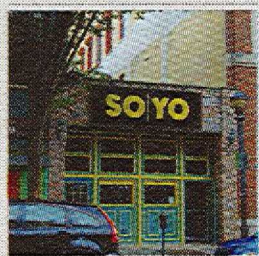


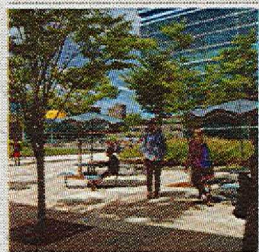
**INSIDE**



NATURE'S ART • 2



SPECIAL REPORT • 21



NEWSMAKERS • 34



**FASNY:  
Oui ou Non?**

PAGE 27

BY LEIF SKODNICK

White Plains resident Terrence Guerriere speaks in opposition to the proposed French-American School of New York campus.

**Cabaret owners await changes in licensing law**

BY LEIF SKODNICK  
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**CABARET OWNERS IN WHITE PLAINS** are waiting to hear from the city on changes to its cabaret licensing law.

They're just not sure how long the wait will be. The city placed a moratorium on the licensing of new cabarets on July 7, saying the regulations needed to be reviewed to address safety and

health concerns.

"Our concern is how long the moratorium will go," said Kevin Nunn, executive director of the White Plains Business Improvement District. "There are plenty of legitimate businesses that need the cabaret license to operate."

While Nunn's group is generally in support of White Plains businesses that operate under cabaret licenses, he said he understands the

*Cabaret, page 6*

**COUNTY SEEKS COMMON GROUND ON HOUSING MONITOR REPORT**

BY MARK LUNGARIELLO  
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**S**ix Westchester municipalities have zoning practices that are contributing to a lack of integration of their black and Hispanic populations, according to a federal housing monitor's latest analysis.


The study, released Sept. 8, is not a final report and monitor James E. Johnson, of the firm Debevoise & Plimpton L.L.P., said the municipalities named would have the chance to justify the seemingly exclusionary zoning or take steps to modify their local codes.

Harrison, Larchmont, Lewisboro, North Castle, Pelham Manor and Rye Brook were cited for either restricting multifamily housing to areas with large minority populations or restricting development of housing types "most often used by minority residents." Harrison was cited for both. Johnson said the most recent analysis looked at clusters rather than populations – the overall minority population of Rye Brook, for example, increased by 111 percent in the 10 years prior to the last U.S. Census.

"We can't stop at the shift," Johnson said at a joint legislative committee meeting Sept. 10. "We need to continue and take a deeper look." The report said that the sole district allowing for two-family homes accounted for 50.8 percent of the village's minority population but only 15.6 percent of Rye Brook's total household population. The district is in the southernmost part of the village on the Port Chester border.

The chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators is now looking to adopt that analysis and several others as part of the requirements of the settlement of a 2009 affordable housing lawsuit. In that settlement, Westchester agreed to build or obtain 750 units of affordable housing in

*Housing, page 6*

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# A marriage of nature and art in YoHo

BY MARY SHUSTACK

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She has created fanciful corsets that will never be worn and ties that won't adorn a single neck. She's even made a collection of dramatic umbrellas, though none will keep an outfit dry.

That the umbrellas are made of leaves, the corsets sport seashells and the ties feature moss and feathers point to the importance of nature as much as fashion in artist Catherine Latson's work.

**"MY WORK DOES NOT PREACH. NATURE IS THE TEXT AND A FULL-FLEDGED COLLABORATOR."**

Latson, a Tarrytown resident who works out of a Yonkers studio, on her website describes her work as springing "from the overlap between the natural world's innovations and our own... My work does not preach. Nature is the text and a full-fledged collaborator."

That was clear on a recent morning in Latson's light-filled workspace in the YoHo Artist Studios, which occupy a converted red-brick factory building in the historic Alexander Smith Carpet Mills complex on Nepperhan Avenue.

A muslin-colored corset sat on a table, fragments of the palest green anemone shells having recently been stitched onto its vintage surface as others awaited their turn.

Nearby, twisted vines had been turned

into one-of-a-kind chandeliers and sconces, while ink-black feathers were artfully draped to form a sleek necktie. Overhead, one of her classic umbrella creations hovered.

Through the umbrellas, Latson said, she has learned about leaves themselves.

"The beech trees hang onto their leaves all winter, and they're this wonderful vanilla color," she said. "Oak leaves are fun because of the spaces between them."

Harvesting the elements by hand is part of the process, giving the artist a chance to know her materials. "You can buy them," she said of the leaves she gathers, "but why?"

In her outdoor education, she has also learned to "stay away from the really fragile. It's hard because they are the most beautiful."

Latson's current work was spurred by a wiry bunch of vines collected on a walk.

"I dragged it back and said 'I'm going to make something.'" What others saw as a nuisance, she saw as an artistic element. "Nobody wants them because they're invasive," she said.

She has long collected others' discards. She pointed out an artful, salvaged sweep of a copper wire that might find itself in a future work. "There I was, Dumpster-diving for piano wire," she said.

As her work has become better known, she will "frequently find bundles of things outside my door, bundles of bark."

A native Minnesotan, Latson studied both biology and studio art at Macalester College in St. Paul. She worked as a medical illustrator before embarking on a 20-year career as a professional scenic artist, painting sets and special effects for film, TV and city opera, ballet and theater companies across the country. "Then babies came along and that turned everything on its head," she said.

She lived for a time in Hawaii. The family moved to Tarrytown 16 years ago when her husband, a teacher joined Hackley School.

With college tuition looming for her two



Catherine Latson at work in her Yonkers studio. Photograph by Bob Rozycki.

sons, Latson shifted gears and "cranked out a nursing degree at 40." She worked in the field for seven or eight years, but felt something lacking, she said.

"I thought I was going to lose my mind not having the right brain going," she said of her return to art, as painting gave way to

sculpture and her current work.

Today Latson is a hospice nurse at Phelps Memorial Hospital, working nights and weekends, and spends time in her studio almost every day. "It's a balance. It's turned out to be the perfect

Latson, p

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**WCBJ BUSINESS JOURNAL**

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Westchester County Business Journal (USPS# 7100) is published Weekly, 52 times a year by Westfair Communications, Inc., 3 Westchester Park Drive, White Plains, NY 10604. Periodicals postage paid at White Plains, NY, USA 10610.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Westchester County Business Journal, by Westfair Communications, Inc., 3 Westchester Park Drive, White Plains, NY 10604.

Annual subscription \$60; \$2.50 per issue. More than 40 percent of the Business Journal is printed on recycled newsprint.

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**Latson —**

From page 2

balance," she said.

Latson's studio has an element of fashion to it, complete with mannequin form, spools of vintage thread, sketches and swatches.

"I learned to sew as a young girl," she said. "I find myself sewing more and more."

Her current work in the "Garment Series," as she has described it, "explores the language of clothing and offers unconventional versions of the packages we put ourselves in, and perhaps, too often define ourselves by."

The unconventional includes a mossy necktie and a fanciful gown whose flowing skirt is made of ferns and sold for \$3,600. A corset-style framed work on a studio wall is a study in delicate hydrangea petals.

Though working alone, Latson said she finds inspiration in her neighboring YoHo artists, especially stylist and vintage clothing dealer Jessie Matrullo of Bohemian Royalty. Latson might obtain an Edwardian or Victorian corset from her and "start taking it apart, piece by piece."

It was vintage clothing, baby items in frames, that got Latson thinking about fashion-as-art in a new way. "I understand vintage, nostalgia, but there's something haunted about them," she said.

In her work with natural materials, Latson transitioned her art into the realm of clothing – with her own spin. "I stuck with the organic materials," she said. "The palette is endless. The textures are endless."

To her, the natural elements are key to an overall impression in her art.

"I want it to look like it's been washing along on the shore for a month," she said, showing a recent find, a piece of well-worn leather that has fascinated her.

The process of creating a work, which starts with sketches and often ends with museum-quality framing, can take up to a year. "The studio can be very solitary, which is nice, but it's really nice to have feedback," Latson said.

Her work, priced from \$900 to \$5,000, has been featured at the Greenburgh Nature Center and in the Macy's Flower Show in Manhattan and Philadelphia. She also

has exhibited at the Architectural Digest Home Design Show in Manhattan. Recently, Latson was part of group shows at both the Blue Door Gallery in Yonkers and Gallery 66 NY in Cold Spring.

Prior to the "Fashion as Art II" exhibition at Gallery 66 NY, which drew artists from across the country, owner Barbara Galazzo didn't know Latson's work. "She just submitted something to the gallery," Galazzo said. The gallery owner called the Westchester artist's work "stunning. It's so original. Her piece was simple-looking but complicated in its execution... I loved having it in the gallery."

Latson said CSM Art & Frame in Chatham, N.J., started to carry her work last spring and she has a "really nice relationship" with Pergola in New Preston, Conn.

For the artist, being in the studio is its own reward, preferable to being out selling her work. "I'd much rather be here playing by myself," she said with a smile. "I always have five or six things going on. It's like a playground."

This fall, she will do an installation at the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers for its Day of the Dead Celebration, for which she is considering a full-size gown in marigolds.

"Every season has something different," she said of her working materials. "It's a different menu every season."



Catherine Latson's feathers necktie. Photograph by Bob Rozycki.

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