

# The Island Current

Published on City Island, New York

Volume 32

Number 9

November 2003

One Dollar

## Parents Challenge the School System

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

Region 2 Superintendent Laura Rodriguez addresses a crowd of P.S. 175 parents, teachers and school administrators at the American Legion hall on Oct. 15, 2003.

The City Island School, Public School 175, has for many years been regarded as one of New York City's best, with published reports crediting an excellent staff; concerned and involved parents; and a student body that is bright, engaged and generally well behaved.

It came as a surprise, therefore, to many City Island residents when New York City Department of Education Region 2 Superintendent Laura Rodriguez called a public meeting to address concerns expressed by five P.S. 175 parents regarding the school's new principal, Milagros Efre-Lopez. Flyers had been distributed by the concerned parents to the general public through local shops, which resulted in an overflow crowd of at least 150 at the Oct. 15 meeting in the American Legion Hall.

Mrs. Rodriguez, who chaired the meeting, was accompanied by Miguel Melendez, head of parent coordinators, Andaye Delacruz, head of the region's Division of Students, and other region officials. The meeting's agenda, prepared by Nancy Pryor on behalf of the concerned parents, contained several questions for the region supervisors.

When P. S. 175's longtime principal, Ena Ellwanger, retired in 2002, the transition to the new interim acting principal, Milagros Efre-Lopez, was smooth, and in July 2003 the superintendent of District 11, now Region 2, according to the new Department of Education system, appointed Mrs. Lopez as principal.

The first question on the meeting's agenda involved the C-30 process by which new principals are selected. A number of City Island parents and teachers had volunteered last spring to make up the P.S. 175 C-30 committee, which reviewed applicant resumés and interviewed several candidates. The committee ranked the candidates and submitted a list of three, from which the superintendent selected Mrs. Lopez, who had been last on the list.

Parents on the committee were unhappy that the superintendent did not accept their first or second choice and felt that the system was flawed because it gave the community a false sense of participation in the

selection process.

Mrs. Rodriguez said the superintendent had acted properly in choosing one of the candidates on the list and that the C-30 process was properly administered. But she noted that there had been similar complaints from other schools, indicating that the role of the members of the committees may not have been sufficiently explained and might need to be clarified in future selections.

The second item on the agenda involved the selection of the school's parent coordinator, a staff position. Here again, a group of parents had made recommendations in the form of a list of candidates from which the principal was to select the parent coordinator. Mrs. Lopez selected Tina Gisante, a past president of the PTA, whose name was third on the list. At the meeting, however, Mrs. Rodriguez was told that Mrs. Gisante's name had not been on the list of recommended candidates, and she said she would take up the matter with the Board of Education. She agreed that parents should have a voice in the process, but she could not say that they should have more control in the school, a matter that she said would have to be evaluated by the central board.

The third issue raised by the concerned parents had to do with communication between the principal and parents who feel the school atmosphere is not as welcoming as it once was and that certain rules and problems are not handled consistently. At this point, the atmosphere of the meeting quickly changed to a more personal attack on Mrs. Lopez, although this was quickly countered by a number of parents who spoke up in her defense.

James Vacca, head of the School Leadership Team (SLT), which is intended to help coordinate communication between the staff and the parents, spoke in support of Mrs. Lopez, citing various improvements she had made in the school at the request of parents, specifically on the second floor, where clutter and noise levels have caused problems for the middle-school students since the construction of the building in the mid-1970s.

Continued on page 5

## HOUSES REPLACE BOATS AT ROYAL MARINA

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by RENA HANSEN and courtesy of the Beechwood Organization

The upland area at Royal Marina, 521 City Island Avenue, is now empty of boats (above). The Beechwood Organization, which built the attached housing development on Cross Street, plans to construct 23 buildings on the property in a style like that in this architect's rendering.



As the boats have disappeared from Royal Marina's upland lot, City Islanders have been trying to envision how 22 houses can possibly fit onto the property. On Wednesday, Oct. 29, representatives of the City Island Civic Association and members of Community Board 10 met with a representative of the developer to learn what is being proposed for the site and to make comments and suggestions.

According to Richard Rosenberg, an attorney representing the Beechwood Organization, the developer plans to build a private street from City Island Avenue to the waterfront part of the property, and to build 11 two-family houses on each side of the street. Because the new zoning law calls for detached housing in residentially zoned areas, the houses are separated from each other by a few feet.

Each house is designed to contain two apartments and to provide parking for three cars; there will also be parking for 20 extra cars along the private street. There are no basements and no garages planned for the development.

At the end of the street on the water the developers plan to construct a 2,500-square-foot area where members of the

public may sit and overlook the waterfront. Each unit will have a boat slip in the development's marina; to the north a private marina will consist of 70 slips and a building to face City Island Avenue with shops below and two apartments above, bringing the total number of housing units to 46.

Islanders at the meeting had many questions for Mr. Rosenberg. First, they requested a meeting with Les Lerner, the developer, so that he could explain why he plans to build relatively small apartment units with little or no storage space when upscale single-family houses are currently the most lucrative market on City Island, according to local realtors.

The Islanders objected to fact that the houses are lined up in a straight row along the new street, each with the same basic design—a faux-colonial look with decorative balconies and peaked roofs—giving the development the overall appearance of row houses, exactly what the new zoning law was designed to discourage.

No permits have yet been submitted for the property, and Mr. Rosenberg assured the Islanders that all of their comments would be passed along to Mr. Lerner.

## BRIEFLY...

**A DAY AT THE CIRCUS** with The New York Lyric Circus—clowning, juggling and magic with music, plus Luciano the dancing dog. The date is Sunday, Nov. 16, at 2 p.m. at the Riverdale Y, 5625 Arlington Avenue at 256th Street. Tickets are \$7 each, sponsored by the Bronx Arts Ensemble.

**CLOTHING DRIVE:** The Bronx Masons will be holding a clothing drive on Saturday, Nov. 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the City Island Masonic Temple, 241 City Island Avenue. All clothes received will go to St. Athanasius in the South Bronx to be distributed to needy recipients. This is a one-day event. For more information, call 718-885-0374.

**BLOOD DRIVE:** The Bronx Masons will be holding a Blood Drive on Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2003, from 4 to 8 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, 113 Bay Street. Almost anyone from the ages of 17 to 75, weighing a minimum of 110 pounds and in general good health can be a blood donor. Photo or signature ID and Social Security Number are required at the time of donation.

**CALLING ALL ARTISTS:** The Focal Point Gallery, 321 City Island Avenue, will exhibit the 16th annual City Island Art Show from Dec. 5 through Dec. 31, 2003. Artists are encouraged to bring in one framed piece of art work ready to hang no later than Nov. 16. The opening reception will be on Friday, Dec. 5, at 7:30 p.m. For further information, call Ron Turner at 718-885-1403.

**JOIN THE CHESS CLUB,** which meets every Monday night from 7 to 11 p.m. at the City Island Community Center, 190 Fordham Street. Everyone ages 13 and up is cordially invited to come meet your match!

**BARTOW-PELL CHRISTMAS:** The holiday season begins at the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum on Shore Road on Fr., Dec. 5, with a brunch at 9:30 a.m. There will be a holiday boutique from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, with a wine-tasting reception on Friday evening from 7 to 9 p.m., and a family continental breakfast on Saturday morning at 10 where you can be photographed with Santa. For information, call 718-885-1461.



## WINTER HEAT REGULATIONS

Those who rent living spaces should be aware of regulations regarding lawful levels of heat and hot water services during the heating season. According to the New York City Administrative Code, the heating season runs from Oct. 1 through May 31. During this period, landlords are obligated to maintain the following heat requirements:

- Between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., heat must be provided at 68 degrees when the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees;

- Between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., heat must be provided at 55 degrees when the outside temperature falls below 40 degrees;

- Landlords are required to provide hot water at a constant minimum temperature of 120 degrees, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Councilwoman Madeline Provenzano suggests that a tenant who believes a landlord has violated the provisions of the city regulations should lodge a complaint by calling 311, New York City's complaint hotline number. This will result in a code enforcement inspection, which could result in the posting of a building violation if the owner has failed to comply with the code.



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PHOTOGRAPHY: Rena Hansen, Rick DeWitt.  
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS: Russell Schaller Sr., Stephanie Ribaldo, Melissa Koller, Marge McNulty, Lorraine Nicoletti. Masthead and special artwork by the late Theodore J. Mazaika.

Typeset by Marguerite Chadwick-Juner, Witworks Studio Graphic Design, 33 Earley Street, City Island, N.Y. 10464  
Printed by Hi-Speed Printing Co., 1123 Worthen Street, Bronx, N.Y. 10474  
The Island Current (USPS 114-590) is published monthly except for January and August by the Island Current Inc., a not-for-profit organization. Subscription rate, \$10.00 per year. Single copies, \$1.00. All subscriptions, editorial, advertising and other correspondence must be mailed to: The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, Bronx, NY 10464. Display advertising deadline is the 10th of the month preceding publication, call 885-0984, 885-1636 or 885-0760. Copyright 2003 by The Island Current, Inc., 724 King Ave., City Island, Bronx, NY 10464. All rights reserved.  
SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT BRONX, NY.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464.

# The Sewers Are Coming! The Sewers Are Coming!

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

City Island has been patiently waiting for New York City to install storm and sanitary sewers along parts of City Island Avenue and on various side streets since the mid-1970s, when city budget cuts prevented the project from moving ahead.

In subsequent years, replacements were made in the area of Sutherland Street, but the major part of the work continued to be put off for one reason or another.

The city's Department of Design and Construction (DDC) has now begun to work on the project, which is in the design stage. Applications for permits to construct the sewers have been filed with New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation.

When the designs are completed in December 2003, they will be brought to the community for review, first through Community Board 10. After the designs are approved, DDC will request bids for the work, which will not start until after

Labor Day 2004. Con Edison will start work first, preparing trenches for gas and electric lines.

James Vacca, District Manager of Community Board 10, said that the construction would take from one year to 18 months before it is completed and that DDC would open only a few areas at a time, in order to minimize the effect on traffic and parking. During the construction period, DDC will have a field office on City Island Avenue.

The sewer construction is the second phase of the project that began in the fall of 2002 in which water mains were installed along City Island Road, from the Pelham Parkway Bridge to the City Island Bridge.

## 45 BLOTTER

Crime statistics were not available from the 45th precinct at press time. We plan to update the blotter next month.

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# Law and Order Continues To Reign on City Island

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by KAREN NANI

Tom Ross, the location manager of "Law and Order: Criminal Intent," delivered a check to P.S. 175 on Oct. 9, 2003, to show the crew's appreciation to City Islanders for their cooperation during the filming of an upcoming episode. The \$1,000 donation will be used toward theater arts projects at the City Island School. Shown accepting the check are (l. to r.) Deborah McManus, teacher; Jeanette Vargas, assistant principal, Millie Lopez, principal, Mr. Ross, and James Vacca, manager of Community Board 10.

No sooner did the crew for "Law and Order: Special Victims Unit" pack up their equipment in September than another "Law and Order" crew—this time from "Criminal Intent"—began making plans to film scenes on City Island.

In spite of the usual parking problems that result from the huge vans and trucks moving cameras, sound equipment, props and staff around at odd hours, the City Island community generally welcomed the film crew, which worked at several different locations on the Island.

The first day of filming took place on Friday, Oct. 17, at St. Mary, Star of the Sea School, which was miraculously transformed into St. Bernard's Episcopal Church on Channel Island. The conversion didn't seem to bother Sister James Patrick, principal of the school, who said that the school was well paid for the two days of filming. "We even got a pipe painted out back and a few other minor improvements," she said.

More filming took place at the school on Tuesday, Oct. 21, as the star of the show, Vincent D'Onofrio, had been unable to work on Friday. He was on hand for the Tuesday shoot, however, and graciously consented to being photographed with members of the school staff.

He also cooperated with the *Current* photographer on Monday, Oct. 20, by allowing himself to be photographed with Virginia McGuire, the owner of one of the houses used as a location, and members of her family and neighbors.

Unlike "Special Victims Unit," "Criminal Intent" has only two stars who travel outside police headquarters, Mr. D'Onofrio and his partner. Kathryn Erbe, who has been his partner since the beginning of the



series, is now on maternity leave; Samantha Buck, who plays Detective Bishop, will be featured in this episode, which should air in early December.

Although the writers of this episode are based in Los Angeles, the subject is truly "ripped from the headlines," *The Island Current* as well as the *The New York Times*. A minor aspect of the story involves the drowning of a teenager, but a more important story line involves the threats posed by a developer, whose designs on the island have divided the community.

Scenes were also shot at a home on Minneford Avenue and at the Kirby Street Marina. Michael Moniaros told *The Current* that the director of the episode, Jean Desegonzac, wanted locations where the water was clearly visible from the houses and the church, reinforcing the identity of "Channel Island." He complimented City Island residents for being amazingly cooperative and pleasant to the crew. Nearly all "Law and Order" episodes are shot in the five boroughs, but City Island was an especially pleasant place to work, Mr. Moniaros remarked.



Photos by BARBARA DOLENSEK and DOROTHY McGUIRE

City Island continues to be popular as a backdrop for television shows, especially "Law and Order." For three days in October, King Avenue, Minneford Avenue and St. Mary, Star of the Sea School were used as locations for an upcoming episode of the NBC television series "Law and Order: Criminal Intent." The episode is scheduled to air in early December on Sunday at 9 p.m. The star, actor Vincent D'Onofrio, who plays Detective Robert Goren, posed graciously with many Islanders, including Sr. James Patrick, principal of St. Mary's School (top left); Minneford Avenue resident Estrellita Dzenis (top right); and Islanders Fran Sena, Maura Romita and Loretta McGuire (l. to r. second row above). A new actress on the show, Samantha Buck, is shown having her makeup applied in a driveway on King Avenue. This is the third "Law and Order" program to film on City Island for its location in recent months.

## City Island Library Needs Friends

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

Because the New York Public Library has suffered a number of serious budget cuts this year, the City Island branch has been forced to cancel several of its programs for the current year. Not only has the library had to close on Saturday, but children's programs, such as the chess group, puppet shows, magicians and storytellers have ended, because there are not sufficient funds to cover the costs.

Evelyn Gerges, the City Island branch librarian, has reached out to the community by forming a support group of concerned Island residents, with the help of James Vacca, district manager of Community Board 10. The group has met to share ideas and to learn from similar groups at other libraries how to conduct fundraisers, contact politicians and work with other Island organizations to enrich the library's programs for the entire community.

The branch is especially popular with

schoolchildren, many of whom use the library as a place to do homework after school, but older residents also find the resources of the library useful. Computer courses for both beginners and more advanced users are held regularly, and preschool programs for toddlers are also popular.

The support group, which is headed by Nassima Abdelli-Beruh, is exploring different ways of raising money for special programs and equipment and of creating liaisons with the school and local merchants to help create greater awareness of the importance of this library to the City Island community.

Those who are interested in volunteering or in helping to support the library are asked to call Mrs. Abdelli-Beruh at 718-885-0935 or to drop by the library and speak with Ms. Gerges at 718-885-1703.

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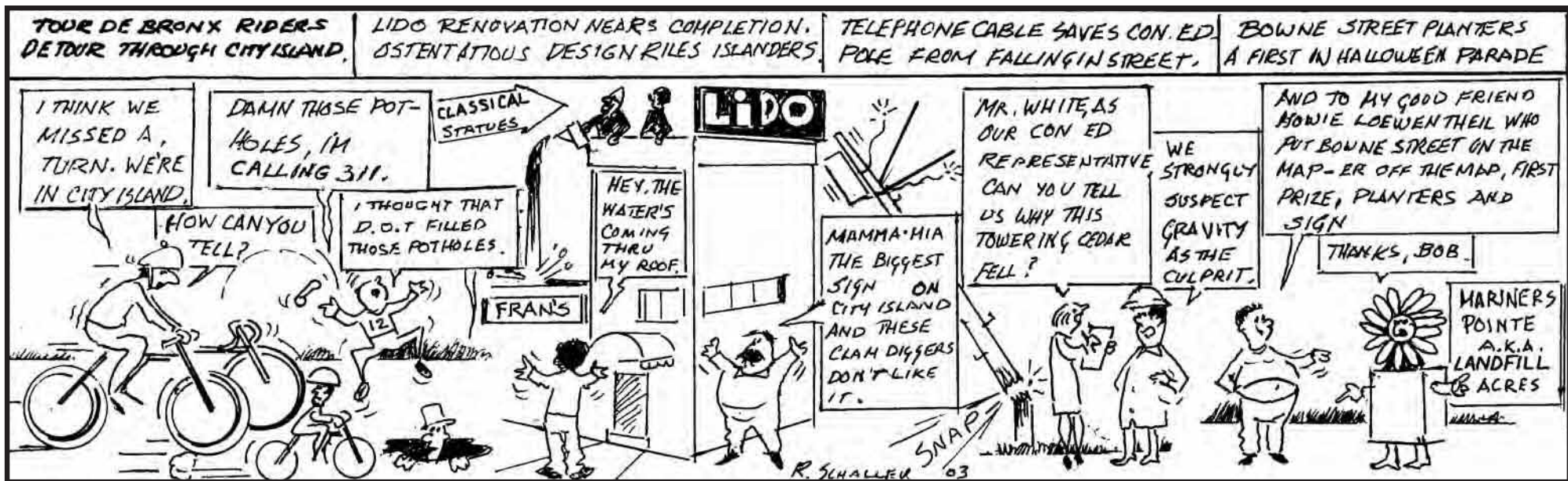
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**Save the Bridge**

To the Editor,

We are in receipt of your paper for September and must comment on the picture of the new bridge. First and foremost, it has no character; it is only a lot of cold steel and has no history like the bridge we remember. We, as former clam diggers would like to see the old bridge restored and refurbished.

Mrs. Robert DeTorres

**Our Children Come First**

To the Editor,

P. S. 175's mission is to create an aesthetically rich learning environment by providing developmentally appropriate activities for all children. Over 500 students (317 families) benefit from quality instruction, which is imparted by our highly experienced and qualified teaching faculty.

We recognize that parents play an important role in the educational community. Our Parent Teacher Association supports the parent-school partnership through its involvement in various school activities during the school year. Monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. in the school cafeteria, and family membership and participation is strongly encouraged.

Our School Leadership Team serves as an advisory board to the school administration in an effort to promote overall school improvement. Monthly meetings take place every first Thursday at 3 p.m. in the teacher's room.

The Parent Coordinator works closely with the principal and the school staff to identify issues, concerns and strategies for strengthening parent engagement. Morning vignettes are held in the cafeteria area

during assembly. Parents and community are encouraged to observe and celebrate the vignettes along with the children.

As the principal of P.S. 175, I understand the significance of moving forward toward school improvement with the support of all families, teachers, administrators and community members.

Remember, our children always come first.

Milagros Efre-Lopez

**MTA Bus Stop**

(A copy of this letter was received by The Current.)

Lawrence G. Reuter  
President, MTA NYC Transit  
370 Jay Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear President Reuter:

The City Island Civic Association voted unanimously at its Sept. 30 meeting to request that the MTA return its bus stop to the corner where it has been for over 50 years.

On or about Sept. 16, the bus stop at the northeast corner of City Island Avenue and Beach Street (in front of 500 City Island Avenue) in the Bronx was moved to the southeast corner of the avenue at Beach Street. This was done without any advance

knowledge, review or approval by Community Board 10, nor was the move presented to the community of City Island for comment.

This move has posed a problem to the Temple Beth-El at 480 City Island Avenue, where the bus fumes cause discomfort and noise within the building. And other residents of the community have also been disturbed by this sudden change.

We strongly request that the bus stop be moved back to its original position and that any future bus stop changes go through the proper channels of city government.

We also ask that the MTA provide our community organization with an explanation of how this could have happened and how it will be rectified.

Francis J. Fitts, President

**Farewell**

To the Editor,

City Island noted with sadness the passing of the Grace Episcopal Church thrift shop on Oct. 4.

For more than 20 years, the shop had been operated by the friendly "ladies of recycling", as toys, sleds, games and sporting goods were passed on from one generation to another.

We can only hope that another willing group will come forward to reopen the thrift shop in the near future. In the meantime, we thank those who managed to keep the shop going for so many years.

Michael Vivian

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**C**

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## Parents Challenge School

Continued from page 1

It was noted at this point in the meeting that Mrs. Lopez was in the audience, accompanied by Mrs. Ellwanger, a number of the P.S. 175 teaching staff, and other school principals.

A few parents asked the region representatives why their letters to Schools Chancellor Joel Klein had gone unanswered for several months, and Mrs. DeLaCruz promised to follow up on this. She suggested that in the future letters be sent to the regional office rather than to the chancellor's attention.

Although there were still several items left on the agenda, including curriculum, discipline and ways in which the administration and the parents might work together, the meeting began to break up, and Mrs. Rodriguez and her colleagues left, along with most of the parents, before those issues could be addressed.

Nancy Pryor, who prepared the agenda, was disappointed that the meeting had turned into what she termed "a kind of witch hunt," which, she said, had not been the original intention. "What was meant to be a forum for parents to speak their minds and air some differences became an 'us against them,' which accomplished nothing," she said. "Many important issues were not addressed."

Mrs. Pryor, speaking on behalf of the concerned parents, said that the presence of the P.S. 175 staff made some people uncomfortable about speaking up. "The members of the regional office team that attended the meeting came because they felt our concerns were important enough to warrant being heard and they had many other correspondence and phone calls from concerned parties. We are confident that they saw beyond the posturing, to the heart of the matter, which is our concern for our children, school and community."

Julia DiMaio, for many years a fourth-grade teacher at the school, told *The Cur-*

*rent* after the meeting that she and others on the staff believed Mrs. Lopez was doing an excellent job, but that parents were having difficulty adjusting to her personal style, which is different from Mrs. Ellwanger's.

Mrs. DiMaio told *The Current* that she thinks the community is very lucky to have Mrs. Lopez, because her priority is the children, and she felt that the handful of complaints should not have been aired in a public forum. "The staff wasn't even informed about this meeting," she said, "and we found out only after someone picked up a flyer at the market." She said she believes that parents really need to work with the system and participate in a positive way, rather than forming negative opinions based on rumor.

Several parents told *The Current* that they recognized the different atmosphere in the school but said that this did not make them feel alienated. They thought that well-meaning suggestions to the principal rather than complaints would be a more successful way to help her through this period of adjustment. They also felt that the current situation would eventually cool down and dissipate.

Andy Giaccon, a member of the SLT who had participated in the C-27 process that selected the region superintendent, told *The Current* that the selection process could definitely be improved. "If some of the parents from P.S. 175 want to pursue the cause for the benefit of all the schools in New York City," he said, "that would be not only okay but even commendable. But to turn our frustrations and anger about the process onto Mrs. Lopez is not fair, because so far, in my opinion, she has proved to be very competent."

Mrs. Lopez told *The Current* that her door is always open and that parents are always welcome in the building before classes start. (See her Letter to the Editor on page 4.) She said she fully understands the important roles that parents play in the school community and that there are a number of channels through which their concerns may be aired and addressed.



Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

To celebrate the new zoning changes, elected officials gathered with representatives of the City Island Civic Association at the Nautical Museum on Oct. 23, 2003: (l. to r.) Senator Guy J. Velella, Assemblyman Stephen B. Kaufman, Bronx City Planning Director Purnima Kapur and *New York Times* writer Seth Kugel.

## SPOTLIGHT ON TEENS

During the next few weeks, a group of City Island photographers and a videographer will be scouting the Island aiming for teenagers. The photographs and the 12-minute video that will result will be put on display at the City Island Community Center in the spring of 2004 and again in the fall at the Focal Point Gallery.

The purpose of the program, sponsored by both the Focal Point and the Community Center and organized by Ron and Susan Turner, is to bring some recognition to Island teenagers and to make connections between them and adults in the City

Island community.

The photographers include Donald Deitz, Susan Farley, Amy Hanson, Terry McElroy, Sylvia Romero, Andrew Sinclair and Ron Turner; the videographers are Susan Rios and Daniel Roemer. They will be asking the teens to provide information about themselves as well as permission from their parents to participate in the program.

Teens who wish to participate may sign up at the Focal Point Gallery, 321 City Island Avenue, or may call 718-885-1403.

## FREAKY FRIDAY!



Photos by RICK DeWITT and RENA HANSEN

Island ghosts and goblins enjoyed the unseasonably warm Halloween weather and spirited down City Island and King Avenues on Friday, Oct. 31, 2003. The 2003 Halloween parade was a howling success, thanks to sponsorship by Atlantic Emeritus Realty and excellent coverage by police officers. Costume prizes went to Joe Burke as Skeleton Jack for the most original; to Dusty, Brenda and Mike Prohaska as Ariel, Ursula and King Trident for the best group; to Amanda and Daniella McKenna as a pair of sneakers for the cutest; to Matthew Sasko as the Grim Reaper for the scariest; to Gwyn Hopkins as Eating Crow Dinner Table for the most difficult to maneuver; to Violet Smith as Merlin for best adult; and honorable mentions to Lily Kolb as Pocahontas, Carry Giariat as Sponge Bob, Matt and Ben Henning as Superman and Super Baby, and Inez Larracuente as Dark Angel. The judges were Geri Seiter and Mark Hohenstein, whose job was especially tough because there were about 855 participants, including nine canines. Everyone was also grateful to Mother Nature for the perfect weather.

## POTS

The holidays are coming, and there is no better way to express the true spirit of giving than by providing gifts for those who are in need.

Part Of The Solution (POTS) is a not-for-profit community-based organization that has been serving the Bronx community since 1982. Located on Webster Avenue, POTS offers an array of services to needy neighbors. Their goal is three-fold: to provide the basic needs, to foster individual development and to encourage positive social change.

City Island became associated with POTS six years ago by delivering meals that have been home-cooked by Islanders to neighbors once a month. *The Island Current* posts the monthly menu in each edition.

Through St. Mary Star of the Sea, POTS has also developed a Christmas giving program. Members of the community are asked to donate new articles of clothing, such as men's and women's sweat pants, sweat shirts (size medium and large); warm socks, hats, gloves; T-shirts, briefs and disposable razors.

You may drop your gifts in the lobby of St. Mary Star of the Sea Church or at Atlantic Emeritus Realty, 300 City Island Avenue. All items will be collected the first two weekends in December, on Dec. 6 and 7 and on Dec. 13 and 14.

A number of families have specific needs. To select a family, call Jane LaScala at 718-885-2137 during the week of Nov. 30.



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.

For the entire month of November, **Focal Point Gallery** will be showcasing the newest paintings of Island artist, Marguerite Chadwick-Juner. An opening reception for the artist will be held on Fri., Nov. 7, 2003, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Signed giclée prints of previous works, framed or matted only, will also be exhibited just in time for holiday gift-giving.

### HARLEM YACHT CLUB'S "ROARING TWENTIES"

The Harlem Yacht Club, in association with the club's Blue Gavel Chapter, an International Association of Past Commodores, will be putting on a dinner theatre show entitled "Our Roaring Twenties" at the club on Saturday evening, Nov. 15, at 6 p.m.

The show will attempt to re-create a day at the Harlem in July 20, 1929, when the members organized a talent show. Except for new numbers written especially for this show, the songs and music to be performed by today's members of the club were written before July 20, 1929.

Approximately 45 members of the club

will be taking part in the show, which will include singing, dancing, comedy skits and the playing of musical instruments. "Our Roaring Twenties" was written by Selwyn Feinstein with original music and lyrics by James D. Porter Jr. Joseph Cangelosi is the stage manager and the producer is P.C. Ernie Odierna, in conjunction with his fellow Blue Gavel Commodores. Historical research was provided by Evelyn Schneider.

Everyone is urged to come to the show dressed as if they were attending a Harlem Yacht Club dinner event in July 1929.

For more information, contact the producer, Ernie Odierna, by e-mail at [ernie1@optonline.net](mailto:ernie1@optonline.net).

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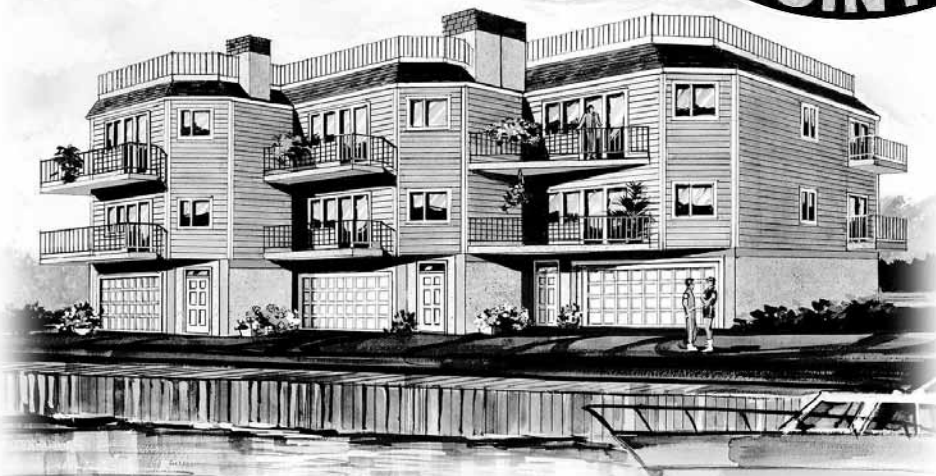


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Photo by RICK DeWITT

As the finishing touch on the Pretty Island renovation project at Connie's Market on Fordham Street, Laury and Gwyn Hopkins created a waterscape mural during October 2003. According to Laury, "the mural is not a specific place on City Island, but it tries to capture the flavor of the neighborhood and the wonderful waterfront." Also part of the mural is a poem by Island poet Eb Riley. The Pretty Island project is supported by the City Island Civic Association.



Photo by RENA HANSEN

A Con Edison pole on Fordham Street was toppled in the high winds on Oct. 16, 2003. Telephone wires kept the pole from falling completely down prompting some Islanders to joke about the cooperation between Con Ed and the phone company. The pole was quickly replaced, but many Islanders remain concerned about other poles that appear to be in poor condition.

Current Review

ANOTHER OPENING,  
ANOTHER STERLING SHOW

By TERESA TETO



Photo by RENA HANSEN

The City Island Theater Group performed the play "An Inspector Calls" at Grace Episcopal Church on Oct. 24 to 26, 2003. Shown above is the cast who received excellent reviews: (l. to r.) Con Grondahl (Mr. Birling), Stephanie Miano (Edna), Susan Rauh (Sheila), Christopher McGowan (Gerald), Nicolas Perugini (Inspector), Jason Fogarty (Eric) and Kathleen Cullen (Mrs. Birling).

Words escape me. How shall I describe the wonderful production by the City Island Theater Group of the "An Inspector Calls," a play by J. B. Priestley, which was presented during the last weekend in October and the first weekend in November 2003.

The play, which is set in 1912, takes to task a group of cold-hearted social climbers who set up goals that mirror all that is small and self-centered in the human heart and then sacrifice a human life to their ambitions—a problem that is still with us today. What appears to be a simple story line develops into a surprising, even shocking finale.

Nicholas Sala and Carol McCabe, the production managers, are to be commended for putting together this stellar assembly of artists. The Birling family—made up of the father, Arthur (played brilliantly by Con Grondahl), the mother, Sybil (majestically played by Kathleen Cullen), the son, Eric (played flawlessly by Jason Fogarty), and the daughter, Sheila (played with luminous star quality by

Susan Rauh)—are in the midst of celebrating Sheila's engagement to Gerald Croft (played impeccably by Chris McGowan) when the doorbell chimes.

The maid announces that an inspector (perfectly played by Nicholas Perugini) from the local police department wishes to interrogate each member of the family as well as Gerald about the suicide death of a poor, unemployed young woman.

The actors bring to life the class struggle that arises from the conflict between moral behavior and proper manners. Apparently, acceptance into the upper class is to be had at any cost, even that of moral degradation. Susan Rauh enables her character, Sheila, to see clearly what is happening in spite of her wounded eyes, but she remains powerless to stop the consequences of the immoral behavior around her.

Chris McGowan's Gerald, with matinee good looks and superb composure, almost saves the day, until the surprise ending. In the meantime, Sheila's parents are undone by the adjustments that must be made in the relationships between members of the family, as their son moves from comic mugging to an honest repentance. The performances were marvelous and breathtaking.

The set design by Dorothy Muccio was beautifully evocative of the period and allowed the action to take place in a believable manner. The costumes by Norma Kerner, Carol McCabe and Carole Sullivan; the makeup by Margaret Cioffi; and the lighting and sound by Michelle Accardi were all excellent.

Last but definitely not least, hearty applause goes to director Lawrence Paska for orchestrating the quick pace and timing of the performances, which made for a very enjoyable presentation of a thought-provoking play.

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## Organization News

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

### Current Calendar

#### NOVEMBER

Tues., Nov. 11, **Bronx Masons Blood Drive**, 4 to 8 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church at 113 Bay Street.

Fri., Nov. 14, **Grace Church Annual Dinner**, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Parish Hall at 104 City Island Avenue, see Organization News.

Thurs., Nov. 20, **Community Board 10 meets**, 7:30 p.m., P.S./I.S. 194, Waterbury and Zerega Avenues in the Bronx.

Tues., Nov. 25, **City Island Civic Association meets**, 8 p.m., Community Center, 190 Fordham Street.

Thurs. Nov. 27, **Thanksgiving Dinner**, sponsored by Trinity United Methodist Church, 113 Bay Street, 1 to 4 p.m.

#### Happy Thanksgiving

Sat., Nov. 29, **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.

#### DECEMBER

Fri., Dec. 5, and Sat., Dec. 6, **Trinity United Methodist Church Fair**, 2 to 8 p.m. (Fri.) and 11 to 3 p.m. (Sat.), 113 Bay Street, see *Organization News*.

### Garden Club News

At our meeting in October we made silk flower birthday corsages for Providence Rest Nursing Home. At the November meeting we will make holiday arrangements.

**Gardening Hint:** Don't mulch your perennials too soon, but wait until the ground starts to freeze. The best mulching materials are dried leaves, bark, pine needles or straw. Apply a layer about three to four inches around the base of each plant. Pull away from trunks and stems to give plants room to breathe.

Phyllis Goodman

### Chapter 3303 AARP

The Minneford Chapter 3303 of AARP held its annual fair in October. It proved to be another successful fair in both attendance and participation by members. We want to publicly thank everyone who helped make this fair a success. Special thanks to the various chairpersons and their committees for the wonderful job they all did. Funds derived from this fair will be donated to charitable, religious, educational, health and youth organizations in and around our community. Thanks also to the many City Islanders, members and friends of the chapter for attending the fair and helping us realize our goal.

At this particular time of the year, the chapter urges all its members and elderly persons to get their flu shots as early as possible, before the flu season begins. Remember, Medicare will cover the cost of the flu shot.

On Monday, Nov. 17, the chapter will go to the Westbury Music Fair for a spectacular show, the "Golden Age of Radio," bringing back the sensational singing and uproarious comedy of the 1940s and 1950s. This day will be an unforgettable entertainment for all of us. After the show, we will have dinner at the beautiful Tivoli Terrace in Westbury. Departure time is 12 noon.

The chapter is sponsoring a fabulous 12-day cruise to Hawaii, including Honolulu and Pearl Harbor, plus a 5-day land tour of San Francisco and San Diego from April 17 to May 7, 2004. The trip will include first-class accommodations, meals, and deluxe motor transportation

with a professional tour manager and much, much more. Prices and more details for these events will be discussed at our meetings, or call Tina De Cristofaro at 718-885-0865.

Lucy Puglia

### Chapter 318 AARP

Our next trip to Atlantic City is on Tuesday, Nov. 11. The bus departs at 9 a.m. from 113 Bay Street. Please call Jean Ringel at 718-885-1479 or John Bonicoro at 718-885-1844.

Our Penny Social is on Wednesday, Nov. 19, starting at 12 noon. Admission is \$4, which includes lunch and a sheet of tickets. Please make a great effort to attend this social, as this is our only fundraiser. Chairperson for this social is Jean Ringel.

Places for our overnight in February are going fast; if you are interested, please attend one of our meetings and see Flo Bonicoro or Marie Tirelli.

The trip to Westbury in March still has a few openings. At Westbury we will see Al Martino and Carmel Quinn. If interested attend our meetings and see Flo Bonicoro or Marie Tirelli.

Our annual Christmas luncheon is on Friday, Dec. 12, from 12 to 5 p.m. There will be an open bar, cocktail hour and music by Johnny DaV. Our chairperson for this luncheon is Florence Quinn; please see her for reservations.

Marie Tirelli

### City Island Civic Association

It's been a busy month for CICA, what with fireworks, the Tour de Bronx bicycle event and bus stop changes being thrust on the Island unannounced, but one bright spot was the final approval of our new zoning changes, which are now part of the law. The Civic hosted a small reception to thank the staff of the Department of City Planning and our elected officials for helping make this a reality.

Development has not stopped, however, and we are looking at the proposed plans for the Royal Marina site (now a sad-looking empty yard, soon to become full of houses). At our October meeting, the Civic membership voted down the proposal made by Howard Loewentheil to place large planters with signs on Bowne Street before the entrance to Mariner's Pointe.

Bob Simons, head of our traffic committee, and Frank Fitts met with Joseph Palmieri, head of the Bronx office of the Department of Transportation to discuss several issues of concern to Island residents. The angled parking proposal was deemed impractical, but we are asking for a full study of City Island's traffic problems, from the running of red lights to the mysterious disappearance of no-parking signs from various parts of the Island.

Sue Bellinson announced that the zoning committee was making a list of buildings with zoning violations and will meet with officials to discuss enforcement.

The election of officers was held. The

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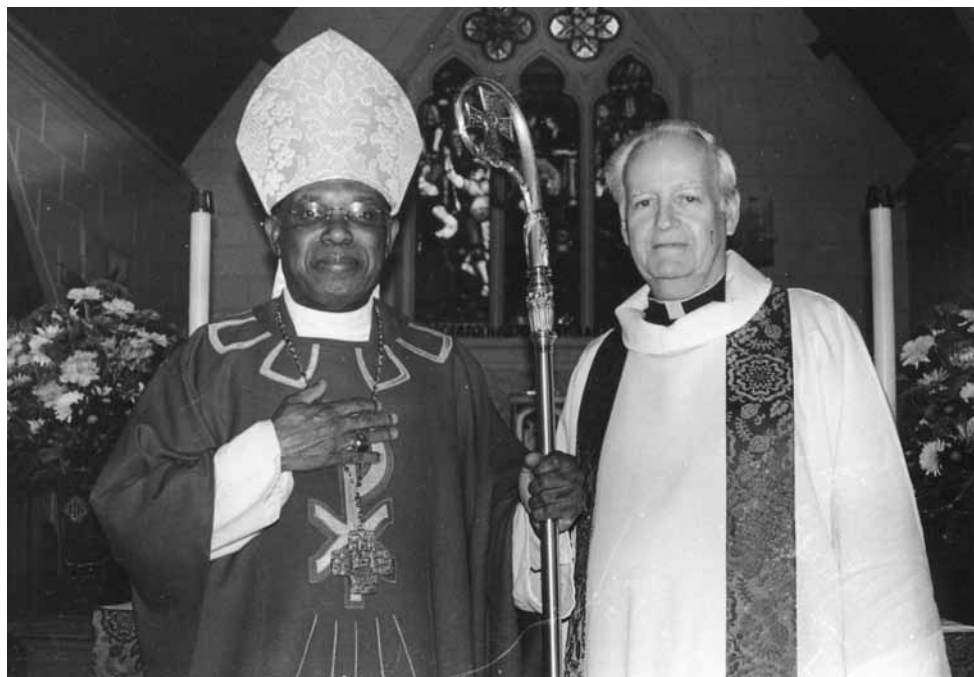


Photo by RENA HANSEN

On Sunday, Oct. 19, 2003, the Right Reverend E. Don Taylor, bishop vicar in the Episcopal Diocese of New York, was the celebrant at Grace Episcopal Church on City Island Avenue. The bishop (above left) is shown with Reverend H. Douglas Coleman, priest in charge at Grace Church.

following were re-elected: Frank Fitts, president; Irwin Weinfeld, first vice president; Deirdre Simmons, second vice president; Barbara Dolensek, recording secretary; Jane Protzman, corresponding secretary. The votes were equally split for the two candidates for treasurer, Jay Sinclair and Tom Smith; a new round of voting will be held at the next meeting, Nov. 25.

Anyone with comments or questions may contact the Civic at [civici@yahoo.com](mailto:civici@yahoo.com) or by calling 718-885-3823.

Frank Fitts

### Grace Episcopal Church

On Friday evening Nov. 14, Grace Episcopal Church will hold its annual dinner in the parish hall at 104 City Island Avenue. This dinner will feature roast beef, potatoes and vegetable, dessert and beverage. The dinner will be served from 6 to 7:30 p.m. and will cost \$13 per person. Anyone wishing to attend the dinner can make reservations by calling Father Doug at 917-865-6644. There will also be raffles and drawings. We look forward to your continued support for our parish, which has served the City Island community for over 150 years.

H. Douglas Coleman

### Temple Beth-El

Temple Beth-El of City Island, 480 City Island Avenue, an all-inclusive egalitarian congregation, conducts services on Friday nights at 7:30 p.m. Our doors are open to all and attendance is free.

We welcome you to our Kabbalat Shabbat service, led by Rabbi Shohama Wiener, on Friday, Nov. 7, at 7:30 p.m. Special events are as follows:

Tuesday, Nov. 4: NJOP Learn to Read Hebrew Classes, led by Debbie Graber, will begin at 7:30 p.m.; classes will continue on Tuesday evenings. They will be

free to everyone.

Thursday, Nov. 6: Yoga/Tai Chi class, taught by Marc Kaplan, begins at 7:30 p.m. and is free to members. \$10 admission for non-members.

Monday, Nov. 24: Rabbi Shohama Wiener's special classes-SHOHAM: Spiritual Healing of Heart and Mind, to help us find peace and joy in a time of anxiety—will begin at 7:30 p.m.; classes will continue on Mondays through the month of December. This series of sessions is based on a unique, Biblical approach to spiritual development. Through meditations, chants, energy work and the study of selected texts from our Shabbat service, we will tap into the transformative power of Jewish mysticism. The course is free for members and only \$10 per class or \$36 for the whole series for non-members. Please call 914-636-2504 for more information.

Visit our website at [www.yourshul-bythesea.org](http://www.yourshul-bythesea.org).

Bob Berent

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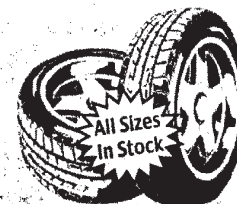
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If you wish to submit, for inclusion in this column, information regarding events and activities at the City Island Community Center, please call Laury Hopkins at 885-3202 no later than the 15th of each month, except December and July. Leave a message, including your name and phone number.

#### Announcements

Plan ahead! **Holiday Craft Workshop**, for kids and adults, with a bake sale and raffles will be held Saturday, Dec. 13, from 12 to 3 p.m. Plan to bring some snapshots, because picture frames and frame ornaments will be the featured craft!

**Scrapbook Club.** If you are interested in getting all those old photos out of the boxes and into attractive books without cluttering up your dining room table, call Joanne Brogan at 718-885-2713.

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

#### Ongoing Events

**Monthly Meetings** are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. in the Community Center, 190 Fordham Street.

**To schedule events at the Center**, call Laury Hopkins at 718-885-3202.

**Teen Center:** Saturday evenings. To volunteer your time so that we can keep the Teen Center open, please call Jay Howard at 718-885-2192.

**Dance Classes:** Preballet, jazz and tap for kids. Call Linda at Dance Connection, 914-576-5515.

**Millennium Babies:** A Moms and Babies Playgroup. Call Brenda Prohaska at 718-885-9040.

**Senior Nutrition Program:** Held at Pilot Cove Manor, weekdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. All senior citizens are welcome; the cost is only \$1.00 per meal. Call 718-885-0727 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. for your monthly calendar with daily lunch menus and schedule of visits to shopping centers.

**Irish Dance:** call Deirdre O'Mara at 201-947-8535.

**Preschool Art and Playgroup:** Early socialization and fun for two- to four-year-olds. Thursdays 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Sept.9-Dec.11. Call Laury at 718-885-

3202.

**Kundalini Yoga:** Saturdays at 9 a.m. Call Ann Ward at 718-885-1478.

**Adult Tap Classes:** Call Corinne Grondahl at 718-885-2011.

**Photography Classes:** For adults and teens. Call Ron Terner at 718-885-1403 or inquire at Focal Point Gallery.

**Step Aerobics Classes:** Sundays, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.; Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 9 to 10:30 a.m., and Mondays and Wednesdays, 7 to 8 p.m. Call Mary Immediato at 718-885-0793.

**Yoga:** Basic-level Hatha Yoga classes include yoga postures, deep relaxation and breathing practices, and stress management for peace of mind and physical well being. Call Annette at 718-885-0724 for further information.

Laury Hopkins

#### Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity will again host a dinner on Thanksgiving Day from 1 to 4 p.m. for all who would like to attend. Anyone who can donate time or food to this community effort should contact Anne Cox at 718-885-3300.

Our annual post-Thanksgiving trustees joint communion service and breakfast will be held on Sunday, Nov. 30, at 10 a.m. This year we will be treated to a concert after the breakfast. We hold this event each year jointly with the Grace Episcopal Church. Please call Donna LaValle at 718-885-0931 to purchase your \$6 tickets in advance. Children under 12 are free.

Our Christmas fair will be held in Fellowship Hall on Friday, Dec. 5, from 2 to 8 p.m. and on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets for the Friday dinner or the Saturday lunch can be obtained from Tina Schaefer, 914-636-6452. There will be oodles of homemade food, arts and crafts, gift items and fun for the children. We hope to see you there.

The outreach committee is selling the Entertainment 2004 Books. Books are available now for \$27. These books make excellent gifts and are a wonderful way to save money on restaurants, movies, and sports, even groceries! The books pay for themselves very quickly. I used mine to purchase two-for-one tickets to the Helen Hayes Theatre and in one transaction saved more than I paid for the book. We are also able to help you order gift books for folks who live in other areas of the country. Trinity receives \$5 for each of these books that we sell. Thank you so very much for helping us in this project.

Donna LaValle

#### Legion News

Once again we mourn the passing of two of our members, Patrick Breen and Joseph Engelhard. Pat was a WWII veteran and Joe a veteran of Vietnam.

The annual Pumpkin Sale was a financial success, thanks to the efforts of John Ulmer, Ed Shipp, Buddy and all the workers who participated. Plaudits are in order too for the Island's residents and business people who supported the sale. Special thanks to the Lobster House, Sammy's, the Seashore, JP's, Tito Puente's, Jack's Bait and Tackle and all the business people who contributed generously.

Sometime in November Senator, Guy Vellella will visit the Leonard Hawkins Post to thank us and other Legion posts for our support in getting the U.S. Postal Service to approve the Purple Heart stamp, now available at our local Post Office.

I would like to personally thank those Post members and Islanders who see that flags fly from more than 100 poles on City Island Avenue on important holidays. We will put the flags up for the last time this year for Veteran's Day, Nov. 11.

On Friday, Nov. 14, the Bronx County Military Ball will be held at the Greentree Country Club. Joseph Goonan, our outgoing Bronx County commander, will be honored at this festive occasion. Joe has spent decades in the military as a submariner and soldier and achieved the rank of Chief Warrant Officer. Joe is regarded as a military Methuselah among his peers. Tickets for this occasion are \$55 and include a cocktail hour from 7 to 8 p.m.

The Annual Serviceman's Dance will be held Saturday, Nov. 22, at the Legion Hall. DJ Ray will provide the music.

#### St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church

On Oct. 26 at 5 p.m., a small, but eager group of teenagers met in the lower church of St. Mary's with one common goal-to start a pro-active group for teenagers of the parish. More specifically, this group espouses the genuine, almost utopian ideals of not only uniting the teenagers of the parish, but also playing a role in helping the underprivileged people of the Bronx community.

Dubbed the St. Mary's Underground-literally for its location in the lower church and figuratively for its unique ideas in living out the Catholic faith-this group meets from 5 to 6:30 p.m. every Sunday in the lower church of St. Mary's. The main goals of the Underground include charity and commitment to the underprivileged of the community. In addition, we hope to foster a sense of unity among teenagers of the parish. In order to carry out these goals, we plan to participate in soup kitchens, food drives, and social events, to name a few activities.

The Underground is looking for new members who share our commitments and ideals. If you are interested, you are encouraged to join us at our next meeting.

Our next meeting will be Nov. 9, at 5 p.m. or you may call 718-885-3208.

Mary Mulroy

Tickets are \$30 and include a cocktail hour. Make your reservations early, as the dance is limited to 70 guests.

On Sunday, Nov. 9, the troops will muster at the Post at 10:30 a.m. and proceed to the Throggs Neck Parade on Tremont Avenue.

Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, the troops will muster at the Post at 10:15 a.m. and proceed to the WWI Memorial, where a brief ceremony will be held to honor our departed veterans.

The Annual Pearl Harbor Day ceremony will be held Saturday, Dec. 6, at 12 noon at the WWII Memorial.

Our Commander informed me that Jack Hartigan, our judge advocate, will celebrate his 80th birthday on Nov. 8.

On Nov. 10, the Marine Corps will be 228 years old. Our commander will partake in a ceremony to be held at City Hall.

At the Nov. 3 meeting, nominations for the board of directors will be made and elections will be held Nov. 17. Robert Booth, president, is retiring after 20-plus years.

Comrade Hess informs us that an eclipse of the moon will take place on Nov. 8, beginning at 6:32 p.m. and ending at 10:29 p.m. For further details see the Post bulletin board.

Remember our comrades who are homebound. A visit, phone call or card can bring a little cheer.

Meetings for November will be as follows: regular meeting: Nov. 17; executive board: Nov. 10.

And for you WWII buffs, the designator of the Navy craft designed to transport tanks from ships to beaches was LST (to wary crewmen LST meant Large Slow Target).

Until next month, parade rest.

Russell Schaller

#### City Island Chamber Music

November will be a delightful month for concert goers. On Nov. 9, a new cellist, Karlos Rodriguez, will appear on City Island for the first time. Together with pianist and poet Mae Barizo, who will also present some of her poetry, he will perform pieces by Bach, Schubert, Brahms and others.

Nov. 16 will be a special memorial concert for Richard Archer and Lisa Dunton. The amazing violinist Ariel Shamal will lead a superb supporting case through Brahms's fantastic string sextet in B-flat major and Mozart's sublime string quintet in G minor. Joining Mr. Shamal will be violinist Katarina Grossman, violists Jessica Troy and David Cerutti and cellists Wolfram Koessel and Ariane Lallemand.

Internationally renowned pianist Joeli Fan will dazzle you one more time with his great artistry, playing pieces by Bach, Chopin and others.

On Nov. 30 the fantastic guitarist Oren Fader will team up with four great string players (including cellist Wolfram Koessel) to present another memorable performance with works by Bach, Boccherini, Vivaldi and others.

Each concert begins at 12:30 p.m. at Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Avenue. Reception follows every concert; admission is \$16. For more information, call 212-724-4474.

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**The Space Race**

We all take for granted the fact that astronauts travel into outer space in real life, but in the beginning, space travel was fraught with difficulties, a slice of history well captured on film, both fictional and based on fact.

In the fictional thriller **Capricorn One** (1978), the entire space program will be scrapped if a mission to Mars does not work as a result of technical difficulties. At the last minute, members of the crew, Colonel Charles Brubaker (James Brolin), Lieutenant Colonel Peter Willis (Sam Waterston) and Commander John Walker (O.J. Simpson) are told to leave the spacecraft before it takes off. Then they are threatened into complying with a fake television enactment of a space walk. Elliott Gould plays journalist Robert Caulfield, whose life is in danger when he gets close to finding out the truth.

**Contact** (1997), based on the novel by Carl Sagan, is the fictional story of Dr. Eleanor Arroway (Jodie Foster), who has dedicated her life to the cosmological field of SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence), listening for signs of life in outer space. When "contact" is finally made, there is a race to meet the beings that have sent instructions. This is an intelligent film, with philosophical discussions between Arroway and her brief love interest Palmer Joss (Matthew McConaughey) about God and the universe. Arroway also struggles with her superior David Drumlin (Tom Skerritt), who first ridicules her search and later reverses himself, still to her detriment. Arroway puts up a valiant struggle with fascinating results.

Clint Eastwood directed himself in **Space Cowboys** (2000), a charming film about four retired test pilots, Frank (Eastwood), Hawk (Tommy Lee Jones), Jerry (Donald Sutherland) and Tank (James Garner), whose careers as astronauts were side-tracked when a chimp was sent into space. Years later, when a Russian satellite with deteriorating American engineering schematics starts falling to earth, this aging team comes to the rescue.

The true story of the space race is told in the epic film **The Right Stuff** (1983). It starts with the breaking of the sound barrier by test pilot Chuck Yeager (Sam Shepard). It follows with the introduction to the public of the first seven astronauts: Captain Alan Shepard Jr. (Scott Glenn), Major John Glenn Jr. (Ed Harris), Captain "Gordo" Cooper Jr. (Dennis Quaid), Captain "Gus" Grissom (Fred Ward), Captain "Deke" Slayton (Scott Paulin), Lieutenant Commander Scott Carpenter (Charles Frank) and Lieutenant Commander Walter Schirra Jr. (Lance Henriksen). The film then traces the substitution of a chimp for a man as the first "American" in space, the Russian launch of Sputnik and the flights of Shepard, Glenn and others through the year 1963. Throughout the film, Yeager, the greatest pilot of all time, is forced to watch from the sidelines because he never had a college education.

**Apollo 13** (1995) is the thrilling story of astronauts Jim Lovell (Tom Hanks), Fred Haise (Bill Paxton) and Jack Swigert (Kevin Bacon), and the problems of the Apollo 13 mission during a time when the American population was so jaded that the networks didn't even bother to televise it until everything started to go wrong. Supporting players include Ed Harris as Gene Kranz, the flight director in Houston; Gary Sinise as Ken Mattingly, who was originally scheduled to go on Apollo 13; and Kathleen Quinlan as Jim Lovell's wife, Marilyn. No stock footage was used in the filming of this powerful movie, directed by Ron Howard.

**October Sky** (1999), based on a true story by Homer H. Hickam Jr., stars Jake Gyllenhaal as Homer who grew up in a poor West Virginia mining town and was inspired by the Sputnik launch to start building rockets of his own. Homer is encouraged by his teacher, Miss Riley (Laura Dern), much to the consternation of his father (Chris Cooper), who expects Homer to be a miner like himself. This film about family values is a story of how education can be a ticket out of poverty.

**The Dish** (2001) is a lovely light comedy from Australia based on how the people "down under" assisted NASA in 1969. In the little town of Parkes in New South Wales, a radio telescope the size of a football field is the pride of Australian astronomy. The scientists there, led by Cliff Buxton (Sam Neill), help NASA by tracking Neil Armstrong and his shipmates and by relaying the television signals that will show Armstrong's moonwalk. This is a delightful, gentle film and a nice addition to the Space Race genre.

And until next time, happy viewing...



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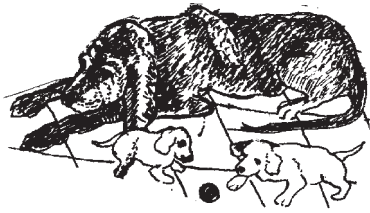
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Photos by VIRGINIA DANNEGGER  
Island residents and their pets waited patiently in St. Mary's schoolyard on Sept. 28, 2003, to be blessed by Father Moore in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals.



### The Tree Lady

Somebody somewhere once said that if you like plants you plant perennials, but if you like people you plant trees. Assuming this is true, lifelong City Islander Susan Strazzera must really like people a lot! If you have ever admired the many street trees on the Island, you may not realize that you are more than likely admiring Susan's hard work and perseverance. Not surprisingly, she is known locally as "The Tree Lady," and over the years many residents have turned to her for advice about their trees or for help in getting one planted by the city.

Susan points to the plague of Dutch elm disease that decimated New York City's trees in the 1970s as the issue that first raised her awareness of street trees. This devastation began many years of letter writing, telephone calls, more letter writing and plenty of what Susan describes as the "squeaky-wheel" approach to getting our trees planted, pruned and properly cared for. Her correspondence files are impressive, to put it mildly, and she credits Tom Russo, director of operations for the Department of Parks & Recreation in the Bronx as being a big help.

Susan, who is currently vice president of the City Island Garden Club, is also largely responsible for getting our Post Office garden fixed up. There is a very nice Korean dogwood out front now, and the flower beds are groomed, mulched and in great shape. Hawkins Park is next on her list and is being scheduled for a renovation next spring.

Like others with a lifelong love of gardens and plants, Susan can point to the influence of garden-loving parents, and

especially to fond memories of her grandmother's small but beautifully manicured garden. These garden genes have also been passed along to the next generation, in this case Susan's City Island daughter Susannah. After graduating from the New York Botanical Garden School of Professional Horticulture, Susannah has made a career of her passion for plants as a gardener at Riverdale's gorgeous Wave Hill.

Islanders who are interested in having New York City plant a tree in front of their houses (which may take a while) or in planting one of their own (for which a permit is required), there is a great deal of information available at the Parks Department Web site: [www.nyc.gov/parks](http://www.nyc.gov/parks). The list of approved trees for sidewalk and lawn planting is much more extensive than you might think and even includes some trees of ancient origin, such as the ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) and the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). There are also some very nice small flowering cherries (such as the Japanese flowering cherry *Prunus serrulata* "Kwanzan"), which would look great on any City Island street.

One of Susan's favorite ornamental trees is the Korean dogwood (*Cornus kousa*), which is a white flowering dogwood that is not only beautiful but resistant to anthracnose, unlike the pink varieties, which are not. She likes to remind Islanders that landscaping adds value to your property, as well as adding to the quality of life for everyone on City Island.

So the next time you are thinking about what to do with that bare spot in front of your house, remember Susan Strazzera and think about a tree.



### Public School 175

November is an exciting time in kindergarten. The children are learning about the letters of the alphabet and that each letter has its own sound. In math, they are being introduced to coins and how to find patterns and shapes in their everyday lives. Toward the end of the month, there will be discussions about Native Americans, Pilgrims and Thanksgiving. All of the children are looking forward to the Thanksgiving feast, when they can share a meal with their family and school friends and be thankful that they are in our lives.

Grade 1 will discuss the meaning of Thanksgiving and learns about sharing with others and about family values and the various family traditions in our community.

The second-graders are learning about fire safety and will be sworn in by a special firefighter as Junior Fire Marshals. The students will read stories and do writing activities based on a Thanksgiving theme.

Children in Grade 3 are about to begin the first of many projects that will lead to International Day in May. They will be interviewing family members or friends who grew up in other countries. This activity will help students to learn about the country their ancestors came from. This project is an extension of the third-grade social studies curriculum.

Classes 4T and 4D are working on cookbook reports. During the month, the children will each prepare a dessert recipe to share with the class. At the end of November, the students will visit historic St. Paul's Church to take part in an American Revolutionary War program.

Grade 5 will soon begin a study of Canada. The literacy program is under way, and the children are working on their own memoirs.

This is an exciting year for the sixth grade. In math and science the students are off to a great start working on patterns, rules and polygons in math; they will explore fractions and decimals in the weeks ahead. In science, students are conducting inquiry experiments and will then begin the study of chemistry.

The seventh-graders are continuing to work in literature circles, reading and analyzing books of their own choosing. They will continue to record their reactions and observations in their writers' notebooks. Who knows? Maybe this will be the beginning of the great American novel! Students are also discovering the world of chemistry, utilizing much of the newly purchased science equipment to explore the different states of matter.

The eighth grade is working on a project called "The Future City Competition," which uses math, science and technology to build a city of the future. This will be the third year that we have participated in this program. The students will work in groups of three and be aided by the eighth-grade science teachers, Ms. Heil and Mr. Vouit-

sis, as well as by an engineer mentor provided by the competition organizers.

Finally, Mr. Weiss would like everyone to know that he has started his American Sign Language Club. He meets with everyone interested in learning at 8 a.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. He also meets with the fourth-graders on Wednesdays and the third-graders on Thursdays during the lunch period. The children will be learning the alphabet, numbers, colors and some songs. Everyone is welcome to attend!

### St. Mary, Star of the Sea

The kindergarten children are studying the letters A, F, N and P and are learning about patterns and positions—top, middle, bottom, left and right. In religion they are discussing what it means to be thankful. For social studies they are learning about Native Americans and the Pilgrims and how they became friends and celebrated Thanksgiving together. The cooking project for the month is apple pie. Mmmm!

The first grade will prepare the liturgy for the First Friday Mass. The letters I and U are being emphasized this month. In math the children are beginning greater than (>) and less than (<). In science they are studying hibernation and different land forms in the United States. There will also be a turkey and Pilgrim art project. Casting and rehearsal for the Christmas play begins shortly.

The second-graders are practicing penmanship with the help of the popular television program "The Script Show." In science they are studying farm animals and their particular needs. The children are also learning about Flat Stanley, a venturesome flat boy who has many adventures traveling around in the mail system. The class will make their own Flat Stanley, which they will mail to a second-grade class in another school in the hope that they will be able to share in their Stanley's adventures.

Grade 3 is planning a trip to Gracie Mansion. The current writing assignment is to go back in time and pretend to be a Pilgrim and describe what you imagine life would be like.

The fourth grade is preparing for the ELA test. In science class the students will do experiments using sand and soil to show what they have learned about erosion and weathering. Map skills are being sharpened in social studies, and the holiday writing assignment is to make believe that you are a turkey and devise an escape plan.

The fifth-graders are working on multiplication and division in math and will soon journey into space for science class.

Grade 6 will explore the ancient world of Mesopotamia.

Descriptive news reports will be written by the seventh-graders on what they feel it was like to live in prehistoric America. For English class, different student groups will read short stories and rewrite them into plays that they will perform for their classmates. The difference between plant and animal cells will be microscopically examined in science.

Church history is on the agenda for Grade 8, as well as a study of the Creed, the basic rules of faith. In math the students are finishing their review for the Co-ops and will begin area, volume and graphing.

Special dates for St. Mary's are as follows: Nov. 4, school open for Election Day; Nov. 7, Co-op exam for Grade 8, First Friday Mass at 9 a.m.; Nov. 11, school closed for Veterans Day; Nov. 18, report cards will be distributed to the parents of students in grades 4 through 8 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. only; Nov. 19 and 20, Grade 5 takes the state social studies exam; Nov. 21, Turkey Bingo in the gym at 7 p.m.; Nov. 26, Thanksgiving recess begins; Dec. 1, school reopens; Dec. 5, First Friday Mass at 9 a.m., end of trimester for grades K through 3.

Russell Schaller

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# 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.

## Jeannette Mehrtens

Jeannette Hammond Mickelson Mehrtens, 102, of New Bern, North Carolina, died at the Craven Regional Medical Center in September. She was a resident of City Island for many years before she moved to North Carolina.

She is survived by her son, Robert LeRoy Mickelson, of Newport, North Carolina; her stepdaughter, Effie Ross; two grandchildren; three step-grandchildren; three great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

Mrs. Mehrtens's funeral was held at Christ Episcopal Church in New Bern, with Dr. Peter Stube officiating.

## Vera Rickard

Vera Rickard of Lake Worth, Florida, died on Aug. 29, 2003. She was 82.

She was born on 180th St. in the Bronx on January 5, 1919. Her family, the Toelbergs, moved to the Country Club section of the Bronx in the late 1920s. She graduated from P.S. 71 and Julia Richmond High School. As a young woman, she worked in Manhattan for the Life Extension Institute, W.T. Grant and Mueller Products.

She met Earl Rickard Jr. of City Island after a St. Mary's basketball game in December 1941. They were married at St. Mary Star of the Sea on June 24, 1945. Mrs. Rickard was both the wife and the mother of past commanders of the Leonard H. Hawkins Post 156. During the 1950s, she often appeared in St. Mary's fashion shows wearing dresses she sewed herself.

After the family moved to Florida in 1969, Mrs. Rickard worked for 20 years as a typesetter for the Lake Worth *Herald*. She is survived by her husband of 58 years, Earl Rickard Jr., of Lake Worth, Florida; her son, Earl Rickard III of Reno, Nevada; her daughter, Marianne McGlynn and son-in-law William McGlynn of Lantana, Florida; her sister, Mrs. Ruth Tremamunno of the Bronx; and three nieces and their families, all of the Bronx.

## Leo P. Keane

Leo Keane, a longtime resident of City Island, died on Oct. 7, 2003, at the age of 73.

He was born on Jan. 1, 1930, in the Bronx and moved with his family to City Island when he was three years old. The Keanes eventually bought a house at 481 King Avenue and were also the owners of the Manor Inn on Ditmars Street. Leo graduated from St. Mary, Star of the Sea School and Columbus High School. In 1965 he married Renée Salzman, and they soon purchased their home on Pell Place.

Skippy Lane taught Leo to sail by the age of seven, after which he focused the rest of his life on the water. At 18 he obtained his professional captain's license. He also worked for the Harlem Yacht Club as their launch tender.

Leo lost his sight in 1959 from diabetes and decided to open a yacht brokerage. He bought a houseboat and turned it into his sales office. In 1961, together with fellow City Islander Sonny Nieves and another investor, he purchased property on the east end of Fordham Street (formerly the site of International Underwater Contractors) and started a full service shipyard known as G.G. Marina and Sea Gear, Inc., which was the first small sailboat chartering company in the United States.

Leo was a member of the City Island Civic Association, the Chamber of Commerce, the Pelham Masonic Lodge, the City Island Yacht Club (which honored him with a lifetime membership in 1971), and St. Mary, Star of the Sea parish. IDEA gave him the Maritime Heritage Award in 2001. His voice was heard on several issues, and many newspaper and magazine articles were written about him.

Leo was also involved with teaching sailing, and he worked with the Boy Scouts, helping them earn special badges in their knowledge of the water.

He is survived by his wife and their daughter and son-in-law, Nancy and Raydel Hernandez, their son, Patrick, two sisters and many nieces and nephews.

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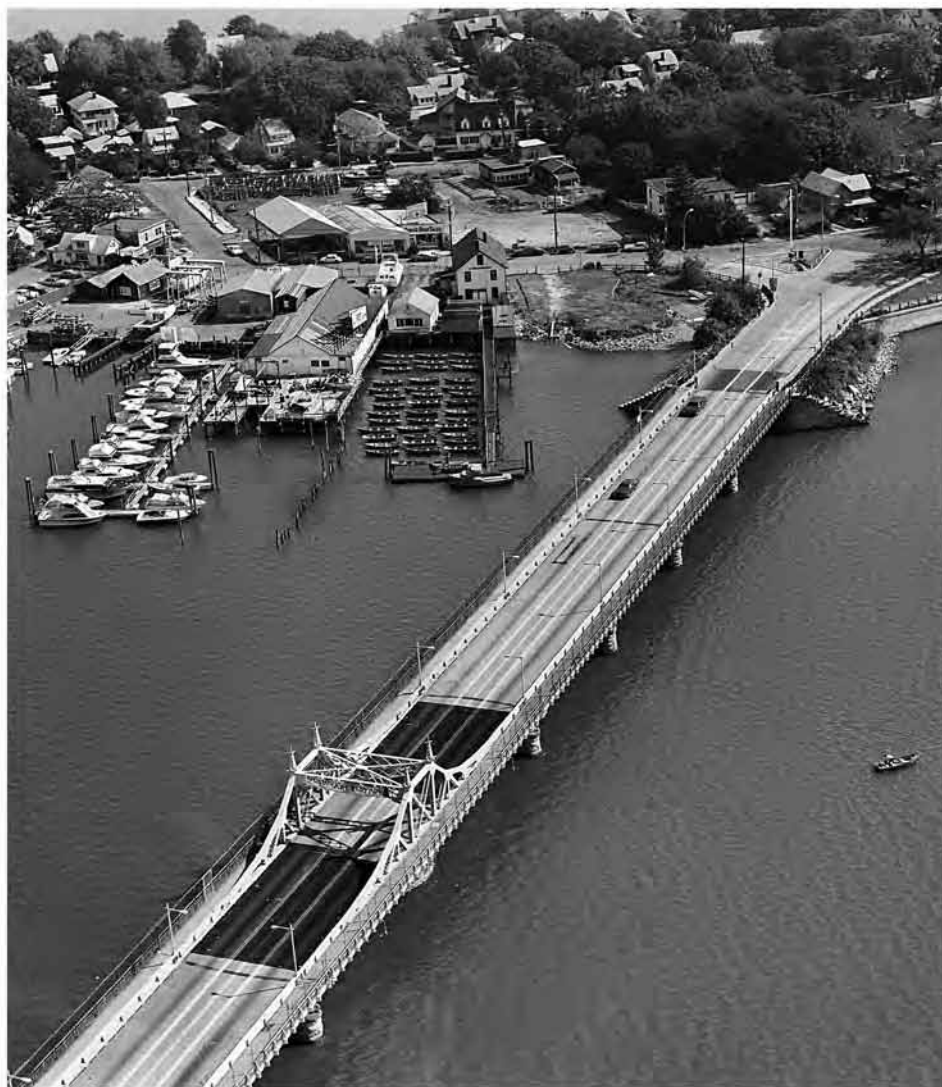
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 HH = hours; MM = minutes.

Tide chart by Tom Smith

**NOVEMBER 2003**

DAY	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	DAY
01 Sat	0527	6.9	1145	1.1	1753	7.3			Sat 01
02 Sun	0029	0.5	0634	7.1	1254	0.9	1901	7.3	Sun 02
03 Mon	0128	0.4	0732	7.4	1355	0.6	1959	7.5	Mon 03
04 Tue	0222	0.4	0824	7.7	1449	0.3	2051	7.6	Tue 04
05 Wed	0311	0.3	0912	7.9	1537	0.0	2138	7.6	Wed 05
06 Thu	0355	0.3	0955	8.1	1622	-0.2	2221	7.6	Thu 06
07 Fri	0435	0.3	1034	8.0	1703	-0.2	2301	7.4	Fri 07
08 Sat	0510	0.5	1110	7.9	1740	-0.1	2338	7.3	Sat 08
09 Sun	0538	0.6	1138	7.8	1812	0.0			Sun 09
10 Mon	0009	7.1	0549	0.8	1153	7.6	1834	0.2	Mon 10
11 Tue	0030	6.9	0603	0.9	1210	7.6	1846	0.4	Tue 11
12 Wed	0047	6.8	0634	1.0	1239	7.5	1912	0.6	Wed 12
13 Thu	0117	6.8	0713	1.2	1317	7.5	1950	0.7	Thu 13
14 Fri	0155	6.7	0757	1.3	1400	7.4	2033	0.9	Fri 14
15 Sat	0240	6.8	0847	1.4	1449	7.3	2123	1.0	Sat 15
16 Sun	0331	6.9	0942	1.5	1543	7.1	2217	1.0	Sun 16
17 Mon	0428	6.9	1043	1.4	1644	7.0	2316	0.9	Mon 17
18 Tue	0528	7.2	1150	1.1	1749	7.1			Tue 18
19 Wed	0018	0.7	0629	7.5	1303	0.6	1855	7.2	Wed 19
20 Thu	0119	0.3	0727	7.9	1412	0.1	1958	7.4	Thu 20
21 Fri	0217	0.0	0821	8.4	1512	-0.5	2056	7.6	Fri 21
22 Sat	0311	-0.3	0913	8.7	1608	-1.0	2151	7.7	Sat 22
23 Sun	0403	-0.6	1003	8.9	1701	-1.3	2243	7.7	Sun 23
24 Mon	0455	-0.6	1053	9.0	1755	-1.4	2336	7.7	Mon 24
25 Tue	0547	-0.5	1145	8.8	1850	-1.2			Tue 25
26 Wed	0032	7.5	0643	-0.3	1239	8.5	1947	-0.9	Wed 26
27 Thu	0131	7.3	0744	0.1	1338	8.1	2048	-0.5	Thu 27
28 Fri	0239	7.1	0856	0.5	1449	7.6	2152	-0.1	Fri 28
29 Sat	0352	7.0	1011	0.7	1613	7.2	2256	0.2	Sat 29
30 Sun	0501	7.0	1122	0.8	1727	7.0	2357	0.4	Sun 30

**DECEMBER 2003**

DAY	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	DAY
01 Mon	0604	7.1	1228	0.7	1832	7.0			Mon 01
02 Tue	0055	0.5	0701	7.3	1327	0.5	1930	7.0	Tue 02
03 Wed	0149	0.5	0754	7.5	1421	0.3	2022	7.0	Wed 03
04 Thu	0238	0.5	0842	7.6	1511	0.1	2110	7.0	Thu 04
05 Fri	0323	0.5	0927	7.7	1556	-0.1	2155	7.0	Fri 05
06 Sat	0404	0.6	1008	7.7	1638	-0.2	2237	7.0	Sat 06



Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

The 40-mile route of the 2003 Tour de Bronx bicycle event included a leg on City Island on Sunday, Oct. 19.



As if the days weren't short enough already, here we go again now, back to standard time and the days of the 4:30 sunsets. Wasn't it just yesterday that the sun was setting at 8:30? Whose idea was this daylight savings time anyway?

We've always understood it to have been Benjamin Franklin's idea, conceived for the benefit of American farmers. Well, it turns out we were only half right. Benjamin Franklin did indeed dream up the idea of daylight savings, but the farmers were out there leading the fight against any kind of legislative stamp of approval. One poultry farmer complained that his chickens could not adjust to the new times.

Franklin's idea came to him in France, the morning after he had been in attendance at a demonstration of a new and improved oil lamp. Apparently, there had been a lot of discussion about the efficiency of the new lamp and how it would save Frenchmen money.

In an open and obviously playful letter printed in the *Journal de Paris*, Franklin "proved" that the French people would be much better off rising six hours before

noon (as was their custom, Franklin observed) and to thereby save themselves six candlelit hours later on that evening. As he figured it, the people of France would be saving something like 96,075,000 *livres tournis* every six months if they could only be persuaded (by church bells and cannon fire, if necessary!) to use natural light, as opposed to candlelight, more efficiently.

Franklin's letter was a mere exercise for his renowned wit. That was how it was intended and how it was received. About 100 years later, however, the idea was resurrected by one William Willett. Willett was as serious about saving daylight as Franklin was silly, and although he did not survive to see it, nations at war were to employ a kind of daylight savings time in both world wars. In the United States, the idea was to conserve fuel at home and win the war abroad.

So what does it all mean for City Islanders? You will have to let us know ([jdsstrat@earthlink.net](mailto:jdsstrat@earthlink.net)). In the meantime, these two Islanders are going to try to make the most of that extra morning light while it lasts.

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1. Title of publication: The Island Current.
2. Publication No. 114-590.
3. Date of filing: October 1 2003.
4. Frequency of Issue: Monthly, except January and August.
5. No. of issues published annually: 10
6. Annual subscription price: \$10.00
7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication (Not Printer): 724 King Avenue, Bronx, N. Y 10464.
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not Printer): 724 King Avenue, Bronx, N.Y. 10464.
9. Full names and complete mailing addresses of publisher, editor, and managing editor (This item MUST NOT be blank): Publisher, The Island Current, Inc., P.O. Box 6, Bronx, N.Y 10464; Editor, Karen Nani, 724 King Avenue, Bronx, N.Y 10464; Managing Editor, none.
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13. Publication Name: The Island Current.
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Sept. 2003.
15. Extent and nature of circulation:
  - a. Total No. copies printed (Net Press Run): Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 2,000. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 2,000.
  - b. Paid circulation:
    1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales: Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 750. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 800.
    2. Mail Subscriptions: Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 376. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 373.
  - c. Total paid circulation (Sum of 15b(1) and 15b(2): Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1126. Actual copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 1173.
  - d. Free distribution by Mail, Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free Copies: Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 48. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 46.
  - e. Free Distribution outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means): Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 Months: 300. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 300.
  - f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 348. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 346.
  - g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 1,474. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 1,529.
  - h. Copies not distributed:
    1. Office use, left over, unaccounted spoiled after printing: Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 140. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 113.
    2. Returns from News Agents: Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 93. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h(1), and 15h(2)—should equal net press run shown in a): Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 2,000. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 2,000.
    16. Percentage Paid and/or Requested Circulation Average No. copies each issue during preceding 12 months: 81%. Actual No. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date: 82%.
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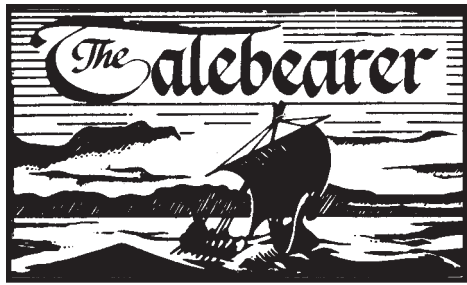
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Information for the Talebearer must be received in writing no later than the 15th of the month except July and December. Mail to The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464; include your name and telephone number.

Happy 16th birthday on Nov. 12 to Bay Street's Bobby Swieciki, with love from Mom and Dad, Stephen and little Maria.

Welcome to the world to Angela Michelle Berardo, who made her debut on Sept. 13. Thrilled parents are Steven and Stephanie and big sisters are Andrea and Anna. Proud grandparents are Evelyn Berardo and Ella and Harold Paulsen.

Belated 69th birthday greetings to Bob DeTorres, with love from Cyndi.

Get-well wishes to Fordham Street's Alice Rotello, with love from your family and friends.

Belated birthday wishes to little Bob Carmody, who turned seven years old, and to his big sister Kelly, who turned 13. Mike and Mikey Carmody also celebrated their birthdays on Oct. 24, and Faith Elisabeth Zapata had her first birthday on Oct. 15. Love from the Cebeks and the Carmodys.

Happy birthday on Nov. 18 to Timmy, with love from Judy, Tim, Mal, Mom and the whole Byrnes and Yarusso families.

Best wishes for a lifetime of happiness to Linda and John ("King Egg Cream Maker") Vento, who celebrated their mar-

riage on Sept. 6 at the Villa Barone. When he's not busy mixing up his favorite beverage, John can be found at the Harlem Yacht Club. Linda, originally from Morris Park, is delighted to be a part of City Island.

Happy birthday on Nov. 2 to Christine Rodriguez, with love from Marty and the gang from Curves.

Belated happy 16th birthday to Hawkins Street's Chris Kolb, who celebrated on Oct. 27, with love from your family.

Happy fifth birthday on Nov. 2 to Lily Kolb, also of Hawkins Street, with love from your family.

Belated October birthday greetings to Minneford Avenue's Mary Ann Occhicone, who celebrated a "special birthday" from your "not quite as old" friend Geri.

And to all our readers, neighbors and friends, may you all have a happy and safe Thanksgiving.

Maria Swieciki



### CORRECTION

In the article about the black-out in the September issue of *The Current*, the reporter wrote that Chase Bank gave the credit card holder full credit for the sum charged by the Sunoco gas station; in fact, the reimbursement was made by the credit card division of Chase, not by the banking division.

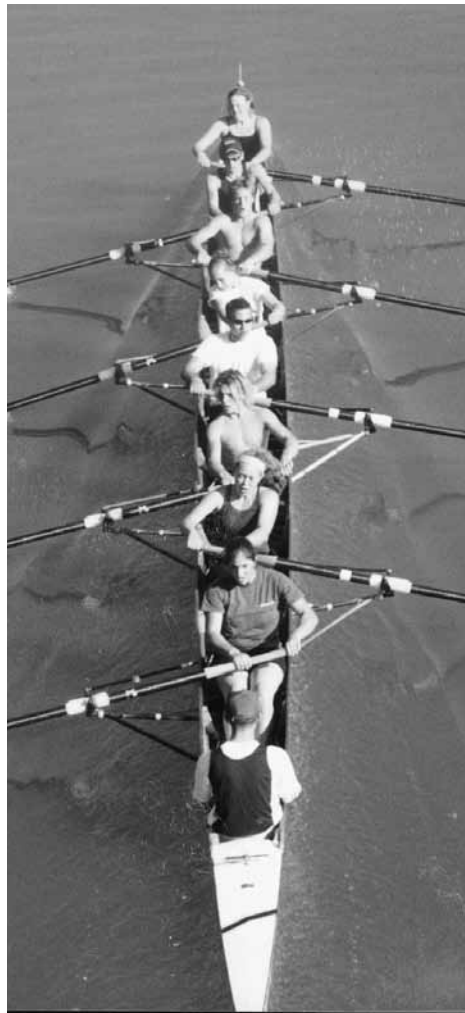


Linda and John Vento toast each other during their wedding on Sept. 6, 2003 at the Villa Barone.



Photos by LUCILLE RIVIN

Many City Islanders learn how to row at an early age. Bowne Street resident Luke Vivian took his rowing experience to Ithaca College and recently competed in the 31st annual Ithaca College Freeman Cup Fall Regatta on Oct. 11, 2003. He is shown above with his winning crew (left, fourth from the bottom) and holding the Freeman Cup plaque (fourth from left above).



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