

# Wolf Tales

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

*'The strength of the wolf is in the pack'*



July 2022, Vol. 74

## Meet Gorton's New Principal

On July 20, the Yonkers Board of Education approved Assistant Principal Jamie Morales as Gorton's new principal. Gorton Alumni President William Tolany interviewed Jamie on his promotion.



**WT:** *As you begin to take the helm at Gorton, what are the major changes you have seen?*

**Morales:** I have been at GHS for five years and I have seen massive improvements in the culture and climate of the building, as well as the student school spirit. I believe that our staff is unlike any

other, willing to go above and beyond for our students. I also believe that our students are involved, in and out of the classroom! They genuinely care about Gorton as we do.

Our medical program has taken off. Our Clinical Medical Assisting CTE program  
**See MORALES on Page 6**

## From All-State to NCAA Champ

**BERNARD TOONE**

—July 14, 1956-July 11, 2022—

Bernard Toone, a championship basketball player for Gorton High School and Marquette University, died July 11 of cancer, three days shy of his 66th birthday.

Born July 14, 1956, he was the center on Gorton's 1973-75 championship teams that amassed a 56-7 record in three years. He averaged 32 points and 20 rebounds per game and was selected to New York State's All-Star team and was named its MVP in his senior year.

"Bernard was very coachable, he excelled in all aspects of the game," said former coach John Volpe. "Obviously, he was one of the best basketball players to come out of Gorton. And off the court, he took care of his family and his siblings."

One of the top three high school recruits  
**See TOONE on Page 3**



Bernard after the 1977 championship.

**TRISHA JENKINS ZINN**

—March 29, 1947-July 7, 2022—



## Embracing Her Family & Friends With Optimism

Trisha Jenkins Zinn, who died July 7 at 75, was more than a red-head Irish lass who lit up the room with her broad smile and boisterous laugh—she was also a beacon of hope who was always there when folks and family needed it the most.

That same inner strength helped her get through the death of Walter, her six-foot, 8-inch college sweetheart and husband of 40 years, to brain cancer while she was fighting a recurrence of colon cancer after a 10-year remission. Last year, racked by cancer once again, she moved to California to be with her family.

Born March 29, 1947, she was the only child of Harry and Mary (McSpedon) Jenkins but she didn't want for company. Besides having literally three dozen of McSpedon cousins, she had friendships developed at PS 9 that lasted until her death.

"PS 9 boys did not appreciate 'teacher's pets' and 'tattle-talers'; being neither, and never a 'drama queen,' Trisha was both friendly and popular with the boys," said Tony Dilorio who shared classes with her during their seven years at School 9.

**See TRISHA on Page 5**



**FOUNTAIN OF YUTES**—Alec and Neleh Poletsky cool their heels (and their children, Dimitri and Nella) at a fountain in Marietta, GA, while in town to celebrate her brother's birthday.



**LOVE ON THE ROCKS**—The Hanford family poses on a Lake Ontario swimming spot for their Fourth of July celebrations. The boys took the plunge but Janet (right) wisely chose to stay high and dry.



**MOTHER AND CHILD REUNION**--Kathee Crowley Richter and daughter Jessica (left) and Kay Fedirka Trautvetter with her daughter, Heather.



**YANKEE DOODLE DANDIES**—Don Parry has his boots on the ground in his salute to the 4th in Keysville, VA. At right, Steve Tuers is at Dunwoodie Golf Club and dressed to shoot the spirit of 76.

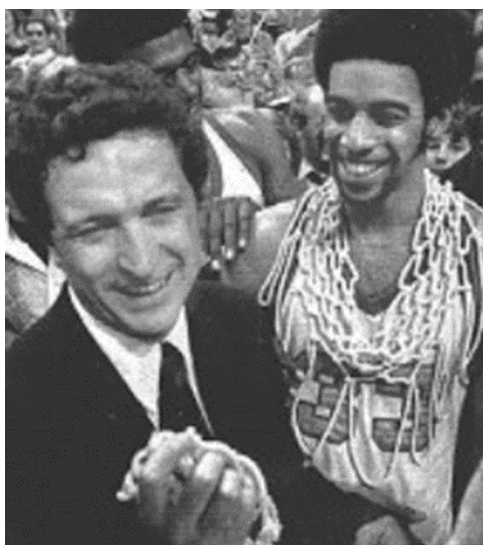


**THEY DARED ME!**—Yvonne Sullivan Price attempts to dry off after diving into the pool at her nephew's wedding. As she tells it, "The grandkids, nieces and nephews went in. No adults. Then they chanted my name. How could I refuse? Running jump, deep six, surfaced to cheers!"



**A WHOLE LOTTA LOVE**—Kevin Henry has his hands full with his granddaughters, Lyla (5) and Mara (3 ½). Conall (2 ½) was playing hide&seek.





Cutting down the championship net and sharing the moment with Coach Al McGuire.

### **TOONE** (from Page One)

nationally in 1975, he chose Marquette University and its head coach, the legendary Al McGuire. Toone was one of six current or future All-Americans that included Earl Tatum, Lloyd Walton, Butch Lee, Bo Ellis and Jerome Whitehead.

He was a sophomore reserve on the Warriors' 1977 NCAA Championship team in McGuire's final season.

While McGuire's "star system" of favoring seniors over sophomores didn't sit well with Toone, the 6-foot, 9-inch forward's lack of defensive skills didn't sit well with the coach.

"Toone, a freshman in every way, smiles, chews gum, argues with McGuire, collects fouls and plays bad defense," wrote Sports Illustrated's Larry Keith.

During the school's run for the national championship, the duo's love/hate relationship came to a boil during a half-time locker room scuffle in the opening tournament round against Cincinnati. "That gave us a sense of purpose," Bernard explained years later when talking about the incident. "After that, we settled down as a team. He left me alone, and we all just played."

Toone told the *Milwaukee Journal* reporter Mary Schmitt in 1987 that the championship, "meant a lot to me with all the

controversy me and Al had. I have pure respect for him. Him being who he was, he had his philosophy."

Separately, and always with the last word, McGuire said of Toone: "Bernard has absolutely the finest personality of any kid I've ever had. There was something about his smile that just captured you."

Bernard became Marquette's captain his senior year averaging 18.7 points and 6.7 rebounds a game. He shot 49% from the field and 84% from the line and was named 4th Team All-American. He was chosen by the Philadelphia 76ers with the 15th pick of the 2nd round (37th overall) in the NBA draft.

Toone played in just 23 games for the 76ers during his rookie season, averaging 5.4 minutes, 2.4 points and 1.5 rebounds per contest as Philadelphia streaked to the 1980 NBA Finals behind the play of Julius Erving. The 76ers lost the NBA championship to his former teammate Butch Lee and the Los Angeles Lakers.

He then played international professional basketball for Italy and Venezuela. After four years, "He decided he didn't want to be away from his family anymore," nephew Justice Williams said.

Back in Yonkers, Toone initially had brushes with the law. "He fell upon hard times and he did things he probably shouldn't



have done but he was always still a huge part of his community," Williams said.

In the end, his nephew said, "He became ill and tried his best to hide his sickness but it was obvious to so many that he was suffering."

Toone is survived by his former wife, Carol Giddins Toone, and his three daughters, Lacreia Toone, Je'Nette and Je'Nelle Watkins. He also leaves behind his grandchildren, Derrick Williams, Christopher Watkins, Jasmine Watkins, Mya Watkins Tapia, Kailee Wall Watkins, Brooklyn O'Conner, DaRell, and two great-grandchildren, Amiah Williams and Kalynn Hill. He also had two siblings, a brother, Christopher Toone and a sister, Kim Toone Saidykhan, as well as nephews Quentin Toone, Justice Williams, Tyler and R'Mani Saidykhan, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

# Remembering Gorton's Gentle Giant

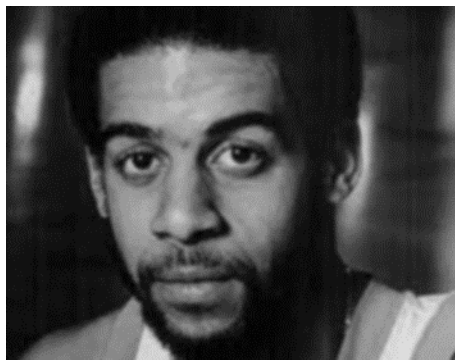
Family, neighborhood friends and fans gathered to pay tribute to Bernard Toone, arguably one of the greatest basketball players to emerge from Westchester in 50 years.

"There was this succession of great basketball players back then," said Dr. Jim Bostic, who also was an All-American and 1971 graduate of Gorton High School.

"Bernard came and added a dimension that nobody had seen before, because no one had ever seen a person his size do the things with the basketball that he did. He was beloved in our community, and we'll remember him as one of the greats of all time."

"He was way before his time as a big man," said Lowes Moore, who had his share of games against Toone as a Mount Vernon player. "Being 6-8, 6-9, handling the ball, shooting the jump shot. Guys that size, you see them as power forwards and center, but he was a wing. When he was young, he got all that guard work, then he had a growth spurt. He was already like a grown man, playing with the boys."

Morris Crute, a long-time friend and 1974 Gorton grad, recalled those early glory years. Gymnasiums were filled to the rafters whenever he played. "The JV played first," Crute told *The Journal News*. "If you didn't get in at halftime of the JV game, the gym would shut down." "If you came just for the varsity, you couldn't get in. People would be yelling out the door, hollering, 'What's the score? Who's winning?' Even the parking lot would be full of people."



Rev. Frank Coleman delivers his eulogy at the Messiah Baptist Church in Yonkers.

"There was this little teenager in Tuckahoe looking up to him as he played ball in Yonkers," said Rev. Frank Coleman, referring to the way he idolized Toone growing up.

Speaking to those assembled at the Messiah Baptist Church, he said, "We even sat and listened to the championship game on the radio in our living room, anxious and excited every time they called Bernard's name. We didn't care if it was a turnover, or a missed shot, when they called his name, we got excited."

"He was just a gentle giant," said his cousin and former teammate Sonny Winstead, a Gorton grad. "I don't even think he was aware of who he was. He didn't walk around like he was that dude. Ball was what he did, but he did it so naturally that he dealt with it naturally. When he fell off years later and got older, he was the same person then. Before the fame, during the fame and after it, he always stayed constantly the same

person."

"The Toone family, they were part of the fabric of Yonkers," said Symra Brandon, a former longtime neighbor of the Toones, who now works as the Director of Community Affairs for state Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins.

"Bernard was a mentor, people looked up to him," Brandon added. "I remember his mom, I remember his dad, and they were all proud. We were all proud and Yonkers was proud. He was a hero to many, just the idea that we had somebody reach that potential."

"I would like people to remember him as a basketball player, for being a mentor and being a coach for the youth," his daughter Je'Nelle Watkins said. "He was fun, he was crazy. He was full of life."

"He always laughed," she said, "and you couldn't be around him for long without smiling, laughing or him cracking a joke or making me laugh. He was full of life, and he just tried to help all those around him. I appreciated that about him."

**TRISHA (from Page One)**

While everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day, "No one in the class was more Irish than the freckle-faced, red-haired girl in the next row," Tony said. "Only during the last seven years did I, and everyone else, realize just how tough she is, but Trisha will always be the kind 'Irish' girl with glasses who every boy liked."

Jo Harter Irish, who also attended School 9, met Trish in kindergarten and remained friends throughout their lives. "Her parents would take me to Trout Lake outside of Lake George," Jo said, "because she was an only child and 'needed' company." Her father rented a boat so that we would be occupied, for most of the day, on the lake. Some of our happiest times."



"We always roomed together at our reunions and talked several times a week until she got sick and had to move to California," Jo said. "I have a quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson that might sum things up."

*To know even one life  
Has breathed easier  
Because you have lived  
This is to have succeeded.*

After graduating Gorton in 1965, she attended Duquesne University where she received her BS in Business Administration. There she met and later married Walter, a member of the Duquesne basketball team that made it to the NCAA Sweet 16 round in 1968-69 season.

In her early 20s, she worked at AT&T and Citibank. She then started a specialty furniture and accessory company, California Burl. She also worked at the now decommissioned Fort Monmouth Army Post for 12 years tracking all personnel in Iraq. A Shrewsbury, NJ, resident for 45 years, she spent a quarter of her time visiting her children and grandchildren in Los Angeles for birthdays, Christmas and Halloween. She moved there permanently last year to be closer to her family.



**Trisha (aka Ganzy) with her grandchildren.**

She is survived by a daughter, Laurel, and husband B.J. Turner; a son, Terrence, and his wife Jennifer; and five grandchildren, Porter, Watson, Bowen, Beckett and Blythe.

The legacy she really wanted to leave was to remind everyone of this: "Compassion has power," her daughter, Laurel, said. "Kindness and understanding are crucial."

Trisha embraced eastern philosophy and western medicine to "balance my energies" and maintained positivity and an open heart.

"She was one of a kind, the very BEST kind, who faced joy and adversity with the same optimism, spiritual strength and wisdom that I came more and more to admire and

envy," said Yvonne Sullivan Price. "Trisha often expressed her appreciation for the love and wonderful care of her son and daughter, who found her a lovely home near them in California.

"Trisha was full of gratitude for each day. I will miss her, but if good spirits exist out there, hers will be a predominant force of nature," Yvonne added.

Ihor Kinal, who often sent gifts to her grandchildren around the holidays, paraphrased Shakespeare's conclusion to *Hamlet* to pay tribute to his close friend:

*Now cracks a noble heart.  
Good night, sweet princess,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!*



**Trisha, Far left, with her '65 classmates at their 50th reunion.**

**MORALES** (from Page One)

(Career and Technical Education) was state certified this year.

**WT:** What additional CTE programs are you developing?

**Morales:** Getting the state certification was not an easy task. Thanks to the dedication of Will Shaggura, myself and the CTE team of Dr. Michael Wszolek and Dawn Myers, we were able to accomplish this goal. Our new goal is to be state certified in at least five programs within the next five years, including our Medical Assisting pathway.



We are already working toward submission of two applications: Personal Training and Nutrition, as well as Business Marketing and Entrepreneurship. These should be ready to submit by the Oct. 1 deadline.

**Alumni News**

Our next program that we would like to submit applications for would be our EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) program, as well as to renew our PTECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High Schools) grant in biotechnology. With solid partnerships with local hospitals as well as other medical businesses, WCC and College of Westchester, I believe that this goal, although ambitious, is attainable.

**WT:** You referenced the following Winston Churchill quote in an email you sent me: "It is no use saying we are doing our best. You have got to succeed in doing what is necessary." How does that reflect on your philosophy of education?

**Morales:** That quote is near and dear to me, because my philosophy for education is simple—educators must do what is necessary for children to succeed! I am a firm believer in hard work, and I believe that this means being adaptive to the needs of our students. All children are capable of learning, and the best is pulled out of each student when we are attentive and form relationships with our students and their families. My intention is to be what the school needs.



**JAMIE MORALES**

Home Town: Mount Vernon, NY

High School: Mount Vernon HS.

College: Sacred Heart University, Academic and Baseball Scholarship. BS Biology, Minor Chemistry

Post Graduate: Lehman College, Master's Science Education

Teaching Career: 10-years as a Middle/High School Science Teacher.

Additional Post Graduate: College of St. Rose, Master's in School Building and District Leadership.

Gorton Experience: Joined the Gorton administration in 2017. Became Assistant Principal. Appointed Principal on July 20, 2022.

Married: Jennifer Morales, teacher at Enrico Fermi School in Yonkers, in 2008. Children: Brandon Elias and Francesa Mariana.

**WT:** How do you plan to go about doing that?

**Morales:** Three ways. As an instructional leader, I will work with the staff to develop academic programs that are appropriately challenging and that are reflective of our student population.

Secondly, as a community builder, I will keep our community informed and involved while also keeping them accountable to our children. It does take a village.

Lastly, as a collaborative team builder, I will be on the front lines with my staff and students, asking of them only what I am willing to do myself.

Accountability, transparency, collaboration and integrity are a few of the values that I hold important and that drive my work for the children of Gorton High School.

**WT:** There's no question that the pandemic created major obstacles to both the students and the Gorton staff. What have

been the major impacts on both?

**Morales:** I believe that the pandemic put a barrier between us and what we had become accustomed to sharing with our students.

We are a family at Gorton, a family that shares and collaborates and thrives as a team. The distance did not allow for collaboration and teamwork. With solitude comes an increase in social emotional needs for our students and staff. I believe that this is our biggest hurdle entering our next school year.

**WT:** How do you plan to address those challenges?

**Morales:** I intend on providing professional training for our staff to increase student engagement, rigorous instruction, culturally responsive instruction and social emotional learning. Pupil personnel support staff (social workers, school psychologist and school Counselors) are centrally

**MORALES** (from Page 6)

located and will be asked to support our students and staff as we move forward.

**WT:** *What is your sense of what lies ahead?*

**Morales:** As an eternal optimist, I believe that we learned so much from this pandemic and we are better equipped for some aspects of education coming out of it. Instructional technology was prioritized throughout the pandemic and we have established some super star staff members as well as resources, securing laptops, tablets and Promethean boards (interactive white boards) to aid in moving the school into the 21st century.

We also have experts in the fields of social emotional learning and student engagement. Our teachers are incredible and take responsibility for peer education and student support, creating clubs and activities to increase school spirit and student sense of belonging at GHS.

**WT:** *Finally, what has caused Gorton’s dramatic academic turnaround?*

**Morales:** I believe that over the past five years, there has been a culture shift. That culture shift has led us to a gentle balance between caring/loving for our students while still keeping them accountable. I believe that the tone has been set, that students will be responsible for their education and behavior, but they will be supported while they find their way.

I truly believe that the support our faculty and staff have for our students is unmatched anywhere else. We are unwavering and relentless in our pursuit of student success, focusing on our most vulnerable student populations (English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities) and general education students to become their authentic selves freely in an accepting environment of unified Wolves!

I love this school, this staff and most of all, these students!

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



**SMOKE ON THE WATER—**And fire in the skies at the 4th of July fireworks celebration on the Hudson River and at the Nodine Hill water tower.



## Parry's Ponderings



### Put the Padiddle To the Padedal

While driving home the other evening I spotted a car with one headlight.

In the blink of an eye, and without any conscious thought on my part, I was instantly transported back more than 50 years ago and a single word flashed through my mind..."PADIDDLE!"

There, now that I've said it, no one gets to punch me in the arm.

### Birds of a Feather Fly

Riddle me this: Other than those of a feather, what kind of birds stick together? Answer: Velcrows.

Be caw-ful of what you ask.

### I'd Like to Buy A V-W-L, Pat

I heard a rumor that due to runaway inflation, *Wheel of Fortune* may be cancelled. No one can afford to buy a vowel.

### Ghost Writer In the Sky

Last month we lost our friend and classmate Bill/Will Nothdurft. He had written many things for other people.

Now, he's in heaven looking down upon us. Some might say he's a *Ghost Writer in the Sky*.

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



**CLASS DISMISSED**--Gail O'Rourke and Helen Mangini, longtime Gorton teachers (and previously at Emerson) at the recent retirees' luncheon. Gail taught computer science and Helen taught English.



**KEEPING PACE**—Joan Lawless Kennedy with her eighth grandchild, Pace, while vacationing near Virginia Beach, VA.



**IN MEMORY OF TRISHA**—Steve Tuers was fortunate to be on vacation on the Jersey shore near where classmate Trisha Zinn's family was hosting a Celebration of Life. "Listening to the family and close friends speak about Trisha," Steve writes, "brought some heartfelt tears but mostly warm smiles and thunderous laughter." Pictured with Steve are her children, Laurel and Terry, who thank all for your well wishes.

**ORIGINALLY A NATIVE AMERICAN TRAIL, THE DUTCH MADE IT A MAIN ROAD & TODAY IT RUNS 33 MILES FROM STATE STREET TO SLEEPY HOLLOW**

...And right by School 16—Broadway.





Nicholas Mastromarco with the rookie.

## From Bowling To Bocce, It's All in the Wrist

When Mayor Mike Spano announced improvements at the Bernice Speckman/Coyne Park Community Center, seniors (including myself), paid attention.

In a letter addressed to the president of the center, Nicholas Mastromarco, one item on the amelioration list caught Nick's eye and brought a smile—the building of a new bocce court! Nick has been playing bocce since his childhood days in southeast Italy and wanted to set up a bocce club at the center.

Nick would eventually fill my ear with how great and how much fun it was to play. Finally a few weeks ago, I took the plunge and started to play. With Nick as my mentor, he started to teach me the rules and strategy it takes to play a decent game.

I finally felt somewhat comfortable with

## Tuers De Force



the idea and Nicholas arranged my first match against a well-seasoned player. This player had a unique way of tossing the larger ball, called the bocce, at a smaller target ball, called the pallino. He would use a backward spin as he tossed the bocce.

I completely ignored his unorthodox style and decided to rely on my own proven way of tossing a ball—throw it like a bowling ball. Much to my surprise and probably beginner's luck, I won.

Am I ready to participate at the Yonkers/Mount Vernon bocce club with its lighted and heated bocce courts at Hartley Park in Mount Vernon? Probably not. But I'm looking forward to that day.

In the meantime, bocce provides me with another game to enjoy and have fun besides my first love—golf.

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



Goodbye bowling, hello bocce.



OH BUOY! Yvonne's in trouble now.

## Priceless Moments



## Yippee Ki Yay, Kayak; I'm Off For Adventure

Greg and I are "water people" and by that I mean, at every opportunity, we are either in it or on it.

Greg grew up on Long Island. Summers, he worked at Jones Beach and surfed in his free time. I grew up along the Hudson River, where I spent time ON that water, but rarely IN it. My summers were always spent at the Jersey and Maine shores and at lakes in the Adirondacks and New Hampshire.

Our first experience with kayaking was in 1972, when we discovered Block Island. We rented two kayaks and were immediately determined to have our own. We've been exploring the waters of New England and (spoiler alert) VERY briefly Canada, ever since.

The real beauty of kayaking, is the ability to find and explore places where others are not. Whether you are meandering through the marshlands of Long Island and Maine, or hauling up on a little island

See **PRICELESS** on Page 10

## Vietnam Vets & Class of '64 Giving Back

In a rural area of the Philippines, a pair of Vietnam vets and Gorton '64 grads have taken the parish of St. Michael the Archangel under their wings.

Bobby Quinn (Marines) and Joe Maggiola (Air Force) joined forces with a group of veterans led by former Marine Lance Corporal and Silver Star recipient Vincent Matthews to support the church located outside General Santos City on the island of Mindanao.

They have supplied chalices and vestments for the priests, catechisms for the children, the main Statue of St. Michael at the entry of the Church and the "multicolored" windows to shed light onto the congregation. These veterans have even responded to emergency needs of the village due to floods and fires.



Recently, a plaque was mounted by the congregation acknowledging these efforts and daily prayers are offered on their behalf in thanks.

—Joe Maggiola, GHS 64

## Wolf Ambassador Put to Sleep at 11

Zephyr, one of the wolf ambassadors at the Wolf Conservation Center in South Salem, NY, had to be euthanized on July 2.



The 11-year-old was suffering from myasthenia gravis, an incurable condition affecting the transmission of signals between the nerves and muscles.

During WCC education programs, Zephyr is a natural crowd pleaser, happy to howl with the slightest prompting. His engaging personality helped Zephyr earn an impressive number of fans.

Zephyr was the self-appointed leader of the family. He expressed his status with erect posture and tail carried high.

## PRICELESS (from Page 9)

in a lake somewhere, you find yourself appreciating the greatness of peace and quiet.

Kayaking can be especially restorative to mind and body, during stressful times. When birdsong, wind whispers, bee buzzing, squirrel scurrying, bullfrog gurgling and the lull of lapping lake water are the only "noises" available, you can appreciate the healing qualities of nature in a way that is not often otherwise attainable. I truly believe that the human race does not value quiet as much as it should.

Lest you think kayaking not exciting enough, be assured, we have had our share of drama over the years, while maneuvering through different waters.

We began by exploring our own Candlewood Lake, later branching out to many other lakes in our state and beyond. Our first foray into Long Island Sound posed a challenge we were not prepared for. Since we were just lake and river "water people," we weren't prepared for maneuvering in these tidal types. There were a cou-

ple of alarming moments, but we "rowed" to the challenge.

Once, on Lake Champlain, which can seem like an ocean, we cut short exploring Valcour Island due to alarming amounts of poison ivy and headed back to the mainland. Within minutes, huge black clouds came scudding our way.

The wind picked up and we paddled like our lives depended on it, which they did. We made it safely to shore, just in time. Had we left the island a few minutes later, there may not have been a happy ending. This was the first and only time I was actually thankful for the existence of poison ivy.

Our next Lake Champlain kayak mishap occurred less than a year after 9/11. We entered the lake at Alberg, VT, near the border with Canada. We paddled across to Fort Montgomery, at Rouses Point, NY, and then headed north.

We spied a buoy in the middle of the lake, identifying the US-Canada border. This was exciting, because although we had

kayaked across state lines before, this would be the first time into another country. We circled the buoy and skimmed into Canadian waters.

Suddenly, the quiet was shattered by the sound of a helicopter coming toward us. Because I'm friendly, I waved. It circled and came lower and Greg yelled at me to stop waving, sensing there was a problem.

Sure enough, a voice blared out, ordering us to turn around immediately and go back to U.S. waters. We later learned that the border crossings had become more and more rigid and that we were decidedly not going to be allowed to kayak into Canada.

Over the decades, these few challenging episodes added just the hint of excitement that we all look for in our sporting ventures, so we have stories to tell. After all, we never want to be known as the "boring water people," do we!

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

**Editor's Note:**



**Heads Up For Nukes and Giant Ants**

As a proud New Yorker, I've learned how to take a lot of things in stride and roll with the flow. New York tough, as Andrew Cuomo would say it, before you couldn't say the name Andrew Cuomo.

We've been attacked by Mideast terrorists and state governors who decry us our taxes but are first to the trough for federal aid—and our pizza.

However, even the most die-hard, pizza-folding, strap-hanging Mets and Jets fan who says "caw-fee" when ordering a sidewalk knish, had to be stopped cold in his or her New York second by a recent Public Service Announcement (PSA) that began:

"So there's been a nuclear attack. Don't ask me how or why, just know that the big one has hit, okay?"

The PSA went on to list what you should do. First on my list would be change my underwear. This is what we should do:

See **EDITOR** on Page 12

**Henry Hudson And Gnomes Go Bowling**

On Sept. 3, 1609, Henry Hudson sailed into the mouth of a great New York river with his ship The Half Moon. An English explorer sailing for the Dutch East India Company, he was in search of the elusive Northeast and Northwest passages.

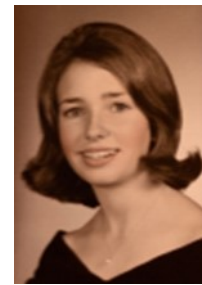
Hudson and his men journeyed north up the river that would bear his name, trading with the native residents along the way and looking for the passage to the Orient. After several days, they reached a dead end at the present-day Albany and turned around.

So much for history, now onto folklore. Hudson and his crew anchored the Half Moon in the shadow of the Catskills Mountains. Around midnight, legend has it, Hudson heard the sound of music floating across the mountains and decided to investigate. Along with a few members of his crew, he went ashore and followed the sound up into the Catskills. The sound grew louder as they approached the top of a steep precipice.

Much to their surprise, they spied a group of pygmies with long bushy white beards and eyes like pigs who were dancing and singing around the campfire.

Hudson realized that these "little people" were the metal-working gnomes of whom the natives had spoken. Hudson and his crew were warmly greeted and welcomed into the campsite. They joined their hosts drinking and dancing around the fire and playing nine pins. Hudson, as legend has it, grew alarmed that the liquor would have an adverse effect on his crew, and quickly hurried them back to the ship.

Back to reality.



**Did You Know?**



Replica of The Half Moon.



A friendly game of 9-pins.

The next day the Half Moon continued south on the river and sailed home. The following year, in 1610, Hudson tried again to locate the Northwest Passage.

Taking a different route, he became the first European to see the immense Hudson Bay. After wintering a month ashore, he wanted to press on. His crew didn't. They mutinied and sent Hudson, his son, and seven others adrift, never to be seen again.

Never seen, but perhaps heard. As legend has it, in 1629, 20 years to the day that Henry Hudson and his crew had met the gnomes, a bright light appeared in the Catskills and dance music could be heard throughout the mountainside—it was the Catskill gnomes.

See **HUDSON** on Page 12



## **HUDSON** (from Page 11)

The Catskill gnomes spent the evening dancing, drinking and playing nine pins. At midnight they were joined by Hudson and his crew and together they played nine pins throughout the night.

Each time the ball was rolled a loud peal of thunder would shake the mountains and their campfire would flare up in bolts like lightning. The party lasted until day-break at which time the spirits departed from the hills with promises to return.

Who were these gnomes?

Native American tribes believed them to be short intelligent humanoids that materialized on earth for one week during the warm autumn period called Indian summer. Native Americans believed that the hot forges of the gnomes caused the brief surge of warm temperatures in the autumn.

Anyone who visited the gnomes' camp



**Hudson and his son sent adrift.**

during this time, were welcomed warmly and offered drinks. It is believed the camp was situated in Highmount, NY. Centuries later, The Grand Hotel was built in this

area. Hotel guests occasionally claimed to see the fires from the blazing forges. The hotel closed in 1966. Any disappearance in the area continue to be attributed to the mysterious gnomes.

Every 20 years, Henry Hudson, his crew and the gnomes return to the Catskills. Together they play nine pins and look out over the country they had explored on the Half Moon. Now and then, one of the Dutch settlers living in the region would come across the spirits playing nine pins.

They also claimed that any man foolish enough to drink the gnomes' grog would sleep for 20 years until the next reunion, much like Washington Irving's Rip Van Winkle.

Most people discount this story. However, the next time you hear thunder, remember it's just Henry, his men and the gnomes playing nine pins.

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

## **EDITOR** (from Page 11)

**Step One:** "Get inside, fast! Get into a building and move away from windows."

**Step Two:** "Stay inside. Shut all doors and windows. If you have a basement, head there."

**Step Three:** "Stay tuned and follow the media for all information."

Before we go any further, a few comments. All three "steps" sound like the lifestyles of teens and millennials who live with their parents. Second, we of the '50s and '60s, don't need no stinking instructions, we already know what to do—hide under a wooden school desk or do a face plant against a metal locker. Duh!

I'd like to add an additional step: Find a cockroach. Cockroaches are survivors. They know all the cool hiding places and where to find food scraps. They're a lot like millennials only less annoying and more useful.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams defended the PSA as a "very proactive step." Sorry, but scaring New Yorkers is not a good



**'Did you remember to bring the Raid?'**

idea. Check out what happened after Orson Welles aired War of the Worlds. Switchboards were flooded with calls. We don't have switchboards anymore. We have social media, a petri dish for nut jobs.

What this PSA needs is light-hearted, upbeat background music from the Pointer Sisters:

*"I'm so happy doin' the neutron dance.  
I'm just burning doin' the neutron dance."*

This leads me to a segue I'd like to call, Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb.

According to U.S. News & World Report,

Los Alamos County, NM, home of America's first nuclear test, is the healthiest place to live in the U.S. for the third straight year.

This raises two important questions: First, U.S. News & World Report still exists? Second, are they out of their collective "editorial we" minds? Hasn't everyone seen the giant ants in Them? Or movies like Mothra, Godzilla, or Rodan? The list of bomb-related movies is endless, even longer if you add Ishtar.

The Los Alamos National Laboratory has 45 barrels of radioactive waste. So, remind me again why this county about 200 miles away from a gated space alien community in Roswell is so healthy?

Here's a clue. Last year, Los Alamos had only 29 COVID cases. Aha! That'll take your mind off the 10-pound tomatoes in your garden or your kids playing "olly olly oxen free" in the dark without flashlights.

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



**END OF THE LINE**—Ernie at the historic cathedral in Santiago de Compostela in Spain (above) and with fellows pilgrims.

## Walking My Merry 500 Miles

By Ernie Levinson C'65

*Walking Along My Merry Way* is a 1957 song performed by the Solitaires that I sang to myself as I walked the France's route of the Camino De Santiago along with several thousand pilgrims from April to June.

The "Camino" is an almost 500-mile route from St. Jean Pier de Pont in France to the historic cathedral in Santiago de Compostela in Spain. It is believed that the remains of Saint James are buried in the Cathedral. Each year, thousands walk the route that's been traveled for more than 1,000 years.

I joined several thousand Pelegrinos (pilgrims) as I walked from the end of April to early June. The entire trip lasted six weeks, but I only walked 33 of those days. The experience of walking a route that has barely changed for more than 1,000 years is both humbling and spiritual.

As I walked, I was alone in my thoughts and had the time to reflect on ideas and memories. Additionally, as I tried to remember the words to many songs, I dis-

covered how my brain has atrophied!

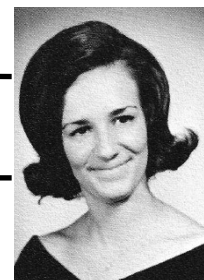
I walked the route with Sam(antha), my 78-year young hiking partner—not a girlfriend or friend with benefits. We were together almost 24-7 for six weeks and, at best, we shared a room with twin beds and a private bathroom.

However, there were many times when we slept in hostels and shared a room with seven other people in bunk beds and communal bathrooms. Generally, we walked about 15 miles in a day; however, there were days when we walked almost 20 and others only 10 miles.

Along the way I saw many beautiful cathedrals and incredible Spanish country-side. However, the most memorable part of the journey was the people. The Spanish people would greet you with "Hola," "Buenos Días" or "Buen Camino."

On the Camino I met people from all over Europe, Australia and North America. All the pilgrims had a common goal and, because religion and politics were never discussed, we realized how much we had in common!

## Ask Janet



## Somebody Rained On My Parade

Dear Janet,  
Do you like parades?

I. Juana March

Dear Juana:

*"I love a parade, the tramping of feet,  
I love every beat I hear of a drum.  
I love a parade, when I hear a band  
I just want to stand  
And cheer as they come."*

Those are the words of Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler's song, *I Love a Parade*, written for the 1931 film, *Manhattan Parade*.

I too love a parade. Doesn't everybody? Holiday, military, ticker tape, city and pride parades to name a few. Disney extravaganzas and school and religious processions too.

For me, Halloween was the best, starting with the costume parade in school and ending with the grand finale of the day, the Yonkers Ragamuffin Parade. I remember the thrill of watching the huge balloons floating through Getty Square and years later, the even greater thrill of marching as a Gorton cheerleader.

And what about the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with the floats and balloons, dancers, marching bands and of course Santa Claus to "officially" herald the beginning of the Christmas season? I finally saw a Macy's parade in person when

See ASK JANET on Page 14

# A Life of Stage, Born at the Coal Bunker Theater

Arlene Gardner Wendt, a 1958 graduate of Gorton, died July 11. She was 82.

Born May 9, 1940, she was a talented student and natural leader, contributing to every high school activity but most notably the Gorton Players and the Coal Bunker Theater.

Her love of the performing arts began before most kids learned to read. She started ballet and tap lessons when she was 3 and made her stage debut at the USO at the age of 4. She also wrote radio plays and full-length stage scripts in her early teens. In high school, Arlene studied acting under Mildred Streeter at the Coal Bunker Theatre. She said of her mentor, "She was tough, she was thorough, she had the nerve to take artistic chances, and she didn't skimp on details."



**Arlene Gardner Wendt: 1940-2022**

Arlene met fellow Gorton student and husband of 49 years, Ernest P. Wendt, on a double date. They married in 1958.

At 23, Arlene auditioned and was accepted to study with Robert Lewis, the legendary founder of The Actors Studio. She ventured into community theatre, acting, directing and producing more than two dozen productions in Yonkers.

She joined IBM at 29 and became a communications specialist at IBM headquarters, promoting the company's corporate sponsorship for television productions. Arlene retired from IBM in 1995.

With \$1,000 and the support of her husband and several close friends, she founded the Actors Conservatory Theatre.

She directed more than 100 productions and conducted more than 30 acting and scene study workshops. Her most recent workshop resulted in Monologue Moments, which was rehearsed and presented in an all-virtual format during the 2020-21 pandemic. Arlene is credited with launching the careers of dozens of professional actors and theater technicians.

She is survived by three daughters (Sally, Janice and Nora and their husbands); eight grandchildren (Jillian, Nicholas, Olivia, Christopher, Marietta, McKenzie, Daisy and Lucy); a sister, Jane; a sister-in-law, Jacki; six nieces and nephews; and seven grandnieces/nephews. She was predeceased by her husband, Ernie, and her brother, Richard Gardner.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to the Actors Conservatory Theatre and, in honor of her husband who was a U.S. Marine veteran, to Operation Second Chance.

## **ASK JANET** (from Page 13)

Beau surprised me with a trip to NYC for my 60th birthday.

The first 4th of July parade was in Bristol, R.I. in 1785. These parades have become hometown favorites for years, with high school bands, scouts, neighborhood families and friends, local organizations and more, proudly marching together, displaying homemade costumes and floats.

There are politicians and clowns marching together, with vendors hawking dime-store trinkets on the sidelines; veterans and nursing home residents riding in fancy cars, waving all the way; fire and police departments showing off their finest vehicles, blasting their sirens and horns, triggering wauling and bawling, shaking and quaking among children and pets alike.

Our Fairport, NY, parade was the place to be. It boasted a drum and bugle corps and a tiny rag-tag squadron of Civil War reenactors who occasionally stopped to shoot off a VERY loud gun.

One particular neighborhood performed a folding-chair routine, opening and closing the chairs up and around themselves in amazing precision.

The "paisanos" tossed fruit and vegetables from their produce wagon. A high-stepping drum major was a show in himself, donning his snappy uniform with plumed hat, baton and whistle as he strutted from one side of the street to the other, as proud as could be. You might say, a Robert Preston-*Music Man* doppelgänger!

It all flowed into a huge picnic in the park with music, kayak rides on the canal and more.

But sadly, this year's parade was different. There was only one marching band and an overload of firetrucks and shiny highway department trucks and recycling trucks. Politicians and one scout troop marched and a few military vets rode. Around two dozen other "Vettes" participated en masse to end the parade.

There was no one else.

The best part of the parade for the kids was collecting the candy the participants threw. For most people, it was a non-event. It was so disappointing. Where did they all go?

Another tradition lost in time.

I said before that I love a parade, but sadly not everyone does. I remember a commotion years ago at a NYC parade where a little child was carrying on. "I want a balloon," he kept crying, as his parents apparently were arguing over something. Finally, in disgust, the father said to the mother, "Will ya get the kid a balloon???...and your sister's meatballs were LOUSY!"

As time marches on, Fairport, if you're listening, next year please send in the clowns.

**Janet Guyon Hanford (C65) is a former cheerleader and was voted Most Versatile by her '65 senior class.**



Neil with teacher, Sanford Siegelstein.

## Neil F. Armida, 75; Drummer in the Band

Neil F. Armida, Sr., died June 30 after a brief illness. He was 75.

A 1964 Gorton graduate, he played in the school band for four years before attending Westchester Community College. In 1966, he married his high school sweetheart, Joanne Viviano, on April 30.

Drafted into the military, he served in the U.S. Navy four years on the USS Fulton Submarine Tender during the Vietnam War but he never lost his beat. Following the Navy, he was a drummer for many years in several bands.



Neil worked for Technicon as a consultant before he and Joanne opened their own flower shop, Floral Inspirations, in Pearl River, NY.

Neil also worked at TJ McGowan Sons Funeral Home for a short time before moving to Lake Ariel, PA.

Neil was predeceased by his parents, Neil and Rose (DeFucci) Armida. He is survived by his wife, Joanne, daughter Michele (Jim Carron) and sons Neil Jr. (Deirdre Curran), Brian (Ivone Aviles), and Nick (Jaime Squilini) as well as eight grandchildren, Michael, Nicholas, Joseph, Christopher, Daniel, Colton, Liliana and Austin.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Columbia University Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center.



—Photos by Sonia Shchur GHS '71

**UKRAINIAN PRIDE**—The annual Ukrainian Heritage Festival on Shonnard Place was a rousing success with record crowds shattering past attendance figures. Proceeds for the three-day event went to help the war effort to defend their country against the Russian invasion and bring humanitarian relief to its people.



## Thieves Put the Heat On Cooling Center

A Yonkers cooling center was shut down during a record heat wave after thieves stole copper plumbing needed to power the center's AC.

The theft at the Nepperhan Community Center was discovered when employees attempted to turn on the air conditioning located on the roof. The center's director, Dr. Jim Bostic, is hoping to get some portable unit replacements. The city, which owns the building, has earmarked more than \$100,000 to replace the air conditioning unit and damage to the roof.

## City Names Equity Officer

Sonja Smash, a 10-year veteran of human resources and diversity and inclusion experience, has been named the city's first equity officer.



She served as director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging/Business Operations for Gigi Gilliard Development.

Smash will be tasked with creating new administrative procedures and policies that promote diversity and inclusion. This includes developing plans for recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, training and outreach.

## Thousands to Apply For Housing Lottery

The city's Municipal Housing Authority has opened its doors to new applicants for its shrinking Section 8 waitlist. The authority expects at least 20,000 applicants for 3,000 spots that will be decided by a lottery on Aug. 3.

It's been more than a decade since the city and the authority added anyone to its waitlist. The current list, which stood at 7,600 two years ago, is now down to 500 eligible names.

## Free Pool Time At Sprain, Tibbetts

It's just a splash in the bucket but it'll be free.

The county will waive beach and pool fees Monday through Thursday for county residents this summer at Glen Island Beach in New Rochelle, Saxon Woods Pool in White Plains and Sprain Ridge and Tibbetts Brook in Yonkers.

## City OKs Purchase For Ludlow Park

The city reached an agreement to purchase eight parcels of land along the Hudson River in the Ludlow section of the city for a new waterfront park.

The park will feature an additional boat launch, playground and open space. Yonkers and the county will contribute \$10 million each for the property and construction of the park. In addition, the county anticipates contributing a parcel at the north end of the adjacent Wastewater Treatment Facility toward the park.

## Yonkers Native Signs With Giants

A year after suffering a gruesome double broken leg injury as a Seattle Seahawk, Yonkers native Gavin Heslop has signed with the N.Y. Giants.

The 6-foot-1 corner back who played high school football at Stepinac, signed with the Giants immediately after a workout with the team. He played his college ball at Stony Brook.

## Construction Begins On Riverfront Housing

Six new buildings with 1,400 apartments and nearly 40,000 square feet of retail space will fill in one of the last gaps in the Yonkers skyline along the Hudson River.

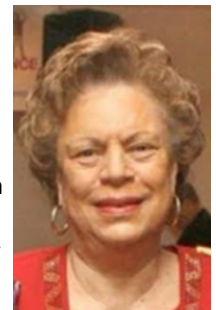
Construction began last month on the first two of six new mixed-use buildings as part of Hudson Piers, Extell's \$585 million development. Construction will be in three

phases over the next six years, with the tenant availability within two years.

The seven-story buildings will fill in 17 acres of a former industrial site along Alexander Street, Water Grant Street and Babcock Place with 1,400 luxury apartments—10% of which will be affordable—and more than 37,000 square feet of retail space on the ground floors.

## City Names Street After 'Yonkers' Mother'

On what would have been her 85th birthday, Yonkers renamed a street in honor of Rita Gross Nelson, the city's first Black female police officer.



Nicknamed "Yonkers' Mother," Nelson also became the state's first female patrol officer in 1964. Rita Gross Nelson Way lies on Horatio Street between Dunbar and Clement.

## Iona Graduates To University Status

Iona gave it the old college try and is now a university.

The New Rochelle-based private Catholic college founded in 1940 by the Christian Brothers, has expanded its educational profile by collaborating with New York-Presbyterian to create a new school of health sciences.

## Walsh Housing Gets Facelift

Residents of the senior community William A. Walsh Homes near the William A. Schlobohm Houses are finally seeing improvements to their decades-old complex located in downtown Yonkers.

Elevator repairs and brighter hallways also are among other upgrades that include renovated kitchens, flooring and bathrooms. The improvements also include Schlobohm units and are expected to be completed by year's end.