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The Hudson Independent

Serving Tarrytown and Sleepy Hollow

Features

3 What's next for the Tappan Zee bridge?

8 Sleepy Hollow & Irvington sports

23 Guest columnist, Ben Cheever

22 The Hudson Independent is your new community newspaper. Read more about us in our Mission Statement.

Waterfront Development Pushes Ahead

Environmental issues remain a concern

Kim Gaudin de Gonzalez

For The Hudson Independent

Ground breaking for the Ferry Landings waterfront development could start as early as spring, provided the village of Tarrytown accepts directives for ways the developer will reduce the project's adverse environmental impact, according to village administrator Steve McCabe and Mayor Drew Fixell.

The New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) mandated an environmental impact study, which the board of trustees approved late last December. A public hearing on the study was held on Jan. 10. Strategies to address the study findings, which will be presented this month, would bring developer National/RE Sources of Greenwich one step closer to breaking ground on the project. Once the changes are accepted, the developer and the Architectural Review Board must fine-tune architectural design and landscaping issues.

The view facing north toward Sleepy Hollow's Ichabod's Landing, with Tarrytown's asphalt plant on the right.

"Issues of architecture and landscaping will be dealt with in the site planning process, which starts after we finish with SEQR in February," Fixell said.

Highlighting the long-term negotiations and public debate that has gone into creating a project acceptable to both the developer and the village, McCabe said, "We've left no stone unturned. This is probably the biggest thing to happen in Tarrytown in a hundred years, and we're only going to do it once. So we're going to do it right."

National RE/ Sources of Greenwich has been in discussion with the village for 14 years, and in serious negotiations for four years. They have agreed on building plans, which now include 238 residential units, 65,000 square feet of office space and 15,000 square feet of retail space on the property to the north of Pierson Park and West Main Street, on the west side of the railroad tracks.

Last December, village officials and National RE/Sources chiseled out a list of

Continued on page 18

School Days, Testing Maze

No Child Left Behind has fueled debate about assessments

Andrea Kott

The T-shirt said *nomoretests.com* on the back, and Dana Matthew Bennis knew he struck a nerve the day he wore it. First, there were the teenage boys who stopped him to vent about all the tests they have to take. Then there was the mother who shared her dislike of how testing was driving her children's education. Others approached him. Many simply stared.

Bennis, a Tarrytown resident who has worked as a teacher and a consultant in alternative education for the last five years, was not surprised by the attention. He believes that testing stifles teacher creativity, emphasizes teaching to the test and results in students who are both bored and anxious. "Testing is one of the most destructive growing trends in education today," Bennis, 26, said. "Increasing reliance on testing changes education from a process of discovery to a process of memorization and competition, and produces an excessive amount of pressure for parents, students, teachers and administrators."

Others believe that standardized testing is exactly what schools need to raise the academic bar.

There is no single truth about standardized testing; there is no one argument for or against it and there are few who feel unconflicted about it. The No Child Left Behind federal mandate to assess students in grades three through eight in English Language Arts and math has raised questions, doubts and concern about the value of such testing and its effects on children, teachers, schools and their districts.

When did all this testing start?

While No Child Left Behind legislation sparked the recent surge in testing, the first big push came in 1983 with the publication of "A Nation At Risk," a government report that found the U.S. educational system inferior to other countries and its students unqualified to compete in a global economy. The report warned: "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." Twenty years later, President George W. Bush signed No Child Left Behind into law.

"The complex law, which is currently the target of litigation from various districts nationwide, requires all public school students to be proficient in English Language Arts and math by 2014. In 2005, schools had to give assessments – and demonstrate annual yearly progress – in these two subjects. Failure to show progress could bring sanctions, including the potential loss of federal funding. Because No Child Left Behind is a federal law, and because no school wants to risk sanctions, districts everywhere, including Tarrytown, Pocantico Hills and Irvington, must comply.

Continued on page 14

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Surviving and Thriving in the Shadow of the 'Big Box' Stores

After 101 years, Goldberg Hardware on Tarrytown's Main Street has the formula for success nailed down.

Wayne Coffey

For The Hudson Independent

It's 8:20 in the morning, and Scott Burnett needs a paintbrush. He wheels his old red dump truck onto Main Street and stops in front of the last store on the right, across from the Tarrytown YMCA.

Burnett knows he could save a buck or two by going across the river and trying to find the paintbrush aisle in The Home Depot, but why would he? A commercial contractor and Tarrytown native, Burnett has been a customer of Goldberg Hardware his whole life.

After picking up a brush and some plastic sheeting, he banters with Louie Moscowitz, who is behind the register, wearing the standard-issue green shirt worn by the three Goldberg employees on the floor. In less than five minutes Burnett is back in the truck, a satisfied customer departing with supplies, and a smile.

"It's like a neighborhood hardware Cheers," Burnett says. "Everybody knows your name."

Goldberg Hardware hasn't been around since the time of Washington Irving. It only seems that way. Across 101 years and four generations, it has been a fixture in Tarrytown, a place where residents can find everything from lawnmowers to lag screws, welcome mats to wood glue. The big-boxing of America continues apace but store owner Gregg Goldberg isn't worried – no matter that Home Depot has 150,000 square feet, and he has 2,500.

Ten hours a day, six days a week, one wing nut at a time, Goldberg is holding up just fine.

"[The advent of the mega hardware store] is the best thing that ever happened to me, because it makes us look good," says Goldberg, sipping a cup of coffee on a recent morning at a desk in the newly opened finishing showroom on the second floor of the store. He is surrounded by clocks, baker's racks and a wall of brass address plates. "You shouldn't even compare me. You can't compare me."

Ten hours a day, six days a week, one wing nut at a time...

Goldberg, 40, purchased the store from his father, Stan, in 1998. Stan took over the store from his father, Edward, who took it over from his father, Isaac, an Eastern European immigrant – and the Goldberg who started it all. A glazier by trade, Isaac opened the original Goldberg's on Orchard Street near Wolfgreens. It was Gregg's grandfather, Edward, who moved the store to its current location, at 63 Main, about a half-century ago. There were as many four hardware stores in Tarrytown and North Tarrytown then, including Greenbaum's on Broadway and Rons' in North Tarrytown. Goldberg – formerly known as Goldberg and Son – is the lone survivor.

The walls and aisles in Goldberg Hardware bulge with thousands of products, from awls to Zud. While the store does robust sales in building supplies, selling more than a half-million pounds of concrete last year, the core of the business is the nuts and bolts of any hardware trade: 60-grit sandpaper here, Phillips screwdriver there, with a Weber grill and an occasional snowblower thrown in.

Goldberg knows he can't compete with the chains for a customer who wants six rolls of R-32 insulation or a new water heater, so he puts the store's focus on service, knowledge and efficiency. People come in because they don't want to spend the time, or the toll, going across the river or down the Thruway, hoping to find someone in an orange apron who knows what he's talking about. Goldberg prices have some downtown markup, but with it comes honest advice and straight answers.

"And if we don't know, we'll tell you we don't know," says Steve Noye, a Goldberg employee for seven years.

As an example, suppose someone comes in for a caulking gun. Goldberg sells three models: one for $3, one for $8 and the Cadillac of caulkers, for $14. After finding out about the job that has to be done, the guy in the green shirt will likely tell the customer that the $3 gun will be fine.

Gregg Goldberg of Goldberg Hardware.

"I don't think customers are going to get that every place they go," Goldberg says.

Goldberg has high hopes that the finishing showroom will prove profitable, and draw customers from surrounding towns. No matter what, though, he knows the base of his business will continue to be the local folk who find their way to the foot of Main Street, in search of a hunk of PVC pipe, or 20 pounds of bird seed.

In between the coveralls and Snow Melt in the front of the store and the paint and the fuses in the rear, Goldberg Hardware, into its second century of business, is as much a commercial anchor as there is in Tarrytown, and if you ask Scott Burnett, that isn't likely to change. ■

Wayne Coffey, an award-winning sports writer as the Daily News, is also the author of numerous books, including "The Boys of Winter" and "Winning Sounds Like This." He lives in Sleepy Hollow.

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