



Alumni News

We Have a Ways to Go

Greetings Alumni,

The summer heat is waning and the fall season is here with colors changing. It's nice to have something to rely on in this ever-changing world in which we live.

As you know, the Alumni Association has embarked on a project, the Never Forget Garden, to honor Gorton men and women who served in the military; those who sacrificed their lives in service to our country; those who endured the effects of their service, both mental and physical; as well as those forgotten over time.

See *ALUMS* on Page 3

How to Donate

When writing out a check to the Gorton High School Alumni Association, please note EIN 84-2711009 in the memo section of the check.

Checks may be mailed to:
Gorton High School Alumni Association
100 Shonnard Place
Yonkers, NY 10703
Attention: Marilyn Rabadi

(OR)
Gorton High School Alumni Association
Attention: William Tolany
2040 Hacienda Heights Lane
Frisco, Texas 75036-6594

(OR)
Our GoFundMe Site
Help us reach our goal of \$20,000 for the Never Forget Garden that will honor Gorton students who have served our country.
<https://gofund.me/62c6d7c7>

Please note that GoFundMe allows you the option to donate anonymously.



—Photo courtesy of Phil Reisman

Abandoned cars strewn along the Bronx River Parkway following the flash floods.

Wolf Tales

*The Newsletter of
Gorton's Class of '65*

'The strength of the wolf is in the pack'



September 2021, No. 64

Ida Unleashes Its Wrath; 5 Drown in Flash Flooding

The remnants of Hurricane Ida slammed into the New York metropolitan area causing never-before-seen flash flooding that swept five motorists to their deaths while leaving one Sound Shore village under 14 feet of water.

All of the county's "river parkways" were swollen lakes littered with abandoned cars. Mudslides on Warburton Avenue near Arthur Street dragged parked cars down to the Metro-North tracks where mud and debris shut down Amtrak service. "I've lived in these parts for many years and have seen many floods," said

veteran newsman Phil Reisman. "This is by far the worst."

In a one-hour period on Sept. 1, 3.15 inches of rain fell in Central Park surpassing the record of 1.94 inches set only 10 days earlier by Hurricane Henri. Nine tornadoes were reported in New Jersey along with 27 deaths. For the first time in the Big Apple's history, a flash flood warning was issued for Manhattan.

Thirteen New York City residents drowned to death, some while trapped in their

See *IDA* on Page 4



SURFIN' USA—The North End Surf Club has reason to be proud now Steve Tuers' grandson, Zach, and Malcom Brown's grandson, Henry, have hit the surf. While Henry dresses up sharp to catch the eye of the wahinis in California (right), Zach catches his first wave off New Jersey.



Zach with instructors Mike Manna and Tom Forkin.



Malcolm's face and Joe Mikulsky's surfing attitude.



CLASS MATES--Jack Humphrey and John Volpe (right) at lunch at A&V Pizza on Morsemere Avenue, home of Yonkers' best pizza. Jack and John grew up in the Bronx and attended Catholic Schools together. Both are 89, but John is two months older. Jack's grandson, Theo Humphrey, is on golf's Corn Ferry Tour.



Missed an issue of Wolf Tales? Want to catch up? Click [here](#) for all our Wolf Tales issues.

Join Fellow Alums On Our Facebook Page

Check out our new Facebook page for the Charles E. Gorton High School Alumni Association.

<https://www.facebook.com/GortonHSAumniAssociation>

Help Our Garden Grow At Our GoFundMe Site

Help us reach our goal of \$20,000 for the Never Forget Garden that will honor students who have served our country.

<https://gofund.me/62c6d7c7>

Raymond Morton, 74, Avid Tennis Player

Raymond Wilbert Morton, a 1965 Gorton graduate, died April 20 after a short illness. He was 74.

Raymond was born in Yonkers on March 23, 1947, to the late Isaiah W. Morton and Juanita L. Morton. A long-time resident in Yonkers, he attended Yonkers public schools before attending Westchester Community College.

Raymond was employed by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, IBEW-Local 3, for 50 years before retiring in 2019.

His wife, Diane Lloyd, survives him as does their son, Colt Lloyd Morton.

He was an avid tennis player, which kept

him on the tennis courts all over Yonkers. His favorite pastimes were "strength training" at the YMCA and watching movies at home with his family.



Affectionately known as Ray-Ray, he was described as "a humble and caring person" who enjoyed being around people. His love for family was his reason for being. Ray-Ray always had a story to tell, and laughed as he told them.

In addition to his wife and son, Raymond is survived by his brothers Ronald Morton and Robert Morton; a sister, Lillian Walton; nieces, nephews, and great nieces and great nephews as well as long-time friends, Michael Thomas, Aldo Smith, Walter Riley and many others.

ALUMS (from Page One)

The Never Forget Garden will be managed and cared for by freshmen classes over the years as well as by the Center for Learning students. There is no better way to instill the national pride, respect and understanding for military service. This will carry forward with the students throughout their four years at Gorton. The value of military service should not be discovered after high school, college or later in life.

Unfortunately, what sounds great on paper has yet to translate into tangible support. As of Sept. 22, our fundraising totals are \$7,800, well shy of our projected costs of \$20,000.

Go Fund Me:	\$4,050	22 donors
Checks Received	\$ 550	7 donors
Total to Date	\$4,600	29 donors
Previously Raised	\$3,200	
TOTAL FUNDS	\$7,800	

Several people were extremely generous with their donations, and we thank them very much. One unidentified graduate provided an interest-free loan (not a donation) to the association to help start paying our startup expenses. Additionally, eight of the 22 Go Fund Me donors are teachers/administrators at Gorton...wow!

However, if we are to make our goal of \$20,000 in time for the construction and dedication, we need more support from alumni. I've reached out to many and the project has just not been top-of-mind.

Several thought this was more of an individual class effort. It is not...this is all alumni from all classes.

Others mentioned donations right now are outside their financial means. That is certainly understandable...we don't want to cause anyone financial hardship.

Finally, several noted feeling intimidated by some of the larger donations on GoFundMe, whose policy is to publish the dollar amounts. Please don't feel intimidated. Every donation is important regardless of size. Also, there is an option to donate anonymously on GoFundMe, or send in a check directly instead.

Regardless, we need your support now. Dedication is Veterans Day, Nov. 11. Materials are on order as well as the design and creation of the Garden's monument. Bills need to be paid.

Please take a minute to consider this noble and everlasting memorial that gives the men and women of Gorton the recognition and honor they deserve.

Bill Tolany is the president of the Charles E. Gorton High School Alumni Association and a member of the Class of 1964.



—Photos courtesy of The Journal News/Nancy Haggerty

THE FORCE IS WITH YOU—From left, QB Atticus Oelkers' winning TD; Ryan Joseph, who scored the Yonkers Force's only touchdown in regulation; and Brandon Sweat heads up field during a big gain with Felix Perez (8) of the Yonkers Brave in hot pursuit.

Three's a Charm As The Force Wins in OT

In the end, three was a charm even if it took it an overtime to do it.

Atticus Oelkers, a third-string quarterback for the Yonkers Force, scampered into the end zone on a 9-yard run to lead the Force to a 12-6 win over the Brave under the Friday night lights at Roosevelt. It was the

Force's third Yonkers Superintendent's Cup victory in four years.

"Going into overtime, I was thinking we need to be more aggressive and focus on the moment," Oelkers told *The Journal News*. "My offensive line made my job very easy."

Oelkers, a junior, was thrust into the starting role after the Force (Gorton, Roosevelt, Yonkers High and Yonkers Montessori Academy) lost two of its starting quarterbacks against Mamaroneck a week before its showdown with the Brave (Lincoln,

Palisade Prep, Riverside and Saunders). First-year Force Coach Anthony Fava told *The Journal News*, "Our five offensive linemen carried us. I told them all week the game is going to be won in the trenches and it was."

In a game marred by fumbles and penalties, the Force took full advantage of a Brave fumble in overtime.

Ryan Joseph gained four yards up the middle and James Minton then tacked on additional yardage for a first down. That set up Oelkers' last-play heroics.

Yonkers Opens New High School

A new school year, a new high school in Yonkers as the Charter School of Educational Excellence (CSEE) opened the doors of its \$27 million building on the grounds of the former Our Lady of the Rosary Church on Warburton Avenue.

The charter school expansion offers high school students culinary arts, automobile technology and health science programs and an opportunity to obtain up to 24 college credits. CSEE leaders say the goal is to offer families of all economic backgrounds educational choices and will draw its student body from Yonkers, Mount Vernon and the Bronx.

Too Many Students, Not Enough Buses

A week before the scheduled opening of school, the Yonkers Public Schools and the Board of Education did the math and realized nearly 500 new students would not be bused to school due to a shortage of bus drivers.

The aftermath of Hurricane Ida, however, delayed the school openings by a week. That gave officials time to get special permission from the state Education Department to hire an additional bus company on an emergency basis.

Vax Shots Before Athletes Suit Up

High school athletes will have to play ball in order to play ball.

All city high school athletes 16 and up will need to be vaccinated with at least the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine by Sept. 27 in order to play ball.

Yonkers was the first district in Section 1 to have a vaccination mandate for its athletes. There will also be random COVID-19 testing each week on athletes. The ruling applies to fall sports such as football, volleyball and swimming and winter and spring sports teams such as soccer, basketball and baseball.



—Photo courtesy of the Yonkers Fire Department

Yonkers first responders rescue Bee Line bus passengers trapped in swelling waters.



—Photo courtesy of the Journal News

A mudslide on Warburton Avenue and Arthur Avenue left cars (circle) dangling and debris on the Metro-North Railroad tracks halting service for days.

IDA (from Page One)

illegal basement apartments. More New York City and Westchester residents died during Ida than in Louisiana where the monster storm made landfall as a Cat 4.

Gusting winds were hardly the issue. Only 30,000 Westchester residents lost power. It was the intensity of the rain that measured more than nine inches in a 12-hour period over land already soaked by Hurricane Henri 10 days earlier. In Mamaroneck on the Long Island Sound, sections of the village were under 14 feet of water. There were more than 100 flood rescues.

Portions of the New York State Thruway, Major Deegan and the county parkways were closed by rising flood waters and strewn with abandoned cars. Most motorists survived; five didn't:

- **Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Weissmandel** was driving from Monsey to his home in Mount Kisco when he called his family to say he was having difficulty traveling through the storm. His son, Moshe Elya, posted a WhatsApp status pleading for help but no one was able to get to him. The rabbi's body was found near Rte. 119, his car was



See IDA on Page 5

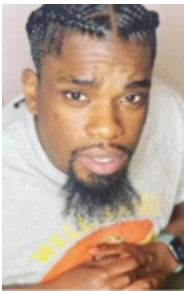
IDA (from Page 4)

found nearby, submerged on an entrance ramp to the Saw Mill River Parkway.



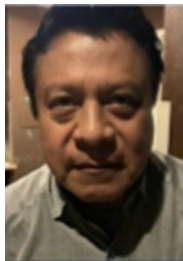
- Two longtime professors, **Ken and Fran Baille** of Rye Brook, died on their way home from teaching at Iona College where she was the chair of the computer science department. Rushing waters slammed their car into a utility pole at Lincoln Avenue and Brookside Way in Purchase. His body was found a quarter of a mile away. Four days later, after the waters had receded, her body was found nearby.

- The body of **Alan Dorsainvil**, a 33-year-old Bronx man, was discovered on South Columbus Avenue in Mount Vernon by a passerby. A preliminary investigation indicated that he appeared to have driven the car into deep standing water.



As the water continued to rise, police believe that the car quickly filled with water, trapping Dorsainvil.

- Raymundo Cholula**, 65, of White Plains was on his way home from work when his car got stuck in the waters on Mamaroneck Avenue. His body was discovered two days later. His family raised more than \$11,000 on GoFundMe to honor his wishes of returning him Mexico, where he will be buried.



"Traffic in Yonkers is a mess due to surrounding parkways and Thruway closures," Steve Tuers said. North Broadway



I'M FIXING A HOLE—Aerial view shows repairs being done to the Lake Avenue sink hole (above) that appeared in Ida's aftermath.



THE TRACKS OF MY TEARS—Washed away sections of Metro-North's Hudson line.



A RIVER ROILS THROUGH IT—A gate in the daylighting project kept Saw Mill River from breaching Van Der Donck Park.



at the corner of High Street was closed when a mudslide took out an apartment building parking lot and crushed cars below. A sinkhole, seven-feet wide by 14-feet deep sink hole, suddenly appeared on Lake Avenue near Park, across from the basketball courts at Lennon Park.

Metro-North's Hudson line was shut down for almost a week after the storm triggered several landslides in Yonkers, dumping dirt and debris onto the tracks and washing up the rails as far north as Dutchess County.

Some school districts set to open before Labor Day and Rosh Hashanah had to make a sudden change in plans:

- Yonkers' 27,000-student school dis-

trict pushed its scheduled opening back a week to Sept. 9 to deal with rain damage;

- New Rochelle High School is closed until at least late October due to sewage contamination caused by the flooding. The school opted for remote learning while seeking alternative learning sites;
- The water level at Rye High School's Nugent Stadium almost reached the height of the goalpost crossbars;
- Both gym floors at Bronxville High School were ruined and its playing field became a lake.

The metropolitan area was declared a state and federal disaster site. Two mobile FEMA centers were set up in the county, one at the Grinton I. Will Library.

STUPID	JEOPARDY	IDEA	FORE	'NEW'	HOST
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400
\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800	\$800
\$1200	\$1200	\$1200	\$1200	\$1200	\$1200
\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600	\$1600
\$2000	\$2000	\$2000	\$2000	\$2000	\$2000



Editor's Notebook

~~Who Is Was~~ Mike Richards?

Alex Trebek died on Nov. 8, 2020, after battling pancreatic cancer for nearly two years. His death, sadly, was a foregone conclusion.

Businesses normally plan ahead for an orderly succession. But not *Jeopardy*, not Sony Entertainment and certainly not Executive Producer Mike Richards who had his eyes on the prize.

Alex thought either Los Angeles Kings announcer Alex Faust or CNN legal analyst Laura Coates would make good replacements. What did he know? He'd only been on the job for 35+ years. No, the empty suits in the good ol' boys suite decided to milk Alex's death for all it was worth.

Thanks to Alex's tireless work ethic (the last show was taped 10 days before his death), Jeopardy had enough pre-taped shows in the can to carry it into January. Then, for the next eight months, came a spinoff, ala *Dancing with the Blahs*. Potential hosts were lined up like pigs at a hog-judging contest at the county fair.

Alex knew that the true stars of Jeopardy were the contestants. Just like a hockey goalie, his job was to keep the puck in play.

See ALEX on Page 7



PLAYING THROUGH—Sam Fried and Gale Donnelly wound up their “get out of Florida in the summer” golf travels with a round at Neshanic Valley, NJ, with classmate Rich Whittaker. Another nearby course was unplayable due to Hurricane Henri and made worse when Ida turned a Par 3 green into Pac Man. They then visited Barry and Lorna Reynolds Jacob and hit the links at Pine Lake Country Club in Mint Hill, NC.



How I Spent My Summer Vacation

By Sam Fried

Furnace-like heat. Massive fires. Smoke across a thousand miles. Two hurricanes. Major flooding. Pestilence from the Great Salt Lake to the boreal forests. And, of course, plague, everywhere plague.

Was this a vacation or a book from the Old Testament? How far behind could be murrain? (No, not murrain!) Four horse-men always seemed to be gaining on us in the rear view mirror. Remember—objects are closer than they appear!

But seriously, folks, I am serious! Across four months and 12,500 miles, attempting to flee Florida's summer heat, Gale and I lurched through the depths of hell, occasionally crossing purgatory and allowed fleeting glimpses of heaven before being cast back into the interminable morass. Like Odysseus, the Sirens



called us, but unfortunately, mostly we just got pulled over.

Alas, native New York cynicism has taken over my perception of what was actually a wonderful journey.

Despite the less-than-pleasant interruptions, we encountered many natural wonders of our beautiful country. We saw 261 species of birds and played a remarkable 40 golf courses, scattered

See SAM on Page 7

ALEX (from Page 6)

Speaking of hockey, eh?, it helped greatly that Alex was a Canadian by birth. Canadians are nice. If you hate a Canadian, there's something wrong with you.

Oh yah, for sure, he had his quirks. There were awkward moments when he read prepared questions about a contestant's "interesting" moments. And, there were his "good for you" brush offs after listening to another painfully boring story. Occasionally, he had that snarky "know-it-all" admonition to a wrong answer or piercing stare when no one buzzed in. I blame both on the fact that he had dual U.S. citizenship.

Guest hosts came and went. I wonder how much some of them paid to be on the set. They all praised Alex and every show ended with a written homage. In the end, it became a joke—it chose its executive producer as its new host. A show filled with 2 gazillion factfinders didn't do a simple Internet search on Richards to find out he was a creep. Richards lost the host and producer jobs.

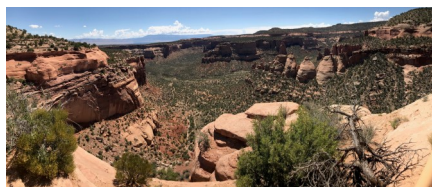
Here's another bone I'd like to pick with Jeopardy—it's cheap. The show makes \$125 million a year. During this Star Search run, it gave about \$5 million to charities. That's about 4% of show's earnings. Try tipping a waiter that.

The wannabe hosts, like prisoners of war before a camera, bragged about it. A contestant who just named the ninth largest moon of Jupiter but comes in third gets a measly \$1,000. Wheel of Fortune gives you that for showing up.

Sixty years ago, FCC Chairman Newton Minow said, "When television is bad, nothing is worse. I can assure you that what you will observe is a vast wasteland."

To the same people who brought us Dr. Pimple Popper, thanks for ruining Alex Trebek's legacy and the integrity of his beloved Jeopardy.

Alex Poletsky (C65) is a retired journalist and managing editor of Wolf Tales.



Colorado National Park.



A Rocky Mountain "Hi" from Gale.



Black-headed grosbeak.



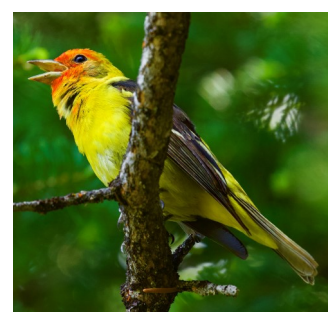
Cassin's vireo at nest.



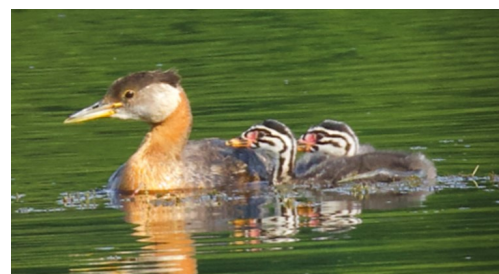
Lazuli bunting.



American Redstart.



Western Tanager.



Red-necked Grebe with chicks.

SAM (from Page 6)

across the continent, from the tiny nine-holer in Laverne, OK, intimidating U.S. Open courses at Chambers Bay in Washington and Erin Hills in Wisconsin, delightfully ancient Leatherstocking in Cooperstown, NY, to charming Pine Lakes in North Carolina.

We crossed the Great Plains twice, south and north (lots of corn and soybeans), traversed the western spine of the Rockies, had a goat caddy, reveled at the cool Pacific beaches of southwest Washington, ate monster fresh raw oysters, went to a Cubs game at Wrigley, wore masks, took them off, put them on again, camped everywhere from sea level to 10,000 feet, golfed at the bottom of the Snake River Canyon and visited amazing national parks and forests.

We enjoyed the company and hospitality of fellow Gortonites: Janet and Beau Hanford, Steve Tuers, Ursula Belle Healy, Rich Whittaker, Barry and Lorna Jacobs and Ernie Levinson. We visited with all our children and grandchildren.

How bad could that be? We were exhausted. Time to go home.

Sam Fried (C65) has seen and photographed almost every bird species in North America.



Phyllis Yatchie Benjamin's grandson Alex Benjamin Cohen, then and now.



Elaine London Glover's grandson Ithan Zaslow (11th).



BACK TO SCHOOLS—Joan Lawless Kennedy's grandchildren have all the bases covered. Clockwise from top left: Henry (1st), Caitlyn (7th), Callie (7th), Jackson (12th) with his kindergarten lunch pail (a senior-year tradition), Caraline (11th), Lane (5th) and Liv (3rd).



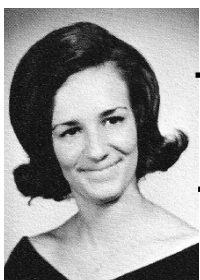
Granddaughters Hannah (2nd) and Emily Glover (K).



Peyton and Ryan Shaw, Sarah Langley Policelli's grandsons, pose before heading off to 9th and 11th grade classes, respectively.



Yvonne Sullivan Prices' youngest grandchild, Prairie, looks for her name tag at her first day of Pre-K.



Ask Janet

If I Could Talk To the Animals

Dear Janet,

Did you ever wish that you could talk to the animals? I do.

Dr. Liza Doolittle

Dear Dr. Doolittle,

As crazy as it may sound, I do talk to them, but I only wish they could understand what I say.

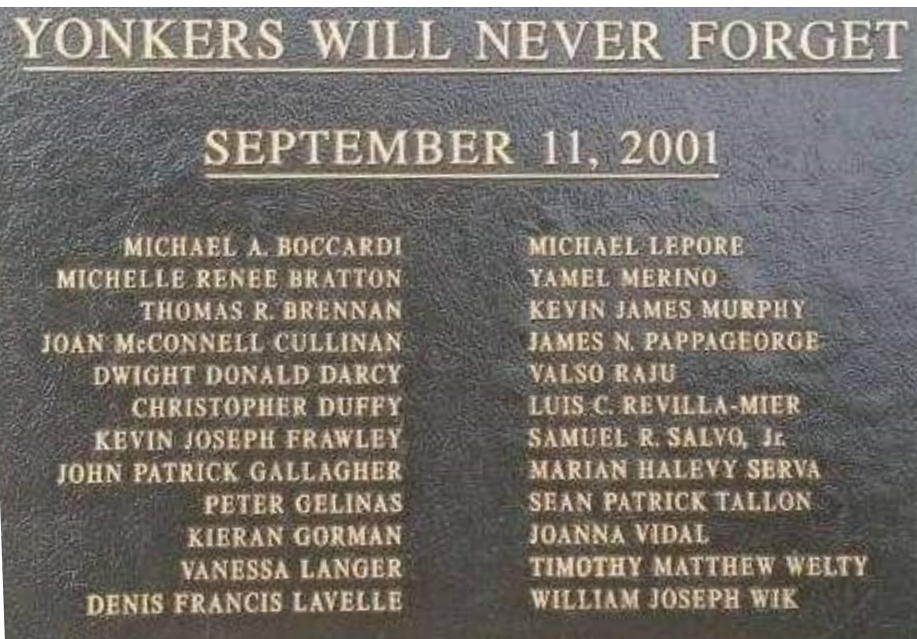
Our window bird feeder is a virtual aviary food kitchen. Some birds seem to understand that it's a safe haven while others don't get it. They quickly snatch one seed and leave. Eat and run...er, fly.

The more trusting ones, like the chickadees and goldfinch, sit for minutes gorging as if they haven't eaten all day. Cardinals take one look and immediately vamoose if they see anyone standing by the window, while others get all jerky with heads and bodies bobbing and twitching, as they suspiciously study us, then take off with our slightest movement. Those are the ones I talk to. YOU try explaining windows, barriers and "I won't hurt you" to a bird! Maybe they simply can't hear me through the window! DOH. Birdbrains!

"Talking" to animals can be done without words. According to Tony Bedford's The Sunset Seagull Blog, robins can recognize humans by their movements, schedule and possibly other signals, including faces. He claims that bird brains are smart. Crows and pigeons can recognize human faces and even hold grudges.

I once had an encounter with a gorilla at a zoo, only he wasn't laughing. I was sitting

See **ASK JANET** on Page 10



20 Years Later, City Still Remembers

The Yonkers community gathered on Sept. 11 to mourn the loss of 26 Yonkers residents in the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center 20 years ago.

Morning ceremonies were held at the 9/11 Memorial on Water Grant Street (above) where additional plaques were dedicated.

An evening remembrance was held at Conor Park on Central Park Avenue (left), which displays center support beams from the tower along with a Callery pear tree.

The original tree miraculously survived the attack and was returned to the NYC Memorial in 2010. New, smooth limbs extend from the gnarled stumps, creating a visible demarcation between the tree's past and present.

ASK JANET (from Page 9)

on the ledge by its cage, which apparently was too close even with the glass between us. It quickly came lumbering over to me and started banging on the glass. Why so angry, Mr. Kong? I backed off and so did he.

Right now, I wish I could reason with the squirrel in the yard, the one hanging upside down while eating from the bird feeder. No matter where we move it, he's there. If you can't fight 'em, join 'em so I bought a Squegee...squirrel feeder/bungee jumper. Screw two corn cobs on it and hang it in the yard. The squirrels jump and bounce and entertain, as the attached bell is supposed to let you know that it's "showtime." So far, I've only seen two attempts and both times ended with the squirrel jumping down and taking off like a flash.

And now for the fly that lived with us for a few days.

It was an "affectionate" little guy that wanted to be close. It watched television and sat on our computers alongside us. An open door didn't entice it to leave. Fly swatters couldn't touch it. A plate of sugar and water didn't work either. Reasoning made no sense. I was actually getting used to having it around and almost gave it a name... "Owdduh-here," from our battle cry, "Get owdduh here!" With the aid of a towel, I finally scooted it out the door and haven't seen it since. I actually kinda miss it, but not much!

There's so much more that I'd like to tell the animals. Deer, look both ways. Mice, stay out of my house and shed. Chipmunks, stay out of our cars. You get my drift. You probably talk to them too!

Ciao from this Animal Whisperer.

Janet Guyon Hanford (C65) is a former cheerleader and was voted Most Versatile by her senior class.



I'm Between A Rock and A Card Place

When the Hard Rock Casino and Resort opened its doors in Atlantic City on June 27, 2018, I had to be there.

My wife, Alice, and I have been visiting Atlantic City casinos for more than 50 years. The Hard Rock had something more than the usual gambling games with fancy restaurants, top-name entertainers, expensive spa and luxury suites and, yes, a bevy of bars to either wash away your pain of your losses or toast your extravagant winnings.

The Hard Rock Brand had amassed the largest collection of music memorabilia in the world. And, to pardon the pun, that was music to my ears since I'm an audiophile, from opera to rock.

From Elvis to Gaga, you can't walk more than 50 feet on the property (no blue suede shoes needed) without hitting a piece of memorabilia. And with 150,000 square feet, that's a lot of memorabilia.

Being a big Elvis fan growing up and seeing his 1963 customized Rolls Royce on display brought back so many memories and music of the King of Rock n' Roll. Another incredible piece right next to his limo is the hand-



Tuers De Force

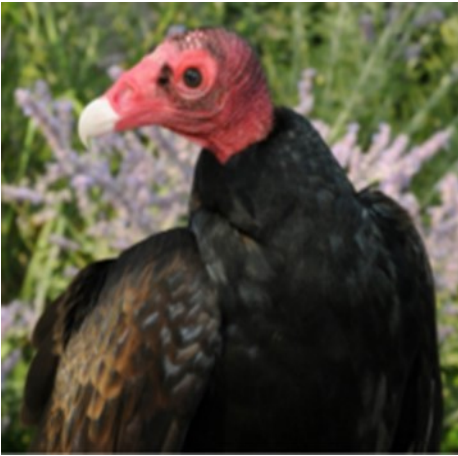
written lyrics to John Lennon's *Imagine*. If that doesn't strike a chord, you're not a music fan.

How about Michael Jackson's glove? It goes hand-in-hand with the King of Pop. On the second floor, there is a room called the Vault where Southside Johnny and The Asbury Jukes are on display—the personification of the Jersey Shore Sound along with Bruce's E Street Band and Jon Bon Jovi from Perth Amboy.

There is so much to see. Every piece of memorabilia brought back vivid memories of my youth and what I was doing at the time I first saw that singer or heard that a song. Seeing a stage prop, a piece of clothing, an instrument or even a ticket stub was a journey in a time machine.

The next time we go, there will be new displays and new memories rekindled. And you can bet on that.

Steve Tuers was a member of Gorton's championship basketball team and is a lifelong resident of Yonkers.



Bald turkey vulture.

Priceless Memories



It's a Dirty Job But Someone Has to Do it

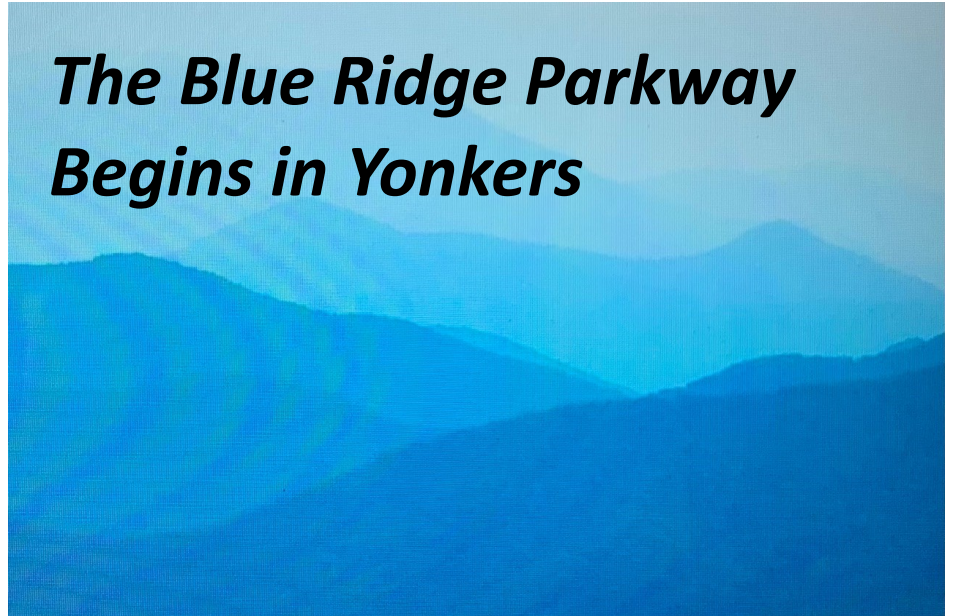
I've always been a champion of the underdog, or in this case, the under bird. I have been known to make exceptions.

For instance, I had been a fan of the Patriots for a long time, regardless of what some people felt about their quarterback and coach. Mostly though, I root for those who need a little championing. Years ago I found just such a critter.

Who hasn't come across a turkey vulture and given a little shutter of disgust at its perceived ugliness? Driving along the back roads of New England, they are a pretty common sight, but unlike coming across a deer, rabbit, fox, or even the occasional black bear, most of which evoke "oohs and ahhs", the turkey vulture more often elicits less flattering reactions. At such times, I invariably become the cheerleader for all things vulture, but let's be honest, "bald is

See **PRICELESS** on Page 12

The Blue Ridge Parkway Begins in Yonkers



In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt took a drive on the newly constructed Skyline Drive in Virginia. He was so taken with the views that he suggested the road be extended into North Carolina to connect to the recently established Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Tennessee.

After meeting with the governors of Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee, Roosevelt asked Interior Secretary Harold Ickes to look into the project. Approval for this "park to park" highway was granted as a public works project.

The National Park Service was faced with an enormous challenge—it had no adequately trained staff for this project. Turning to the Westchester County Park Program, it "borrowed" a consultant, who convinced the Park Service to hire one of



Did You Know?

his talented young assistants as the supervisor of this undertaking.

Enter Stanley W. Abbott of Yonkers. On Dec. 31, 1933, using Public Works funds, the Park Service took that advice and on Dec. 31, 1933, Abbott reported for duty beginning a glorious career as the Parkway's resident landscape architect from 1933 to 1944.

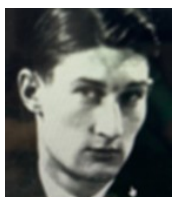
Abbott lived at 22 Ridge Road. After

See **BLUE RIDGE** on Page 12



BLUE RIDGE (from Page 11)

graduating from Yonkers High, he attended Cornell University where he studied landscape architecture. Just 3 ½ years after graduation, he was directing and designing the Blue Ridge Parkway. It was also his responsibility, working with the Bureau of Public Roads, to plot out its route. As the roadway took shape, areas



of "bulges" were added for camping, picnicking and other recreational activities.

He also served as the project's communication director, launching *Stan's Blue Ridge Parkway News* to keep the people most affected by the construction of the parkway informed on what was going on.

Today, the Blue Ridge Parkway runs 469 miles through Virginia and North Carolina linking Shenandoah National Park to the

Great Smoky Mountains. Since 1946, it's been the National Park System's top-most visited area in all but four years. There is no fee for using the parkway; commercial vehicles are prohibited unless they receive approval from the Park Service headquarters near Asheville, NC.

A bit of caution: The roads are not maintained in the winter and rapidly changing weather conditions can lead to sudden road closures, almost without notice.

Following the Blue Ridge project, Abbott led the Mississippi River Parkway Survey and served as superintendent of the Colonial National Historical Park in Williamsburg, VA. After his retirement in 1963 until his death in 1975, he and his architect son, Carlton, were principals in the Abbott Associates planning firm. They provided master plans for many parks and served as consultants for a vast variety of special projects.



—Photo by Sam Fried

Morning mist on a Blue Ridge Parkway campsite.

Abbott was often described as a "modern day Renaissance man—broadly talented, blessed with multi-faceted interests and gifted with a visionary mind." No other architect in America had ever faced a more awesome assignment nor a more splendid opportunity.

Joan Lawless Kennedy (C65) is a member of the Yonkers Historical Society.

PRICELESS (from Page 11)

beautiful" is a pretty lame defense. Recently, much to my surprise and joy, an article about this much-fouled fowl appeared in our newspaper. Included were some facts that I can now happily use to promote vulture love.

To wit: there are two types of vultures in my neck of the woods. There is that bald one, the turkey vulture and its cousin, the black head. The former is so named because its head is red, like the male wild turkey. It is Connecticut's native son. The black heads, named so for reasons that become obvious at a glance, flew the proverbial coop, arriving from the south in the 1990s. There are other differences between the two, including wing coloration and flight patterns.

Differences aside, they are both enormously necessary to us and our environment.

Let's get to the nice stuff first. We owe both vultures a huge thank you. Without them, we'd be knee deep in piles of decaying animal flesh, not to mention the added threat of the spread of untold path-



ogens emanating from all the carcasses. Those facts alone should be enough to earn them stars on Bird Boulevard.

They are also highly social, good parents and super fliers, riding thermals for miles. They can become antsy without something to do, much like children and may then become destructive, much like children, so keeping them busy is a good idea.

Turkey vultures have an astounding sense of smell, unusual for birds and can find new kills almost as soon as they happen. Black vultures cheat a bit. Lacking that keen sniffer, they fly over their bald kin

competitors, follow them down to the meal, and then aggressively drive them away to enjoy the "fruits" of another's labor. But hey, it's still getting the job done and there's plenty of carrion to go around, as any road trip will confirm.

In the interest of truth and transparency, here's some not so nice stuff about them. Both hiss and the black vulture can also grunt like a pig. Both keep interlopers away by puking on them and they also urinate on their own legs to keep them cool. I consider that problem solving.

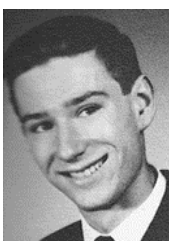
Seem disgusting? Vultures still too ugly for ya? Already forgotten paragraph five? Want to live in a world full of rotting flesh? Craving more deadly pathogens after the almost two years we've just been through?

Well, I'd trade a few furry ferals for a super carrion cleanup crew any day. I will most assuredly continue to cheer on those flying sanitation squads!

Yvonne Sullivan Price was queen of the '65 senior prom and is a retired school administrator.



BACK FROM AFGHANISTAN--Dalton Potter reunites with his wife Valerie, the granddaughter of Lorna and Barry Jacobs, after a brief stint in Afghanistan. Dalton is a drone specialist just finishing his first year with the Army while stationed in Germany. They are expecting their first child, a boy, at the end of December.



Parry's Ponderings

A Wonder, No Matter How You Slice It

Even with inflation, a "Giant-Sized" loaf of bread is still giant size. However, it's now a giant-sized loaf of pint-sized slices.

On a related note, a slice of Wonder Bread seems to be about three-quarters the size it used to be "back in the day." I guess now it helps build strong bodies nine ways.

Don Parry (C65) was awarded Westchester's Safest Teenage Driver Award and is a Vietnam War veteran.

Reunited At Last: A Love Story

By Bill Tolany

Ann Patavino and Alan Votta graduated from Gorton in 1961. As Alan tells the history of "their story," it all started the day they entered Gorton as 7th graders and by the time they were seniors, they were a couple.

However, when they went off to college, Ann ended the relationship. Alan was devastated. Not knowing what to do after losing the love of his life, he joined the Navy, eventually spending 24 years in the nuclear submarine service.

Fast forward 48 years—three marriages and four children between them and no contact whatsoever—except for seeing one another at their 25th Gorton reunion in 1986.

They reconnected on Facebook! The only name that surfaced Alan's Facebook search was Ann



Where Are They Now?

Patavino Vincola—his old love! After many emails, phone calls, and reaffirming love for one another, they were married in 2010. There were 11 Gorton graduates at their wedding in Charleston, SC.

It was an event!



In 2013, Ann published a book retelling their incredible story—*Reunited: When the Past Becomes a Present*. In 2018, she published her second book, *From Italy and Back: Coming Full Circle*, about her Italian heritage and their trips to Italy together.

Three years later, Alan published a book about his years in the U.S. nuclear submarine force, *Real Stories from a Nuclear Submariner: Once Upon a Time/This Ain't No Bullshit*. Their books have been published under AV Publishing LLC, and are available in paperback and EBook on Amazon and at retail booksellers. Very interesting reading for sure.

Will we hear more from this publishing duo? Stay tuned.



CABBAGE PATCH KIDS--Beau and Janet Hanford toured the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens with their son, Mike. They had a great time but on their way home via Amtrak, their train stopped south of Poughkeepsie and went nowhere fast until a new engine was sent to take them to Albany. "It's always something," Janet wrote. "At least we're not 30,000 feet in the air!"

City Fends Off Cyberattack

Two quick-thinking IT workers saved Yonkers from a ransomware attack over the Labor Day weekend.

The attack was spotted within 10 minutes, affecting only a dozen servers and 400 laptops. They isolated the virus and took it off line. It took nearly 20 hours to restore full service. The Yonkers police operate on a separate system and were unaffected.

No ransom was paid and the Department of Homeland Security was notified.

COVID Concerns Cancels Riverfest

Organizers of the 28th annual Yonkers Riverfest on the Hudson have cancelled the event for the second year in a row due to rising COVID concerns.

"Making the decision to postpone Yonkers Riverfest was difficult but ultimately it is the decision that is best for the health and safety of our community," said Sara A. Brody, executive director, Yonkers Downtown Waterfront Business Improvement District. "We are looking forward to coming together once again for a celebration in 2022."

The annual free festival along the Hudson River has attracted thousands of people from across the county and has been a Westchester staple since its inception in 1992.

Former Cop Joins Board of Education

Retired Yonkers Police Detective Amjed I. Kuri has been named to the nine-member Yonkers Board of Education.

A 30-year veteran of the force, Kuri is the recipient of eight police commendations, seven Certificates of Excellence, the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award, a *Journal News* Award and many others in recognition of his honorable service.



—Photo courtesy of the Untermyer Park Conservatory

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT--So nice to see the Temple of the Sky again, free of its scaffolding and supports. This has brought smiles to many faces.

Kuri serves as a law enforcement instructor for Soufan Group, which instructs Qatari national officers in basic and comprehensive law enforcement courses.

Morningside Shooter Gets 9 Years to Life

Jamir Thompson was sentenced to nine years to life in prison following his guilty plea in the death of Lincoln High student Marilyn Cotto-Montanez on Morningside Avenue in 2019.

Thompson, who was 15 at the time, fired his gun at another male but instead fatally shot Cotto-Montanez, an innocent bystander, in the head, as she walked on Morningside Avenue with her 9-year-old

sister.

It's The Great Pumpkin, All 7,000 of Them

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze, also known as The Blaze and a harbinger of autumn, is back at Van Cortlandt Manor in Croton-on-Hudson with more than 7,000 illuminated jack-o'-lanterns in arranged displays including a full river scene and cityscape.

The ticket-only event, which began Sept. 17, is open Oct. 1-31 and Nov. 3-7, 10-14 and 18-21.

The Oct. 16 and 23 are already sold out.