

# Record Number of HGAR Members Travel to Albany To Lobby State Lawmakers on Key Real Estate Issues

By John Jordan

ALBANY—A total of 45 members of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors traveled to the State Capital to lobby state legislators on a host of key legislative priorities including HGAR’s support of a bill that would establish a first-time homebuyer savings account.

HGAR officials noted that this year’s participation at the May 23rd event marked a record for the organization in its annual pilgrimage to Albany to support the New York State Association of Realtors’ Annual Lobby Day program. More than 250 Realtors from across New York State participated in this year’s Lobby



HGAR members at the 2017 Lobby Day in Albany.

Day. HGAR members boarded buses in White Plains, Brewster, West Nyack and in Newburgh for the trip to Albany.

NYSAR held a briefing prior to the respective boards sessions with their state delegations at the Albany Hilton where NYSAR President Dawn Car-

penter, NYSAR Director of Government Affairs Mike Kelly, and New York State Assemblyman Michael Cusick offered updates on key legislative matters.

The highlight of the day was a very informative give-and-take session between HGAR members and a num-

ber of state legislators in Hearing Room A of the State Legislative Office Building. The session, led by Leah Caro, co-chair of the HGAR Legislative Council, featured frank discussions on the seven top HGAR legislative priorities. Among a host of Realtors that made presentations at the session included HGAR President Dorothy Botsoe and John Kope, co-chair of the HGAR Legislative Council.

The Hudson Valley legislative delegation that met with HGAR members included: State Assemblywoman Sandra Galef, Assemblyman Kenneth

Continued on page 7

# Bricks and Mortar Retail is Not Dead, But Changing

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—Reports of the demise of bricks and mortar retail are premature, so says a panel of retail executives that appeared at the June 1st meeting of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors’ Commercial Investment Division.

The panel participants also agreed that while bricks and mortar retail faces many challenges today and in the future, conventional retail locations actually are integral to many retailers’ e-commerce operations. The panel, moderated by CID President John Barrett, consisted of: Steve Sayers, general manager, The Westchester;



The retail panel at HGAR’s Commercial Investment Division session agreed that some retail properties are in need of redevelopment.

Peter Kempner, principal, The Kempner Corp. of White Plains; Jonathan Gordon president and CEO, Admiral Real Estate of Bronxville; Scott Auster, managing director, Grid Properties of New York City and James Aries, senior vice president and director of acquisitions for Urstadt Biddle Properties Inc. of Greenwich, CT.

Aries said there has been a healthy streamlining of the weaker operations in the retail sector and while the Internet has a large impact on the industry, he said Urstadt Biddle Properties, which specializes in grocery anchored-shopping centers, considers the Internet and e-commerce as strictly another large retailer to contend with. He related that Urstadt’s stock fell several points when Sears announced its store closures, but knowledgeable investors realized that the firm has no exposure since Sears is not a tenant at any of its properties.

Continued on page 3

# Multifamily Investment Finds Long-Ignored City of Mount Vernon

By John Jordan

MOUNT VERNON—Multifamily investors, who have bypassed this storied Southern Westchester locale for decades for such Westchester cities as Yonkers, New Rochelle and White Plains, are finally taking notice of the City of Mount Vernon for both its opportunities and challenges.

Mayor Richard Thomas, who took office in January 2016 on a platform of reform, an effort to fix the city’s aging infrastructure and bring private investment back to the city, held a press conference on Friday, June 2nd to announce four major new market rate housing projects in the city. In total, the



A rendering of the Q West Towers project to be developed by Simone Development in Mount Vernon.

four new developments approach approximately \$323 million in investment and will add 880 new housing units. All four of the projects have either been approved by the city or are in the approval process and could break ground within a year. Several proposals are close to beginning construction in the next three to four months, the mayor noted.

At the press conference, David Gentner, president and CEO of The Wartburg senior care services campus, announced that it is studying develop-

Continued on page 2

## INSIDE SPOTLIGHT ON



Matt Rand, see page 13

- VIEWPOINTS ..... 4
- LEGAL CORNER ..... 5
- RESIDENTIAL ..... 6,7,8
- PEOPLE ..... 9,12
- HGAR REPORT ..... 13,14
- EDUCATION ..... 15
- LEGISLATIVE ..... 16
- BARRISTER’S BRIEFING ..... 16
- COMMERCIAL ..... 18,19
- TECHNOLOGY ..... 21
- MORTGAGE/FINANCE ..... 22
- IN THE REGION ..... 24
- PUTNAM ..... 26

# Multifamily Investment Finds Long-Ignored City of Mount Vernon

Continued from page 1



**Mount Vernon Mayor  
Richard Thomas**

ing approximately 140 units of senior market rate rental housing on its Mount Vernon campus. Gentner said The Wartburg hopes to select a developer, close on financing and begin the estimated \$65-million project by year's end.

The Wartburg project would bring the total number of units announced at the press briefing to 1,028 and the total development investment in the City of Mount Vernon to approximately \$388 million.

The mayor, who has had his share of battles with the City Council since taking office, said the development wave taking hold in Mount Vernon is due in large part to investors trying to take advantage of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's recent \$2-billion initiative to build affordable housing in New York State. He also cites reforms in the approval process that have been implemented recently as well as rezoning of certain sections of the city in order to spur new development.

"Mount Vernon is moving forward," Mayor Thomas said. "This begins the next chapter of Mount Vernon's story, which is 'Mount Vernon Rising.' There is a renaissance happening here." He added that the city will in coming weeks announce new restaurant and retail openings, as well as the results of studies the city has conducted geared to helping developers leverage more resources to build new projects in the city.

The new development projects coming to the city include:

**Library Square**—a \$125 million, 320-unit high-rise project at 20 South Second Ave. to be developed by Direct Investment Development of New York City and partners.

Carlton Brown, co-managing director of Direct Investment, which has developed a number of projects in Harlem beginning in 1996, said Mount Vernon has been historically "underinvested." Brown said that his firm has undertaken transformative projects in "communities that people have written off, but had underlying value that no one had mined" and saw an opportunity to harness the city's potential at the Second Ave. project site.

He said the Library Square project will include approximately 100 units that will be catered to the "creative class." Noting the recent decision by President Donald Trump to exit the Paris climate change accord, the Library Square project, when completed, will utilize 80%

less energy than the New York State energy code requires.

Brown said that his firm is seeking several zone changes, including the creation of a Mount Vernon East Arts District in and around the Mount Vernon East Metro North train station. He said that he expects to secure all necessary approvals and break ground on the project in the spring of 2018.

**42 Broad St.**—A \$90-million, 249-unit tower project in the Fleetwood section of the city being developed by The Alexander Development Group. The firm is within weeks of closing on the financing for the market-rate rental development, according to Mark Alexander, principal with the Alexander Development Group.

He said the project will be the "first planned luxury rental development in Mount Vernon in over 50 years." Alexander added that the project will also be built energy-efficient and will include co-generation as well as a host of high-end amenities.

"We are so excited to be here and to be a part of the resurgence of the City of Mount Vernon," Alexander said. "Fleetwood is a fantastic neighborhood and we are looking forward to breaking ground on a complex that will offer the best amenities in all of southern Westchester."

**7-11 MacQuesten Parkway**—is a 140-unit twin-tower building project called "Q West Towers" to be developed by Simone Development Companies of the Bronx, which recently completed the redevelopment of the former Boyce Thompson complex in Yonkers.

The \$60-million project in Mount Vernon is expected to break ground by the beginning of 2018. Mayor Thomas noted that the Simone project being developed by the Mount Vernon West Metro North train station will look to benefit from Gov. Cuomo's affordable housing fund as well as from the recent rezoning of the Mount Vernon West area around the station. The mayor noted that the Simone project will be the first development proposal to take advantage of the city's new 45-day permit process.

L'Judie Simmons of Simone Development noted that the apartments at the development will be priced to meet the needs of the area's workforce. "If you are a fireman, policeman, city worker—these buildings are for you. You will not be disappointed," she said.

Joseph Simone, principal of Simone Development, noted that he grew up in the Fleetwood section of Mount Vernon and was a graduate of Mount Vernon public schools and because of that the project is very personal. "I truly have a love for Mount Vernon and would like to see it flourish again," Simone said.

**525 and 645 MacQuesten Parkway**—A 179 unit, \$48-million apartment project being developed by Enclave Equities. Sam Mermelstein, vice president of development for Enclave Equities of Purchase, said he is hopeful to begin construction soon on the project geared to attracting young millennials to the City of Mount Vernon.

Enclave previously redeveloped a former Verizon call center on South Fifth Ave. into the Enclave on Fifth, a senior affordable housing project with a 22,000-square-foot Westchester Community College extension center.

The mayor at the press briefing staged in front of City Hall also introduced the new executive director of the Mount Vernon Industrial Development Agency Stacey Brayboy, a former official with the U.S. Department of Agriculture during the Obama administration, and



**From left, L' Judie Simmons and Joseph Simone of Simone Development and Mount Vernon Mayor Richard Thomas.**



**A rendering of the 42 Broad St. residential project to be built by the Alexander Development Group.**

Elvis Cordova, a former Obama administration appointee and now an official with the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency.

## Out With the Old



**Real Estate In-Depth photographer John Vecchiolla took a drive-by photo of the demolition of the former Westchester Pavilion mall in White Plains recently. Lennar Multifamily will be developing a mixed-use project at the property that will feature more than 700 rental apartment units.**

# Bricks and Mortar Retail is Not Dead, But Changing

Continued from page 1

He added that due to the poor perception of the retail market at the moment many of its competitors are “static or sitting on the sidelines. We are looking at that as an opportunity.”

Auster updated the CID gathering on the company’s proposed project in White Plains. The firm plans to develop a 230,000-square-foot, two-level retail development on a five-acre site on East Post Road. He told *Real Estate In-Depth* that the project, estimated at approximately \$150 million, secured site plan approval from the City of White Plains earlier this year. The firm has hired JLL as its leasing agent and is now looking to secure anchor tenants for the project that will also include a 750-space parking garage. He said the firm is hopeful to secure leasing commitments for at least 50% of the space so that it can begin construction sometime in 2018. He said the firm currently has approximately 600,000 square feet of new development in the pipeline. The White Plains project is the first development for the firm outside of New York City.

Admiral Realty’s Gordon stressed Westchester’s strong demographics, such as Westchester’s average household income of \$135,000 for example, as a definite key to attracting new tenants to the region. Commenting on the overall retail sector, Gordon related, “Retail is definitely in a state of flux... It is in a state of change.” Emerging trends include the growth of the omni channel or multi-channel concept that provides customers with seamless bricks and mortar and Internet. In addition, Internet-proof type retailers such as gyms, food and entertainment-oriented retailers, are also growing at the moment.

He said that municipalities should change their zoning codes to make it easier for these type of retailers to lease or own space, which he related would “prime the pump” and facilitate the future success of those type of retail operators.

Kempner said his firm, which owns retail properties in the Northeast and in the New York metro area, is currently in an “acquisition mode.” He noted that properties that were on the market a year ago or two years ago priced at a cap rate of 6.0 or 6.25, are now on the market for 7.0 to 7.5. He added that some of those properties therefore will likely trade at a cap rate of 8.0 or more.

While he noted that there are challenges facing the retail sector, he said that Internet sales account for 10% of all retail sales and that bricks and mortar supports 30% of those Internet sales.

The challenges facing retail property owners include expected higher levels of e-commerce, continued retail consolidation and stagnant or declining rental rates.

“It is up to us as the developers, the landlords and tenants to provide a proper retail environment for millennials,” Kempner said. “You have to give people a reason to show up and we have to continue to move forward and renovate the properties, provide good tenant installations and an experiential retail environment.”

The Westchester mall’s Sayers said, “Retail is not dead, but it is certainly changing.” He touted “The Westchester Savor”, a dining area on the fourth level of the mall that includes a number of specialty eateries, al fresco patio seating, a children’s play area and a high-tech media lounge.

Auster said that some sectors of retail are struggling, such as large enclosed malls for example. He also said that “Concessions are a reality that is not going away.”

However, he said that due to the strength of the New York area real estate market, while retailers may down-

size and the number of new retailers may be lower in the years to come, “I would place my bet on those stores being in New York first and closing here last before anywhere else in the country.”

The sponsors of the event were Carr Workplaces and Trustco Bank.

The next meeting of the Commercial Investment Division will be held on Thursday, June 22nd at the HGAR offices in White Plains. The session will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will feature Seth Pinsky, executive vice president at RXR Realty, who will discuss the firm’s major development projects in New Rochelle and Yonkers as well as multifamily sector growth in the New York City suburbs.

At 10:30 a.m. Anthony R. Davidson, Ph.D., MBA and Dean of Fordham University, School of Professional and Continuing Studies, will discuss a new partnership between the Fordham Real Estate Institute and the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors to offer professional and real estate designation programs to the HGAR membership



Front row, from left: Steve Sayers, general manager, The Westchester; Peter Kempner, principal, The Kempner Corp. of White Plains; Jonathan Gordon president and CEO, Admiral Real Estate of Bronxville; Scott Auster, managing director, Grid Properties of New York City and James Aries, senior vice president and director of acquisitions for Urstadt Biddle Properties Inc. of Greenwich, CT. Back row: HGAR President-elect Barry Kramer, HGAR CEO Richard Haggerty, HGAR President Dorothy Botsoe and CID President John Barrett.



The June 1st program was another in a series of well-attended CID sessions.

## Trion Sells \$9.7M Property in Mount Vernon

MOUNT VERNON— Trion Holdings, a Yonkers and New York City-based investment firm, announced earlier this month it had sold 55 Sheridan Ave. in Mount Vernon to 55 Sheridan Gardens LLC for \$9.7 million.

The closing on the property was on April 21, 2017. Trion Holdings sold the property after 13 years of ownership. The sale marked one of the highest sale prices per square foot and per unit in the sub-market area in recent years, the company reported.

“The asset achieved an annual cash on cash of 11% and had an Internal Rate of Return of 21.20% over a 13-year period, which met our acquisition goals,” said Carmelo Milio, chief investment officer and president of Trion Holdings. “The property was very management intensive but was stabilized after implementing many Trion policies and procedures along with strict collection policies.”

The property consists of two four-story walk-ups that combine for 66

units and the buildings are separated by a private, fenced-in courtyard. Robert Shapiro of Cushman and Wakefield represented both sides of the deal.

Trion Holdings LLC is a New York based real estate investment firm that acquires undervalued and value-add multifamily properties in New York City and the Tri-State Area. Trion and its advisors have successfully purchased, sold, and managed more than \$400- million in assets over the past 35 years.

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Dorothy Botsoe, HGAR President



## GATEWAY PERSPECTIVES

By Richard Haggerty, HGAR CEO



## Where Are We Now? A Recap of the First Six Months

*"Patience, persistence and perspiration make an unbeatable combination for success."* Napoleon Hill

There's a biblical phrase my mother used to often say to me "To whom much is given much is expected," and after my first six months as HGAR President I totally believe she continues to be right! We have come a long way already and have accomplished so much. But there is still work to do.

Our January Gala launch was a spectacular jumpstart to my commitment to inclusion and diversity and asking all of us to think about the following questions: What does it really mean to develop a diverse housing market? What does it mean to embrace inclusion? What will our real estate world look like in the next 10, 15 years?

In the past six months, we have enjoyed a great dialogue in an attempt to answer these questions over "tea" in my "Tea with the President" sessions, which started in February and will continue throughout the year. Some of the feedback I received included:

"Upon entering, I didn't know what to expect or what topics would be on the agenda, but from inception to conclusion, I was thoroughly impressed!"

"The discussion was informative, lively, progressive and productive. I was encouraged and felt my voice was heard. So much so, I've signed up to become more involved in Committees that match my interest, knowledge and life experience."

Thanks to members, like Teresa Belmore and so many others who joined me for tea and conversation, the feedback and overall involvement has been excellent. I learn a lot in these sessions and believe our time together has been valuable. The discussions are lively and informative.

Gloria Welcome, another member, had this to say about our work so far: "For the many years that I have volunteered at the board, previous presidents have not been as connected to the membership than you. The next president has a hard act to follow!"

I thank you all for joining in on the conversation for change to help us make a difference. We continue to learn from each other how powerful we are as a team; made up of the same differences that demand us to conduct ourselves with the respect for our own and our client's ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, education and religious diversity. We are the world.

In February, many of us joined millions of women across the country for the "Women's March"—a platform once again for our collective voices to embrace and tackle tough issues facing our communities, while also helping us as Realtors recognize the enormous buying power of women in today's real estate market. We continue to see how women are leading the way in obtaining a piece of the American Dream by owning property and buying homes. And that American Dream must be protected.

In April we celebrated Fair Housing month, which was a reminder of our power as Realtors. We are held to a higher standard based on our Realtor Code of Ethics. Home ownership provides shelter and brings stability to a family and the community. Fair housing and cultural diversity is a celebrated right for all of us. We must always do our job in working with all consumers be it the buyer, seller, renter or investor.

We also have to "advocate" and sometimes "agitate" to make our voices heard. In May, many of you joined me on the bus ride to Albany in support of RPAC (Realtors Political Action Committee). This committee acts as a strong consumer advo-

Continued on page 7

## Correction

In the May edition of *Real Estate In-Depth*, the project value of Lynmark Group's Sheldon at Suffern Station project was incorrect. The multifamily, transit-oriented development is valued at \$25 million.

## Thank You!

We are taught at an early age by our parents and teachers to always say please and thank you. Alas, sometimes as we grow older we forget the common courtesies in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, but we should not forget to show our appreciation to the HGAR members who give up so much of their time and energy to help lead and energize the Association.

Three years ago our communications consultant, Tracy Weir, led a series of focus groups involving approximately 50 HGAR members, and the comments and feedback solicited during those focus groups led to the creation of a new mission and vision strategy for the association, as well as forming the foundation of the completely revised association website, hgar.com. To all the members who participated in those focus groups, a belated Thank you! Your voices truly made a difference.

A month ago we conducted another series of focus groups with our consultants—David Severance and John Foligno—who are helping to facilitate our current strategic planning process. John and David were tasked with delving into the different methods of communication our members utilize and what preferences they have concerning how the association communicates with the membership.

What we learned from these focus groups was that our members utilize many different forms of communication and believe that the association should continue to communicate in multiple ways in order to reach all of our constituencies. For the most part the focus groups gave the association high marks for the communication content from HGAR. Another key finding is that we need to ensure that we are structuring our communications and programs to ensure that we engage all of our geographic areas. A possible solution to this would be to allow members to create their own template for what type of communications and content they wish to receive. Another interesting revelation was that several focus group participants want communications to be a two-way street, with some form of suggestion box being available to provide feedback. We are still digesting the findings from these latest rounds of focus groups, but I can tell you the information we received is very valuable.

The challenge we have as an association is that we do not want our message to get lost in the barrage of communications that we are all confronted with every day from so many different sources. How many of us suffer from e-mail exhaustion and either let e-mails go unread or hit the delete key? The National Association of Realtors recently conducted a Tech Edge program at our office in White Plains to a packed house. One of the speakers, Mathew Shadbolt, the director of real estate

Continued on page 8

## IN MEMORIAM

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors regrets to inform its membership of the passing of David L. Hawkins, a longtime real estate broker/developer and a lifelong resident of the area, who died on May 15 at Orange Regional Medical Center at the age of 74.

The son of the late James and Mabel Fox Hawkins, he was born on August 9, 1942 in Middletown, NY.

Hawkins was a graduate of Middletown High School and SUNY New Paltz, earning a Master's Degree in 1967. He started his professional career teaching art in the Minisink Valley School district and later the Warwick Valley School District, before pursuing a career in real estate. He was an Instructor of Real Estate, teaching several classes at SUNY Orange and the former Orange County Board of Realtors, which later merged with HGAR.

He was the founder/owner of D.L. Hawkins & Associates, Inc. in 1972, known for his "Buy Land" slogan, signs and license plate. In 1979, he was awarded "Realtor of the Year" by the Orange County Board of Realtors. He was an active member and founder of the Commercial and Investment Division of the New York State Association of Realtors serving as its president in 1979 and 1987. He also served as president of the Orange County Association of Realtors in 1999. He was co-founder and owner of Real Estate Solutions with longtime friend and colleague, R.J. Smith, from 2000-2015. He was one of the first active members in the Hudson Valley Chapter of the New York State Commercial Association of Realtors, and was honored with the NYSCAR Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2016 Dealmaker Awards event.

Hawkins was a Charter member and past president of the Warwick Valley Rotary Club and a longtime member of the Middletown Rotary Club. He was a Paul Harris Fellow with Rotary International. He was also a founding contributor and board member of the Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan Counties. He was a member of the Jimmy Sturr Band, having played the accordion for many years. He was a longtime member of the Barbers Eddy Hunting and Fishing club. Hawkins was a past youth basketball and baseball coach in Warwick. As a longtime member of the Orange Hollow Racquet and Fitness Club in Goshen, he was a player and captain of several USTA league teams, playing at the national level four times.

He spent his last 10 years living on Wolf Lake with his beloved wife, where he loved fishing, bird watching and enjoyed the serene beauty of the lake.

Survivors include his wife, Margaret Pennings Hawkins at home; his children: David L. Hawkins Jr. and his wife, Michelle of Vacaville, CA, James Hawkins and his wife, Denise of Goshen, Susan Hawkins of Stamford, CT, Jason McGovern and his wife, Tracy of Warwick; his grandchildren: Joshua, Jordynn, Brady, Ryan, Caitlin, Jimmy, Erik, Charles, Corinne, Madison, Ian, Paige and Cade; his great-granddaughter, Adaline; his sister, Barbara Higgins and her husband, David of Wanasink Lake. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank the entire ORMC Medical ICU staff for their compassion, care and support. A Memorial Service and Celebration of David's life was scheduled at 12 p.m. on Sunday June 11th in the Mulder Chapel located at the Warwick Conference Center, 62 Warwick Center Rd., Warwick, NY. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Middletown Rotary Club.

Continued on page 5

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# Website Accessibility and the ADA: An Update on Dismissal of Robles v. Domino's Pizza LLC

## LEGAL CORNER

By John Dolgetta, Esq.  
HGAR Legal Counsel



On April 26, 2017, a federal District Court in California dismissed a lawsuit filed by a plaintiff against Domino's Pizza, LLC (*Robles v. Domino's Pizza, LLC*, see <http://bit.ly/2s1hUJ7>) on the basis that the U.S. Department of Justice failed to issue specific website accessibility guidelines and therefore, the court held that the defendant, Domino's, could not be held liable for a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended in 2008 by the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act, when no such guidelines or specific rules exist.

### The Americans With Disability Act

The ADA was enacted to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. The ADA's general rule provides: "No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any person who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation." The National Association of Realtors explains the "...ADA specifically aims to end discrimination by private entities that operate a 'place of public accommodation,' and requires that any existing architectural and communication barriers be removed (where such removal is readily achievable and would not cause undue hardship to the entity) so that disabled persons are provided equal participation and benefits." (See <http://bit.ly/2r3Edcq>). The "communication barriers" (like the "architectural barriers") must be removed by all entities that operate a website which is considered to be a "place of public accommodation" under the ADA.

The court in Domino's Pizza pointed out that the ADA, in a section entitled "specific prohibitions," defines discrimination to include:

*"A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden."*

The basic premise of the ADA is that any failure to take the necessary steps to accommodate the disabled could be considered discrimination. However, if the entity or business can establish that taking the steps to comply with the ADA would alter the "fundamental nature" of the goods, services, etc. or compliance results in an "undue burden" then that entity would be exempt from complying with the ADA. Again, it is important to note that the burden to prove this is on the entity, business or organization offering the goods, services, facilities, etc.

### The DOJ and Accessibility Guidelines

In a recent article ("The American With Disabilities Act: Does it Apply to Broker Websites," HGAR *Real Estate In-Depth*, October, 2016, see <http://bit.ly/2r2ejFN>), the state of the existing law as it related to the requirements of "places of public accommodation" and "service establishments," which also include real estate brokerage firms, and website accessibility guidelines were addressed in detail. While it was noted that there is a split in the courts as to whether websites are "places of public accommodation" subject to the ADA, the DOJ's formal stance is that the ADA does indeed apply to websites. In May 2015, the DOJ reiterated that it was in the process of establishing formal website accessibility guidelines and that new rules would be forthcoming. As of yet, no formal guidelines or rules have been issued.

The DOJ, in various settlements with defendants who were alleged to have violated the ADA because their websites were not accessible to persons with disabilities, made specific reference to the accessibility guidelines known as WGAC 2.0 AA (the "WGAC 2.0 Guidelines"). In a settlement with EdX, Inc. (see <http://bit.ly/2e5NUGg>), the DOJ recommended that the WGAC 2.0 Guidelines be utilized in "...making websites accessible across a variety of ADA-covered disabilities, including blindness and low vision, deafness and hearing loss, learning disabilities, cognitive limitations, limited movement, speech disabilities and photosensitivity." A similar settlement was entered into between the DOJ and Peapod, LLC ("Peapod") where the DOJ required Peapod to "...ensure that [www.peapod.com](http://www.peapod.com) and its mobile applications conform to, at minimum, the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA Success Criteria (WGAC 2.0 AA), except for certain third party content..." (See <http://bit.ly/2s1Y1lj>).

### Robles v. Domino's Pizza, LLC: Lack of Due Process

Domino's operated the website known as "dominos.com" which is utilized by its customers and visitors for placing online orders and as an ecommerce platform, although Domino's is primarily a "brick and mortar" business. The plaintiff filed a lawsuit against Domino's alleging that its website did not comply with the WGAC 2.0 Guidelines. The plaintiff claimed that the website was incompatible with screen reading devices and prevented disabled individuals who used these devices from making purchases. The plaintiff relied on the settlement agreements entered into by the DOJ with various defendants and argued that the standards included therein were the applicable ADA standards established by the DOJ.

In analyzing the case, the court noted that "on July 26, 2010, the DOJ issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NOPR"), stating it was 'considering revising the regulations implementing Title III of the [ADA] in order to establish requirements for making the goods, services, facilities, privileges, accommodations, or advantages offered by public accommodations via the Internet, specifically at sites on the [web], accessible to individuals with disabilities.'" The court points out that the DOJ itself noted in the NOPR "...that a clear requirement that provides the disability community consistent access to websites and covered entities clear guidance on what is required under the ADA does not exist." Domino's argued that in light of the fact that clear guidance has yet to be issued by the DOJ, the plaintiff's request to impose liability under the ADA for the defendant's alleged failure to abide by "accessibility standards" that have not been formally adopted or issued by the DOJ would constitute a violation of Domino's constitutional right to due process.

Domino's relied on a case decided by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (see *United States v. AMC Entertainment, Inc.*, 549 F.3d 760 (9th Cir. 2008)), where the Court of Appeals considered whether the ADA required that theater owners

"retroactively" incorporate a rule dealing with making specific viewing angles available for theatregoers. The district court in AMC Entertainment held that AMC's theatres violated a particular "viewing" standard (which was promulgated after the theatres were constructed). The Ninth Circuit reversed the District Court decision and held that "because the injunction requires modifications to multiplexes that were designed or built before the government gave fair notice of its interpretation of the standard, the injunction violates due process..." Accordingly, relying on AMC Entertainment, Domino's argued that it could not be held liable for a standard that has yet to be promulgated. The Court of Appeals agreed.

The Court of Appeals explained the "...Plaintiff seeks to impose on all regulated persons and entities a requirement that they 'comply with the WCAG 2.0 Guidelines' without specifying a particular level of success criteria and without the DOJ offering meaningful guidance on this topic (citations omitted). This request flies in the face of due process." While the court is not stating in its decision that the ADA does not apply to websites, it is firmly establishing that until the DOJ promulgates specific rules and guidance, a company, entity or organization, including brokerage firms, which and agents who have websites, cannot be held liable for a violation of something that does not yet exist.

### Is Providing a Phone Number A 'Reasonable Accommodation' Under the ADA?

The Court of Appeals also commented on the fact that Domino's, after the lawsuit was commenced, provided a 24-hour telephone number on its website for those individuals that were having difficulty accessing the website. The court pointed out that the Plaintiff did not provide any evidence or make any argument demonstrating why the 24-hour telephone number did not constitute a "reasonable accommodation" under the ADA. Therefore, while the court did not specifically hold that providing the phone number was a "reasonable accommodation," it did open the door to the possibility that reasonable alternatives may be available, once the DOJ promulgates formal rules that would not constitute an undue burden on businesses that may fall under the scope of the ADA.

### What Does the Domino's Case Mean for Brokers and Agents?

The Domino's case does not change the legal landscape drastically, but it does provide useful guidance to website operators. One thing that is clear is that once the DOJ promulgates formal rules relating to website accessibility, most businesses, including real estate brokerage firms and agents, will be required to make their websites ADA compliant. As indicated in the October article, it is clearly not going to be an easy or inexpensive undertaking for brokerage firms and agents, which own or who operate websites, to make the appropriate changes that the DOJ and the ADA will require.

In light of this recent case, however, the pressure may be alleviated somewhat, in so far as it may make sense for businesses to wait and see what the eventual rules and website accessibility guidelines are before expending substantial money and prior to making extensive changes to existing websites. Unfortunately, there is no guaranty that someone or some firm will not be sued by a plaintiff and that another court will not find that a particular defendant is liable under the ADA. The decision in Domino's also provides additional important guidance, in so far as it suggests that website operators consider making "reasonable accommodations" (although not specifically defined) available to disabled users which may not result in an undue burden. ADA website accessibility guidelines will eventually come and as always the industry should be aware of and be proactive in dealing with these potential issues associated with these developments.

*Legal Column author John Dolgetta, Esq. is the principal of the law firm of Dolgetta Law, PLLC, which acquired the law practice of former Board Counsel, Edward I. Sumer. For information about Dolgetta Law, PLLC and John Dolgetta, Esq., please visit <http://www.dolgettalaw.com>.*

## IN MEMORIAM

Continued from page 4

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors regrets to inform its membership of the passing of Jean Overstreet Endres at the age of 93.

Endres passed away on May 22nd at her home in White Plains. She was born on Aug. 31, 1923. She was a natural entrepreneur and for more than 30 years was a devoted real estate broker in Westchester County. During that time she was recognized as a member of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors as well as the National Association of Realtors and the New York State Association of Realtors, where she actively participated on many committees.

Endres was predeceased by her husband, Ira Franklin Endres, Jr. and her son, David Endres. She is survived by her sons and their spouses, Ira F. Endres, III (Patricia) of Newnan, GA, Beckham Endres (Sally) of Marietta, GA, and her devoted daughter Jean Pamela "J.P." Endres of White Plains, who lovingly cared for Jean in her last few years. She is also survived by her four grandchildren Beckham, Bradley, Ira IV and Brian and her great granddaughter Elizabeth. J.P. was supported by amazing caregivers who Jean affectionately called her "Angels"—Charmaine, Marve and Pat.

A private family burial service will be held at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Hawthorne.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial donations be made in honor of Jean's memory to Calvary Hospice Fund in the name of Jean Endres. Calvary Fund, 1740 Chester Road, Bronx, NY 10461 or [www.calvaryhospital.org](http://www.calvaryhospital.org)

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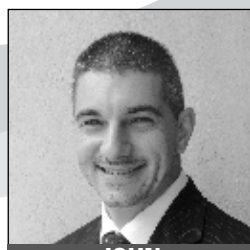
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## 3 Westerly Bar & Grill Opens at GDC's Harbor Sq.



From left, Assemblywoman Sandy Galef; Ossining Village Trustee Quantel Bazemore; GDC Founder and Principal Martin Ginsburg; Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino; 3 Westerly Bar & Grill owner Jeremy Casilli and Ossining Village Mayor Victoria Gearity.

OSSINING—Ginsburg Development Companies, along with county and village officials staged a ribbon cutting on June 1st to commemorate the official grand opening of 3 Westerly Bar & Grill, a new nautical-themed restaurant located at GDC's recently completed Harbor Square luxury rental complex on the Hudson River waterfront.

"Today's grand opening of 3 Westerly Bar & Grill represents the final stage of our Harbor Square development which has transformed a former industrial site into a thriving mixed-use residential community with a public park and riverfront promenade. With the addition of this exciting new restaurant, people can enjoy first-class cuisine while experiencing the timeless beauty of the Hudson River," said GDC Founder and Principal Martin Ginsburg.

"Westchester County and its Industrial Development Agency are proud to have partnered with Ginsburg Development Companies on the Harbor Square project," said Westchester County Executive Robert P. Astorino. "Now complete, Harbor Square's innovative development is an attractive community for families, empty nesters and millennials alike, looking to move or stay right here in Westchester."

The grand opening of 3 Westerly Bar & Grill represents the completion of Harbor Square, a \$65-million mixed-use luxury rental complex featuring 188 luxury rental apartments, a new public park with children's playground, waterfront promenade with monumental sculptures and a dock that serves the NY Waterway Haverstraw-to-Ossining commuter ferry. At press time the development was 90% leased.

Housed within a free-standing lighthouse, the 300-seat restaurant is operated by Jeremy Casilli, a restaurateur whose other venues include TriBeCa's AOA Bar and Grill, Pier 115 in Edgewater, N.J., and Soho and Tribeca Grand Hotels.

"After much anticipation, we are thrilled to bring this project to fruition and open our doors to the Ossining residents and the Westchester community," said Casilli. "3 Westerly Bar and Grill will be an iconic destination for people seeking a nautical indulgence. We have worked diligently to create a universal hub for all types of guests. We look forward to sharing our breathtaking views of the Hudson River while dining under our free standing light house structure."

3 Westerly Bar & Grill's main dining room seats up to 100. Its main bar, which features a black granite bar surface, raised-booth seating with walls adorned with HD TVs, can accommodate up to 75 patrons.

Under the direction of award-winning Executive Chef Dmitri Petriakov, formerly the executive chef at B.L.T. Prime in New York City, 3 Westerly Bar & Grill offers a wide array of dining options with a pronounced seafood emphasis. The restaurant also offers a full-service outdoor beer garden and sunset terrace capable of entertaining up to 125 guests. There is also a private dining room lit by nautical rope chandeliers that seats up to 75 guests.

## Property Management Firm Relocates to Tarrytown

TARRYTOWN—In a move the company says is to grow its presence and modernize its offices, Westchester Property Management Group, Inc. announced recently the relocation of its corporate headquarters from Hartsdale to its new site, a 4,000-square-foot home in the Tarrytown Corporate Center at 520 White Plains Road.

The move was expected to be completed this month.

"Moving from our home of 20 years isn't easy, but our new space is in a wonderful building and location and will allow us to continue providing our clients with the top level of service they've come to expect from our dedicated team of professionals," said John T. Lamorte, WPMG's president and CEO. "It will also provide the kind of attractive work environment that aligns with where we are now and where our company is headed in the future."

A licensed property management firm founded nearly 30 years ago, Westchester Property Management Group, Inc. manages 57 properties consisting of cooperatives, condominiums and homeowner associations throughout Westchester, Rockland and Orange counties.

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# Record Number of HGAR Members Travel to Albany To Lobby State Lawmakers on Key Real Estate Issues

Continued from page 1

Zabrowski, Assemblywoman Shelley Mayer, Assemblyman David Buchwald, Assemblyman James Skouflis, State Senator George Latimer and State Senator Sue Serino. Also participating in the session was Patrick Schraa, policy director for State Senator William Larkin. Several other staff members of state legislators also attended the forum.

HGAR officials subsequently met with all legislative members of the Hudson Valley state delegation or their staff, including State Democratic Conference Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins of Yonkers, to update them on the association's legislative priorities.

"This year's meeting with state legislators from the Hudson Valley was perhaps the most interesting and productive in memory," HGAR Chief Executive Officer Richard Haggerty said. "Our new format provided legislators a forum where they could speak openly and honestly on our agenda. The session offered us both perspective, as well as some interesting ideas on how we can advance some of our key priorities in the future."

HGAR's legislative priorities for 2017 included

**1) Support of First-Time Homebuyer Savings Account—A. 5616 (Ramos) S. 4058 (Little)**—The bill would establish a first-time-homebuyer savings account to allow individuals or couples to set aside after-tax income into a bank account designated only for costs associated with buying a first home in New York State. An individual would be allowed to deposit up to \$5,000 per year (couples up to \$10,000). At press time, a total of more than 105 members of the State Assembly and 30 State Senators had signed on in support of the bill.

**2) Opposition to Mortgage Recording and Transfer Taxes**—HGAR opposes any proposal to raise mortgage recording or transfer taxes, including a proposal by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and some New York State legislators to impose a New York City real estate transfer tax of an additional 2.5% on the sale of properties valued at more than \$2 million.

**3) Supporting the Reopening of the STAR Exemption for First Time Home Buyers—A. 5969 (Galef) S 4733 (Murphy)**—NYSAR and HGAR supports legislation that would repeal sections of Part A of Chapter 17 of the Laws of 2016,

which converted the STAR benefit to a credit instead of an up-front savings for new homeowners. This legislation would sunset the STAR Credit program and replace it with the STAR Exemption program for new homeowners affected by the change. By doing this it would bring certainty back to new homeowners who depend on the STAR exemption, especially since New York has the highest closing costs and the highest property taxes in the nation, HGAR officials stated.

**4) Supporting Transparency and Disclosure in Cooperative Housing—A. 7111 (Lavine) S. 2540 (Hannon) A. 3813 (Perry) S. 4551 (Sanders)**—One of the key provisions of the proposal is it would require that within 45 days of receipt of an application, the cooperative board shall either reject or approve the application and provide the applicant with written notice thereof. If the applicant does not receive an answer the applicant is automatically accepted as a purchaser of the co-op apartment. The proposal also contains the additional requirement that the board notify the applicant stating that they received their application within 10 days of receipt.

**5) Support of Vested Rights for Property Owners—A.69 (Paulin)**—The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors strongly supports the bill that would create a six-year pilot program in the counties of Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester relating to municipalities' ability to alter local codes, laws, ordinances, rules and regulations during the course of local development projects.

The bill reduces costly exposure to constant rule changes by establishing vested rights for as-of-right projects at the time of submission of a complete application and environmental assessment form. It achieves fairness for the applicant without blocking the municipality from considering newly discovered information, assessing cumulative impacts as allowed by SEQRA, conforming to changes in federal or state laws, applying regulations that had been initiated prior to the application, or acting on other special circumstances, HGAR stated.

**6) Support for Increasing the Threshold for the Mansion Tax—A.2194 (Buchwald) and S.1962 (Latimer)**—The Hudson Gateway Association

of Realtors strongly supports the legislation that ties the threshold for assessing the Mansion Tax to the Consumer Price Index or (CPI) for conveyances of real property. This bill is designed to avoid imposing an extra tax burden on what has become the average homebuyer in counties like Westchester, Rockland and other counties in the metro New York vicinity.

Currently the Mansion Tax imposes an additional 1% tax on buyers who purchase a home that sells for \$1 million or more a year. According to Hudson Gateway MLS statistics in 1998 there were 327 properties that sold for more than \$1 million. In 1999 there were 417 properties that sold for more than \$1 million and in 2014 there were 1,448 properties that sold for more than \$1 million. That is a staggering 1,300% percent increase during that time period. In the five counties that HGAR covers, there were nearly 2,500 single-family residences that sold for more than \$1 million between the years 2012 and 2013. This equates to one in four home sales.

"Based on the current numbers it is more apparent that the Mansion Tax no longer applies to Orange, Putnam, Westchester and Rockland's wealthiest homeowners," HGAR stated in its position paper. "New York State should be adopting policies that enhance homeownership. This is another tax that discriminates against middle income New Yorkers."

**7) Opposition to Expanding Cease**

**and Desist Zones—A. 5565 (Weprin), S.1985 (Avella)**—HGAR strongly opposes legislation that would make the entire borough of Queens a cease and desist zone. The legislation is unnecessary. There has been some local support for calls for establishing cease and desist zones in Rockland County. HGAR is not opposed to "do not knock" policies that are enacted by local villages and towns allowing a homeowner to put a decal or sign on the property saying that they do not wish to be disturbed. HGAR supports this policy because in effect, it does not violate a licensee's right to practice business, while it allows homeowners to opt out of being contacted. Towns have done this across New York State and it has largely solved the problem.

In reference to some issues in Rockland County that have surfaced recently, HGAR suggests that punishing all real estate licensees practicing within Rockland County due to the action of a handful of practitioners is overreaching. Law abiding real estate brokerages, which are significant contributors to Rockland County's economy, should not be singled out and halted from conducting legitimate business practices. The New York State Department of State currently has remedies within its licensing authority that could appropriately address any illegal activity or violation of real estate license law. For those reasons, HGAR opposes the imposition of a Cease and Desist Zone in Rockland County.

## Where Are We Now? A Recap of the First Six Months

Continued from page 4

cate and keeps an eye out on current, pending and proposed legislation that will impact home ownership. I want to say a huge thank you to all who attended and made this day a success.

We were reminded that our RPAC dollars go a long way to make sure we support Realtor friendly legislators who understand our causes. We must continue to make an impact at all levels of government—local, state and federal.

There will be more opportunities to let your voices be heard with upcoming open forums in our communities. I encourage your feedback and interaction on my blog, if you haven't checked it out please do. Member Angela Briante had this to say about her experience so far with my outreach: "You rocking it! You have ink everywhere!! Love it! Keep doing what you are doing!"

Thanks to all of you for giving me a platform to make a little "noise." So please check out the blog and post away. I will read and respond timely. Also, keep an eye on the information ticker and event page of HGAR. Things are happening and there is a lot of change coming and coming soon.

As we settle in to the summer, let's not forget who we are as a team and how important it is for us to keep the conversation for change going. It's been a great six months, we are half way through 2017 and our success is beginning to show. As Realtors, we still hold the keys to opening the door to someone's homeownership dream and what a joy it is to be a part of a community that's not afraid to lead the way and meet our challenges together. Let's stay the course and stay in touch.

Please feel free to contact me at dorothy@dorothyjensenrealty.com or at 914-450-0600.

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## Rockland County Exec. 'Drawing the Line' On Irresponsible Development Projects

RAMAPO—At a press conference staged near a controversial housing development at Patrick Farm here, Rockland County Executive Ed Day signed an Executive Order prohibiting county departments from issuing permits that do not comply with the General Municipal Law.

"When it comes to development, for far too long we see laws disregarded or broken—with no consequences," County Executive Day said. "No more. Starting today there are going to be consequences. We are drawing the line."

General Municipal Law requires towns and villages to comply with the findings of the County Planning Commissioner or file a reason why a decision has been made not to comply. Failure to do so will result in the county not issuing permits for such uses as water and sewer connections, well permits, rooming house permits, drainage permits, road opening permits, issuance of new addresses and others, county officials noted.

County Executive Day made the



Rockland County Executive Ed Day gives a signed copy of his Executive Order to ROSA Volunteer Deborah Munitz.

Executive Order announcement in Ramapo on May 22nd, adjacent to the 197-acre Patrick Farm property where developers want to build 479 units, much of it opponents charge over an aquifer. Community leaders also participated in the press conference, including Michael Miller of CUPON, Deborah Munitz of ROSA, Robert Rhodes of Preserve Ra-

mapo and other residents as well as firefighters and county and town officials.

Certain circumstances trigger provisions under New York State General Municipal law that force a local municipality—a town or a village—to send plans to the county planning department. This includes plans for a proposed zone change, a special permit, certain subdivisions, certain site plans and even changes to local laws. Reviews are also triggered when a proposed development is near an adjacent municipality or close to a county road, stream, wetland, park, etc., according to county officials.

If the county review requires modifications or there is a disapproval, a super majority of the Town Board, Planning Board, or Zoning Board is needed to override the General Municipal Law findings. That means that a town or village can still allow development that does not comply with the law.

However, Day stressed that the county will no longer go along with it unless the town or village states why it has reached a different conclusion.

"Sure, you can build a 479-home development over a crucial fresh water aquifer even though our Commissioner of Planning says 'No,'" the County Executive said. "But guess what? You will not be able to get water or sewer hook ups for those homes. You will not be able to get addresses. You cannot open your road, you cannot get curb cuts for a driveway. Good luck with that."

While the new Executive Order applies to all of Rockland County, County Executive Day noted, "But all of us know that the problem with irresponsible, reckless development is for the most part contained to one town—Ramapo and its villages. We are at a turning point for the Town of Ramapo. Let's restore integrity to Ramapo. We want the county to be there for people of Ramapo who have been waiting years for a change."

The order was developed at Day's direction after a joint effort by many of county departments. County officials that joined him for the announcement, included Deputy Commissioner of Health Catherine Johnson Southren, Commissioner of Planning Doug Schuetz, Director of the Office of Fire and Emergency Services Gordon Wren and County Attorney Tom Humbach, who was the author and architect of the order.

Local officials also attended the press conference, including Pomona Mayor Brett L. Yagel, Airmont Mayor Philip Gigante and Clarkstown Supervisor George Hoehmann, who is chairman of the Rockland County Sewer District No.1.

## Thank You!

Continued from page 4

products for the *New York Times*, observed that we are suffering from "an assault upon attention" with so many different communication styles constantly vying for our notice.

So, we've learned that there are no easy answers or simple solutions when it comes to communications, but in this day and age of fast paced technology growth, we really can't expect that. What you can expect is that HGAR will do everything we can possibly do to meet our member's needs, and if that means utilizing multiple communication vehicles to deliver relevant and important content to help our members succeed, we will do so. You can also expect that we will continue to ask for your opinions and request your feedback so that we can better meet our members' needs. Trust me, your collective voices truly make a difference.

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Michael Delgado



Nancy Hamilton



Rob Dominguez



Susan Lyke Cooper

Valley National Bank, the wholly-owned subsidiary of Valley National Bancorp, recently announced the appointments of **Michael Delgado, Nancy Hamilton, Rob Dominguez** and **Susan Lyke Cooper** to home loan consultant of the Hudson Valley, New York region.

As home loan consultants they will be responsible for growing Valley's mortgage lending portfolio by partnering with a network of real estate professionals, financial planners and construc-

tion professionals to deliver Valley's wide array of home financing solutions.

Delgado brings more than 30 years of real estate and mortgage lending experience to his new role at Valley. Delgado holds a Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree from Fordham University. He is a certified mortgage planning specialist, a graduate of the Realtor Institute and a member of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

Hamilton boasts more than 20 years

of mortgage lending experience. She is a certified mortgage planning specialist and serves on the Women's Council of Realtors.

Dominguez, a certified mortgage planning specialist, brings a wealth of expertise to Valley's growing team of home loan consultants with more than 30 years of experience in the housing industry.

A professional mortgage lender with more than 25 years of experience, Co-

per also joins Valley as one of its newest home loan consultants. Cooper is also a certified mortgage planning specialist.



**Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty** announced recently that **Victor Polce** has joined the company as a business development director of Distinctive Collection properties, which are homes valued at \$1 million or more.

"The goal of our Distinctive Collection brand is to become the preeminent luxury market enterprise in Bergen, Orange, Rockland, and Westchester Counties," said Polce. "Our focus is to be client-centric and service-oriented to a degree that has never been seen before in our marketplace."

Polce spent 25 years on Wall Street, working in global financial markets and catering towards multinational companies and high net-worth individuals. His real estate experience includes working as an agent for six years with Halstead Properties in New York City and spending the last three years as an agent in the Alpine, NJ office of Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty.

Aside from being the Business Development Director of Distinctive Collection properties, Polce will also be a Rand agent. He holds broker real estate licenses in New York and New Jersey and has a significant referral base, particularly from New York City. He will be



Victor Polce

working out of Rand Realty's Closter, NJ office as a broker/salesperson, and at the firm's Piermont office as an associate broker.

Polce spent 16 years as the mayor of Old Tappan, NJ, a position he held until Jan. 1, 2016.

More People Briefs on page 12

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# HGAR/NYSAR Annual Lobby Day, Albany, NY, May 23, 2017



Almost 50 HGAR members from Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, and Orange counties attended this year's Lobby Day on May 23 in Albany.



**Dawn Carpenter,  
NYSAR President**



**New York State Assemblyman  
Michel Cusick**



**Mike Kelly,  
NYSAR Government Affairs Director**



**Dorothy Botsoe, HGAR President**



**Barry Kramer, HGAR RPAC  
Committee Co-Chair**



**Jennifer Mallory, HGAR Director**



From left, John Crittenden, Michelle Rivera, Sarah Hughes, Robert Shandley, Barry Kramer and Assemblywoman Amy Paulin.



From left, Harding Mason, Clayton Livingston, Crystal Syska, Leon Cameron and John Kope



HGAR members gather outside the New York State Capitol building in Albany.



From left, John Vernazza, NYSAR's Legislative Steering Committee Chair; CJ DeVecchio, NYSAR's President-elect; Dawn Carpenter, NYSAR President; NYS Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins; Moses Seuram, NYSAR Secretary-Treasurer and Dorothy Botsoe, HGAR President



Hudson Valley legislators listen to the concerns of HGAR members.



From left, Mike Kelly, NYSAR Government Affairs Director; Philip Weiden, HGAR Government Affairs Director and Richard Haggerty, HGAR CEO



From left, New York State Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski, New York State Senator George Latimer, New York State Assemblyman James Skoufis and New York State Assemblywoman Sandy Galef



Barry Kramer, HGAR RPAC Committee Co-Chair confers with New York State Assemblywoman Amy Paulin.



HGAR members meet with Hudson Valley lawmakers.



Front row, from left: Ann Garti, Maryann Tercasio and John Olivero; back row, from left: Kathy Milich, Cindy Schweizer, Kelly Olivencia, Ron Garafalo and Jeffrey Farnell.





Ahmed Nunez

**Ahmed Nunez** has joined **Charles Rutenberg Realty's** new Bronx office.

Nunez is a graduate of John Jay College and obtained his real estate license in 2007 but was not very active due to the tough climate in real estate at that time. He took a position at WeFamily as a housing manager full time and kept his real estate license active to work on a part-time basis.

Nunez was most recently associated with Wide Realty in the Bronx. He is also grateful for the excellent training he got from Coldwell Banker, which he said helped him transact business in a professional manner.



Josef Gashaj

**Rand Commercial** reported recently that **Josef Gashaj** has joined its New City office as a licensed real estate salesperson.

Gashaj holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business management from Rockland Community College in Suffern. While at Rand Commercial, Gashaj will be assisting clients in Rockland County, but he anticipates moving onto other markets in the future, Rand officials noted.

**Mary M. Burr** has joined **William Raveis' Scarsdale** office as a Licensed Associate Broker. She has extensive real estate experience throughout Westchester County and Putnam County. She has been a licensed real estate agent since 2002, working with Prudential Ragette and Julia B. Fee Sotheby's International.

Burr is experienced in all property types and sizes. Her career aggregate gross sales of \$74 million represent a cross section of single-family homes, multi-family homes, condos and co-ops throughout Westchester and Putnam, company officials noted.

She received a Bachelor of English from the College of New Rochelle, a Masters in Secondary Education from Iona College, and a Professional Diploma in Supervision and Administration from Fordham University. After 24 years in education as Department Chairperson of English, Dean of Students, Elementary School Principal, Assistant High School Principal and Principal, she entered the real estate industry.



Mary M. Burr

**Coldwell Banker Residential** of Connecticut and Westchester County reported recently that Yorktown Heights resident **Kimberly A. Renzi** has affiliated with the Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage office in Yorktown Heights.

She has been an award winning full-time Associate Real Estate Broker for more than 17 years, a lifelong resident of Westchester County and former Principal Broker/Owner of a local real estate brokerage.

Renzi has been active in numerous organizations including the Hudson Gateway Multiple Listing Service, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, New York State Association of Realtors, National Association of Realtors and the PTA for the Yorktown Central School District. She is also a New York State licensed Notary Public.



Kimberly A. Renzi

Manaroneck-based **Murphy Brothers Contracting** was honored at the 26th Annual **Building Owners and Managers Association** Hall of Honor Awards Dinner as the recipient of The Best of BOMA Westchester County's Signature Award in the category of "Re-Position/Re-Purpose Award" for Mamaroneck Self Storage.

The 40,000-square-foot self-storage facility was designed by architect Kim Martelli and developed by the general contracting firm on its own property in the Village of Mamaroneck. A recent winner of a 2016 HOBBI Award for "Best Green Commercial Project," Murphy Brothers collaborated with nationally known energy consultants, Steven Winter Associates to construct their building under NYSERDA's New Construction Program to rate better than 52% more energy efficient than required by the New York State Building code. The results succeeded in averaging yearly operating cost savings of more than \$30,000, while providing a NYSERDA rebate check totaling close to \$60,000.

In a separate ceremony, the company also received a Westchester County 2017 Earth Day Award for the development of Mamaroneck Self Storage with energy-efficient features built into the facility design. The Westchester Industrial Development Agency granted a sales tax relief incentive to the project while under construction, enabling the Murphy Brothers to wrap the savings into a more energy-efficient building strategy. Deputy County Executive Kevin Plunkett, on behalf of Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino, presented the award to Murphy Brothers Contracting.

**Chalet Jiang** has joined the Scarsdale office of **Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Westchester Properties**. The announcement was made by Mark Nadler, director of Westchester sales.

Jiang has worked many years in the financial industry. She performed fund accounting for Millennium Partners, analyzed fund investments for institutional clients at Credit Suisse, and provided trade valuations and control for the fixed income desk at Nomura Securities. She played an important role in providing client services on a day-to-day basis for hedge funds and financial institutions.

Born and raised in Shanghai, Chalet, a resident of Scarsdale, came to the U.S. to pursue an MBA in Accounting from Baruch College and became a CPA in New York. Her years of experience and international background have enabled her to develop solid expertise in nearly every aspect of client services. Proud to be part of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Westchester Properties, Chalet brings her creative problem solving and negotiation skills as well as a



Chalet Jiang

goal-oriented talent to her commitment as a real estate professional, Berkshire Hathaway officials stated.

**Dr. Cliff L. Wood** has been named **Rockland Community College's** first President Emeritus.

In more than 13 years as President of Rockland Community College, Dr. Wood made a substantial impact both on RCC and the Rockland County community.

The RCC Board of Trustees voted on May 25 to bestow the honor upon Dr. Wood, effective with his retirement. The unanimous vote came immediately after the Board adopted rules to establish criteria for the naming of a President Emeritus. Dr. Wood will retire on June 30, and Dr. Michael Baston will take over as the new RCC President the next day.

"Under Dr. Wood's leadership, RCC has reached out to every corner of Rockland to serve the county's educational, cultural and business needs," said Martin Wortendyke, chair of the Board of Trustees. "He is widely known as a leader of vision and integrity, and is clearly deserving of this title."



Dr. Cliff L. Wood

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Your suburban buyer client needs to sell their home in the Bronx...  
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# HGAR

# JUNE 2017 UPDATE

## 'Runway for Hope' Fashion Show Draws Large Crowd for HG Realtor Foundation



By Mary T. Prenon

NEW ROCHELLE—The "Runway for Hope" Fashion Show, held on May 31 at Glen Island Harbour Club in New Rochelle, drew more than 300 people and raised thousands of dollars for the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation.

The final fundraising results were still being tabulated at press time. A joint venture between the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation and the Women's Council of Realtors, the Fashion Show featured business, casual, and evening wear by Lord & Taylor in Eastchester and fashions were modeled by HGAR members.

"This was truly an exciting event and we were thrilled with the turnout," said Bonnie Koff, trustee and chair of the foundation's fundraising committee. "We want to thank all of our generous sponsors and all who attended to help make this one of our most successful events of the year."

HGAR President Dorothy Botsoe and HG Realtor Foundation Trustee Drew Kesler served as emcees for the evening.

This year's models included: Laura Acocella of Coldwell Banker, Katonah; Ke-

nyatta Jones Arietta of R2M Realty, Nyack; Doreen Bronner, Bronners Brokers, Ltd, Newburgh; Michelle Cruz of Today Real Estate, Bronx; Aimee DeCesare, North Country Sothebys Int. Realty, Croton-on-Hudson; Rey Hollingsworth Falu, Hollingsworth Real Estate Group, White Plains; Kim Giarraputo of Weichert Realtors, Larchmont; Debra Goodwin of William Raveis Legends Realty, Irvington; Giovanni Gonzalez of Gio Homes Real Estate, White Plains; Michele Gonzalez of Julia B. Fee Sothebys Int. Realty, Irvington; Elizabeth (Beth) Hargraves, Julia B. Fee, Sotheby's Int. Realty, Irvington; Xiao Hua (Delica) Herman of Douglas Elliman, Scarsdale; Ray Magnani of Houlihan Lawrence, Jefferson Valley; Hope Mazzola of William Raveis New York, Katonah; Jon Paul Molfetta of Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City; Dodie Frisch Mouldovan of Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Armonk; Joe Paoli of BHG Rand Realty, Goshen; Joe Rand of BHG Rand of BHG Rand Realty, Nanuet; Robyn Rosenberg of Houlihan Lawrence, New Rochelle; Walter Sadowski of Café Realty, Mount Kisco; Amil Soman of Exit Realty Group, Elmsford; Eric Stein of RE/MAX,

Continued on page 14

### 2017 HGAR RPAC HONOR ROLL as recorded by NYSAR for June 2017

Thank you to the following Members who are leading the way in the 2017 RPAC campaign

#### Platinum R

Dorothy Botsoe, Dorothy Jensen Realty Inc., White Plains  
Nancy Kennedy, Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Croton-on-Hudson  
Paul Kennedy, Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Croton-on-Hudson

#### Golden R

Richard Haggerty, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.

#### Crystal R

Katheryn DeClerck, BHG Rand Realty, Goshen  
JP Endres, BHG Rand Realty, New City  
Marcene Hedayati, William Raveis Legends Realty, Tarrytown  
Russell Woolley, Wright Bros Real Estate Inc. Nyack

#### Sterling R

Leah Caro, Park Sterling Realty, Bronxville  
Douglas Dill, Houlihan Lawrence, Yorktown  
Ann Garti, HGAR, Goshen  
Marcene Hedayati, William Raveis Legends Realty, Tarrytown  
Pamela Jones, Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, White Plains  
Cynthia Lippolis, BHHS River Towns Real Estate, Croton-on-Hudson  
Clayton Livingston, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, Croton-On-Hudson  
Holly Mellstrom, Julia B Fee Sotheby's, Bronxville  
Rosemarie Pelatti, Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

#### President's Club

Lazer Milstein, Realty Teams Corp, Pamon  
Barry Kramer, Westchester Choice Realty Inc. Scarsdale  
Carol Kope, Keller Williams, Yorktown Heights  
Renee Zurlo, BHG Rand Realty, Central Valley

#### Capitol Club

Allan Bohlin, BHG Rand Realty, New City  
Angela Briante, Briante Realty Group, Carmel  
Carol Christiansen, Café Realty, Mount Kisco  
Gary Connolly, HGAR, White Plains  
Lawrence Curasi, Curasi Realty Inc. Montgomery  
Michael Graessle, BHG Rand Realty, White Plains  
Carol Kope, Dorothy Jensen Realty, White Plains  
John Kope, Dorothy Jensen Realty, White Plains  
Phyllis Lerner, William Raveis, Tarrytown  
Eydie Lopez, Dorothy Jensen Realty, White Plains  
Jennifer Mallory, Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City  
Kathleen Milich REMAX Benchmark Realty Group, New Windsor  
Donna Riniti, Coldwell Banker, Yorktown Heights  
Sherry Schneider, Century 21, White Plains  
Maryann Tercasio, BHG Rand Realty, Central Valley

#### 99 Club

Barbara Barber, Biagio Bello, Allan Bohlin, Mark Boyland, Layla Boyles, Janet Brand, Andrea Braunstein, Debra Budetti, Louis Budetti, Michael Criscuolo, John Crittenden, Diane Cummins, Julian Diaz, Laurie DiFrancesco, Kevin Dwyer, Jeffrey Farnell, Sharlene Forman, Ronald Garafalo, Marianna Glennon, Peter Gorbitt, Lynn Harmonay, Sarah Hughes, Chloe Jensen, Molly Jensen, Cindy Kief, Melissa Lanza, Gary Leogrande, Kathleen Mangan, Theresa May, Eileen Marie Murphy, Janet Nold, Joan O'Meara, Myriam Ramos, Peter Riolo, Joanna Rizoulis, Cindy Schweizer, Robert Shandley, Cathleen Stack, Rita Steinkamp, Maryann Tercasio

Recap of Contributions Year to Date\*\*

**TOTAL: \$121,384 from 2,564 contributors**

Goal: \$201,103 from 3,295 contributors

% of dollar goal: 60%

% of member goal: 78%

## SPOTLIGHT ON

### The Best Laid Plans...

By Mary T. Prenon

Matt Rand's future career was probably decided at a very young age. Some of his earliest memories are just hanging around the real estate agency with his mother, Marsha Rand, the founder of the company now known as Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty. "My mom would drag me along to show properties too," he recalled.

While in high school, one of his first jobs was creating virtual tours for the firm's listings. "This was long before the Internet so I used to take pictures of homes, get the film developed and then record VHS tapes showing interior shots," he said. "Afterwards, we'd show the pictures at kiosks at the local mall. It was something truly unique at the time."

However, after graduating from Boston College, where he majored in Biol-



Matt Rand

Continued on page 18

# BOARDROOM REPORT

**Boardroom Report  
HGAR Boards of Directors  
April 5, 2017  
HGAR Offices, Goshen, New York**

## Hudson Gateway Association General Activities

CEO Richard Haggerty reported that the association had met its budgeted goal for dues receipts. In addition, Haggerty noted that 655 new members, including Realtors and Affiliates, have joined HGAR as of March 31, 2017, further noting that 1,035 new members were budgeted for the entirety of 2017.

CEO Haggerty reviewed recent projects approved by the Executive Committee, including staff training by Advanced Development Services, a strategic planning initiative to conduct focus groups concerning association communications, and a project to conduct focus groups in Manhattan. The Directors passed a motion ratifying the previous actions of the Executive Committee.

HGAR President Dorothy Botsoe then provided an update on the ongoing Leadership Training and Strategic Planning processes. Leadership training was most recently conducted at the Joint HGAR-HGMLS Board of Directors meeting in March. The next session will be had in May.

Gail Fattizzi provided an update on the Strategic Planning Communications workgroup. She advised that the next meeting of that group is anticipated to be on April 11, 2017. Ronald Garafalo provided an update on behalf of the Strategic Planning Governance workgroup. He advised that the Governance workgroup was close to making recommendations regarding the on-boarding of new Directors of HGAR. The next meeting of the Governance workgroup on April 21 in West Nyack is expected to cover the role of the Board of Directors.

President Botsoe then delivered an update on her recent "Tea with the President" events, which had been held at various locations. Summaries of the feedback from these events will be drafted by President Botsoe and will be published in a manner accessible to the membership.

CEO Haggerty spoke of the upcoming Global Real Estate Summit to take place at the New York Marriott Marquis in Manhattan. The event will occur on October 2 and will be hosted by both HGAR and the Staten Island Board of Realtors. The theme and focus of the event will be the international real estate market. This event is part of the merger agreement between HGAR and the Manhattan Association of Realtors ("MANAR") whereby HGAR pledged to continue to promote this particular event as MANAR has hosted the same in the past.

## Communications

HGAR Director of Communications Mary Prenon provided an update on behalf of the Communications Council. On April 12th and 13th HGAR will host a Defensive Driving Course in conjunction with Liberty Mutual Insurance at the Goshen offices. There will be a "Breakfast with Benefits" event on April 19 at Walker Zanger in Port Chester. April 26 will see another "Breakfast with Benefits" event at HGAR's West Nyack offices. Prenon also reminded those in attendance to mark the date of October 30 for HGAR "Members Day" at the DoubleTree Hotel in Tarrytown. She further noted that the next meeting of the Broker/Owner/Manager Committee will be held in June, the exact date to be determined.

## Education

Director and Education Co-Council Chair Eydie Lopez provided a report on behalf of the Education Council, advising that NAR certification courses should be available on HGAR.com by May 1. It was also discussed at the meeting that HGAR Appraiser members wish to see more appraisal-based classes in the educational offerings at the HG School of Real Estate. Additionally, Lopez advised that on June 6, HGAR will host "Tech-Edge" and the Education Council is seeking sponsors for that event. NAR Tech Edge events teach Realtors the latest business technology skills and trends affecting the real estate industry.

Lopez further reported that the pre-licensing courses offered by the HG School of Real Estate have been filling up as well. CEO Haggerty reported that Anthony Davidson, the new Dean of Fordham University's School of Continuing Education, met with representatives of the Hudson Gateway Commercial and Investment Division ("HGCID") concerning Fordham's Commercial Real Estate Certification program and the possibility of developing some form of partnership. Both HGCID and the Education Council had responded positively about such a partnership.

## Professional Standards

Director of Legal Services Leon Cameron delivered a report on behalf of the Professional Standards Council, advising that the HGAR Grievance Committee last met on March 24, 2017. At that meeting, five Ethics Complaints were forwarded on for a hearing. Additionally, all three Requests to Arbitrate filed were deemed to be Mandatory Arbitration.

Cameron then reviewed four Ethics Decisions, 213-E, 214-E, and 215-E, copies of which had been previously provided to the Directors. After review and discussion concerning each decision, the Directors passed individual motions confirming the decisions, with abstentions by all parties in interest or having a conflict of interest.

## Legislation

Co-Council Chair John Kope provided a report on behalf of the Legislative Council advising that the next meeting of the Steering Committee will be on May 2, 2017. The topic of discussion at that meeting will be the 2017 Legislative Priorities developed by NYSAR. Additionally, Kope encouraged attendance amongst all present at NYSAR's "Lobby Day" to take place on May 23 in Albany. Travel by chartered bus that morning will be made available at various locations through HGAR's region.

HGAR Director of Governmental Affairs Phil Weiden provided a legislative update. He noted that federal issues are of particular concern for the moment to Realtors since the mortgage interest tax deduction may be eliminated under proposed tax reform. On the state front, he noted that NYSAR continues to lobby for first-time home buyer's legislation that will allow singles to set aside up to \$5,000 tax-free (\$10,000 for couples) to purchase their first home.

HGAR President-Elect Barry Kramer provided a report on behalf of the RPAC

Committee. He reported on several RPAC fundraising events happening in April and May. Those included "Happy Hour at the Brickhouse" in West Nyack for April 4; "Happy Hour at Brother Jimmy's" in White Plains on April 26; "RPAC-A-THON" in White Plains on May 11; and "A Day with the Yankees" at Yankee Stadium on May 25 (since postponed due to weather). He stated that HGAR was on pace to meet its RPAC fundraising goal before year's end.

Director Weiden also delivered an update on the Fair Housing and Cultural Diversity Committee. HGAR hosted a program entitled "Debunking Section 8 Housing Myths" on April 4 at its White Plains headquarters. The event was well attended, with more than 100 members and members of the public present for the event. The panel, moderated by Gloria Welcome, chairperson of the HGAR Fair Housing and Cultural Diversity Committee, included: Danny Rump, senior housing specialist, Westhab; Alicia Price-Blanks, rapid re-housing supervisor, Westhab; Marcus Lowell, director of property management, Westhab; Ariana Calderon, program manager, education & investigation, WRO; and Marlene Zarfes, fair housing director, WRO.

## HGAR Commercial Investment Division And Woman's Council of Realtors Report

CID President John Barrett reported on behalf of the HGCID. Thomas Roach, mayor of White Plains, recently spoke before HGCID on April 4. The program was well attended. Mayor Roach delivered an update on the commercial real estate market in White Plains and what White Plains was doing to be more accessible and inviting to the business community. The next HGCID program will be held on April 20 at the Harness Racing Museum in Goshen. The featured speaker will be Phil Royle, head of community and project relations for LEGOLAND New York. There will also be a June event, which is slated to be a roundtable discussion on the local retail market.

Theresa Crozier provided an update on behalf of the Women's Council of Realtors Empire Chapter ("WCR"). There will be a fashion show entitled "Runway for Hope" that WCR is hosting in conjunction with the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation on May 31st at Glen Island Harbour Club in New Rochelle.

## Hudson Gateway Multiple Listing Service

Director of HGMLS and Information Services Gary Connolly gave a status report on new HGMLS Initiatives. HGMLS plans to launch HomeSnap, the technology solution from the National Broker Public Portal. Connolly then spoke of certain CoreLogic products, which will soon be available to Participants and Subscribers of HGMLS, namely: eProperty Watch (information service for past clients on their homes and neighborhoods), Housefax (insurance claim information) and MyRental (tenant screening). Instead of receiving a traditional revenue stream on these products, HGMLS has negotiated a discounted price for HGMLS members.

Additionally, Connolly reported that Instanet, our new transaction management system, is in the beta testing phase. He also noted that there will soon be a Member Portal dashboard launch for Broker/Owners with a link for Zillow and Homes.com. This will allow Broker/Owners the ability to see how their listings are performing on those destination sites or the ability to opt-out of sending their listings to those sites.

CEO Haggerty reported on the implementation of a HGMLS rules change. For HGMLS Participants, they will be prohibited from offering one-day e-Key access codes to other HGMLS Participants and Subscribers. The HGMLS Board of Directors has approved this rule. Access to the listed property must still otherwise be made, either by physical key or by physical accompaniment. This rule change would not apply to Non-HGMLS licensees acting as cooperating agents. This rule change will coincide with the annual Supra e-Key invoicing to take place in June 2017.

## Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation

CEO Haggerty presented an update on the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation. He was pleased to report that gross income for 2016 was \$115,000. Net income was \$68,000. In 2016, \$55,000 in monies were distributed to local charitable organizations in the lower Hudson Valley. The Programming Committee as well as the Trustees met on March 29, 2017. The Programming Committee reviewed 14 applications for requests for funding that had been received in recent months. It was decided to make donations to six of those particular entities with total funding of \$16,500, which is contingent upon approval by the Trustees.

## Management, Financial & Membership Reports

Secretary/Treasurer Pamela Jones presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of HGAR, including the bank and investment summaries for March 1st, and the Directors approved receipt of the Cash Reports.

Please welcome the following new members to your area:

### Designated Realtor

Barry J. Brandt  
Argo Residential  
50 W. 17th St., 7th Fl.  
New York, NY 10011  
212-896-8600

Tonin Lumaj  
J A K Realty Inc.  
1030 Morris Park Ave.  
Bronx, NY 10461  
718-409-7093

Alba Sanjurjo  
Albasan Real Estate LLC  
3424 Kingsbridge Ave., Ste. 7J  
Bronx, NY 10463  
917-885-4138

Marie Vitale  
Marie Vitale Realty  
20 Woodcrest Ave.  
West Harrison, NY 10604  
914-224-8366

Charles A. Zobel  
Charles Zobel Appraisers  
35-53 82nd Street, Suite 2H  
Jackson Heights, NY 11372  
917-539-9566

### Affiliate

Luis Alencastro  
Emigrant Mortgage Company  
7 Westchester Plaza  
Elmsford, NY 10523  
914-785-1267

Continued on page 23

# Fashion Show

Continued from page 13

Bronxville, and Kristina (Kiki) Storm of Houlihan Lawrence, Rye.

The Women's Council of Realtors is a network of successful Realtors empowering women to exercise their potential as entrepreneurs and industry leaders.

Established in 2003 and relaunched in 2013, the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation has donated thousands of dollars to charities and non-profit organizations serving the housing, hunger, health, happiness, and humane needs of people throughout the Hudson Valley and beyond.



WHITE PLAINS, GOSHEN,  
WEST NYACK, PUTNAM

JULY 2017 FEATURED CLASSES

White Plains



TUES JULY 18, 2017 9:00AM-5:30PM  
IN PERSON CLASS | CREDITS: 7.5 CE  
INSTRUCTOR | DONALD C. SCANLON

Pot Holes and Pitfalls, Paving the Way to a Smooth Transaction + F.H. + Ethics + 2 hrs. Agency

- Member Price: \$85
- Class Express: \$75
- Non-Member Price: \$100

Additional Classes:

- 7/11- Matrix 1: Introduction to Matrix with Kristine DiFrancesco
- 7/12- All About Negotiations with Edward S. Smith
- 7/12- Listing Commercial Properties: what the buyer or tenant will want to know with Edward S. Smith
- 7/19- Matrix 2: The Next Step into Matrix with Kristine DiFrancesco
- 7/19- Matrix 2: The Next Step into Matrix (NO CE) with Kristine DiFrancesco
- 7/20- Construction Skills with John Yoegel
- 7/25- Matrix 3: Matrix to the Max with Kristine DiFrancesco
- 7/26- Matrix 3: Matrix to the Max (NO CE) with Kristine DiFrancesco
- 7/26- Building Your R.E. Practice in the New Norm + F.H. + Ethics + 1hr. Agency with Donald C. Scanlon
- 7/27- Using RPR to Better Serve Buyers and Sellers with Data and Analytics with Sharon Tucker

West Nyack



FRI JULY 14, 2017 9:30 AM – 1:15 PM  
IN PERSON CLASS | CREDITS: 3 CE  
INSTRUCTOR | JAMES ROOD

Mold & Other Environmental Hazards (“Munch & Learn”)

- Member Price: \$35
- Class Express: \$25
- Non-Member Price: \$50

Additional Classes:

- 7/12- Stigmatized Properties + 1hr. Agency with Roberta Bangs
- 7/13- Using RPR to Better Serve Buyers and Sellers with Data and Analytics with Sharon Tucker
- 7/19- All About Negotiations with Edward S. Smith
- 7/19- Listing Commercial Properties: What the Buyer or Tenant Will Want You to Know with Edward S. Smith

Goshen



MULTI WEEK JULY 10-AUG 21 2017  
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
IN PERSON CLASS | 75 HOUR  
INSTRUCTOR | MULTI INSTRUCTORS

Salesperson Licensing Course- Morning Sessions

- Price: \$549.00

Additional Classes:

- 7/6- (NYSAR) GRI-5: Buyers with Donald C. Scanlon
- 7/7- Matrix 1: Introduction to Matrix with Kristine DiFrancesco
- 7/13- Agency Update with Carole McCann
- 7/18- Remedial or Gap Course – 30 hours - Mornings with Multiple Instructors
- 7/21- Using RPR to Better Serve Buyers and Sellers with Data and Analytics with Sharon Tucker

For Class Details and Registration go to [HGAR.com/Education](http://HGAR.com/Education).

CALENDAR

JUNE

**Monday, June 19th**  
WCR - Meet the Mayors  
Juliano's Caterers, New Rochelle, 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**Tuesday, June 20th**  
HG Reator Foundation Pub Night  
River Market, Tarrytown, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

**Wednesday, June 21st**  
FREE Breakfast with Benefits Custom Closet Organization  
HGAR Goshen, 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
Welcome to Summer Networking on the Waterfront  
Billy Joe Ribworks, Newburgh, 5:00 p.m – 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday, June 22nd**  
CID Breakfast – RXR Realty –  
Projects in Yonkers and New Rochelle  
HGAR White Plains, 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.  
Fordham Real Estate Institute Information Meeting  
HGAR White Plains, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**Monday, June 26th**  
HGAR Affiliate/Advertiser Cocktail Reception  
HGAR White Plains, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, June 29th**  
HGAR Affiliate/Advertiser Cocktail Reception  
HGAR Goshen, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

**JULY**  
**Tuesday, July 4th**  
Independence Day Holiday  
All HGAR Offices Closed

**Tuesday, July 11th**  
Pizza with the President  
Four Brothers Pizza, Mahopac, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, July 14th**  
Working with REO Properties  
HGAR White Plains, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

**Thursday, July 26th**  
A Day With The Yankees,  
Yankee Stadium, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Friday, July 28th**  
Breakfast with Benefits  
Working with REO Properties  
HGAR Goshen, 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.



## LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

By Philip Weiden



# Permanent Income Tax Relief Needed for State's Beleaguered Middle Class

In order to sustain a healthy housing market, tax relief is desperately needed for middle income New Yorkers and for first-time homebuyers. We need lower income tax rates at the state and federal level for those specifically starting out and those who are in the middle tax brackets saving for a down payment.

in the door of home ownership. We had the FHA established to help first-time buyers; this is how my parents bought their first home.

Another tax issue that we are dealing with presently is the Alternative Minimum Tax, which was established originally to ensure that wealthy individuals

***Westchester desperately needs to see the mansion tax level raised or people will continue to buy property in other states to avoid the mansion tax.***

Many people cannot save for a down payment, in part, because high taxes leave little income to commit to savings.

In the 1920s, the 1960s, the 1980s and the 1990s we saw significant income tax relief under both political parties for middle income Americans. Tax rates went down and Americans prospered. We had VA loans established that helped returning veterans get a foot

paid their share of taxes. AMT has now devastated middle-income households because that tax was never adjusted for inflation, creating what economists and tax experts call "bracket creep" where a tax is never adjusted for inflation and over time, affects a larger pool of taxpayers. Simply stated, if you can't save for the down payment you can't buy a house.



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Similarly, this has been the case with the New York State Mansion Tax, which kicks in at \$1 million or more. With the effect of inflation kicking in, that number should now be raised to close to \$2 million because inflation has changed how much those dollars are worth.

Westchester desperately needs to see the Mansion Tax level raised or people will continue to buy property in other states to avoid the Mansion Tax.

What we have not had since 2000 has been consistent long-term prosperity for the middle class. In fact, wage gains have been close to zero and the housing market collapsed in 2008 and

has not recovered to its former level.

What do I consider long-term prosperity? A 3% growth rate per year or at least close to that. Currently, our annual rate of growth is barely above 1%, which means we could tip into recession at any time. Our presidents in the past, from both parties, have dreamed big and I do not think that 3% growth should be something that is unattainable. Faster economic growth is something both parties should strive for.

*Legislative Affairs columnist Philip Weiden is the Government Affairs Director for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.*

## BARRISTER'S BRIEFING

By Leon Cameron, Esq.



# Real Estate Rentals: Permissible Tax Deductions

Some Realtors are real estate investors. Others regularly represent those individuals, whether in residential or commercial markets. This article will cover, for informational purposes, the generally allowable tax deductions on real estate rentals.

Commonly allowable expenses include property tax, mortgage interest, operating expenses, repairs and depreciation. Landlords are allowed to deduct the ordinary and necessary expenses for managing and maintaining their rental property. Ordinary expenses are those generally accepted in the rental business for providing a habitable rental unit (e.g. fixing a leaky sink). Necessary expenses are those that are deemed appropriate for running a rental business, such as interest, taxes, advertising, maintenance, utilities and insurance.

Landlords are not permitted to deduct the cost of improvements outright. A rental property is improved only if the amounts paid are for a restoration, or betterment, or by adapting the rental property to a new use. Instead, the cost of improvements is recovered through depreciation. A landlord may recover some or all of their rental property improvements by using Form 4562. That form allows the landlord to report depreciation beginning in the year the rental property is first rented, and also allows reporting beginning in any year in which improvements are made or furnishings added. Just a fraction of those expenses are deductible in the year in which they originally occurred.

Losses may be limited if your rental expenses exceed your rental income. The level of deductible loss is constricted by the passive activity loss rules and the at-risk rules. Landlords should consult IRS Form 8582, "Passive Activity Loss Limitations", and IRS Form 6198, "At-Risk Limitations", to make an independent determination if loss is limited. If you personally use part of a dwelling unit that you also rent out, deductible rental expenses and loss may likewise be limited. IRS Publication 527, "Residential Rental Property" has more information on this topic.

It is imperative to substantiate any rental expenses you may have in order to properly deduct them. Documentary evidence, including receipts, canceled checks or bills, must be provided upon demand in the event of an audit. Landlords should also track and substantiate any travel expenses incurred for rental property repairs. More information on travel expense deductions may be found in Chapter 5 of IRS Publication 463 entitled "Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses."

Realtors, as well as all other licensees, are not permitted to dispense tax advice unless they also happen to be properly licensed to do as such. Landlord clients should be directed to a licensed Certified Public Accountant, an Attorney-at-Law who specializes in tax practice, or to [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) for any specific tax advice.

**Editor's Note:** The foregoing is for information purposes only and does not confer an attorney/client relationship. For a legal opinion or advice specific to your situation, please consult with a private attorney at law. Any tax advice contained in this communication was not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used, for the purpose of (i) avoiding penalties under the Internal Revenue Code or (ii) promoting, marketing or recommending to another party any transaction or matter addressed in this communication.

*Leon P. Cameron, Esq. is the Director of Legal Services and Professional Standards Administrator for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.*



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# Runway for Hope, Glen Island Harbour Club, New Rochelle, May 31, 2017



From left, Dorothy Botsoe, HGAR President; Bonnie Koff and Drew Kessler, HG Realtor Foundation and Marina Kolmar



Joe Rand, BH&G, Rand Realty



PHOTOS BY JOHN VECCHIOLA

Laura Acocella, Coldwell Banker



Jon Paul Molfetta, Keller Williams Hudson Valley



Beth Hargraves, Julia B. Fee, Sotheby's Int. Realty



Xiao Hua (Delica) Herman, Douglas Elliman



Anil Soman, Exit Realty Group



Michelle Gonzalez, Julia B. Fee, Sotheby's Int. Realty.



Kenyatta Jones Arietta, R2M Realty



Walter Sadowski, Café Realty



Realtors peruse raffle baskets with exciting prizes.



From left, The Fashion Show Committee including: Mary Prenon, Bonnie Koff, Terri Crozier, Stephanie Liggio, Roseann Paggiotta, Sarah Hughes and Carol Dorado

## Sumitomo Bank Signs 101,000-SF Lease at Gateway Building

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp., which had been shopping the county's office market for about 100,000 square feet of available space, has finally picked its new office location—the Gateway Building in Downtown White Plains.

CBRE reports it has brokered a 101,000-square-foot lease with Tokyo-based Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp. at the glass office building at 1 North Lexington Ave. The bank has committed to a 13-year lease at the property.

The CBRE team of William V. Cuddy, Jr. and Jacqueline Novotny represented the building ownership, Gateway One Group, in the lease negotiations as the exclusive leasing agents for the White Plains office property. Williams Peters, Derek Trulson, Robert Ageloff and Paul Tortora of Jones Lang LaSalle acted on behalf of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp.

"The quality institutional ownership and the property's phenomenal Class A office space, as well as its central location—just a block from the White Plains Metro North Train Station and White Plains Transportation Center—made 1 North Lexington Avenue the ideal location for Sumitomo Mitsui," said Cuddy, who has been the exclusive leasing agent for the building for 20 years. During his tenure, he has helped attract such high-profile corporate space users as Alliance Bernstein, GuildNet, Chase Bank, and many others to the building's tenant roster.

Cuddy related the Sumitomo lease is the largest lease transaction of any New York City company moving operations to Westchester County since September 2008 when Amalgamated Life Insurance Co. announced it was relocating its corporate headquarters from 730 Broadway in New York City to 135,000 square feet of space at the former Kraft Foods complex at 333 Westchester Ave. in White Plains.

The Sumitomo deal does not involve an entire corporate relocation, but will involve shifting of some of the bank's New York City workforce. Sumitomo Bank received some incentives from the Westchester County Industrial Development Agency in connection with planned tenant improvements at the Gateway Building. According to documents filed with the Westchester County IDA, Sumitomo stated that it expects to employ approximately 340 full-time employees at its new White Plains office. The new staff would consist of 231 transferred workers and 109 new hires. The entire project is expected to cost \$38.5 million, including approximately \$18.5 million in construction costs over the course of the 16-month project at the Gateway Building. The IDA granted Sumitomo a \$1.97-million sales tax exemption if it moved forward with the project and lease deal at its session on April 27th.

"Sumitomo Mitsui's commitment to the property is part of an early trend of the increased interest from New York City tenants coming into downtown White Plains looking for more reasonable rental rates. Tenants value the live, work and play environment and appreciate the advantage of the convenient commute to Manhattan," Novotny added.

White Plains Mayor Tom Roach released a statement on the importance of the corporate relocation deal to the City of White Plains: "We are pleased to welcome Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation to our city. We've worked hard to create an environment that's attractive to employers and residents alike and it's gratifying to see our efforts bear fruit. The hundreds of jobs that SMBC will bring to the city will add to the vibrancy of our downtown and provide economic benefits to our downtown businesses."

The Westchester office market has not been a stranger to large lease



When Sumitomo Bank takes over its space, the Gateway Building will be 96% occupied.

deals of late. New York Life Insurance Co. inked a 146,870-square-foot lease at 44 South Broadway in White Plains last year. Other notable lease deals in Downtown White Plains have included VMTurbo's 33,738-square-foot lease at the Gateway Building and Sidney Frank's 29,754-square-foot relocation to 10 Bank St. In addition, DanoneWave will begin construction soon on its approximately 100,000 square feet of new space at the Source at White Plains. The yogurt maker will be relocating from its

current North American headquarters totaling more than 77,000 square feet at 100 Hillside Ave. in Greenburgh.

Sumitomo will occupy space on the sixth, ninth and 10th floors of the Gateway building, bringing the Gateway building to 96% occupancy, Cuddy noted. CBRE reported the Downtown White Plains vacancy rate at the end of the first quarter of this year was 19.3%. With the Sumitomo deal, Cuddy estimates the vacancy rate in Downtown White Plains has fallen to approximately 17.4%.

## Spotlight On...

Continued from page 13

ogy and Psychology, Rand never expected to make real estate his full time career. "I didn't want to be in real estate and I didn't want to live in Rockland County," he admitted. "Of course now, I'm doing both!"

Initially, Rand saw himself following in his father Joseph's footsteps and going into medicine. Shortly after graduation, though, he decided to work just six months in the family business, take over a couple of projects and then pursue a career in technology. "But when my mom came to my brother Greg and I and asked us to take over the business, how could we say no?" he said.

Greg Rand had already started a technology business and had done some national training for Century 21. It was at that point the two brothers decided they had to expand their own family business.

"I came into a leadership position at the age of 23, so I really relied on all of the people around us. We have great managers and amazing agents that have been so important to us," Rand added.

Originally located in New City, the company expanded to the Nanuet Mall and began to add other satellite locations. Soon, they were named the top real estate business in Rockland County and had added up to 100 agents. Later, they expanded into Orange and Westchester counties, then to the Bronx and northern New Jersey.

In 2009, they joined Better Homes and Gardens and today, Better Homes

and Gardens Rand Realty has 25 offices, more than 1,000 agents and more than \$2.2 billion in sales. As CEO, Rand works with his brother Greg, a partner, Joe, Chief Creative Officer, and Dan, who heads up Hudson United Mortgage, Title and Insurance.

"We looked at the core of what has made our company so successful, and it's the family involvement, entrepreneurial culture, and focus on technology," he added. "We were the first to use fax machines and the first to offer the MLS on our website."

Rand explained that while technology and marketing are important in growing their business, they put the most emphasis on servicing their agents and clients. "We look at ourselves as a career development business," he said.

In fact, just this year, the company won the Hall of Fame Award for "Entrepreneurship" from the Business Council of Westchester. "We're a company of 1,000 entrepreneurs, providing them with technology tools, support, and leadership to help them build their businesses as big as they want to," Rand said.

A leader in business, Rand is also a leader in charitable work. For the past two years he has served as president of the Board of Directors for People to People—Rockland County's largest food pantry. Located in Nanuet, the non-profit organization also provides clothing drives and other programs for families.

While serving as president of the for-

mer Rockland County Board of Realtors in 2004, Rand started a gala event to support People to People. "I got to know them very well over the years and when there was an opportunity to join their Board of Directors, I took it," he said. Rand has been involved with the charity for six years now.

"They have an amazing team and staff," he added. "It's mostly volunteer-driven and touches so many local people." For Rand, it's not enough to just serve on the board—he has also been personally involved with stocking and packing food and "whatever has to be done."

Rand and his wife Jennifer have two children, ages 12 and 10. "I just about live my life at the baseball field these days," he said. At this point, Rand admitted, it's too soon to tell if his children will choose real estate careers. However,

he does often ask his 12-year old son's help with the newest tech program the company recently rolled out. "If you can use your phone and Internet, you'll have no problem," he said. "And if you have a 12-year old at home, that's even better!"

In the little spare time he has, Rand spends some of it hiking and traveling, as well as "uberating" his kids to sporting events. He has also recently discovered a challenging hobby of competing in Spartan races—13-mile trail running, complete with obstacles courses.

As for spending most of his days with family members, Rand has no regrets. "This is a family business and we're all involved—it's just part of our lives," he said. "It's helped us to create a unique company. We're not a corporate bureaucracy. There's just five of us and we like to listen to what our agents and our clients are saying."



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# Simone Cuts Ribbon on \$35-Million Boyce Thompson Project

YONKERS—A decade’s old historic building turned eyesore has been transformed into a modern mixed-use center of commerce in Yonkers.

On May 24th, Simone Development officials were joined by county and city officials to cut the ribbon on the new Boyce Thompson Center, formerly the Boyce Thompson Institute plant research center that sat vacant with graffiti-strewn walls and its greenhouses in ruins for almost 40 years.

Simone Development has transformed the historic building into the Boyce Thompson Center, an 85,000-square-foot mixed-use center that now features office/medical space, retail stores, restaurants and banking.

“The grand opening celebration represented an important milestone for Simone Development and the City of Yonkers. What was once an eyesore will now be generating tax revenue for the city, creating jobs and bringing new retail and healthcare services to the residents of Yonkers and nearby Rivertown communities. We are especially pleased to be preserving an important piece of history for Yonkers and Westchester County,” said Joseph Simone, president of Simone Development Companies.

“There is such a tremendous sense of pride and renewal felt by the city as we breathe new life into Boyce Thompson,” said Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano. “With the vision and commitment of Simone Development, we have been able to turn a symbol of long-stalled development into a historic and authentic economic driver that will build upon the momentum that’s happening in Yonkers right now.”

Built in the 1920s, the property was acquired by Simone Development two years ago. Part of the redevelopment project involved restoring the main building to its original character with a new plaza and fountain.

On the northern end of the site, a new two-level, 15,000-square-foot freestanding building was constructed and is now leased to St. John’s Riverside Hospital for outpatient care and physician offices. Services will include internal medicine, family medicine, cardiology, orthopedics, pulmonology,

neuro-spinal, nephrology, GI, general surgery, pain management and continuity clinic.

A new 20,000-square-foot addition was constructed at the southern end of the main building with an architectural style resembling the historic building. WESTMED Medical Group is leasing the entire structure. In addition to the services of OB/GYNs, perinatology and family medicine, WESTMED will offer on-site diagnostic imaging, perinatology and Urgent Care—all under one roof. Imaging services will include 2D/3D mammography, X-rays for adults and pediatrics and ultrasound for high-risk Maternal Fetal Medicine and breast imaging needs, Simone officials noted.

In addition to St. John’s and WESTMED, other healthcare tenants include Westchester Gastroenterology, Juvanni Med Spa and Family Wellness Pharmacy. Retail tenants include Tompkins Mahopac Bank, PLUSHBLOW Salon, Ultimate Spectacle and The Taco Project. Restaurant Fortina has leased the entire wing on the northern end of the main building. Led by celebrity chef Christian Petroni, Fortina is scheduled to open soon.

Guy Leibler, president of Simone Healthcare Development, said of the Boyce Thompson redevelopment project, “Not only are we restoring an important historic building, we are also creating a mixed-use development that incorporates state-of-the-art medical space with retail, restaurants and other services. As healthcare becomes more consumer-driven, facilities such as the Boyce Thompson Center will become more attractive to medical practices and ambulatory care facilities that want to be located in an environment that offers patients and employees easy access to retail stores, restaurants and free parking.”

In addition to preserving the classic architectural style of the main building, Simone Development is also honoring the building’s legacy as a plant research center. Simone hosted a reception at the center for officials from the Boyce Thompson Institute which is now located in Ithaca, NY. Vintage photos of the institute in the 1920s are on permanent



From left, Oliver Schulze, great grandson of Colonel Boyce Thompson; Anthony Viceroy, CEO, WESTMED Medical Group; Westchester County Executive Robert P. Astorino; Joe Simone, president, Simone Development Companies; City of Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano; Dr. Steven Meixler, WESTMED; Dr. Laura Philips, chair, Board of Directors, Boyce Thompson Institute; Donna McGregor, executive vice president and COO, St. John’s Riverside Hospital; Dr. Richard Morel, WESTMED and Guy Leibler, president, Simone Healthcare Development.

display in the main building.

Simone Development recently commissioned internationally-known Dutch street artist Eelco van den Berg to design and paint a dynamic mural for the southeast lower wall of the main building. The graffiti-inspired public art design was a collaborative effort of the artist, the Boyce Thompson Institute and Simone’s Boyce Thompson Center design team. The bold and colorful design features a combination of images depicting plant life, insects, birds and scientific research.

Approximately 85% of the Boyce Thompson Center is leased and ad-

ditional new tenants will be announced soon, Simone Development reported.

Simone Development Companies is a real estate investment company specializing in the acquisition and development of office, retail, industrial and residential properties in the New York tristate area. Headquartered in the Bronx, the privately held company owns and manages more than five million square feet of property in the Bronx, Westchester County, Queens, Long Island and Connecticut. The company’s portfolio includes more than 100 properties and ranges from multi-building of-

## Former Legoland Project Site in Rockland County on Market for Sale



A map depicting the former Letchworth Village property in Haverstraw.

By John Jordan

HAVERSTRAW—The Letchworth Village site here, once coveted by Legoland developer Merlin Entertainments for a major theme park, is back on the market for sale.

The Town of Haverstraw has hired Cushman & Wakefield’s Capital Markets Group to market and eventually sell the 173-acre Letchworth Village development parcel.

Developer Merlin Entertainments had considered the Letchworth Village site for a \$500-million theme park in 2015 and had even secured some in-

centives from New York State’s Empire State Development before backing out of the project that called for a theme park, waterpark and a hotel at the site.

After the Letchworth Village Legoland project, which had not been officially presented to the village, drew some local criticism the Town Board and Town Supervisor Howard Phillips released a statement in October 2015 that the village would no longer consider the project. The shunning of the project drew some intense criticism from

Continued on page 21



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# What's the Latest With Google and Apple Events, LinkedIn Marketing and Glif Tripod Mount/Stand

## TECH TALK

By John Vrooman  
john@johnvrooman.com



Google held its annual "Google I/O" developers conference back in May. Similarly, in early June, Apple held its annual "WWDC" (World Wide Developers Conference) event. At these events, Google and Apple introduced their respective company's latest and greatest products and services. Fortunately, if you're like me and enjoy these types of events, you might be interested in knowing that the keynote addresses at both events were recorded and are available to be watched at your convenience. The following links lead to web pages where you can watch them...

Google I/O Keynote (2017)

<https://youtu.be/Y2VF8tmLFHw>

Apple Special Event. June 5, 2017 (Apple Worldwide Developers Conference) keynote address

<https://www.apple.com/apple-events/june-2017>

### LinkedIn Marketing

Are you familiar with LinkedIn's various marketing solutions? If you haven't explored LinkedIn's marketing options lately, you may want to take some time out to explore what's available. LinkedIn (like most major social media platforms) is continually introducing new/updated marketing options and services. The following courtesy link will lead you to a web page that provides you with an easy way to navigate your way through LinkedIn's various marketing solutions...

<https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions>

### Windows 10's 'Notifications and Action' Settings

If you use a computer that runs the Windows 10 operating system, at some point you are likely going to stumble upon the operating systems "Notifications and Actions" setting area. I would encourage Windows 10 users to review the settings and configuration options that are available in the "Notifications and actions" area, because you may find solutions to some nuisance notifications that you may be experiencing. To help with this, the link below will lead you to a windowscentral.com article that will tell you how to access that area of the Windows 10 operating system as well as provide you with a nice overview of the settings that you may encounter while exploring. Those of you who "present" from your computer may want to keep an eye out for setting(s) that allow notifications to be turned off while presenting.

<https://www.windowscentral.com/how-customize-action-center-windows-10>

### Want to Switch From an iPhone to an Android Phone?

For whatever reason, have you been thinking about switching from an iPhone to an Android phone? If so, I'm pretty sure that you would be interested in reading an article about the process of making the switch. I recently came across an article on the topic at the howtogeek.com website. I would encourage those who are interested in the topic at hand to check it out. Here's a courtesy link to the article...

<https://www.howtogeek.com/303988/an-iphone-switchers-guide-to-choosing-your-first-android-phone>

## NAR's Tech Edge Attracts Big Crowd



NAR's day-long Tech Edge conference was held at the HGAR offices in White Plains on June 6th.



From left, J. Philip Faranda, Elena Kupka, Angela Johnson and D. Gloria Henandez

### How to do a Clean Install/Reinstall Of Adobe's Flash Player

In a nutshell, the Adobe Flash Player is a software application that enables you to view certain types of online/streaming multimedia content on computing devices. In the past, Adobe Flash was a more necessary application than it is today. Unfortunately, there are still quite a few situations where you may still need to have Adobe Flash installed on your computer. Occasionally, you may find yourself in a situation where you need to fix, delete and/or reinstall an Adobe Flash installation (e.g. sometimes installations get corrupted and/or a specific version of Adobe Flash is needed). When situations such as these arise the fix to the problem is sometimes to simply perform a clean Adobe Flash install/reinstall. The following link will lead you to a web page that can help you to get Adobe Flash properly removed and if needed reinstalled...

<https://forums.adobe.com/message/4041846#4041846>

### Glif Smartphone Tripod Mount/Stand

A recent gadget that caught my attention is a smartphone tripod mount/stand called the "Glif," which is a small device that can hold smartphones in either a landscape or portrait orientation. Additionally, since the device has three tripod mounting/connection options you can attach additional accessories to the mounts that aren't in use (e.g. a lighting solution, microphone and/or a handgrip). If this brief product description has caught your attention, I would encourage you to visit the product's website as it shows both the product and some examples of the different ways that it can be used. Here's a courtesy link to get you on your way...

<https://www.studioneat.com/products/glif>

### Reminders

This column (and many previous ones) are made available for your viewing convenience and reference at...

[www.realestateindepth.com/technology](http://www.realestateindepth.com/technology) (The "Technology" section of the Real Estate In-Depth website.)

If you have comments, suggestions, tips, questions or just want to say "Hi", you are invited to contact me at [john@johnvrooman.com](mailto:john@johnvrooman.com). I always enjoy hearing from you!

*John Vrooman is an experienced Realtor who enjoys staying on top of real estate, technology, gadgets, marketing, new media and small business trends/developments. He gathers information from a diverse range of resources and enjoys sharing tips, thoughts, and discoveries with others—using a "something for everyone" approach. John has been authoring this column since August 2000 and is an Associate Broker with Better Homes & Gardens Rand Realty's White Plains office.*

## Former Legoland Project Site in Rockland County on Market for Sale

Continued from page 19

the business community in Rockland County at the time.

The statement released on Oct. 15th stated, "After hearing the concerns of our residents, we have decided to withdraw our consideration of the Legoland project. While we will continue our efforts to bring new projects to our town in order to provide quality of life amenities and help defray rising costs associated with living in Rockland County, it should never come at the cost of creating hardship or stress for our residents and divide our community. Balancing these interests is the goal of the Board and leads us to this decision. As always, we thank all the residents for their input."

Al Samuels, president of the Rockland Business Association told *Real Estate In-Depth* in response to the town's decision, "This is a very unfortunate situation that is quite frankly a victim of the tyranny of the minority."

Samuels said that the Town Board, responding to neighborhood criticism of the project, pulled the project from consideration even before the applicant had a chance to formally present its plans and dispel some of the misinformation that had been disseminated by opponents of the venture, including considerable planned infrastructure work to mitigate traffic, wastewater and water usage concerns.

Samuels added, "That is a damn shame," he said. Upon completion, the project would have also created approximately 1,000 net new jobs, Samuels added. Those jobs are sorely needed in many communities in the area.

Shortly thereafter, Merlin, with the assistance from Orange County economic development officials, secured a site in the Town of Goshen and the firm is currently working toward final approval of its Final Environmental Impact State-

ment on the project located off Route 17.

In 2006 a site plan was approved to construct a 500-unit, age-restricted community with single-family residences, townhouses and condominium flats, along with recreation facilities and nearly 25,000 square feet of neighborhood retail on the Letchworth Village site. Although these approvals are still in place, the town has said it understands the current needs of the development community and will work with developers to maximize the site's potential, Cushman officials stated. FEIS and SEQRA approvals have previously been completed for Letchworth Village, potentially saving the developer millions of dollars in engineering and review costs, they added.

"Municipal officials are enthusiastic about the potential of this property and open to working with developers to explore a variety of future uses," said Cushman & Wakefield's Brian Whitmer, who is heading the assignment with Metropolitan Area Capital Markets Group team members Andrew Merin, David Bernhaut, Gary Gabriel, Les Smith and Ryan Dowd.

"The offering represents a rare and distinctive opportunity to acquire a contiguous critical mass of land for development in the Greater New York Metropolitan area," Whitmer noted. "The location truly is unmatched."

The Letchworth Village site is located between two championship golf courses (Philip J. Rotella Municipal Golf Course and Stony Point's Patriot Hills Golf Course), with local shopping that includes ShopRite, CVS, New York Sports Club and other major national retailers. The site is also nearby the Haverstraw Marina, one of the largest marinas on the East Coast, offering approximately 60 acres, 1,000 slips and waterfront dining.

# NAR Survey: Led By China, Foreign Investment In U.S. Commercial Real Estate on the Rise

WASHINGTON—One-fifth of surveyed Realtors practicing in commercial real estate closed a sale with an international client in 2016, and as foreign investors flock to smaller-sized commercial properties in secondary and tertiary markets, many Realtors are confident that increased sales and leasing activity will occur in 2017.

This finding is according to the 2017 Commercial Real Estate International Business Trends survey released on June 6th by the National Association of Realtors, which analyzed cross-border commercial real estate transactions made by Realtors during 2016. Most Realtors who specialize in commercial real estate reside in smaller commercial markets where the typical deal is less than \$2.5 million.

Similar to NAR survey findings on foreign purchases of residential real estate in recent years, China was the top country of origin in both buying and selling commercial real estate in 2016, and Florida was the top destination of choice for international clients. NAR's 2017 Profile of International Activity in U.S. Residential Real Estate is scheduled for release this summer.

NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun said the appetite for U.S. commercial real estate property was strong from foreign investors last year and shows little signs of slowing in 2017.

"Multiple years of steady job growth and the strengthening U.S. economy—albeit at a modest pace—makes commercial property a safe bet for global investors looking to diversify their portfolios and generate returns outside their country of origin," he said. "While Class A asset prices in many large markets have surpassed pre-crisis levels, Realtors in many middle-tier and smaller markets stand to benefit from the increased interest from foreign and domestic commercial property investors."

Added Yun, "Forty percent of Realtors expect an increase in foreign buying clients this year. The healthy labor markets and lower property prices in smaller markets are poised to make up a larger share of activity."

Of the 69% of Realtors who indicated they completed a commercial real estate transaction last year, 20% reported closing a deal for an international client. Realtors completed a median of one buyer-side international deal and two seller-side international transactions. The typical buyer-side sales price was \$1 million, and the median seller-side price was \$550,000.

Additionally, 22% of Realtors said they completed a lease agreement on behalf

of a foreign client. The median gross lease value for international lease transactions was \$105,000, with most space typically under 2,500-square-feet.

Nearly two-thirds of commercial foreign buyer and seller clients were non-resident foreigners. The top countries of origin for buyers were: China (17%), Mexico (14%) and the United Kingdom and Venezuela (both at 7%), while sellers were typically from China (17%) or Brazil, Canada, France and Mexico (all at 10%).

Florida and Texas were the top two states where foreigners purchased and sold commercial property last year, with California being the third most popular buyer destination and Michigan ranking as the third top state where foreigners sold real estate.

The survey also found that foreign buyers of commercial property typically bring more cash to the table than those purchasing residential real estate. Sixty percent of international transactions were closed with cash, while NAR's 2016 residential survey found that exactly half of buyers paid in cash. For those not using all cash, 34% of commercial deals involved debt financing from U.S. sources. An overwhelming

majority of buyers either purchased commercial space for investment purposes or acquired it for business use.

"Nearly half of Realtors reported that they experienced a greater number of international clients looking to buy commercial space over the past five years," said Yun. "Economic expansion has slowly chugged along since the downturn, but in comparison to the rest of the world, the U.S. remains one of the most attractive and safest bets for investors. There's little evidence this will change anytime soon."

The NAR commercial community includes commercial members, real estate boards, committees, subcommittees and forums; and NAR commercial affiliate organizations—CCIM Institute, Institute of Real Estate Management, Realtors® Land Institute, Society of Industrial and Office Realtors®, and Counselors of Real Estate.

Approximately 70,000 NAR members specialize in commercial real estate brokerage and related services including property management, counseling and appraisal. In addition, more than 200,000 members are involved in commercial transactions as a secondary business.

***"While Class A asset prices in many large markets have surpassed pre-crisis levels, Realtors in many middle-tier and smaller markets stand to benefit from the increased interest from foreign and domestic commercial property investors."***

***—NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun***

## Better Homes & Gardens Rand Realty Holds Grand Opening for New Office in Piermont

PIERMONT—Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty held a grand opening ceremony for its Piermont office at 540 Piermont Ave. on June 8th.

The new Piermont location is Rand Realty's second office in the Rockland Rivertowns, joining its branch at 46 South Broadway in Nyack.

"Having a home on the Hudson River is an unmissable opportunity for anyone who wants to live in Rockland County," said June Stokes, New York regional manager for Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty. "This historic waterway has captured the imaginations of many homeowners, and we want to help our future clients build a life alongside its grandeur."

With Piermont being one of the Rivertowns, it offers beautiful views for residents and visitors. Other than irresistible housing opportunities, the village also provides a picturesque downtown area with wonderful restaurants and small businesses, Rand officials stated.

Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty gained a foothold in Piermont by acquiring Piermont's Kennedy & Kennedy Real Estate, the brokerage firm announced.

"I'm very excited to take my career in this direction," said Lina Kennedy, associate broker for the Piermont office of Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty. "After being a broker and owner of Kennedy & Kennedy Real Estate for almost 15 years, I have decided to join Rand Realty, a world-class company and family-owned local business. They are technological innovators with a great staff and have many resources that will



The ribbon is cut on Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty's new Piermont office.

support my team as they work towards continued success in the industry."

"The Rivertowns in Rockland are thriving, and we are excited to have a Piermont location to help us boost our presence in this area and take it to the next level," said Matthew Rand, managing partner for Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty. "Piermont is an amazing village, and we are proud to welcome Lina Kennedy and her agents to our Rivertowns team. Partnering this new branch with our Nyack office will be an unbeatable combination."

Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty, founded in 1984, has more than 26 offices serving Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam, and Dutchess counties in New York, as well as Bergen, Passaic, and Morris counties in New Jersey.

Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty has more than 1,000 residential real estate sales associates, as well as a commercial real estate company (Rand Commercial) and the Hudson United Group, which provides residential mortgage lending, title services, and commercial and residential insurance.

## Ellis Sotheby's International Realty Helps New Story Create Safe, Sustainable Homes

NYACK—Ellis Sotheby's International Realty recently announced it will partner with New Story, a non-profit organization that works to transform dangerous living environments into communities of safe, sustainable homes.

The firm will encourage its agent network to participate through donations on closings and provide exposure to New Story through its marketing efforts.

"New Story puts 100% of donations toward the creation of safe communities, building homes for \$6,000 each and giving them to families in need to impact their lives for generations to come," said Richard Ellis, owner of Ellis Sotheby's International Realty. "We are proud to do our part to assist them in their goal of changing lives."

San Francisco-based New Story, a 501c3 non-profit, has been building safe homes and transforming slums into thriving communities since their start two years ago. In that time they have funded more than 750 homes in seven communities around the developing world.

"New Story has created an innovative and more transparent model than the traditional charitable giving experience," said Brett Hagler, chief executive officer of New Story. "Every dollar given goes directly to building homes, and every donor receives a digital profile of the exact family they helped support. When the home is completed, they are delivered a move-in video to share in the excitement of this incredible effort. We hire local labor and buy domestic materials to boost the country's economy, providing jobs and economic stability for the community."

The Sotheby's International Realty brand in March announced a partnership with New Story, helping the Guillaume family from Haiti with their donation. Anyone can make a donation to New Story by visiting the Ellis Sotheby's International Realty dedicated donation page.

## Weichert's Nanuet Office Supports 2017 Nanuet Chamber St. Festival

NANUET—Karen McCabe, manager of Weichert, Realtors' Nanuet office, announced that the office recently participated in the 2017 Nanuet Chamber Street Festival held on June 4th. The event, organized by the Greater Nanuet Chamber of Commerce, attracts more than 15,000 people annually to the Main Street festivities.

Those who attended the street festival enjoyed live entertainment, amusements, rides, games, a beer and wine garden, and crafts and giveaways, along with food and refreshments. More than 200 vendors displayed hand-crafted art, jewelry, home items and more.

"We had a wonderful time at the Nanuet Street Festival," said McCabe. "It's such a fun-filled, family friendly event for residents with so much to do and see. It also allows us the opportunity to interact with our friends in the community and meet many new people."

Sales associates from Weichert's Nanuet office who participated in the street festival included: Wilson Cadet, Jason Cantave, Jean LeBlanc, Marc Russack Beth Siciliano and Christina Tolen. McCabe and Gold Services Manager Abdias Ramos also took part in the day's festivities.

# New Members

Continued from page 14

Ryan Coleman  
M & T Bank  
1769 Route 52  
Fishkill, NY 12524  
845-313-9709

Michael Delgado  
Valley National Bank  
1401 Route 52, Suite 202  
Fishkill, NY 12524  
845-262-5520

Christopher Fritz  
Emigrant Mortgage Company  
7 Westchester Plaza  
Elmsford, NY 10523  
914-785-1267

Rick Kouns  
1099 Accountant LLC  
240 Van Cortlandt Park Ave.  
Yonkers, NY 10705  
855-529-1099

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Melville, NY 11747  
914-250-9600

Mike Milano  
Brightway, The Milano Agency  
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914-257-7352

Susan Radzilowicz  
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Melville, NY 11747  
914-250-9600

Rob Rieger  
JP McHale Pest Management, Inc.  
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Buchanan, NY 10511  
800-479-2284

Rose A. Rossi  
Rossi Law PLLC  
180 South Broadway  
White Plains, NY 10605  
914-358-9755

## Realtor

Niamh Alexander  
Julia B. Fee Sotheby's Int. Realty, Rye

Michael Alexandrov  
Exit Realty Private Client

Lizett Alvarez  
Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains

Maria Amor  
John J. Lease Realtors Inc.

Richard Arce  
Apex Realty

Emilin Arias-Gil  
Besmatch Real Estate

Maurice Bailey  
Joe Hasselt Real Estate

Elena Begazo  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, White Plains

Sarah J. Bione  
BHG Rand Realty, Nyack

Scott Blasenstein  
Keller Williams Valley Realty, Woodcliff Lake, NJ

Wendy Bonilla  
NY Future Homes Realty Co.

Kaitlyn Brown  
Madison Allied LLC

Lorraine Brown Bunting  
Exit Realty Group

Jason E. Calabretta  
Ellis Sotheby's Int. Realty

Herbert Cheng  
Exit Realty Premium

Adam Cherko  
Julia B. Fee Sotheby's Int. Realty, Larchmont

Susan Clark  
BHG Rand Realty, Suffern

Allyssa M. Compton  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Joseph Corradi  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, Somers

Kirsty Corrigan Kirk  
Houlihan Lawrence Inc, Larchmont

Vincent J. Damiani  
BHG Rand Realty, Central Valley

Pearlita David  
Century 21 Schneider Realty

Eddie E. DiBenedetto  
Century 21 Marciano

\*\*Normita Dizon-Huang  
Terrie O'Connor Realtors

Megan G. Dwyer  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, Croton-on-Hudson

Robert J. Economico  
Nest Seekers Westchester LLC

Daniel Elamrani  
BHG Rand Realty, Central Valley

Christopher Esposito  
Solo Realty Group LLC

\*\*Marie Farina  
Century 21 Marciano

Norlyn Figueroa  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, Larchmont

Josef Gashaj  
Rand Commercial, New City

Richard Gedney  
BHG Rand Realty, Briarcliff Manor

Edward Goldenberg  
Hudson Affiliates, Inc.

Dylan Gottesman  
Silversons Realty, LLC

Judy L. Haddad  
Houlihan Lawrence Inc, Irvington

Kory-Michael Hambas  
Julia B. Fee Sotheby's Int. Realty, Scarsdale

Martin Hansen  
BHG Rand Realty, Central Valley

Tina Hayden  
Berkshire Hathaway HS West. Prop., Scarsdale

Francine Henry  
BHG Rand Realty, Stony Point

Alexander Horelick  
Tarrytown Real Estate

Annie E. Howell  
Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains

Amy Huang  
Grand Lux Realty Cerrone Inc.

Sheila Huang  
Exit Realty Private Client

Mary Imkeller  
North Country Sotheby's Int. Realty, Croton-on-Hudson

George Infante  
Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains

Michael Jacobi  
Weichert Realtors, Suffern

Yoel Jacobs  
Exit Realty Venture

\*\*Olivia Janovic  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, New City

Jacob Jeremias  
Capital Ventures Group Inc.

Xiaolei Jiang  
Berkshire Hathaway HS West. Prop., Scarsdale

Aaron Krinsky  
Green Team Home Selling System

\*\*Gordon LeRoy  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley Untd, Rock Hill

Rosemarie Loder  
BHG Rand Realty, Warwick

Mary Beth Macina  
Keller Williams Realty Group, Scarsdale

Christopher Mannering  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, Somers

Christine Manning  
Home Sweet Home Properties

Kettisha R. Manson-Walker  
BHG Rand Realty, Pine Bush

Melissa B. Marcello  
Marc Jason

Lisa M. Marra  
Houlihan Lawrence Inc, Jefferson Valley

Brian Mason  
Besmatch Real Estate

James Maurno  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, Yorktown Heights

Jennifer R. McArdle  
K. Fortuna Realty, Inc.

David McClain  
Platinum Drive Realty, Inc.

Sean McElligott  
BHG Rand Realty, Pearl River

Tiffany Megna  
Keller Williams Realty, Chester

Nicholas Miessmer  
Monroe Realty Center

Timmy Mohl  
John J. Lease Realtors Inc.

Elad Mor  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Christina Narine  
Exit Realty Group

Nestor Nova  
Exit Realty Search

Ahmed Nunez  
Charles Rutenberg Realty, Inc., Bronx

David Ostrander  
Weichert Realtors, Monroe

Susan B. Ostrander  
BHG Rand Realty, Stony Point

Ryan Paige  
William Raveis Baer & McIntosh, Nyack

Stephanie Panayot  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Jaslinne M. Pantiga  
Pantiga Group Inc.

Alicia Pavignano  
BHG Rand Realty, Central Valley

Joseph Pelatti  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Waldy Pena  
Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains

Samantha Pitman  
Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Bedford

Samantha Ponce de Leon  
Keller Williams Realty- Ridge, Ridgefield, CT

Jonathan D. Powell  
Kane & Associates

Lee Presser  
Keller Williams NYC, New York, NY

Jillian Rasulo  
Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Bronxville

Rachelle Rayner  
Stetson Real Estate

Dawn Reilly  
Cronin & Company Real Estate

Adrian Rivera  
Exit Realty Private Client

Sheldon Robinson  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, White Plains

Ronnie Robles  
BHG Rand Realty, Yonkers

Angello Rodriguez  
Stetson Real Estate

Patricia Rogers  
Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Katonah

Annette Roman  
Imagine Properties NY

Joseph Rosenberg  
Exit Realty Venture

Shmuel Rosenberg  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Jeanine Royce  
Coldwell Banker Res. Brokerage, New Rochelle

Avigder Samet  
Exit Realty Venture

Maris Sanchez  
Pantiga Group Inc.

David Samoff  
ERA Insite Realty Services, Bronxville

Mendl Schwarz  
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Coldeep Shewbarran  
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Christopher Shoulders  
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Micaela Stanaland  
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Colleen Q. Styer  
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John B. Taggart  
Five Star Realty Group International

Gary Thut  
BHG Rand Realty, Yorktown Heights

Amber Tonnesen  
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Varghese G. Vairamon  
Century 21 Dawns Gold Realty

William D. Van Sise  
BHG Rand Realty, White Plains

Yeritza Vasquez  
Coldwell Banker Signature Properties, Bronx

John Wesolowski  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley Untd., Middletown

Susan Xiang  
R2M Realty Inc.

Christen Yglesia  
Westchester Choice Realty, Inc.

Brian Zeller  
Hanson Real Estate Partners

Jacob Zigelman  
MK Realty USA Inc.

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**Lights, Camera Action!  
Movie Studio Coming  
To the Bronx in 2018**

By John Jordan

NEW YORK CITY—Construction began earlier this month on York Studios' heralded \$100-million "Michaelangelo Campus" film and television production complex in the Soundview section of the Bronx.

A host of city and state officials were on hand for the groundbreaking ceremony for the project on May 6th including New York State Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul, Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr., Deputy Mayor Alicia Glenn and Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment Julie Menin.

York Studios EVP of Operations John Battista said that work on the \$45-million first phase at 1410 Story Ave. would take about 16 months to 18 months to complete. The new campus will significantly expand Maspeth, Queens-based York Studios' operations, which includes a 40,000-square-foot facility that features one production stage.

The Bronx complex, at full build-out will total 350,000 square feet of production space, including nine production stages, production office space, and workshops for each stage. The currently vacant 10-acre lot off the Bruckner Expressway will also include eight loading docks and secured on-site parking. The property is bordered by the Bronx River and Soundview Park.

Phase one of the project will total 170,000 square feet, including five production stages. The general contractor on the project is Tri-Rail Construction of Copiague, NY. The first phase is designed by Gerald Caliendo Architects. Battista said that financing is in place for the first phase and that York Studios and its partners hope to



An aerial view of the York Studio's campus.



The multi-phased studio production project is being developed in the Soundview section of the Bronx.

begin the second phase of the project once the first phase is completed.

The project is expected to receive \$36 million in conditional tax benefits over a 25-year term from the New York City Industrial Development Agency. The second phase will involve approximately 171,000 square feet and include four more production stages, Battista noted.

"This is an industry that is bursting at the seams," Battista said. "I get calls every other day for feature films, television shows or production. With all the different levels of platforms that they have, whether it is Netflix, Amazon, hulu, YouTube, everybody needs content. Also, the way that people are watching TV these days with 'binge watching' your normal series that might have taken 12 episodes, which would be one time a week, people are watching in a week. Demand for more content grows continuously and our challenge is to provide the space to produce it in."

York Studios' Queens complex opened in 2012 to host the film production of the feature film "Non-Stop" and has since seen theatrical productions such as "John Wick," "This Is Where I Leave You," "The Amazing Spider-Man 2" and "Godzilla" filmed at the complex. York Studios is also home to the CBS Network television show "Elementary."

The expansion of York Studios in the Bronx is expected to generate nearly \$100 million in new tax revenue, employ more than 400 production industry professionals and create hundreds of construction jobs.

"I am so proud of the gains we continue to make in the movie and television production business, and welcome the construction of York Studios' new sound stages in Soundview, which will put more than 400 New Yorkers to work in this industry. Creating jobs and building industries across our neighborhoods is key to a more affordable and equitable New York," said Mayor Bill de Blasio in a prepared statement.

Battista said the Michaelangelo project site was attractive because the Bronx is currently securing the least amount of television and production work of all the boroughs. He believes that in addition to the production work on campus, television and film crews will find the diverse surrounding neighborhoods attractive venues for on-location shoots.

"The television and film industry is growing across the five boroughs, and The Bronx is no exception. York Studios' new Michaelangelo Campus in Soundview not only expands our borough's ability to host major movie and TV productions, it reactivates a long-dormant site, creates new jobs and is another excellent example of the ongoing positive transformation that is taking place in communities all over The Bronx," said Bronx Borough President Diaz.

York Studio officials stated that there is significant interest from within the industry to reserve space at the new facility when it opens in late 2018.





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# Embracing Religious Organizations Could Become A Viable Economic Driver

Recently, we discussed Putnam County's not-for-profits and how the business community could best support and enhance their efforts. To extend that topic further, perhaps we should consider promoting Putnam County as a hub for religious organizations. People may not realize it, but Putnam County is home to some rather large religious organizations.

One of my favorites which brings a considerable amount of people into our county is Graymoor. According to its website ([www.atonementfriars.org/graymoor-spiritual-life-center](http://www.atonementfriars.org/graymoor-spiritual-life-center)), the Graymoor Spiritual Life Center sponsors and hosts retreats, conferences, days of renewal and recollection, pilgrimages, meetings and other events. Opened in 1970, the center has offered people of many different religious traditions and all walks of life an opportunity to slow down and encounter the Spirit in their lives. Graymoor is also host to the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of Atonement, both Catholic organizations of monastics.

Our county is also the home of the Chuang Yen Monastery, which is more than just an amazing Buddhist temple—it contains the largest Buddha statue in the Western Hemisphere. Chuang Yen Monastery is the jewel in the crown of the Buddhist Association of the United States (BAUS). Under president Bikkhu Bodhi, a world-renowned Buddhist Monk, BAUS is an organization of more than 800 members from around the world. Their mission is to spread the philosophy of Buddhism here in the U.S. Thousands of people visit the Monastery weekly.

An example of a non-sectarian reli-

gious organization is The Garrison institute. The Garrison as well as Chuang Yen Monastery have hosted the Dali Lama. How cool is that? The Garrison is a spiritual retreat center that hosts year-round workshops on varying topics, again bringing thousands of visitors to our county.

The above organizations have clearly demonstrated that religious institutions have a place in attracting multitudes of visitors to Putnam. That coupled with all the philanthropic work they do makes it a no brainer for us to consider how to partner with these organizations and capitalize on their benefits to our county!

## Supporting Local Charities Through A New Initiative

The Putnam County business community is very generous when it comes to charity.

For example, the Mahopac Relay for Life held on June 3rd is a wonderful community event and a great opportunity for local businesses to support the American Cancer Society. There are 655 not-for-profit organizations not including local sports teams, Girl Scouts and schools in Putnam County. The non-stop stream of organizations asking for financial aid or other donations can be overwhelming, potentially putting a small business owner in a precarious position. Saying "No" to a local team or school fundraiser can be a very unpopular decision and be harmful to one's business!

The Putnam County Chamber of Commerce is considering the establishment of a not-for-profit council, designed specifically to help those or-

## PUTNAM POSTING

By Jennifer Maher



ganizations that join the Chamber. Such a council would allow for more promotional opportunity for the businesses that support these not-for-profits. Charitable organizations operate to fulfill their missions, not to make money, but are allowed to create and maintain a strong reserve. These organizations are a huge part of the Putnam County economy and culture, with hospital, healthcare providers, cultural organizations charitable foundations, non-government social agencies all making our county a better place to work and live. The council could assist in dealing with the tax laws, regulatory burdens, workforce training and more that impact the success of nonprofit organizations. If interested in being a part of this council please contact me at the Putnam County Chambers of Commerce at (845) 228-8595.

Some businesses aggressively sup-

port charities on their own. This July 8, Mahopac Marine is hosting an annual Armed Forces Appreciation Festival, to raise donations for local disabled American veterans and to show appreciation for all the men and women who serve in our armed forces, both active duty and veterans. There will be activities all day long including free food for military personnel and veterans. Sponsorship and donation opportunities are available. E-mail Charlie Melchner for more details at [mahopacmarine@gmail.com](mailto:mahopacmarine@gmail.com) or call (845) 628-6550.

*Jennifer Maher served as the 2015 vice president of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors and currently serves as the vice president of the Hudson Valley Chapter of the New York State Commercial Association of Realtors and chairwoman of the Putnam County Chambers of Commerce.*



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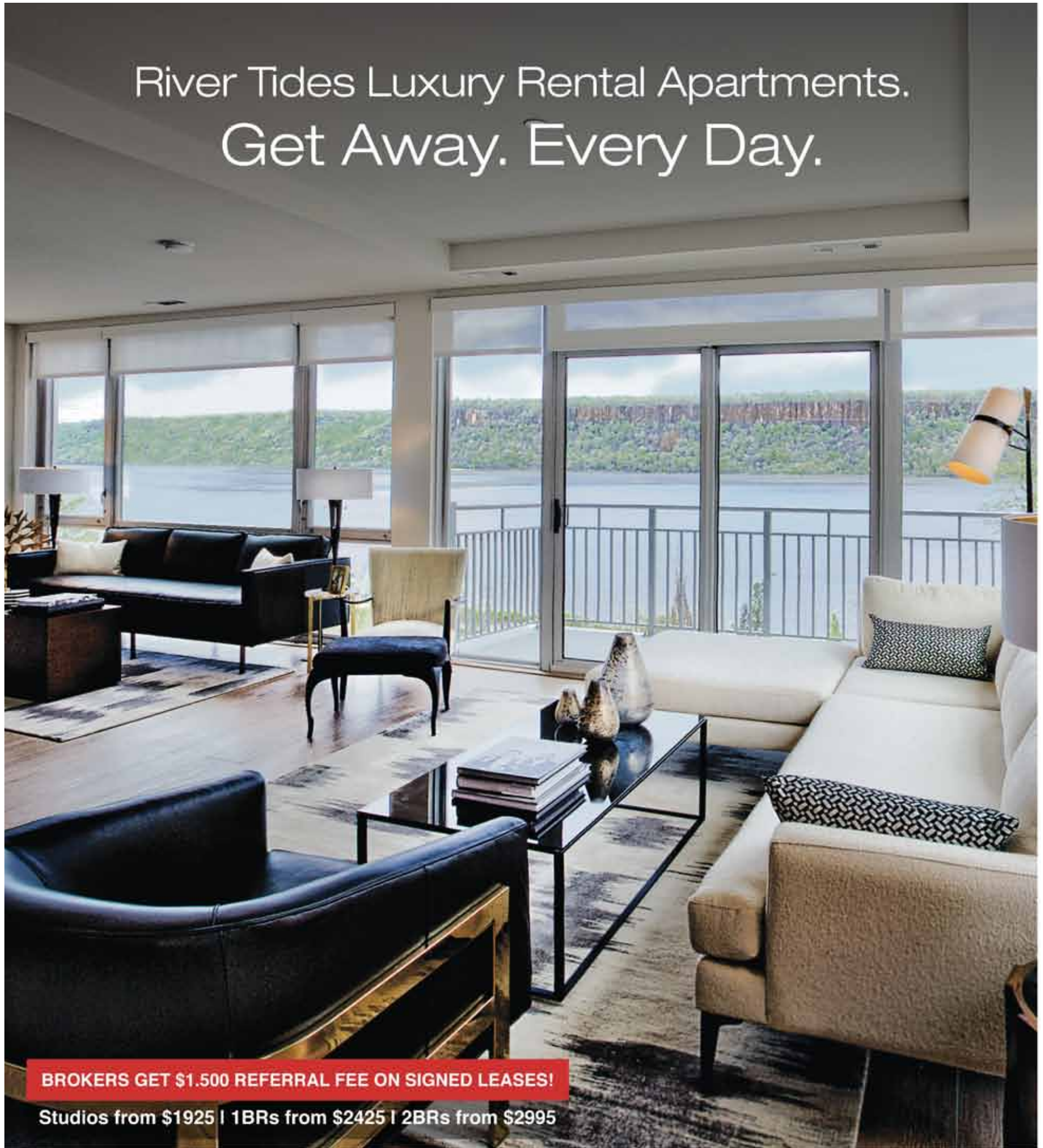
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\*PMI - Private Mortgage Insurance. Lender paid Private Mortgage Insurance on loans over 89.5% Loan-to-Value. Please note: Rate subject to change. We reserve the right to alter or withdraw these products or certain features thereof without prior notification. NMLS #474376



# River Tides Luxury Rental Apartments. Get Away. Every Day.



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Terms, conditions and fees of accounts, programs, products and services are subject to change. This is not a commitment to lend. All loans are subject to credit and property approval. Certain restrictions may apply on all programs. Offer cannot be combined with any other mortgage offer.

1. Final commitment is subject to verification of information, receipt of a satisfactory sales contract on the home you wish to purchase, appraisal and title report, and meeting our customary closing conditions. There is no charge to receive a SureStart pre-approval. However, standard application and commitment fees will apply for the mortgage loan application.

2. A Citibank deposit account and automated monthly transfers of the mortgage payment from a Citibank personal deposit account using EZ Pay will be required to receive Citibank mortgage relationship pricing. Ask a mortgage representative for details on eligible balances and the qualifying closing cost credit or rate discount. Availability of the Citibank mortgage relationship pricing for Citibank account holders is subject to change without notice.

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