WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

May 2019 **Volume 35, Issue 5**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
THANK YOU!

It is with great pleasure and humility that I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity and privilege to serve as the President of the Westchester County Medical Society this year. My experience at the Westchester County Medical Society this year as President has been a wonderful, eye-opening and a valuable one for me.

Such opportunities came at an early stage of my career largely because I was fortunate to find myself surrounded by such passionate and instrumental figures. As a new attending several years ago, it became clear to me that the practice of medicine goes far beyond just the doctor-patient relationship, and that physician advocacy is critical to our daily practice of medicine – both for the present and for the years to come. The Westchester County Medical Society fits that role.

I want to give a heartfelt thank you to Janine Miller, Kalli Voulgaris, and Rhonda Nathan. You are the backbone of the Westchester County Medical Society and we owe each of you a debt of gratitude. A special thank you to the immediate past presidents, Marshal Peris and Thomas Lester, for providing me this opportunity to become involved and serve at WCMS, and above all for your guidance and friendship.

As a proud resident of Westchester County, I look forward to continuing my involvement with the society. I encourage all of my friends and colleagues to stay active members in the organization and to spread the word about all the great things that we do here.

I wish you all the best.

OMAR SYED, MD
President, WCMS

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UPCOMING EVENTS

WCMS/WAM Annual Meeting
Thursday, June 13, 2019
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY

WESTCHESTER PHYSICIAN

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FROM THE EDITOR…
PETER J. ACKER, MD
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF WORRY

I suppose that there is a basic need to find an underlying pattern or rhythm to whatever is going on around us. The brain is the constant recipient of a barrage of sensory input which, through an incredibly complex set of neurologic connections, a rapid assessment, an imposition of coherence, is made upon what may be astonishingly complex. Coherence trumps truth. F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said, "The test of a first rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." The more common experience, however, is to resolve contradictions rapidly, subconsciously in order to reach a decision. Also, if several possible formulations or interpretations present themselves, the brain is inherently biased towards adopting the one that is most threatening. A honking horn is first interpreted as a warning of imminent collision rather than as a friendly greeting. It makes sense that our brain has developed that way since our survival often depends on rapid assessments and then action. In fact, as Malcolm Gladwell so exhaustively points out in his book Blink, these assessments can be astonishingly accurate. But not always. Many innocents languish in jails as the result of sincere, but dead wrong eye witness testimony.

In my minds eye, I see a primitive man, from eons ago, on the savannah, perhaps my ancestor, stealthily moving towards a herd of wildebeest, spear in hand, eyes fixed on a target. Suddenly he hears a crack of a broken twig off to his left. Instantaneously, he interprets the sound via worst case scenario analysis and foregoes his aiming and immediately turns toward the sound and is able to get into position to defend against a prowling tiger about to pounce. Maybe he survives and maybe he doesn't, but with this scene played over repeatedly, the rapid responders survive more often to pass on their genes to their prodigy. But since I am here, I assume he survived to pass his, our, genes, preternatural anxious genes. Then through the ages, these genes percolate down through the generations, coding for a myriad of proteins and enzymes which in turn activate the exquisite machinery that allows us ambulate, talk, see, smell and think. All of these billions of molecules are organized into units of increasing complexity: cellular organelles, cells, organs of digestion, excretion, respiration and circulation and finally at the apogee, the billions of neurons that control it all. And all designed for, devoted to, the survival of genes, "dopey little particles" as Robert Wright puts it. So, am I, who can write, dash across a tennis court and time my swing perfectly on the run for a cross court winner, and play with some proficiency Beethoven's Sonata Pathetique, merely the temporary custodian a small chain of inanimate nucleotides? It reminds me of an insect, a beetle, I believe, that I either read about or saw on a nature show that is prone to a very small parasite which is able to invade the nervous system and take control of the whole organism for its own nefarious purposes. Similarly, thoughts enter our minds, seemingly unbidden, that cause unease, that rumble through our heads at three in the morning that seem to

(Continued on page 11)

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STOP THE TRAIN

Elliot Barsh, MD

Hi everyone.

Resiliency is about creating a future that is not determined by our past. A future with the hope that we can have a big enough presence to accept ourselves, and each other, as we try to live with what we gain and what we lose.

This can be easier said than done.

Winston Churchill wrote, "If you're going through hell, keep going."

Franklin Roosevelt wrote, "When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on."

What Churchill and Roosevelt were saying is that no matter how bad things seem to be, we are worth fighting for. No matter how dark our present is, we can change our story and create new possibilities.

The grief we feel when we lose a loved one, or lose the future we have lived for and counted on, is hard to recover from.

We heard from the author of these NY Times articles a few years ago when he bravely told the story of losing his young daughter.

Now he tells a new story about how he has continued to live with his grief.

He has found a way to keep on living and create a future.

In the Washington Post article, the author and her husband find a way to grieve and stay together.

These stories are hard to read. I think you will be glad that you read them.

"Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation"

---Viktor E. Frankl

Thanks for reading.

E

From The New York Times:
Children Don't Always Live
I lost a child, and yet I chose to become a father again. Is that bravery or stupidity?

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/23/opinion/sunday/children-dont-always-live.html

From The New York Times:
'What Does Daddy Cry About?'
Someday I will have to tell my son how his sister died. But not yet.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/04/opinion/sunday/child-death.html

From The Washington Post:
How we saved our marriage after our daughter was stillborn.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/04/24/how-we-saved-our-marriage-after-our-daughter-was-stillborn/?tid=ss_mail&utm_term=.7dfab46fdba0

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MSSNY Advocacy on Vaccine Exemptions

New York State is facing a public health crisis—as of last week the state has seen 722 measles cases since October 2018. Those cases are expected to grow. MSSNY and other organizations are seeking to ensure that medical exemptions from vaccines is the only exemption allowed under state law. DOH has indicated that there are over 400 school districts in NY State that are below the 95% herd immunity.

As a member of MSSNY we are urging you to reach out to the legislator on this measure. Please take the following steps that appear last Friday in MSSNY's Enews!

Physician Action Needed to Help Stop Measles Outbreak

In recognition of the measles epidemic expanding in New York State and across the nation, the Medical Society of the State of New York has been advocating for passage of legislation that would allow only medical exemptions for immunizations. The measure, A.2371/S.2994A, is in the Assembly & Senate Health Committees. MSSNY President Arthur Fougner, MD will participate in a press conference next week at which he will call upon the NY State Legislature to ensure that the only exemption from immunizations is based on a medical reason. MSSNY, along with 28 other medical organizations, patient advocacy groups and public health organizations, have been meeting with members of the Legislature to advocate for passage of this measure.

The Medical Society of the State of New York's Memo in support of A.2371/S.2994 can be found here: https://tinyurl.com/A2371-S2994 and a copy of the physician and public health organizations, and parent and patient advocacy memo is available here: https://tinyurl.com/MSSNYJointMemoA2317-S2994

Your help is needed now! There are action steps that you can do to move the legislation forward:

Please call the following members of the Assembly Health Committee and tell them that you support passage of A.2371/S.2994A, which would repeal the religious exemption, ensuring that the only allowable exemptions to vaccination will be for medical reasons. There is an Albany and local office number listed:

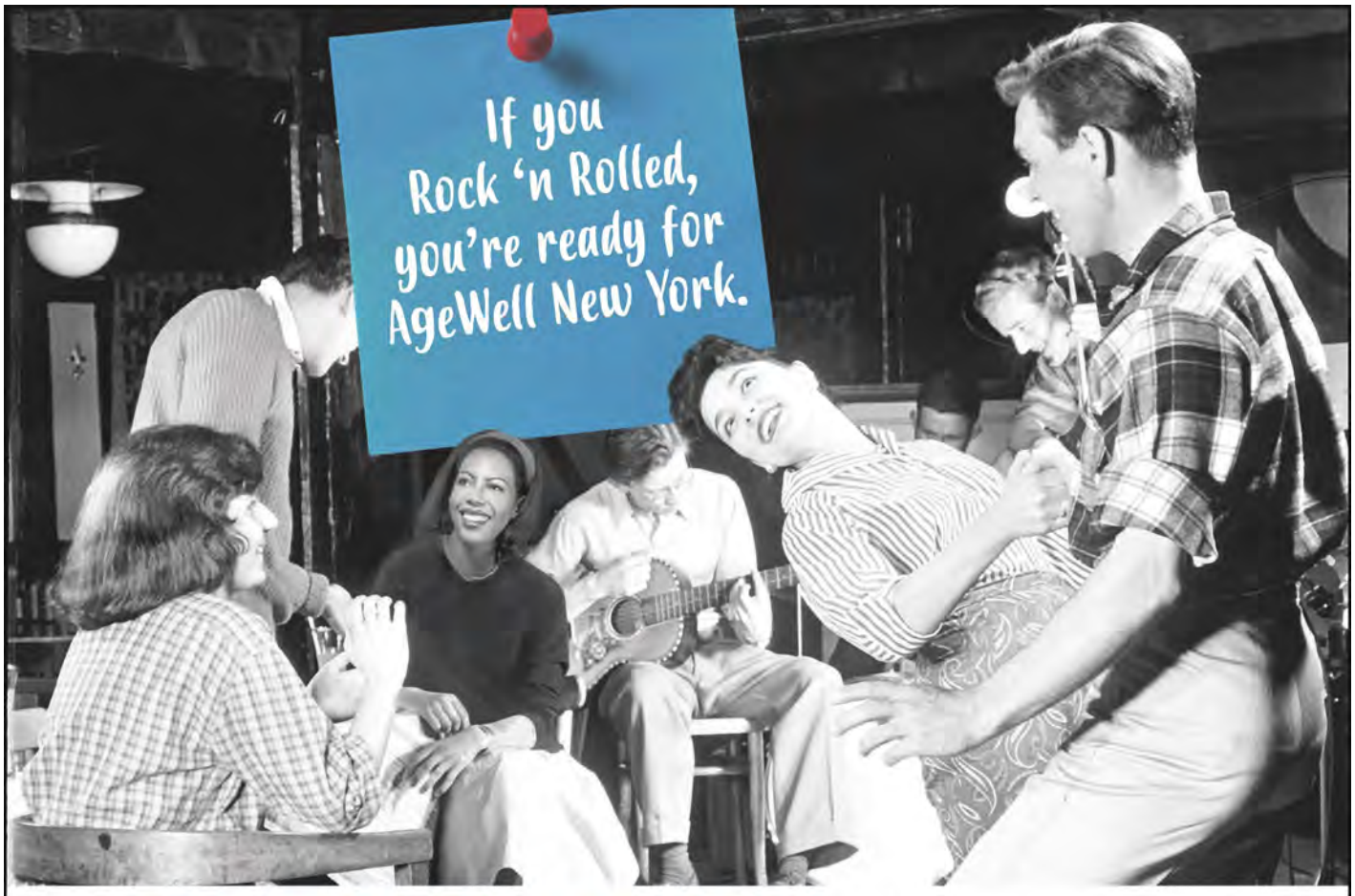
Richard Gottfried (518) 455-4941; (212)807-7900
gottfrr@nyassembly.gov
Michaelle Solages (518) 455-4465, (516) 599-2972
solagesm@nyassembly.gov
Andrew Hevesi: (518) 455-4926, (718) 263-5595
hevesia@nyassembly.gov
Amy Paulin: (518) 455-5585, (914) 723-1115
paulina@nyassembly.gov
Ron Kim: (518) 455-5411, (718) 939-0195
kimr@nyassembly.gov
Nader J. Sayegh: (518) 455-3662, (914) 779-8805
sayeghn@nyassembly.gov
Robin Schimminger: (518) 455-4767, (716) 873-2540
schimmr@nyassembly.gov
Kevin A. Cahill: (518) 455-4436, (845) 338-9610
cahillk@nyassembly.gov
Steven Cymbrowitz: (518) 455-5214, (718) 743-4078
cymbros@nyassembly.gov
Aileen M. Gunther: (518) 455-5355, (845) 794-5807 and (845) 342-9304 gunthea@nyassembly.gov
Rodneyse Bichotte: (518) 455-5385, (718) 940-0428
bichotter@nyassembly.gov
Phil Steck: (518) 455-5931, (518) 377-0902
steckp@nyassembly.gov
Sandy Galef: (518) 455-5348, (914) 941-1111
galefs@nyassembly.gov
Linda B. Rosenthal: (518) 455-5802, (212) 873-6368
rosentl@nyassembly.gov
Edward C. Braunstein: (518) 455-5425, (718) 357-3588
braunsteine@nyassembly.gov
Kevin Byrne: (518) 455-5783, (845) 278-2923
byrnek@nyassembly.gov
Marjorie Byrnes: (518) 455-5662, (585) 218-0038
byrnesm@nyassembly.gov
David McDonough: (518) 455-4633, (516) 409-2070
mcdonoughd@nyassembly.gov
Jake Ashby, (518) 455-5777, (518) 272-6149
ashbyj@nyassembly.gov
Andrew Raia: (518) 455-5952, (631) 261-4151
raiaa@nyassembly.gov

Send a letter via the MSSNY Grassroots Action Center (GAC) to your legislator!
Here: https://cqrcengage.com/mssny/app/write-a-letter?2&engagementId=499144

Work with your local county medical society and schedule a meeting within your area with your legislator! Or call your State Senator and Assembly Member's office to voice your support of this legislation. There is strength in numbers!

Please look them up here: Assembly: https://nyassembly.gov/mem/search/
Senate: https://www.nysenate.gov/find-my-senator

Joining the Medical Society in support of medical exemptions only are the following groups:
American Academy of Pediatrics, NYS District II, Chapters 1, 2 & 3, American Nurses Association - New York (ANA-NY), Associated Medical Schools of New York, Autism Science Foundation, Citizen Committee for Children of New York, Inc., Children's Defense Fund-New York, Erie County Department of Health, Ithaca Is Immunized, Kimberly Coffey Foundation, Nurses Who Vaccinate, March of Dimes, Meningitis B Action Project, Nurse Practitioner Association New York State, New York American College of Emergency Physicians, NY Chapter American College of Physicians, NYS Academy of Family Physicians, NYS Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO), NY Occupational and Environmental Medical Association (NYOEMA), NY State Neurological Society, NY State Neurosurgical Society, NYS Ophthalmological Society, NYS Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, NYS Public Health Association, New York State Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc., The New York State Radiological Society, Schuyler Center For Analysis and Advocacy, The Children's Agenda, Tompkins County Department of Health.



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WESTCHESTER COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY
WESTCHESTER ACADEMY OF MEDICINE
REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2019-2020

The Nominating Committee of the Westchester County Medical and the Westchester Academy of Medicine met on April 18, 2019, and hereby nominates the following candidates for election at the Annual Meeting on June 13th, to take office effective **July 1, 2019:**

President-elect
Peter Acker, MD

Vice President
Jeffrey Jacobson, MD

Treasurer
Bella Malits, MD

Secretary
Bruce Molinelli , MD

Delegates to the MSSNY House of Delegates
(Four for two years; term ending 2021)

Robert Ciardullo, MD
Ronald Jacobson, MD
Daniel Gold, MD
Peter Liebert, MD

Alternate Delegate to the MSSNY House of Delegates
(Three for two years; term expiring 2021)

Peter Acker, MD
Richard Yung, MD
Bella Malits, MD

Delegates to the MSSNY House of Delegates
(One for one year; term ending 2020)

Marshal Peris, MD

Alternate Delegate to the MSSNY House of Delegates
(Two for one year; term expiring 2020)

Ana Aronova, MD
Christos Stravopoulos, MD

Note: Per the Bylaws, the current President-elect, Daniel Gold, MD, automatically assumes the Office of President and the current President, Omar Syed, MD, assumes the Office of the Immediate Past President.

***Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor at the WCMS/Academy Annual Meeting, provided that each nomination is supported by a petition signed by at least 100 members, as specified in the Bylaws.**

The Medical Society of the County of Westchester
and
The Westchester Academy of Medicine
Cordially Invites you to Attend our

Annual Meeting and Program
Thursday, June 13, 2019

Westchester Country Club
Biltmore Room
99 Biltmore Avenue
Rye, NY 10580

6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Networking Reception
7:00 p.m.
Buffet Dinner
Installation of 2019-2020 Medical Society & Academy Officers

Remarks of Omar Syed, MD
Outgoing WCMS President

Remarks of Daniel Gold, MD
Incoming WCMS President

Robert A. Wild, Esq., Chairman & Founding Partner
Garfunkel Wild, P.C. Attorneys At Law
"Friend of the Society" Awardee

Mr. David Gray
Westchester Medical Center Volunteer
"Friend of Medicine" Awardee

No Cost for WCMS Members & Spouse or Guest; Additional Guests of Members $125; Non-members & Guests $250/per person
Tables of 10 - $2000

RSVP TODAY to Janine Miller, 914-967-9100, by email to jmiller@wcms.org or fill out the form below and fax to 914-967-9232 or mail to 40 Sunshine Cottage Road, Valhalla, NY 10595. Checks should be made payable to the Westchester County Medical Society.

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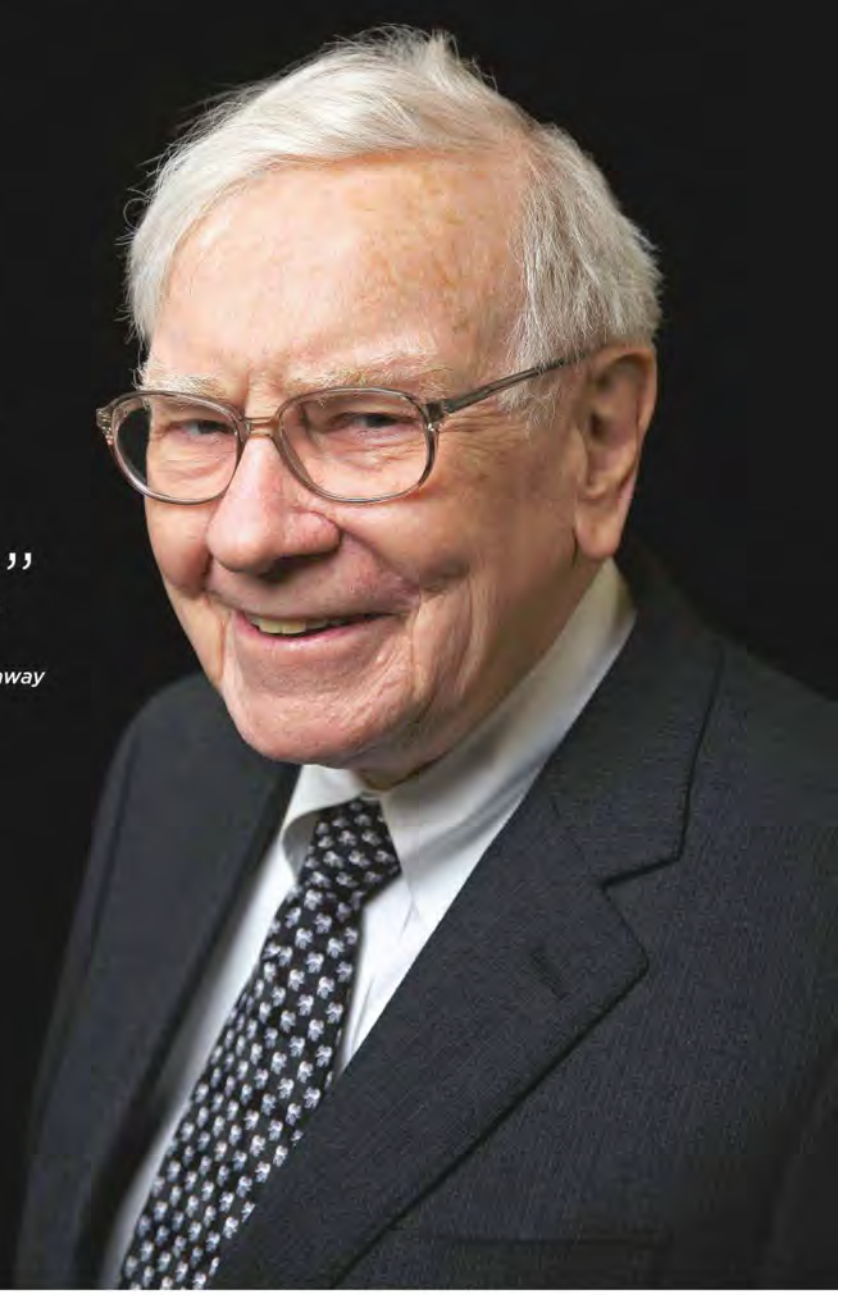

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FROM THE EDITOR…
PETER J. ACKER, MD
THE TOPOGRAPHY OF WORRY
(Continued from page 2)

crowd out all other thoughts, or can pop in during a solitary walk, worried ruminations, perverse notions such as all the ways that our kids, our progeny, are at risk in the world.

As regards to my own kids, three daughters, all with clear echoes of my genetic traits, I carry an extra burden: I am a pediatrician and have spent years learning in exquisite detail all the possible diseases, genetic predispositions, behaviors, and toxins that can endanger a child. And this knowledge is a constantly shifting landscape, with sometimes dramatic and sudden changes. I deal with it with either over reaction or denial, never quite getting it right. When one of my daughters complains of a headache, my first thought is of a brain tumor. Of course, I can be more dispassionate with other people's children and realize that 99.9% of headaches are not indicative of brain tumors.

I trade in the topography of worry. A parent's worry seems astonishing in all its complexity, variability and nuance, yet entirely understandably as an echo of our evolutionary past. There are gradations and variations of worry and a pediatrician is like an Eskimo familiar with many types of snow. A pediatrician can extract reams of information from a mother's furrowed brow. As I say to mothers, it is being parent-oid – that a parent's brain as the result of eons of evolution, is designed to foresee any potential risk to their child, no matter how obscure and to react rapidly assuming the worst. A mother's facial expression is like a barometer picking up nuances of a child's condition, having been witness to say the last 24 hours of the child's illness.

I identify with my ancestor on the savannah and carry the benefit and the burden of his selected genes. I can't say I enter my office each day thinking about whether I will miss a diagnosis, yet I am certain that it is always floating around there somewhere. I will see perhaps a couple of thousand mildly sick kids this year and one perhaps one with early meningitis. Missing a case of meningitis is every pediatrician's worst nightmare. Once I saw a two week old infant on a February Saturday morning, one of about 40 sick kids that had called that morning for a sick visit. The baby had been fussy overnight, not too unusual for a baby. I examined the baby, didn't find too much except for a very low grade fever. I turned my head towards the mother as I finished my exam, to tell her that I thought the baby was fine. The mother's facial expression stopped me cold. I asked her about it. She couldn't articulate what she was worried about; she just had this inchoate feeling of dread. I sighed to myself, thinking about the full waiting room and for a full thirty seconds the mother and I looked at each other. An hour later, I was in the hospital, having walked quickly through my packed waiting room, and spending a full 15 minutes talking with the baby's father who was angry about the spinal tap I proposed, holding up a tube of cerebral spinal fluid to the light where I could detect just the slightest amount of cloudiness. Bacterial meningitis. I shuddered as I thought about how I had almost sent that baby home.

When I'm on call, I am bedeviled by phone calls. The task of separating the serious from the mundane is even more exacting than in the office and often engenders even more worry. Not infrequently, I put the phone down and start to worry. If it happens in the middle of the night, I often lie awake for a full hour wondering if I made the right decision in reassuring that parent. I am a repository of worry, the designated worrier or as perhaps George Bush would put it, I am the worrier, and as the mother settles down to sleep reassured, I lie awake. I feel at times like a priest, who hears confessions, providing absolution, but I am quite certain that clergymen of all faiths feel a collective burden of all the sins they hear. They come at all hours and they often come at the most inopportune times: when I'm sitting down to dinner, just dropping off to sleep, or in the shower. I admit, I feel sorry for myself at times and occasionally I wonder if all pediatricians wouldn't benefit from a form of therapy: to pick up a phone with nobody on the other end and shout, "I have problems of my own."

I had a call the other night that resulted in me not feeling quite so singled out by fate. It was a typical call, a worried father, a crying child in the back ground, the regular breathing of my wife next to me who learned years ago to sleep through all of this. After several minutes of conversation, father was reassured and I lay back now fully awake. Next day, I saw the child with both parents. "Doc" the father began, "Thanks so much for calming us down last night." I smiled at him in gratitude and he continued. "You know, I know what you go through. I'm a solo electrician, and I often get calls late at night, people worry you know about their electrical systems. They see a problem, and they immediately worry about a fire. Usually I can tell over the phone if it's serious or not, but if I can't convince them, I start to worry so I go over to their house just to make sure." So, I'm not the only worrier in town.

♦

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Westchester Academy of Medicine
2019 Golf Outing & Fundraiser

Thursday, October 3, 2019
Westchester Country Club
99 Biltmore Avenue
Rye, NY 10580

Registration, Driving Range & Halfway House Lunch—11:00 AM
Shotgun Start at 12:30 PM
Golf Format: Scramble
6:00 PM—Cocktails
6:45 PM—Buffet Dinner/Awards/Raffles

If you are unable to attend, please consider making a tax-deductible donation. Contact Kalli Voulgaris kvoulgaris@wcms.org or 914-967-9100 for more details.

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All proceeds will benefit the Westchester Academy of Medicine
For more information and other sponsorship opportunities, contact Janine Miller at 914-967-9100 or jmiller@wcms.org

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Underwritten by: Life Insurance Company of Boston & New York, Athol Springs, NY. This policy provides disability income insurance only. It does not provide basic hospital, basic medical or major medical insurance as defined by the New York State Insurance Department. The expected benefit ratio for this policy is 60%. This ratio is the portion of future premiums which the company expects to return as benefits, when averaged over all people with this policy. See the Product Brochure and/or Policy form DIC-N (0900) NY for details concerning policy benefits, limitations and exclusions. CJS540 3/2019 Exp. 3/2021

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Please call Realtor/Owner at 914-737-1656 for details or to schedule a showing

The MSSNYPAC Executive Committee
Thomas J. Madejski, MD
Joseph R. Sellers, MD
Gregory Pinto, MD

Cordially invite you to

Physicians Day at the Races

Saturday, July 27, 2019

11:30am-6:30pm

Saratoga Race Course
"The Rail at the 1863 Club"
Saratoga Springs, NY

$500/physician & $300/guest

Ticket price includes clubhouse admission, post parade programs, a gourmet buffet lunch at your own trackside table (11:30 am - 2:30 pm), open bar, private viewing of the horses as they bring them from the paddock and private betting windows with a 1:00 pm post time.

Saratoga Stakes Races: Jim Dandy, Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Bowling Green, and Amsterdam are scheduled for this date.
https://www.nyra.com/saratoga/racing/stakes-schedule/jim-dandy/
https://www.saratogaracetrack.com/event/stakes-race-74892/

Dress: Neat casual attire. Gentlemen require collared shirts. Ladies require dresses, skirts or slack outfits. Jeans, shorts, sneakers, flip-flops or abbreviated wear are not permitted at the venue. Non-members of MSSNY are also welcome.

Visit www.mssnypac.org/events for further details.

Contact Jennifer Wilks at 518-465-8085 to secure tickets.