

New NAR President Promises Change In Aftermath of Harassment Scandal

By John Jordan

WASHINGTON—In a video message posted on Sept. 7, National Association of Realtors President Tracy Kasper acknowledged the pain caused by the charges of harassment and discrimination at NAR that led to the resignation of former NAR President Kenny Parcell on Aug. 28. (See story on page 3).

Kasper, who was named NAR President on Aug. 28, acknowledged that in the aftermath of the scandal that members and staff “are hurting right now. Their trust has been broken. It is upsetting to hear that some members and staff have not felt safe or respected and I want you to know that I hear you, the Leadership Team and the Executive Committee hears you. We must figure out what NAR needs to do to make sure that every member and every association staff person always feels respected and valued.”

In her video message, Kasper detailed a number of initiatives NAR has already undertaken to investigate how instances of discrimination and harassment were reported and addressed and how the association can make improvements to its operations, includ-

ing better screening of volunteer association Board members. “I can promise you going forward, we will do and be better,” Kasper said.

She related that NAR plans to hire outside experts to assess the process in which harassment reports are investigated and the outcomes of those probes. “We expect that there will be recommendations to implement new and better safeguards and procedures,” she related.

She also reported that NAR plans to take a hard look at how its leaders are selected, the power and control they now have and how they interact with the association’s staff of professionals.

Kasper said that one of the questions being asked by members in the aftermath of the Parcell resignation is even if the alleged behavior was not illegal, why wasn’t more done to stop it? She related that in the past year NAR has implemented a number of policies to address the conduct and behavior of volunteer leaders.

“But what we are seeing and experiencing show us is that those new policies and practices still are not enough,” Kasper said in the video message.



NAR President Tracy Kasper

“There is so much work that needs to be done.”

NAR is also in the process of assembling a “Culture PAG” (President’s Advisory Group) that will include contributions from NAR members, state and local association executives, as well as NAR staff members.

Kasper also revealed that NAR has retained Dr. Shaun Harper, a DEI expert,

to guide the Culture PAG toward recommendations.

While stressing that NAR has taken quick actions to address the issues raised in days following the Parcell harassment claims and resignation, she noted, “We also want to get this right. We have to listen better, we have to take meaningful action, we have to do better by our members and our staff,” she said.

She concluded her remarks with a hopeful plea for unity. “Please, know that as hard as this moment is, I still very much have faith in this organization. There are so many people who care. So many people who want to do the right thing. You have the unwavering commitment of the Executive Committee, the leadership team and me to get this right.” Kasper said. “Because no one should feel anything less than heard, empowered and able to do their work in an environment they feel safe and respected. And I need each and every member beside us on this, each and every member treating each other and every member of staff with dignity and respect.”

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Report Shows the Cost of Homeownership, Rent Is Out of Reach for Many in the Hudson Valley

By John Jordan

NEWBURGH—Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress released a new report on Sept. 12 that clearly identifies an affordability crisis for housing in the region, fueled by stagnant wages, increasing rents, and skyrocketing home prices that have stretched household budgets to their limits.

The report, *Out of Reach Hudson Valley 2023*, used federal and local data to examine the gap between wages and the cost of rental housing for those living in the nine-county region. Pattern also examined the affordability of homeownership throughout the Hudson Valley by comparing median home prices to the mortgages for which typical families would qualify in

each county.

The data show a persistent and clear trend across the entire Hudson Valley: the cost of housing has pushed beyond reasonable levels of affordability for most of our neighbors. A single worker cannot afford fair-market rent for a one-bedroom apartment in any of the nine counties, and median home prices are more than \$100,000 higher than the mortgage that typical families would qualify for in every county, Pattern officials stated.

“The data we analyze each year tell a clear and troubling story: most of our neighbors cannot afford to live in the communities where they work,” Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress CEO Adam Bosch said. “As our neighbors choose to leave the region, have smaller families, and our workforce slowly shrinks, the Hudson Valley is

starting to feel some of the most painful ramifications of stagnant housing and zoning policies. Civic leaders at every level must rally around evidence-based solutions to solve our regional crisis of housing affordability and availability. The vibrancy and viability of our communities will depend on actions that encourage the production of more housing at prices our working-class neighbors can afford.”

The Pattern report utilized county-by-county data from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, which examined hourly wages and fair-market rents to measure the affordability of rental housing. (Fair-market rent is the 40th percentile of renters who have moved within the past two years, which means it is lower than median market-rate rents.) Affordability is calculated by

the standard that no individual or family should spend more than 30% of its total monthly income on housing.

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The Homeownership Gap

| | Q2 2023 Median Sale Price (NYSAR) | 6% Down Payment for Median | Mortgage Needed to Afford Median | Mortgage Gap for Median | |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | Single Householder | 2 Person Household |
| Columbia | \$450,000 | \$27,000 | \$423,000 | -\$286,972 | -\$251,649 |
| Dutchess | \$414,000 | \$24,840 | \$389,160 | -\$187,372 | -\$142,656 |
| Greene | \$346,000 | \$20,760 | \$325,240 | -\$216,267 | -\$185,078 |
| Orange | \$395,000 | \$23,700 | \$371,300 | -\$169,512 | -\$124,796 |
| Putnam | \$450,000 | \$27,000 | \$423,000 | -\$162,592 | -\$109,609 |
| Rockland | \$588,000 | \$35,280 | \$552,720 | -\$292,312 | -\$239,329 |
| Sullivan | \$275,000 | \$16,500 | \$258,500 | -\$155,915 | -\$125,478 |
| Ulster | \$400,000 | \$24,000 | \$376,000 | -\$219,680 | -\$181,727 |
| Westchester | \$650,000 | \$39,000 | \$611,000 | -\$335,937 | -\$280,699 |

SOURCE: HUDSON VALLEY PATTERN FOR PROGRESS CENTER FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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Report Shows the Cost of Homeownership, Rent Is Out of Reach for Many in the Hudson Valley

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ing. Pattern also used that standard to measure the affordability of homeownership in the Hudson Valley. Pattern calculated the mortgage for which households earning the area median income would qualify and compared that to the median price of homes in each county. Pattern examined these data for the nine-county region, including Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester counties.

The report noted that all prospective homebuyers who earn the Annual Median Income in the respective nine Hudson Valley counties have a gap well in excess of \$100,000 for the median-priced home for both single households and two person households.

The mortgage gaps for two-person households were: Columbia, \$251,649; Dutchess, \$142,656; Greene, \$185,078; **Orange, \$124,796; Putnam, \$109,609; Rockland, \$239,329; Sullivan, \$125,478; Ulster, \$181,727 and Westchester, \$280,699.**

Alarming data in terms of the rental apartment market is the annual wage gap in the Hudson Valley for median wage earners seeking units priced at fair market value. The following are the wage gaps for those earning the median annual wage in each county seeking a two-bedroom fair market rate unit: Columbia, \$15,582; Dutchess, \$25,224; Greene, \$19,799; **Orange, \$30,830; Putnam, \$61,144; Rockland, \$64,954; Sullivan, \$8,130; Ulster, \$29,753 and Westchester, \$25,653.**

Some of the key conclusions from the report included:

- Single adults working 40 hours per week on average renter wages cannot afford a one-bedroom apartment in any of the nine counties. Renters would need to earn anywhere from \$1 to \$26 more per hour to afford rent in their respective counties. Renters in every county are considered “cost burdened.”

- Fair-market rents would need to decline anywhere from \$33 to \$1,343 per month to make them af-

fordable for a person earning average renter wages across the region.

- Families are also stretched thin. Two working adults in a two-bedroom apartment can afford rent in seven of the nine counties. Fair-

- An analysis of income data found that low-, moderate-, and middle-income earners saw their spending power stagnate or decline from 2010-2021. The trend for the bottom two-fifths of earners, which

ers coming into the Hudson Valley labor pool are only a fraction of their size. Consequentially, almost every industry sector in the nine-county region is struggling to find enough workers to meet their needs for labor. Pattern explained this trend—and its connection to housing in a report released this past May entitled *The Great People Shortage and its Effects on the Hudson Valley* region. A copy of the report can be accessed at: <https://www.pattern-for-progress.org/portfolio/the-great-people-shortage-a-special-report-analyzing-hudson-valley-demographic-trends-and-consequences/>

In its recently released “Out of Reach” report, Pattern stated: “Wage stagnation in our lower income brackets paired with skyrocketing housing and living costs have created an affordability crisis with devastating consequences for our hardworking neighbors and our entire region.” Earlier this year, Pattern released “The Great People Shortage and its Effects on the Hudson Valley,” which found that the Hudson Valley region lost a net of more than 130,000 people to migration since 1996. A national survey by the U.S. Census Bureau found the top reasons cited for leaving New York State were housing-related: more affordable and higher quality housing, or the opportunity to buy a home elsewhere.

Pattern stated that its “Out of Reach” report’s findings were troubling. “The solutions to our affordability crisis are not simple, and they cannot focus on one corner of our civic structure alone. State and federal governments must work to ensure that our hardworking neighbors are compensated fairly. To meet the demand for housing, state and local governments must adopt significant changes to land-use and housing policies that support the kind of development that is affordable for our residents. These efforts must include deeply affordable rentals as well as new opportunities for homeownership; many tenants are paying more in rent than they would on monthly mortgage payments, but traditional pathways to homeownership are unviable due to prices that have far outpaced incomes.”

The Out of Reach report can be accessed at: <https://www.pattern-for-progress.org/portfolio/out-of-reach-2023/>

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress is a nonprofit organization that provides objective research, planning, and educational training throughout the region. Its work identifies civic challenges and promotes regional, equitable, and sustainable solutions to constantly improve the quality of life in Hudson Valley communities.

Annual Wage Gap

| | Renter Annual Wage | To afford 1 BR FMR | To afford 2 BR FMR | 1 BR FMR Gap | 2 BR FMR Gap |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Columbia | \$28,698 | \$38,080 | \$44,280 | -\$9,382 | -\$15,582 |
| Dutchess | \$38,096 | \$49,320 | \$63,320 | -\$11,224 | -\$25,224 |
| Greene | \$25,121 | \$37,240 | \$44,920 | -\$12,119 | -\$19,799 |
| Orange | \$32,490 | \$49,320 | \$63,320 | -\$16,830 | -\$30,830 |
| Putnam | \$36,896 | \$86,800 | \$98,040 | -\$49,904 | -\$61,144 |
| Rockland | \$33,086 | \$86,800 | \$98,040 | -\$53,714 | -\$64,954 |
| Sullivan | \$32,190 | \$33,520 | \$40,320 | -\$1,330 | -\$8,130 |
| Ulster | \$30,167 | \$46,200 | \$59,920 | -\$16,033 | -\$29,753 |
| Westchester | \$55,507 | \$66,760 | \$81,160 | -\$11,253 | -\$25,653 |

SOURCE: HUDSON VALLEY PATTERN FOR PROGRESS CENTER FOR HOUSING SOLUTIONS & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

market rents remain unaffordable in Putnam and Rockland. However, two working renters meet the affordability standard by less than \$100 per month in Orange and Ulster counties, which leaves little money left over for other expenditures or emergencies.

- Wages earned by a typical renter ranged from 39% to 61% of the area median income, a key metric for housing policies and programs.

- Since 2010, renters have comprised a larger proportion of all households in the Hudson Valley. From 2010-2021, the region saw an 8% increase in renter-occupied households and a 2% increase in owner-occupied households. The growth in renter-occupied households outpaced owner households by 2-to-1.

- The median price of a home in the Hudson Valley exceeds mortgage qualifications for the typical household by more than \$100,000 in all nine counties. For a two-person household, the gap is anywhere from \$109,609 in Putnam County to \$280,699 in Westchester County. Data indicate that more middle-income households are staying in rentals as the cost of homeownership gets further out of reach for a greater proportion of them.

generally include people making up to \$50,000 per year, are of special concern. These workers have seen their wages flatten or decline relative to inflation, exacerbating their financial stress for housing and other necessary expenses. For earners in the lowest two quintiles, the Hudson Valley has seen wage growth that significantly underperformed statewide and national trends.

The data from the report indicate that renters and homeowners in the Hudson Valley have little to spend on necessary and discretionary expenses because the cost of housing is gobbling up a large proportion of their incomes. Many service workers, for example, are living month-to-month with little money left over for savings or emergencies. This has broader implications for the Hudson Valley. For example, migration data from the Internal Revenue Service show that more people have moved out of the Hudson Valley than into it for 24 of the last 25 years—a trend that has resulted in a net loss of 134,505 people since 1996. State education data show there are 34,088 fewer children in our schools than in 1996, Pattern officials stated. These deleterious trends are connected to, and partially caused by, the relatively high cost of housing in the Hudson Valley.

As a result, the region is now struggling through the early stages of a workforce crisis. Data show that our workforce shortages will also worsen in the next two decades unless the region can see a shift in well-established population trends. Currently, the older half of the labor pool (45-64) outnumbers the younger half (ages 25-44) by approximately 100,000 people. As the Baby Boomer generation continues to retire in larger numbers, the cohorts of work-

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Kasper (AHWD, C2EX, CIPS, CRS, GRI, SFR), is a Realtor from Nampa, ID and the Broker-Owner of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Silverhawk Realty in the Boise Valley and a majority owner in two other Idaho real estate companies. With 30 years of experience in real estate, she still lists and sells both residential and commercial real estate in addition to her Broker-Owner duties.

At the national level, Kasper has served on the NAR Board of Directors since 2016, and has chaired the 50th Anniversary of the RPAC Implementation Group in 2018. She was a member of the Future of the REALTOR Party Presidential Advisory Group (PAG) in 2017 and the RPAC State Fundraising Partnership Goal PAG in 2016.

She has been a dedicated member of the Idaho Association of Realtors

since 1997. She served as its president in 2016 and was selected as Realtor of the Year that same year. At the local level, Kasper belongs to five local Idaho associations. She is a past president of the Nampa Association of Realtors, and is a past Realtor of the Year for both the Nampa (2001) and Caldwell (2011) boards.

She has served for many years on her local chamber, was Chairman of the Board for the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce in 2009, and is a former Honorary Commander for the Idaho Air National Guard in Boise. Kasper and her husband, Mike, have seven grown children, four of whom are married. Between them, they have six grandchildren. In her spare time, she has helped to raise more than \$500,000 for a variety of youth charities in the Boise Valley.



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NAR President Kenny Parcell Resigns Amid Sexual Harassment Allegations

By John Jordan

CHICAGO—Two days after a *New York Times* report that detailed claims of sexual harassment against National Association of Realtors President Kenny Parcell, the Utah-based Realtor executive, while denying the allegations, resigned from the post on Monday (Aug. 28) effective immediately. President-Elect Tracy Kasper took over as NAR President effective immediately.

The allegations and subsequent fallout are a black-eye to an organization that has prided itself in embracing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion principles as well as fostering a safe workplace environment. In fact, earlier this month NAR's *Realtor Magazine* published an article entitled "NAR Prioritizes a Respectful Workplace." NAR CEO Bob Goldberg said that the National Association of Realtors has a strong focus on respect that is a longstanding commitment that starts with training for staff and volunteer leaders. The article stated, "As sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace reaches a new level of consciousness in society, the National Association of Realtors says it is committed to providing a productive and welcoming environment for its 350 full-time staff members. This means making clear that discrimination, harassment and retaliation will never be tolerated by the association, including within employee workspaces and at NAR-sanctioned events," says CEO Goldberg. "And it means do-

ing everything possible to create and maintain a culture that pays proper respect to the immense amount of trust placed in the association."

"NAR consistently strives to improve our workplace for every employee, and we have a robust set of policies, protocols and training programs in place to help us maintain a positive, respectful

"NAR consistently strives to improve our workplace for every employee, and we have a robust set of policies, protocols and training programs in place to help us maintain a positive, respectful working environment. We pride ourselves on following the best governance practices in place throughout our nation, and we remain focused on fostering a culture that encourages our people to be heard and come forward if needed."

NAR CEO Bob Goldberg

working environment." Goldberg said. "We pride ourselves on following the best governance practices in place throughout our nation, and we remain focused on fostering a culture that encourages our people to be heard and come forward if needed." NAR's annual employee anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training supports those principles, the *Realtor Magazine* article stated.

The *New York Times* reported on Saturday, Aug. 26 allegations by multiple women who said they had been harassed or subjected to inappropriate conduct by NAR President Parcell. The harassment claims were based on interviews, a lawsuit that was eventually settled and an internal report. Parcell, 50, denied the accusations in written

responses to *The New York Times* and in his resignation letter on Monday.

Multiple media outlets reported that a number of high-profile Realtors called for Parcell's resignation in response to the *New York Times* report.

"I was very disturbed to read the *New York Times* report on the brazen attitudes and alleged behaviors of leaders at the National Association of Realtors," said Sue Yannaccone, president and CEO of Anywhere Brands and Anywhere Advisors, according to a *RIS-Media* report. "Given our predominantly female industry, I am incredibly disappointed by the reporter's findings as NAR is supposed to be a guidepost for our industry."

The *New York Times* reported that, Jason Haber, a real estate agent with Compass, started a Change.org petition over the weekend that demanded Parcell resign as NAR President.

Parcell's resignation letter stated: *Executive Committee and Board of Directors,*

This letter serves as my resignation as President of the National Association of Realtors. Being elected to this position has been a highlight in my career.

My resignation comes after a series of accusations against me that are categorically false. I am deeply troubled by those looking to tarnish my character and mischaracterize my well-intended actions.

During this experience I've opened myself to listening and looking for



Former NAR President Kenny Parcell

ways to improve myself, but all I can do is tell the truth. I've been shocked by these false accusations, hurtful words, whispers, and character assassination.

Putting the organization and the Brand first comes with the title of President. Leadership is about making tough choices; this resignation signifies that I will put the organizations' needs first to move forward above my own personal needs to stay in this position. I truly appreciate the support and true friendships that I have made during my volunteering at NAR.

*Sincerely,
Kenny Parcell*

Parcell was installed as 2023 President of the National Association of

Please turn to page 6

DISAPPOINTED?



Most Westchester Boards of Assessment Review will issue their decisions on or around September 15th. If you or anyone you know are disappointed with either a denial or insufficient reduction, you should know that there's a second opportunity to seek a reduction; via the Small Claims Assessment Review (SCAR) process. Please call for information!

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Tony D'Anzica
HGAR President



The MLS Increases Competition, Levels Playing Field for Consumer

Many Realtors today are worried about a string of anti-trust lawsuits filed against NAR alleging anti-competitive practices. While NAR is vigorously challenging those lawsuits, one of which was recently dismissed, the average Realtor needs to focus on the value benefits that Realtors bring to each transaction.

Contrary to the allegations in those lawsuits, participation in local MLS broker marketplaces increases competition by leveling the playing field for small real estate firms and new market entrants, allowing firms of all sizes to compete. This gives consumers greater choice and far more freedom to choose whom they wish to work with, what levels of service they prefer, and which pricing model suits their needs.

Realtors work together for the benefit of consumers to promote equity, transparency and market-driven pricing options for consumers. It is unquestioned that local MLS broker marketplaces provide consumers with the largest database of available homes for sale, ensure the most accurate property info and listing status information, and facilitate cooperation between buyer and selling brokers.

Every sales listing gets maximum exposure giving sellers access to more buyers, and buyers' access to the most choices. Reliable property information mitigates against the possibility for misrepresentation and confusion, allowing buyers and sellers to

negotiate on a level playing field.

Every buyer and seller who works with a Realtor works with a *licensed* and *trained* real estate professional who operates under a strict Code of Ethics that compels Realtors to protect and promote the interests of their clients. Our Code of Ethics promotes professionalism and demands that Realtors owe their clients the fiduciary duties of obedience, loyalty, disclosure, confidentiality, accountability and reasonable care/diligence. Fairness, honesty, and transparency are the pillars of our Code of Ethics.

Recently, I had the privilege of addressing nearly 1,000 real estate professionals at a real estate convention in Lisbon, Portugal. I spoke to them about our Code of Ethics and the fiduciary obligations of Realtors to their clients. I was astonished at their interest in this subject and the amount of attention it received. Those real estate professionals, unlike many in the United States who take our Code of Ethics for granted, understood that a free, fair, transparent, and competitive marketplace can only exist when there are rules that bind Realtors to an ethical relationship of trust with their clients and with consumers.

If any of the current lawsuits against NAR succeed, consumers would be the most detrimentally impacted with the result that homebuyers would be discouraged from obtaining professional representation in

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Every sales listing gets maximum exposure giving sellers access to more buyers, and buyers' access to the most choices. Reliable property information mitigates against the possibility for misrepresentation and confusion, allowing buyers and sellers to negotiate on a level playing field.

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

By Lynda Fernandez
HGAR Chief Executive Officer



Meeting the Membership's Evolving Service Needs

As previously announced, I joined the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors as your Chief Executive Officer on Sept. 1. I am deeply honored and thrilled to be serving you along with the exceptional team of professionals and leaders at HGAR.

It is with a great sense of obligation to honor the illustrious legacy and history of HGAR that I express my gratitude to President Tony D'Anzica and the entire leadership for the opportunity to serve and to my predecessor Richard Haggerty for his important work to cement HGAR's position as a leading Realtor association in the U.S. and beyond.

HGAR and its leadership and staff have an outstanding reputation in the Realtor association community. I know I have big shoes to fill and I am committed to advancing and further strengthening the organization as we work together to embrace opportunities and withstand challenges.

Over the last few weeks, I have reconnected with old friends and already met many of you. Thank you so much for the warm welcome and endless well wishes. Your positivity,

authenticity, and dedication mean the world to me and are a great source of inspiration.

I believe my past experience at the Greater Louisville Association of Realtors and the MIAMI Association of Realtors offers me a diverse and fresh perspective that will allow me to bring HGAR enhanced value.

We have a responsibility to meet our members' evolving needs, consistently reviewing our offerings, value, and culture. I believe we can always do more and better to drive member engagement and success. While HGAR has successfully served you and the communities you serve for over a century, I see huge

I believe we can always do more and better to drive member engagement and success. While HGAR has successfully served you and the communities you serve for over a century, I see huge potential.

potential. In the coming months, I look forward to meeting many more of you and hearing your feedback. As we work on our new strategic plan, we will be taking a holistic approach to identify ways to ensure your success through advocacy, education and collaboration.

We will focus on streamlining processes, reviewing governance struc-

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IN MEMORIAM

Don Cummins

Veteran Realtor, Association Executive

WHITE PLAINS—The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors regrets to inform its membership of the tragic passing of real estate veteran, HGAR member, association executive and attorney Don Cummins on Friday, Sept. 1 at the age of 54.

Cummins was previously the Team Leader at Keller Williams Realty Partners of Baldwin Place and formerly served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Columbia Greene Board of Realtors and CEO of the Columbia Greene Northern Dutchess Multiple Listing Service. A well-known and well-liked Realtor, association executive and real estate instructor, Cummins served as the CEO of the Columbia Greene Board of Realtors from June 2019 until recently.

Prior to those positions, Cummins was hired as in-house legal counsel at the Westchester-Putnam Association of Realtors and assisted in the merger of the Orange County Association of Realtors and the Rockland County Board of Realtors into what would become the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors. He then served as HGAR's Director of Legal Services and Professional Standards until July 2015 when he was named manager of



Coldwell Banker's Yorktown Office.

At HGAR, Cummins was responsible for administering the professional standards and grievance proceedings for the entire lower Hudson Valley region, as well as providing legal counsel for the association and multiple listing service system.

A licensed attorney, Cummins had an extensive legal and real estate background. He began his legal career as the Fellowship Law Clerk to Chief Judge Michael Mukasey, U.S. Attorney General and then went on to join one of New York City's premiere Antitrust and Corporate Litigation law firms. Later, he opened his own legal practice in Westchester and Putnam counties and during that time he was the lead instructor and chair of the Education Committee of the former Putnam County Association of Realtors and was an instructor for the New York State Association of Realtors. His legal practice specialized in legal issues, will, trusts and estates and general litigation. He was named PCAR's Man of the Year in 2008.

A Celebration of Don's life was held on Saturday, Sept. 9 at 22 Mayfair Lane in Mahopac.

REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH

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Ransomware and Cyber Threats: The Real Estate And Other Industries are Under Attack, Again!

It is disheartening, but this column yet again has to address the very real threats that cyber-attacks and ransomware incidents pose to industries, including the real estate industry, and individuals. Recently there has been a wave of serious cyber and ransomware attacks against well-known companies, such as Rapattoni, one of the largest national companies providing hosting services to more than 100 multiple listing services (MLSs), as well as hotels and casinos, notably Caesars and the MGM Grand in Las Vegas [see <https://bit.ly/3LoiFTO>].

A few weeks ago, it was also reported that another individual in New York City lost \$746,000 in connection with a real estate purchase when she was “duped” into wiring funds to a cyber-criminal who hacked into her attorney’s e-mail account. When these attacks occur, the FBI and local law enforcement usually become involved immediately. These attacks result in billions of dollars of losses each year. In connection with ransomware attacks, companies are often forced to pay these criminals substantial amounts in ransom in order to regain access to their systems. On the other hand, when individuals are targeted, many times these individuals lose their entire life savings.

The Attack on Rapattoni

On Aug. 8, Rapattoni suffered a cyber-attack which sent shockwaves throughout the real estate industry. While the extent or economic effects of the attack may not be known precisely, many MLSs throughout the country, including the real estate agents and brokerage firms who rely on them, were severely affected and the economic costs will certainly be extensive.

As reported by journalist Mathew J. Schwartz [see <https://bit.ly/44Nlbss>] “Real estate agents’ ability to list or update property information has been compromised by an attack on...Rapattoni...” Schwartz explained that “Multiple regional MLS providers rely on Rapattoni’s services to identify new properties coming on the market, update home listings, and bring together buyers and sellers to facilitate offers and track purchase details, as well as track commissions for listing agents and the agent who secures a sale.” Agents and brokers had to resort to manual processes to update and share listings. It has been reported that the attack on Rapattoni was the “longest-running attack on an MLS.” [See <https://bit.ly/3LqwRvw>].

Alicia Hope of *CPO Magazine* [see <https://bit.ly/3t0mrfy>], reported, “With the cost of a data breach estimated at \$4.35 million, cyber-attacks pose an existential threat to most businesses.” She further noted that “the incident shows that cybercriminals are targeting the real estate industry for the vast amount of personal and financial information (including of wealthy individuals) it holds and the cost of disruption or data loss.” She also pointed out that real estate transactions are “lucrative targets for business e-mail compromise and wire fraud.”

The Real Estate Transaction: Wire Fraud is Very Real

On Aug. 26th, Kathianne Boniello of the *New York Post* reported that an individual in New York City, Leila Meltzer, the victim of a business e-mail compromise (BEC) attack, “lost the bulk of her savings after thieves hacked into her real estate lawyer’s e-mail and duped her into wiring them more than \$746,000.” [see <https://bit.ly/3Zkco19>]. Meltzer, a retired nurse, was in contract to purchase an apartment. She received an e-mail which she thought was from her own attorney. Hackers



had accessed her attorney’s e-mail account and instructed Meltzer to wire the balance owed on the transaction to an account controlled by the hackers. Meltzer did not discover that she had been the victim of fraud until two days later, but the funds had already been withdrawn and could not be recovered.

Meltzer reported the incident to the FBI and the NYPD. She also filed a lawsuit against her attorney “alleging the attorney was ‘oblivious to the threat of cybercrime’ and ‘failed to take even the most rudimentary steps to protect Meltzer from cyberfraud.’” Unfortunately, these cyberattacks are all too common, but it is critical that clients

questioning that funds or other sensitive information be sent to them (posing as you or someone else) via e-mail.

- Inform clients never to do anything without directly speaking with someone at your office.

- Alert clients that you will never send them any e-mails requesting such information without also calling the client directly and confirming such a request personally by telephone after any such e-mail has been sent.

- Most importantly, alert clients NOT to wire any funds to any person or entity without first calling your office to confirm same and to confirm the bank account and routing information.

On Aug. 8, Rapattoni suffered a cyber-attack which sent shockwaves throughout the real estate industry. While the extent or economic effects of the attack may not be known precisely, many MLSs throughout the country, including the real estate agents and brokerage firms who rely on them, were severely affected and the economic costs will certainly be extensive.

are informed about wire fraud and cybersecurity issues.

Taking Important Steps to Notify Clients of Cyber Threats

It is important to discuss the risks associated with cyber threats, wire fraud, BEC attacks, privacy issues, etc. at the very initial stages of representation. It is also recommended that these issues are detailed in writing and provided to the client so that the client is made aware of what to do in instances such as this. Below is language that should be utilized and included on all e-mails sent by attorneys and other professionals:

WARNING: FRAUD ALERT - BEWARE OF CYBER-FRAUD – If you receive an email from this office requesting that you wire or otherwise transfer funds, you must confirm the request and any corresponding instructions via telephone before you initiate any transfer. Hackers are targeting emails of attorneys, real estate brokers and other businesses in attempts to initiate fraudulent wire requests. YOU MUST CONFIRM THE TELEPHONE NUMBER OF THIS OFFICE WITH PREVIOUS EMAILS AND CORRESPONDENCE YOU HAVE RECEIVED FROM THIS OFFICE AND MUST CALL OUR OFFICE IN PERSON TO BE SURE IT IS ACCURATE.

It is also recommended that language be included in engagement letters, retainer agreements or in disclosures that are signed and acknowledged by the clients. Some of the points that should be covered may include the following:

- Highlight that there are high incidents of e-mail fraud and cyber security threats involving hacking and theft of personally identifiable information (e.g., Social Security numbers, bank account numbers and routing information).

- Alert clients that hackers may gain access to your e-mail and/or e-mail system and send false e-mails re-

questing that funds or other sensitive information be sent to them (posing as you or someone else) via e-mail.

Business E-mail Compromise (BEC) Threats

In 2022, IC3 received 21,832 complaints relating to BEC scams and losses totaled more than \$2.7 billion. According to the IC3, BEC is a “sophisticated scam targeting both businesses and individuals performing transfers of funds. The scam is frequently carried out when a subject compromises legitimate business e-mail accounts through social engineering or computer intrusion techniques to conduct unauthorized transfers of funds.” BEC scams commonly target individuals involved in real estate closings. The IC3 Recovery Asset Team (RAT), which assists with all aspects of cybercrimes, offers the following specific guidance to those victims of BEC crimes:

- Contact the originating financial institution as soon as fraud is recognized to request a recall or reversal and a Hold Harmless Letter or Letter of Indemnity.

- File a detailed complaint with www.ic3.gov. It is vital the complaint contain all required data in provided fields, including banking information.

- Visit www.ic3.gov for updated PSAs regarding BEC trends as well as other fraud schemes targeting specific populations, like trends targeting real estate, pre-paid cards, and W-2s, for example.

- Never make any payment changes without verifying the change with the intended recipient; verify e-mail addresses are accurate when checking e-mail on a cell phone or other mobile device.

Ransomware Crimes

The IC3 report explains that “Ransomware is a type of malicious software, or malware, that encrypts data on a computer, making it unusable. In addition to encrypting the network, the cyber-criminal will often steal data off the system and hold that data hostage until the ransom is paid. If the ransom is not paid, the victim’s data remains unavailable.” The IC3 notes, “Phishing e-mails, Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) exploitation, and exploitation of software vulnerabilities remained the top initial infection vectors for ransomware incidents reported to the IC3.” In 2022, the IC3 received 2,385 ransomware complaints and 39,416 extortion complaints, which amounted to losses exceeding \$34.3 million and \$54.3 million, respectively. However, the figures contained in the IC3 report may be well below the actual amounts.

According to a report by Chainalysis [see <https://bit.ly/3LqPjnB>], ransomware crimes are significantly on the rise in 2023, and “Ransomware attackers are on pace for their second-biggest year ever, having extorted at least \$449.1 million through June.” In all of 2022, the figure relating to ransomware attacks was just under \$500 million. Chainalysis projects that ransomware attacks will extort close to \$900 million if the pace continues, which will be second only to 2021, where the figure totaled nearly \$940 million—and, with the recent attacks, the pace does not seem to be slowing.

As we can see from the recent attacks on the Las Vegas casinos that **Please turn to page 18**

2022 FBI IC3 Report On Cyber Crimes

Each year the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) issues an in-depth annual report on the state of cyber-criminal activity in the United States and the risks posed by such activity. The FBI’s 2022 IC3 Report [see <https://bit.ly/3Rlt4TS>] states, “Today’s cyber landscape has provided ample opportunities for criminals and adversaries to target U.S. networks, attack our critical infrastructure, hold our money and data for ransom, facilitate large-scale fraud schemes, and threaten our national security.” While the 2022 IC3 Report indicates that there was a 5% decrease in reported incidents as compared to 2021, the “potential loss has grown from \$6.9 billion in 2021 to more than \$10.2 billion in 2022.” These totals are certain to increase in 2023. From 2018 to 2022, IC3 received 3.26 million complaints and losses during that time were \$27.6 billion.

IC3 Areas of Concern

According to the 2022 IC3 report, the top five cybercrimes involved



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NAR President Kenny Parcell Resigns Amid Sexual Harassment Allegations

Continued from page 3

Realtors during NAR NXT, The Realtor Experience, on Nov. 14 in Orlando, FL. Parcell, a Realtor from Spanish Fork, UT is the Broker-Owner of Equity Real Estate Utah. He served as NAR's vice president of government affairs in 2018 and was the Realtor Party RPAC fundraising liaison in 2017. Parcell was NAR's Region 11 regional vice president in 2016 and served as his local association's president in 2008 before becoming president of the Utah Association of Realtors in 2011.

Kasper issued a statement as she took office early as NAR President.

Following Kenny Parcell's decision to resign his position as president, I will be stepping into my presidency early.

First, let me say, I'm incredibly sorry for what's led us here.

We recognize there is lots of concern, anger and disappointment, and we want to acknowledge the people who have come forward and shared their stories and those of you who have shared your perspective over the past few days.

We have taken everything we have heard to heart. Our commitment to our staff and our members is unwavering, and we will continue to enhance the way we foster a welcoming, safe and respectful workplace. We will work to ensure the relationship between staff and members acknowledges not only staff expertise and their commitment to the association in addition to the members. The Culture Presidential Advisory Group we announced is one step forward in that. Bob Goldberg and his team also will be working in parallel with staff on their own culture council. We are looking to make lasting and positive change and to do so as quickly

as possible.

It is important to all of us at NAR that we take this moment to learn and focus on building a culture of comradery where we can do the good work we are all so passionate about. And, when an issue arises, that we all feel safe to say something.

This is a really hard time for our association. But I know this is an opportunity to really listen and grow together. As your president, I take the responsibility of rebuilding very seriously. Know I'm here for you, as is the entire leadership team, and we will get through this together.

Sincerely,
Tracy

Kasper, a resident of Boise, ID, has 30 years of experience in real estate and has served on the NAR Board of Directors since 2016. She has served various groups, including the RPAC Implementation Group, the Future of the Realtor Party Presidential Advisory Group (PAG), and the RPAC State Fundraising Partnership Goal PAG. She has been a member of the Idaho Association of Realtors since 1997. She was honored to serve as its president in 2016 and was awarded Realtor of the Year that same year.

Realtor Magazine reported yesterday that NAR is forming a new presidential advisory group that will look at recommendations for ensuring a healthy relationship between staff and members. There will be a parallel effort at the staff level. "We are looking to make lasting and positive change and to do so as quickly as possible," Kasper said.

On a call Monday, NAR CEO Bob Goldberg apologized to the organization's 350 full-time staff. "We are committed to taking real action toward rebuilding trust with staff and addressing the concerns we heard," he said in a staff memo following the meeting. "We want to expressly acknowledge and express gratitude for you for coming forward to share your experiences. As an organization, we will seek to demonstrate the same courage you have all expressed."

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors in response to the Parcell resignation, issued an e-mail on Aug. 29 to its entire staff emphasizing its steadfast commitment to fostering a "safe and welcoming work environment." The e-mail, co-authored by HGAR President Tony D'Anzica and Interim CEO and COO Jana Currier, stated:

"In light of the recent resignation of Kenny Parcell as President of the National Association of Realtors, and the allegations that led to his resignation, HGAR would like to assure our staff, leadership team, members and volunteers, that we stand united against any form of harassment.

HGAR prioritizes a safe and welcoming work environment. At the staff level, HGAR requires annual sexual harassment and anti-discrimination training for all employees. Additionally, all HGAR Directors and Officers must agree, in writing, to comply with numerous anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies, including our Sexual Harassment Policy, as a precondition for serving as a Director.

HGAR remains steadfastly dedicated to fostering a welcoming, safe, and respectful workplace free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. HGAR will continue to prioritize transparency, education, and the implementation of policies that deter and detect unlawful or inappropriate behavior so that every employee, member, and volunteer feels valued, heard, and empowered."



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GUEST COLUMN

Baby Steps

By **Kenyatta Jones-Arietta**

I did my first doggy paddle last weekend. Yes, that's right—a doggy paddle! I didn't attempt to learn how to swim until a few years ago. Yep! I got to 46 not knowing how to tread water. That all changed after a trip to Africa with my girlfriend, Patricia in 2018.



We chartered a boat to explore this little island off the coast of Mozambique. The angry waves crossing into the Indian Ocean were rough and quite terrifying. I remember sitting on the floor in the stern of the boat, embracing the post under the pedestal seat for dear life. I prayed, thinking, "God didn't bring me to Africa to kill me!"

Meanwhile, Patricia, an experienced boater and very confident swimmer, lay on the bow, relaxed and unphased with her face covered, protected from the sun's rays by the brim of an oversized straw sun hat. Once in calmer waters and a few shots from a large bottle of Red Label, I began to relax.

With the assistance of one of the ship's crew members, my life vest, fins, and snorkeling gear, I was able to see Nemo, and a lot of his fellow finned friends under the sea. My eyes were open to the wonderful world below and I was hooked! I vowed to take swimming lessons when I returned home, and I kept that promise.

I immediately paid a visit to Lifetime Fitness and signed up for lessons. I committed for a few months but then was busied with life and my swim sessions fell by the wayside. I've never attempted anything beyond a convoluted breaststroke, in which I hold my breath and swim for as long as I can until I run out of air; this was enough to get me by.

Three weeks ago, I took my granddaughter, Raevyn, to the outdoor pool at the gym for an afternoon. She is nine and quite the fearless little tadpole. I watched as she swam up and down the pool. She did backstrokes, doggy paddles, handstands, you name it! The outdoor water hole was hers to enjoy, and I was in awe.

Fast-forward to last weekend. My husband, Rudy, and I were invited to a pool party at a friend's house. Now, even though I never attempted to perfect my strokes, I do get into almost every pool I encounter. Light gave way to darkness as the evening went on, and soon, Rudy and I were the only ones left in the pool. Eventually, he got out to dry off and grab a bite to eat.

Having the pool to myself, I decided it was my moment to try a doggy paddle. I mean, if Raevyn can do it, I should be able to. Usually, I venture under the water, afraid that any attempt to swim above would cause me to sink, but this evening I was hopeful. I was feeling good this evening but I wasn't in the mood to get my hair wet. I mean, do you know what happens to coily hair when it gets wet?

The thought of having to detangle and stretch my hair alone was enough

motivation for me to succeed at swimming above the water at all costs. And wouldn't you know it, I did it! I'm not sure if that first doggy paddle was a funnier visual than me trying to walk forward in fins on that island beach in Africa. Regardless, I set out to accomplish a goal and I succeeded! I tried something new, and it was easier than I had expected. It was literally just one stroke at a time.

Speaking of stroke, that brings me to the point of this very revealing piece. As our digital world evolves, so do the ways in which we get our message across to our potential clients and customers. And NOT jumping in the waters of social media and trying to paddle across Instagram and TikTok could be giving your real estate business a slow leak.

I have spoken with many Realtors who are afraid to just "dive in," afraid of making a mistake; in fear of looking silly, not realizing that the biggest mistake they are making is not utilizing these platforms to assist in amplifying their message. Not to mention, for the most part, it's free!

Everything is challenging when you first get started and are unsure of what to do. The answer is not to rule it out while sitting on the shore watching the other swimmers in the distance. What is this world, if not a playground for learning? Don't be afraid to fall back onto the waters of the World Wide Web and give that doggy paddle a try!

Not sure how to get started? As with my swim instruction, look for someone within the digital marketing realm who can give you some guidance. Follow some of your favorite real estate personalities on Instagram and TikTok to see what they are doing that works and emulate it! There is no need to recreate the wheel.

Spend some time brainstorming ideas and messages that resonate with who you are and get them out there! It may require you to pick up a few additional tools, such as a light ring or an instrument that will allow you to do your videos hands-free, but hey—those are write-offs!

I once had an agent admit that he stopped making videos because his neighbor teased him about, "Waiting for his next home improvement tip." In actuality, he should have made another one! His neighbor saw it and commented, which proved that he was getting views! Even if his videos didn't translate to hundreds of "likes," his efforts were working!

People want to see who we are and what we may be like to work with. You can give them a glimpse by sharing bits of the real you. I'm now 51 if you were wondering. Looking forward to seeing more of you on social media. Remember to take one stroke at a time!

Kenyatta Jones-Arietta is the Broker/Owner of R2M Realty, Inc., licensed in NY, NJ and CT. R2M (Ready to Move) Realty was launched in 2014 and has two offices in Rockland County.

Spend some time brainstorming ideas and messages that resonate with who you are and get them out there! It may require you to pick up a few additional tools, such as a light ring or an instrument that will allow you to do your videos hands-free, but hey—those are write-offs!

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Visit www.nysar.com to register for the events and committee meetings.

We look forward to seeing you!

Highlighted Events

MON., OCT. 2 » 7 – 11 P.M.
RPAC Karaoke

TUES., OCT. 3 » 3 – 4:30 P.M.
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee

WED., OCT. 4 » 8:30 – 9:30 A.M.
Legal Update

A Teaching Moment: Addressing Sexual Harassment And a Hostile Workplace in the Real Estate Industry

By now you may have seen the headlines and heard the outrage and opinions being formed regarding the National Association of Realtors and the allegations and controversy relating to sexual harassment and hostile workplace environments. I don't work for NAR, so I will not address any of the NAR allegations, but because I work for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, I'd like to take this moment to remind our membership of their obligations as Realtors and to reinforce what we do here at the association to ensure that everyone is treated equally. I speak not just of lofty ideals, but the practical nature of them as well.

As a licensed attorney and the Professional Standards Administrator for HGAR, I'm required to follow various legal and professional codes of conduct and I provide guidance to others on these exact same topics. So, when a teaching moment such as the one we are currently encountering presents itself, I think it's important that we seize this opportunity. Read this. Share this. Teach and guide others.

Guidance From the Past

Aside from the now defunct association of printers, Realtors were the first business group of professionals, outside of the "learned professions of medicine, engineering, and law" to adopt a Code of Ethics. It is because of this Code that Realtors have been able to succeed, grow and become the largest trade association in the United States. Our foundation is built upon the Code and our roots run deep into the land and our duty to ensure that we treat everyone equally and honestly.

Pathways to Professionalism

Pathways to Professionalism is a part of the Realtor doctrine. It is a set of voluntary guidelines and professional courtesies that all Realtors should follow, such as:

- Follow the "Golden Rule."
- Show courtesy and respect for everyone.
- Show courtesy, trust, and respect to other real estate professionals.
- Avoid the inappropriate use of endearments or other denigrating language.
- To be successful in the business, mutual respect is essential.

At its core, *Pathways to Professionalism* provides the underpinnings for the Code of Ethics. While it doesn't explicitly address sexual harassment or a hostile work environment, it does touch on these issues and it establishes a launching off point for moral conduct and protections in the workplace.

Preamble

The Code starts with a preamble. This precursor to the Code establishes its framework and, while it speaks in lofty ideals, its words should be taken to heart and incorporated into our actions:

"Such interests impose obligations

BARRISTER'S BRIEFING

By Brian S. Levine, Esq



beyond those of ordinary commerce. They impose grave social responsibility and a patriotic duty to which Realtors should dedicate themselves."

"[Realtors should] eliminate practices which may damage the public or which might discredit or bring dishonor to the real estate profession."

"The term Realtor has come to connote competency, fairness, and high

Article 10: "...shall not deny equal professional services...."

Article 12: "...be honest and truthful in their real estate communications...."

Article 15: "...shall not knowingly or recklessly make false or misleading statements about other real estate professionals...."

While these articles are relating to Realtor transactions and not the work-

At HGAR, we take sexual harassment and hostile workplace activity prevention seriously. Each employee is provided with an employee handbook. They are required to review this handbook and understand it. This handbook establishes that HGAR is a violence- and harassment-free workplace and it goes into detail on what could be deemed harassment and provides examples of inappropriate activities.

integrity resulting from adherence to a lofty ideal of moral conduct in business relations."

All these excerpts shine a light on the ethical duty of Realtors to be fair, to maintain a moral compass, and to hold themselves out as the standard bearer of fairness, social justice and equality. Sexual harassment and creating a hostile work environment run completely contrary to these ideals and there is no place for allowing such activities.

The Code of Ethics

The Code sets forth various ethical requirements. Again, none of the articles directly address sexual harassment or a hostile workplace but they are touchstones for the principle that sexual harassment and hostile workplaces should not be tolerated. For example, various Articles of the Code refer to a number of worthwhile principles:

- Article 1: "...treat all parties honestly."
- Article 2: "...avoid exaggeration, misrepresentation, or concealment...."

place, each and every article could be applied to the workplace as well. Each one carries the same tone of morality, fairness and professionalism. Any Realtor applying these Codes should, consistent with the benchmarks established by the Code, apply the same principles to their workplace. There should be no room to circumvent these ideals in favor of anything less.

HGAR Policies for Employees

At HGAR, we take sexual harassment and hostile workplace activity prevention seriously. Each employee is provided with an employee handbook. They are required to review this handbook and understand it. This handbook establishes that HGAR is a violence- and harassment-free workplace and it goes into detail on what could be deemed harassment and provides examples of inappropriate activities. These requirements/prohibitions apply not only to employee-to-employee interactions, but also to all interactions with clients, customers, guests, members, vendors and anyone doing business with HGAR. The handbook further addresses the reporting process, which is confidential, the obligation to report incidents in which an employee may encounter or observe, supervisory responsibilities, and how investigations are to be conducted and resolved. It also discusses other legal protections, including the NYS Human Rights Law, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and other local protections that are also available.

Each employee is required to review, agree to abide by, and then sign a sexual harassment and prevention policy acknowledgment form which covers not only all forms of harass-

ment, but also hostile workplace activities, and retaliation prohibitions. Additionally, complaint forms are provided by HGAR to all employees in an effort to break down barriers to reporting. Moreover, each HGAR employee must participate in an annual sexual harassment prevention training seminar.

HGAR Policies For Board Members

Not only are all HGAR employees held accountable for their actions, but each and every HGAR Board of Director participates in an onboarding orientation as well. During this orientation, all Board members undergo anti-harassment training, which covers the identical principles/requirements of the employee program. This training applies to old and new Board members alike. Each Board member is required to review, understand and abide by the general anti-harassment policies, as well as the more specific anti-sexual harassment policies of HGAR. They also review and agree to the no-retaliation policy as well. Like HGAR employees, Board members are provided with an understanding of not only how to report a complaint, but their obligation to report incidents that they observe. Upon completing the orientation, they must sign an acknowledgment form. No Board member will be permitted to serve until such time as they review and agree with all the HGAR policies.

Realtor Obligations

Similar to the Code, where all Realtors self-police each other, the same should hold true for any sexual harassment or hostile workplace incidents. If you are a victim of such activities, you should understand that what is/happened is wrong and should not be tolerated. You are encouraged to report it because if it goes unaddressed it could continue or increase. If you observe someone being the subject of such actions, you should report it. We all must work together to eradicate actions that are wholly unacceptable and hold those that violate policies and the law accountable.

Conclusion: Time to Step Up

Sexual harassment and hostile working conditions should never be acceptable. As a local association, we have taken steps to irradicate what was once considered permissible. NAR has taken steps to create a Presidential Advisory Group (PAG) focused on NAR's culture to determine what more NAR can be doing. So now I ask, "What are you doing?" I encourage all of you to join together to do your part as well. I encourage all brokerages to adopt anti-harassment policies and procedures, not only for your employees, but also for your agents/independent contractors. I ask that each of you do your part to eliminate bad "habits," identify improper conduct, and call out those that fail to embrace the high standards, ideals and moral conduct that is required of all Realtors.

Realtors are special. We are leaders. We are socially progressive. We are innovators. We care. Do not sit complacently by assuming that others will step up for you. It's time for you to step up.

As General Counsel and Professional Standards Administrator for HGAR, I am here to answer any questions and assist you however I can.

Brian S. Levine, Esq. is General Counsel & Professional Standards Administrator for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

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Mark Seiden Real Estate Team Joins Howard Hanna | Rand Realty

BRIARCLIFF MANOR—Howard Hanna | Rand Realty announced on Aug. 24 that the “Mark Seiden Real Estate Team,” of Briarcliff Manor has joined the regional brokerage firm.

The deal marks the addition of another independent Westchester County-based real estate brokerage to the Howard Hanna | Rand Realty firm. Back in May, Howard Hanna | Rand Realty announced that J. Philip Faranda and the agents of J. Philip Real Estate located at offices in Briarcliff Manor and Carmel joined the brokerage firm.

A Howard Hanna Rand official stated the firm’s Briarcliff Manor operations are being consolidated and will be housed at the Mark Seiden team’s offices at 1238 Pleasantville Road.

The Mark Seiden Real Estate Team, known for its mantra: “Turning Goals Into Reality,” brings more than three decades of experience in Westchester and the many surrounding counties. The firm was voted “Best Real Estate Office” for 2023 by *Westchester Magazine*.

Seiden, a Cornell University graduate and highly accomplished real estate professional, founded the company in 2003 and earned an outstanding reputation for providing exceptional service to clients while achieving significant market share. He values client relationships, and his team manages each and every transaction from start to finish.

Additionally, Seiden knows the importance of community and ensures that his brokerage gives back to the community at every client appreciation event held throughout the year,



Howard Hanna | Rand Realty and Mark Seiden Team Real Estate Team officials at the ribbon cutting for the new Howard Hanna | Rand Realty’s new offices at 1238 Pleasantville Road in Briarcliff Manor.

Howard Hanna | Rand Realty stated. At each event, a nonprofit organization is selected to benefit; the organizations include Ossining Food Pantry, Career Closet, Lifting Up Westchester, Ossining Padres Hispanos and many others.

Matt Rand, CEO of Howard Hanna | Rand Realty, expressed his enthusiasm about the partnership, stating, “We’re thrilled to welcome the Mark Seiden Real Estate Team to the Howard Hanna | Rand Realty family. Mark and his team demonstrate a relentless determination to excel, and their innovative approach to marketing and client satisfaction perfectly aligns with our values.”

Seiden added, “It is genuinely an

honor to align with the largest family-owned real estate company in the United States. Our dedicated team, deeply rooted in our family business, remains steadfast in delivering exceptional outcomes for our clients. We are confident that the remarkable track record and unwavering commitment to service displayed by Howard Hanna | Rand Realty make this partnership an impeccable match.”

The Mark Seiden Real Estate Team consists of Allyson Davidov, Listing Partner, who has successfully closed more than 400 properties. The team’s Buyer and Showing Partners are: Allison Imondo, Rob DeCoursey, George Gabor,

Michele Hamburg, Jennifer Mattei and Leon Stokes. The team is supported by Amy Seiden, Eiddie Baret, Stephanie Tapia, Angel Diego and Angeli Sediego.

Renee Zurlo, General Manager of Howard Hanna | Rand Realty New York, said, “The addition of the Mark Seiden Real Estate Team to our family presents tremendous opportunities for our agents and customers. We are excited to expand our presence in Westchester County and continue our mission of providing exceptional service to our communities.”

Howard Hanna Rand Realty has more than 1,200 residential real estate sales associates serving New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut suburbs of New York City. Its 32 offices serve Westchester County, Rockland County, Orange County, Sullivan County, Dutchess County, Putnam County, Ulster County, and the Bronx in New York, Bergen County, Passaic County, Hudson County, Morris County, Essex County, Union County in New Jersey, and Fairfield County in Connecticut. Rand also owns and operates Rand Commercial, a commercial real estate brokerage, and Hudson United Home Services, which provides residential mortgage lending, title services, and personal and commercial insurance.

Howard Hanna Real Estate Services has nearly 500 real estate, mortgage, insurance, title, and escrow service offices across 13 states, including Allen Tate Realtors in the Carolinas and F.C. Tucker Company in Indiana, with more than 14,000 sales associates and staff, including many of the industry’s top-producing real estate agents.

Construction Continues; Buyer Demand Strong At Edge-on-Hudson Development

SLEEPY HOLLOW—The mixed-use Edge-on-Hudson community being built at the former site of a General Motors minivan assembly plant on the shores of the Hudson River has achieved a series of construction and sales milestones as the project enters new project phases of development.

Project developers noted on Sept. 5 that it has been four years since home sales began on the 70-acre site along the Hudson River waterfront. In its first phase, all condominium residences by Toll Brothers sold-out prior to construction, as did nearly all of the 92 townhomes offered. More than 98% of the 425 apartment residences at Edge-on-Hudson have been leased. Moving swiftly into its second phase, the master development team of New York City-based Biddle Real Estate Ventures (BREV) and PCD Development of New Providence, NJ announced a series of new retail and residential construction projects on-site.

The Sales Gallery for waterfront condominium residences at The Daymark opened in July. Currently under construction, led by Houston-based Hines as development manager, The Daymark is the first building directly on the waterfront at Edge-on-Hudson and will add 100 new homes to the community. The Daymark is expected to be completed in spring 2025.

New condominium residences under construction at The Daymark have been a hot commodity at Edge-on-Hudson, with 25% of homes already under contract within just two months of the Sales Gallery’s opening. The first building to be located directly along the waterfront, The Daymark features architectural and interior design by

COOKFOX, a leader in biophilic design, and sets a new standard for waterfront living along the Hudson. The Daymark will also include more than 9,000 square feet of retail space, featuring the first waterfront restaurant in the community.

- Site work began in August for 90 new townhomes and a clubhouse by Sun Homes. This new neighborhood borders both Kingsland Point Park and the new Tappan Zee Park and features park and river views. Sales are anticipated to begin in the first quarter of 2024.

- Construction of a new 30,000 square-foot DeCicco & Sons Market began in August, located at the community’s entry along Beekman Avenue and Legend Drive. The DeCicco & Sons Market will deploy a series of green initiatives for both construction and operation and is set to be built to LEED certification standards, keeping energy efficiency at the top of mind. Market operations will include a natural refrigeration system, a non-ozone-depleting refrigerant that DeCicco & Sons was the first to bring to Westchester County. Heat expelled from the refrigeration system will be recycled for use as the market’s heat and hot water in cold weather months. DeCicco & Sons will also install the company’s largest solar array to date.

- Plans for a medical office building are set to be presented to the Village of Sleepy Hollow Planning Board in the fall of 2023

- Planning for new parkland and open space is underway, following the successful opening of Phase 1 of the Sleepy Hollow RiverWalk at Edge-on-Hudson, which was deeded back



The Sales Gallery for condominium residences at The Daymark is now open at Edge-on-Hudson.

PHOTO CREDIT VUW STUDIO

to the Village of Sleepy Hollow. The project restored access to a section of Hudson River shoreline in Sleepy Hollow that had been closed for more than a century.

BREV Managing Member Peter Chavkin said of the development’s progress, “Completion of Phase 1 at Edge-on-Hudson has demonstrated that this community offers best-in-class amenities in residential construction, easy transit access and an extraordinary setting along the Hudson River. The combination is proving very compelling for both buyers and renters.”

Jonathan Stein, Founder and Managing Director of PCD Development, added, “It’s exciting to see retail construction on-site, to compliment new parkland and residences already completed or underway. We look forward

to welcoming the DeCicco & Sons Market, as well as a waterfront restaurant at The Daymark, and additional retail and office components currently in design.”

Edge-on-Hudson is to eventually include 1,177 townhomes, condos and apartments; a 140-room boutique hotel; 135,000 square feet of retail space and 35,000 square feet of office space, in addition to more than 16 acres of new parkland.

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Westchester Medical Center's New Patient Care Tower Secures \$195M in Bond Financing from Westchester LDC

WHITE PLAINS—The Westchester County's Local Development Corporation voted on Aug. 23 final approval of \$195-million in tax-exempt bond financing for the development of a new 162,626-square-foot Patient Care Tower on the campus of Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla.

The \$221.3-million Patient Care Tower project will feature a five-story, 128-bed structure with all of its inpatient rooms ICU-equipped and a patient-centric design with leading edge amenities that WMCHHealth officials state will create a soothing, healing environment. It will house vital services for WMCHHealth patients and their families including trauma, neurosciences, cardiology and general surgery.

"The LDC has a clear vision for the future of Westchester County, and we're happy that vision includes projects such as the Patient Care Tower," said Michael D. Israel, President and Chief Executive Officer, Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCHHealth). "The Patient Care Tower on the Westchester Medical Center campus will be the Hudson Valley's hub of critical care medicine as it will bring together critical care and medical-



A rendering of the new Patient Care Tower to be built on the campus of Westchester Medical Center. RENDERING COURTESY OF WMC HEALTH

surgical specialties in one location, enabling Westchester Medical Center to convert to all private inpatient rooms across the rest of the campus. Additionally, the Patient Care Tower will advance our academic mission by giving medical residents and students a state-of-the-art facility in which to train."

According to a cost benefit analysis prepared for the LDC, the project will provide Westchester County with total benefits of \$3,531,780 over 30 years. The total benefits are comprised of \$722,468 in sales tax revenue from

construction; \$2,528,062 of sales tax revenue from operations over 30 years, and \$281,250 in fees to be collected by the LDC based on the bond proceeds. The project is also estimated to create more than 770 construction jobs and 127 new full-time jobs. WMC Health officials stated that site work has begun and that a groundbreaking will be held before year's end. The project is expected to take two years to complete.

"Today's historic approval by the Local Development Corporation is yet another example of how we are work-

ing with our not-for-profit community in securing tax-exempt bond financing benefits that are provided at no cost or risk to the taxpayers of Westchester County. This magnificent new project will further enhance our county's world-class healthcare sector while providing a boost to our region's economy," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer.

"The Local Development Corporation is very pleased to approve the bond financing for this very important healthcare development at the Westchester Medical Center campus. As a result, nearly 900 construction jobs and new full-time jobs will be created and the county will receive more than \$3.5 million in total economic benefits," said Local Development Corporation Chair Joan McDonald.

The Local Development Corporation assists Westchester not-for-profit organizations in securing tax-exempt bond financing benefits. These benefits are provided at no cost or risk to the taxpayers of Westchester County. Since its inception in 2012, LDC has assisted not-for-profit organizations in securing tax-exempt bond financing totaling more than \$500 million.

Construction to Begin This Fall on \$350-Million Movie Studio at Pier 94 on Manhattan's West Side

By John Jordan

NEW YORK—The developers of the long-anticipated movie/television studio project at Pier 94 on Manhattan's West Side say that construction is expected to begin this fall on the \$350-million, public-private partnership venture.

On Aug. 29, Vornado Realty Trust, Hudson Pacific Properties, Blackstone, the City of New York, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation announced they had entered into Manhattan's first public-private partnership venture to build a purpose-built studio campus at Pier 94. The project to be built will be called "Sunset Pier 94 Studios."

Vornado, who contributed its long-term leasehold with New York City for Pier 94 to the venture, will own 49.9%; Hudson Pacific will own 25.6%; and Blackstone's institutional Core+ Real Estate strategy will own 24.5%. Vornado will be responsible for development and Hudson Pacific will provide design oversight and manage the facility's leasing and operations.

Plans for the 266,000-square-foot Sunset Pier 94 Studios include six purpose-built soundstages with production control room facilities and 145,000 square feet of production support space and offices, with Hudson River views and on-site parking. Several stages will have technological infrastructure for adaptation to virtual production. The facility's location, design, size and technological capabilities will provide world-class convenience and flexibility for episodic television, live audience television and feature films, the partnership stated. In alignment with the broader Sunset Studios portfolio, Sunset Pier 94 Studios will priori-

tize sustainability, targeting LEED Gold and Fitwel certification, with plans for operations to be powered by 100% renewable energy.

"With our administration's leadership, New York City is back—we have recovered 99% of the jobs lost during the pandemic, and visitors from across the world are returning to Broadway and Times Square," said New York City Mayor Eric Adams. "At the same time, from Willets Points in Queens to Kips Bay in Manhattan to Kingsbridge Heights in the Bronx, we are advancing bold economic development projects across the entire city that will create tens of thousands of family-sustaining jobs in our communities, and the activation of Pier 94 will produce the same kinds of economic opportunities on the West Side of Manhattan. This project will bring critical, long-awaited investment to this public asset, turn an underutilized space into an economic driver, and improve public space and quality of life for New Yorkers."

"Sunset Pier 94 Studios demonstrates a monumental public-private partnership that will have a lasting impact on our city by creating 400 film and TV jobs, over 1,300 construction jobs, along with an estimated economic impact of \$6.4 billion over the next 30 years," said New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) President & CEO Andrew Kimball.

"Our partnership with Blackstone, Hudson Pacific, and the City of New York will solidify New York as a leading market for content production and studio space, create jobs, drive economic momentum, and deliver a host of amenities to the surrounding community," said Michael Franco, President and Chief Financial Officer at Vornado Realty Trust. "Together we'll raise the bar for one of New York City's signature industries and breathe new life into a key waterfront site."

The new facility will be the first New York location for Hudson Pacific and Blackstone's growing studio platform and synergistic with its existing Los Angeles operations. With the addition of Sunset Pier 94 Studios, Sunset Studios will comprise 69 existing and



Sunset Pier 94 Studios will be the first purpose-built studio campus in Manhattan.

planned stages globally across six purpose-built facilities, all in top-tier locations within the well-established and supply constrained production epicenters of Los Angeles, London and New York. Sunset Studio's planned Sunset Waltham Cross Studios is expected to open in 2026 with 21 sound stages. Hudson Pacific's Quixote brand operates an additional 26 stages in Los Angeles and New Orleans and services productions in Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, New Orleans and Albuquerque.

The project represents a total investment of approximately \$350 million from Vornado, Hudson Pacific and Blackstone, and is expected to create more than 1,300 construction jobs, 400 permanent jobs and contribute \$6.4 billion to the local economy over the next 30 years. Construction will begin in the third quarter of this year. RBC is providing \$183 million in construction financing. The project is expected to be completed by year-end 2025.

The New York City Economic Development Corp. reached an agreement with Vornado Realty Trust in April 2008 to redevelop Pier 94. The original plan called for the development of a trade show facility and also included the adjacent Pier 92 site. However, the Pier 92 location is not part of the current movie studio project plan.

Sunset Pier 94 Studios will also include a host of public amenities, including new public restrooms for Hudson River Park, an 1,850-square-foot community amenity space, 25,000

square feet of waterfront open space and pier access, and safety improvements to the bikeway. There will also be a program to support workforce development and training programs to connect local residents to opportunities in film, television, commercial and other media production.

"We are thrilled to partner with the City of New York, Vornado, and Blackstone to bring this unparalleled, ideally located production experience to New York. The city has an extensive, well-established production infrastructure yet is highly supply constrained in terms of stages," said Victor Coleman, Chairman and CEO of Hudson Pacific. "Once again we are leveraging our industry relationships and unique expertise in building and operating premier facilities for leading content creators in the highest-barrier-to-entry global media markets to create long-term value for our shareholders."

"Content creation is one of our key global investment themes, and we are thrilled to be part of this one-of-a-kind, public-private partnership that delivers for our investors while aiming to create more than 1,300 construction jobs and 400 permanent jobs, and contribute \$6.4 billion over the next 30 years to the local New York City economy. I want to thank the City of New York, Mayor Eric Adams, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation for helping make this project possible," said Nadeem Meghji, Blackstone's Head of Real Estate Americas.

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Meeting the Membership's Evolving Service Needs

Continued from page 4

ture and documents, enhancing technology and communications, and offering an elevated member experience.

HGAR is known for leading on many fronts. As one of the first associations to hire a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Officer, HGAR has been proactive in preventing discrimination and advancing fair housing.

I feel very fortunate in joining an association that is proactive and passionate about the most important issues and whose leadership is dedicated to ensuring diversity and inclusivity are a part of every aspect of the association.

I look forward to building on the impact and success of these initiatives and to continuing to set an example for other associations and organizations throughout the country.

HGAR has also created a fantastic culture of advocacy, which is fundamental to ensuring member success, effectively protecting the American dream of homeownership and our members' ability to do business. HGAR members and leaders recognize the pivotal role of the Realtor Party, and I am excited to continue this essential work.

We will also leverage HGAR's diversity in membership and geography, its position as one of the largest associations in the nation, and the global prominence of this market to generate further partnerships and resources, expand communications and exposure, and bring additional opportunities and business to our members.

I am filled with optimism and excitement as I look forward to working together to further elevate HGAR.

Hope to see you soon!

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The Society of American Travel Writers Foundation



has presented their coveted gold Lowell Thomas Award to local Rockland County Realtor/author **Dawn M. Barclay** for her book, "Traveling Different: Vacation Strategies for Parents of the Anxious, the Inflexible, and the Neurodiverse." The award was presented in the guidebook category at the organization's 2023 conference held September 7-11 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The Lowell Thomas Awards are to travel journalism what the Academy Awards are to filmmaking. Past recipients include famed travel journalist Rick Steves, as well as renowned travel publications such as *National Geographic Traveler*, *Travel & Leisure*, *Fodor's Travel*, and *Lonely Planet*.

Barclay, a GRI and SRES who has lived in Rockland since 1999, brands herself as Rockland's Real Estate novelist and has sold real estate in the Hudson Valley for the past 25 years. Now an Associate Broker with **Century 21 Full Service Realty**, she formerly worked with Rand Realty when it was still affiliated with Prudential, and Keller Williams Hudson Valley Realty.

The 2023 Lowell Thomas Awards received a near-record 1430 entries in 30 different categories. Judging was overseen by the University of Missouri School of Journalism with Emeritus Prof. John Fennell and Prof. Jennifer Rowe coordinating 25 judges this year.

This is not the first award for *Traveling Different*, considered by many to be the autism travel bible. It received a starred review from *Library Journal* upon publication and won first prize in the Maxy Awards earlier this year. It also received Honorable Mention from the American Society of Journalists and Authors in their 2023 Arlene Awards for Books That Make a Difference. This is also not the first travel writing award for Barclay, who also won the 1992 First Prize for Travel Writing (Other) from the Society of Professional Journalists for her story in *Travel Life* titled, T.A. Law.

Barclay is a member of NAR, NYSAR, SATW and ASJA. She is also a fiction author, with several psychological and domestic suspense novels published as D.M. Barr (www.dmbarr.com).

Todd Stevens was recently promoted to New York City-based brokerage firm **Real's** New York State Broker of Record, after working with Real as its 'Broker-in-Charge' for the past few months.



Todd Stevens

Previously, Stevens was most recently a Branch Manager at Coldwell Banker. In his career, he was formerly one of Douglas Elliman's top 10 agents and sold more townhouses than any agent in Manhattan from 2004 to 2014. He also supervised 15 new development projects.

Real's 375 New York agents and brokers sell and rent across the state,

from Lake Erie to the Hamptons. Real is operational in 48 states and the District of Columbia in the U.S. and four Canadian provinces. Since the beginning of 2023, The Real Brokerage has launched in three states, including South Dakota and Delaware, and the Canadian province of Manitoba. Founded in 2014, the company serves 48 states, DC, and four Canadian provinces.

CBRE has announced that **Jason Stein** has joined the firm's Saddle Brook, NJ office as a Vice President, Debt & Structured Finance.



Jason Stein

With more than a decade of real estate lending experience, Stein specializes in financing for market-rate and affordable multifamily, construction and substantial rehab assets, and senior housing. Prior to joining CBRE, he served as a Vice President at Greystone, where he originated more than \$500 million in loans, predominantly in the multifamily sector.

"We are thrilled to have Jason join our industry-leading Capital Markets team," said Hipschman, Senior Managing Director and New Jersey Market Leader for CBRE. "His strong, collaborative relationships nationwide and expertise in originating FHA / HUD, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, CMBS, and Bridge loan products, make him a tremendous asset as we continue to grow our practice."

"I am honored to become a part of CBRE's esteemed global real estate platform, and eagerly anticipating the opportunity to collaborate closely with the FHA team as we propel it through its next phase of growth," said Stein. "My goal is to play a pivotal role in enhancing CBRE's services, ensuring that we not only meet but exceed expectations in delivering unparalleled client financing solutions."

CBRE announced recently that **James Millon** has been appointed

President of U.S. Debt and Structured Finance (DSF) for the United States. Millon will steer CBRE's DSF business in the U.S.—a leading provider of commercial and multifamily financing—and will be responsible for expanding the firm's debt and structured finance capabilities nationwide. CBRE's DSF business has averaged more than \$70 billion of loan originations over the past two years, manages a more than \$395 billion loan servicing portfolio, and is a leading Fannie Mae DUS (Delegated Underwriting and Servicing) and Freddie Mac Optigo Multifamily lender.



James Millon

"James is a market-leading capital markets expert who knows our clients, people and platform extremely well and is highly regarded across the investor and lender communities," said Chris Ludeman, Global President of Capital Markets for CBRE. "He is the perfect leader to drive the growth and continued improvement of our DSF business, particularly at this time of market uncertainty when investors rely on our insight and market access."

Millon, who is based in New York City, has originated more than \$75 billion in commercial real estate loans. He most recently served as Vice Chair and Co-Head of U.S. Large Loans. Since joining CBRE in 2016, he and his partner Tom Traynor have arranged more than \$45 billion of large transactions, including the \$1.77 billion fi-

ancing of 245 Park Ave. for HNA; \$1.70 billion financing of Blackstone's Cabot Industrial Portfolio; \$1.40 billion financing of Oxford's Project Newport Industrial Portfolio; \$1.25 billion construction financing of Terminal Warehouse, owned by L&L, Columbia Property Trust, JP Morgan and Allianz; \$1.07 billion financing of Blackstone's Project Solar Multifamily Portfolio; and the \$1.03 billion Stonemont Net Lease portfolio.

Millon will assume his new responsibilities on November 1. He will transition his deal activities to Traynor and their team, enabling him to focus full-time on elevating and growing the U.S. DSF business, helping CBRE DSF professionals generate exceptional outcomes for clients. Prior to CBRE, Millon held senior positions in commercial real estate capital markets at Deutsche Bank, and earlier at Société Générale on its large loan origination and structuring team.



From left, **Orange County County Executive Steve Neuhaus**, **Kaitlynn Lancellotti (Executive Director of Vision Hudson Valley)** and **Jim Delaune, Executive Director of the Orange County Land Trust.**

Vision Hudson Valley recently awarded **Jim Delaune**, Executive Director of the Orange County Land Trust with the 2023 Graham Skea Quality of Life Award at its Summer Jubilee.

Vision Hudson Valley created this award to honor Graham M. Skea in recognition of his many contributions both to this organization and the community as a whole. Graham was always a strong advocate for public/private partnerships, lending his skills to a multitude of countywide organizations. His dedication to numerous projects and causes has been recognized by many of those organizations, all of which are too numerous to name, in addition, he received many national, regional, and state professional honors during his career. The recipients of the Graham Skea Award need to exemplify Graham's qualities and Jim Delaune of the Orange County Land Trust does just that.

Delaune's career began with the City of Newburgh's Community Development Agency where he served for 20 years and ultimately became the Executive Director (ED). In his capacity as ED, he was responsible for the redevelopment of the Newburgh Waterfront, inducing Orange County Community College to locate a satellite campus in the city and he successfully undertook numerous affordable housing and historic preservation projects. He has held the position of Executive Director of the Orange County Land Trust since 2006. In his time as Executive Director, the Orange County Land Trust has protected in excess of 6,500 acres which includes portions of Sterling Forest, numerous working farms, and in the near future Sugar Loaf Mountain.

Joe Cubias, regional president of **Weichert, Realtors**, announced that the Monroe office and two top-producing sales associates have been recognized for outstanding achievement at the regional level in August.

The Monroe office, which is managed by Lydia Mitchell, had the highest dollar volume, the most revenue units and the highest dollar volume

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Christie's International Real Estate Westchester | Hudson Valley, one of the fastest growing independent brokerages in the region, has announced the appointment of **Bryan Lanza** as Director of its Commercial Division. Lanza and his team of seven associates will lead Christie's commercial business based out of the firm's regional sales office in White Plains.

Christie's International Real Estate Westchester | Hudson Valley shares common ownership with and is under the tri-state umbrella of Christie's International Real Estate Group, which is headquartered at 1 Rockefeller Plaza in Manhattan. Christie's International Real Estate Group has more than 1,000 associates across 30 offices, serving New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Local offices of the firm's Christie's Westchester | Hudson Valley brokerage are located in White Plains, Scarsdale, Chappaqua, New City, and Nyack, with additional office locations coming soon.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to be a part of this amazing team. With my appointment as Director of the Commercial Division, I can say that we are investing heavily in technology and marketing to ensure that our clients continue to receive the

best possible service and have the best possible experience. We understand that the commercial real estate market is constantly evolving, and we are committed to staying ahead of the curve," said Lanza.

Lanza joins Christie's with a team of experienced professionals, including Darren Lee, Silvio Cangianni, Peter Corcoran, Ian Heyman, David Riolo, Stephania Ortiz and Sam Sabet. Given Lanza's extensive expertise in the industry as well as the experience of his team of talented professionals, they are well-equipped to handle all of their clients' commercial real estate needs.

Ilija Pavlovic, President and CEO of Christie's International Real Estate Group, said, "We are very happy to welcome Bryan and his team to our Christie's family. Our team is constantly analyzing market trends and exploring new opportunities to provide clients with the best possible solutions. In short, we are excited about the future, and we hope that you are too. We believe that our team's expertise and dedication, combined with our enhanced services and marketing efforts, will enable us to better serve and help clients achieve their commercial real estate goals. We would like to thank our clients for their continued support."



HGAR UPDATE

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING October 30, 2023

Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®, Inc.

Report of the HGAR Nominating Committee
to be presented at the HGAR Annual Meeting
October 30, 2023

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®, Inc. will take place on October 30, 2023 at 3:30 PM at the Westchester Marriott, located at 670 White Plains Road, Tarrytown, New York, 10591. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Hudson Gateway Association of REALTORS®, at its sole discretion, reserves the right after providing ten (10) days written notice, to convert this live meeting to a virtual meeting. The voting business at the Annual Meeting will include the Report of the Nominating Committee:

The election of Officers in accordance with Article XI, Section 4, subsection (f), the election of HGAR Directors in accordance with Article XI, Section 4, subsection (d), and the election of six (6) Regional Directors in accordance with Article XI, Section 3, subsection (a)(2) of the Bylaws, representing the counties of Bronx, New York (i.e., Manhattan), Putnam, Orange, Rockland and Westchester, replacing Directors and Officers with terms expiring at the end of 2023. The HGAR Nominating Committee has submitted the following slate of candidates for election to serve as Officers and Directors on the HGAR Board of Directors commencing on January 1, 2024.

President

Carmen A. Bauman
Green Grass Real Estate Corp.
141 Parkway Road, Suite 9
Bronxville, New York 10708

President Elect

Vlora Sejdi
HomeSmart Homes & Estates
777 Westchester Avenue
White Plains, NY 10604

Treasurer

Joseph Lippolis
BHHS River Towns Real Estate
983 Main St.
Peekskill, NY 10566

Secretary

Rey Hollingsworth Falu
Hollingsworth Real Estate Grp.
75 S. Boardway, 4th Floor
White Plains, NY 10601

Immediate Past President

Tony L. D'Anzica
DynaMax Realty NYC, Inc.
1463 5th Ave.
New York, NY 10035

Previous Past President

Anthony Domathoti
Exit Realty Premium
813 Morris Park Ave.
Bronx, NY 10462

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2023 HGAR RPAC HONOR ROLL

as recorded by NYSAR August 31, 2023

Thank you to the following Members
who lead the way in the 2023 RPAC campaign

Platinum R \$10,000

Dorothy Botsoe, Dorothy Jensen Realty Inc., White Plains
Anthony Domathoti, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx
Richard Haggerty, OneKey® MLS, Farmingdale
Nancy Kennedy, Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Croton-on-Hudson
Michael Schmelzer, Tyrax Realty Management Inc., Bronx

Golden R \$5,000 – \$9,999

Tony, D'Anzica, DynaMax Realty NYC, Inc., NYC
Susan Goldy, Susan E. Goldy Inc., Bronx
Irene Guanill, De Luca Realty Group, Inc., Bronx
Brian Phillips, Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Bronx

Crystal R \$2,500-\$4,999

T. Teresa Belmore, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains
Layla Boyles, CENTURY 21 Realty Center, Monroe
Ronald Garafalo, John J Lease Realtors, Middletown

Sterling R \$1,000-\$2,499

Mark Aakjar, Marks Inspections, Ossining
Carmen Bauman, Green Grass Real Estate Corp., Bronxville
Emran Bhuiyan, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx
Debra Budetti, ERA Insite Realty Services, White Plains
Leah Caro, Park Sterling Realty, Bronxville
Carol Christiansen, McGrath Realty Inc., Mount Kisco
Gary Connolly, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, White Plains
Katheryn DeClerck, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Goshen
J.P. Endres, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New City
Michael Gibbons, Azimuth Global Realty Inc., Tarrytown
Susan Greenfield, Brown Harris Stevens, NYC
Crystal Hawkins Syska, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains
Joseph Houlihan, Houlihan & O'Malley, Bronxville
Barry Kramer, BHG Real Estate Choice Realty, Scarsdale
Brett Lando, Gahagan Lando & Wagner LLP, White Plains
Cynthia Lippolis, BHHS River Towns Real Estate, Croton-on-Hudson
Joseph Lippolis, BHHS River Town Real Estate, Croton-on-Hudson
Clayton Livingston, McGrath Realty Inc., Pawling
Carole McCann, Hudson Heritage Realty, Washingtonville
Tana McGuire, eXp Realty, White Plains
Darin (Nan) Palumbo, Green Grass Real Estate, Bronxville
Eli Rodriguez, Esq., Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors Inc., Bronx
Matthew Schmelzer, Tryax Realty Management Inc., Bronx
Chris Scibelli, Keller Williams Realty, Chester
Vlora Sejdi, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains
John Sheehan, Skyline I LLC, Bronx
Christina Stevens, Laujel Realty Corp., Bronx

President's Club \$500-\$999

James Coleman, Houlihan-Parnes Properties, White Plains
Jana Currier, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., White Plains
Angela Demaris, PrimeLending, Newburgh
Kevin Dwyer, Dwyer Agency, Mahopac
Ismail Kolya, eXp Realty, White Plains
Roseann Paggiotta, eXp Realty, White Plains
Maryann Tercasio, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley
Lou Triscari, United Property Restoration, Elmsford
Renee Zurlo, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley

Capitol Club \$250-\$499

Matthieu Alliot, Julia B Fee Sotheby's Int. Realty, Scarsdale
Roberta Bangs, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New City
Joseph Cosentino, Morris Park Realty Group, Bronx
Mackenzie Forsberg, Genesis Realty Group LLC, Bronx
Rey Hollingsworth Falu, Hollingsworth Real Estate Group, White Plains
Debbie Goldstein, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley
Marianne LePore, Corcoran Legends Realty, Tarrytown
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Ron Sierra, Pillar to Post Home Inspectors, Rye Brook
Cathleen Stack, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., White Plains
Veronica Suarez, RE/MAX Distinguished Homes & Property, Tuckahoe
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty Group, Bronx

\$99 Club \$99-\$249

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TOTAL: \$230,844 80% towards goal

With 2,978 contributors 67% towards participation goal
Goal: \$288,025 from 4,469 contributors

SPOTLIGHT ON

Deborah Waters Rising Above the Waters

By Mary T. Prenon

Deborah Waters, an agent with Howard Hanna | Rand Realty in Central Valley, has been in the industry for just three years, but already she's making a huge impact on her local community of Highland Falls. Following July's flash flooding that damaged many area homes—including her own—Waters jumped into action to help.

"I got a call from Jana Currier, HGAR's Interim CEO, who asked about the Realtors and homeowners who were affected by the floods," she recalled. "I shared my experience and those of my neighbors and clients, and Jana got the ball rolling to secure funding from NAR's Realtor Relief Foundation."

For Waters, it was a loud rushing sound outside of her home that let her know that nature was about to get very nasty. "It was like the rapids that came

out of nowhere, and when it was over, my fence collapsed and water came pouring into the basement. We gathered up a 75-pound German shepherd and a 14-year-old cat and got out of there as quickly as we could," she said.



All around her, she saw retaining walls succumbing to the floods, and make-shift rivers rushing into homes. "We were lucky that we had a sump pump, so it got rid of the standing water, but it left a coating of mud and dirt everywhere," she added.

While the fire department and various church groups were on hand to help, Waters said they were all disappointed that FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has not yet come through with any funding. "It's been a wonderful experience to be able to provide the Realtor Relief funds for homeowners," she said. "I've received the same response from ev-

Please turn to page 16

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Scarsdale, NY 10583
516-605-2700

David Hillard
Riverside Properties
11801 N Washington St., #J406
Northglenn, CO 80233
845-415-0372

AFFILIATE

Jen Beato
Stunning Spaces
59 Livingston Rd
Scarsdale, NY 10583
914-434-5052

Elliot J. Danziger, Esq.
Danziger Legal PLLC
800 Westchester Ave, Ste N-641
Rye Brook, NY 10573
914-719-6970

Tom Avezzano
ALL PRO Cleaning & Restoration
75 Virginia Road
White Plains, NY 10603
800-352-7886

** Joseph Siciliano
Quintessential Mortgage Group
399 Knollwood Rd.
White Plains, NY 10603
914-368-2444

** Jerry Rodriguez
Trustco Bank
100 Clearbrook Rd.
Elmsford, NY 10523
914-715-0449

Jordan Linkowski
Guaranteed Rate
195 Route 46, Suite 7
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412-523-5277

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BOARDROOM REPORT

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*Indicates current member who opened
an office as a broker.

**Secondary Member

PEOPLE

Continued from page 12

from weichert.com transactions in the Weichert sales region. The office shared top honors for having the most listings.

Individually, **Rosalie Cook** had the highest dollar volume

and the most revenue units in the sales region. She shared top honors for having the most listings. **Bradford Lewis** had the highest dollar volume from weichert.com transactions for the month.

Cubias also announced that the Rockland County Regional office was recognized for outstanding achievement at the regional level in August. The Rockland County Regional office, which is managed by **Karen McCabe**, shared top honors for



Rosalie Cook

having the most listings in the Weichert sales region, which is comprised of locations throughout Rockland, Orange, Dutchess and Westchester counties, and New York City.

He also reported that sales associate **Lynn Fronckowiak** with the Fishkill office was recognized for outstanding sales achievement at the regional level in August.



Lynn Fronckowiak



Karen McCabe

Fronckowiak shared top honors for having the most listings in the Weichert sales region, which is comprised of locations throughout Rockland, Orange, Dutchess and Westchester counties, and New York City.



Bradford Lewis

OCTOBER 2023

Course Schedule via ZOOM

*Course qualifies for the Virtual Card

- October 5-** Pricing Strategies For Listings and Listing Presentations* with Katheryn DeClerck
- October 6-** Commercial Real Estate: Tools of the Trade (2 Day Course) with Edward Smith, Jr.
- October 11-** Financing the Deal; Understanding The Mortgage Process* with David Moore
- October 12-** Sales Remedial or Gap Course – 30 hr. with Varied Instructors (Evening Sessions)
- October 14-** Matrix 1: Introduction to Matrix* with LaVerne Brown-Williams
- October 18-** Today’s Mortgage Program Options: Every Realtor Needs to Know* with Sheetal Sawhney
- October 20-** Buy the Numbers: Investing in Real Estate with Edward Smith, Jr.
- October 21-** (Transaction Desk) Instant Forms & Authentisign* with Katheryn DeClerck
- October 25-** Co-Ops and Condos* with Barry Kramer
- October 26-** Navigating Fair Housing/Fair Lending in Real Estate Valuations* with Rebecca Jones (Real Estate & Appraisal CE)
- October 27-** Negotiating with and For Your Clients with Edward Smith, Jr.

Upcoming... via ZOOM

Building Your Commercial Real Estate Business

Friday, November 3rd, 9:00am-12:00pm

with Edward Smith, Jr.

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*Online classes via The CEShop are not included in the Virtual Card

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* Online classes via CE SHOP, designation courses, and certification courses WILL NOT be included in the purchase of the Education Card.



CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

September 26

Breakfast with Benefits:

The Power of Artificial Intelligence

Via Zoom, 9:30AM – 10:00AM

Pizza with the Prez: Rockland

Banchetto, Nanuet, 5:00PM to 7:00PM

September 28 – 30

C5 + CCIM Global Summit

Omni Atlanta Hotel CNN Center, Atlanta GA

OCTOBER

October 1 – 4

NYSAR Fall Meetings

Turning Stone Casino, Verona

October 3

Volunteering at Green Chimneys

Brewster, 10:00AM – 12:00PM

October 5

Commercial & Investment Division:
Virtual Commercial Marketplace with
MIAMI REALTORS® Commercial

Via Zoom, 9:00AM – 10:30AM

Breakfast with Benefits:

Don't Be the Invisible Agent!

Via Zoom, 10:00AM – 11:00AM

October 9

Indigenous People Day
– HGAR Offices Closed

October 10

RPAC Breakfast and Economic Update with

NAR Chief Economist, Dr. Lawrence Yun

HGAR White Plains, 8:30AM – 11:00AM

October 11

Orange County Day

Salisbury Mills Firehouse 1:15PM – 5:45PM

October 13

Global Business Council Webinar
with NAR India

Via Zoom, 10:00AM – 11:00AM

October 17

Breakfast with Benefits: What's Lurking
in Your Home's Crawl Space?

HGAR Goshen, 9:00AM – 10:30AM

Global Business Council Welcomes
Portugal Trade Mission Representatives
to HGAR, Program and Networking

HGAR, White Plains, 9:00AM – 12:00PM

Women's Council of Realtors - Chat and Chew

Tesoro D'Italia Restaurant, Pleasantville,

5:30PM – 8:30PM

October 18

HGAR Board of Directors Meeting

White Plains, 10:00AM – 12:00PM

October 19

Global Real Estate Summit NYC

Fordham University – Lincoln Center Campus,
NYC, 8:00AM

October 26

Commercial & Investment Division
Monthly Roundtable and Marketing Session

HGAR White Plains, 9:00AM – 11:30AM

October 30

107th Annual Member Appreciation Day

Westchester Marriott Hotel, Tarrytown,
8:00AM – 5:00PM

Not Enough Homes to Sell? Blame the Local Land Use Boards and Their Lack of Education

The “zombies” of issues left to be decided are poised to walk the halls again this coming legislative year. With the added specter of a Presidential election year, the 2024 New York State Legislative Session will play out while some State Representatives fight in primary elections, providing a backdrop for a legislative session where there is expected to be, just like in 2023, a fight over the budget, Good Cause Eviction and, of course, the housing crisis.

What will inevitably break into fights over forced density increase, transit-oriented development and the affordability issue, the Housing Crisis will play itself out to no end, much to the chagrin of housing advocates, first-time homebuyers and those who make their living providing homes for people. What will definitely go under the radar is a probable cause and possible solution for the log jam that is housing policy in this state.

What you may know is that each municipality in New York State has almost complete control over its zoning and land use. This power of local government is called “home rule.” The power of home rule is, surprisingly, not limited to Mayors and Town Councils, but also extends to the Zoning and Planning Board of each municipality. The boards tasked with reviewing applications are typically composed of community volunteers who have some level of interest or expertise on the issues of land use.

These boards may approve an application, approve it subject to conditions, deny it outright, or hold it over to subsequent meetings after asking

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

By Alexander Roithmayr



for additional information, additional study, suggested revisions, or to accommodate further public comment. The more complex the project, the more likely it will need to repeat this

about community character, a fear of increased traffic, or an outright dislike of increasing density. Regardless of their individual reason, the institutional reason that land use boards have not

It is land use boards where housing goes to die. Most zoning boards in New York State over the past 40 years have opted to deny or delay indefinitely multi-family projects or housing options that were not single-family homes.

process through multiple boards. It is land use boards where housing goes to die. Most zoning boards in New York State over the past 40 years have opted to deny or delay indefinitely multi-family projects or housing options that were not single-family homes.

These denials or delays by Land Use boards can be caused by several reasons, including a concern

allowed an increase in housing stock over the last few decades is because of a distinct lack of education.

What is not common knowledge is just how little education and oversight it takes to be a member of a volunteer land use board. As of now in New York State, the law requires that each member of the volunteer zoning and planning boards go through four hours of training a year. What that training consists of or oversight on if this training is ever completed is not

a requirement of the law. To put this in perspective, New York State has 1,187 cities, towns and villages and each municipality has at least five zoning board members, which means there are more than 5,000 individuals with unknown education levels dictating housing policies. This has been the case for decades.

I choose to believe that the volunteers on these boards are good people—civic minded individuals that believe in what’s best for their community. I also know it to be true that New York State has record housing costs, a declining housing stock, and rising segregation. It is why I believe that through better accountability and education, these individuals can make better land use decisions on a local level that will truly bring what is best for communities and their downtowns.

Modern literature and studies on the topic of housing and economics have indicated an increase in housing is an almost universal gain for local economies. Recent studies from Long Island and Westchester County have dispelled myths that an increase in housing hurts local school districts, and, in fact, local studies have shown that an increase in housing is a net positive for school districts.

From the Presidential to State Legislative election contests, 2024 will be a robust political year, and the politics around housing will be thick. When we inevitably find our leaders talking about rent for life or the dangers/benefits of ADU, remember and advocate for a common-sense solution—better education for Land Use Boards.

Alexander Roithmayr is Director of Government Affairs for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

Deborah Waters Continued from page 13

everyone—this is the first, the only financial help they’ve received.”

Many residents are without flood insurance and can’t afford to repair their homes. Waters described an 80-year-old man whose home was “red-tagged,” meaning it’s risky for habitation. “He’s on a fixed income, so he has nowhere else to go right now,” she said. “Others who are still working are digging into their 401Ks or IRAs and some are having to take a second mortgage.”

Waters will continue bringing these much-needed relief checks to her community members through the Fall, as the deadline for applications is set for October 15. In the meantime, she’s busy helping potential homebuyers find their respective American Dream. “I especially like working with first-time homebuyers,” she said. “It can be a scary experience, especially in this market.”

She knows first-hand how challenging that can be, as Waters purchased her first home at the age of 52. “I grew up in Bethpage with my friend and fellow Realtor John Chewens, who actually helped me find my first rental,” she recalled. “He always told me I should become a real estate agent, and I finally listened!”

Her background in computer science, high school sports coaching, teaching and serving as a West Point tour guide made the transition to real estate sales fairly seamless. Waters admits her experience as a former military spouse also helped her to make

friends easily, as her family traveled nationally and internally for over two decades. “We lived in 17 different homes in 21 years,” she revealed. “We were all over—New York, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Kansas, Hawaii and Germany.”

Her three children – now 29, 28 and 26, grew up believing that constant moving was the norm for all families. “When they were ready to go away to college, it was no big deal for them. I also got to know so many people and now have friends everywhere. I think I’ve been to 46 of the 50 states,” she said.

Waters spent a lot of time researching the housing areas for their various homes and became an expert in relocating. “I’m totally able to relate to people who need to move, and I understand the stress and pressure they’re under,” she added. “Every real estate deal has different challenges, but I know we can always work our way through them.”

As someone who now loves what she does, Waters admits she wishes she had started sooner in real estate. “I love meeting and helping people with one of the biggest transactions of their lives,” she said.

While she has traveled extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe, Waters’ favorite place is still New York. “At one point, we lived in Germany for about four years, and I took German courses to be able to converse with my neighbors,” she said. “They used to tell me I spoke German with a New York accent!”

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Redfin Reports Home Purchases Fell Through At the Highest Rate in Nearly a Year in August

SEATTLE—Residential real estate deals are falling through at the highest rate in almost a year as high mortgage rates give homebuyers sticker shock, according to a new report from residential brokerage firm Redfin.

Nationwide, nearly 60,000 home-purchase agreements were canceled in August, equal to 15.7% of homes that went under contract that month. That's up from 14.3% a year earlier and marks the highest percentage since October 2022, when mortgage rates surpassed 7% for the first time in two decades.

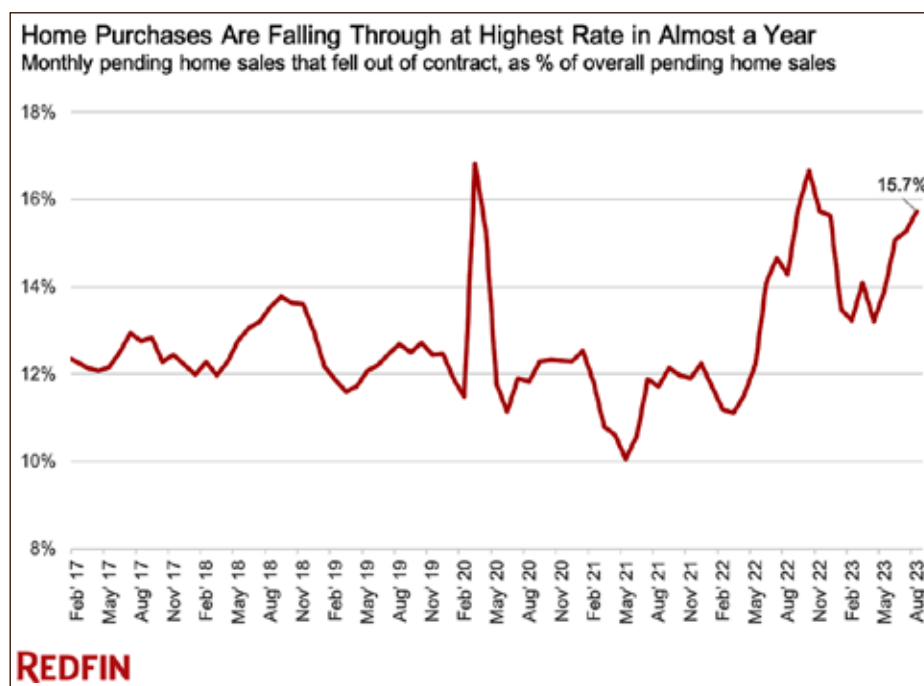
The average interest rate on a 30-year-fixed mortgage was 7.07% in August. At one point last month, it hit 7.23%—the highest since 2001—sending the typical homebuyer's monthly payment up significantly from last year.

"I've seen more homebuyers cancel deals in the last six months than I've seen at any point during my 24 years of working in real estate. They're getting cold feet," said Jaime Moore, a Redfin Premier real estate agent in Reno, NV. "Buyers get sticker shock when they see their high rate on paper alongside extra expenses for maintenance, repairs and closing costs. Many of them would rather back out, even if it means losing their earnest money. A lot of sellers are also willing to let buyers slip away because they don't want to concede to repair requests."

Home Prices Post Biggest Increase in Almost a Year

The median U.S. home sale price rose 3% year-over-year to \$420,846 in August, the largest annual increase since October 2022, and was little changed (-0.2%) from a month earlier. It was 2.8% below the May 2022 record high of \$432,780.

Activity in the housing market is sluggish due to rising mortgage rates, but prices remain high because the buyers who are out there are competing for a limited number



of homes, Redfin stated.

"Home prices will likely remain elevated for the foreseeable future," said Redfin Economics Research Lead Chen Zhao. "The Federal Reserve still has more work to do in its battle against inflation, which means mortgage rates are unlikely to come down anytime soon. As long as rates remain high, homeowners will be reluctant to sell. And that lack of homes for sale will keep prices high because it means buyers are duking it out for a limited supply of houses."

Home prices also posted a year-over-year gain in August due to the "base effect" from a year earlier; in August 2022, prices had recently started descending from their record high, which is contributing to the size of year-over-year increases we're seeing now.

Buyer Demand is Below Pre-Pandemic Levels

Pending sales declined 0.6% from a month earlier in August on a seasonally-adjusted basis, and fell 18.1% year over year. While they're no longer falling as rapidly as they were

earlier in 2023, pending sales remain below pre-pandemic levels. They've been hovering below 400,000 since the end of last year, compared with nearly 500,000 just before the pandemic.

Pending sales have stabilized as the initial shock of elevated mortgage rates has moved further into the rearview mirror, but high housing

costs are still keeping many buyers on the sidelines.

New Listings Tick Up Slightly, But Supply Remains At Record Low

New listings rose 0.8% from a month earlier in August—the second small uptick on a seasonally adjusted basis following nearly a year's worth of declines—and were down 14.4% year over year.

"New listings have likely bottomed out," Zhao said. "Most of the homeowners who feel handcuffed by high rates have already made the decision not to sell. That means many of today's sellers are putting their homes on the market because they have to, in some cases due to divorce, family emergencies or return-to-office policies."

Still, the total number of homes for sale hit a record low in August, falling 1.1% month-over-month on a seasonally adjusted basis and 20.8% year-over-year—the largest annual decline since June 2021.

Housing supply is at an all-time low because homeowners feel locked in to their low mortgage rates; for many, selling their home and buying a new one would mean taking on a much higher monthly payment.

Report: Woodbury Common Proposes \$250M Expansion

In its online newsletter distributed on Sept. 19, The Orange County Partnership in Goshen reported that Woodbury Common was set to present to the Town of Woodbury Planning Board Meeting its latest expansion development.

Anticipated highlights include 100,000 square feet of new retail space, a state-of-the-art parking garage, and a lavish 100-room hotel. The Orange County Partnership stated that the expansion will create more than 100 additional jobs at the property in

Central Valley and is expected to involve a \$250-million capital investment.

In addition, Poly Craft Industries, an advanced manufacturer and printer of laminated and non-laminated plastic products, held a ground breaking ceremony in the City of Middletown for its \$30-million expansion project. Company officials at the event said the firm will be relocating its corporate headquarters from Long Island to Middletown in 2025.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Continued from page 13

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New City, NY 10956

Classification of Directors

Class 1 Directors terms of office shall expire December 31, 2025, and every three years thereafter. Class 2 Directors terms of office shall expire December 31, 2026, and every three years thereafter. Class 3 Directors terms of office shall expire December 31, 2024, and every three years thereafter.

Regional Director terms shall expire on December 31, 2024.

Members of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee members filing this report were: Anthony Domathoti, Chair; Susan Goldy, Renee Zurlo, Diane Mitchell, Christina Stevens, Ruth Lara Dean and Ismail Kolya.

ALTERNATIVE NOMINATIONS BY PETITION:

REALTOR® Members may file petitions to nominate candidates other than those proposed above for any of the Director positions. A petition must be signed by at least three percent (3%) of those REALTOR® Members of HGAR eligible to vote. Further, the REALTORS® must be affiliated with at least twenty (20) different REALTOR® firms. Branch offices do not count as separate firms. The Officer positions are not subject to petition challenges because they are subject to election by the HGAR Board of Directors.

Any such petition must be filed with the 2023 HGAR Board of Directors at least twenty-one (21) days before the election, accordingly, **no later than noon on Monday, October 9, 2023**. The petition must state the name and firm of the candidate(s). A link to a copy of the HGAR By-Laws is posted at www.hgar.com. Petitioners are strongly urged to consult with the HGAR CEO or other executive staff members, to be assured of a proper understanding and interpretation of the Bylaws. In the event that nomination petition(s) are filed, HGAR must post at the HGAR offices and also provide notice of such additional nominations to all members eligible to vote in such election at least fourteen (14) days prior to the annual meeting (i.e., **not later than Monday, October 16, 2023**) by email and/or publication in *Real Estate In-Depth*.

PROXY VOTING

REALTOR® members may vote in person or by proxy at the annual meeting. The person who attends and votes may act as proxy for only one absent REALTOR®. A proxy ballot and the procedure for voting by proxy will be posted on the member only pages of www.hgar.com **no later than October 2, 2023**.

The MLS Increases Competition, Levels Playing Field for Consumer

Continued from page 4

one of the most complex and consequential transactions of their lives. Of those consumers, first-time and low- and middle-income homebuyers—often with the least experience and the least information—would suffer the greatest hardship.

While most consumers today begin their research online, almost nine in 10 people still choose to work with a real estate agent, according to the NAR 2020 and 2021 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers Report. That is because in a free and competitive marketplace, knowledge is power, and most consumers rely on the knowledge and expertise of Realtors. An understanding of property taxes, property valuations, financing options, market trends, and competitive pricing strategies empowers both buyers and sellers.

Realtors are experts who assist their clients with a myriad of complex federal and state disclosures, forms and closing documents. Realtors efficiently navigate their clients through a complicated transaction requiring coordination between inspectors, appraisers, attorneys and lenders.

For those Realtors with experience in global real estate transactions, it is common knowledge that local broker marketplaces in the US are the best option for consumers around the world. More than 100 real estate asso-

ciations in 75 countries have bilateral relationships with NAR, many of which (on nearly every continent) seek our advice and expertise in developing and promoting similar local MLS broker marketplaces. With consolidated fees and a streamlined process, international real estate professionals recognize that this model provides the most efficiency, the greatest transparency, and the most market-driven pricing, benefiting both buyers and sellers.

I will continue to encourage our Realtor members not to fret about the current lawsuits. Rather, stay informed, stay engaged, and continue to do what Realtors always do: 1) advertise your services accurately and truthfully, 2) fully disclose your compensation and remind consumers that commissions and fees are always negotiable, 3) never represent your brokerage services as free, 4) demonstrate the value of your services to your clients and customers, and 5) faithfully abide the fiduciary duties you owe to your clients—obedience, loyalty, disclosure, confidentiality, accountability and reasonable care/diligence.

As long as Realtors continue to demand and promote a common responsibility for the integrity and honor of our standards of conduct, we can rest assured that a free and competitive marketplace will always exist for the benefit of every consumer.

Ransomware and Cyber Threats: The Real Estate And Other Industries are Under Attack, Again!

Continued from page 5

occurred this week and the attack on Rapattoni, the economic effects can be devastating. The IC3 report points out that the “FBI does not encourage paying a ransom to criminal actors. Paying a ransom may embolden adversaries to target additional organizations, encourage other criminal actors to engage in the distribution of ransomware, and/or fund illicit activities. Paying the ransom also does not guarantee that a victim’s files will be recovered.” Although not recommended or ideal, in many cases a ransom is paid in order to regain access.

The IC3 Recovery Asset Team

The FBI strongly recommends that all incidents of cyberattacks should be reported to IC3 so that investigators can assess the attack and obtain critical information which could potentially allow them to track these criminals, hold them accountable, and possibly prevent future attacks. Once these incidents are reported to IC3, the Internet Crime Complaint Center’s Recovery Asset Team (RAT), which was established in 2018, communicates with financial institutions and “assists FBI field offices with the freezing of funds for victims who made transfers to domestic accounts under fraudulent pretenses.” Unfortunately, once the funds are wired to the cybercriminal’s account, it may be difficult or impossible to claw back the funds. However, if the FBI and the banking institution are notified within 24 to 48 hours from the time the funds were wired, the funds may be recoverable. The RAT Team serves as the “liaison” between law enforcement and financial institutions.

Cyber Threats Are Real, Do Not Take Them Lightly!

It is not a question of whether you will be the victim of a cyberattack, but when. The potential for a cyberattack should never be taken lightly. Cyberattacks are very real and all individuals and businesses need to be aware of the dangers and risks. Individuals and companies must take these threats seriously and put in place protections to reduce the risk, although it is impossible to totally eliminate it.

These cyberattacks are very costly. Companies and individuals are also required to spend thousands more to comply with the data breach and notification requirements of state and local laws. It is important for all businesses to look into obtaining cybersecurity insurance coverage as most insurance policies do not cover cyberattacks or the related damages and costs incurred. Appropriate cybersecurity coverage will not only cover the damages incurred, but will also provide coverage for the costs involved to send the required notices under the law, which can be very expensive. Once an attack occurs it is too late. Taking the appropriate measures in advance will go a long way in affording the necessary protections should one occur.

Legal Column author John Dolgetta, Esq. is the principal of the law firm of Dolgetta Law, PLLC. For information about Dolgetta Law, PLLC and John Dolgetta, Esq., please visit <http://www.dolgettalaw.com>. The foregoing article is for informational purposes only and does not confer an attorney-client relationship and shall not be considered legal advice.



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Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month

By **Freddimir Garcia**

As we enter Hispanic Heritage Month, we come together not only to celebrate the rich history, vibrant cultures, and significant contributions of Hispanic individuals to our society, but also to recognize the deep personal connection many of us have to this celebration. This month, observed from Sept. 15th to Oct. 15th, is a time to honor the journey of Hispanic Americans, including my own Dominican heritage, and to celebrate the profound impact of Hispanic cultures on our lives.

My Dominican heritage holds a special place in my heart, and I encourage each of you to reflect on the unique stories and traditions that shape your own cultural identity. During Hispanic Heritage Month, I often take the time to reflect on my Dominican roots, beginning with the food from tostones to a hearty sancocho, which I recently had as my wife and I recovered from COVID. That's what we consider as the remedy to any illnesses.

Like many other cultures, the kitchen is a place of connection, where we not only enjoy delicious meals but also share stories, laughter, and



memories that tie us closer together. Lastly, music is also sacred to who we are from a four-step bachata, fast paced merengue, or smooth salsa. Finding the song with the right lyrics, tempo, or rhythm that speaks to you is a big part of our heritage.

I encourage each of you to take this time to engage and learn something about Hispanic heritage, and reflect on your own heritage and the synergies of who we are as people. Embracing our cultural roots enriches our lives and deepens our understanding of the diverse tapestry of this country. Some notable Hispanic figures who have shaped our country include individuals like: Cesar Chavez, Sonia Sotomayor, Roberto Clemente, Arturo Alfonso Schomburg, Jorge Ramos and Lin Lin-Manuel Miranda. He is at the top of my list lately with the Disney movie "Encanto"—a viewing staple at home with our two girls.

Let's use these next few weeks to dive into the culture by:

EDUCATING: Take the time to learn

about the history, cultures, and achievements of Hispanic and Latinx communities. Share this knowledge with your colleagues, friends, and family.

CELEBRATING: Attend events,

By celebrating our diverse heritages and fostering a sense of unity, we strengthen our real estate community and build bridges that connect us in meaningful ways. Let us continue to embrace the beauty of our shared humanity and the array of cultures that enrich our lives.

workshops, and discussions that highlight Hispanic and Latinx contributions. Celebrate the diversity within our community.

SUPPORTING: Visit and support Hispanic and Latinx-owned businesses, organizations, and initiatives. Contribute to efforts that uplift these communities.

By celebrating our diverse heritages and fostering a sense of unity, we strengthen our real estate community and build bridges that connect us in

meaningful ways. Let us continue to embrace the beauty of our shared humanity and the array of cultures that enrich our lives.

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors was scheduled to hold an International Night on Sept. 21st and spotlight Hispanic Heritage Month with a program filled with speakers, food, and music.

Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the culture and traditions of those who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Those countries include: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela.

For more information on Hispanic Heritage Month, go to: <https://www.oprahdaily.com/life/a28134135/hispanic-heritage-month/>

Freddimir Garcia is the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

HGAR Member Appreciation Day Challenge for 2023

By **Katheryn DeClerck**

I have attended many HGAR Member Appreciation Days over the years, and it is a great time to catch up with those that you haven't seen in a while. Many of us missed this kind of interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic and the years that have followed. With classes and other events on Zoom, I hear people longing to get together in person more and more.

Member Day is filled with past HGAR Presidents and Realtors of the Year, Executive Committee members, Board members, Committee chairs, instructors, volunteers and staff. These people are people who know people... a lot of people. For these attendees, Member Day is like a reunion.

However, what about the newer members or those who have been less engaged? It can be intimidating to walk into an event with hundreds of people you don't know. Chances are they know someone... but maybe not many. For these people, Member Appreciation Day may be like attending Thanksgiving for the first time with a new love interest... and being surrounded by people they don't know, who all know each other really well.

For all the experienced attendees, I am going to ask you to make a concerted effort to acclimate a newer attendee. Seek them out. Introduce yourself to people you don't know and help them meet other people. If you are a leader, formal or informal, within this organization, you owe it to the organization to help create an inviting and inclusive environment. Our future leaders are among us, and they could use your assistance. I bet someone held a door open for you. Now it's your turn.

There are lots of reasons why this will benefit you, too. Member Day events present a unique opportunity to expand your professional network,

and the importance of actively engaging with new people cannot be overstated. While spending time with familiar faces can provide comfort and familiarity, venturing out to meet new individuals offers a myriad of benefits

that contribute to personal growth and professional success.

Broaden Your Network—Networking is a cornerstone of professional success in real estate, and Member Day events offer an excellent platform to expand your network where you can establish valuable connections with industry leaders, competitors, affiliates, instructors, mentors and Association and MLS staff.

Learn from Industry Leaders—HGAR's Member Day events often attract industry leaders and experts as speakers or panelists. By attending sessions featuring prominent professionals, you can gain insights into the latest industry trends, best practices and strategies for success.

Boost Confidence and Communication Skills—Initiating conversations with new people can be intimidating, but doing so can significantly boost your confidence and communication skills. Engaging with diverse individuals in a professional setting enhances your ability to articulate your ideas, actively listen, and adapt your communication style to different audiences.

Foster Inclusivity—Attending Member Day events with a willingness to meet new people aligns with the core principles of diversity, equity and inclusion. By actively seeking out and

If you are a leader, formal or informal, within this organization, you owe it to the organization to help create an inviting and inclusive environment. Our future leaders are among us, and they could use your assistance. I bet someone held a door open for you. Now it's your turn.

engaging with attendees from under-represented groups, you contribute to a more inclusive environment.

I look forward to seeing you all on October 30th at the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors Annual Member Appreciation Day. I challenge you to do one or all of the following:

1. Bring a newcomer.

2. Meet a newcomer and introduce them to people you know.

3. Meet and interact with people you don't know.

4. Search out members of HGAR's DEI committees and ask how you can help foster inclusivity at our organization?



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4. Search out members of HGAR's DEI committees and ask how you can help foster inclusivity at our organization?

Embrace the opportunity to network and connect with individuals from various backgrounds and industries on Member Appreciation Day. Then watch how these interactions positively impact your professional journey within the real estate industry.

Katheryn DeClerck is a member of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors DEI Steering Committee.



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Orange County: At the Confluence Of Opportunity and Responsibility

By Maureen Halahan

The “summer slowdown” never occurred in 2023 at the Orange County Partnership as site selector activity and tenant requirements demanded our full attention. The leads have been in diverse industry clusters, and we have been working with



companies that specialize in:

- Battery Manufacturing
- Food/Beverage Production
- Data Center
- Plastic Manufacturing
- Distribution
- Clean Energy Technology

These opportunities are fleeting—we must validate sites, infrastructure, labor, and supply chain connectivity quickly, quicker than our competition. As Economic Developers, it's our responsibility to fight to land these projects, in order to facilitate job creation.

Given the activity this summer, a few items became very clear to me:

1 Prioritizing Workforce Development is Paramount

Many of the leads that we've seen are driven by access to moderately skilled labor. We are in a position to service most industrial uses at scale because we have sites that are either approved or going through the entitlement process that can accommodate requirements ranging from 50,000 square feet to 1.2 million square feet. Our site inventory is powerful, but for us to emerge out of a competitive



Tesla will occupy 1396 Route 300 in Newburgh and utilize the property as a distribution facility.

Northeast, we must drive a dynamic workforce development and training agenda that stands out to consultants and end-users.

2 New Jersey Companies Are Taking Notice Of Orange County

Recently, we've seen frequent project opportunities come out of New Jersey in part, driven by land constraint, high rents, and difficulty getting sites approved in a heightened NIMBY environment. We've prioritized building out-of-state relationships and tailoring our marketing to position Orange County as the cost-effective alternative to New Jersey, offering similar market access at a lower price per-square-foot basis. Our site advancement efforts, coupled with announcements, such as Tesla occupying the Matrix Route 300 building, have provided us with mo-

mentum and market recognition that extends beyond the Hudson Valley.

3 Clean Energy and Organic Food Manufacturing Projects are Prevalent

Given New York State's position and policy direction focusing on decarbonization and energy transformation, we've seen an uptick in battery, solar, EV product, and climate control product manufacturing leads. At the same time, consumer demand that is focused on clean, organic food and beverage products has made Orange County a hotbed for project activity. Many of these leads are driven by access to high-end food markets in Northern New Jersey, Connecticut and New York City. Given land constraints in those markets, we've emerged as a strategic location to produce and distribute food products.

4 Plastic Production Is on the Rise

Following our announcement of Poly Craft Industries intention to construct a 100,000-square-foot plastic printing and manufacturing facility, we've worked on four additional plastic production leads. We are in deep discussions with two companies seeking to relocate their plastic manufacturing operations in Orange County with an opportunity to create 300 jobs between both projects. As we continue to announce “big names” in the plastic sector, the tri-state plastic market is taking notice.

While incentives aren't a panacea, they remain the great equalizer as we compete with other states and countries to attract projects. Clearly, the Governor of the State of New York continues to focus on enhancing New York's competitive edge through establishing an array of funding and incentive programs that support economic development, site development, housing, workforce development and clean energy. These programs are key tools in our toolbox as economic developers.

We're enthusiastic about the project opportunities that are looking at Orange County. As spec projects become increasingly difficult to finance, we expect a slight slow-down in vertical speculative construction and a shift to more build-to-suit driven construction activity. The good news is that the market is in expansion mode as sites continue to be advanced in the approval process. We're confident that we'll have tenants continuing to explore the market.

Maureen Halahan is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Orange County Partnership.

Orange County Eco. Summit Focuses on Growing Tourism, Hospitality & Film Production Sectors

By John Jordan

MIDDLETOWN—More than 300 people attended the second annual Orange County Economic Summit on Friday, Sept. 15 that focused on the county's high-growth tourism, hospitality and film production industries.

The program, held at Orange Hall at the SUNY Orange campus in Middletown, featured presentations and panel discussions by a host of political and economic development leaders, as well as local and national experts in the respective tourism, hospitality and film production industries.

Orange County Director of Economic Development Steve Gross began



Josiah Brown, president and CEO of Famous Destination Marketing

the summit program by stating that an “influx of tourists has brought about a myriad of economic benefits that ripple through our community, creating jobs, stimulating local business and boosting our overall economy.”

His comments were right on the mark and well-timed. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul announced just two days earlier that New York State welcomed a record 291.5 million visitors in 2022, the largest number of visitors in New York State's history, generating more than \$78.6 billion in direct spending and \$123 billion in total economic impact. These figures represent staggering increases over 2021 and surpassed the previous records set in 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tourism is very big business in Orange County, according to the latest data. Orange County Director of Tourism & Film Amanda Dana at the Orange County Summit reported that according to state data, tourism had a \$1.1-billion economic impact in Orange County in 2022, generating \$394 million in labor employment income; \$95 million in local taxes and another \$59 million in state taxes.

Traveler spending in 2022 in Orange County posted a 22.3% increase over 2021, according to data compiled by Tourism Economics. The tourism sector employed more than 8,000 direct workers in 2022. In the Hudson Valley last year, tourism generated a total of 51,241 jobs, 6.1% of all jobs within the region.

Orange County Executive Steve



From left, Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus and Director of Economic Development Steve Gross

Neuhaus told the gathering that thanks to continued strong business attraction efforts, and a marked increase in tourism, he plans to unveil a 2023 budget that includes the lowest county taxes since the 1960s.

At the Orange County Summit, Dana unveiled new marketing videos and also introduced the Tourism and Hospitality Panel that featured: Dave Mistretta, general manager of Woodbury Common Premium Outlets in Central Valley; Stephanie Johnson, divisional director, LEGOLAND New York in Goshen; Sonny Patel, owner of Beer

World and the recently opened Aspire Brewing of Middletown and Eric Ridley, chairman of the Board of the New York State Hospitality and Tourism Association. Mistretta and Johnson detailed expansion plans in the works at Woodbury Common and LEGOLAND New York, respectively.

Gross also introduced a promotional video entitled “Why Orange County is the Place to Turbo Charge Your Business.”

A second panel discussion covered the Film & Production sector that was

Please turn to page 23

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Veteran Real Estate Attorney to Be Honored As 2023 'Woman of Achievement' on Oct. 3

MIDDLETOWN—The Orange County Partnership has announced that Kelly Naughton, partner at the Goshen law firm Naughton & Torre, LLP, has been named the organization's 2023 "Woman of Achievement in Economic Development" honoree.

Naughton, a resident of The Town of Wallkill, will receive her award at the Orange County Partnership's Investor Breakfast on Tuesday, Oct. 3 at The Barn at Villa Venezia in Middletown. The event will begin at 8 a.m. with the program starting at 8:30 a.m.

Orange County Partnership officials noted that Naughton began her career in 2006 as an attorney representing municipalities in Orange County, as well as private developers. Since then, Naughton has been involved in some of the largest economic development projects in Orange County, including serving as attorney for the Town of Goshen's Planning Board in connection with LEGOLAND New York's theme park proposal. The development secured all municipal approvals in less than a year's time. Naughton also repre-



sented Resorts World Hudson Valley in its successful bid to locate a gaming facility at the Newburgh Mall. Both projects are highly successful and generating hundreds of new jobs and millions in tax revenues to Orange County.

Orange County Partnership officials noted that Naughton is currently involved in projects that cover many of the growth sectors of the Orange County economy: industrial, travel-tourism, residential and green energy to name just a few.

Maureen Halahan, CEO of The Orange County Partnership, said of this year's Woman of Distinction: "We are honoring Kelly Naughton because of her resilience and intelligence that has directly enhanced our ability to attract and retain quality projects resulting in good paying jobs for the residents of Orange County. Specifically, her work on the Legoland project in Goshen, the Resorts World Hudson Valley project in Newburgh, and a host of strategic economic development projects that have created thousands of new jobs and contributed untold economic benefits to Orange County's dynamic economy. In addition, Kelly's municipal law expertise is vital to many local communities, helping advance visionary and prudent progress. Her efforts positively impact the lives of so many, with measurable results that strengthen economic development not only here in Orange County, but throughout the region."

For more information, to make a reservation or to sponsor the event, contact Rebecca Hulse at rebecca@ocpartnership.org or at 845.294.232.

Companies Can Tap into the Benefits Of Orange County's Foreign Trade Zone

GOSHEN—Orange County operates US Foreign Trade Zone #37. The Foreign Trade Zone was established by the federal government in May of 1978. It was intended to provide an economic boost to the greater Newburgh/New Windsor area that endured a significant blow when Stewart Air Force Base closed in 1971.

Presently, the Orange County-Foreign Trade Zone consists of the following sites:

- Newburgh Foreign-Trade Zone Industrial Incubator facility, adjacent to Port Newburgh, in Newburgh.
- Stewart International Airport/Northeast Business Center, near the intersection of I-87 and I-84, New Windsor/Newburgh.

- Newburgh/New Windsor site (Port Newburgh) off Exit 10, Interstate 84 at the Newburgh/Beacon Bridge. The site includes only that area bounded by the Hudson River, Quasick Creek, South Water Street and South Williams Street.

- Goshen/Westgate FTZ Industrial Park, off Exit 124 of NY Route 17, Village of Goshen.
- The Gap Distribution Facility, Fishkill.
- Takasago Inc., at Harriman.

What is a Foreign Trade Zone?

FTZs are secure, designated areas around the United States, located in or near a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Port of Entry. For-

eign and domestic merchandise that enters an active FTZ is considered to be in international territory, thus providing a number of advantages for FTZ clients who regularly import finished goods, raw materials or component parts for manufacturing or distribution.

For those involved in international trade, advantages may include the elimination, reduction and/or deferral of costly duties or tariffs on imports. FTZ-37 has premier corporate operators that include Takasago International, The Gap, Konica-Minolta and Findlay's Tall Timbers.

"Our Foreign Trade Zone is a critical economic development tool that helps create business and jobs in

Orange County and beyond," said Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus. "FTZ #37 directly impacts a company's bottom line, especially in the current global trade climate."

"As we grow our FTZ we continue to attract top manufacturers and distributors to Orange County and to the Hudson Valley region," said Steve Gross, Orange County Director of Economic Development. "The FTZ is a catalyst in our economic development formula that leads to job creation and positive business development."

If you want to know how the FTZ can be beneficial to your business, contact Steve Gross, Orange County Director of Economic Development at sgross@orangecountygov.com.

Site Inventory Program Arms Orange County With Key Facts to Accommodate New Projects

By **Conor Eckert**

Executing sector specific economic development strategy is not an overnight process—it takes research, relationships, and an in-depth understanding of the market. When an economic development organization gets an opportunity to compete for a major project in Advanced Manufacturing, speed and accuracy are everything. That's why we rolled out the Site Inventory Program (S.I.P.)—to give us a better understanding of which sites, communities, and areas of Orange County can accommodate what we've deemed as "strategic sectors"—including Advanced Manufacturing, Advanced Materials, Life Sciences, Clean Energy and Microelectronics.

Lessons Learned

The reasoning behind developing the Site Inventory Program was clear—to develop a portfolio of on/off market sites that can accommodate strategic sectors. This included a comprehensive review of the infrastructure profiles, approval/entitlement time-

lines, municipal objectives, incentive options, and workforce connectivity for each community in Orange County. This information arms us with the knowledge we need to confidentially approach consultants and site selectors with sites that we know can accommodate manufacturing-oriented projects.

Site Selector Relationships

Site Selectors are influential consultants that work on behalf of major corporations to lead their search for real estate—often across the world. When a company such as Micron is ready to expand its footprint, they enlist the help of a Site Selector to manage the site search process.

A major part of the Site Inventory Program, outside of the on-the-ground data gathering, was interviewing major site selectors that represent clients in our targeted industry clusters. We learned the common infrastructure, workforce, and site requirements for the sectors that we want to attract. Separately, we bolstered our relationships



Conor Eckert, Senior Development Officer and Vice President of Business Attraction, Orange County Partnership

with a handful of site selectors undertaking projects in the Northeast. The relationship between the site selector and economic developer is sacred—and can help take a location to the "next level" of economic development.

Outcomes and Next Steps

The Site Inventory Program was a creation out of necessity if we want to continue to compete for transformational economic development projects. We must know our sites and infrastructure better than anyone else. We are now in a position to be proactive, not reactive when working to attract our target industries. Since the conclusion of this program, we've responded to more than 15 project requests from site selectors and consultants, mostly in the manufacturing sector.

Knowledge is power—having an in-depth understanding of infrastructure and sites has positioned us to compete for dynamic projects. I'll reiterate—when fighting to land an economic development project, speed and accuracy are everything. We have both, and we're ready to execute.

Conor Eckert is Senior Development Officer and Vice President of Business Attraction for The Orange County Partnership.

Alliance for Balanced Growth Tackles New York's Evolving Green Energy Future

By John Jordan

The Alliance for Balanced Growth at its recent second quarter session entitled “Construction Development in the New Clean Energy Economy” tackled the complex and sometimes confusing seismic shift of New York State’s energy grid from fossil fuels to renewable green energy sources—solar, wind, biomass, water and geothermal. Participating panelists at the program held at The Country Club at Otterkill in Campbell Hall for the most part agreed that the state’s ambitious climate action goals are attainable, but perhaps not on the timeline state and environmental advocates are hoping for.

The cataclysmic changes in the energy sector stem from the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act), which was signed into law on July 18, 2019. New York State’s Climate Act is among the most ambitious climate laws in the nation and requires New York to reduce economy-wide greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030 and no less than 85% by 2050 from 1990 levels.

The two panel discussions were moderated by Melissa Cobuzzi, President and CEO of M&R Energy Resources. Cobuzzi, who also serves as Chairperson of The Orange County Partnership, posed probing questions to both panels on the state of the major utilities in the region, their needs to meet the state’s climate goals and the costs to undertake those initiatives.

The first panel covered the current state of the utilities, grid challenges and long-term approaches to compliance and featured: Christopher Capone, President & CEO of Central Hudson Gas & Electric; and Robert Sanchez, President & CEO Orange &

Rockland Utilities, Inc.

The second panel discussion delved into possible solutions, funding, and implementation of clean energy practices. That panel featured Jay Goodman, partner of the Albany-based law firm Couch White LLP; Alexander Betke, an attorney with Brown Weinraub of Coxackie, NY; Rebecca Filbey, Program Manager, Utility Affairs & Strategic Partnerships for the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) and Peter Muzsi, head of marketing of Core Development Group of Mahwah, NJ, a designer and developer of clean energy projects.

Moderator Cobuzzi highlighted some of the other significant New York State clean energy goals that are on the horizon, including the grid being sourced by 70% renewable energy by 2030 and 100% zero-free emissions electricity by 2040. She noted that consumer demand will increase as the state shifts from natural gas to electric and from gas to EV. She told the record-ABG gathering that the transformation of New York State’s energy grid is a major topic that will impact business and economic development for years to come.

O&R’s Sanchez said that the utility is trying out a host of new technologies, including batteries, onshore and offshore wind, etc. “I kind of view this as an exciting time for the industry,” Sanchez said, adding that in coming years the existing system will have to be at least doubled.

“Frankly speaking we are not going to be able to do that on our own,” Sanchez said. “We are going to need a lot of



From left, Robert Sanchez, President & CEO of Orange & Rockland Utilities, and Christopher Capone, President & CEO of Central Hudson Gas & Electric

support from the developers out there. There will be a lot of working going on.”

Later in the program, Sanchez said in terms of the state’s climate goals, “There are a lot of discussions about new and renewable coming on board, and we are extremely supportive of that, but we are also supportive of what I would say are very responsible steps being taken, meaning that as you bring in new, do not release what is existing until you know you can run the system.”

Sanchez’s words rang true as the New York Independent System Operator released a report two days after the ABG session that concluded there could be a deficit in reliability margins for the New York City area beginning in the summer of 2025. The deficit is as large as 446 MW and the ISO is recommending keeping some fossil fuel

“peaker” plants in operation past their expected closures in order to meet the energy demand.

While he said the entire utility industry supports the state’s efforts in respect to its Climate Plan, the transformation must be done in a “responsible” way that ensures reliability and affordability in the future and prevents issues California and Texas faced with their respective energy grids, he noted.

Central Hudson’s Capone, who was named President & CEO in February 2023, was also upbeat but pragmatic about achieving the state’s climate goals by the mandated timelines.

While supportive of the Climate Plan, Capone said that some of its goals are “aspirational, not just ambitious” and will take a collective effort to achieve.

“As we are building today, we need to be thinking about what we are building to,” Sanchez said. He noted that the recent torrential rain storms and the damage they inflicted on sections of the region should serve as a reminder of what needs to be done to prepare for the future. “The skill set we need today is going to change tomorrow and as we are building today, we can’t be building for 2023, we need to be building for what we are going to expect to see in 2050,” he said.

Orange County Eco. Summit Focuses on Growing Tourism, Hospitality & Film Production Sectors

Continued from page 20

moderated by Gross. Among the panelists was Summer Crockett Moore of Umbra Stages & Choice Films, which is also engaged in a major expansion of its sound and film stage facilities at the former Anthony’s Pier 9 in New Windsor.

The program also included keynote speakers Josiah Brown, president and CEO of Famous Destination Marketing and Yoni Bokser, executive director of the New York State Office of Motion Picture & Television Development.

Maureen Halahan, president and CEO of The Orange County Partnership, stressed that Orange County’s economic development team, which includes Gross, Dana, as well as the Orange County Industrial Development Agency and others, work well together to foster new business to Orange County.

“Our team of economic development specialists, we truly do work hand-in-hand,” Halahan said. She noted that many counties in New York State do not operate in a cooperative manner like Orange County does. “I am very proud and privileged to work with a team that really rows in the same direction and the only way that we can sustain our economy is through economic development, which includes increasing tax ratables from companies coming in and fostering job creation,” she said.

Halahan introduced keynote speaker Brown who discussed the changing demographics and growth forces impacting the tourism-destination sector. In fact, he theorized that economic development policies and tourism are intertwined with one another.

“If your community is not a place

that young people want to visit, it’s not a place young people want to live,” Brown said. “Let’s flip that around. If your destination is a place young people love to visit, it will be a place young people will want to live.”

He said that part of an ongoing generational shift is that people are choosing where they want to live before they choose where they want to work.

Another economic development related news item coming out of the summit was when SUNY Orange President Dr. Kristine Young announced the hiring of Dr. Jean Leandre to fill the newly created leadership position of Vice President for Workforce, Strategy, and Innovation effective that morning.

Dr. Young said in a press release announcing Dr. Leandre’s hire, “Under his leadership, we will create and enhance local partnerships, develop academic and training programs to better serve the varied employment and educational needs of those within our community, and support economic development within the greater Hudson Valley.

Most recently, Dr. Leandre was the founding dean of career and professional development at Rockland Community College. He has 15 years of experience in higher education, with stops at Mohawk Valley Community College, Bronx Community College and the SUNY North Bronx Career Counseling & Outreach Center. He is a product of the SUNY system, having earned an associate’s degree at Mohawk Valley and a bachelor’s degree from SUNY Institute of Technology. Additionally, he acquired his master’s degree in human services, as well as both an Ed.S. and an Ed.D. in educational leadership, from Liberty University.

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Event Program



8:30 - 11:30 AM
Grand Ballroom
Ethics for REALTORS®
Everything You Need to Know – and More

This course includes Ethics, Fair Housing, the Professional Standards Enforcement process and filing procedures, arbitration overview and much more. Approved for NAR’s 2.5 hr Code of Ethics triennial certification. CE credit pending.
Presented by: Brian Levine, Esq., HGAR General Counsel & Professional Standards Administrator

9:00 AM - 12:30 PM Westchester Ballroom
OneKey® MLS Info Track Sessions

OneKey® MLS presents free Info Track sessions and service updates by CoreLogic and Remine.
Keynote address by: Mitch Skinner, Attorney/Owner at Larson Skinner PLLC

9:30 - 10:30 AM Tarrytown Ballroom
Artificial Intelligence in Real Estate

AI is quickly changing the real estate industry! You’ll walk away with knowledge of how these emerging technologies can make a difference in your success.
Presented by: George Tsemberlis, AI Presenter and Sr. Loan Officer, CrossCountry Mortgage

10:45 - 11:45 AM Tarrytown Ballroom
Using Video to Convert Leads to Clients

Why are organic videos the secret sauce that can make you more successful? Find out how the right videos will keep you in the limelight and keep clients coming in!
Presented by: Digitality Marketing

11:45 AM - 12:45 PM Tarrytown Ballroom
Personal Branding Panel

What is personal branding and why is it so important for your success? Join our panel of experts including: Stacey Cohen, President & CEO, Co-Communications; Risa Hoag, President, GMG PR; and Chris Pagli, Social Media Manager, HGAR for all the answers.
Moderated by: Deb Budetti, Members Day Committee Chair and Broker/Owner, ERA Insite Realty Services



12:45 - 2:00 PM
Grand Ballroom
RPAC LUNCHEON
Guest Speaker:
Joe Harris VP of Government Advocacy, NAR

Joe Harris joined NAR in 2015 and has also served as its Director of Federal Legislative and Political Affairs. He also spent eight years on Capitol Hill working with Senator Joe Lieberman (I-CT) and Congressman John Spratt (D-SC).

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2:00 - 3:30 PM
Grand Ballroom
KEYNOTE ADDRESS
“There’s Always a Way!”
with Alex Banayan

In his international best seller, “The Third Door,” Alex Banayan details his unconventional route to success. Alex sold his prize sailboat from “The Price is Right” show to fund his quest to learn from the world’s most innovative leaders including Bill Gates, Lady Gaga, Larry King, Maya Angelou, Jane Goodall, Quincy Jones and more.

3:30 - 4:30 PM Grand Ballroom
HGAR Annual Meeting

Elect your 2024 HGAR leaders and congratulate the HGAR REALTOR® and Affiliate of the Year, along with other REALTOR® award winners.

4:30 - 6:00 PM Terrace Room
Celebration Cocktail Party

Join your friends and colleagues to celebrate your successes of 2023!
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