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Prayers Answered: St. Mary's School is Saved

By VIRGINIA DANNEGGER and KAREN NANI

Following an appeal by clergy, faculty, students and members of the community, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York announced on Friday, April 21, 2006, that St. Mary, Star of the Sea School would remain open.

On March 28, the school was placed on the archdiocese's list of 14 schools and 31 parishes in New York to be closed. St. Mary's leadership, Father Michael Challinor, pastor, and Jane Dennehy, principal, immediately vowed to fight to save the school.

"We made a very convincing presentation to the board on April 3 that St. Mary's has a bright future," Fr. Challinor told *The Current*. The appeal focused on the three criteria that the archdiocese was using to place schools on the list: enrollment, finances and mission. In their presentation to the six-member board chaired by Dr. Catherine Hickey, superintendent of schools in the archdiocese, the eight members of the St. Mary's appeal team emphasized that enrollment was increasing, costs had been drastically cut and the school was meeting its mission of providing religious education to two communities, City Island and Co-op City.

The appeal team, which was limited to eight people, was led by Fr. Challinor and Mrs. Dennehy and included Sister Bernadette Hannaway, pastoral associate; Loretta Boehm, the parish's accountant; Judge John Moore, parishioner; and Larry Saulnier, Tina Ruggeiro, and Ophelia Smith of St. Mary's Home School Association. In addition, Mrs. Dennehy cited the invaluable help of several Islanders in preparing the appeal, especially Mike Bunyan, Tom and Helen McMahon and her husband,

John Dennehy.

The appeal also included five key reasons why St. Mary's should stay open, which represented a consensus of input from parents and students of the school following the emergency meeting on March 30, after the school had been placed on the list for closing. In addition, the positive impact of the school on the community was "eloquently written by Mr. Bunyan," Mrs. Dennehy said.

As the team nervously headed to the archdiocese's chancery office in Manhattan, they did not know what to expect. It turned out to be a cordial atmosphere and the members of the board listened very carefully to their presentation. In addition to the formal appeal, the team presented numerous letters of support for the school from a wide range of City Island and Co-op City residents and organizations, which they credit with helping to sway the board.

Fr. Challinor said that members posed a number of questions, but he described the board as "concerned and caring" and he felt that it was a fair process. They left the meeting feeling that "we had a chance."

The board's decision came a few days ahead of the original schedule when Dr. Hickey called Fr. Challinor on April 21 and said, "Good news. The school will remain open." Because it was the Easter break, classes were not in session, so telephones were used to spread the word. Mrs. Dennehy had set up a communication chain of people who would call each other with the news, starting with faculty, parents, parishioners, organizers of the various school functions such as the basketball program and then the rest of the community. The message on the school's answering ma-



Photo by KAREN NANI

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York announced on Friday, April 21, 2006, that St. Mary, Star of the Sea School would remain open, to the joy of faculty and students. The announcement followed an appeal by St. Mary's leadership after the school had been put on the list of proposed closings in March. Shown above in front of the school after hearing the good news are the pre-K, kindergarten and first-grade classes with their principal and teachers (l. to r.): Sr. Joan McKinney, Joyce Ocasio, Jane Dennehy and Beth Nesheiwat.

chine was "We have received word today that St. Mary's will remain open. Please report to school on Monday, April 24, as scheduled."

In addition to relaying the news about the school's staying open, Fr. Challinor told *The Current* that this is not a temporary reprieve and St. Mary's is not "on probation." Mrs. Dennehy concurred. "We are the only parish school for both City Island and Co-op City. Our finances are in order, the deficit is declining and enrollment is up. Every student's tuition is covered primarily by paying families. Only 15 students out of 200 are on scholarships, and these are provided by the archdiocese. Our goal is to be a viable alternative for children, and we are succeeding."

Mrs. Dennehy was confident that St. Mary's now has the archdiocese's support. She happily announced that on April 24, they received an Early Childhood Literacy grant of \$5,000 that will go toward improving the pre-K and kindergarten program. "This grant is an indicator of their support. It takes a financial burden off, and we can once again split the two programs as has been done in the past."

Also relieved are the organizers of St. Mary's 75th anniversary celebration scheduled for June (see *Letters to the Editor* this issue). A number of activities are planned for alumni, as well as for current faculty and the administration. Needless to say, the closing of the school would have put a damper on this celebration.

SUNSHINE AND \$ FOR LL OPENING DAY



Photos by RICK DeWITT

The City Island Little League 2006 season kicked off on April 29 under sunny skies and "pennies from heaven." State Senator Jeff Klein tossed out the first pitch at Ambrosini Field and presented a state grant for \$2,500 to league president, Bob Whelan. Joining Mr. Klein at the opening ceremony were (l. to r.) Assemblyman Michael Benedetto, Liz Lyons, Ed Cullen, Councilman Jimmy Vacca, Father Michael Challinor, Bob Nolan from the borough president's office, Chris DiMarco, Bob Whelan, Steve Kaufman, Katherine Ambrosini, and Larry Saulnier. This year, there are many major and minor league teams competing both on and off the Island. See *Little League News* in this issue for more information and stop by and cheer for the girls and boys on weeknights and Saturdays through June.

BRIEFLY...

CALLING ALL ARTISTS: If you are an artist 18 years of age or older, become part of the 19th City Island Art Exhibition at the Focal Point Gallery, 321 City Island Avenue, which will be on view from June 2 to 30. The deadline for the delivery of artwork to the gallery is May 21, and there is a hanging fee of \$15 for each piece. The gallery will only accept work that is ready to hang and reasonable in size. If the work sells, the gallery will take 30 percent; works may also be marked not for sale. Last year 90 artists filled the gallery with paintings, etchings, drawings, photographs, stained glass, sculpture, pottery, weaving and more. Call 718-885-1403 or stop by the gallery for more information. Space is limited, so please be early. There will be an opening reception for the artists on Friday, June 2, at 7:30 p.m.

HELP CREATE THE COMMUNITY WALL: On Tuesday, May 16, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at P.S. 175, everyone is welcome to come and decorate a 6-by-6 inch ceramic tile with memories or themes relating to their lives on City Island in celebration of the school's 30-year anniversary. Bring your friends and family and have an idea in mind. You don't have to be an artist to participate and to become a part of City Island history. Minimum tax-deductible donation is \$25 a tile. To reserve your tile, pay in advance by sending a check to PTA of P.S. 175, 200 City Island Avenue, City Island NY 10464; or pay at the door. Come early so you will have enough time to create a wonderful tile. For more information or if you can't make it that day, call Susan at 718-885-2109.

MOTHER'S DAY FLOWERS: You can buy your Mother's Day flowers and support City Island's Girl Scouts at the same time this year. The scouts will hold a Mother's Day Flower Sale on Saturday, May 13, in front of Trinity Church, from 10 a.m. till they are sold out. Mark your calendars!

LADIES AUXILIARY CANCER BINGO will be held at the American Legion, 550 City Island Avenue, on Thursday May 11, 2006. Doors open at 6 p.m. and bingo starts at 7 p.m. sharp. Donations of cash or gifts would be greatly appreciated and can be dropped off at the Legion by May 9. Please make checks payable to: The Ladies Auxiliary / Post 156. Proceeds are used to support clinical research and Calvary Hospital and are anonymously distributed to needy individuals in the community that are afflicted with this disease. For more information, contact Kathy Seaman at KSEAMANNPA@AOL.COM.

CITY ISLAND THEATER GROUP SPRING PRODUCTION: On stage for three more performances: Clare Boothe Luce's 1936 play "The Women." The dates are Thursday, Friday and Saturday, May 4, 5, and 6 at 8 p.m. To reserve tickets, please call 718/885-3066 or e-mail citythewomen@yahoo.com. Don't miss these women! See review on page 5.

BRONX MASONS SPRING BLOOD DRIVE will be held on Tuesday, May 9, between 4 and 8 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church at 113 Bay Street and City Island Avenue (two blocks up from the second traffic light). Almost anyone between the ages of 17 and 75 weighing a minimum of 110 pounds and in good general health can be a blood donor. Photo or signature ID and social security number are required at the time of donation. For more information, call Scott Meyer at 718-885-0374.

GARDEN CLUB EVENTS: Be sure to visit some of City Island's loveliest gardens at the Garden Tour on Saturday, May 13, starting at 1 p.m. (rain or shine) at 21 Tier Street. Suggested donation is \$5. And reserve your place by June 1 for the spring luncheon at the City Island Yacht Club on Thursday, June 8, at 12 noon. Send a check made out to the Garden Club of City Island to Ruth Collins, 45 Centre Street, City Island NY 10464.

FIRST ANNUAL GRACE CHURCH TAG SALE will take place on Saturday, May 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church, City Island Avenue at Pilot Street. All proceeds from the sale will go to support the ministries of Grace Church. Please call sale organizer Evyonne Baker at 347-427-4265 for more details.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL will be held again this summer, sponsored jointly by Grace Episcopal, Trinity Methodist and St. Mary, Star of the Sea Churches. All interested parents are invited to attend an open house on Sunday, May 21, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Grace Church Parish Hall (City Island Avenue south of Pilot Street) to learn more about this summer's program. For further information about Vacation Bible School, please call VBS coordinator Ann McGuire at 718-885-1710.



Photos by LINDSEY KINFORD and PAUL NANI
A fire on April 2, 2006, engulfed a shed at the equipment storage lot on City Island Avenue between the Little League field and Schofield Street. The fire required several fire companies to control and caused traffic tie-ups on City Island Avenue. No injuries were reported.

ISLANDERS FRUSTRATED BY RASH OF VANDALISM

By BARBARA DOLENSEK and KAREN NANI

A wave of vandalism occurred in early April, causing damage to cars, windows and buildings on several streets on City Island. As of press time, no arrests had been made.

On April 1, several cars on Centre Street had their side mirrors either ripped off or smashed, according to residents who filed police reports. Neighbors had been increasingly concerned about "kids going down at night to the house on the end of the block that is unoccupied. But this is the first time they've done property damage," one told *The Current*.

On Bay Street that same evening, several cars had their front and side windows smashed. One neighbor said that they saw "an SUV going up and down the block about five times that night." Bay Street residents were also frustrated with the police follow-up. They called in the incident and when one called back to get the complaint number, "I was put on hold, then got disconnected. I called back and was told they did not have the complaint number yet."

At Le Refuge Inn on City Island Avenue, seven cars had their tires slashed at

some point during the night of April 1.

As if these events weren't troublesome enough, a fire broke out on Sunday afternoon, April 2, in a shed in the equipment storage lot on City Island Avenue between Schofield Street and the Little League field (see photos). Some Islanders reported seeing kids running out of the building shortly before the fire, but this could not be confirmed with police. The two-alarm fire required several fire companies to contain it, and traffic on City Island Avenue was disrupted for several hours.

On April 18, the City Island Nautical Museum on Fordham Street was found to have suffered some vandalism, with flower pots thrown down the stairs and lighted cigarettes thrown through a broken window in the vestibule.

It is not clear whether all these incidents are related, but the timing leaves Islanders wondering about "hordes of kids" running amok on April Fools Day and afterward. Police continue to urge Islanders to call 911 to report any incidents of vandalism and to take photographs of the damage before cleaning it up.

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DEAD BIRDS WASH UP ON BOWNE STREET

By KAREN NANI



Photos by BILL McDANIEL

More than two dozen dead roosters were discovered on Bowne Street beach on April 17, 2006. The ASPCA removed the birds and investigated the cause of death.

Residents became alarmed on the morning of April 17, 2006, when they found decapitated birds on Bowne Street beach. Although the sight of more than 25 dead birds was disturbing, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) investigation revealed nothing suspicious.

King Avenue resident Bill McDaniel was among the first to notice the beheaded birds, and he immediately called 311. "I was concerned that this might have been some sort of ritual sacrifice, and with the kids out of school on spring break, I didn't want them to see it," he told *The Current*.

The ASPCA responded promptly and sent an agent, Henry Ruiz, to Bowne Street to examine and remove the birds. When he arrived at the scene, he discovered between two and three dozen dead birds, some lying out in the open on the sand and others inside a blue garbage bag (see photos).

The birds turned out to be roosters and, although 10 of them were decapitated, the others were mostly intact, with only some internal organs removed. They were not tagged, but they appeared to have washed up onto the beach after a significant time in the water.

The birds were brought back to the ASPCA to be studied and necropsied (a postmortem study for the cause of death). The investigation revealed no evidence of

animal cruelty, nor any evidence of ritual sacrifice.

"It's as if they were butchered in a slaughterhouse or butcher shop and discarded," agent Joseph Pentangelo told *The Current*. He speculated that they might have fallen off a garbage barge and coincidentally washed up on City Island. He followed up with several slaughterhouses in the area to check on their disposal sites and procedures, but no connection could be established.

According to the ASPCA, it was impossible to tell if the roosters had been beheaded before or after death because of the time the carcasses spent in the water. "They were not desanguinated [drained of blood] as is often true in certain sacrifices such as Santoria rituals," Mr. Pentangelo said. Also, none of the feet were cut off, other evidence of this type of ceremony.

Given the concern about bird influenza, the roosters were also checked for infection. There were no signs of disease, nor did the birds appear to be sick or emaciated. They also did not appear to be roosters prepared for cock fighting, another concern. These fighting birds often have their combs removed, but this was not the case for the roosters found on Bowne Street.

Although the cause of death could not be officially determined, the ASPCA has closed the investigation unless new details emerge.

Consolidated Yachts to Stay Open

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by PAUL NANI

Boats will continue to be docked, stored and worked on at Consolidated Yachts for the foreseeable future as the plans to develop the property have fallen through.

To the relief of many City Island residents—and many boatyard cats—who have mourned the loss of boatyards in favor of residential development, Cava Construction has withdrawn its plans to develop the property now occupied by Consolidated Yachts, which plans to stay in business for the foreseeable future.

In order to construct housing on City Island, Cava must apply for a change in zoning, because the marina site is zoned for manufacturing (M-1), but the Department of City Planning, which is responsible for overseeing the rezoning process (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure, or ULURP), indicated that it would be unlikely to support the plans that Cava had developed. These plans included the construction of three large buildings, each holding 18 condominium units, rather than one- and two-family houses, as allowed by City Island's current residential zoning.

The Department of City Planning indicated that it would not be willing to ap-

prove the designs for three large buildings because they are inconsistent with the village character of City Island and with the contextual down-zoning that was first approved in 2003.

Many Islanders, and not just boat owners, were elated at the news of Cava's withdrawal of the development, because the Consolidated site has played a significant role in City Island's nautical history since the middle of the 19th century. The first major boatyard on City Island, David Carll Shipyard, was established on this site in 1862, followed by Henry Piepgras in 1886 and Robert Jacobs in 1900. Three-masted schooners were built by the yard, and yachts owned by Thomas Lipton, J. P. Morgan and Vincent Astor were serviced there. Jacob's yard was sold to Consolidated Boatyard after World War II, and when the Rodstrom family bought it in 1956 the name was changed to Consolidated Yachts.

Traffic Congestion and Control

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

"The fact of having our Sunday peace disturbed by a lot of inconsiderate nonresidents does not set well. This is not a park, a pleasure resort, nor a seaside picnic grounds but a community of private residences, people who spend the six working days of the week earning their living with the hope of having one day of quiet rest. They like to see a fellow resident prosper and do well, but when it infringes upon their peace and safety, it becomes intolerable and needs checking. Let us have peace."

These remarks were made by a City Island resident, but not for *The Island Current*. In fact, they were published over 100 years ago, on Aug. 11, 1894, to be exact, in *The City Island Drift*—a fact that will surprise many who are already complaining that the traffic this year is worse than ever before.

Let's face it: the traffic on City Island has always been terrible, even before the introduction of the automobile. It is inevitable that warm, sunny weather will attract those who have spent the winter cooped up in high-rise apartment buildings, and it is inevitable that the traffic will become seriously congested, because City Island has only one main street. It is also inevitable that the traffic situation creates strained relations between residents, who hate the traffic, and restaurant owners, who rely on it.

In past years, the City Island Civic Association has worked with the Police Department to establish traffic control on busy weekends, but this has never proved completely successful, according to Frank Fitts, the association's president. "The Orchard Beach/City Island detail was in place

for a few years when there were 40,000 or so cops on the force. Three years ago, however, when the Police Department numbers decreased, it was decided that the 45th Precinct would assume the weekend traffic detail. Unfortunately, the precinct also had a shortage of personnel so the number of officers directing traffic varied from day to day and if a call came in, they would have to leave the Island."

In 2005, the situation improved somewhat when the Police Department brought in officers from other precincts to help with the traffic, but this too provided inconsistent coverage, since these officers had no idea how the traffic flow on City Island Avenue was supposed to work.

This year the Civic Association, with the crucial support of State Senator Jeff Klein, is hoping to have yet another solution—the use of officers from the Traffic Control Division of the Police Department, rather than from the 45th Precinct. The division is a force of more than 3,600 police officers and civilian personnel whose goal is to reduce accidents while maintaining and improving mobility on the city's streets.

Senator Klein, having attended a number of Civic Association meetings, heard the complaints registered by residents and wrote to Police Department officials requesting that traffic officers be positioned at the City Island traffic circle and at points along City Island Avenue during the hours of 5 p.m. to midnight on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.

"City Island becomes more popular

Continued on page 16

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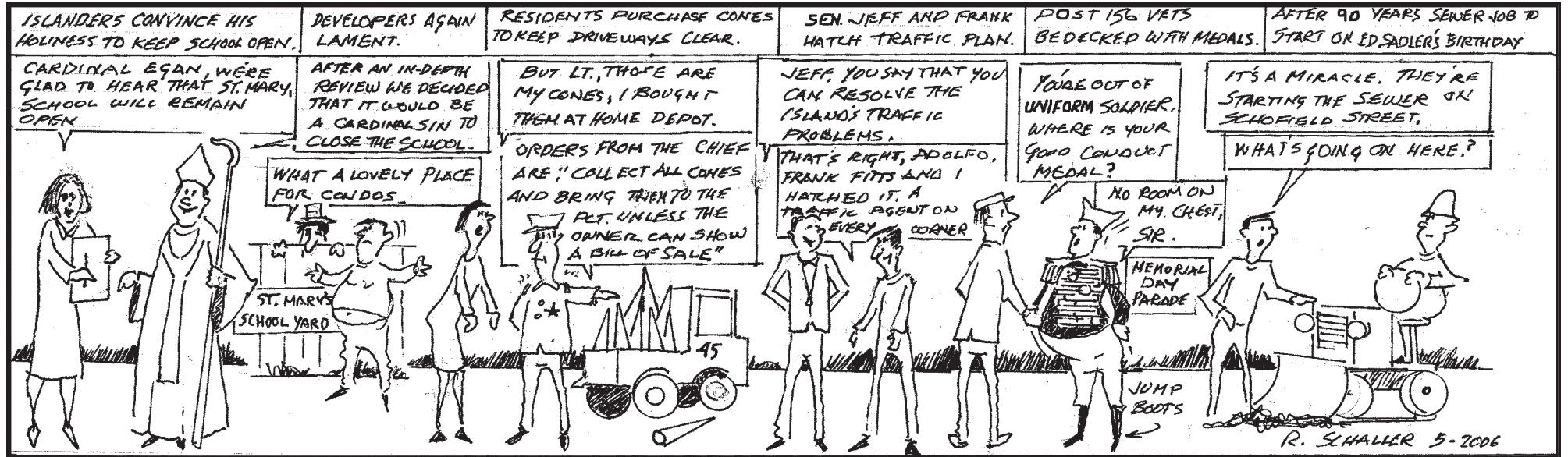
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Editorial
Spring Break

City Islanders always welcome the sight of boats going back into the water, daffodils and tulips blooming in Hawkins Park and other signs of spring, even as we cringe at the thought of the traffic congestion that invariably follows. This year residents have something else to cringe at—the behavior of some of our young people who seemed to think that “spring break” meant “let’s go break stuff.” City Island has suffered unusual levels of vandalism in recent months—beginning last summer with burglaries at some local restaurants and culminating in the fire at the former Copat property at Schofield Street on Sunday, April 2. Along with these events have been numerous attacks on automobiles, with broken mirrors and slashed tires, as well as graffiti and other assaults on private and public property. Most residents and police believe that the damage is being caused by a handful of teenagers, but there have been no arrests.

Although some people report these crimes to the police, others refuse to do so because they fear retaliation or don’t want to get involved. Many people blame the parents for failing to discipline their children; the parents either deny their kids are involved or blame the community for not providing enough for teens to do during their free time. Others say “Kids will be kids” and wait for this latest generation of “feral youth” to grow up and find other things to do. And what about the kids themselves? They certainly know that what they are doing is wrong, but they do it anyway, secure in the knowledge that they will be protected by either the law or their parents.

The bottom line here is that everyone is passing the responsibility to someone else. City Island is not alone in suffering from teenage mischief, but we are unusual in that we are a relatively small community that could control the vandalism if we worked together. Parents must step up to the plate and teach their kids that uncivilized behavior is unacceptable, but residents must also understand that failing to report a crime is also a form of neglect. Parents have a point when they complain that the community doesn’t provide enough for kids to do, but why do so few Islanders volunteer on behalf of the teens once they get beyond Little League and basketball?

As we complain about the vandalism and point fingers at each other, the kids raise the ante by doing increasing amounts of damage, as if they were daring somebody, anybody, to pay serious attention. It’s about time we did so.



We welcome letters and opinions. Letters longer than 250 words will be edited, with every effort made to preserve their substance. We reserve the right not to print letters that are copies, libelous, inaccurate or in bad taste, or those that cannot be verified. Include your phone number. Anonymous letters will not be printed, but names will be withheld upon request.

St. Mary’s

To the Editor:

We have just been notified officially that St. Mary, Star of the Sea School will remain open, and we are both relieved and excited. We were confident that we provided a compelling argument for keeping our school open, and thankfully, the Archdiocese of New York heard our voices and realized that St. Mary’s provides a valuable service to this community and our neighbors in Co-op City.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Father Michael and Mrs. Dennehy, who provided outstanding leadership throughout this difficult time. The members of the Parish Council, Home-School Association, and Religious Instruction Program, who all worked together as a team to write our proposal and present our case to the Archdiocese, deserve our deepest gratitude. Many members of the parish and the City Island and Co-op City communities wrote letters to the Archdiocese and offered their support for the school and

we truly appreciate their efforts.

St. Mary, Star of the Sea School celebrates its 75th year of service to the community this year. St. Mary’s has played a vital role in this community, and we plan to continue to provide not only a sound education but a second home for everyone here on City Island.

Thank you all for your support of St. Mary, Star of the Sea.

Larry Saulnier,
Home-School Association

Spring Cleaning

To the Editor:

Spring has sprung and I’m sure everyone is horrified to see the devastation caused by winter weather. Tree belts are littered, and our 16 empty storefronts have dirty windows, facades and sidewalks.

Let’s all make an effort to beautify our lawns and gardens and encourage shop owners to redo their window boxes and planters.

Jacqueline Kall



Grateful Scouts

To the Editor:

As we are all aware at this point, C.O.L.O.N.Y. did not get its grant this year to help support the local youth groups on City Island. Needless to say, this has put all the groups, especially Cub Scout Pack 211, in a dire situation because of the lack of funds. Our budget was heavily dependent on C.O.L.O.N.Y.’s help.

Speaking for Cub Scout Pack 211, fund-

raising did not do well, so we had to call upon our local elected officials for any and all help they could give us.

Out of all the letters and petitions for help that were sent to our local politicians, Councilman Jimmy Vacca was the only one who came through for us. Jimmy Vacca has consistently been there for us in the past. From the hearts of Cub Scout Pack 211, a big THANK YOU to Jimmy Vacca.

Angelo Bellocchio
Cubmaster Pack 211

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Current Review

LADIES D'AMOUR

By RACHAEL LANICCI

Every year we look forward to the spring performance of the City Island Theater Group, and this one was full of the energy and talent that we have come to expect from this remarkable company. This season's production is the sardonic play "The Women," written in 1936 by Clare Boothe Luce. Esteemed director and CITG president Nicholas Sala brought the show to vibrant life with a talented cast and crew made up almost entirely of women. Love, divorce, the idle rich and high fashion are great themes, and the cast embraced them fully. The 20 ladies in the show did a fine job, and they looked great.

The story is both dated and timeless, although one hopes that women today have transcended the fate described by the oft-married Countess, who moans: "Hélas, what else can a woman do with her youth but give it to a man?" But the bitterness of divorce and infidelity expressed by the characters is all too familiar to both men and women of the 21st century.

The irony of this production is that the women perform almost all the duties of the show, the menial and the glamorous alike, just as some of their characters lament. They get to pose in beautiful evening gowns, but they have to move all the scenery around for 12 scene changes—not unlike the multi-tasking women of today.

The star of this show was Susan Rauh, who did a fabulous job portraying Mary Haines and captured the audience's heart as her character evolved from a timid "good wife" to a strong woman courageous enough to stand up to her bawdy rival, Crystal Allen. Crystal was played with great verve by Cori-Ann Roublick, who did a wonderful job of making her character seem both seductive and detestable.

Julie White was also right on point as Sylvia, the catty leader of her gossipy pack of friends, which included Tee Cotter as the wise and ever-pregnant Edith, Justine Costanza as the innocent newlywed Peggy and Tara Brant as Nancy, the observant and sardonic writer of books about idle socialites. All of these ladies were wonderful as they ran the gamut of emotions from ennui and disdain to misery and rage, with a good deal of humor thrown in.

Another featured player was Susan Velcheck, who played Mary's mother and confidante, Mrs. Moorehead. It is good news that Susan decided to make the transition from backstage to onstage, since she clearly has a flair for acting.

Although the story has its moments of heartache as it explores the sadness of lost love and the catty vindictiveness of certain women, there were several comedic turns. The experienced Cathy Roskam portrayed the Countess convincingly and hilariously. Her delivery was strong and her southern accent and stage presence brought the most applause from the audience.

Liz McIntyre and Antoinette Boiano played Jane and Maggie, servants in the Haines' residence. The scene in which Jane

describes for Maggie an argument she has overheard between Mary and her unfaithful husband, provided fine comic relief. Jane's he-said-she-said reenactment of the argument was well executed and hilarious.

Also delivering humorous scenes were promising newcomers Barbara Dolensek as the Instructress and Eileen Fox as Olga the manicurist, Ms. Trimmerback the notary, and Lucy the Reno hotelkeeper. Ms. Dolensek's acting debut as a frustrated exercise teacher left the audience chuckling about the good old pre-aerobic days. Ms. Fox gets an A+++ for her ability to deliver three funny performances in one show.

The lines delivered by Maria Swieciki as the mother of Princess Tamara were especially amusing to those in the audience who realized that she was reprimanding her real-life daughter, Maria Christina Swieciki. "Little Maria," as she is known around the neighborhood, had starred in the P.S. 175 production of "Annie," but this was her mother's acting debut, and both ladies worked very well together. Nor surprisingly, Maria, a convincing real estate saleswoman, played a convincing saleswoman in the high-fashion dress shop where Mary Haines first meets her rival, Crystal.

On another family note, the Hopkins-DeWitt family was strongly represented in "The Women" by mother Laury Hopkins (Mr. Haines's secretary), daughter Gwynellen (who delivered a charming and effective performance as Little Mary Haines), and son Joe, who managed the sound and the music. One audience member was overheard teasing Rick DeWitt, the father of the family (who photographed all members of the cast for the poster), that there would be no living with all the stars in his family, a reference to the excellent performances of his wife and daughter and the technical expertise demonstrated by his son.

Other notable performances included seasoned actress Liza Reid, who played Miriam Aarons, one of the many divorcees in the show, and Miriam Benitez-Nixon (one of the original founders of the theater group), who was both a saleswoman in the dress shop and Edith's no-nonsense baby nurse. Norma Kerner appeared as the French maid Hélène, and Angela Yang, who worked hard as stage manager, made a cameo appearance.

Between the scenes, the actresses (helped by CITG veteran Tom Smith) changed the sets quickly and efficiently as the music played songs about, what else? women. The clever set was designed and built by Chris McGowan and Con Grondahl. A special tribute goes to the great costume crew, the CITG "Sew n Sews" Carol McCabe, Carole Sullivan and Norma Kerner, who succeeded in making all of the actresses look beautiful, several of them with a number of costume changes. And the stylish appearance of the ladies was beautifully enhanced by the makeup skills of Margaret Cioffi.

Be sure to come and see this play while it is still running. It's a guaranteed good time.



Photo by RICK DeWITT

Tempers flared, divorces decreed, babies burped, hugs exchanged and (fake) cigarettes were smoked in the City Island Theater Group's April production of Claire Booth Luce's "The Women." The energetic cast members not only acted out multiple roles but also handled all the scenery changes. Shown above taking their curtain call are the women of "The Women" (top photo, seated, l to r): Liza Reid, Cori Roublick, Gwyn Hopkins, Susan Rauh, Justine Costanza, Tara Brant, Tee Cotter and Liz McIntyre. Standing are Barbara Dolensek, Norma Kerner, Laury Hopkins, Miriam Benitez-Nixon, Cathy Roskam, Eileen Fox, Maria Swieciki, Maria Swieciki, Antoinette Boiano, Susan Velcheck, and Julie White. You can still catch performances of the show from May 5 to 7 at Grace Episcopal Church Hall, 116 City Island Avenue.

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Sewer Project Proceeding on Schedule

By KAREN NANI

The first phase of the extensive sewer and water main project began in March 2006 with work off City Island and is proceeding on schedule, according to Andy Macagnone, community liaison from the Department of Design and Construction (DDC).

The replacement of the 100-year old, 12-inch water main under the Shore Road by the Hutchinson River Parkway exit and leading to the Pelham Bay Bridge (also known as the Shore Road Bridge) is complete. "Although it's done, it's not open yet. It will be 'watered up' when the entire loop is completed," Mr. Macagnone told *The Current*.

The rest of the loop was being worked on during April and includes the road between Bartow Pell Circle and Orchard Beach. The work on this road resulted in the first major detour for Island drivers. "Traffic Relief Road," as DDC calls it, will be closed westbound during weekdays through May until the water main replacement is complete.

Some Islanders found this confusing as they were turned around by workers at the entrance to this access road to the Hutchinson River Parkway near Orchard Beach. "A few [impatient] drivers are attempting to travel westbound in the eastbound lanes to reach the Hutch, then cutting across the grass," said Mr. Macagnone. "This is illegal and very dangerous."

A sign was added at the City Island circle indicating a detour to the Hutchinson River Parkway in order to reduce the confusion. Until this part of the project is complete, drivers should continue up City Island Road past the golf range and then turn right onto the Shore Road toward the Bartow Circle to reach the Hutchinson River Parkway north or south.

Although most of the work is underground replacement, drivers will notice additional fire hydrants along the roads leading into and away from City Island. This is based on current Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations,

which require a hydrant every 300 feet.

Once this part of the loop is completed, the water main under the section of Shore Road toward Split Rock Golf Course will be replaced. As with every phase, all roads will remain open to traffic, but there will only be one lane in each direction and drivers will have to follow the instructions of the crews.

All DDC work stops on weekends and all lanes are opened to the flow of traffic. This is especially important for Mother's Day traffic (May 14), usually the heaviest traffic day of the year around City Island.

After these off-Island phases are complete, work moves onto City Island for the summer months. Starting in June, the out-fall, water and sewer pipes on both sides of Schofield Street will be replaced, according to DDC. This is not in conflict with the proposed summer embargo against any work on City Island Avenue.

Islanders wondered about the connection between the DDC project and two other events on City Island Avenue during April. First, Con Edison was working on the gas lines leading into the new houses on City Island Avenue between Ditmars and Bowne Streets. Traffic lanes were closed, but this work had nothing to do with the water and sewer main project. Also, there was a fire on April 2, in the lot on the avenue between the Little League field and Schofield Street, where DDC is hoping to store water-main pipes during the project. According to Mr. Macagnone, they have not begun to utilize the storage area yet, so the fire had no effect on the project.

DDC has a field office for the project at 261 City Island Avenue between Carroll and Hawkins Streets. The office is open to Islanders from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. by appointment. The office and Mr. Macagnone can be reached at 718-885-0308 or by e-mail at hed549b.andy@verizon.net. Interested residents can also receive automatic updates at www.outreachny.com: click on 'Mail Lists,' scroll down to City Island Contract hed549b, and enter your e-mail address to subscribe.


Sunday, May 7, 3 p.m.). On Saturday, May 6, there will be a reception for the artwork of two City Islanders—Cheryl Solomon (artisan handmade boxes) and Hannah Glick ("dress" drawings)—and one returned Islander—Donna Dietrich (paintings), from 4 to 6 p.m. On Mother's Day weekend, treat your mom to a debut performance by singer-songwriter Timothy Hill on Friday, May 12, at 8 p.m. or some jazz with the master of that game, Lou Volpe, on Saturday, May 13, at 9 p.m. On Friday, May 19, at 8:30 p.m. there's more jazz with Two Guitars. There are still a few seats left for the 6 p.m. show on Saturday, May 20, for Rubber Soul, a Beatles tribute band (the 9 p.m. show is sold out). As May ends, come to celebrate on Saturday, May 27, with songwriter Kenny Cunningham performing originals, covers and Irish tunes, starting at 8 p.m. For more on the schedule for music and art, visit www.starvingartistonline.com.

REAL ESTATE REVIEW

As a service to our readers, *The Island Current* will periodically list recent sales of residential and commercial property as found in the public record. This feature is designed to give a general idea of the fair market values of property on City Island. An update will be published every few months at our discretion. The listings below represent some of the recent sales. *The Current* is not responsible for errors or omissions in the data.

Address	Closing Date	Sale Price	Type
148 Reville Street	1/5/06	\$595,000	1 Family
46 Bay Street	3/9/06	\$495,000	1 Family
142 Reville Street	3/24/06	\$619,000	1 Family
22 Deepwater Way	4/5/06	\$660,000	Condo

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If you have a new business, or if your old business is offering a new service, write to *The Current*, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464 by the 10th of the month.

The **Starving Artist Cafe & Gallery**, 249 City Island Avenue (718-885-3779) presents a May filled with music and art—and all that jazz. The month begins with open mike comedy night on Thursday, May 4. There are more open mike nights this month: for poets (Thursday, May 18, 8 p.m.) and for songwriters (Friday, May 26, 8 p.m.). That weekend also offers a blues performance (Seth Okrend, Friday, May 5, 8 p.m.), an original rock folk band (Purple Rose, Saturday, May 6, 8 p.m.) and an afternoon with original, inspiring guitar work (James Molloy, debut performance,



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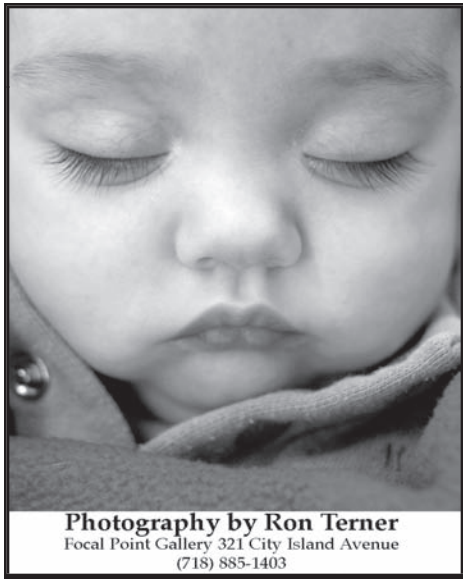
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- Anniversaries
- Proms/Graduations



Photography by Ron Turner
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ISLAND UPDATES

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

The **Morris Yacht Club** is in the process of recovering from the disastrous fire that took place on March 10, 2006. According to chairman Elliott Manders, trailers are in place so that the club can provide restrooms, showers and office space. No firm date had been set for demolishing the ruins of the building, but it is likely to take place during the month of May. No plans have as yet been drawn up for the rebuilding of the club house, but you can stay in touch with the progress by checking in occasionally with the club's Web site: www.morrisybc.com.

Sound-abatement barriers at the **Rodman's Neck Firing Range** are in the budget, but because of delays caused by scheduling problems and the awarding of contracts, nothing has been built as yet.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY, ONE TILE AT A TIME

By MICHAEL SHANLEY



The community wall project at P.S. 175, in which City Islanders are invited to decorate ceramic tiles on May 16, is being spearheaded by students (front row, l. to r.) Austin Albert, Nicole Dammacco and Ryan Fitzpatrick and by (back row) Susan Bellinson; the art teacher, Ms. Hajar; the principal, Ms. Lipson; and Ms. Rondi, the assistant principal.

Every once in a while an idea takes on a life of its own. At a recent meeting of the P.S. 175 Parent-Teacher Association, board member Susan Bellinson threw out an idea to the assembled group of parents and faculty. "Let's cover the walls of the pit with hand-painted tiles," she suggested. (The pit Bellinson refers to is the auditorium area of the school.) She explained that on a recent visit to California she had seen a beautiful example of this type of wall and wanted to create a permanent installation at P.S. 175. "We will have them professionally fired and permanently installed. Let's turn these drab brown walls into a beautiful mosaic."

Susan's remarks raised a few eyebrows at first, but when she elaborated on her idea, she began to capture the imagination of those assembled. It certainly got people talking. In fact, everyone had so much to say that a sheet of paper circulated through the room. A subcommittee was formed to explore this idea and report back to the general meeting in one month's time.

So much has happened since that Thursday night in February. At the first exploratory meeting of the committee, Rose Kolb gave Bellinson's idea an identity. She suggested it be called "The Community Wall," which sounded much better than "the tile project." Rose added: "This project will allow us to invite the entire community to participate."

After the committee reported back to the P.T.A., the Community Wall was presented to the membership and a vote was taken. It passed unanimously. Because this spring marks the 30th anniversary of the City Island School, the PTA wants to do something significant to mark this important milestone, and the Community Wall is that significant something. It allows every facet of Island life to be represented in a permanent, commemorative tribute.

Lisa Fine, parent and committee mem-

ber, says: "It is an ambitious project, but we are on a mission. We intend to make P.S. 175 the best public school in New York City. We are up for this challenge and every other challenge to achieve that goal."

Amy Lipson, the school principal, is also very supportive and enthusiastic about the Community Wall. Because of her own extraordinary efforts, the school environment has been substantially brightened up. Last summer she had the entire school painted, and each door is now a sunny yellow. She welcomes this creative and unique project and hopes that the wall will be a place where everyone may reflect on the experiences of being a child on City Island.

Mother and activist Grace Nagy comments: "We hope everyone will support this exciting project. Not only the current student body and faculty, but also P.S. 175 alumni, local families, elected officials, Island organizations and businesses and every individual who cares about quality public education. If we get cooperation and support from everyone, this wall will be a striking collage of images. It will reflect the diverse and creative urban/nautical community that is City Island."

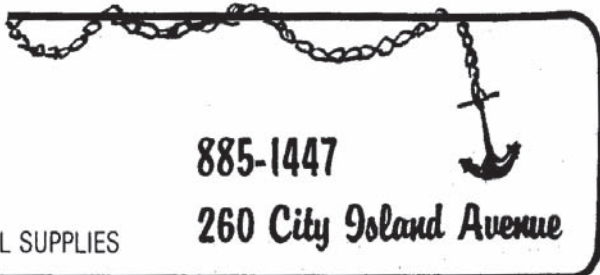
Susan Bellinson, who wears many hats in this community, is acting as project coordinator. She has commissioned a company in Brooklyn to supply and fire the tiles and provide the special paints that will be used. "I think I probably contacted every tile company in the greater New York City area," she said. "This company offered the best price, so we can keep the cost affordable to participants yet still raise needed funds to support art, music and sports programs."

The committee has also tapped into local talent and expertise. A number of City Island artists, including Marguerite Chadwick and Cathy Devlin, to name just two, will act as artistic advisors to help people design their tiles or to do the actual painting if asked. Parent and P.T.A. member John Williams has agreed to be the foreman for the installation of the finished product.

The painting party will be held at the school on May 16 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Donations will also be accepted at the door. Anyone with questions about the Community Wall may telephone 718-885-2109. Anyone who wishes to reserve a tile may do so ahead of time. The suggested minimum donation is \$25. Send or drop off a check made payable to P.S. 175 P.T.A. to the City Island School, 200 City Island Avenue. Be sure to include your name, address and telephone number and indicate if you intend to paint your own tile or would prefer an Island artist to paint one on your behalf.

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A TEACHER FOR ALL SEASONS: ALICE ROTELLO

By MIRIAM KLEINBERG

When you are a teacher, the profession becomes a big part of your identity. And when the time comes to retire, it's a wrenching decision because you are losing a part of yourself. As you leave, you wonder if you made the right career choice all those years ago, if you did a good job, and if you will be remembered with affection and respect.

Alice Rotello will never have to worry about being remembered with affection and respect, nor about having done a good job. Indeed, there are many people on City Island (and off) who have happy memories of being Mrs. Rotello's students. She taught school for 28 years, 25 of them on City Island. If you were lucky enough to be in Mrs. Rotello's class, there was a lot to remember. Her enthusiasms, her humor, her energy and her love of the children made her classroom an exciting and memorable place to be. She gave her best, and in return she demanded the best from the children she taught.

Alice Ohanian was born on Feb. 12, 1928, in Washington Heights. (She has been teased all her life because she shared Lincoln's birthday. Everyone called her "Honest Al.") She lived with her parents and older sister, and everything went smoothly



Alice Rotello.

until she was nine, when her father, a photoengraver, died and her mother had to go to work. This was a very difficult time for the family, since her mother had no skills and had to do menial work at very low pay. For Alice it was a double loss—her father was gone and then her mother had to be gone all day too.

During this period Alice attended P.S.

189 in Washington Heights. She recalls that she was a very shy and retiring child, although she did manage to win every spelling bee she entered. Louis Toupin, who also taught at P.S. 17 and 175, attended P.S. 189 at the same time Alice did. He must have been shy and retiring too, because they never even noticed each other.

Three years after the death of Alice's father, her mother married again, a good, kind man who worked as an electrician. The family moved to Astoria in Queens, and the burden of poverty and loss was lifted.

After attending William Cullen Bryant High School, Alice went on to Hunter College. She had wanted to be a writer since the eighth grade, but financial necessity dictated that she start work on a teaching degree, although teaching was not something she wanted to do. Still, she liked college. When her sister told her that college must be easy because Alice was doing so well, Alice retorted: "It's not easy, I'm just smart."

Hunter was an all-girls college until after the Korean War, and in those days it was known as a "subway school." There were no sororities, but there were house plans—clubs that were organized for holding dances and meeting boys. Many girls from poor families got out of poverty through Hunter. Even the books were free.

After college Alice got a job in the accounting department of the Borden Milk Company. She also took teaching courses at night, because it became ever more evident that writing wasn't going to pay the bills.

It was at Borden that she met Carmelo (Kenny) Rotello, and the two were married in 1958. (Sadly, Kenny Rotello died recently after a long illness; he was a well-loved member of the City Island community and is much missed by his family, friends and neighbors.)

The young couple moved to the Bronx and started a family. Leo was born in 1959, Michael in 1963 and Karen in 1965. Because they needed more room, the Rotellos decided to look for a house. Alice was from Queens and had never heard of City Island, but Kenny was a Bronx native and knew it well. When he found a newspaper ad for homes on City Island, they came to look at a house on Fordham Street and immediately fell in love with it.

Alice Rotello was by this time a wife, a mother and a homeowner. Busy as she was, however, she still didn't want to stay at home all day. She couldn't go back to Borden to a full-time job with a two-week vacation, and the only other options in those days for an educated woman who wanted to work on a flexible schedule were teaching and nursing. Teaching was the ideal choice for a mother, because her hours would coincide with those of her children. Although she wasn't much interested in teaching, she wanted to be a nurse even less. She still hoped to become a writer, but the Rotellos needed the money, so she started to do substitute teaching in the south Bronx.

After she had gained some experience, Alice (from now on known by one and all as "Mrs. Rotello") stopped by P.S. 17 on City Island and introduced herself to the principal, Lucrezia Fusco. Miss Fusco was delighted to find such a qualified substitute and began calling her to work right away. By May Mrs. Rotello was a regular substitute, and by September she was teaching full time. In 1969 she was given her official appointment as a teacher, and by this time she had fallen in love with her job.

Now Mrs. Rotello was a full-time teacher, a full-time mother, and a full-time housewife. She marked the papers; wrote the lesson plans; did the laundry, the cooking, the shopping and the housework (husbands didn't pitch in much in those days); helped her kids with their homework; and went to college in the evenings and during the summers to fulfill licensing requirements for the Board of Education.

As soon as Mrs. Rotello began teaching full time, from the fifth grade up, she began to enrich classroom routine. She started something called an International Festival, in which every child brought a food native to his family's country of origin, and the class invited all the teachers in the school to lunch. At various times during her teaching career, she also ran the school spelling bee, and the winners regularly won at the district level. She also coached the debating club, which also often won at the district level.

She got involved in a program called "Theater for New Audiences," in which groups of professional actors worked on selected Shakespearean plays with the children, who then went into Manhattan to see the performances. During summer vacations, Mrs. Rotello also participated in the Lincoln Center Institute Program with five or six other teachers from P.S. 175. She took graduate courses at Columbia University and worked with professional artists, actors, musicians and dancers. The artists then came back to the school in the fall to work with the classes of those teachers. Eventually, P.S. 175 was selected as a pilot school for the Lincoln Center program because of the involvement of the teachers.

Mrs. Rotello also ran fund-raisers for the eighth grade to help pay for special events and published an eighth-grade magazine. She took students to see plays on Broadway and at the Westchester Dinner Theater, and on weekends, she organized family visits to a dude ranch. For winter holiday concerts every year, she trained the eighth grade to perform "The March of the Wooden Soldiers" (Karen Nani, editor of *The Island Current*, still recalls seeing the routine years later!) Also, as part of the Talented and Gifted Program, Mrs. Rotello produced a play in which children from many different grades played the various parts.

As an active member of the United Federation of Teachers, Alice Rotello won an arbitration that enabled the seventh- and eighth-grade teachers at P.S. 175 to get junior high school contracts, which had been denied them because the two grades were housed in an elementary school building. The upper-grade teachers therefore received the additional time that teachers on that level were supposed to have, as well as back pay for the time they had been denied. Mrs. Rotello bought herself a refrigerator with the money.

When asked what she misses most about teaching, she says: "Being with the children, having a class in front of you. Watching their faces as they learn something they didn't know before." And what does she like about retirement? "The freedom! Doing what you want when you want."

Of course, even after she retired, Mrs. Rotello didn't stop teaching. At some point during her career at P.S. 175, one of the parents asked her to give her son extra help, and Mrs. Rotello willingly agreed to do so. Before long, and well after her retirement, she was the go-to tutor for everything from preparation for SATs and high-school entrance exams to one-on-one courses in Latin, math and reading.

Whether she was in the classroom or at home working with an individual student, Alice Rotello has always given her best, and she has demanded the best from her students. Because she never accepted sloppy work, the children learned self-respect and confidence along with their subjects. She may not have attained her original goal of becoming a writer, but she definitely made the right career choice, judging from the affection and respect with which she is remembered by her many students. She has influenced the lives of hundreds of children and brought joy and a love of learning wherever she worked. Alice Rotello has left a rich legacy to everyone whose lives she has touched.



Cub Scout Pack 211 held its annual Blue and Gold Dinner on April 7, 2006. The dinner is held to award the scouts for their accomplishments throughout the year and to honor the second-year Webelos who are "crossing the bridge" into Boy Scouts. During the dinner, the Cub Scouts showed their appreciation to City Councilman Jimmy Vacca (top photo, center) for all his help. This year's graduates are (bottom photo, l. to r.) Ryan Henning, Brian Devlin, Hajqi Lajqi, Ryan Fitzpatrick and Kyle Kreig. Shown with them are their leaders Regina Kreig, Mervette Lajqi and Cubmaster Angelo Bellocchio. Good luck boys!

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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.

Current Calendar

MAY

Tues., May 9, **Bronx Masons Blood Drive**, 4 to 8 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church at 113 Bay Street.

Sat., May 13, **Girl Scout Mother's Day Flower Sale**, 10 a.m. until sold out! Front of Trinity Church, Bay Street and City Island Avenue.

Sat., May 13: **City Island Garden Tour**, 1 p.m., sponsored by the Garden Club of City Island. Begins at 21 Tier Street; suggested donation \$5.

Thurs., May 18, **Community Board 10 meets**, 7:30 p.m., Schuyler House, 3077 Cross Bronx Expressway, Bronx.

Sat., May 20, **POTS Program**, St. Mary's School Yard, Minneford Avenue and Kilroe Street; drop-off between 4:30 and 5 p.m. Menu: Cut up chicken with rice.

Mon., May 29, **Memorial Day Parade**, 1 p.m., sponsored by the American Legion.

Tues., May 30, **City Island Civic Association meets**, 7:30 p.m., Community Center, 190 Fordham Street.

JUNE

Sat. and Sun., June 3 and 4, **Arts and Crafts Fair** sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. City Island Avenue.

Thurs., June 8, **Garden Club Spring Luncheon**, 12 noon, City Island Yacht Club, Pilot Street.

Sat., June 17 to Sat., June 24, **Bronx Week 2006**, sponsored by The Bronx Tourism Council.

Garden Club News

Our spring Garden Tour will be on Saturday, May 13, rain or shine, starting at 1 p.m. at 21 Tier Street, where you may pick up a map with the locations of our beautiful participating gardens. There will be refreshments at the final stop. Suggested donation: \$5.

Reserve now for our annual spring luncheon, which will be held on Thursday, June 8, at 12 noon, at the City Island Yacht Club on Pilot Street. The price is \$30, and we ask that you have your payment in by June 1. Send a check made out to the Garden Club of City Island to Ruth Collins, 45 Centre Street, City Island NY 10464.

Gardening hint: With the spring flowers and trees in full bloom, we should now be preparing the ground for some wonderful annuals to produce color when the spring flowers fade away.

Phyllis Goodman

Temple Beth-El

Temple Beth-El, "Your Shul by the Sea" (at 480 City Island Avenue, between Beach and Bowne Streets) is an all-inclusive egalitarian, multiethnic Jewish congregation with Sabbath services each Friday night at 7:30 p.m.

Rabbi Shohama and Cantor Elaine will lead the Kabbalat Shabbat services on Friday, May 5.

Children accompanied by adults may join Karyn Berger for her creative Family Program for one hour of crafts, song and Jewish history at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 6.

For adults, our spirituality service and Torah study workshop will be led by Dan Klipper at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 6. Come, learn and share your understanding in a comfortable, accepting group.

SHOHAM class (Spiritual Healing Of Health And Mind) will be conducted on Monday, May 15, at 7:30 p.m. (free for members; \$15 per class for non-members).

Learn ballroom dancing with Elaine Belasco. Lessons in basic ballroom and Latin dance are open to the public. Classes will be conducted on Wednesdays (from 7:30 to 9 p.m.) beginning on May 17. No partner

required. Free for TBE members (\$10 per session for non-members; \$54 for all six classes). Registration accepted until classes are filled. Call 718-885-2154.

Yoga/Tai-Chi classes continue on Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. all through May. Led by Marc Kaplan, the exercises will leave you more flexible, more energetic and refreshed. For more info, contact Marc at 718-885-2445.

For more information, visit our Web site at www.yourshulbythesea.org.

Bob Berent

City Island Republicans

As I am sure everyone has noticed, the political season has already begun, with a bombardment of political commercials on television and radio. If it is this bad now, I will have to throw the TV through the window when we get to October. The political season has also begun for the City Island Republicans. We were fortunate to have Tom Lynch and Stu Mirsky from the Rockaway Republicans in Queens speak at our last meeting.

They talked about how they established their club back in 2003 and how they faced some of the same challenges we currently do. The gentlemen explained to our membership that since City Island has four election districts, we should have eight county committee people, one man and one woman from each district. Furthermore, Mr. Lynch told us how we can obtain a charter from the state of New York. Mr. Mirsky who also is a writer, encouraged all club members to write to the Bronx papers so that our views are heard.

One of the major goals we want to achieve this year is for the club to receive a charter from New York State. The second major item we would like to accomplish is to elect Joseph J. Savino to the New York State Senate.

The City Island Republicans would like to announce that there is a Web site that covers Republican news from around the state which is mostly geared toward New York City. The Web site is www.urbanelephants.com, and it even gives information about the different Republican candidates from around the state.

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 550 City Island Avenue. All are welcome. For all of those who are interested in joining, dues are \$20. The meeting is also posted on the Urban Elephants Web site. We may have a popular statewide candidate at our next meeting as a speaker.

The City Island Republicans would like to wish the entire community a happy and healthy Memorial Day and ask that everyone pray for all of our troops. If we do not see you at our next meeting, we will see you next month on your block when we carry petitions so we can get Republicans on the ballot.

Frederick W. Ramftl Jr.

Trinity United Methodist Church

With the spring fair and Easter behind us, we at Trinity are looking forward to a restful summer.

Our services are still at 10 a.m., and everyone is welcome to join us. Our Sunday school is still in full swing, and all children are invited to join us.

Spring has also arrived at our Budget Shop, with the arrival of a great selection of spring and summer clothing for the whole family. We are still experiencing a lack of volunteers for Budget and are in a great need of help. If anyone has some spare time on Tuesdays, please give Ellen Hebbard a call at 718-518-7241.

Enjoy the spring, and we hope to see you at Trinity!

Anne Sill



Photo by BOB BERENT

Rabbi Shohama Wiener led the service at Temple Beth-El's community seder held at the Stuyvesant Yacht Club on the first night of Passover, Wednesday April 12, 2006.

City Island Seniors

It is with deep regret that I report the untimely demise of our small group, the Island Seniors. Due to the paucity of membership, it was difficult to stay afloat financially, and at our last meeting the majority of those present, just nine members, agreed that we should disband.

The membership committee voted to refund all dues paid for the year 2006 and advised that checks should be cashed promptly.

After all obligations are paid, residual monies in the treasury will be dispensed to the charitable organizations we have donated to in the past.

A final treasurer's report listing organizations gifted in the past, which will share the remaining largesse, will be issued when the bank account is officially closed.

No further meetings will be held. In closing, we wish to thank all who have supported us in the past. Nil desperandum.

Russell Schaller

Chapter 318 AARP

Our next trip to Atlantic City is on Tuesday, May 9. The bus leaves from 113 Bay Street on City Island at 9 a.m. For reservations, please call Jean Ringel at 718-885-1479 or John Bonicoro at 718-885-1844.

Our end of the season luncheon is on Friday, June 9, at the Lido Restaurant on City Island Avenue at Pilot Street. Please come and join us. It will be a wonderful afternoon with great food and a chance to be with friends. Please see Florence Quinn or Lucy Pontecorvo at our meetings for reservations.

We are opening our books for new members. Please join us and bring a friend. We meet the first and third Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. at the Trinity Methodist Church, at 113 Bay Street on City Island Avenue. Refreshments and cake are served following the meeting. We sometimes have guest speakers or we play bingo.

Marie Tirelli

Grace Episcopal Church

Grace Church celebrates Holy Communion every Sunday at 10 a.m., and you are warmly welcomed to join us! Child care is available for young children in the Parish Hall beginning at 9:45 a.m.; for older children, Church School is offered approximately three times a month, beginning at 10 a.m. Please call the Parish Office at 718-885-1080 for dates and more information. Also,

reiki sessions are offered regularly at Grace Church and may be scheduled by calling Evyonne Baker at 347-427-4265; consult our Web site (www.gracecityisland.org) for specific schedule information.

Here is an overview of what's happening at Grace Church during May and early June:

Sunday, May 7, 12 noon, Parish Hall: Monthly Health Talk. This month's topic is "Women and Heart Disease," presented by Ms. Mary Farley, who is herself a survivor of two heart attacks. Come hear how diet, exercise and awareness can help prevent this leading killer of women in America; bring a woman you love to hear this life-saving message, too. Monthly Health Talks are sponsored by the Grace Church Health and Healing Ministry and are free and opened to the public.

Sunday, May 14 (Mother's Day): Outreach Committee Rose Sale. Come buy a flower for Mom and support our outreach efforts on behalf of AIDS orphans in Tanzania. For further information, call Susan Velcheck at 718-885-2346.

Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.: First Annual Grace Church Tag Sale. All proceeds from the sale will go to support the ministries of Grace Church. Please contact sale organizer Evyonne Baker at 347-427-4265 for more details.

Sunday, May 21, 2 to 4 p.m.: Vacation Bible School Informational Open House. Following on the success of last year's Vacation Bible School, sponsored jointly by Grace Episcopal, Trinity Methodist and St. Mary, Star of the Sea Churches, we are pleased to announce an encore! All interested parents are invited the Grace Church Parish Hall to learn more about this summer's program. For further information about Vacation Bible School, please call VBS coordinator Ann McGuire at 718-885-1710.

Sunday, June 4, 10 a.m.: The Feast of Pentecost, the "Birthday of the Church."

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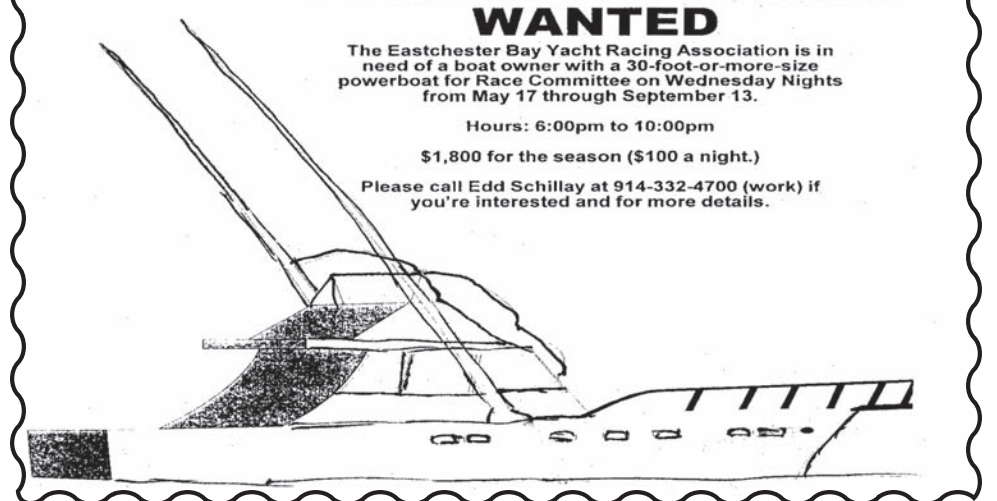
POWERBOAT OWNER WANTED

The Eastchester Bay Yacht Racing Association is in need of a boat owner with a 30-foot-or-more-size powerboat for Race Committee on Wednesday Nights from May 17 through September 13.

Hours: 6:00pm to 10:00pm

\$1,800 for the season (\$100 a night.)

Please call Edd Schillay at 914-332-4700 (work) if you're interested and for more details.





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

Ongoing Events

Monthly Meetings of the Board are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Center Main Room, 190 Fordham Street. All members are encouraged to attend.

Weekly Schedule

YOUTH PROGRAM

Irish Dance: The Deirdre O'Mara School of Irish Dance teaches step dancing in a fun, competitive environment for all ages. A confidence building and cultural experience for all who participate. Wednesdays. Call Deirdre at 201-679-1450.

Jazz/Tap for Grades 2 through 6: Thursdays after school. Call Linda at Dance Connection, 914-576-5515.

Girl Scouts: Fourth Grade. For information, call Grace Nagy at 718-757-1338.

Daisies: Kindergarten. For information call Brenda Prohaska at 718-885-9040.

Small Potatoes-Creative Cooking for Kids: Thursdays. Give Gina a call for more information at 845-531-5011.

Teen Center: Saturday evenings 7:30 to 10 p.m. Please call Jay Howard at 718-885-2192 for more information.

ADULT PROGRAM

Belly Dancing With Myriam: Tuesdays, Thursdays, Sundays. Call Myriam at 347-602-8968 for more information.

TNT (Tuesday Night Tap): Adult Jazz/Tap Classes. Tuesdays, from 7 to 8 p.m. Call Corinne Grondahl at 718-309-8041.

Aerobics Classes: Sundays, from 9 to 10 a.m.; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9 to 10 a.m.; and Wednesdays from 7 to 8 p.m. Babysitting available Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Call Mary Immediato at 718-885-0793.

FAMILY PROGRAM & MIXED AGE GROUPS

Millennium Babies Playgroup: A free playgroup open to all with babies and/or pre-school children. Call Brenda Prohaska at 718-885-9040 for more information.

Vilma's Music Together: Music and movement for children ages birth through 5 and the adults who love them! Fridays, from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m., Saturdays from 10:15 to 11 a.m. For more information, call 718-882-2223 or visit the Web site www.vilmasmusictogether.com or e-mail info@vilmasmusictogether.com.

Knitting Club: Beginner knitting classes for all ages! Thursdays, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Call Carol at 718-885-3190 for more information.

Chess Club: Monday evenings from 7 to 11 p.m. For ages 13 and up. No need to register, just show up!

Amy Gottlieb-McElroy

Family Movie Night

St. Mary, Star of the Sea will host a family night on Saturday, May 20, at 6 p.m. In an effort to promote Father Michael's vision of building a faith community, the church is hosting a family movie night in the gymnasium at St. Mary, Star of the Sea School.

Everyone is welcome to enjoy a night of unity and celebration of the family spirit. Parishioners are encouraged to attend the 5:15 Mass, which will be followed immediately by a pasta dinner in the school gym. After dinner, families will enjoy a double feature of family-friendly films, thanks to the new sound system and projection unit, which simulate a real movie theater experience. Popcorn and soft drinks will be provided.

An essay contest will be held to select the two movies to be viewed. Children under the age of 16 are asked to submit essays on the subject of "What is my favorite movie and why?" Movies must be age-appropriate, rated G or PG. All essays must be dropped off in a box in the church vestibule by May 15. Two essays will be selected, and those movies will be viewed at the movie night. The authors of the two winning essays will be recognized at the dinner, and they will receive a DVD copy of the movie and a \$25 gift card to Barnes and Noble.

The cost for this event will be \$30 per family. All children under the age of sixteen must be accompanied by a parent. If you are interested in attending, log on to the church Web site at www.stmarystaroftheseacityisland.com or call Larry Saulnier at 718-855-1313. Reservations are necessary and should be made no later than May 15 if you wish to attend.



This beautiful 58-year-old Japanese flowering cherry tree will be one of the stops along the Garden Club's spring garden tour on Saturday, May 13. According to the owner, the U.S. Department of Forestry declared it to be the largest specimen of this type growing in New York City. Join the tour at 1 p.m. starting at 21 Tier Street.

Legion News

It seems like only yesterday that I took quill in hand to pen the April newsletter. *Tempus fugit*. May is always an active month for the Post with the big event being the Memorial Day parade. The parade is scheduled for Monday, May 29, and will step off at Belden Point at 1 p.m. For those who have difficulty stepping off, we hope to have some form of transportation, possibly a float, as in past events. Veterans are urged to wear their decorations earned in battles both real and imaginary.

There will be several stops along the way to give marchers a chance to catch their breath. The first will be at the World War I monument in Hawkins Park. Leonard Hawkins was the only Islander to die during World War I, aka the Great War. The next stop will be Pelham Cemetery. It should be noted that here repose soldiers and sailors from the Revolutionary War to WWII. The final service will be held at the WWII memorial at the bridge.

Seventeen Island youths met their untimely demise in that conflict. I say "youths" because many were still in their teens. One teenager, Russell Wade, was a Navy gunner aboard the *S.S. Paul Hamilton*. The following was taken from "Straight and Level: The Story of the 33rd Photo Reconnaissance Squadron in WWII."

"Under armed sea and air escort, the *Paul Hamilton* steamed eastward in a convoy through Cape Benegut, off Algeria. At approximately 2100 hours, the Luftwaffe came through the dusk, JU-88s and HE-111s at a very low altitude. The *S.S. Paul Hamilton* was hit by a torpedo dropped by the first wave of attackers. The ship and all 627 aboard were blown to bits, a column of water and debris rising skyward some 3,000 feet. Not a single body was found intact since the ship was also carrying a cargo of high explosives. The 32nd PRS was wiped out."

After a brief ceremony at the bridge, all marchers will retire to the Post to enjoy hot dogs and beverages of their choice. As always, we can anticipate a plethora of VIPs to share

the rewards of the long trek.

We don't get too many volunteers these days, but Pat Bramley stepped forward to accept the coveted position as our representative of Homeland Security and Civil Preparedness, an impressive title indeed.

Nominations for Post officers will be held Monday, May 1, and at the meeting on Monday, May 15. Elections will also be held at this meeting.

Membership recognition night was well attended. Pins were presented to members with five or more years of continuous service, measured in five-year increments. Topping the list of worthy recipients were Robert Branizza, Robert Booth and Earl Rickard Jr. with 60 years and Frank DeSantis with 55 years. Refreshments befitting the occasion were served.

I am still asked about the omnipresent blue tarp that graces the southwest corner of the building. This corner of the Post is being repaired after years of neglect. Both Ray Kelly and Bill Clancy, carpenters of repute working only in their spare time, are progressing at a feverish pace. I have also been asked about refurbishing the unisex restroom on the main floor. To the best of my knowledge, it is the Post's next major project.

Richard O'Keefe reported that the National Commander's Dinner, held at Anton's, was a success.

Meetings for the month of May are as follows: regular meetings, Monday, May 1 and 15; executive board meeting, Monday, May 8.

On Sunday, May 21, at 10 a.m., a memorial service will be held at the Trinity Methodist Church.

Our newly elected Commander will take charge at the June 5 meeting.

The blessing of the colors will take place on May 7 at Holy Family Church at Castle Hill and Blackrock Avenues. See the bulletin board for instructions.

Flag schedules will be delivered early in May. We can always use a few able volunteers.

To smoke or not to smoke, that is the question. Smoking is, at the present time, permitted at the bar, but seems to permeate the adjacent room used for meetings and social affairs. A number of members, family and friends are reluctant to make use of our facilities because of smoking. On the other hand, members, their spouses, family and friends who have the habit frequent the bar. Our bar chairman, Tom McMahon, sees some resolution in a smoking area, soon to be provided. Will everyone be happy?

In parting, let us remember General William Tecumseh Sherman's immortal words: "There is many a boy here today who looks upon war as glory, but, boys, it is all hell."

At ease until next month.

Russell Schaller

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Out of Order

Cinematic license is sometimes used very creatively in films that are not told in chronological order. Movie makers use various techniques that challenge the viewer to piece together clues into a satisfying whole.

The Harold Pinter play **Betrayal** (1983) is a psychological drama that is told backward in time. It is the story of Jerry (Jeremy Irons), who has an affair with Emma (Patricia Hodge), the wife of his best friend, Robert (Ben Kingsley). The notion of who knew what when is intriguing in this beautifully acted film set in England and Italy.

Also told backward in time is the fascinating **Memento** (2000), starring Guy Pearce as an insurance investigator afflicted with serious short term memory loss while trying to solve his wife's murder. Every day he wakes up and has to start all over again with the help of Polaroid snapshots and tattoos all over his body. As we go back in time, we see each event that leads up to what we already know from the previous scene, which he cannot remember.

Perhaps the most famous of all films in this category is **Pulp Fiction** (1994), in which director and co-screenwriter Quentin Tarantino created one of the most original and influential American movies of that decade. Three intertwining stories are told from the middle, jumping backward and forward with a melding of cartoon violence and philosophical hit men. Vincent Vega (John Travolta) and Jules (Samuel L. Jackson) work for mob boss Marcellus Wallace (Ving Rhames). When not killing people, Vincent is assigned to take out Marcellus's wife, Mia (Uma Thurman), a risky undertaking. Bruce Willis is featured as a boxer and Harvey Keitel as a "cleaner" (who cleans up when hit men make a big mess).

However, the star of this very violent film is the dialogue.

Undoubtedly inspired by **Pulp Fiction** is **2 Days in the Valley** (1996), an intricate interweaving of plots concerning Los Angeles murderers, cops and those in the media world. James Spader is Lee Woods, a sadistic hit man sent to murder the husband (Peter Horton) of Olympic athlete Becky Foxx (Teri Hatcher). Lee's accomplice is the soft-hearted Dosmo (Danny Aiello), who takes refuge in the home of Hopper (Greg Cruttwell), a snobby art dealer who is verbally abusive to his assistant, Susan (Glenn Headly). Two cops (Jeff Daniels and Eric Stoltz) are on the trail of Lee's girlfriend (Charlize Theron). Director Paul Mazursky has an acting role as a suicidal television director who is befriended by a nurse (Marsha Mason) when they meet at a cemetery. Until all the pieces come together, it is impossible to figure out what has happened when in this engrossing film.

21 Grams (2003) is the kind of story that would be too painful to watch if told chronologically. Because it is presented as a puzzle, however, the viewer can maintain some distance from the tragedies yet still feel the emotional impact. Each character has been rocked by tragedy. Grief-stricken Cristina (Naomi Watts) has lost her family. Guilty Paul (Sean Penn) has a damaged heart. Angry Jack (Benicio Del Toro) is a former convict who has fundamentalist leanings to keep him in recovery. The intersection of their stories is an incredibly well-acted catastrophe.

13 Conversations About One Thing (2001), is another ensemble movie in which the lives of seemingly unrelated characters intersect. Troy (Matthew McConaughey) is a successful prosecutor wracked with guilt because of his involvement in an accident. Gene (Alan Arkin) is an office manager who decides to fire someone who is too happy. Beatrice is a house cleaner who suffers because of an injury. Walker (John Turturro) is a sarcastic college professor who leaves his wife (Amy Irving). What do they all have in common? As their lives touch, we see how elusive happiness can be.

And until next time, happy viewing. . .

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P.S. 175's seventh grade girls participated in the Math Olympiad at Preston High School. The team was coached by seventh grade math teacher, Mr. Lafreniere. In the individual competition, Elizabeth Balfe came in fifth place and Kristina Dilorio came in second place. In the team competition, the students came in first place! Shown above are the victorious team members (bottom row, l. to r.): Julia Doyle, Kristina Dilorio, Elizabeth Balfe and Kristina Garcia. Top row: Alyssa Molloy, Wayne Lafreniere and Samantha Emmert.



St. Mary, Star of the Sea

We would like at once to extend our sincerest thanks to all of you who sent letters and signed petitions to the Archdiocese of New York when it was proposed that St. Mary, Star of the Sea School be closed. The response of the City Island community was overwhelming and very gratifying. We will keep you all in our thoughts and prayers and ask that you do the same for this institution which has been a part of the parish and the community at large for the past 75 years. We hope that the school's next 75 years will be marked by many great things as well.

Registration for the 2006-2007 school year for grades Pre-K through 7 is still available, so please contact the school office with any questions or to register as soon as possible.

We are rolling into May after a restful and reflective Easter break, and we are looking forward to exciting and very full May and June schedules. We will be holding our first Friday mass on Friday, May 5 at 9 a.m. All are welcome to our celebration. First Holy Communion will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, May 6, and our May crowning will be held on Sunday, May 7 at the 10 a.m. mass with our Communion breakfast to follow.

Grades 4 and 5 will be traveling to Albany to see how our state government works. Thanks to State Assemblyman Michael Di Benedetto for all of his help on this trip. Grades K through 3 will be traveling to the Norwalk Aquarium to enjoy another view of maritime and marine life.

The fourth grade is busy working on the New York state science test and practical exam. Good luck to our budding scientists!

The Home School Association is working on Mother's Day flower arranging for grades Pre-K through 8. The group will also help at the Scholastic Book Fair from May 8 through 12, with Thursday night, May 11, open to the entire community. There will be a few items to purchase for Mother's Day as well. We will be scheduling another Popcorn Movie night during May also.

The eighth grade will design and make decorations for its party in June, which will take place in the gym. The party will have a Mardi Gras theme to honor victims of the Gulf storms of 2005.

Reservations are filling fast for Alumni Weekend to celebrate the school's 75th anniversary. Spots at many of the functions, such

as the golf outing and the boat ride, are filling up fast, so please sign up soon. Reservations are all due by May 15. For more information, you can visit our Web site at www.stmarys-taroftheseacityisland.com.

Public School 175

Spring has arrived and the students continue to bloom! The eighth-graders are putting the finishing touches on their social studies and science exit projects. In addition to a visual presentation, the students are required to do an oral presentation for their teachers. Mr. McConnell and Ms. Heil have been working alongside their students to make this a most meaningful project.

The kindergarten and first grade students have enthusiastically begun the Sports & Arts After-School Program, which focuses on visual arts and taekwon do. It is amazing to see how even the youngest children have begun to master the beginning martial arts moves! They are also working on creative arts projects with the art teacher, Ms. Hajjar.

The spring season of the CHAMPS program began for sixth- and seventh-grade students. The focus for this season is tennis. Ms. Stelman will be heading up the program, working with students to learn and perfect their tennis techniques.

Grade 5 is preparing for the May presentation of "Bye Bye Birdie," which will take place on Tuesday, May 23, and Thursday, May 25. Ms. Fateman and Ms. DeGrasse have been working with the students and their teachers and, from the sound of the rehearsals, this promises to be another phenomenal P.S. 175 production! As an extension activity to preparing for this performance, the fifth-graders went to see the Broadway production of "Hairspray." After the performance, the students met with members of the cast and were able to ask questions about the many facets of putting on a Broadway production.

We are very proud to report that seven of our seventh-grade girls participated in the Math Olympiad at Preston High School. The team was coached by the seventh-grade math teacher, Mr. Lafreniere, who did a fabulous job of preparing the students. In the individual competition, Elizabeth Balfe came in fifth and Kristina DiIorio came in second. In the team competition, our students came in FIRST! Congratulations to Elizabeth Balfe, Kristina DiIorio, Julia Doyle, Samantha Emmert, Kristina Garcia, Ariana Joubert and Alyssa Molloy for both their individual and team efforts!

Please keep in mind these important dates: Ongoing kindergarten registration for City Island residents continues Thursday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Grade 7 will be going to Boston on May 4; eighth-grade graduation will take place on Friday, June 23 at 10 a.m. The graduation dance will be the same evening from 8 to 10:30 p.m. The eighth-grade trip to Washington, D.C. will take place from May 31 to June 1. The kindergarten moving-up ceremony will take place on Thursday, June 22, at 10 a.m., followed by a family celebration in the field adjoining the schoolyard.

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SOCIAL SECURITY

Making Your Drug Plan Decision

Medicare beneficiaries who have not yet enrolled in the new Medicare prescription drug program should consider putting this cost-savings opportunity at the very top of their to-do list. The deadline for initial enrollment in the Medicare Prescription Drug program ends on May 15, 2006.

Medicare beneficiaries who have limited income and resources can maximize their cost savings by also applying for extra help that is available to pay for part of the monthly premiums, annual deductibles and prescription co-payments under the new prescription drug program. That extra help could be worth an average of \$2,100 per year for those who qualify.

You may qualify for extra help if your annual income is below \$14,700 (\$19,800 for a married couple living together) and you have resources totaling no more than \$10,000 (\$20,000 for a married couple living together). Resources include such things as bank accounts, stocks and bonds, but do *not* include your house and car. And resources can be slightly higher if you plan to use some of your money for burial expenses.

Because time is running short, you need to act now.

If you think that you might qualify for the extra help, complete an online application at www.socialsecurity.gov. Or call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) and ask for an application. If you prefer, we can help you complete one over the phone. You also can visit your local Social Security office, where someone will help you complete an application.

After you apply, Social Security will review your application and let you know if you qualify for the extra help. If you qualify, you will then need to enroll in a Medicare-approved prescription drug plan to get help with your prescription costs. It is not too late to sign up to participate in the new program, or to see if you qualify for extra help in meeting its costs. But in order to take advantage

of these opportunities, you must act now.

Women: Retiring Early—or Not

March was women's history month, and a recent study asked this interesting question: "Why do women claim Social Security benefits so early?" The study pointed out that nearly 60 percent of women choose to apply for Social Security retirement benefits as early as possible, at age 62.

Although most of us can understand the desire to pursue retirement dreams as soon as possible, the truth is that working an extra year or two before retiring can provide extra money to help you realize those dreams. You would have the chance to build your bank accounts or make additional 401(k) contributions and to increase your Social Security benefit amount.

You need only 10 years of working and paying Social Security taxes to qualify for retirement benefits, but your benefit payments will be based on your 35 years of highest earnings. If you don't have 35 years of earnings, the Social Security administration uses a zero for each year without earnings when they calculate the amount of retirement benefits you are due.

Many women, because of lower average wages and interrupted work histories to care for children and older relatives, have a number of low-earning years or "zero earnings" years figured into their computation. In fact, current Social Security data estimates that women born between 1946 and 1960 will have an average of three to four years of zero earnings in their benefit computations. Working an extra year or two will allow you to replace a year or two of low (or zero) earnings with higher earnings.

You can find out how many years of low earnings you have under Social Security if you check the Social Security Statement that is mailed each year to every worker age 25 and older. Read it carefully, because it contains information vital to your personal financial future. It shows how much you and your family can expect to receive from Social Security when you retire, or if you become disabled or die.

You may also visit Social Security's financial planning Web site at www.socialsecurity.gov/planners. You can use the calculators there to test different retirement ages or differ-

ent scenarios for future earnings amounts. For example, you can replace one or more zero- or lower-earnings years with higher-earnings years and see for yourself the difference it would make in your benefit entitlement calculations.

The Web site also provides detailed information about how marriage, widowhood, divorce, self-employment, government service and other life or career events can affect your Social Security. And it includes a link to a non-Social Security worksheet that will help you decide how much you need to save and invest on your own to ensure a comfortable retirement.

If you want more information about the role of Social Security in women's lives today,

Social Security has a special *For Women* Web site that you may find useful. You can find it at www.socialsecurity.gov/women.

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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 P.M. 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

MAY 2006

DAY	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	DAY
01 Mon	0229	8.0	0928	-0.1	1518	7.0	2117	0.8	Mon 01
02 Tue	0321	7.6	1021	0.4	1617	6.7	2213	1.3	Tue 02
03 Wed	0425	7.2	1118	0.9	1720	6.6	2323	1.6	Wed 03
04 Thu	0538	6.9	1216	1.3	1823	6.7			Thu 04
05 Fri	0033	1.8	0647	6.7	1313	1.4	1922	6.8	Fri 05
06 Sat	0136	1.7	0747	6.7	1406	1.5	2015	7.0	Sat 06
07 Sun	0232	1.5	0841	6.8	1454	1.4	2103	7.2	Sun 07
08 Mon	0322	1.3	0929	6.9	1537	1.3	2146	7.3	Mon 08
09 Tue	0406	0.9	1013	6.9	1613	1.2	2223	7.5	Tue 09
10 Wed	0446	0.7	1051	6.9	1642	1.0	2251	7.6	Wed 10
11 Thu	0521	0.4	1123	6.9	1703	0.9	2307	7.7	Thu 11
12 Fri	0552	0.2	1145	6.9	1729	0.8	2331	7.9	Fri 12
13 Sat	0620	0.1	1209	7.0	1804	0.7			Sat 13
14 Sun	0004	8.1	0652	0.0	1243	7.0	1843	0.7	Sun 14
15 Mon	0044	8.2	0730	0.0	1323	7.1	1927	0.7	Mon 15
16 Tue	0128	8.2	0814	0.1	1408	7.1	2015	0.8	Tue 16
17 Wed	0216	8.1	0902	0.2	1459	7.1	2109	1.0	Wed 17
18 Thu	0309	7.9	0957	0.4	1556	7.1	2210	1.1	Thu 18
19 Fri	0408	7.6	1100	0.6	1700	7.2	2323	1.1	Fri 19
20 Sat	0516	7.3	1213	0.6	1814	7.3			Sat 20
21 Sun	0054	0.9	0637	7.2	1328	0.5	1930	7.6	Sun 21
22 Mon	0213	0.5	0802	7.2	1433	0.3	2034	7.9	Mon 22
23 Tue	0318	0.0	0910	7.3	1531	0.1	2131	8.2	Tue 23
24 Wed	0415	-0.5	1007	7.4	1624	0.0	2222	8.4	Wed 24
25 Thu	0508	-0.8	1100	7.4	1714	-0.1	2311	8.5	Thu 25
26 Fri	0559	-0.9	1149	7.4	1801	-0.1	2358	8.5	Fri 26
27 Sat	0648	-0.9	1237	7.3	1847	0.1			Sat 27
28 Sun	0043	8.3	0735	-0.6	1324	7.2	1931	0.4	Sun 28
29 Mon	0128	8.1	0821	-0.3	1411	7.1	2013	0.7	Mon 29
30 Tue	0212	7.8	0906	0.2	1458	7.0	2055	1.0	Tue 30
31 Wed	0258	7.5	0950	0.6	1548	6.9	2139	1.3	Wed 31

JUNE 2006

DAY	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	DAY
01 Thu	0348	7.2	1033	1.0	1640	6.8	2229	1.6	Thu 01
02 Fri	0444	6.9	1117	1.3	1734	6.8	2328	1.7	Fri 02
03 Sat	0548	6.6	1201	1.5	1829	6.8			Sat 03



Birding Bob

"Sights and Sounds" recently caught up with Bronx resident Robert DeCandido, Ph.D., also known as Birding Bob, and he agreed to the following interview for this month's column. Bob is a Pelham Bay Park expert who has been enlightening and entertaining New Yorkers for years about the flora and fauna right in their own backyards.

S&S: What is your training exactly?

BB: I have an MS in ecology from Fordham University and a Ph.D. in ecology and evolutionary biology from the City University of New York. I also worked for 10 years or so for the New York City Parks Department (Urban Park Rangers and Natural Resources Group), and I have worked internationally in Southeast Asia (Thailand and Malaysia), most recently as a research associate scientist for the Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

S&S: I know you live in the Bronx, but did you grow up here? How did you get interested in the outdoors?

BB: Yes I grew up in the Bronx, the same neighborhood where I live now. I became interested in the outdoors from running through my neighborhood to Pelham Bay Park beginning in about 1981. Just out of college, I hitchhiked a lot through the western United States and Canada, and I saw the national parks (including both mountains and open spaces) of the West. I enjoyed that very much, and when I returned home, I spent a great deal of time in Pelham Bay Park trying to figure out what plants and birds were in the park now and what has been here in the past.

S&S: Describe the research you've conducted in Pelham Bay Park. Tell us about some of the changes you have observed over the years.

BB: My research falls into two categories: ornithological (primarily bird migration) and ecological (primarily botanical). In the late 1980s, I founded and directed a hawk migration study in Pelham Bay Park. We watched raptors flying south over us from the Orchard Beach parking lot. In the autumn, we would often see large birds of prey (17 species, including bald eagles, ospreys, broad-winged hawks, turkey vultures, and so on) flying south over the park. However, we had no idea how many birds there were and what (if anything) they did as they passed over the park. We didn't know if there was any rhyme or reason as to when the birds would appear.

So we set ourselves up in the parking lot seven days per week from about 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. from mid-August through mid-November. We discovered we could predict that hawks would pass south over us on any day when winds from the northwest would bring them to the coast. Our results amazed everyone: in 1988 and 1990, we counted about 1,250 ospreys migrating overhead each year; we also saw, on average, about 25 bald eagles per year. On one day (Sept. 17, 1990), we counted more than 15,000 broad-winged hawks passing over the Orchard Beach parking lot on their way to South America.

From 1988 to 1990, we also did the only study of ospreys foraging in migration. We learned that the years in which mossbunker were abundant correlated with large numbers of ospreys diving into the water and catching them. We also observed bald eagles stealing fish from ospreys, and we regularly saw peregrine falcons and merlins (another kind of falcon) chasing and catching migrant birds in the area. All in all, we proved that Pelham Bay Park is an important spot for migrating birds to stop and feed. More important, we learned that urban habitats are critical stopover sites for migrants, and that people and wildlife can coexist, so long as people want to make that happen.

In terms of the flora, I began compiling a plant list in about 1988 and turned it into a Ph.D. project by 1994. I found every different species of wildflower, grass, shrub and tree in Pelham Bay Park and compared my list to one compiled in the 1940s by Harry Ahles, a former Bronx native. In the intervening 50 years, about 25 percent of the plant species of the park had been eliminated, owing to a variety of causes, including development, the spread of non-native species and forest succession. About 95 percent of the lost species were



Photo by DEBORAH ALLEN

Dr. Robert DeCandido, "Birding Bob".

herbaceous plants, including wildflowers and grasses.

Overall, about 950 plant species have been recorded in Pelham Bay Park, an amazing diversity for a 3,000-acre urban park. However, we are rapidly losing that diversity. With the recent increase in deer in the park, I am afraid that anything less than five feet in height will be eaten during the next decade or so and that they will eliminate many more plant species in the coming years.

If anyone is interested in these topics, they can e-mail me and I will send articles about my research.

S&S: When did the Birding Bob thing begin in Pelham Bay Park? What are some of your most exciting finds there?

BB: The Birding Bob thing began in 2002 when I left the Parks Department. I began conducting walks in many parks throughout the city, in order to stay in touch with many of the people I had met and to see what was happening in the city parks. Since I knew and loved Pelham Bay Park, we spent much of our time there.

My best sightings? I remember finding the first American turkeys in the park in summer of 1996. The time we found five saw-whet owls in a small conifer grove on Hunter Island (Dec. 31, 1999) was special too. In December 1990 we saw six rough-legged hawks over the landfill, and we have also seen snowy owls and short-eared owls over the years there.

Currently, my favorite sight (well, sound) is produced every spring by the hundreds of gray tree frogs calling in a freshwater pond near the landfill. I put tadpoles in that pond back in 2000 when I still worked for the Department of Parks. I am glad to see (well, hear) that they are doing well and increasing in number. Each spring in March, the adult males begin singing for mates, and it can be downright noisy there during the day, especially on warmer spring evenings. The pond is easy to find—it's right alongside the road—and the sound is unmistakable.

S&S: For those who are just beginning to be aware of their natural surroundings, what advice would you give them?

BB: Just go out and walk in the park as often as possible. You will see many things that will amaze you. Don't worry about learning names at first. Just go out and look and have fun. Best of all, the walking is good for you, and it is free!

S&S: Can you tell us anything that City Islanders should know about their island that they might not already know?

BB: They have one of the great urban parks of the world right in their own backyard.

S&S: This last question is a follow-up to something we wrote about last month—the swan with deformed wings. One reader told us she has observed cygnets before with a similar deformity (possibly from the same parents). Can you shed some more light on what might be going on here?

BB: I have no idea. I suggest you get the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) involved. Ask if Ward Stone of the state's Wildlife Pathology Division can evaluate the bird for you, and, if possible, get photographs of any young swans that may exhibit deformed wings.

For more information about Bob or to send him an e-mail, check out his Web site: www.BirdingBob.com. To contact us about this interview or any "Sights and Sounds" article, send an e-mail to jdsstrat@msn.com. At present, we are awaiting a response from Ward Stone at the DEC regarding the swans with deformed wings. Look for an update in next month's column.

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Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

The Easter Bunny entertained eager Island children for the Chamber of Commerce's Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 15, 2006.

Traffic

Continued from page 3

with each passing day," Senator Klein said, "and we have a responsibility to protect this neighborhood's safety and quality of life by ensuring adequate traffic flow. Nobody needs to be reminded that City Island is one of this borough's most isolated neighborhoods, making it even more critical that we act to ensure the safety of the Island's residents and its tens of thousands of visitors each year."

Frank Fitts is delighted to have Senator Klein's support and hopes that the Police Department will approve his request, not only for the summer but for duty during the sewer-replacement project scheduled for the next several years. "If we get traffic agents, the same unit would be assigned to City Island, so that they will quickly become familiar with the flow of traffic on weekends and during construction times. Because they have specialized training, they know how to direct traffic efficiently. No one does it better than they do."

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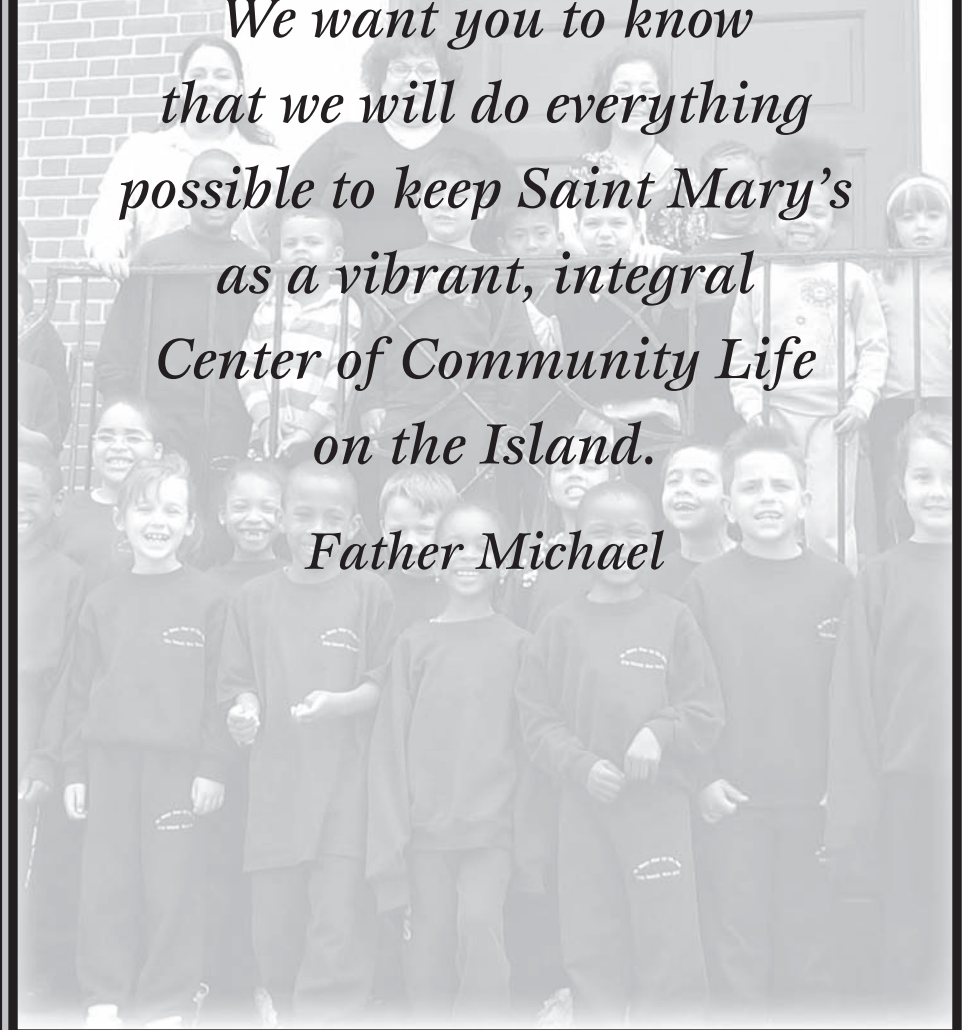
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“AW SHUCKS”

The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell

A review by JANE PROTZMAN



Photo courtesy of the CITY ISLAND NAUTICAL MUSEUM

Oystermen on Fordham Street Beach and Eastchester Bay early 1900's.

One of my favorite authors, Mark Kurlansky, has just published a new book, “The Big Oyster, History on the Half Shell.” Like his other books “Cod” and “Salt,” this one tells the tale of the social, culinary and economic impacts of a single item, in this case the humble oyster, on life in New York City, as well as providing interesting asides about the oyster throughout history.

The book begins with the original oystermen, the Lenape Indians, whose shell middens (trash heaps) reveal the abundance of oysters in the New York estuaries, and it ends with the demise of the oystering industry, caused by water pollution of the water and over-harvesting. In 1865, New York City was the oyster capital of the world, a boom that lasted until 1910, but by 1927 the last of the beds had been closed down.

The European settlers of New York City had relished oysters back in England and Holland, and this certainly contributed to the success of oystering in the area. During the heyday of the industry, several varieties of New York oysters were sold on every street corner, and they were cheap. Indeed, oysters were served both at Delmonico's and in the slums, one of the few foods of the time that crossed socio-economic lines. Oysters from the New York City estuaries were in demand throughout the world and were shipped to England and Germany and even as far west as San Francisco. According to the author, the varieties known as “Bluepoints, City Islands, Spuyten Duyvels, Rockaways ... were considered some of the best.”

Oysters have been a favorite of food lovers throughout the centuries, beginning with Roman emperors, who paid for them by their weight in gold. Oysters have also been linked with love. Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, sprang forth from the sea on an oyster shell and promptly gave birth to Eros and to the word “aphrodisiac.” It is said that Casanova began his meals by eating 12 dozen oysters because of his belief that they would enhance his sexual prowess.

During the height of the business, oyster beds spread from Ossining, New York, to Keyport, New Jersey, throughout New York Harbor and up the East River to City Island and beyond. Because oysters attach themselves to sea beds, underwater property became valuable and incited New Yorkers to fight for ownership of underwater land. The politics associated with this fight contributed to the demise of the industry from over-harvesting.

This very interesting book interlaces New York history, ecology, oystering techniques, oyster biology, culinary and social insights, economics and politics and even some recipes. My favorite one is from an 18th-century cookbook:

“To Roast a Leg of Lamb with Oysters - Take a Leg about two or three Days kill'd, stuff it all over with Oysters and roast it.

Garnish with Horse-raddish.”

Thanks, but no thanks. I'll order Oysters Rockefeller or the fried oysters at Johnny's Reef. It was interesting to read that during the late 19th century, oysters were the most popular snack at New York beaches until the introduction of “frankfurt vendors on Coney Island” gave the street-side eating of oysters serious competition.

One aspect of the oyster story missing from the book is that it was a City Islander, Orrin Frederick Fordham, who was responsible for revolutionizing the industry in the 1830s. He is attributed with the practice of cultivating oysters by planting seed oyster shells, the spent shells of oysters, over the areas known to be fertile oyster beds. He had discovered that oyster larvae were attracted to the surface of the shells and thus produced the new growth of oysters. Fordham passed this tradition on to his sons and other local oystermen.

Orrin Fordham was born in England and came to City Island, from Essex, Connecticut, where he had been a shipbuilder. He was a trustee of School District No.2 in the town of Pelham and a prominent member of the Methodist Episcopal Church on City Island. He died here in 1845.

Fordham's innovation began a period of great wealth for City Island. In 1852 the New York Herald reported that the largest proportion of East River oysters coming into New York were from City Island. Islanders owned 25 percent of the boats conveying oysters at the time. By 1860, there were 30 oyster dealers and planters here, and by 1895 there were 60 oyster planters, even as the oyster beds were declining. In the 1870s, one week's worth of dredged oysters could be sold for \$1,500 at the Fulton Fish Market.

The author of “The Big Oyster” does make mention of the first seeding: “The first commercial practice of seeding ... occurred in the 1830s in beds surrounding a small East River island in the Bronx, City Island. ... By tradition, the area today running past LaGuardia Airport and the Throggs Neck Bridge as far as Norwalk, Connecticut... was considered part of the East River.” He quotes Charles Mackay, who wrote in the 1850s that “In City Island, the whole population, consisting of 400 persons, is employed in the cultivation of oysters. The City Islanders are represented as a very honest, peculiar, and primitive community, who intermarry entirely among themselves and drive a very flourishing business.”

Just think what a different place City Island would have become if these oysters had been the kind that produced pearls! The true oyster does not produce pearls, however, which come from a different variety of mollusk, which inhabits tropical waters. But City Island owes a great deal to the humble, pearl-less oyster, which was our first important industry, before shipbuilding became its next claim to fame.

Obituaries

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

Siv Coddington

Longtime resident of City Island Siv Coddington died on Dec. 28, 2005, at the age of 84.

Born in Sweden, Siv Meyer came to the United States as a child with her family. She moved to City Island in the 1950s with her first husband, Charles Reheman, followed in 1954 by the rest of her family.

Siv worked as a housekeeper for a number of Island businesses and residents, but her real passions were painting and writing poetry.

After the death of her second husband, Jim Coddington, she moved to Pilot Cove Manor, where her late sister, Ingrid Lamanna, was also a resident.

Siv Coddington leaves her sister, Britten Roth of Kansas; two brothers, Oke Meyer of Fort Montgomery, New York, and Jens Meyer of Monticello, New York; and a niece, Dawn Moen, of City Island.

Louise Revell Hahn

Former Islander, Louise Revell Hahn, passed away on April 7, 2006 in St. Petersburg, Florida. She was 75.

Mrs. Hahn was a former employee of Ratsey Sails on City Island.

She is survived by her husband, Peter K. Hahn; her son, William W. Hughes Jr.; four daughters, Kathleen Hughes Goff, Aileen Hughes, Theresa Hughes, all of St. Petersburg, and Priscilla Szarmach of Spring Hill,

Florida; and nine grandchildren.

Mrs. Hahn was predeceased by two sisters, long time City Island residents, Dolores Flanagan and Isabelle Burke. She is survived by three sisters, all former Islanders, Gladys Cavallaro of Poughkeepsie, New York, Jean Eldridge of Miami, Florida, and Virginia Shirk of Harlleton, Pennsylvania.

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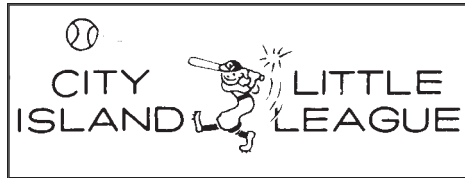
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Spring is finally here and our season got under way with our opening day ceremony on April 29, 2006. We look forward to another successful season of baseball on City Island.

We are happy to announce that our major league division will be participating in inter-league play this season. We also are fielding three teams in our minor league division and a junior division team that plays other leagues from the Bronx at Rodman's Neck field. We have games every weeknight and on Saturday

mornings, so please feel free to come down and join us for a game.

Our instructional league began on Saturday, April 22. If you have children between the ages of five and six, you are welcome to come join us at any time. We play every Saturday at 9 a.m. at Ambrosini Field. The instructional league fee is \$60.

If anyone is interested in volunteering or wants more information about the City Island Little League, e-mail us at cityislandlittleleague@yahoo.com or just stop down the field and talk to a league official.

We hope you decide to join us and enjoy watching a game.

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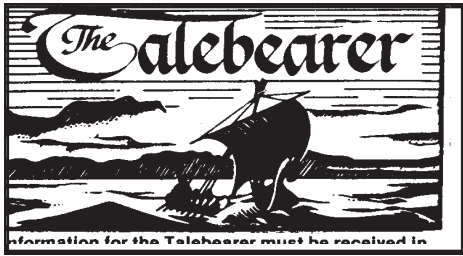
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Information for the Talebearer must be received in writing no later than the 15th of the month except July and December. Mail to The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464; include your name and telephone number.

Happy 90th birthday greetings on May 10 to Pilot Cove's Mary Iovieno with love from the Iovieno and Swieciki families.

Get well wishes to Centre Street's Arlene Byrne from your family, friends and the gang at St. Mary's Thrift Shop.

Happy 20th birthday wishes to former Islander Peter Lenz, who celebrates his big day on May 19.

Break some legs! Congratulations to *Island Current* staff writers Barbara Burn Dolensek and Maria Swieciki, who made their theatrical debut in the City Island Theater Group's production of "The Women" in April. You can still catch their act during the first weekend in May. The staff of the *Current* is proud of you both.

Belated happy birthday on April 4 to Frank Ramftl from Mom, Dad, Fred and Gram and Sara.

Good luck to Bay Street's Bobby Swieciki, who leaves for Coast Guard Boot Camp on May 1. We love you and are proud of you!

Happy May 8 birthday to Pilot Cove's Terry Carmody with love from the Cebek and Carmody families.

Special thanks to Yolanda Cirulli for her hard work in finding a home for Hillary Duck, with appreciation from Catherine, Kaylin, Samantha, Sabrina, Sarah and Lindsey.

Happy birthday on May 1 to Minneford Avenue's Diane Duryea.

Best wishes for continued happiness to the Sailmaker's Johnny and Judy Iovieno, who will celebrate their anniversary on May 12.

Happy birthday on May 16 to Frank Ring with love from the gang at P.S. 175.

It's a boy! Happy big brother, Joseph Goonan, announces a new addition to King Avenue, Paul Aidan on March 31. James and Susan Goonan are the proud parents of the 8 lb. 4 oz. bundle of joy. The proud grandparents are Joe and Eleanor Goonan of Minneford Avenue and Kevin and Patricia Kirwin of the Bronx.

Congratulations and God bless Marine Street's David Charles "Timothy" Butterworth on making his Confirmation.

Happy birthday across the miles to James Butterworth in Chester, New York, who will turn 12 on May 10, with love from his City Island family.

Congratulations and God bless Cole Strnad on making his First Holy Communion and to his big sister Meaghan Cathryn "Abigail" on making her Confirmation. And a happy 13th birthday to Meaghan on May 21.

Happy 19th birthday wishes to Matthew Butterworth on May 26 and to his dad, Chuck, on May 22.

Birthday wishes on May 28 to Patrice Ortega of "To Go Express" with love from Raf, Janie and Bobby.

Smile when you see City Island's friendliest letter carrier, Tommy Cleary, on May 30 and wish him a happy birthday.

Judy and Mike Rauh had a fabulous Easter vacation visiting their brother and sister, John and Linda Rauh, in Arizona. What a beautiful new home they have in Saddlebrooke, with activities galore! Judy and Mike were joined by their daughters, Susie and Beth, who stayed with their cousin Leigh Anne Gilbert and her husband Michael.

Good luck to the fifth-grade class of P.S. 175 on their production of "Bye Bye Birdie" on May 23 and May 25. Students, teachers and staff have worked very hard and should be proud.

Congratulations to Islander Catherine Quinn on her retirement from nursing after 35 years. Woohoo, you're free! Love from your favorite daughter.

Happy Mother's Day on May 14 to Cathie Doyle and Pat Lutz.

And a wonderful, relaxing and enjoyable day to all our hardworking mothers and grandmothers on Mother's Day.

See you next month!

Maria Swieciki

SCOUTING FLOWERS & HOOPS



Photos by PAUL NANI

Although they had to move inside one day because of rain, the sun shone the rest of the time on the City Island Boy Scout's annual plant sale from April 13 to 15 in front of Trinity Church. Customers purchased the beautiful blooms for Easter gifts and to plant in their gardens (top photo). Shown are the hardworking boys and adults who helped make the sale a success (bottom photo, front row, l. to r.): Brian Devlin, Liam Flynn, Polii Tas, Ryan Pena, Sal Kulka and John Devlin. Back row: Mr. Esposito, Stephen Erosa, Joseph Amoroso, John Broughal, David Mooney, Omar Garcia, Steven Owens, Kevin Whelan, Mr. Persteins and Reverend Susan Chadwick. If you missed the Boy Scouts sale, you can pick up some blooms at the Girl Scout Mother's Day Flower Sale on Saturday, May 13 (see *Brief* this issue).



City Island's Troop 1175 enjoyed a great day at Hofstra University's Women's Basketball Girl Scout Day in March 2006. Shown cheering the players on are (first row, l. to r.): Brianna Reilly, Kaylin Fitzpatrick, Amanda Valentino, Catherine Graves, Sarah Williams and Grace Ramos. Middle row: Stephanie Morissey and Anastasia Lacina. Back row: Chandler Campbell, Bianca Valenti, Lindsey Zapata, Arianna Rodriguez and Briana Whalen.

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