

The Island Current

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One Dollar

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL
FROM 50 YEARS OF THE ISLAND CURRENT STAFF**



BRIEFLY...

ANNUAL COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER, sponsored by Trinity United Methodist Church and Temple Beth-El, will take place on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, Nov. 26, 12 noon to 2 p.m. This year, because of Covid-19, the dinners will be prepared for take-out and can be picked up at the 113 Bay Street entrance, by the red doors. The meals are free, but monetary donations will be accepted.

THE CITY ISLAND NAUTICAL MUSEUM will remain closed through the winter, but the shop is still offering City Island face masks and other gifts. Call 718-885-1616 for information and to place orders. In the meantime, the museum staff is working up a series of webinars on City Island to be held through the winter, as well as improving exhibits. Visit www.cityislandmuseum.org for updates.

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS will be taking place quietly this year. A tree lighting and Menorah placement will take place during the weekend after Thanksgiving, but because of Covid-19, there will be no ceremony and no caroling as in years past. In the meantime, the colorful lights are up along the Avenue to put us into the holiday spirit.

EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS BY HEIKE NEUMEISTER will be on view from Dec. 5 through Dec. 28 at Clipper Coffee, 274 City Island Avenue, and in Mary Colby's gallery window next door. A virtual show opening with a brief introduction to the work of this talented artist, who passed away in August, will be presented on Zoom on Dec. 5 at 3 p.m. For access, e-mail Christine Frohnert at c.frohnert@me.com. All benefits from the sale of paintings during the exhibition will go to the City Island Oyster Reef (CIOR).

45 BLOTTER

Complaints reported from City Island to the 45th Precinct during October and November 2020. Unfounded complaints are not included in the list.

- 2 – HARASSMENT
- 1– CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE
- 1– DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI)
- 4 – CRIMINAL MISCHIEF GRAFFITI

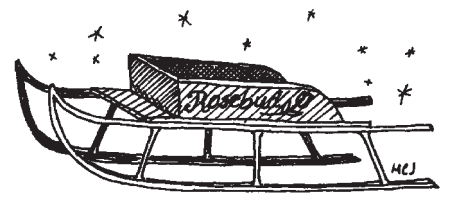
Police provided details on the following arrests and incidents for the period from Oct. 20 to Nov. 17, 2020.

10/28 – On City Island Avenue at 3 p.m., an Island female reported being harassed by a male who punched her following a verbal dispute. There were no injuries.

10/31 – On Halloween, police took four reports of graffiti on mailboxes and traffic boxes on City Island Avenue.

11/13 – At 6:30 p.m., an Island female told police that an acquaintance she met on Facebook harassed her in-person during a verbal dispute. The perpetrator rode off on an electric scooter after pushing the victim on City Island Avenue.

11/13 – Police from the 45th Precinct arrested an Island male, 49, and charged him with DWI and criminal possession of a controlled substance at 7:24 p.m. on Rochelle Street. The defendant was involved in a motor vehicle accident and fled the scene. Officers traced him to his home and observed the defendant swaying and slurring his speech. After he admitted being involved in the accident, police also found the driver in possession of (alleged) marijuana and cocaine.



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**Wishing you &
your family a
safe and happy
holiday!**

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Voting During the Pandemic: 2020 Election Results

By FRED W. RAMFTL and KAREN NANI



Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (right) campaigned for re-election to the US House of Representatives on Halloween, wearing a City Island Nautical Museum mask given to her by Barbara Dolensek (left).

It was an election year unlike any other with Island residents voting in person wearing masks or sending absentee ballots in record numbers in 2020. Many Islanders chose the early voting option at St. Frances de Chantal Church, where there were few lines and lots of parking. On Election Day, Nov. 3, there were long lines early in the day at P.S. 175, but the crush lessened as the day went on and there were few complaints. Unfortunately, the annual Election Day sale sponsored by the P.S. 175 Parent's Association had been cancelled because of the coronavirus to the dismay of many who look forward to the usual baked goods and raffles.

The final New York results won't be certified until Dec. 7, 2020, but some projections can be made based on the in-person and estimated mail-in ballots for City Island. Almost 1,800 residents cast ballots in person from the Island's four Election Districts (60, 61, 62 and 63). In addition, an estimated 15 to 18 percent of voters from Assembly District 82 (which includes City Island, Co-Op City, Pelham Bay, Throggs Neck, Country Club, Westchester Square and part of Morris Park) voted by mail (9,099 out of 50,133 total), according to the New York City Board of Elections. Of those absentee ballots, an estimated 74 percent (6,772) were from registered Democrats, 14 percent (1,278) had no party affiliation, and 8 percent (734) were from Republicans, which is similar to the national trends for absentee ballots. This would mean that the final Island voter turnout in 2020 was over 2,000, which exceeds the 2016 presidential election when about 1,800 residents cast ballots.

Residents voting in person sided with the projected winners in the presidential and other races, including State Senator (Alessandra Biaggi) and State Assembly

(Michael Benedetto).

The following table indicates the tallies, based on the City Island Election Day in-person* vote total from the Democrat (D), Republican (R), Green (G), Libertarian (LBT), Conservative (C) and other party lines.

Race/Candidate	# C.I. Votes*	%
President		
Joseph Biden (D)	884	50%
Donald Trump (R)	878	49
Jo Jorgensen (LBT)	10	1
Howie Hawkins (G)	8	1
Projected National Winner: Joseph Biden		

U.S. House of Representatives District 14		
John Cummings (R)	981	55%
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D)	757	43
Michele Caruso-Cabrera (SAM)	24	2
Projected District Winner: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez		

State Senator District 34		
Alessandra Biaggi (D)	817	50%
James Gisoni (R)	717	44
Antonio Vitiello (C)	97	6
Projected District Winner: Alessandra Biaggi		

State Assembly District 82		
Michael Benedetto (D)	905	53%
John DeStefano (R)	717	44
William Britt (C)	6	12
Projected District Winner: Michael Benedetto		

Justice of the Supreme Court 12th Judicial District		
Orlando Molina (R)	867	28%
Kim Wilson (D)	745	24
Andrew Cohen (D)	727	24
Bianka Perez (D)	706	23



Photos by RICK DeWITT

The 2020 holiday season began with the stringing of the festive lights across City Island Avenue on Nov. 16, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. The annual Holiday Tree lighting and Menorah placement in Hawkins Park are scheduled for Thanksgiving weekend, but will not be accompanied by the usual crowds and caroling because of Covid-19 restrictions. Islanders applaud the community support that made it possible to bring much-needed joy to the end of a challenging year for all.

MOUNT VERNON VS. THE HUTCHINSON RIVER

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

For many years, the city of Mount Vernon has had a serious sewage problem, so serious that in 2018 the United States government and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation brought a lawsuit that charged the city for long-running noncompliance with and violation of the Clean Water Act. The city government ignored the situation, claiming to have no funds to meet its obligations, but on Sept. 22, 2020, the federal government obtained a court order requiring the city to address its polluting storm sewers.

Because the sewage drains into the Hutchinson River, as well as the Bronx River, residents of Co-op City and communities on Eastchester Bay have joined together to put pressure on Mount Vernon's mayor to remedy the situation.

On October 28, 2020, State Senator Alessandra Biaggi arranged for Senator Jamaal T. Bailey, whose district includes Co-op City in the Bronx as well as Mount Vernon in Westchester County, and representatives of the City Island community to meet virtually with the mayor of Mount Vernon, members of her staff and the Department of Environmental Facilities. Although Mount Vernon had failed for years to repair the broken sewers, Mayor Shawyn-Patterson Howard, who took office in January 2020, had pledged to neighboring communities at a meeting in February 2020 that she would do her best to remedy this situation, something few of her predecessors had taken seriously.

In the February meeting, Mayor Patterson-Howard was not yet certain how the sewer repairs were going to be financed. However, at the meeting in October she was happy to report that the city had received a federal grant of \$1.6 million and that most of the repairs of storm and sanitary sewers were well under way. Additional funding, however, is still needed to completely repair their sewage infrastructure project. The city will apply for funding from the New York State's \$3 billion Restore Mother Nature's Bond Act, which has been postponed because of the pandemic, as

soon as the state has adequate funds.

Unfortunately, however, repair of the Mount Vernon sewers will not correct all the sewage problems in the Hutchinson River. Adje Henderson, a City Island resident and a board member of the non-profit Hutchinson River Restoration Project (HRRP), noted on a recent kayak trip up the river that the water appeared to be seriously contaminated, perhaps from a sewage pumping station or treatment plant near Glover Field in Pelham Manor. That location has a long history, and together with an incineration plant that once occupied the site, the pumping station gave Glover Field its time-honored epithet "Stink Field." It is assumed the current station is operated by the Westchester County Department of Environmental Facilities, which is responsible for controlling pollution at that site. Mayor Patterson-Howard and her staff had been unaware of this issue and pledged to look into correcting the situation.

In 2016, the Yonkers Joint Wastewater Treatment Plant borrowed \$6.8 million approved by the Westchester County legislature in order to make improvements to reduce sewage infiltration in all seven Yonkers sewer districts, one of which connects to the Hutchinson River. And in Co-op City, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection has a long-term plan to curb the spillage of sewage from combined sewer overflows (CSOs) along the Hutchinson River. But this particular location in Pelham Manor needs immediate attention, and both Mayor Patterson-Howard and Senator Biaggi vowed to follow through on the issue. It is clear, however, that the community organizations present, including the City Island Civic Association, HRRP, the City Island Oyster Reef, City Island Rising, along with Save the Sound, a Connecticut-based organization that monitors water quality in Eastchester Bay and the Hutchinson River, will have to continue applying pressure to make sure that Westchester County follows through on its commitment to clean water.



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Thanks from the Chamber

To the Editor

We want to thank all the businesses, the Civic Association and Mark Gjonaj for the funding we needed to put up our holiday lights along City Island Avenue this year.

Thank you to all of the volunteers for our many community-based organizations and for all of the worthwhile projects that you've accomplished in spite of this year's pandemic.

**Paul Klein, Vice President,
City Island Chamber of Commerce**

The Road Ahead

A copy of the following letter was received by The Island Current.

Dear City Island Community,

It's good to be back. The last few weeks have been an emotional roller-coaster for our nation in the aftermath of the most consequential presidential election of our lifetime. But more importantly, these times have been a testament to the strength of New Yorkers and the movements we continue to build.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, Americans have proven that we are unwilling to give up on our democracy. Across the country, people voted in record numbers. According to the Washington Post and Edison Research, voter turnout in 2020 is projected to be the highest since 1900, and 18 states have already reported numbers breaking 40-year records. Here in New York, 2,506,685 ballots were cast during early voting statewide. That alone accounts for nearly 40 percent of the vote cast in the 2016 general election.

Those voting numbers are an accomplishment to be proud of. Our country has been through a great deal of suffering in the last eight months, let alone the last four years, and we must celebrate the fact that New Yorkers showed up in a big way for their communities by exercising their civic duty.

I want to take a moment to extend my gratitude to the City Island poll workers, poll observers, election workers and every single volunteer who did their part to help City Island residents vote and to preserve the integrity of our elections against all odds.

As expected, there are people who want to suppress hundreds of thousands of votes across the nation. Know that I will continue to fight with everything I have to protect every single New Yorker's ballot and stand up to the powers who even attempt to undermine them. Every vote counts, which is why we must ensure

every vote is counted.

But your voice does not end with your vote. Regardless of who is in the White House, the critical work to build a world that is safe and just for all New Yorkers still lies ahead. Our power extends beyond a single election—the pursuit of justice must be a way of life that guides every decision we make to impact our communities.

Representing City Island residents in the New York State Senate has been the honor of my life, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to continue serving every single one of you. I look forward to making sure that New York has a clear vision for our future and a strong recovery from the devastation of Covid-19.

Although fear and uncertainty for our nation's future remains, there is also incredible hope and opportunity. As such, I urge you to keep practicing self care and community care. This is a fight for the long haul, and we must continue to nourish ourselves. Take time to prioritize your emotional and physical health, and listen to what your mind and body needs.

In that vein, it is important to remember that the pandemic is not over yet and that our communities must continue to take the necessary precautions to keep flattening the curve. This includes wearing a mask outside of your home, staying six feet apart from others, frequently washing your hands, staying home if you are sick and following New York State travel and quarantine guidelines. I also encourage you to keep utilizing the free Covid diagnostic and antibody testing sites in District 34.

I cannot promise that the road ahead will be easy. I ask that you move through the weeks and months ahead with strength, compassion and integrity. We are at a pivotal moment in history and must continue to demonstrate the power of our collective voices. The future of our city, state, and nation depends on all of us, and I look forward to fighting forward together.

With gratitude,
State Senator Alessandra Biaggi

CIOR Thanks Volunteers

To the Editor:

The City Island Oyster Reef (CIOR) wishes to acknowledge with enormous gratitude all the volunteers from City Island and beyond who came out over two weekends to help restore the wetlands area behind PS 175. Volunteers cleared invasive weeds and planted more than 1,200 indigenous plants, grasses and shrubs that were generously provided to us by the NYC Parks Department's Greenbelt Native Plant Center.

This project is a brilliant example of the community working together to make a difference. The once abandoned area will soon become a sanctuary that will serve as an outdoor learning center, where oysters, other marine life and indigenous plant species can be studied. Thanks to the wonderful hard work of our many volunteers, we are one step closer to achieving this goal.

A special thank you to Bronx Parks Commissioner Iris Rodriguez-Rosa, Mar-



Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

City Island Oyster Reef volunteers planting native species in park area behind P.S. 175.

ianne Anderson and Kristine Zagorski Kelly for their support, and to Jason Smith of the New York Restoration Project for offering gardening tools and expertise.

If you are interested in getting involved, please visit our website, www.cioysterreef.org, or contact us at cityislandoysterreef@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing everyone in the spring as we continue with this project!

With tremendous gratitude,
City Island Oyster Reef (CIOR)



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LOCAL VIEWS

By VIRGINIA DANNEGGER

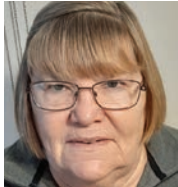
How has the pandemic affected your holiday plans?



Mary Lou Lachman

For the first time ever, my husband and I will be home alone on Thanksgiving, and our Christmas plans are pending because of the pandemic. We will be deeply saddened if our daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren can't be with us this year. Our trip into the city with them for a show and to see the tree won't be happening. Also, our annual pre-Christmas dinner with family in Connecticut will not occur. It certainly is a time to reflect and hold onto happy memories of times gone by.

Cheryl Koller



We will be spending the holidays without any family. Our son and his wife live in Massachusetts, and they won't be traveling to be with us, and our daughter and her family won't be visiting either, although she lives close by. And we won't be with any of our siblings or my mother. It will be a very different holiday. We are doing what we have to do to stay safe.



Kevin and Naomi Boyle

We are planning to go to Rhode Island to see "Poppy," but we have concerns about going out of New York and then coming back and getting Covid tests before and after. His health is on the tenuous side, so we want to be sure we are cautious. Usually other family members come over too (aunts and uncles), but they may not be able to come into the house. We usually spend Christmas here on City Island, but we are not there yet, so hopefully the pandemic improves by then. Naomi hopes to once again participate in the Grace Church Christmas Pageant in person, but it may have to be virtual.

Estrellita Dzenis



This holiday won't be like any other, especially since my daughter Kristina (she's one of the six) and her fiancé, who reside in London, can't make it because of the lockdown. Plus the fact that my 96-year-old mother-in-law might not be joining us. All things considered, there are a lot of things to be grateful for. It will be a day to look forward to even via Zoom. We are a family after all.



Bob Berent

The pandemic has affected me in many ways—from physically not being able to visit with family out West to feeling sad for the many, many families who've lost loved ones because of the coronavirus. Giving up our holiday plans for family gatherings at Thanksgiving and Hanukkah has been especially hard on my wife and 7-year-old grandson, whom we haven't seen in a year. Zoom isn't quite the same as holding and hugging a live person. Nor does it provide us with the sound and delight of attending a NYC ballet or NY Philharmonic performance.

RODMAN'S NECK UPDATE

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has put many city budgets and schedules on hold, it seems as if funds remain in the city budget for work at Rodman's Neck. According to Bob Bieder, a member of Community Board 10 and president of the 45th Precinct Community Council, "The range has agreed to address the loudspeakers, and the funds for the sound baffling are still in place."

The last meeting that the NYPD held with members of the community was in February 2020, when Joseph Notaro, commanding officer of the NYPD Facilities Management Division, reported that a revised design would include completely enclosed ranges. The cost, however, was higher than the funds in the capital budget, and because of the city's financial woes

caused by the pandemic, the approval of any increase in the budget is not expected.

In July, the 45th Precinct Council sent a letter to Officer Notaro with a number of requests and questions. Specifically, the letter asked for a reduction in the hours of the shooting schedule; modernization of the public announcement system, which can often be heard on City Island as early as 7 a.m.; and acceleration of the temporary baffling installation.

Although the funding for minimal sound abatement appears to be intact at the present time, no time frame has been given as to when the Office of Management and Budget will release the funds so that work can begin. Mr. Bieder expressed optimism that this could take place during the first quarter of the new year.

RUNNING ON HIS OWN

By JUDY RAUH



Photo by JAMES BREEN

Islander Mike Rauh crossed the "finish line" of his Virtual TCS New York City Marathon on Nov. 1, 2020. His wife, Judy (left), and daughter Susie proudly held the finish line banner. This was his 42nd consecutive New York City Marathon, and certainly the most unique one, given the changed format of the race caused by the pandemic.

When Covid-19 caused New York Road Runners (NYRR) to cancel the 2020 TCS New York City Marathon in late June, City Island runner Mike Rauh found himself with a big hole in his calendar. Normally he would start training in late summer to be ready for the fall event. So, when NYRR offered runners a virtual race, he jumped on it. It gave those who signed up a chance to complete the 26.2-mile with a route of their choice between Oct. 17 and Nov. 1. But there would be no aid stations, no road closures and, most of all, no cheering crowds along the course.

Mike chose to keep his run close to home, starting the first mile on City

Island, and the next 25.2 within the confines of Pelham Bay Park. City Island photographer Ron Turner took several photos along the avenue and over to Orchard Beach. A chilling rain made the last half of Mike's race grueling. Without the usual crowd of millions along the course, Mike relied on his family, his good friends Mary Lou and Bob Lachman, one of Susie's co-workers (Alethea Gonzalez), and of course, photographers James and Tommy Breen, to cheer him on to the finish. His daughter Beth in New Orleans followed Mike's progress on the NYRR app and ran with him virtually for his final three miles.

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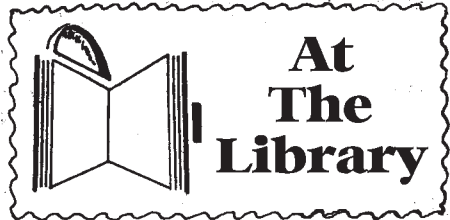
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DECEMBER – JANUARY CHILDREN’S VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Babies & Toddlers Book Club: Join library staff for a virtual early literacy book club, where we share some stories, songs and rhymes for approximately 30 minutes. This program is geared toward parents/caregivers and their young children. Tuesday, Dec. 8 and 22, Jan. 12 and 26, 11 a.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

One-on-One Help: Databases for Children: Do you have questions about using one of our databases? Are you interested in exploring some databases that can help with your child’s school work? Book 30 minutes to speak with a Library staff member via Google Meet! Mondays from 4 to 5 p.m. Call 718-885-1703 to set up a free appointment! Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more detailed information.

DECEMBER – JANUARY VIRTUAL TEEN and TWEEN PROGRAMS

Teens Talk Books: Riots & Revolutions: Get together to talk about books containing revolutions and riots, either fact or fiction. You must register with your e-mail address in order to receive the link to participate. Wednesday, Dec. 9, 4 p.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

Mindfulness Minute: Teens will learn mindfulness techniques to help them reduce stress and lower anxiety, and they will leave with the knowledge to perform these exercises on their own, as well as with book recommendations. You must register with your e-mail address in order to receive the link to participate. Wednesday, Dec. 16, 4 p.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

Teens Write Now: Teens will get a chance to explore their creative side, writing based on a book-related prompt. Participants are highly encouraged to write before attending the program! The prompt for this month is: “How can there be more when there is less?” You must register with your e-mail address in order to receive the link to participate. Wednesday, Dec. 30, 4 p.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

DECEMBER - JANUARY 2021 VIRTUAL ADULT PROGRAMS

Art Journaling: Using poetry from #PocketPoems2020, create a reflective art journal. A local artist will guide participants on how to tap into your self-expression and create a piece of artwork that reflects your feelings, thoughts and personal experiences while connecting with the community. Dec. 3, 3 p.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

Art Journaling: Photography gives us a window into the world—a way to understand the past and present and to imagine our future. In this program we will look at photographs from the Library’s Wallach Division Photography Collection, noting different techniques, styles and composi-

tion. We’ll then spend some time reflecting on a photo in a free art journaling session. Dec. 10, 3 p.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

Online Book Discussion: Open Book Format. The Wakefield and City Island Libraries will be hosting more Online Open Book Hour discussions. These are casual discussions that will focus on what you are currently reading. Together we will discover and learn our interests, favorite books and new titles! Thursday, Dec. 3, 1 p.m. Registration required. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.

Online: Meet the Collection. Looking for something to read? The Wakefield and City Island Libraries will be hosting Meet the Collection! which is a topical introduction to the library’s circulating collection. Registration required. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register. Thursday, Dec. 10, 1 p.m. Tom Clancy; Thursday, Dec. 17, 1 p.m. Holiday Books; Thursday, Jan. 14, 1 p.m. MLK Jr. and the American Civil Rights Movement

Virtual 1:1’s: The City Island Library is now scheduling Virtual 1-on-1 classes on the following topics: “Help with Databases for Adults,” “NYPL Catalog and E-Book Borrowing,” and “Getting Started with E-Books.” These half-hour sessions, conducted via Google Meet, will take place on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Registration required. Call 718-885-1703 to make an appointment!

Open Book Hour: What Are You Reading Now? Many of us have been indoors looking for ways to pass the time. One of the most popular activities at home is reading. What have you been reading? What are you reading right now? Join us and share selections with other readers. You may discover a title that will make your days move faster. No matter the genre, jump into the conversation and let the fun begin! Dec. 2 and 16 at 5 p.m. Go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> for more details and to register.



We, Susan, Donna and Jim, along with our families and our amazing staff, want to thank you all for your continued support during these difficult times.

With the winter months approaching quickly, we decided to scale down our menu to ensure the quality we have always demanded and, at the same time introduce some fun, seasonal, new dishes.

We are now open partially for indoor dining and are strictly adhering to the NYC Restaurant Re-opening Guidelines and will remain diligent in definitely.

We look forward to seeing you back inside at the Diner and Snug soon for a “cheers” or a delicious homestyle meal... from a safe distance. If you are not ready to venture out, don’t hesitate to call 718-885-0362 or 9559 or order online at cityislanddiner.com. DELIVERY IS FREE...and contactless if you prefer.

We wish you all Happy Holidays and a warm, safe, healthy winter! Thank you again for patronage and friendship throughout the years.

(Watch for new Winter menu in the mail)

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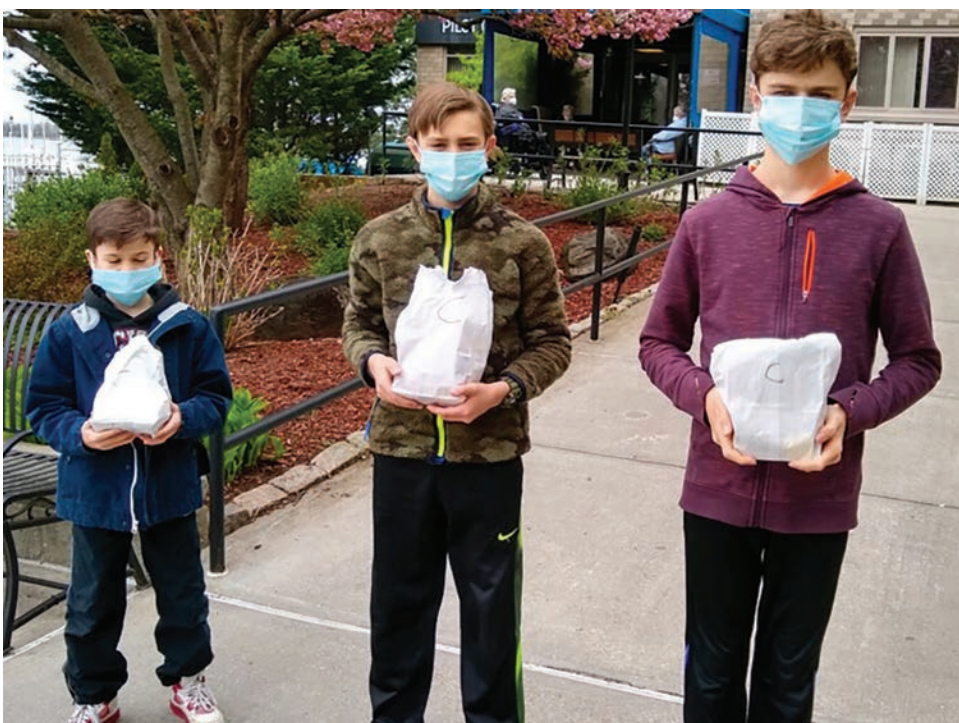
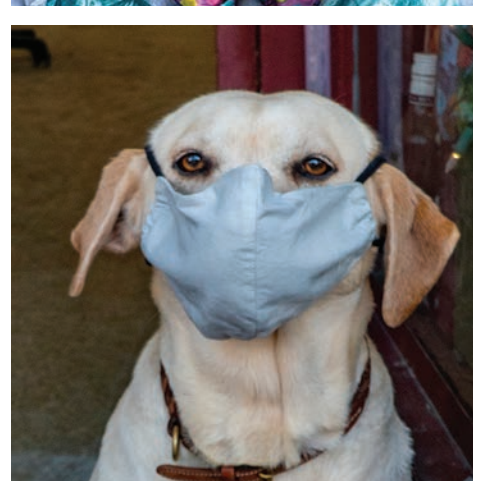
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WHO IS THAT MASKED MAN/WOMAN/OTHER?



Photos by MARY and MITCH COLBY, KAREN NANI, JANE PROTZMAN, MARIA SWIECIKI, BARBARA DOLENSEK and RON TERNER
Most Islanders and visitors are complying with Covid-19 safety recommendations, which include wearing masks outdoors on the streets and inside Island businesses and restaurants. The effort of residents is praiseworthy and evident in City Island's low positivity rate of 1.4 percent as of Nov. 15, which is among the lowest rates for all New York City zip codes. Among the masked residents and visitors above are alumni of "The Sopranos" television series, Chazz Palminteri, Kathrine Narducci and Vincent Pastore. Hats off (but not masks) to all who are trying to keep City Island safe.



Bartow-Pell Events

Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum will be decked out for the holidays this year. "It's been a particularly bitter year, so we'd like to end it on a sweet note." There will be 10 trees decorated with a candy theme, including a candy cane tree, cotton candy tree and a gingerbread man tree. The carriage house will be transformed into a sugarc coated cottage gift shop, where you can buy gifts, holiday wreaths and stocking stuffers.

Weekend walk-throughs of the mansion as well as evening candlelight tours will be timed and ticketed, with a \$10 admission, and on one or two Saturday mornings in December there might be a "Santa Sighting." Check www.bartowpell-mansionmuseum.org for details. We are also offering eight holiday performances "Mr. Dickens Tells a Christmas Carol" by M & M Performing Arts Company (see description below).
On Friday, Dec. 4, candlelight walk-

throughs of the mansion will be offered from 6 to 9 p.m. They will also be held on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 4 to 9 p.m. Also on Saturday and also Sunday, the Carriage House Shoppe will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and house walk-throughs will be available from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

On Friday and Saturday, Dec. 11 and 12, there will be candlelight walk-throughs from 6 to 9 p.m. On Saturday and Sunday, the Carriage House Shoppe will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and there will be a performance of "Mr. Dickens" held on both days from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Candlelight walk-throughs will be held the following weekend, from Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 17, 18, 19, from 6 to 9 p.m. The Carriage House Shoppe will be open on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 19 and 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., with "Mr. Dickens" performing from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on both days.

"Mr. Dickens Tells a Christmas Carol" recreates the famous performance tour by Charles Dickens in 1867 presenting his classic tale about the travails of Ebenezer Scrooge, Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim. In this performance, based on the original script, actor Michael Muldoon of M & M Performing Arts Company plays Charles Dickens and tells his much-loved story in the beautifully decorated double parlors of the mansion, as we meet the different spirits and characters. A newspaper wrote of Dickens at the time: "He gave to every character a different voice, a different style, a different face." This event is appropriate for ages 10 and up; tickets cost: \$40.



The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, ...

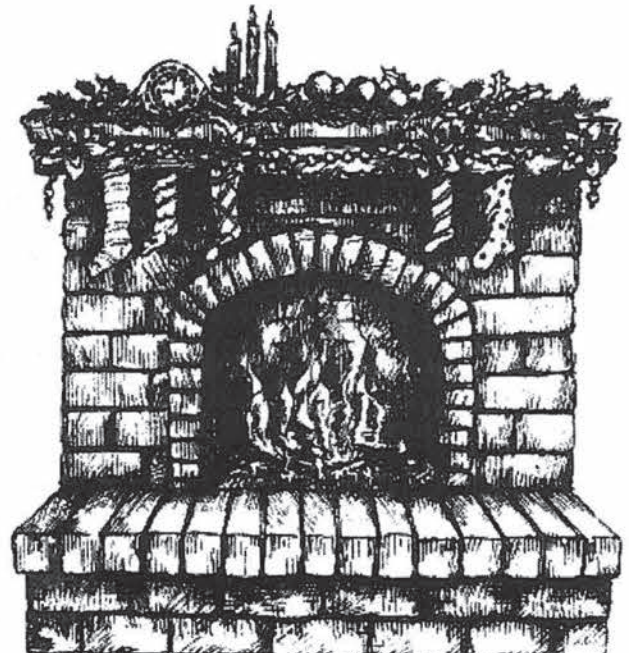


In hopes that St. Nicholas would soon be there.



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AT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS ON CITY ISLAND

By MONICA GLICK

In this most challenging of years for us all, City Island's shops, galleries, restaurants, cafés and businesses want you to know they are still here for you—with everything you need to celebrate the holiday season!



J. W. Foley Rarities and Obscurities

Treasure and Travel. Step inside any of the shops on City Island Avenue south of Hawkins Street and find treasure to delight someone on your gift-giving list. **Janos and Theresa's Gallery** (278 City Island Avenue) offers paintings, lamps, handmade creations by various artists and more. Check out nautical Santa and his village in the window! **Mary Colby Studio and Gallery** (276 City Island Avenue) features an art exhibition and possible painting classes. A few doors down, stop in to **J. W. Foley Rarities & Obscurities** (270 City Island Avenue) and find lamps of all kinds, as well as jewelry and furniture. Back north a block away, perhaps there will be a holiday display in the windows of **Cheryl Brinker's Studio / Gallery** (282 City Island Avenue).



Janos and Theresa's Gallery

While you're heading uptown, find memories of times past and some present at **Early Ruth Antiques** (319 City Island Avenue). Then cross the street and continue up the avenue a bit further to find **Antiques Collectibles and More** (474 City Island Avenue), where you're guaranteed to find even more gift possibilities in their trove of trinkets and treasure. And in all your visits to these and other Island shops and stops, you'll need to wear your mask!

Although the pandemic has temporarily closed the **City Island Nautical Museum** (190 Fordham Street), you can still purchase from their gift shop by calling 718-885-1616. And especially in these difficult times you might consider making a year-end donation or joining as a member. And next time you're looking through Facebook, stop by the City Island Nautical Museum Facebook page for some wonderful albums of historic photographs.

Just because you can't physically travel, there's no reason your taste buds can't—and City Island has flavors from around the world. If Italy is your destination, try **Portofino** (555 City Island Avenue) or **Scavello's on the Island** (101 City Island Avenue). For Latin flavors, there's **Vistamar Restaurant and Lounge** (565 City Island Avenue). And for a mix of locations—Latin with hibachi dishes—visit **Ohana Japanese Hibachi Seafood & Steakhouse** (500 City Island Avenue).

Fun and Fish. What can you do with the family when you're spending so much time in the house? Play games and do puzzles, of course. You will find all you need for "inside time" fun at **239 Play** (239 City Island Avenue), where Reina will be happy to help you make a selection!



239 Play

Now if fun is fish on your dish, then this Island has a number of spots for a great "catch"! At the start of the Island, there's the **Sea Shore Restaurant** (591 City Island Avenue), **JP's Restaurant** (703 Minneford Avenue), and **Lobster House** (691 City Island Avenue). Mid-Island you'll find **Crab Shanty** (361 City Island Avenue), and down near the view of Stepping Stones Light there's a netful of options, from **Sammy's Fish Box** (41 City Island Avenue) to the **Original Sammy's Shrimp Box** (64 City Island Avenue) to **The Lobster Box** (34 City Island Avenue).



Original Sammy's Shrimp Box

If you like your fish fast, there's the midtown option of **Seafood City** (459 City Island Avenue) or the downtown fare from **Tony's Pier Restaurant** (1 City Island Avenue).

If you or those on your gift list like to catch their own fish, try a gift certificate to **Jack's Bait & Tackle** (551 City Island Avenue) or visit **Island Bait & Tackle** (632 City Island Avenue) for everything you will need. And there's **Captain Mike** (530 City Island Avenue) nearby for a "deep dive" into the season.

Music and Merry. Although Covid-19 has dimmed the stage lights at Elliott Glick's **Starving Artist** (The Artist) (249 City Island Avenue), you can still catch live music—right from Glick's home to yours—through a Facebook LIVE show with Elliott and wife Monica every Saturday night at 8 p.m. Visit this link (<https://bit.ly/ArtistLIVEHome>) and join the fun (no Facebook page). Learn more at StarvingArtistOnline.com, including how to get an Artist mask or to see the "Hope to Cope" photography exhibit from Monica Glick, on view at The Artist through the season.

"Merry" is cooked into the fare and found in the atmosphere of **The Black**



Starving Artist

Whale (279 City Island Avenue), which will celebrate 60 years on City Island in 2021. And your taste buds are also sure to celebrate with the delights served up at **Archie's Table and Tap** (536 City Island Avenue). At both, check out the daily specials.

And give your pets a merry season by visiting the new Island business **Jax & Brownie's Pet Supplies** (626 City Island Avenue). Wonder if they have reindeer chow?



Focal Point Gallery

Gifts and Glamour. Ron Turner provides a plethora of gift possibilities at his City Island mainstay, **Focal Point Gallery** (321 City Island Avenue). This year, he's printing his eye-catching photographs on leaves as well as lamps, bricks, burlap and more. He can also use your family photos or pics of a favorite pet!



Kaleidoscope Gallery

Window shop at **Kaleidoscope Gallery** (280 City Island Avenue) and then step inside for a magical tour of gifts for everyone on your list.

To get glamorous for the season, let the team at **Bay Rose Nail Salon** (329 City Island Avenue) help your nails sparkle or your toes shine! **Nail Island** (462 City Is-



Bay Rose Nails

land Avenue) is also ready to help you get set for celebrating the holidays. Visit **Eden Beauty Bar** (310 City Island Avenue) for an introduction to their total life changes product line.

Let Rose at **Art of Beauty** (240 City Island Avenue) give your hair a pick me up with highlights and cut; this salon can also help your fingers and toes feel festive with a manicure and pedicure! **Complexions of City Island** (403 City Island Avenue) is ready to "unmask a new you." Call for an appointment, 718-885-0188.



City Island Juice Bar

Wellness and Whimsy. **City Island Juice Bar** (327 City Island Avenue) is featuring a six pack of their juices to contribute to your better self during the holidays.

And it's never too late to go for your best self, and the personal trainers at **Club Fit** (466 City Island Avenue) can help with that. Explore the possibilities also at **Dragon's Path Tae Kwon Do Academy** (229 City Island Avenue). Stay stress-free this season, especially in this challenging year, at the **City Island Physical Therapy and Wellness Center** (464 City Island Avenue).

Has staying inside given you a "honey do" list of tasks to get your house in shape? You're sure to find assistance with that at **Buddy's Hardware** (268 City Island Avenue) or **JJ Burck** (526 City Island Avenue). And **Remy's** (272 City Island Avenue) can "sew up" any loose ends in those projects.

Explore the whimsy and wonder of **Jill's Cottage** (152 City Island Avenue), where Jill herself will help you find a plant, a bouquet or something special for a holiday table, or to make the season more festive for family, friends and yourself!

And there's always wonder in the whimsy of decorations at **Artie's Steak & Seafood** (394 City Island Avenue), a delight for the eyes while you satisfy your palate with selections from the regular menu. Maybe start with buffalo chicken wontons, followed by chicken francese or marsala or Alaskan king crab legs, or pick from the daily specials, including the tempting desserts and specialty cocktails.

Comfort, Cheer and Convenience. There's comfort food and more at the **City Island Diner** (304 City Island Avenue), where a newly launched menu features buttermilk chicken tenders as appetizers and chicken schnitzel with red cabbage and mushroom gravy as a main dish. Visit the connected **Snug** eatery on Tuesdays for half-price burger night, and say "hi" to bartender/waitress Hannah!

There's comfort in the convenience of pre-made meals from **Dominick's Market** (385 City Island Avenue). They also have a full catering menu and an awesome deli. And if you need something at the last minute and late in the evening, stop by **Fire House Corner Deli Grocery** (240 City Island Avenue). If it's earlier in the day, visit **Island Pharmacy & Discount** (290 City Island Avenue).

You'll find everything you need to say "cheers" this season at **JGL Wines & Liquors** (358 City Island Avenue). To cheer in person, stop by **Fella's** (522 City Island Avenue) or **Man Overboard** (247 City Island Avenue), eating while toasting, of course!

Rest and Relaxation. You'll find Italian pastries from Arthur Avenue, a gingerbread latte or some winter teas waiting for you at **Clipper Coffee** (274 City Island Avenue) this holiday season. Clipper Coffee will display the artwork of the late Heike Neumeister of City Island through December. Proceeds from sales of her work will benefit the City Island Oyster Reef, a cause that was close to Heike's heart.

Continued on page 17



NYC Councilman
Mark Gjonaj

Season's Greetings

Wishing all City Islanders a joyous, safe and blessed Holiday Season, filled with love, laughter and peace!

We are proud of the work we have done for City Island and we look forward to continue our partnership!

Contact NYC Councilman Mark Gjonaj's Office at (718) 931-1721 or MGjonaj@council.nyc.gov.



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As the hurricane season reaches its conclusion at the end of November, City Islanders have, thankfully, been spared a large-scale natural disaster. However, even mild rain days result in significant flooding on Island streets and roadways in Pelham Bay Park (photos above). In an effort to address these issues, City Island Rising is partnering with the New York Sea Grant Program to document flooding and how it is affecting our community.

New York Sea Grant is a 50-year-old statewide network of integrated research, education and extension services that promote the economic vitality of coastal communities, environmental sustainability and citizen awareness about the state's marine resources. In New York City, the organization has established a Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay, partnering with the City University of New York and other educational institutions to provide scientific research and perspective on vital environmental issues that impact communities every day.

Since December 2019, New York Sea Grant staff have visited City Island on several occasions to meet with Rising members, the NYC Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the district manager of Community Board 10, Matt Cruz, in an effort to gain data about flooding on City Island, whether caused by high tides, rain storms or inadequate drainage. Some of these areas are well known to residents—the west end of Ditmars Street, Minneford Avenue and Cross Street, the road leading to Orchard Beach—whereas some locations are less noticeable. By documenting each location, residents are providing scientific evidence in order to prove how City Island's resiliency needs are being neglected on all levels of government, leaving the community vulnerable to future storms. In less than 11 months, more than 550 area photos have been submitted to New York Sea Grant.

Islander David Diaz, a board member of Rising, hopes that this evidence will provide a convincing argument to local officials and policy makers that the Island's flooding issues can no longer be ignored. "In the world of public policy, whoever has the evidence usually wins the argument," Mr. Diaz explained. "We are trying to help Islanders make our own argument that resiliency measures are needed and to do so in a way that is both compelling and understood by those in power."

Residents are encouraged to submit their own photos through New York Sea Grant "Community Flood Watch Project Survey" website at <https://bit.ly/CIRisingFloodingSurvey> or by contacting City-IslandRising@gmail.com. Residents are also encouraged to report flooding to the City of New York via 311 and to send compliant reference numbers to Rising.

Katie Graziano, a Coastal Resilience Extension Specialist with the New York Sea Grant, told *The Current*, "the Community Flood Watch Project depends on strong partnerships like the one we have with City Island Rising. The residents of City Island have invaluable local knowledge of flood locations, timing, and impacts."

Organization News

News on this page concerning organizations, and events listed in, are submitted by representatives of those organizations. A limit of 150 words is requested for all news items submitted. In most cases news will be edited and every effort will be made to preserve the substance of longer items. News and calendar events must be received by no later than the 20th of each month except December and July. If the 20th falls on a holiday or Sunday, the deadline is the 19th. Mail submissions to P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464. YOUR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER MUST BE INCLUDED.

City Island Civic Association

This has been a difficult year for everyone. The officers and board of the Civic Association wish you, your family and friends a holiday season with good memories. Stay safe. Stay well. See you in 2021!

To become a member of the Civic, send your annual dues (\$20 per year or \$50 for a three-year membership) to City Island Civic Association, P.O. Box 117, Bronx 10464, or pay online at [paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com) to city.island.civic@gmail.com, the "friends and family" option. Please note that joining the Civic Facebook page does not represent membership in the association.

Jane Protzman

AARP 318

Our chapter has been notified by the National AARP that all chapter meetings must be discontinued for the remainder of 2020 as a necessary precaution against Covid-19. Although we are disappointed, we look forward hopefully to 2021. Until then, stay well and be safe.

Carroll A. Reid

Garden Club of City Island

With the colder weather in November, the Garden Club held its Nov. 2 meeting via Zoom. This gave us a way to talk about club projects and to see each other. The club will continue to look for ways to stay connected, whether by holding Zoom meetings or by sending out newsletters. We are looking forward to warmer weather when we can again hold meetings outdoors. Members who have not used the Zoom online meeting platform can get help from Secretary Ellen Murphy by calling or e-mailing her.

We hope that you have enjoyed our planter boxes this summer. Thanks go to all the Garden Club members, business owners and other volunteers for keeping them watered and trimmed. We are in the process of removing the summer plants in anticipation of putting in winter greenery. The containers at the gates of Pelham Cemetery were replanted with winter plants, miniature evergreens and pansies. The Post Office garden got a much-needed weeding this fall; the mums in the garden are still blooming, and the oak leaf hydrangea is putting on a show of deep purple leaves. We want to thank our contractors, CJS Property Care and Ellen Malzone, for helping us maintain the garden.

The club is making plans to distribute decorated holiday wreaths to our public spaces, including the Post Office, library, fire station, City Island Nautical Museum, P.S. 175, Pelham Cemetery, the American Legion Triangle, Hawkins Park and Ambrosini Field. We will also be donating wreaths to the Veterans Home in Montrose, NY, a project of the 9th District Federated Garden Clubs of NYS. We want to thank those of you who so generously donated to our Beautification Fund this year. Those funds have made these projects possible.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Garden Club, please contact a current member who will refer you one of our officers. We will make sure to include you in our meetings—whether in person, via Zoom or just to receive a newsletter.

Judy Judson

PSS Senior Center

PSS City Island is currently open Tuesday and Thursday from 12 to 2 p.m. to distribute meals, masks, sanitizers and more as we receive them. Please be sure to listen to the One Call Now sent to members to update them on meal pickups and new groups.

SPECIAL NOTE: Any member who needs instruction on how to use a tablet, iPad, iPhone or smart phone may contact the center to schedule a time when we may work with you privately. We want everyone to have the option to our Zoom programs

and other available news and classes. Our Facebook page (PSS City Island Center) is updated regularly as new information becomes available for our members. It also shows instructions on how to access exercise classes online, our remote balance class, arthritis class, craft classes and our singing group. Staff members regularly call our members individually to check on their well-being. If you are not on our calling list, please e-mail pattis@pssusa.org with your name and phone number. Or you can reach the center at 718-885-0727. Until we are together again, stay safe and healthy.

To all: Have a wonderful holiday and a happy New Year! Everyone at PSS City Island looks forward to seeing you all in person in 2021!

Patty Attis

Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity's Christmas service schedule is as follows: Blue Christmas date will be Saturday, Dec. 19, at 10 a.m.; Sunday School Christmas pageant will be Sunday, Dec. 20, at 10 a.m.; and the Christmas Eve Candlelight service will be held on Thursday, Dec. 24, at 10 a.m.

All persons wishing to attend must wear masks and enter through the Fellowship Hall entrance on Bay Street. Attendance is recorded and temperatures are taken. While maintaining social distance, attendees then enter the Sanctuary, where seating is staggered. At this time, there is no singing, but hymns are played by the extraordinary organist, Joy Kim.

For the foreseeable future, this is how we will worship in person. Every effort is being made to thoroughly clean the facility after the service. Trinity understands that these are unprecedented times. Many people will not feel comfortable coming to a service, even while wearing a mask and social distancing, so the services will be live streamed and recorded for YouTube. To request information about the live stream, email Pastor Dave at david.jolly@nyac-ucm.com.

The new hours for the Food Pantry are Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m.

Rick DeWitt



Photo by PAUL NANI

The Grace Church Sunday School participated in a Youth Service on All Saints Day on Nov. 1 (some still wearing their All Hallows Eve costumes). It was the first time most parishioners returned to the church for in-person worship on Sundays, but the service was also streamed live by those who preferred virtual participation, made possible by the technical expertise of Kevin Boyle and John Skinner. Shown above is Fr. John Covington (left) with Sunday School members Tyson Skinner, Sofia and Emilio Aponte, and Naomi Boyle. Not shown (those who participated remotely): Sarah and Paul Goonan, and Tyler, Haley and Isabelle Bendler. The Sunday School is planning a special Christmas Eve Pageant with both online and in-person presentations.

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For additional information about the Community Center, or if you are interested in conducting classes here please call 718-885-1145.

Seasons greetings from the board of the City Island Community Center. This year's holiday season looks and feels very different from last year, but one thing that's remained the same is the support of our members and local community. Like so many other City Island businesses and organizations, the Center has struggled to get through these difficult months. We have had to cancel all programming and get creative on how to cover the Center's expenses. Many of you helped by attending one of our outdoor Tag Sales and our most recent Holiday Gift Basket sale. To all of those members and residents who came to support us, we are grateful!

A special recognition must be given to a few exemplary community members. A heartfelt thank you to Joe Briody and Dennis Owens for their generous donations to the Center. This support allowed us to make necessary repairs to the boiler just in time for the chilly fall weather.

Another way you can help support the City Island Community Center is by becoming an official member. Our Membership Drive continues! If you need a renewal form, please call 718-885-1145, and we will mail one. For up-to-date information, visit www.cityislandcommunity-center.org or call 718-885-1145, or Like us on Facebook and check FB for any changes in classes.

The Center is vigilantly watching all Covid-19 data and safety protocols, and we are following all the strict guidelines to make sure that all of our members and guests remain protected. Given recent spikes and higher positivity rates in our city and county, the Center is limited in what programs we can allow, and we can only have a maximum of only 10 participants per program.

Approved Programs

AA Meeting: Saturdays and Sundays at 7:30 a.m. All are welcome.

NA Meeting: Thursdays at 7 p.m. All are welcome.

City Island Culinary Club: Second and fourth Mondays at 7 p.m. Share recipes and have fun with other Islanders who like to cook. For information, call Kenny Selesky at 917-533-7873.

We wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season.

Melissa Cebollero

Temple Beth-El

Temple Beth-El (TBE), "your shul by the sea," is a stimulating non-denominational, welcoming place for observance of Jewish traditions. Jewish Renewal is the style of our deeply spiritual, innovative, all-inclusive and open-minded worship. All Temple offerings are online via Zoom. Many tutorials for registering a new free Zoom account are available online. You do not need an account to join our offerings. To participate in any of our offerings please e-mail yourshulbythesea@gmail.com, and identify which you would like to attend.

For the months of December and January, Rabbi David Evan Markus will lead Friday night Shabbat services on Dec. 11, 25, Jan. 8, 22 and 29. Other services will be community led on Dec. 4, 18, Jan. 1 and 15. Please see our calendar for our community-led Havdalah services. All services are held in a joyful celebratory manner.

From Dec. 10 through the 17th via Zoom, we will be offering Chanukah Candle lighting, together apart at 6 p.m.

On Jan. 23, at 7 p.m. Havdalah Game Night will be a fundraiser for breast cancer research.

Tu B'Shevat will be held on Jan. 31 at 4 p.m. Get ready for a journey of taste, touch and feel.

To members we offer Torah study, mystical teachings, ethics study, social gatherings and rabbinic office hours. For the community we also offer meditation, yoga, qi gong/tai chi and Feldenkrais classes, suitable for all persons, ages, body types and experience levels. Pre-registration is required. Suggested freewill offering: \$10 per session. All classes and services begin promptly, so sign in 10 to 15 minutes early. A schedule can be found on our website, www.yourshulbythesea.org. We look forward to seeing you.

Chesed Committee: If you need a helping hand, a caring call, a ride to the doctor, etc., please let us know. If you have love to give, we need your support. No experience required. To seek support and/or to volunteer, please e-mail us at yourshulbythesea@gmail.com.

Prayer Group: TBE has an informal prayer group to hold members, friends and family in prayer for healing. If you feel called to join this group, please e-mail us at yourshulbythesea@gmail.com.

Our newsletter has returned to a monthly schedule; if you would like to be on our mailing list, please e-mail us. For additional information and membership opportunities, check out our website, www.yourshulbythesea.org.

The entire TBE community offers prayers and best wishes to all during these unprecedented times.

Paul Klein

Grace Episcopal Church

The coronavirus has altered many aspects of our lives. People are confused and frightened and dealing with almost unprecedented uncertainty. As we explore new and different ways of living together, many of us find comfort in those things that are constant: family, dear friends, worship (in whatever form) and our congregation at Grace Church.

Our sincere thanks to Kevin Boyle and John Skinner, who are making it possible for us to connect and worship together on a regular basis. On Sundays at 10 a.m. we have our online church service. Please join our 10 a.m. Sunday service from your computer, tablet or smartphone via <https://www.gotomeet.me/JohnSkinner1>. You can also dial in using your phone: 571-317-3122 Access Code: 386-753-157. Are you new to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/386753157>.

Grace Church is now open for prayer between 2 and 3 p.m. each Wednesday. The church is located at 116 City Island Avenue, on the corner of Pilot Street. Those who are not able to attend in person are invited to pray at home. Feel free to visit at any time during the hour. Please enter by the main entrance, and a church member will seat you. Observe social distancing; the use of a mask is required, and hand sanitizer will be available at the door. Please join us for a time of prayer, with masks on, sitting socially and safely distanced in the pews. We pray for each other, for ourselves, the sick, the lonely, the caregivers. And as Father John Covington suggests: "Find a moment to be thankful for our lives and those things that bring us comfort and joy."

Our congregation will endure. Vestry is continuing to hold monthly online meetings coordinated by our Senior Warden, Bruce Weis. A vestry committee is also planning to live-stream our Sunday Service, along with plans for our eventual return to public worship. Paul Nani reports that Cuba, our sexton, checks on the building daily; our treasurer, Kathy Lonergan, sorts the mail and visits the office during the week; and Evyonne Baker, our volunteer office assistant, is continually updating our website, which now has Father Covington's sermons posted.

Members of the Grace Church Sunday School participated in a hybrid virtual/in-person Youth Service on Nov. 1, All Saints Day. It was a wonderful way to return to church and celebrate the memory of the many "saints" who have served Grace over the years. Mrs. Nani looks forward to meeting again in person or virtually with her Sunday School for the Pageant on Christmas Eve, Dec. 24. If you would like to be part of Grace's Sunday School and the Christmas Pageant, call Karen Nani at 917-853-4401 or e-mail her at karenrn1@optonline.net. There will be one rehearsal, on Sunday, Dec. 20.

Our music ministry is introducing a new opportunity for all to participate in music during our worship services. No prior musical experience necessary. Contact Caroline Coppola, Minister of Music, for more information and a demonstration of our hand

chimes (geccimusic@gmail.com).

When it is safe to do so, the GraceTones are eager to return to singing for residents at area nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, as well as supporting local businesses with shows featuring hymns about the power of God's eternal grace, love and joy. We wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

Sandy Dunn

St. Mary, Star of the Sea

Masses continue to be celebrated: Weekdays, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. and Vigil, 5:15 p.m.; Sunday, 9 and 11 a.m. Advent begins Sunday, Nov. 29. This is a special period of preparation extending over the four Sundays before Christmas. The word Advent comes from the Latin *advenio*, "to come to," and refers to the coming of Our Savior, Jesus Christ. The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe is Dec. 12. Christmas Masses will be celebrated Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, at 8 p.m., and on Christmas Day, Dec. 25, at 9 and 11 a.m. New Year's Day Masses are as follows: Dec. 31 at 5:15 p.m. and Jan. 1 at 9 and 11 a.m.

OLA/St. Mary, Star of the Sea's new Archdiocese's "Family Based Parish Religious Education" program is well under way; thank you to our teachers, parents and students who have undertaken this new way of teaching and learning our faith. If you have any questions regarding the program, please don't hesitate to contact Teri Kurtz at the Religious Education office, 718-885-1440, or by e-mail at smsrled@yahoo.com.

Lessons and Carols will not take place this year due to the pandemic. We look forward to this wonderful performance next year.

Because of the pandemic, Christmas giving through Part of the Solution (POTS) will not be accepting clothing donations this year; however, a monetary donation can be sent to the attention of Angela Colard, Part of the Solution, 2759 Webster Avenue, Bronx, NY, 10458-3708. Checks should be made out to Part of the Solution (POTS); put Christmas (SMSS) in the memo section of your check.

St. Mary's annual Christmas Fair will take place Saturday, Dec. 5, and Sunday, Dec. 6, on the school grounds from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come and find the perfect gift.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a blessed and Happy New Year!

Rose Dietz and Teri Kurtz

St. Mary's Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop's temporary home will be the St. Mary's School gymnasium, which will be open on Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. We are preparing for our "No Frills" Christmas Fair, to be held on Dec. 5 and 6, and we will continue to sell Christmas items until we close on Dec. 19; we will reopen on Jan. 7, 2021.

Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year.

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Judges

The untimely death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was an inspiration for the topic of this column. In 2018 there were two films released about this superb jurist. The documentary **RBG** is an intimate portrait that chronicles her career and the development of her legal legacy. The film is a biographical depiction of Ginsburg from her birth in Brooklyn, her college education and subsequent career as a law professor, her appointment to the federal judiciary by President Jimmy Carter, and eventual appointment to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton. With unprecedented access, the filmmakers explore how her early legal battles changed the world for women. The film includes interviews with feminist icon Gloria Steinem and NPR's Nina Totenberg on Ginsburg's trailblazing career focused on women's rights. It even features a wonderful vignette of her exercise routine.

On the Basis of Sex (2018) is a dramatization of Ruth Bader Ginsburg as a struggling attorney and new mother who faces adversity and numerous obstacles in her fight for equal rights. When Ruth (Felicity Jones) takes on a tax case with her husband, attorney Martin Ginsburg (Armie Hammer), she knows it could change the direction of her career and the way the courts view gender discrimination. The way she attacks the case is groundbreaking as she believes that if a *man* is unfairly discriminated against on the basis of sex, that precedent could be cited in cases challenging laws that discriminate against women.

A yearly classic holiday staple is the original **Miracle on 34th Street** (1947), starring Edmund Gwenn as Kris Kringle, the last minute stand-in for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade Santa as a kindly old man with whiskers. Kris is hired by bitterly-divorced mom, Doris Walker (Maureen O'Hara), who has taught her daughter, Susan (Natalie Wood), to be realistic about life, and that there is no Santa Claus. Romantic interest is provided by neighbor Fred Gailey (John Payne), a lawyer who takes on the task of proving that Kris is Santa Claus. Featured in the film is Gene Lockhart as Judge Henry X. Harper, who is faced with the dilemma of possibly declaring Kris Kringle insane. Being a judge is an elected position, and he depends on voter approval to keep his job. His campaign manager, Charlie Halloran (William Frawley), fears that this case will be a disaster.

Judgement at Nuremberg (1961) is the greatest judge movie ever made. It tells the story of the aftermath of WWII when in 1948, a series of trials were held in Nuremberg, Germany, by an international tribunal headed by American legal and military officials. The intent was to bring to justice those guilty of crimes against humanity. This film is a dramatized version of the proceedings at one such trial against four German judges—most notably Dr. Ernst Janning (Burt Lancaster) and Emil Hahn (Werner Klemperer)—accused of knowingly sentencing innocent men to death in collusion with the Nazis. Judge Dan Haywood (Spencer Tracy) is overseeing the trials, while Maximilian Schell gives an Oscar-winning performance as defense attorney Hans Rolfe. The film features notable supporting performances by Marlene Dietrich, Judy Garland and Montgomery Clift and was nominated for 11 Academy Awards.

Star Chamber (1983) stars Michael Douglas as Judge Steven Hardin, who is increasingly discouraged when several criminals go free on technicalities. Acknowledging Hardin's perspective, his colleague Benjamin Caulfield (Hal Hol-

brook) is also disgusted by the failures of the legal system, and introduces him to the Star Chamber, a secret organization that condones vigilante action in cases where justice has not been served. However, when the group "sentences" two criminals to death, and Hardin finds them falsely accused, he clashes with the powerful group. Sharon Gless is featured as Hardin's wife, Emily; James B. Sikking as grieving father, Harold Lewin; and Yaphet Kotto as hard-working Detective Harry Lowes.

My Cousin Vinny (1992) is a delightful comedy set in Alabama where two friends Bill (Ralph Macchio) and Stan (Mitchell Whitfield) are traveling when they are mistakenly arrested and charged with murder. Desperate and afraid, Bill calls his cousin, New York lawyer Vinny Gambini (Joe Pesci). Unfortunately, Vinny has never won a case but remains undaunted as he heads to the Deep South accompanied by his girlfriend, Mona Lisa Vito (Marisa Tomei in her Oscar-winning Supporting Actress performance). The supporting cast also includes Bruce McGill as Sheriff Farley, Austin Pendleton as stuttering Attorney John Gibbons, and Lane Smith as expert witness James Trotter, whose testimony is blown out of the water by Mona in a hysterical courtroom scene. Brought to life by the incomparable Fred Gwynne, Judge Haller stands as a reminder that dignity and a bit of stuffiness are not inconsistent with doing justice in the courtroom.

In **Presumed Innocent** (1990), Chief Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), is accused of murdering a fellow PA, Carolyn Polhemus (Greta Scacchi), with whom he had been having an affair. His boss, Raymond Horgan (Brian Dennehy), thinks he did it; his lawyer Sandy Stern (Raul Julia) doesn't know; and his friend Detective Dan Lipranzer (John Spencer) isn't sure either. Other fine performances include Bonnie Bedelia as Rusty's neglected wife Barbara, and Paul Winfield as the formidable Judge Larren Lyttle, who harbors some secrets of his own.

Based on the John Grisham novel, **The Pelican Brief** (1993) stars Julia Roberts as Darby Shaw, a Tulane University law student who has developed a theory about why two Supreme Court Judges have been murdered. When her lover, law professor Thomas Callahan (Sam Shepard), shares her thesis with his best friend, Gavin Verheek (John Heard) in Washington, murder and mayhem ensue. Eventually Darby hooks up with reporter Gray Grantham (Denzel Washington) in an attempt to survive and expose the conspiracy. Stanley Tucci is excellent as the assassin Khamel, who has a different persona in every scene.

Primal Fear (1996) stars Richard Gere as Martin Vail, a famous defense lawyer who, believing his client to be innocent, takes the case of Aaron Stampler (Edward Norton), a Kentucky teenager charged with the murder of a Chicago archbishop. Assigned to prosecute is Assistant DA Janet Venable (Laura Linney), Vail's ex-girlfriend. The case becomes more complicated than Vail expected when a psychologist, Dr. Molly Arrington (Frances McDormand), concludes that Stampler suffers from multiple personality disorder. The shocking ending twist made this film a box office hit and earned Norton, in his screen debut, an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor. Alfre Woodard is excellent and memorable in her role as the no-nonsense Judge Shoat.

Absence of Malice (2003) stars Paul Newman as Michael Gallagher, an honest liquor distributor whose family has mafia connections. He comes to the attention of Miami reporter Megan Carter (Sally Field), based on false information she receives from ambitious FBI investigator Elliot Rosen (Bob Balaban). Melinda Dillon is outstanding as Michael's fragile best friend, Teresa. Wilfred Brimley has a standout role, appearing only in a final scene as a judge trying to determine the truth.

The Judge (2014) stars Robert Downey Jr. as Hank Palmer, a brilliant but shady attorney who returns to his Indiana hometown upon the death of his mother. His arrival triggers renewed tension between

himself and his father, Judge Joseph Palmer (Robert Duvall), who makes no secret of his disapproval of Hank's ambitious career. When Judge Palmer is arrested for a hit-and-run death, Hank takes his father's case, despite the objections of the resentful old man. The excellent cast also includes Billy Bob Thornton as the prosecuting attorney, Vincent D'Onofrio and Jeremy Strong as Hank's brothers, Vera Farmiga as a former girlfriend, and Ken Howard as the judge in charge of the murder case.

The Children Act (2017) is a law in England that puts the welfare of a child above all else. When British High Court Judge Fiona Maye (Emma Thompson) is in the middle of a marital crisis with her husband, Jack (Stanley Tucci), she must decide if she should order a life-saving blood transfusion for a teen with leukemia, Adam Henry (Fionn Whitehead). He and his family are Jehovah's Witnesses and refuse the medical treatment for religious reasons. Before making her decision, in an unusual move, Judge Maye goes to see Adam in the hospital. Unfortunately, the film descends into melodrama, but Emma Thompson is riveting in the role.

Marshall (2017) is a biographical legal drama starring the recently deceased rising star Chadwick Boseman as Thurgood Marshall, the first African American Supreme Court Justice. The film focuses on one of the first cases of his career, the State of Connecticut v. Joseph Spell, wherein he faces one of his greatest challenges while working as a lawyer for the NAACP. When wealthy socialite Eleanor Strubing (Kate Hudson) accuses black chauffeur Joseph Spell (Sterling K. Brown) of sexual assault and attempted murder, Marshall travels to conservative Connecticut to represent the accused. Teaming up with Sam Friedman (Josh Gad), a local Jewish lawyer who has never handled a criminal case, the men build a defense while contending with racist and anti-Semitic views from those who believe Spell to be guilty. James Cromwell appears as the racist Judge Foster.

The Trial of the Chicago 7 (2020) is based on the infamous 1969 trial of seven defendants charged by the federal government with responsibility for the riots at 1968 Democratic National Convention. Among the defendants are Tom Hayden (Eddie Redmayne) and Rennie Davis (Alex Sharp), who are the leaders of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS); Abbie Hoffman (Sacha Baron Cohen) and Jerry Rubin (Jeremy Strong), who are the leaders of the Youth International Party (Yippies); David Dellinger (John Carroll Lynch), leader of the Mobilization to end the war (MOBE); and Bobby Seale (Yahya Abdul-Mateen II), National Chairman of the Black Panther Party. Other key roles include Fred Hampton (Kelvin Harrison Jr.), chairman of Illinois Chapter of the Black Panther Party; William Kunstler (the wonderful Mark Rylance) and Leonard Weinglass (Ben Shenkman), the defense counsels; Richard Schultz (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) and Tom Foran (J.C. MacKenzie) the federal prosecutors; and Attorney General Ramsey Clark (Michael Keaton). The perfectly horrendous Judge Julius Hoffman is played spectacularly by Frank Langella. Aaron Sorkin, creator of the TV series "The West Wing," has written and directed a very timely film that demonstrates how perceptions from that period in time have filtered down to current day politics.

And until next time, stay healthy, and happy viewing...

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50 YEARS OF DECEMBER ISLAND CURRENTS



December is winter; autumn disappeared last month with the last leaves rustling down a quiet street.

This is the month of winter's first sounds: the moan and howl of the frigid winds, the sibilant whistle of blowing snow... Little wonder the Indians called it the month of the Cold Moon.

To the observant eye - only recently dazzled by autumn's flame and fire - it seems that all color and life too have vanished. Yet - on looking closer one becomes aware of the unmistakable signs of life - the evergreens - pine, spruce and fir have no leafless season. They outlast the winds and snow and frost. They are living reassurance of enduring life. And closer to the ground, winter berries burn crimson-bright, like tiny warm heart-beats in the snow.

Teddy Mazaika

As the holidays approach, there isn't a place in our land that does not feel the excitement and wonder of celebration. The land becomes a festival of gaiety and light.

In this month of sharp contrasts, we give birth to thoughts we harbor only too infrequently during the year... feelings of hope, thoughts of peace, an inner tranquility and good will that we share more openly with our fellow man.

And to all City Islanders - those residing on our lovely little island - and those far, far away - but in whose hearts thoughts of and pride in City Island have never been extinguished - we express our sincere greetings on this joyous season.

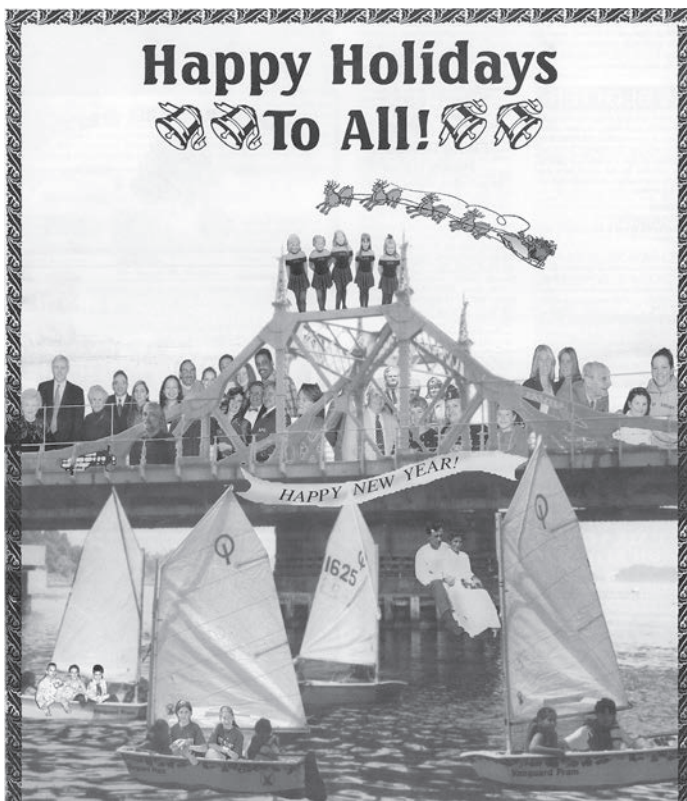


Georgine Sheridan

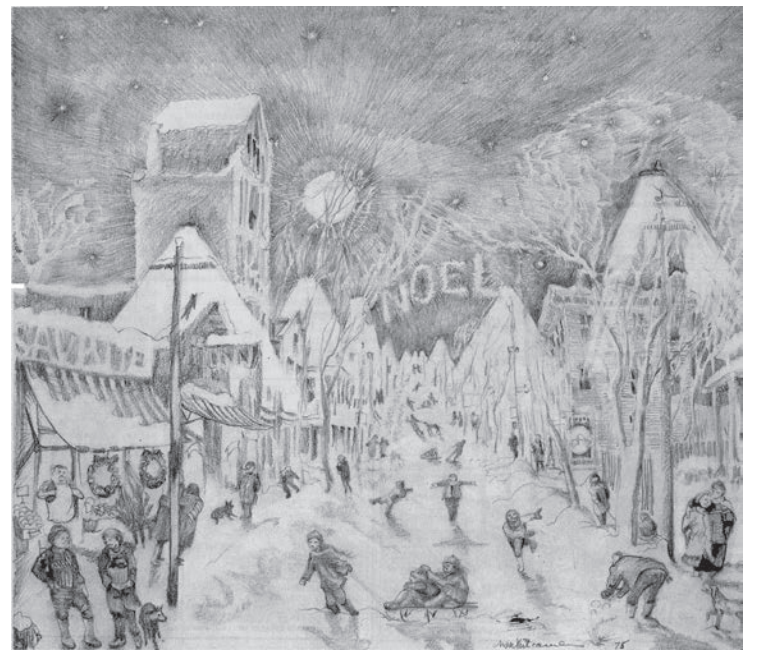
City Island is well known for its talented artists, several of whom have enriched *The Island Current* over the years with works of art celebrating the holidays. Featured here are a few of the wonderful covers by Marguerite Chadwick-Juner, Mark Whitcombe and Georgine Sheridan. The cover of the December 1987 issue (above) was more than a work of art; it was an eloquent editorial celebrating the holiday season with optimism, something we could use a lot more of these days. The artist, Theodore Mazaika, known to all as Teddy, contributed for many years to *The Current*; he designed the masthead of the paper, as well as several column logos, including the Talebearer and Marsha's Movie Mania. A longtime resident of the Island, Teddy was a well-known commercial artist who designed trademarks for such prominent companies as Paramount Pictures and Nestlé; he also inscribed scrolls and certificates for the Baseball Hall of Fame and the New York Police Department. He passed away in 1996, leaving his wife and his daughter, Susan Kraemer, and his granddaughters Tanya and Amanda, both artists in their own right.



Marguerite Chadwick-Juner



Marguerite Chadwick-Juner



Mark Whitcombe



Marguerite Chadwick-Juner



Mark Whitcombe

Happy Holidays!

To All Our Friends
And Neighbors
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and Locally!



Love Versus Fear: Sharing the Light With Our Children in Difficult Times

By JOHN SCARDINA, Certified School Psychologist

None of us could have imagined last December that our world would look so different just a year later. Now we are in the middle of a holiday season—Diwali and Thanksgiving having just passed, Hannukah and Christmas and Kwanzaa coming up—with the challenges of an ongoing pandemic and its accompanying uncertainty for our financial, physical and social well-being.

Some people will say that there are basically two ways to live one's life: on the basis of love and on the basis of fear. Love means opening up to one another, being grateful for the gifts of family and friends and looking toward the future with an open mind and an open heart. Fear means defending ourselves from one another, protecting our families and ourselves from the world and looking to the future with dread and grim determination.

As always, as we live in either love or fear, our children are watching and learning from us. How do we want to raise our children, as individuals open to the world or as individuals who need to battle against perceived enemies?

Most of our current holidays involve celebrations of light over darkness. We

light candles, look with awe upon the mysteries of our faith traditions and feel joy in the presence of loved ones. The lights are already up and lit along City Island Avenue, and the short days of winter are to be illuminated by the warm glow from our homes.


As we look to the new year may we choose light over darkness, love over fear and hope over despair. Our children will learn from us that being open and loving is the best choice in times of uncertainty. Blessings to all.



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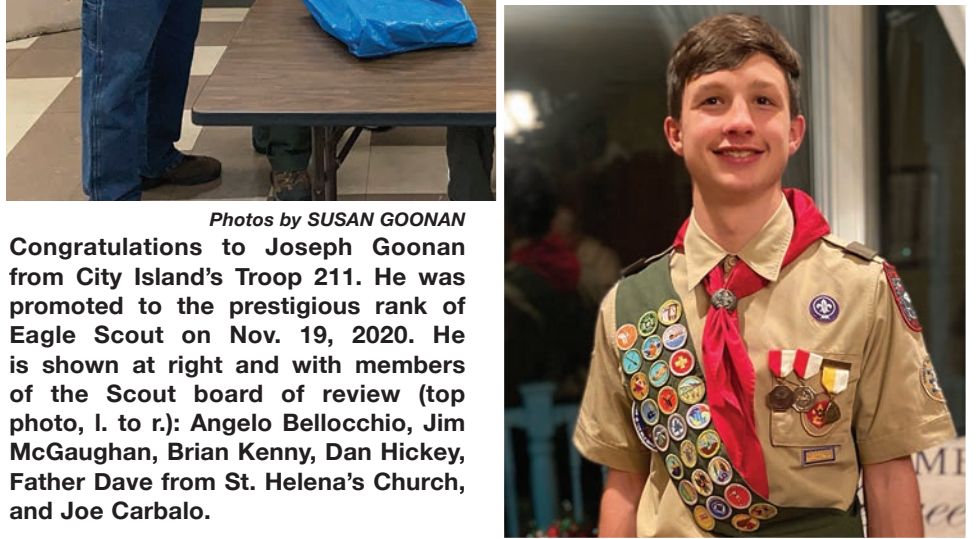
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**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
OUR VETERANS**



Photos by SUSAN GOONAN
Congratulations to Joseph Goonan from City Island's Troop 211. He was promoted to the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout on Nov. 19, 2020. He is shown at right and with members of the Scout board of review (top photo, l. to r.): Angelo Bellocchio, Jim McGaughan, Brian Kenny, Dan Hickey, Father Dave from St. Helena's Church, and Joe Carballo.

Holiday Island

Continued from page 9



Clipper Coffee

Take a break from deciding on dinner for the family and check out the day's dishes at **Chef Rafael's To-Go Express** (415 City Island Avenue), or get takeout from **City Island Chinese Restaurant** (84-86 City Island Avenue), or choose a daily

special from **Ray's Café** (205 City Island Avenue) or a selection from **Sea Breeze Deli** (325 City Island Avenue). There's also **Augie's City Island Deli** (520 City Island Avenue), or **Dunkin' Donuts** (636 City Island Avenue) for something in the morning.

And you're sure to find time to relax if your laundry is washed and folded by **Clam Digger's Laundromat** (323 City Island Avenue) or the **City Island Laundromat** (310 City Island Avenue).

You might want to kick back with a fine cigar from **Humberto Amadiz Cigars** (470 City Island Avenue), or even grab a box as a gift for a friend.

Waiting and Watching. Waiting for spring in the New Year, we'll watch for the return of the ice cream crew at **Lickety Split** (295 City Island Avenue), and the fried shrimp, clam strips and more from **Johnny's Reef Restaurant** (2 City Island Avenue). Maybe the New Year will see the opening of two Island eateries in the making: **Anthony's** (273 City Island Avenue) and **Caliente** (414 City Island Avenue). And we will all wait for the return of fabulous productions from the **City Island Theater Group** (CITG). You can always visit the CITG's website (CityIslandTheaterGroup.com) to learn about past shows and to become a supporter.

This year especially, City Island's shops, galleries, restaurants, cafés and businesses are here to offer everything you need to celebrate being "home for the holidays"!

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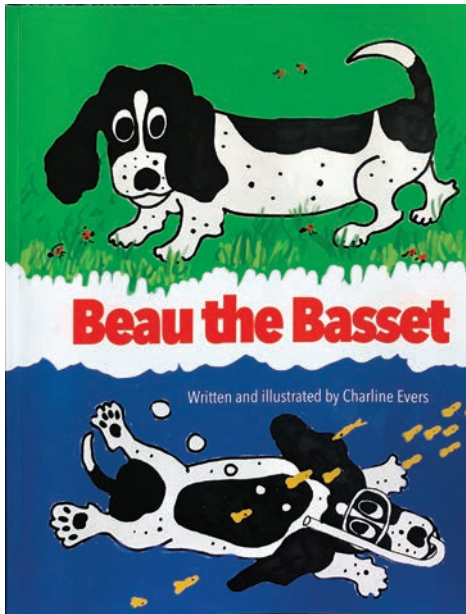


Merry Christmas
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A Current Review

Beau the Basset
Written and Illustrated by Charline Evers



book celebrates his personality and the special place he held in his family's life.

Charline, a lifelong lover of dogs, grew up near a beach in Playa del Rey, CA, and moved to New York after graduating from college and joining the Teachers Corps. She earned her master's degree at New York University and worked for many years as a teacher, specializing in reading, art and computer technology. She and her husband, Charles, have lived on City Island for many years, raising two daughters, and although they traveled widely, they still managed to have dogs in their life.

In this colorful book, Charline's images of Beau and his dreams (yes, dogs do dream!) are enhanced by suggestions for young readers to explore and a brief album of photographs showing the original Beau at home with Charline and her sister, Mary.

The book is available on City Island at Kaleidoscope Gallery, 280 City Island Avenue, at the corner of Hawkins Street, or from *Amazon.com*.

Everyone with children and dog lovers on their holiday gift lists need look no farther than this charming book by Island resident Charline Evers. A loving tribute to Beau, Charline's childhood pet, the

In The Garden

By MARY COLBY



Photos by MARY COLBY

The marshlands behind P.S. 17, where new indigenous plants are replacing weeds and trash.

Marshland and Trees for Winter Interest

The other day, Rose Rodstrom came into my shop to say hello and happily told me all about the City Island Oyster Reef project and the new marsh plantings that are going in behind P.S. 175 on City Island, where the Nevins Yacht Yard docks used to be located.

As Rose explained it to me, there are three kinds of marshes: inland fresh water, tidal fresh water, and tidal salt marsh, which is what we have here on City Island. She also told me about the high marsh and low marsh, subtidal and intertidal. Oh boy, I really started getting interested, so I took a walk over to Orchard Beach and its surrounding environs to take in the tidal marshlands and the beautiful flora and fauna that it supports. I quickly realized how unusual and rare is the area in which we live because of the marshlands, and that creating a new one with indigenous or native plants is quite exciting.

Someone was bicycling by my studio while I was sitting outside, and he almost got past. It was Paul Mankiewicz coming back from working on the site behind P.S. 175. We talked about meadow and marsh, and I asked him to send a list of the native plants going in there. Dr. Paul explained that the Oyster Reef is planting an upland meadow and scrub community overlooking Long Island Sound and a high marsh downslope toward the water's edge. Land at this level is under water, but only twice each moon cycle, during the highest monthly tides. These are now uncommon lands in and around New York, since most have been filled in. I got to thinking about a garden that I had helped to create on Eastchester Bay that floods in high winds and learned how tidal scrub plants could be used there.

Hibiscus moscheutos, Eupatorium serotinum and Verbena hastata were on Paul's list, along with Panicum virgatum and Elymus virginicus grasses. Their exotic common names seem to hold out hope and promise of flowers to arrive with a grassy meadow: swamp rose mallow, late-flowering boneset, vervain, switchgrass, Virginia wild rye. These are hard to come by as plants, so they will be grown from seed. Living by the sea always comes with stresses of sun, sand and salt. So only these beings that thrive in spray off the Sound can become green and fill this rise up from the edge of the high marsh with life

Janie Blanks told me how they had to pull many weeds (especially ragweed) and move many rocks to make a home for the roots and shoots of a few hundred of these upland meadow plants: staghorn sumac,

serviceberry, switch grass, little bluestem grass, milkweed, evening primrose, and early, white and gray goldenrod. And further down the slope, Rose and Paul, along with helpers, planted as least 150 Distichlis spicata and Junus gerardii, plugs of salt-grass and salt meadow rush, in order to enlarge this rare high marsh right on our coast. I can't wait to see the beginnings of this restored area next spring.

It is nearly December and on the 21st it will be winter. With Covid-19 on the rise, it is lucky that we live in a landscape that is made up of forest, meadow and marsh. It is for your well-being to get out there, so bundle up.

Winter months in the garden have always been as important to me as any other. A well-balanced planting of evergreens and tawny grasses enliven the garden with its tracery of trees, whether they are your own or come from the borrowed landscape. Here is a list of some smaller trees that are very comely in the winter months. Plant at least one to enjoy.

1. Acer griseum: This paperbark maple is a small tree. During the bleakest time of year, the bark peels in a cinnamon brown color.

2. Acer Pensylvanicum: A native with striped green bark.

3. Betula jacquemontii: The Himalayan birch with the whitest of all paper bark. It looks good in groves or singly.

4. Cornus kousa: With age this dogwood has platy patches of bark that fall away and reveal bright colored bark of brown, yellow and green.

5. Corkscrew hazel: When the leaves drop, it shows off twisted curly branches.

6. Crape myrtle: The only tree that blooms in August with great plumes of red, pink or white. Its bark is one of the most beautiful—smooth and flaky in different colors of gray, brown and pink.

7. Mugo pine. Beautiful if something less than four feet is required; evergreen.

8. Abies Koreana Horstmann's silberlocke. My favorite evergreen small tree. This rare conifer has soft curly, two-toned needles, dark green on one side and frosty white on the other. Truly superb.

Now I'm pulling on my rubber boots to begin raking the leaves and to compost them in my new leaf shredder. Oak leaves will become mulch to enrich the soil for the coming season. A good helping of wood ash completes the task, and then it's time to mull the cider and kick back for a long winter's rest. Be of good cheer, better times are on the wing.

Happy and safe holidays to all.

Mary Colby is available for consultation, garden plans and installation. Call 917-804-4509.

The Artist (Starving Artist)
wishes one and all "Happy Holidays"!
While we can't celebrate the Holiday Season
in person at The Artist,
join us each Saturday night at 8 PM
on Facebook LIVE (you don't need Facebook account)
(at this web address: <https://bit.ly/ArtistLIVEHome>)
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St. Mary Star of the Sea Church

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2020

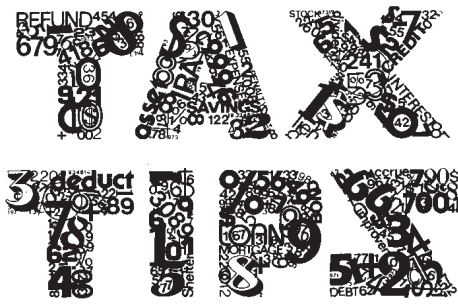
RECONCILIATION MONDAY, DECEMBER 21
Confessions:
4:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M. & 7:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.

CHRISTMAS EVE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24
Carols: 7:30 PM
Mass: 8:00 PM

CHRISTMAS DAY FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25
Masses: 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM

NEW YEAR'S EVE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31
Mass: 5:15 PM

NEW YEAR'S DAY/ST. MARY MOTHER OF GOD FRIDAY, JANUARY 1
Masses: 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM
(A HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION)



From EDWARD D. HEBEN, C.P.A.

Tax Preparation vs. Tax Planning

Many people assume that tax planning is the same as tax preparation, but the two are quite different. Let's take a closer look:

Tax preparation is the process of preparing and filing a tax return. Generally, it is a one-time event that culminates in signing your return and finding out whether you owe the IRS money or will be receiving a refund.

For most people, tax preparation involves one or two trips to your accountant (CPA), generally around tax time (i.e., between January and April), to hand over any financial documents necessary to prepare your return and then to sign it. They will also make sure that any tax reporting on your return complies with federal and state tax law.

Alternatively, individual taxpayers may use an enrolled agent, attorney or tax preparer who doesn't necessarily have a professional credential. For simple returns, some individuals prepare tax returns themselves and file them with the IRS. No matter who prepares your tax return, however, you expect them to be trustworthy (you will be entrusting them with your personal financial details), to be skilled in tax preparation and to accurately file your income tax return in a timely manner.

Tax planning is a year-round process (as opposed to a seasonal event) and is a separate service from tax preparation. Both individuals and business owners can take advantage of tax planning services, which are typically performed by a CPA and an accounting firm or an Enrolled Agent (EA) with in-depth experience and knowledge of tax law, rather than a tax preparer.

Examples of tax planning include the following: Bunching expenses (e.g., medical) to maximize deductions, tax-loss harvesting to offset investment gains, increasing retirement plan contributions to defer income, and determining the best timing for capital expenditures to reap the tax benefits. Good recordkeeping is also an important part of tax planning and makes it easier to pay quarterly estimated taxes, for example, or to prepare tax returns the following year.

Tax planning is something that most taxpayers do not take advantage of but should, because it can help minimize their tax liability on next year's tax return by planning ahead. While it may mean spending more time with an accountant, say quarterly—or even monthly—the tax benefit is usually worth it. By reviewing past returns, an accountant will have a clearer picture of what you can do this year to save money on next year's tax return.

Year-End Tax Planning Strategies for Individuals

With the end of the year fast approaching, now is the time to take a closer look at tax planning strategies you can use to minimize your tax burden for 2020.

General tax planning strategies for individuals include accelerating or deferring income and deductions, as well as the careful consideration of timing-related tax planning strategies concerning investments, charitable gifts and retirement planning.

If you anticipate an increase in taxable income in 2020 and are expecting a bonus at year-end, try to get it before Dec. 31.

Contractual bonuses are different, in that they are typically not paid out until the first quarter of the following year. Therefore, any taxes owed on a contractual bonus would not be due until you file your 2021 tax return in 2022.

Deductible expenses such as medical expenses and charitable contributions can be prepaid this year using a credit card. This strategy works because deductions may be taken based on when the expense was charged on the credit card, not when the bill was paid. Likewise, with checks. For example, if you charge a medical expense in December but pay the bill in January, assuming it's an eligible medical expense, it can be taken as a deduction on your 2020 tax return.

Medical expenses. Medical expenses are deductible only to the extent they exceed a certain percentage of adjusted gross income (AGI); therefore, you might pay medical bills in whichever year they would do you the most tax good. To deduct medical and dental expenses in 2020, these amounts must exceed 7.5 percent of AGI. By bunching medical expenses into one year, rather than spreading them out over two years, you have a better chance of exceeding the thresholds, thereby maximizing the deduction.

Unemployment Benefits. As a result of the Covid-19 crisis, individuals may have collected unemployment insurance benefits for the first time. Please be aware of the fact that this benefit is subject to tax, and that if you did not have federal and state taxes withheld you might very well be in for a tax liability surprise.

Stock options. If your company grants stock options, you may want to exercise the option or sell stock acquired by exercising an option this year. Use this strategy if you think your tax bracket will be higher in 2020. Generally, exercising this option is a taxable event; the sale of the stock is almost always a taxable event.

Accelerating or Deferring Income and Deductions. Strategies that are commonly used to help taxpayers minimize their tax liability include accelerating or deferring income and deductions. Which strategy you use depends on your current tax situation. Most taxpayers anticipate increased earnings from year to year, whether it's from a job or investments, so this strategy works well. On the flip side, however, if you anticipate a lower income next year or know you will have significant medical bills, you might want to consider deferring income and expenses to the following year.

In cases where tax benefits are phased out over a certain adjusted gross income (AGI) amount, a strategy of accelerating income and deductions might allow you to claim larger deductions, credits, and other tax breaks for 2020, depending on your situation. Roth IRA contributions, child tax credits, higher education tax credits and deductions for student loan interest are examples of these types of tax benefits. Accelerating income into 2020 is also a good idea if you anticipate being in a higher tax bracket next year. This is especially true for taxpayers whose earnings are close to threshold amounts that make them liable for the Additional Medicare Tax or Net Investment Income Tax (\$200,000 for single filers and \$250,000 for married filing jointly).

Taxpayers close to threshold amounts for the Net Investment Income Tax (3.8 percent of net investment income) should pay close attention to "one-time" income spikes such as those associated with Roth conversions, sale of a home or any other large asset that may be subject to tax. Examples of accelerating income include: (1) Paying an estimated state tax installment in December instead of at the January due date. However, make sure the payment is based on a reasonable estimate of your state tax; (2) Paying your entire prop-

erty tax bill, including installments due in 2021, by year-end. This does not apply to mortgage escrow accounts; (3) A prepayment of anticipated real property taxes that have not been assessed prior to 2021 is not deductible in 2020; (4) Under TCJA, the deduction for state and local taxes (SALT) was capped at \$10,000. Once a taxpayer reaches this limit the two strategies above are not effective for federal returns; (5) Paying 2021 tuition in 2020 to take full advantage of the American Opportunity Tax Credit, an above-the-line tax credit worth up to \$2,500 per student that helps cover the cost of tuition, fees, and course materials paid during the taxable year. Forty percent of the credit (up to \$1,000) is refundable, which means you can get it even if you owe no tax.

Additional Medicare Tax. Taxpayers whose income exceeds certain threshold amounts (\$200,000 single filers and \$250,000 married filing jointly) are liable for an additional Medicare tax of 0.9 percent on their tax returns but may request that their employers withhold additional income tax from their pay to be applied against their tax liability when filing their 2020 tax return next April. As such, high net worth individuals should consider contributing to Roth IRAs and 401(k) because distributions are not subject to the Medicare Tax. Also, if you're a taxpayer who is close to the threshold for the Medicare Tax, it might make sense to switch Roth retirement contributions to a traditional IRA plan, thereby avoiding the 3.8 percent Net Investment Income Tax (NIIT) as well (more about the NIIT below).

Alternate Minimum Tax. The alternative minimum tax (AMT) applies to high-income taxpayers who take advantage of deductions and credits to reduce their taxable income. The AMT ensures that those taxpayers pay at least a minimum amount of tax and was made permanent under the American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA) of 2012. Furthermore, the exemption amounts increased significantly under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA), and the AMT is not expected to affect as many taxpayers. Also, in 2020 the phase-out threshold increased to \$518,400 (\$1,036,800 for married filing jointly). Both the exemption and threshold amounts are indexed for inflation. AMT exemption amounts for 2020 are as follows: \$72,900 for single and head of household filers; \$113,400 for married people filing jointly and for qualifying widows or widowers; \$56,700 for married people filing separately.

Charitable Contributions. Bunching charitable deductions every other year is a good strategy if it enables the taxpayer to get over the higher standard deduction threshold under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA). Another option is to put money into a donor-advised fund that enables donors to make a charitable contribution and receive an immediate tax deduction.

Under the CARES Act of 2020, eligible individuals in 2020 may take an above-the-line deduction of up to \$300 in cash for charitable contributions made to qualified charitable organizations. Cash contributions are those that are paid with cash, check, electronic fund transfer or payroll deduction. Taxpayers can claim the deduction even if they do not itemize on their 2020 taxes.

Property, as well as money, can be donated to a charity. You can generally take a deduction for the fair market value of the property; however, for certain property, the deduction is limited to your cost basis. While you can also donate your services to charity, you may not deduct the value of these services. You may also be able to deduct charity-related travel expenses and some out-of-pocket expenses, however.

Keep in mind that a written record of

your charitable contributions, including travel expenses such as mileage, is required to qualify for a deduction. A donor may not claim a deduction for any contribution of cash, a check or other monetary gift unless the donor maintains a record of the contribution in the form of either a bank record (such as a canceled check) or written communication from the charity (such as a receipt or a letter) showing the name of the charity, the date of the contribution and the amount of the contribution. Contributions of appreciated property (i.e. stock) provide an additional benefit because you avoid paying capital gains on any profit.

In addition to the \$300 above-the-line deduction for taxpayers who don't itemize, taxpayers who do itemize deductions can take advantage of another provision in the CARES Act that allows them to deduct cash donations to public charities in amounts of up to 100 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI), but only for tax year 2020. In 2019, the limit for the deduction for cash contributions was 60 percent of AGI.

Taxpayers who are 72 and older can reduce income tax owed on required minimum distributions (RMDs)—a maximum of \$100,000 or \$200,000 for married couples—from IRA accounts by donating them to a charitable organization(s) instead.

Investment Gains and Losses. Investment decisions are often more about managing capital gains than about minimizing taxes. For example, taxpayers below threshold amounts in 2020 might want to take gains, whereas taxpayers above threshold amounts might want to take losses.

The Net Investment Income Tax, which went into effect in 2013, is a 3.8 percent tax that is applied to investment income such as long-term capital gains for earners above a certain threshold amount (\$200,000 for single filers and \$250,000 for married taxpayers filing jointly). Short-term capital gains are subject to ordinary income tax rates as well as the 3.8 percent NIIT. This information is something to think about as you plan your long-term investments. Business income is not considered subject to the NIIT provided the individual business owner materially participates in the business.

Fluctuations in the stock market are commonplace; don't assume that a down market means investment losses as your cost basis may be low if you've held the stock for a long time. Minimize taxes on investments by judicious matching of gains and losses. Where appropriate, try to avoid short-term capital gains, which are taxed as ordinary income (i.e., the rate is the same as your tax bracket).

In 2020 tax rates on capital gains and dividends remain the same as 2019 rates (0%, 15%, and a top rate of 20%); however, threshold amounts have been adjusted for inflation as follows: 0% - Maximum capital gains tax rate for taxpayers with income up to \$40,000 for single filers, \$80,000 for married filing jointly; 15% - Capital gains tax rate for taxpayers with income above \$40,000 for single filers, \$80,000 for married filing jointly; 20% - Capital gains tax rate for taxpayers with income above \$441,450 for single filers, \$496,600 for married filing jointly.

Where feasible, reduce all capital gains and generate short-term capital losses up to \$3,000. As a general rule, if you have a large capital gain this year, consider selling an investment on which you have an accumulated loss. Capital losses up to the amount of your capital gains plus \$3,000 per year (\$1,500 if married filing separately) can be claimed as a deduction against income.

After selling a securities investment to generate a capital loss, you can repurchase it after 30 days. This is known as the "Wash Rule Sale." If you buy it back within

Continued on page 23

CITY ISLAND, NEW YORK
Times and heights of high and low water (Eastern Standard Time)
Heights in feet above soundings printed on charts of water adjacent to City Island. Times shown are nautical times. For times on the table beginning with 1300, subtract 1200 to get ordinary PM time (e.g., 1625 - 1200 = 4:25 P.M.). Times less than 1200 are A.M. times (e.g., 1154 = 11:54 A.M.).
HH = hours; MM = minutes Tide chart by Tom Smith

DECEMBER 2020

DAY	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	DAY
	HH:MM	FEET	HH:MM	FEET	HH:MM	FEET	HH:MM	FEET	
01 Tue	0516	0.69	1118	7.70	1803	0.04	2356	6.88	Tue 01
02 Wed	0550	0.67	1151	7.79	1831	0.04			Wed 02
03 Thu	0027	6.95	0629	0.68	1229	7.83	1907	0.08	Thu 03
04 Fri	0106	7.02	0714	0.73	1313	7.79	1950	0.15	Fri 04
05 Sat	0151	7.08	0802	0.79	1402	7.65	2037	0.24	Sat 05
06 Sun	0241	7.13	0856	0.85	1455	7.44	2129	0.33	Sun 06
07 Mon	0336	7.19	0955	0.84	1554	7.20	2227	0.38	Mon 07
08 Tue	0436	7.29	1104	0.73	1659	7.01	2331	0.35	Tue 08
09 Wed	0541	7.47	1229	0.44	1811	6.93			Wed 09
10 Thu	0042	0.21	0649	7.74	1352	-0.05	1928	6.99	Thu 10
11 Fri	0154	-0.03	0755	8.05	1457	-0.59	2038	7.15	Fri 11
12 Sat	0258	-0.29	0854	8.33	1554	-1.05	2139	7.31	Sat 12
13 Sun	0355	-0.50	0950	8.53	1649	-1.36	2233	7.43	Sun 13
14 Mon	0448	-0.60	1042	8.60	1740	-1.47	2326	7.47	Mon 14
15 Tue	0540	-0.58	1133	8.52	1831	-1.38			Tue 15
16 Wed	0018	7.44	0632	-0.42	1225	8.31	1921	-1.12	Wed 16
17 Thu	0110	7.34	0724	-0.16	1317	7.98	2012	-0.74	Thu 17
18 Fri	0204	7.20	0818	0.17	1413	7.58	2103	-0.29	Fri 18
19 Sat	0300	7.05	0916	0.50	1514	7.18	2156	0.15	Sat 19
20 Sun	0359	6.93	1017	0.78	1619	6.83	2250	0.53	Sun 20
21 Mon	0457	6.87	1119	0.95	1722	6.59	2344	0.81	Mon 21
22 Tue	0555	6.87	1218	0.99	1822	6.45			Tue 22
23 Wed	0037	0.98	0649	6.93	1315	0.91	1918	6.41	Wed 23
24 Thu	0128	1.04	0741	7.02	1407	0.75	2010	6.44	Thu 24
25 Fri	0215	1.03	0828	7.12	1455	0.55	2058	6.49	Fri 25
26 Sat	0258	0.99	0911	7.22	1540	0.35	2143	6.56	Sat 26
27 Sun	0335	0.92	0949	7.29	1620	0.17	2223	6.61	Sun 27
28 Mon	0404	0.82	1016	7.37	1655	0.03	2256	6.67	Mon 28
29 Tue	0428	0.70	1031	7.49	1726	-0.09	2319	6.75	Tue 29
30 Wed	0458	0.56	1057	7.66	1751	-0.19	2338	6.90	Wed 30
31 Thu	0535	0.42	1132	7.81	1822	-0.29			Thu 31
JANUARY 2021									
01 Fri	0010	7.13	0615	0.25	1213	7.98	1854	-0.40	Fri 01
02 Sat	0049	7.30	0700	0.18	1257	7.94	1934	-0.39	Sat 02
03 Sun	0132	7.42	0747	0.16	1345	7.78	2018	-0.32	Sun 03
04 Mon	0220	7.48	0839	0.19	1437	7.49	2106	-0.18	Mon 04
05 Tue	0312	7.48	0937	0.25	1533	7.13	2159	-0.01	Tue 05
06 Wed	0408	7.45	1044	0.30	1636	6.76	2258	0.17	Wed 06
07 Thu	0511	7.42	1212	0.24	1748	6.48			Thu 07
08 Fri	0008	0.29	0621	7.45	1339	-0.03	1915	6.40	Fri 08
09 Sat	0133	0.27	0738	7.57	1447	-0.41	2033	6.52	Sat 09
10 Sun	0248	0.12	0848	7.77	1546	-0.76	2136	6.74	Sun 10
11 Mon	0350	-0.08	0949	7.95	1641	-1.02	2231	6.96	Mon 11
12 Tue	0446	-0.24	1043	8.06	1732	0.11	2323	7.14	Tue 12
13 Wed	0538	-0.32	1135	8.06	1820	-1.08			Wed 13
14 Thu	0012	7.25	0627	-0.30	1224	7.93	1906	-0.88	Thu 14
15 Fri	0059	7.28	0715	-0.17	1311	7.70	1950	-0.57	Fri 15
16 Sat	0145	7.23	0801	0.05	1358	7.39	2033	-0.19	Sat 16
17 Sun	0230	7.12	0848	0.31	1445	7.03	2113	0.20	Sun 17
18 Mon	0317	6.97	0935	0.59	1535	6.66	2152	0.58	Mon 18
19 Tue	0407	6.82	1027	0.84	1630	6.34	2228	0.90	Tue 19
20 Wed	0459	6.69	1124	1.02	1730	6.10	2306	1.14	Wed 20
21 Thu	0555	6.63	1224	1.08	1830	5.98	2356	1.30	Thu 21
22 Fri	0650	6.64	1321	1.02	1927	5.98			Fri 22
23 Sat	0058	1.35	0742	6.74	1414	0.85	2020	6.09	Sat 23
24 Sun	0155	1.29	0829	6.89	1502	0.62	2107	6.26	Sun 24
25 Mon	0242	1.13	0909	7.09	1545	0.34	2149	6.47	Mon 25
26 Tue	0324	0.90	0939	7.32	1624	0.07	2224	6.70	Tue 26
27 Wed	0403	0.62	1006	7.58	1658	-0.19	2250	6.96	Wed 27
28 Thu	0442	0.31	1038	7.84	1730	-0.43	2317	7.25	Thu 28
29 Fri	0522	0.01	1117	8.03	1802	-0.63	2351	7.54	Fri 29
30 Sat	0604	-0.24	1158	8.12	1837	-0.74			Sat 30
31 Sun	0030	7.76	0649	-0.40	1243	8.06	1916	-0.76	Sun 31
FEBRUARY 2021									
01 Mon	0113	7.89	0736	-0.43	1330	7.85	1959	-0.64	Mon 01
02 Tue	0159	7.89	0827	-0.34	1421	7.48	2045	-0.41	Tue 02
03 Wed	0250	7.77	0924	-0.13	1517	7.02	2137	-0.08	Wed 03
04 Thu	0346	7.55	1036	0.11	1621	6.54	2237	0.29	Thu 04
05 Fri	0450	7.32	1213	0.21	1744	6.20			Fri 05



Photos by KAREN NANI

On Nov. 15, 2020, strong southerly winds, remnants of Hurricane Eta, which struck Central America and the Florida Keys, caused several boats to break from their moorings in Eastchester Bay and wind up in the spartina grass off the north end of the Island (top photo) and up near the City Island bridge. One of the boats was safely towed away the following day.



By JOHN SHERIDAN and MARIA SUTHERLAND

OWL PROWL

Regular readers of this column will recall that the snowy owl has been on our bird bucket list for a while now. This winter we are determined to check one off once and for all. It will not be easy, as sightings in the Bronx are few and far between. We will probably have to plan a road trip. This was not always the case, though. We have read that with the disappearance of ring-necked pheasant from Pelham Bay Park, snowy owls have been forced to find food mostly outside of the Bronx.

Don't misunderstand us: snowy owls have always been and remain occasional visitors to the environs of New York City. They are polar owls, after all, at home on the Arctic tundra. In acknowledgment of this, part of our plan for seeing snowy owls in our area this year includes the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird app. There is a hotspot feature to the app that alerts birders to specific locations of specific species. Without it, we would have been flying blind, so to speak, taking our chances at one of the following four popular locations for snowys: Floyd Bennett Field in Brooklyn, Breezy Point and Jamaica Bay in Queens or Jones Beach on Long Island. Floyd Bennett Field comes strongly recommended this year, but it's Brooklyn. And like many Bronxites, we don't know Brooklyn.

Owl season has already begun. Typically, New Yorkers can expect to see owls

in and around their city from October through March. Other occasional visitors, like the snowy, are barn owls and short-eared owls. On the other hand, there are the barred owls, great horned owls, long-eared owls and eastern screech owls. These species are much more common in our area. Pelham Bay Park, the New York (i.e., Bronx) Botanical Garden, Inwood Hill Park and Central Park, of course, are all well known homes for a variety of owl species. You can take regular walks in these parks in search of owls, or you can cheat and consult eBird. Like us!

Among birders, there was a lot of chatter this fall about the pine siskin irruption. Apparently, there was a seed shortage within the boreal forests of Canada, and so pine siskins were forced south in record numbers in search of food. Things were so bad for the little finches that they were discovered to have been migrating in the dark. And while migrating at night may not seem all that unusual for birds, we have been led to believe, in no uncertain terms, that it is exceedingly rare for the otherwise diurnal pine siskin.

Chickadees seem to have made it back from whatever it was that seemed to have kept their numbers down last fall and winter. We would like to think of their apparent comeback as an omen of good things to come. Here's to a Happy and Healthy—especially the latter—2021. Lord knows we can all use it. Chick – a – dee dee dee!



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL FROM CARMAN'S SERVICE STATION

Obituaries

The Current will print obituaries free of charge upon notification by a member of the deceased's immediate family. Call 718-885-0760 or write to P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464, including your telephone number.



Sister James Patrick

Sister James Patrick Kavanagh, O.P., former principal of St. Mary, Star of the Sea School on City Island, died on Oct. 24, 2020. She was 81.

The well-respected sister was principal at St. Mary, Star of the Sea for almost two decades, from 1985 to 2004. She continued to live on City Island until her death.

Born Mary Cecelia Kavanagh, she was the daughter of James and Anna Kavanagh of the Bronx. Sister James Patrick entered the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt in 1958 from Holy Spirit Parish in the Bronx, and she professed final vows in 1966.

With a bachelor's degree from Dominican College and a master's degree from Fairfield University, Sister James Patrick served for many years in ministry as an educator. She taught in Sacred Heart Academy and St. Theresa School in Jamaica, West Indies; St. Margaret of Antioch, Pearl River, NY; and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Tappan, NY. She then taught in the Bronx at Saints Philip and James School and St. Mary's School. After working as principal at City Island's Catholic school, she taught at St. Raymond's School and served as Assistant Superintendent for the Archdiocese of New York. Her final ministry was with Catapult Learning at St. Brendan School in the Bronx.

In addition to her religious congregation, Sister James Patrick is survived by her sister, Ann Seckler; and her brother and sister-in-law, James and Teresa Kavanagh; and by several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents and by her brother-in-law Arthur Seckler.

Memorial donations may be made to the Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, NY.



Jeanne Sadler Pezone

Jeanne Pezone of City Island passed away on Thursday, Oct. 22, 2020, surrounded by her loving family after a brief, courageous battle with cancer. She had recently moved to North Carolina.

Jeanne was born on Feb. 27, 1950, to Ed and Laura Sadler, and grew up in the family home on Schofield Street that

had been built by her great-grandfather around 1893. She was a member of Trinity Methodist Church and attended P.S. 17 and Christopher Columbus High School.

She married Ralph Pezone shortly after high school, and they resided on City Island for a while. Ralph joined the Navy, and they were stationed for a few years in Spain. After moving back to City Island, Jeanne became a member of the Garden Club of City Island. When her children attended P.S. 175, she always lent a helping hand. She was part of that core group of Islanders who could be relied on to get things done. She always put others before herself, and she did it with a humble heart, without fanfare.

From 1985 to 1995, Jeanne was the subscription manager of *The Island Current*. She was also part of the enthusiastic group of volunteers who kept the paper going, driving the staff to New Jersey or Connecticut to get the paper printed. Jeanne and her Bronco were ready to go at all times!

She moved to upstate New York as her children grew up and returned to City Island again to help care for her parents, Capt. Edward and Laura Sadler.

Jeanne was a loving and giving woman who brightened the room with her smile and laughter. She loved her Lord Jesus Christ and is now with Him forever. Her memory will always be a blessing to those who knew her.

Jeanne was predeceased by her husband, Ralph Pezone; her parents, and her sister, Bonnie Lalli. She is survived by her children, Jeff (Lisa) of Florida; Jennifer of New York; Jaime Pezone-Treat (William) of North Carolina; her brothers Edward Sadler Jr. and Richard Sadler; her grandchildren, Mark, Gianna, Ava, Michael, Lucas, Giuliana and Nicholas, and many other dear family members.

A memorial service for Jeanne was held on Nov. 14 at Pelham Cemetery on City Island and conducted by her Pastor Dave Sainz of Living Manna Church in Country Club. The family sends a special thank-you to the Fire Department of New York for the very special tribute to Jeanne as the daughter of Capt. Sadler, FDNY fireboat pilot, when a fireboat gave a water display off the beach while the Christian song "I Can Only Imagine" was played.



Tyler Rhodes

Cornelius Tyler Rhodes of Sloatsburg, NY, passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2020, at the age of 75. Tyler was born on Dec. 15, 1944, in the Bronx to the late Cornelius Joseph and Beatrice (Lanteri) Rhodes.

Over the years, Tyler was the owner of three highly successful restaurants, the Morris Park Inn in the Bronx, Rhodes North Tavern in Sloatsburg, and the very popular Rhodes Restaurant on City Island, which sponsored a Little League team and made other important contributions to the community.

Tyler is survived by his beloved wife, Doreen Rhodes; his loving daughters, Jenny Rhodes, Maggie Rhodes and Erin

Gabrick; his brothers and sisters Tommy, John, Christine, Jackie and Debbie, and his grandchildren Jace, Paige, Adelaide, Liam and Noah, along with "special" family members Alessio and Ralphie and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

A private Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated at Sacred Heart Church in Suffern, NY.



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Our virtual Sunday services are on-going and begin at 10 AM.

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ART PRINTS OF CITY ISLAND BRIDGE by Island artist Marguerite Chadwick-Juner are available at: marguerite-chadwickjuner.pixels.com. Seasonal panoramic views of the bridge as well as iconic portions of the bridge can be purchased as prints on archival paper, aluminum, acrylic and canvas, but here you can purchase the images on iPhone and Galaxy cases, pillows, duvet covers, tote bags, and t-shirts! Show your bridge love!

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CITY ISLAND SOUVENIRS: Sweatshirts (children's and adult), T-shirts, mugs, post-cards, bumper stickers @ Kaleidoscope Gallery. 280 City Island Avenue, 718-885-3090. www.kaleidoscope280.com.

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Tax Tips

Continued from page 20

30 days, the loss will be disallowed. Or you can immediately repurchase a similar (but not the same) investment, e.g., and ETF or another mutual fund with the same objectives as the one you sold. If you have losses, you might consider selling securities at a gain and then immediately repurchasing them, since the 30-day rule does not apply to gains. That way, your gain will be tax-free; your original investment is restored, and you have a higher cost basis for your new investment (i.e., any future gain will be lower).

Mutual Fund Investments. Before investing in a mutual fund, ask whether a dividend is paid at the end of the year or whether a dividend will be paid early in the following year but be deemed paid this year. The year-end dividend could make a substantial difference in the tax you pay. The mutual fund's distributions to you of dividends it receives generally qualify for the same tax relief as long-term capital gains. If the mutual fund passes through its short-term capital gains, these will be reported to you as "ordinary dividends" that don't qualify for relief.

Depending on your financial circumstances, it may or may not be a good idea to buy shares right before the fund goes ex-dividend. For instance, the distribution could be relatively small, with only minor tax consequences. Or the market could be moving up, with share prices expected to be higher after the ex-dividend date. To find out a fund's ex-dividend date, call the fund directly.

Year-end Giving to Reduce Potential Estate Tax. The federal gift and estate tax exemption is currently set at \$11.58 million but increases to \$11.70 million in 2021. The maximum estate tax rate is set at 40 percent.

Sound estate planning often begins with lifetime gifts to family members. In other words, gifts that reduce the donor's assets subject to future estate tax. Such gifts are often made at year-end, during the holiday season, in ways that qualify for exemption from federal gift tax. Gifts to a donee are exempt from the gift tax for amounts up to \$15,000 a year per donee in 2020 and remain the same for 2021. An unused annual exemption doesn't carry over to later years. To make use of the exemption for 2020, you must make your gift by Dec. 31. Husband-wife joint gifts to any third person are exempt from gift tax for amounts up to \$30,000 (\$15,000 each), and both must consent to such "split gifts." Gifts of "future interests," assets that the donee can only enjoy at some future period such as certain gifts in trust, generally don't qualify for exemption; however, gifts for the benefit of a minor child can be made to qualify.

Cash or publicly traded securities raise the fewest problems. You may choose to give property you expect to increase substantially in value later. Shifting future appreciation to your heirs keeps that value out of your estate. But this can trigger IRS

questions about the gift's true value when given. You may choose to give property that has already appreciated. The idea here is that the donee, not you, will realize and pay income tax on future earnings and built-in gain on the sale.

TAX RATE STRUCTURE FOR THE KIDDIE TAX

The kiddie tax rules changed under the TCJA. For tax years 2018 through 2025, unearned income exceeding \$2,200 is taxed at the rates paid by trusts and estates instead of the parent's tax rate. For ordinary income (amounts over \$12,950), the maximum rate is 37 percent. For long-term capital gains and qualified dividends, the maximum rate is 20 percent.

Exception. If the child is under age 19 or under age 24 and a full-time student and both the parent and child meet certain qualifications, then the parent can include the child's income on the parent's tax return.

Roth Conversions. Converting to a Roth IRA from a traditional IRA would make sense if you've experienced a loss of income (lowering your tax bracket) or your retirement accounts have decreased in value.

Maximize Retirement Plan Contributions. If you own an incorporated or unincorporated business, consider setting up a retirement plan if you don't already have one. It doesn't need to be funded until you pay your taxes, but allowable contributions will be deductible on this year's return. If you are an employee and your employer has a 401(k), contribute the maximum amount (\$19,500 for 2020), plus an additional catch-up contribution of \$6,500 if age 50 or over, assuming the plan allows this, and income restrictions don't apply. If you are employed or self-employed with no retirement plan, you can make a deductible contribution of up to \$6,000 a year to a traditional IRA (deduction is sometimes allowed even if you have a plan). Further, there is also an additional catch-up contribution of \$1,000 if age 50 or over.

Health Savings Accounts. Consider setting up a health savings account (HSA). You can deduct contributions to the account, investment earnings are tax-deferred until withdrawn, and any amounts you withdraw are tax-free when used to pay medical bills. In effect, medical expenses paid from the account are deductible from the first dollar (unlike the usual rule limiting such deductions to the amount of excess over 10 percent of AGI). For amounts withdrawn at age 65 or later not used for medical bills, the HSA functions much like an IRA.

To be eligible, you must have a high-deductible health plan (HDHP), and only such insurance, subject to numerous exceptions, and you must not be enrolled in Medicare. For 2020, to qualify for the HSA, your minimum deductible in your HDHP must be at least \$1,400 for self-only coverage or \$2,800 for family coverage.

529 Education Plans. Maximize contributions to 529 plans, which can now be used for elementary and secondary school tuition as well as college or vocational school.

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Molly Mahoney Hennessy

Welcome to the world, Molly Mahoney Hennessy. Proud parents are Christina and David, and grandparents are Pilot Street's Pat and Dave Hennessy. Ecstatic aunts and uncles are Erin and Christopher Hennessy and Cait and Richard O'Dwyer.

Congratulations to David Mooney, who was selected as the New Division Commander of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Division 05. He will now oversee the operations of two units in the Bronx, three units in Manhattan, more than 300 volunteers, five vessels and one aircraft.

Happy December birthdays to Ena Ellwanger and Donna Buhl, both of whom congratulate all the hard-working teachers and principals of New York City who have continued to educate throughout the pandemic.

Welcome to the world, Pippin Jude Kunkel Ford, born on Oct. 9. Proud parents are Emily Kunkel and Alden Ford and even prouder big brother Arlo; they are so excited to have a clamdigger in the family!

Happy birthday wishes on Dec. 22 to former Islander Anjulee Sebastian, R.N.



Pippin Jude Kunkel Ford



David Mooney

Your City Island family misses you!

New Year's Eve birthday greetings to Bobby Cavinee, with love from your family and friends.

Happy Birthday wishes to my grandson Jake, who will celebrate his 11th birthday on Dec. 26. Wishing you success in your new school and in all your team sports too. Much love from Grandma Penny.

Wishing all our readers, neighbors and friends a happy, healthy and safe holiday. See you next year!

Maria Swieciki



Photo by JUDY RAUH

The 2020 Veterans Day ceremony was held by the Winged Victory World War I memorial in Pelham Bay Park, hosted by the Leonard Hawkins Post 156 of City Island. More than 100 members of the local Legion family and Scouts from Troop 211 paid honor to the veterans who have served our country. Pictured above are American Legion Bronx County Commander and Post 156 Commander Peter Del-Debbio; Ron Watson, Lt. Col. USMC (ret.); Past Commander Post 156 Mike Rauh; and Joseph Colella, Lt. USNR (ret.).

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