which can be viewed on YouTube by searching for Westchester Rent Guidelines Board.

## Mt. Vernon officially kicks off its Summer Breeze Concert Series



*The "Untouchables" performing at the Summer Breeze Concert Series*

**M**ount Vernon officially kicked off its Summer Breeze Concert Series on the evening of Thursday, June 7 with a performance by the incomparable and dynamic R&B group – "Untouchables."

Acting as the Mistress of Ceremonies

was Sylvia Gadson and the DJ for the event was Brother Arthur.

Mount Vernon's Summer Breeze Concert Series is one of Westchester's most electrifying, foot-tapping, come-ready-to-dance music offerings. The concerts offer a variety of sounds to match the hot



weather and are free and open to the public.

This year, the concerts will be held every other Thursday, in lieu of weekly, as in previous years. And please note that Sheryll Brownlee-Fox, who was the Summer Breeze Project Manager for the highly popular Summer Breeze Concert Series for many years, was recently terminated by the city. Several in attendance talked

about her absence at this year's kickoff.

As in past years, the concerts will be held at Mount Vernon City Hall Plaza, and special concerts will be held throughout the city on dates and locations to be announced in advance.

Summer Breeze is sponsored by the City of Mount Vernon under the Recreation Department, led by Commissioner Darren M. Morton.



## Mayor Thomas participates in US Conference of Mayors Energy Committee



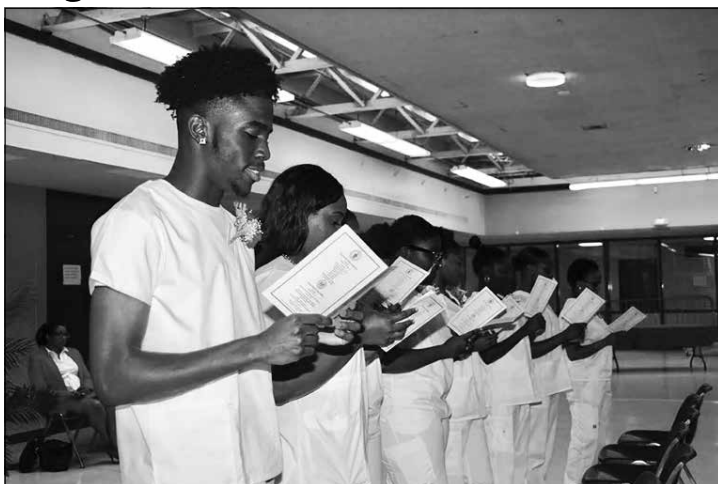
**M**ayor Richard Thomas recently joined a select group of mayors from around the country at the US Conference of Mayors 86th Annual Meeting in Boston, MA. Mayor Thomas is a member of the Energy Committee which sets policies for mayors around the country to follow and imple-

ment in their own city.

"The most innovative ideas and solutions come from cities. Connecting one on one with mayors from across the country allows us to share what we are working on in Mount Vernon - to exchange ideas, and to build new connections," said Mayor Thomas.



## Eight students become certified nursing assistants through MVHS



**E**ight Mount Vernon High School students have completed the school's Nursing Assistant course and are now New York State Certified Nursing Assistants. "These students took on the challenge to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and now they have options for their fu-

ture as they graduate," said Elizabeth O'Loughlin, nursing instructor at MVHS.

The students are: Sh'nya Banton, Kimaya Hamilton, Devonte Hyatt, Marieme Ly, Kayla Riley, Jahmeela Russell, Dionna Watson and Amanii Williams.

"The program is important to Mount Vernon students because it is the entry into the health career pathway," O'Loughlin said. "This will allow students the experience needed to work in the health profession immediately following high school and during their college years. This experience serves as a precursor to entry into a two-year or four-year nursing school."

The Nursing Assistant course follows the mandated training and competency for individuals performing nurse aide duties in accordance with state and federal regulations. The program, which is part of MVHS's Career and Technical Education course offerings, is regulated by both the New York State Education Department and the Department of Health to ensure the program meets industry standards.

Students sit for both written and clinical (hands on) testing at the completion of the program.

"I would like to congratulate these exceptional students for choosing a path that will lead them to a wonderful career," said Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton. "Our nursing program is another important element of the School District's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program here at Mount Vernon High School. These students get a fantastic high school education while learning valuable skills that can propel them into the workforce."

The content of the curriculum includes skills and theories that are needed to facilitate the education and career development of students who wish to enter the health care system.

As part of the program, the students also completed their resumes. Some of the students plan to attend college and will apply for Nursing Assistant jobs in areas closer to their schools, allowing them to work and study.

## Judge orders all work stopped at Memorial Field indefinitely



**J**udge George E. Fufidio, Jr. today issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) against the City of Mount Vernon, Mayor Richard Thomas, and City Comptroller Deborah Reynolds, halting all activity at the Memorial Field site indefinitely. The parties are expected to return to court on July 10, 2018 for a hearing to determine whether to make the TRO permanent.

The motion, brought by the City Council of Mount Vernon, argued that the Thomas administration has consistently failed to followed legal procedures, has squandered taxpayer resources, and has destroyed city assets in violation of the City Charter – all in connection with the Memorial Field project.

On June 1, 2018, the City Council voted unanimously to transfer control of the renovation to Westchester County. Nevertheless, the Thomas administration has continued to direct unlawful and unauthorized activities and expend city resources at the site, including the controversial removal of the tennis bubble at the Kela Ten-

nis Center.

"It's just sad, really. The citizens of Mount Vernon deserve better leadership than this. The Council had no choice but to seek a TRO against the mayor to stop him from blatantly violating the law," said Councilman Andre Wallace. "Memorial Field will be renovated, and it will be something we're all proud of. But, it won't be done by this administration. The process is already underway. Mayor Thomas is going to have to find another way to distract people from his criminal case."

"This ruling just reinforces the principle that no one is above the law," said Councilman Marcus A. Griffith. "That's a lesson this administration seems to regularly ignore. It's unfortunate that things had to get to this point, but the Council has a responsibility to the citizens of Mount Vernon to ensure their hard-earned tax dollars are not wasted."

The City Council was represented by Henry C. Chan, Esq. of Wilson & Chan, LLP.

### EDITORIAL

## Pelham has not objected to use of Glover Field by Mt. Vernonites



**S**ince the closure of Memorial Field over ten years ago, Mount Vernonites have been using the adjacent track and field across from Memorial Field – Glover Field, uneventfully.

I use the track at Glover Field seven days per week, along with countless citizens from Mount Vernon. At no time have I seen or heard of Mount Vernon residents being harassed or kept from using the track by Pelham officials or workers.

Mayor Richard Thomas recently made the following statement: "I have been chased out of other communities when I brought my friends or families to their park, including Glover Field adjacent to Target. That feeling of being asked to leave a public place brings us back to discriminatory times."

I find his comments shocking, since I have never heard of a person(s) being kept from using the public track and field at

Glover Field, unless there was a school or private related recreational activity about to take place. There are large signs that state the track and field is closed to the public just before or during said activities at the field.

As a Pelham resident, I can assure you that Pelham officials understand the ongoing dilemma Mount Vernon residents have had to face concerning the endless debacle at Memorial Field. Therefore, I can assure you that whatever the mayor experienced at Glover Field had to be a misunderstanding on his part.

I encourage any Mount Vernon resident to visit Glover Field any day of the week, especially during the early morning hours, and witness how many Mount Vernonites are pleasurably using the track and the field.

Joe Parisi  
Editor

## Superintendent hosts celebration of Fourth Annual Reading Challenge Achievers



*Dr. Hamilton enjoying the rides with students at the Superintendent's Fourth Annual Reading Challenge Celebration*

**T**he Mount Vernon City School District gave away 125 donated nooks to students at the Superintendent's Fourth Annual Reading Challenge Celebration at Traphagen Elementary School's fields Thursday afternoon.

The carnival was held for students who reached their reading goals this school year. At the beginning of the school year, Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton challenged kindergarten through eighth-grade students to read 200,000 books. He then invited students who achieved their goals to the end-of-year celebration. In total, students read approximately 218,000 books this school year.

"I wanted to come up with an incentive to get students excited about reading," said Dr. Hamilton. "We started this program four years ago and each year it gets bigger and better. Students look forward to completing the Superintendent's Reading Challenge so they can be part of this

end-of-the-year celebration."

"The driving force behind this is making our community more literate and engaging the community more in a family activity," Dr. Hamilton said.

The incentives are not limited to the carnival. Throughout the year students are celebrated with recognition, book gifts, and certificates as they move towards the goal. The two highest readers in each school attend a fun day with the Superintendent at New Roc City's Fun Fuzion. This year it will take place on June 20.

"There is nothing more important for a student than the ability to not only read, but to read well, as it impacts their ability to learn in all facets of education," Dr. Gayle White-Wallace, Standards Administrator for Pre-K, ELA, Literacy and Social Studies (Elementary). "Dr. Hamilton's Superintendent's Reading Challenge is an excellent incentive to help our students grow."

## Mount Vernon City School District expands school uniform policy



*Students in Edward Williams School show off their uniforms in Ms. Cavallaro's classroom*

**T**he Mount Vernon City School District is expanding its student uniform policy districtwide in September. This fall, the uniform policy will be implemented in the district's reconfigured PreK-7 and PreK-8 buildings, as well as the new AB Davis STEAM High School. The school uniform mandate was initially adopted by the district's board of trustees in 2016. The policy allows schools in the district to mandate students wear uniforms if they present certification to the board. Proper certification will include agreements from a minimum of 80 percent of families at the school.

Uniforms were worn in all of the district's elementary schools during the 2017-18 school year. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton is pleased by the support this initiative has garnered.

"District parents initiated this uniform

policy adoption and across the City of Mount Vernon they are very supportive of this effort, citing the cost effectiveness of the program and improvement in the school culture and pride," wrote Dr. Hamilton in a letter to parents. "We look forward to building on this positive trend."

According to the adopted board policy, the intent is not to inhibit or prohibit any student who is not in uniform from receiving the education to which he or she is entitled. Therefore, no student will be subject to disciplinary actions for not complying with the policy.

Students will be given input on uniform selection and may receive uniform waivers for reasons of health or religious freedom. The district will offer assistance in purchasing uniforms to families facing financial hardship.

## Engel announces \$4,634,599 for Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center Network

**C**ongressman Eliot Engel announced the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center Network has been awarded a \$4,634,599 federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The funding will help the Network provide critical care to individuals in Mount Vernon, Yonkers, Greenburgh and the surrounding areas.

"On behalf of the patients and staff of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center we are grateful for being awarded this significant grant that will help us to continue to provide the highest level of care to our most vulnerable patients and families," said Opal D. Dunstan, Chief Executive Officer, Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center Network. "Thanks

to Congressman Engel for his support of Health Centers and all his efforts in helping to secure funding for Community Health Centers such as the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center Network, Yonkers Health Center and Greenburgh Community Health Center.

"The Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center Network does tremendous work in the community, so I am pleased to announce that further federal funding has been allocated to them for that work," said Congressman Engel. "I have always believed health care is a right, not a privilege. Everyone deserves quality care, and that's exactly what our friends at the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center Network provide."

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## Board passes accountability requirements for police chaplains

**B**y a 16-0 vote Monday night, the Westchester County Board of Legislators approved a measure requiring that Westchester County police and public safety chaplains be active members of the clergy either residing in or presiding over congregations in Westchester.

The measure will codify as law requirements enacted as an executive order in January by County Executive George Latimer.

"It should go without saying that anyone serving as a public safety chaplain here should be a member of the clergy and a member of the community," said bill sponsor Legislator Terry Clements (D- New Rochelle, Pelham, Pelham Manor). "Unfortunately, this has not always been the case."

Board Chair Ben Boykin said, "The people of Westchester deserve an open, responsible government, not one that operates by rewarding cronies, and that's just what the Board intends to deliver. By backing County Executive Latimer's actions with a law, we will make it harder for future administrations to take Westchester go back to the way things were."

The law also requires that any chaplain be approved by the Commissioner of Public Safety and be included on a public list of such appointees provided twice yearly to the County Executive, County Attorney and Board of Legislators.

The measures come after two former Department of Public Safety chaplains, Jeremy Reichberg and Jona Rechnitz, became embroiled in an influence peddling scandal last year.

## Statement by City Council President Copeland on illegal actions at Memorial Field



**I** join my other City Council members in being outraged, disappointed and deeply disturbed about the unlawful destruction of the tennis bubble and courts at Memorial Field. Sadly, Mayor Richard Thomas has done a disservice to the people of Mount Vernon by destroying private property and using the city's police to protect his personal interests instead of the interests of the people of the City of Mount Vernon. Their actions have wide-

spread implications for how developers and other entrepreneurs will think about doing business in our city. Who would take the risk of investing in a place where contracts are not honored and the police will not intervene when the rule of law is ignored?

The mayor's actions must be stopped. That is why the Mount Vernon City Council filed an injunction against the mayor and Comptroller Deborah Reynolds to prohibit further illegal actions at Memorial Field. Additionally, on Monday, June 11, I hand delivered our concerns to Governor Andrew Cuomo and the Attorney General Barbara Underwood in Albany.

The City Council is committed to doing whatever is necessary to honor the city's contract and obligation to KELA Tennis. We are further committed to working with Westchester County to complete the renovation of Memorial Field and to fulfill our contractual obligation to complete the Tennis Center. The two are NOT mutually exclusive and we are doing everything within our power to make sure they happen.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Commercial and residential development in Mt. Vernon is out of control

**C**ommercial and residential development in Mount Vernon has long been out of control. It is now reaching epidemic proportions that are destroying every corner of the city.

Mount Vernon's three land use boards plead helplessness as they dole out zoning code variances, site plan approvals, and certificates of appropriateness to projects that, in a city that cared about itself, would merit no consideration. These boards live under the threat of Article 78 challenges from developers if they stray from the dictates of current law.

Our zoning code has not been updated since 1996. Our comprehensive plan dates from 1968 and is still the official standard, even though a new draft comprehensive plan has been waiting for approval by the City Council for almost ten years. A model tree ordinance was carefully researched and written by our volunteer CitizenTree organization. It, too, is stalled in City Council committee despite the endorsement of the Planning Board.

In Fleetwood, a travesty is unfolding as AppleMed Urgent Care prepares to cut down 5 majestic trees to make way for 3 additional parking spaces. Both the zoning and planning boards have approved

this outrage, despite vociferous protest from neighbors.

AppleMed's representatives have displayed disdain for our approval process and impatience that their plans have been delayed. Three members of CitizenTree, who have spoken at public hearings on the proposal, were dismissed by AppleMed's manager as the 'three crazy ladies'. AppleMed's attorney has disparaged our planning department's judgment that the project must also seek approval from the Architectural Review Board.

All that remains between these trees and the chain saw is the court of public opinion. Fleetwood's charming neighborhood character is being devastated. The neighborhood has lost 47 trees in the past 4 years to rampant development. Without trees, the commercial district becomes just another soulless hardscape.

What you can do:

to save the trees, write letters to the owner at [applemed504@gmail.com](mailto:applemed504@gmail.com), and comment on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AppleMedMountVernon/>; to save Mount Vernon, speak at City Council meetings in support of a new comprehensive plan and tree ordinance.

Eveline Feldmann  
Mount Vernon, NY

## Drive-in Movie series kicks off in Mt. Vernon



**O**n Friday, June 15, Mount Vernon kicked off its Drive-In Movie series with a showing of Marvel's Black Panther. The Drive-In Movie series is an expansion of the Mov-

ies in the Park series, bringing the community out for some great family friendly fun. Folks are provided with a beautiful summer evening, a great movie, and a fun old-school approach to the movies.

## Action Pest Control Exterminator Services



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## Mt. Vernon facing crippling fines for longstanding failure to upgrade sewer system

To stave off crippling fines and tax hikes, Mayor Richard Thomas has asked the comptroller and City Council to approve the funding – a net cost of \$122,000 for taxpayers – for the jobs and equipment needed to bring Mount Vernon's sewers into compliance with federal regulations.

At a meeting in Manhattan recently, the Department of Justice informed Mayor Thomas, who was joined by Council Members Marcus Griffith and Janice Duarte, that millions of dollars in fines – up to \$37,500 a day per violation – were imminent because of the city's decade-long failure to correct violations of the Clean Water Act. Every \$500,000 in fines equals a 1 percent increase

in property taxes.

According to Mayor Thomas, progress on correcting violations has been impeded by a lack of funding by the City Council and comptroller. "Mount Vernon has no money in its current budget to pay for its Planning Commissioner or City Engineer, two posts critical to bringing the city's sewers and storm drains into compliance," said Thomas.

Mayor Thomas said compliance can be achieved within 18 to 24 months if the City Council and comptroller pay for the necessary resources, which includes equipment purchases and funding the Planning Commissioner, City Engineer, a four-person crew for the Department of Public Works, and two grant writers in the Planning

Department.

The total cost is \$1.8 million, but the net cost to taxpayers would only be \$122,000, after \$1.6 million is offset by a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and \$114,000 in current vacancy savings. This contrasts with fines of \$37,500 a day that would hit \$1.2 million in a month.

"Mount Vernon has a decision to make," said Mayor Thomas. "We can embrace a course of action and benefit from positive outcomes – complying with federal regulations, stopping pollution of our waterways, protecting taxpayers and promoting economic growth. Or we can default into inaction, which buys nothing but bad outcomes – unaffordable

penalties, dirty water, crushing tax burdens and a city that will shed businesses and jobs. The choice is clear."

Mayor Thomas said he was asking the City Council and comptroller to work with him so that the city could quickly show the DOJ that it was making measurable progress toward compliance. He urged residents to attend City Council meetings to voice support for taking immediate action to achieve an affordable solution.

"Compliance, not defiance, is the answer," Mayor Thomas said. "Mount Vernon can afford to fix this problem. It can't afford not to."



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**MAYOR RICHARD THOMAS**  
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CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NEW YORK  
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CITY OF MOUNT VERNON MAYOR RICHARD THOMAS PRESENTS

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### POP-UP BBQ'S

SATURDAYS FROM JUL-AUG  
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## FLASHBACK

## Many rally and march on Mount Vernon's Memorial Field

Story by Janelle Allbritton, MPH



**Protesters organizing themselves at Memorial Field prior to speeches taking place**

On June 20, 2014, the press release for this year's Unity and the Community event was posted, announcing that the pastor of the Unity Baptist Tabernacle, Reverend Edward Mulraine, and one of our elected officials, Legislator Lyndon Williams, would be leading a rally to call for "long-needed renovations" and "express their concerns on the ongoing neglect of Memorial Field and its significance to the community."

Mulraine said, "We sit here, there's a hole in the ground and nothing has been done. Something needs to be done." According to Mulraine, Unity and the Community is five years old now. In prior years, they have tackled issues from "day care centers, violence, and mental health clinics being closed."

He said they are working to gather 10,000 signatures around the county to take to the county legislature and city hall. Mulraine said, "The delay is too long; people are deprived. The progress on Memorial Field starts and stops, and it's political reasons and bickering stops the progress, and we will be stuck at where we were 6-12 months ago."

On a phone interview, Williams noted, "Memorial Field is important to the entire Westchester County and Mount Vernon. We have been in several years in the state of dis-

repair. There are plans to renovate it, and we want to highlight that. It's one of the most important issues here in Mount Vernon. That is the impetus for this rally - solidarity with folks wanting to see Memorial Field restored."

On Wednesday, June 25th, Commissioner Anthony Bove personally invited Mulraine, by phone, to a private tour of Memorial Field, including car service to and from locations of his choice. Mulraine declined to meet Bove on both Thursday and Friday.

On Friday, June 27th, Mulraine was contacted by phone and asked for a statement since he had been provided with access to video documenting construction and progress on Memorial Field. He said he preferred to make his statement on video on the following day at Memorial Field.

On Saturday, June 28th, he was approached twice and invited to make a statement directly to the camera. He declined. Therefore, the link to a video clip of his speech is provided instead on YouTube.com/TFTNYC.

Other speakers included Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson, Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow, and Pastor Troy DeCohen.

The above story is a summary of the full version which is available online with video links until September 1, 2014.

## Board celebrates Caribbean-American Heritage Month



**(l to r) Board Chair Ben Boykin; HRC's Myrlene Chauvette and Judeson Saintil; Board Vice Chair Alfreda Williams and HRC's Heather Miller**  
(Photo Credit: Jaevon Boxhill)

The Westchester County Board of Legislators marked Caribbean-American Heritage Month with a special ceremony Monday night honoring Caribbean-American community leaders and organizations in Westchester.

This year's celebration focused on the contributions of local Haitian Americans to life in Westchester.

Board Vice Chair Alfreda Williams (D-Elmsford, Greenburgh, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown), presented a proclamation to The Haitian Resource Center. Founded in 2013 to serve the needs of the Haitian community in White Plains and beyond, the center provides enrichment programs for school children, referrals for immigration, citizenship, vocational, educational and other services, and produces a monthly TV show, *Sak Pasé*, on White Plains cable television, among other activities.

Accepting the honor, Judeson Saintil,

chairman of the HRC's advisory board, said, "I feel so blessed and privileged to be able to help our community. It's not just the Haitian community, it's everybody. Anybody that needs help, we're here for you."

A proclamation was presented to decorated Mount Vernon firefighter and community volunteer Lieutenant Mike Jean-Jerome. Among Lieutenant Jean-Jerome's community activities is his work as a counselor for the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, which provides an alternative to jail for young men awaiting disposition of various criminal charges. Lt. Jean-Jerome called out one of the young men he's worked with noting that he has now taken the test to become a Mount Vernon firefighter. "These are the reasons why I do the things I do," Lt. Jean-Jerome said.

## Pelham Art Center faculty and student showcase (July 13 - August 18)

Pelham Art Center is pleased to present its highly popular Faculty and Student Showcase.

This annual exhibition features new work in a variety of mediums by the Art Center's distinguished artist-instructors and enthusiastic students. Exhibited work ranges from charcoal to oils, photographs to collage, and mixed media to ceramics and knitting. This exhibition provides a great opportunity to view and collect original art from emerging and established artists, and to view the results from the wide variety of classes offered by the Pelham Art Center.

Since its founding in 1970, the Pelham Art Center faculty has grown as the Art Center has increased course offerings

to embrace new media while continuing to provide instruction in traditional techniques. From beginners to accomplished artists, students of all ages who want to explore their creative potential have flourished by working with Pelham Art Center's teaching artists. More than 1,320 students, from three to ninety-plus years old, attended over 150 visual art classes and workshops offered at the Art Center this past year. These classes are taught by more than thirty art educators, many of whom are participating in this exhibition alongside their students.

Opening reception is being held, Friday July 13, 6:30-8:00 pm. Free and open to all.



## Pennington School's 2nd Annual Apex Fun Run a huge success



*Students enjoying the Apex Fun Run activities*

Students and staff recently held Pennington School's 2nd Annual Apex Fun Run, which is the school's major fundraiser this semester.

Apex Fun Run is a two-week leadership and fitness program that raises money for the top schools in America. Each student receives daily character lessons and awards as they learn what it takes to be



a true leader. They also received pledges for each lap they ran around the Apex Raceway during the fun run (26-36 laps, 36 max).

The public was asked to consider do-

ating \$1, \$3, and \$5 per lap or any other amount to a student to help them reach their budget goals for this year.

Once again, the school's Annual Apex Fun Run was a huge success.



## Zeta Nu Omega Chapter sponsors mini-model UN conference at Mercy College



*Zeta Nu Omega members displaying the UN flag*

The Zeta Nu Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. partnered with the United Nations Association - USA Westchester Chapter - to sponsor a Mini-Model United Nations conference on June 2 at the Dobbs Ferry Campus of Mercy College. Model UN is a simulation of the UN organization and its participants take roles of "delegates" from various countries and debate current issues.

With several chapter members and students in attendance, Professor Michiko Kuroda of the International Relations and Diplomacy Program (IRDP) of Mercy College and a panel of smart and spirited IRDP Mercy college students trained and practiced with participants in preparing for a conference as "delegates".

The subject matter and current issue was on climate change and participants

represented different countries including but not limited to Canada, Japan, China, France and the United States. Participants acted as diplomats, made speeches, negotiated, drafted resolutions and adopted resolutions during the day long program. It was recognized that climate change is a complex problem through the viewpoint of the several countries represented during the simulation.

Remarks were made by Zeta Nu Omega Chapter President Kristel Johnson and Dr. Brenda Smith, who is the Vice President of UNA-USA and also serves as Zeta Nu Omega Chapter's co-chairman of the Environmental Ownership committee. Everyone who attended built a bigger capacity to the views of other countries and all left the conference with a stronger knowledge and understanding of the great work of the UN.



### Authentic Puerto Rican Recipes

#### Asopao de Pollo

- 1-1/2 cup short-grained rice
- 3 garlic cloves, pressed
- 2 peppercorns
- 2 medium onions, peeled
- 2 sweet chili or banana peppers
- 4-6 culantro leaves or 6-8 sprigs of cilantro
- 2-1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons plus one teaspoon olive oil
- 1 whole chicken cut into pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 1/2 cup tomato sauce
- 8 cups water or chicken stock
- 1 cup of frozen sweet peas
- 1 4-ounce can of whole, roasted pimiento peppers, sliced
- 1 can asparagus tips

Rub the chicken with salt, pepper and oregano and one teaspoon olive oil and set aside for 30 minutes. In the blender, purée the garlic, onions, peppercorns, chili peppers culantro and sweet peppers, with the remaining olive oil. In a large caldero sauté the sofrito purée for 5 minutes over medium-low heat. Brown the chicken pieces to seal in their flavor. Add the tomato sauce and the chicken stock or water to the chicken and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Rinse the rice under cool running water until it runs clear. Drain the rice and stir into the soup pot. Raise the heat and bring to a boil once more. Reduce heat to medium and cook uncovered for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the peas and cook for an additional 5-10 minutes or until the asopao is as liquid or dry as you prefer. Heat the sliced pimientos and the asparagus in their juices. Drain and use to garnish each plate of asopao. (Serves 6)  
Serve with tostones....



### Alternative Medicine Options by Joe Parisi

#### Ease chronic pain with fish oils

There's evidence that you may be able to ease certain types of chronic pain by consuming foods or supplements that are high in omega-3 essential fatty acids. Omega-3s, commonly called "fish oil" because of their primary source, have been shown to lessen the intensity of joint pain and stiffness in rheumatoid arthritis and neck and back pain, as well as pain caused by inflammatory bowel disease and menstrual cramps.

Omega-3 fatty acids lower inflammation within the body, which helps reduce conditions such as heart disease. The same mechanism may be at work in lowering pain.

Indeed, some research subjects with chronic pain who took 1,200 to 2,400 milligrams of omega-3 in supplement form daily were able to reduce or eliminate their use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, in less than three months. Those medications, such as ibuprofen, can cause troublesome and

sometimes dangerous side effects, especially with long-term use. Fish oil, even in supplement form, appears to be safer.

Check with your health care provider if you are taking blood thinners or high doses of aspirin before taking omega-3 supplements. (It's wise to talk with your health care provider before starting any vitamin or supplement regimen, especially if you have a chronic condition, such as high blood pressure, or take medication regularly.)

The highest levels of omega-3s in food are found in fatty fish such as mackerel, Atlantic or sockeye salmon, lake trout, herring, sardines and canned light tuna. Two 3.5-ounce portions weekly can help lower inflammation, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Following a Mediterranean-type diet—with emphasis mainly on fish, vegetables, fruits and little saturated fat—also appears to help reduce arthritic pain.



## Boys & Girls Club of Mt. Vernon children receive free bikes at Wartburg



*Children receiving the free bikes*

**W**artburg, an award-winning provider of comprehensive residential and healthcare services for seniors, hosted Barnum Financial Group and Foundation for Life to surprise almost 30 children from the Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon with a brand new bike. The Bikes for Kids

program provides an uplifting and empowering experience for kids who need it most. Since its inception, the Bikes for Kids program have given away over 3,000 bikes and helmets to underprivileged children.

Wartburg President & CEO, Dr. David J. Gentner explained "What a wonderful way for Wartburg to come full circle as our meadow is steeped in decades of children playing. It is a great use of the resources, and it is our hope that Wartburg's residents enjoyed the inter-generational excitement." Danny Bernstein, President at Backyard Sports, went on to say, "It never fails to amaze me about the transformative power of a nice day, a few balls, green grass, and caring people. Bike Day is less about Community or Corporate Giving, but more about people coming together for common good. Hats off to the Foundation for Life, Wartburg, and all the volunteer and participants for reminding all of us that the resources for making our community better are within all of us."

Almost 30 children from the Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon and their families were invited to participate in a free sports clinic and afterward were surprised with a new bike and helmet. They not only had a great day but they benefited from the exercise bike riding offers as well as the pride and responsibility of owning a bike. The mission of the Bikes for Kids program is to get kids out into their own communities in a fun and healthy way.

"I remember what my first bike meant to me," said Caitlin Beaudry, a financial services representative in Barnum's Shelton office and a member of the foundation's board. "My colleagues and I at Barnum are proud to give youngsters the same thrill we had when we got our first bike. I even had one girl ask me to help her practice riding as she has never owned a bike before."

## EDUCATION COLUMN

*By Diane Fulves, M.A., M.Ed.,  
Director, EMPOWERING OUR PARENTS  
Email: dee076@verizon.net*

### Tips for a great summer

**O**ur long awaited summer has arrived, many weeks of fun, relaxation, and all the summer pleasures. As we look forward to this wonderful vacation, there are many activities for children that will keep their brains stimulated and help them learn while having fun. This is particularly important for children who have special learning issues. These ten weeks can mean a significant loss of information and skills, if we are not careful.

Some children may find it very difficult to get back into their academic work in September when they have spent the lazy days of summer just hanging out, watching television, or playing video games. If your children have not succeeded during the school year, parents may be looking for an educational program or a private tutor. Summer school may be a recommendation. Before selecting a program, parents must be sure that the program fits their children's needs. It is essential that you speak to the teacher to know the program they will offer to students. You do not want your children sitting in a room simply completing worksheets to fulfill the summer school requirement. You want a program that fits the needs of your children. Parents must ask questions. Is the teacher familiar with specific learning deficits? What strategies will be implemented to help overcome deficits? Does the teacher have suggestions for activities to reinforce learning at

home? Is the teacher patient? Listen to their responses, then make a careful decision.

Plan ahead to keep minds active. Gather materials you have at home and put them in a place where you can find them when you need them. You may have phonics, reading and math workbooks, paper, pencils, pens, and crayons. Schedule some time during the week to review skills. This doesn't have to be each day but if you want your children to retain their skills, it is important to reinforce their knowledge. This will make a big difference when they return to school in September.

Don't forget to use your public library. During the summer, libraries offer programs for children that are free of charge. Take the time to share these events with your children.

While you are there, gather some books for summer reading. Librarians can help you find books that are appropriate and interesting. Set aside some time to read each day, and if you can, read with your children. This builds a special bond with them. Take turns reading their books aloud. Children love to hear their parents bring the characters to life. This is one way we can encourage them to read and develop a love of reading. Everyone leads busy lives, but taking fifteen or twenty minutes to read together lets our children know that we believe that reading is valuable. When our children can read, they have power. So share the adventure. Cuddle up with your books and read.



*Children enjoying themselves prior to receiving their free bikes*



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## Rain does not deter spectacular fireworks presentation



*In spite of light showers, the fireworks show was a big hit with the many in attendance*

This year's fireworks show was re-scheduled for Sunday, June 24, due to a threat of rain on Saturday, June 23. The change of schedule seemed like a brilliant idea since Sunday was a sunny and beautiful day, allowing hundreds to flock to Mount Vernon High School's track area to view the fireworks show. Many learned from previous shows and came equipped with folding chairs, blankets, pillows, snacks and other outdoor comfort items.

Attendance may have been equal to last year's fireworks show that attracted a legion of people.

Aside from entertaining the citizens of Mount Vernon, the event was intended as a toast to Mount Vernon's graduating high school seniors and a tribute to our nation's independence. And those that attended could not help to notice the masses of teenagers and young people as a whole that participated in the festive event.

In retrospect, Mount Vernonites previously enjoyed fireworks of this scale in their city back in 1953, when thousands

flocked to Memorial Field to attend a centennial celebration known as "Centurion." From September 27 to October 3, the citizens of Mount Vernon enjoyed seven thrilled-packed days consisting of parades, floats, ceremonies, celebrities from the entertainment world and many other fun-making events. And the climax was a spectacular fireworks display. Yes, those were happier times for Mount Vernonites, who lived, united as one big family and kids attended some of the best public schools in the country – not private schools.

The fireworks show was slightly marred by a passing shower that commenced simultaneously with the start of the fireworks show. But a little rain did not scare away the many in attendance anxious to watch the highly anticipated yearly spectacle of fireworks. Near the end of the fireworks presentation, the sky opened up and people ran for cover, but in spite of the rain, the crowd appeared content as they ventured home.



*DPW Commissioner Joseph Nigro and Mayor Richard Thomas (r)*



*The children had an abundance of play stations to enjoy*



*People gathering in anticipation of the fireworks show*



*Brother Arthur Muhammad (r) was the DJ for the event*



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## Rebecca Turner School teachers, staff and families raise \$885 through Autism Awareness Walk



**R**ebecca Turner Elementary School's teachers, staff and families came out to support students with autism on Sunday, June 3, at the Westchester/Fairfield Autism Speaks Walk and raised \$885 for the organization.

Raising funds to support students with autism spectrum disorders is important to Rebecca Turner because the school, in addition to educating students from pre-school through fifth grade, is also home to an autism cohort of eight classrooms.

The cohort classes at the school are primarily for students with autism spectrum disorders, speech and language impairments, and/or other global developmental delays, who benefit from a small class size and student-to-teacher ratio. These classes use the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis to increase desirable learning behaviors and decrease those behaviors that are a barrier to progress and learning. A significant focus is on the students' language skills including: requesting, labeling, responding to language as a listener, and engaging in communication exchange-

ing, whether it be via spoken language, sign language or other types of symbol representation (i.e.: pictures and printed words).

"Working with students with autism has been a lifelong passion for me," said Danielle Grandazzo, a special education teacher in the cohort and Rebecca Turner's Autism Speaks team leader. "We were there for the kids. It was for the children that we service. Walking for Autism Speaks and raising money for this worthy cause goes to show that this is what we love."

The money will go directly to Autism Speaks, which is dedicated to promoting solutions across the spectrum and throughout the life span, for the needs of individuals with autism and their families through advocacy and support; increasing understanding and acceptance of people with autism spectrum disorder; and advancing research into causes and better interventions for autism spectrum disorder and related conditions.

## MVHS pool will open to the public for family laps and swimming this summer

**T**he Mount Vernon City School District is opening the Mount Vernon High School pool this summer to host family laps and swimming starting Monday, July 9.

The pool will be available to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon. School district residents interested in enjoying the pool will need to bring proof of residency and pay a fee of \$5 per person per visit.

Four lanes of the pool will be available for open swimming and two lanes will be open for lap swimming only. Children 13 and under must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Swimmers with flotation devices must be within an arm's reach of a supervising adult. Only U.S. Coast

Guard-approved flotation devices will be allowed.

In July 2015, Assemblyman J. Gary Pretlow announced the allocation of \$1 million in state funding to make necessary repairs to the pool. It was affected by a leak in 2010 and due to budget cuts, the district was not able to afford repairs. The capital secured by Pretlow allowed Mount Vernon to bring the pool into compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

Renovating the high school pool was a priority for the district, but the funding secured by Pretlow accelerated the plan, which consisted of three phases and was completed in December, 2017.

For more information about family laps and swimming, contact ariullano@mtvernoncsd.org.



Joe Parisi, Publisher/Editor  
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*\* Children must be 4 years old by December 1. Bring your child's birth certificate, immunizations, a current lease or deed, a utility bill and a picture ID.*

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