

# The Island Current

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## BUDGET CUTS UPDATE

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by RICK DeWITT

Islanders and local politicians rallied on Friday evening, Jan. 9, 2009 to protest the announced reduction in City Island's fire coverage.

### Fire Department

Although the Fire Department announced that it would cut service from 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. for Ladder Company 53 on City Island starting Jan. 17, 2009, so far this year the ladder company has been open every night except for Jan. 17 and Feb. 20. This reprieve has been the result of the fact that the department has had extra employees available to staff the ladder.

There is no guarantee that this situation will continue, however, as the Fire Department does not plan to hire new staff to replace those who may retire or resign in the near future. And the situation may in fact become worse, since the Fire Department has announced that they propose to close the ladder company around the clock as of July 1, 2009, the first day of the new fiscal year.

Islanders are continuing in their fight to prevent this closure, citing the isolation and vulnerability of City Island, which would be served by only the single engine company and have to rely on help from off-Island firefighters, who would take at least 10 minutes to reach City Island from Co-op City and beyond.

### City Island Express Bus

Several Islanders attended a public hearing on Feb. 4 with Council Member Jimmy Vacca to protest the Metropolitan Transit Authority's proposed budget cuts, which includes the City Island express bus. The hearing was standing room only, and John Stiene spoke on behalf of City Island, although most of the attendees were concerned with saving the Access-a-Ride program. The meeting was quite heated, and people were advised to address the issue of additional funding for the MTA with their elected officials.

As of the time *The Current* went to press, the City Island express bus was not on the list of proposed MTA cuts that appears on the Web site of the City Controller. However, Council Member Jimmy Vacca had not been informed that the bus route had been reinstated, and he felt that the Web site was in error. Questions directed by *The Current* to the Controller's office for clarification were not answered.

## P.S. 175 CELEBRATES QUADRICENTENNIAL

By LISA LIQUORI FINE



Photo courtesy WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY and © Yann Arthus-Bertrand/Corbis

At the left side of the photograph is an ecological reconstruction of Manhattan as it might have looked 400 years ago, in 1609, the year Henry Hudson sailed into New York Harbor on the *Half-Moon*.

Have you ever wondered what New York was like before Henry Hudson arrived 400 years ago? On Jan. 23, 2009, the City Island School, P.S. 175, was proud to host resident Eric Sanderson's creative portrayal of what Manhattan was like in 1609 and what it could be like in the future.

As a leader in the field of conservation planning, Dr. Sanderson, who is associate director of the Living Landscapes Program at the Wildlife Conservation Society (which operates the Bronx Zoo), has created an ecological reconstruction of Manhattan using extensive historical research, groundbreaking analyses of ecosystem relationships and cutting-edge three-dimensional visualizations. Showing details down to the level of a city block, Sanderson showed where streams once flowed, where the Leni Lenape people lived, where American chestnuts were likely to have grown, and where black bears once marked their territories.

Principal Amy Lipson welcomed a diverse group of New Yorkers to the presentation at the school, including Island residents, parents, teachers, students, architects, artists, doctors, horticulturalists, elected officials, lawyers, mortgage brokers, nurse practitioners, planners, publishers, screenwriters, social workers and therapists. Eighth-grade students Sean Moran, Kevin Saulnier, Shaylin Scott, Luna Sepulveda and Veronica Weyhrauch greeted guests with delicious refreshments prepared by PTA parent Brenda Prohaska.

The audience was captivated by Dr. Sanderson's presentation. Moira Carter-Spencer, an Island resident, P.S. 175 teacher and parent, said later that she wished the program didn't have to end. Assemblyman Michael Benedetto remarked: "This is exactly what schools throughout New York City should be doing on Friday nights—opening their doors for educational talks

like this." Third-grader Erik Lomanaco asked Dr. Sanderson what everyone else must have been thinking: "How do you keep so much information in your head?"

The lecture was part of the statewide quadricentennial celebration commemorating Henry Hudson's voyage 400 years ago, an event that changed world history. In commemorating the event a century ago, City Islanders built a replica of Henry Hudson's boat, *Half Moon*, and throughout New York there were parades with elaborate floats, fireworks and exhibits of the latest industrial and cultural achievements, including Thomas Edison's electric lights and flights by the Wright brothers circling over the Statue of Liberty. This year's events will celebrate, encourage and inspire new innovations.

Eric Sanderson's innovative project, known as the Mannahatta Project, is about to receive international recognition. The Netherlands plans to issue a special euro coin to commemorate Hudson's historic voyage engraved with an image of Mannahatta. Dr. Sanderson's book, "Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City," is scheduled for publication this spring by Harry N. Abrams, Inc. and has already been previewed in the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker Magazine*.

"Mannahatta/Manhattan," an educational exhibit based on the Mannahatta Project, will be presented at the Museum of the City of New York this spring and summer, jointly sponsored by the Wildlife Conservation Society. National Geographic Magazine plans to feature the Mannahatta Project in its September 2009 issue. For more information about the project, visit [www.wcs.org/mannahatta](http://www.wcs.org/mannahatta).

P.S. 175, which is a registered Quadricentennial School, has planned other exciting events to take place throughout the year, and Dr. Sanderson donated 100 percent of the proceeds from his presentation on Jan. 23 to help fund these projects.

## Official Carrión Appointment

President Barack Obama announced on Thursday, Feb. 19, that he has appointed the Bronx Borough President and City Island resident Adolfo Carrión to the position of White House Director of Urban Affairs. He will work with Derek Douglas, the newly appointed Special Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs.

President Obama and Vice President Biden created the White House Office of Urban Affairs to develop a strategy for metropolitan America and to ensure that all federal dollars targeted to urban areas are effectively spent on the highest-impact programs. The Director of Urban Affairs will report directly to the president and coordinate all federal urban programs.

President Obama said, "I look forward to working with these talented leaders to bring long overdue attention to the urban areas where 80 percent of the American people live and work. Vibrant cities spawn innovation, economic growth, and cultural enrichment; the Urban Affairs office will focus on wise investments and development in our urban areas that will create employment and housing opportunities and make our country more competitive, prosperous, and strong."

Mr. Carrión has served two terms as Bronx Borough President and one term as

the President of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). As Borough President, he oversaw the creation of 40,000 new units of housing in seven years, 50 new schools, \$7 billion in capital and infrastructure expenditures, and over \$400 million in new parks and parkland renovation.

Before becoming Bronx Borough President, he represented the 14th City Council District on the New York City Council and also served as an urban planner at the NYC Department of City Planning and a teacher in the New York City public schools. He graduated with a BA in world religions and philosophy from King's College in 1985 and his MA in urban planning from Hunter College in 1990.

An election will be held this spring for a new Borough President; in the meantime, Earl Brown, Deputy Borough President, will hold that post.

Although Mr. Carrión will be working in Washington D.C., he plans to keep his house on City Island and to return here one day. As he told the *New York Times*, "I'm glad to have the opportunity to join the Obama administration, but I'm a kid from the Bronx, I will always be a kid from the Bronx, and New York City is clearly my home," he said.

## BRIEFLY...

**THE SPRING SAFE BOATING COURSE**, hosted by the award-winning City Island Power Squadron, a unit of the United States Power Squadrons, is open to adults and teens (those aged 12 through 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian). Registration will take place on Monday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at the City Island Yacht Club, 63 Pilot Street. The class meets on Mondays for eight two-hour sessions. Student materials include manual, dividers, plotter, marlinspike rope and Maptch CD-ROM. The courses are taught by certified instructors. PWC Certification (NYS and NASBLA approved). The fee of \$75 includes all student materials, instructions and class work. For information, call Jim at 718-863-3855 (before 10 p.m., please) or e-mail Franz Alvarez at [franz\\_alvarez@hotmail.com](mailto:franz_alvarez@hotmail.com) or call 914-715-1161.

**INDOOR TAG SALE:** Sunday, March 8, and Sunday, March 22, at the City Island Community Center, 190 Fordham Street, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tables are available at \$10 each. Call 718-885-1145 and leave a message.

**DIABETES SELF MANAGEMENT WORKSHOPS:** According to the American Diabetes Association, 8 percent of the population has diabetes, and it has become the sixth leading cause of death. If you have diabetes, think about joining a new Diabetes Self Management Program developed at Stanford University and presented by North General Hospital in the Bronx. The program consists of a series of six workshops that promote active management of the disease through such topics as monitoring glucose, healthy eating, exercise and stress and depression. Studies have shown that people who complete the workshops have a better handle on the disease. On March 11 at 12 noon, Guedy Arniella and Maria Baptiste of North General Hospital will make a overall presentation about the workshops at Grace Church Hall. Please call Patty at 914-882-9578 for more information or to register.

**THE CITY ISLAND NAUTICAL MUSEUM**, now open Saturdays as well as Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m., is featuring two special events during the month of March. On Saturday, March 21, at 2 p.m., Dick Sadler will give a talk on what it was like being a crew member on Ted Turner's City Island-built yacht *Courageous* when she successfully defended the America's Cup in 1977. And on March 29, at 2 p.m., the Museum's new model minesweeper, based on a boat built on City Island for the U.S. Navy, will be launched with a celebration to which everyone with memories of City Island during wartime is invited to attend.

**WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH** has been celebrated on City Island for many years. This year the celebration will be held in the City Island Community Center, 190 Fordham Street, from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 29. The meeting will be informal, and several activities are planned, including an international potluck meal. For further information, call Susan Bellinson at 718-885-2109. And don't forget to bring your business cards.

**THE CITY ISLAND THEATER GROUP** will open its 10th anniversary season with the classic romantic comedy "The Rainmaker" by Richard Nash, which will be performed on Feb. 27 and 28, March 5, 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 28 and March 1 at 3 p.m. Please note that there is now a Saturday matinee. Call 718-885-3066 or e-mail [tickets@cityislandtheatergroup.com](mailto:tickets@cityislandtheatergroup.com) to reserve your tickets for this fantastic show.

## GRACE CHURCH 160TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE

All Island residents who have been connected with Grace in any way are invited to drop by the Parish Hall, 116 City Island Avenue, on Saturday, March 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with stories and photos to be included in a book in honor of the church's 160th anniversary. (Photos will be scanned on-site and returned immediately.) Come, have a cup of coffee and share your reminiscences. For more information, please contact Evyonne Baker in the Grace Parish Office or at [newvearts@yahoo.com](mailto:newvearts@yahoo.com).

**THE LIVING ROCKS.** The City Island Community Center and Jay Howard present the Living Rocks on Saturday, March 21, at 7 p.m. Come and learn about the project. For more information, call Jay Howard at 718-885-2192.

## MORE TRASH NEWS

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

In the January-February issue of *The Current*, we noted a number of Department of Sanitation rules and regulations regarding the disposal and recycling of discarded materials. However, a question that occurs to many Islanders is that of how one should dispose of electronic trash.

Until July 1, 2010, it will be legal for New Yorkers to dispose of electronic items (such as computers, monitors, televisions and cell phones) with the regular trash. Those who are concerned about effects that these hazardous materials may have on the waste stream and the environment may look into returning these products to the manufacturers and retailers where they originated.

Starting in late 2009, under NYC's Electronic Equipment Collection, Recycling and Reuse Act (Local Law 13 of 2008), New Yorkers can return used electronics to the manufacturer for recycling.

However, many electronics manufacturers and retailers have already implemented product stewardship programs where they take back electronics (usually via a mail-back program) for recycling. Some charge a fee, some are free, and some will pay for items with value. Some also offer home pick-up and/or coupons for discounts on the purchase of new products. Additionally, some retailers will accept electronics for recycling when new purchases are made. When purchasing new electronics, be sure to ask about

their trade-in or recycling options.

There are also a number of organizations, such as Goodwill, that sponsor drop-off sites or special drop-off events for electronic equipment. Visit the online NYCWastele\$S Events Calendar for information or call 311.

The following electronic equipment will be covered by Local Law 13 (of 2008): computers, monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, televisions and portable digital music players.

Although cell phones are not covered by the new electronic recycling law, current New York State law requires that all cell phone service providers in the state accept cell phones for reuse or recycling from any person at no cost (limit 10 per person per day).

For more information, go to the Sanitation Department Web site at [www.nyc.gov/sanitation](http://www.nyc.gov/sanitation).

## CORRECTION

In the Local Views column in the January-February issue, the sentence about Kim Nye's New Year's resolution should have read: "Kim's resolution was to be more productive with her free time between her school work, her job and her social life."

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# National Women's History Month

By HELEN FRIEDMAN

Before the 1970s, women's history was not a popular topic for discussion or study, although in fact women's history has been a remarkable story, from the suffragists' struggle for the vote to the feminist movement. Whether in groups or as individuals, women have managed to advance the rights of women through perseverance and commitment.

A case in point is the recent passage of the "Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act." Ms. Ledbetter worked for a firm that paid her considerably less than her male counterparts earned, although she performed the same work. She fought hard to reverse the situation by taking her case as far as the Supreme Court, which ruled against her on the grounds that she had not sued for equal pay within 180 days of the first pay check that showed lesser pay (even though it had taken her 18 years to find out about it). She succeeded, however, in getting a bill in her favor drafted in Congress, and President Obama, who had cosponsored the bill when he was in the Senate, recently signed it into law, saying: "Making our economy work means making sure it works for everybody, that there are no second-class citizens in our workplaces."

A significant factor contributing to the emergence of women's history has been the

lack of information in textbooks about the history of women's accomplishments. In 1977, women working through the Commission on the Status of Women initiated Women's History Week to promote the study of women in history. The group chose a week in March because it coincided with Women's International Day, and so the National Women's History Project was launched. Congress was convinced to recognize Women's History Week as a period for celebration, but it was not until 1981 that National Women's History Week was actually proclaimed.

In 1987, the Women's History Project achieved its goal of expanding the week to a month, and Congress at last declared the month of March as National Women's History Month.

Under the leadership of Toby Liederman, City Island has celebrated Women's History Month for many years. This year it will be held in the City Island Community Center, 190 Fordham Street, from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 29, 2009. The meeting will be informal, and several activities are planned, including an international potluck meal. For further information, call Susan Bellinson at 718-885-2109. And don't forget to bring your business cards.

# A MINESWEEPER COMES TO CITY ISLAND

By TOM NYE



Photo courtesy of THE CITY ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## YMS minesweeper.

Virtually every account of City Island's yacht and shipbuilding history discusses the war years, when the yacht builders halted all work on pleasure craft and switched gears to building for the war effort. Many yachts were painted a military gray and had armament added for use as coastal patrol boats, but new boats were built as well.

Among the craft built at City Island during World War II were countless numbers of landing craft, Army tow boats and T-boats of 47 feet and 64 feet respectively, tugboats from 66 to 126 feet, Coast Guard patrol boats, 77-foot Vosper-style PT boats, 144-foot Army FP troop and cargo ships and 85-foot high-speed air-sea rescue boats.

Most significant, however, were the 136-foot YMS minesweepers, which were built by 35 yacht yards along the East Coast, Gulf Coast, Great Lakes and West Coast. This class of auxiliary-motor minesweepers was designated "YMS" to indicate that they were built by yacht yards rather than large naval shipyards.

With nearly 500 built, there were more YMS minesweepers built during World War II than any other class of U.S. fighting ship. Considering the facts that they were designed by the in-house staff of the Henry B. Nevins Yacht Yard and that during the first half of World War II every YMS built in the country was under the supervision of the Nevins Yard, the YMS carries strong ties with City Island. Although there were a number of large yachts over 100 feet built at City Island over the last century, imagine having 48 of them built within a three-year period. From 1942 through 1944, 48 YMS minesweepers were launched, 24 by the Henry B. Nevins Yard and 24 by the Robert Jacob Shipyard.

The YMS minesweepers measured 136 feet overall, with a beam of 24 feet 6 inches, a draft of 6 feet 1 inch and a displacement of 320 tons. Armament consisted of one 3-inch 50 caliber dual purpose mount and two 20 mm mounts, plus two depth-charge launchers. Power was supplied by twin General Motors 8-268A diesel engines turning two shafts at 880 hp each to a designed speed of 12 knots. The YMS carried a complement of 33 in crew.

The primary role of YMS minesweepers was, of course, to sweep mines laid by enemy

subs, and the class was usually found ahead of U.S. fleets, clearing the way. As noted in the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships: "The wood-hulled YMS proved to be one of the U.S. Navy's more durable and versatile types through a quarter-century of service, filling a variety of roles for a number of navies."

After World War II, many minesweepers not needed for U.S. service were transferred to allied nations, sold as commercial craft or converted into yachts. The best-known examples were Jacques Yves Cousteau's research vessel *Calypso* and actor John Wayne's yacht *Wild Goose*.

In the early 1950s, the City Island yards were called upon to build another nine minesweepers for NATO. Of about the same size and build as their predecessors, these minesweepers now had the designation of AMS (Adjutant Motor Minesweeper). The Consolidated Yard built six and the Nevins Yard built three. In 1958 the 144-foot Minehunter MHC 43 *USS Bittern* was launched by Consolidated and signaled not only the end of government contracts for City Island but also the last vessel built by Consolidated and the last vessel measuring over 100 feet built on City Island.

*YMS 1*, built by the Henry B. Nevins Yard, was launched on Jan. 10, 1942, and was christened by Elsa Kroepke of the Nevins office staff and a City Island resident. Mrs. Rose Healy of King Avenue christened two of the minesweepers, one in 1943 and one in 1953, the last minesweeper built on the Island. Her husband, attorney Jerome F. Healy, was instrumental in obtaining the naval shipbuilding contracts for City Island.

During the month of March, the City Island Nautical Museum will receive a custom built 30-inch replica model of YMS 312 (built by Nevins), which is representative of all the minesweepers built during World War II. It seems completely appropriate that Rose Healy's daughter, Barbara Healy Hoffman, will be on hand to christen the model with Champagne. Be sure to join the celebration at the Nautical Museum, 190 Fordham Street, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 29. The event is being co-sponsored by the American Legion Leonard Hawkins Post, and everyone with memories to share of the war years, on City Island or overseas, is invited to attend.

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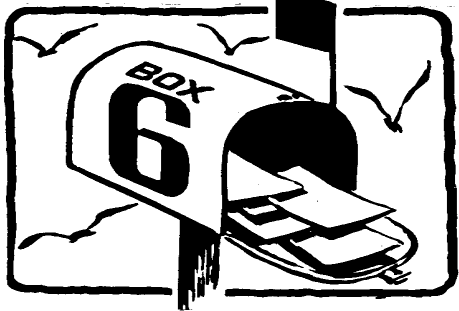
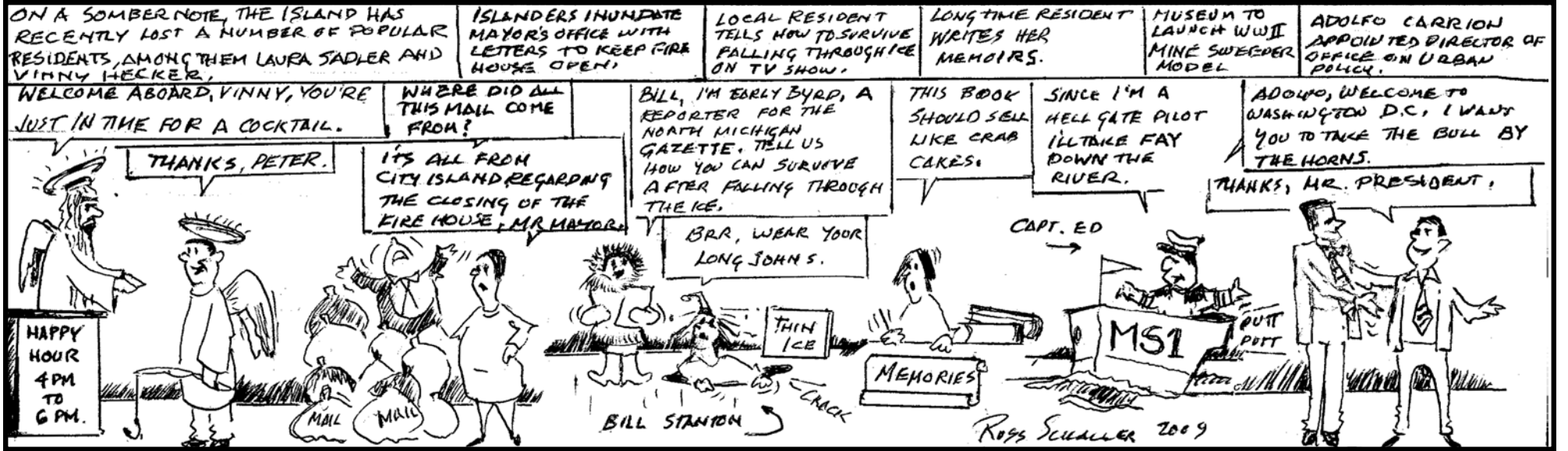
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**A Community Thank-You**

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

To: Councilman James Vacca  
13th Council District, New York City  
Room 104  
3040 East Tremont Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10461

Dear Councilman Vacca:

The City Island Civic Association would like to thank you for the substantial time and effort you have put in to keeping Ladder 53 open. You have truly done an incredible service for the residents of City Island.

Needless to say, we are all very much aware of the financial crisis the City, State, and Country are facing and we certainly understand the need for budget cutting. We also believe, however, that prudent fiscal management would not and should not endanger an isolated community such as ours.

We are very grateful to have your leadership in this endeavor. With many thanks from a grateful constituency.

**Bill Stanton**  
President, City Island Civic Association

**How you can reach us:** email: [city.island.civic@mac.com](mailto:city.island.civic@mac.com). The CICA Officers and Board urge our members to contact us. Anonymous messages and emails will not be addressed, but if you wish anonymity, that can be accommodated.

**BRAVO!**

Dear City Island,

**BRAVO** to all City Islanders who have come together to fight City Hall to keep our Ladder Company 53 open.

To all those Islanders who came, on short notice, to the standing-room-only Town Hall meeting at the Lido on Dec. 15.

To all those Islanders who came out on the cold night of Jan. 9 for the Candlelight March from Hawkins Park to the Fire House.

To the Islanders who attended the City Council hearing at City Hall and presented our case to the Fire and Criminal Justice Committee.

To all who have written letters to officials in New York City's administration persuading them to change their minds by understanding the uniqueness of City Island. We can accept no less than the same FDNY coverage as that of the rest of New

York City's residents.

To the officers and executive board of the City Island Civic Association for their time and energy in fighting the battle.

To the firefighters in the Fire House on Schofield Street, who are here for us.

And especially to Council Member Jimmy Vacca, who went above and beyond for his loyal City Island constituency to present our case to Mayor Bloomberg and Fire Commissioner Scoppetta. We also appreciate the support he received from his fellow Councilmembers, Senator Klein, Congressman Crowley and Assemblyman Benedetto in this effort.

**BUT** we need to keep up the good fight. The Mayor's Office and the Fire Commissioner have not heard us or taken our case seriously, and we need to redouble our efforts to keep our ladder company open around the clock.

**A Grateful City Islander**

**With Gratitude**

To the Editor:

As many City Islanders know, this has been a sad time for my family since the passing of my son Robert Rodstrom, but I wish to express my deep gratitude to the members of his family and to his friends who gathered at the nursing home on a daily basis. The love and friendship, laughs and encouragement they brought gave Robert the strength to survive a full year.

The love and strength shown by Pat Dolphin and Paul Pirraglia, by Patty Peterson, Frank Conte, Tom Leni, and many others, will never be forgotten by our family. The phone buddies, especially Joe Thompson and Noah Calbo, got him through the day.

**Dolores Rodstrom**

**Love Letters to City Island**

To the Editor:

My friend Fay Jordaens has written an incredible book about people, events, stores and much more about City Island. With invaluable help from Tommy Nye and others, this book offers a look back at the wonderful history of memorable people and places.

As Fay was writing it, she read some of it to me, and I marveled at her memory and the way the book was written with such love.

I don't qualify as a book agent, but I would like to make a request on behalf of Fay's book. Initially she had 25 books printed at a tremendous personal cost, for which she was lectured at length by me and her family. The book is thick, and it is printed on quality paper with many photographs in color as well as black and white. There are aerial shots of the Island, many of them taken some years ago.

We all know that the more copies that are printed the lower the cost, but in this case, because of the book's specifications, each book costs her about \$40 (plus \$5 postage). Only a few copies are left, and although she has received requests for more, she can only afford to sell them at what it costs her.

Since this is a book to cherish, not only by history buffs but by descendants of those Islanders who have passed on, the only way to keep this book from becoming a collector's item is to get advance orders. If at least 100 people pre-order the book by contacting Fay at [FayJ@aol.com](mailto:FayJ@aol.com), she might be able to put many more books into circulation.

Imagine reading about the many shipyards and craftsmen, as well as folks like Sam Bierman, the man who started the Board of Trade, which subsequently became the Chamber of Commerce. There are many stories about people written in a warm and affectionate way, making them real even if you never met them.

Needless to say, I am very proud of my best friend!

**Ruth Cronk**

**William Pflieger Memory**

To the Editor:

This is an epilogue to a story you did some time ago on William Pflieger as a PB Y pilot in World War II. I lived across Buckley Street from him and his family for many years and never knew it until I read your story.

I collect World War II planes. I found

an advertisement for a PB Y limited edition from the Air and Space Museum. The specs listed Lt. William Pflieger as the pilot. I bought two, one for my grandsons and one for Candice Pflieger. William Pflieger signed and dated my specs card and sent me a personal letter and a picture of himself in his PB Y. This meant a lot to me, and I will pass this on to my grandchildren.

**Richard Rodstrom Sr.**

*P.S. The two little girls in the picture in the January-February issue of The Current are Barbara Healey (Hoffman) and Susan Henning (Strazzera) around 1946 or 1947.*

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Photo courtesy FOCAL POINT GALLERY

More than 100 people attended the opening of the "Women's Art Exhibition" on Feb. 6, 2009, at the Focal Point Gallery on City Island. The artists included (back row, l. to r.): Marian Doherty, Noemi Santana, Ron Terner (director of the gallery) and Pamela Sklar; (front row), Fran Marino, E.B. Tierney, Cheryl Brinker, Maggie Myers and Lois Weingarten.

## JOIN THE BIG READ

By MARIA ROMANO

As a supporter of arts in the Bronx, the Bronx Council on the Arts is inviting residents and groups in the borough to participate in a new literary project, The Big Read, a program of the National Endowment of the Arts. The BCA is hosting a marathon reading of Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird" on Thursday, March 12, from 6 to 8:45 p.m. at the Bronx Library Center on East Kingsbridge Road.

The marathon will begin with celebrity readers and then the audience, including special invited guests from the WritersCorps, elected officials and local community groups, reading passages from the book aloud. The free event will be taped for broadcast, and light refreshments will be served.

Some of the celebrities and local dignitaries expected to attend are Sonia Manzano of "Sesame Street," Rai Raimundi of News 12, media personality Valerie Smaldone,

Jane Jacobs Award-winner Alexie Torres-Fleming, New York City Council Member Jimmy Vacca and Assemblyman Carl Heastie.

All attendees are invited to read a sentence or two aloud and to pass it along to the next participant, creating a living record of first-ever Big Read in the Bronx that will be broadcast on local cable and that celebrates reading and literacy in our community.

The first few chapters of the novel will be read aloud on March 12, but the marathon will continue in March and April all over the borough, in both English and Spanish, with readings by young and old, by celebrities, students and ordinary citizens. Look for a complete schedule of events at [www.bronx-arts.org](http://www.bronx-arts.org) or e-mail [maria@bronxarts.org](mailto:maria@bronxarts.org) for more information. Participants should register by March 5, 2009, via e-mail to [maria@bronxarts.org](mailto:maria@bronxarts.org).

## A Current Preview Don't Miss "The Rainmaker"!

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by MARY MCINTYRE

The talented and hardworking cast of "The Rainmaker," which opens on Friday, Feb. 27, includes (front row, l. to r.) Matthieu Regney, Christopher Meindl, Elizabeth Paldino, John Garcia and (back row, l. to r.) Torrey Rodriguez, Scott Griffith and John Schwam.

The 10th anniversary of the City Island Theater Group (CITG) is being kicked off in style with a classic romantic play, "The Rainmaker" by Richard Nash, which opens on Feb. 27 for a two-weekend run.

This appealing play explores the conflict between dream and reality in a ranch family that is struggling to survive a serious drought in the 1930s. Help comes, or seems to come, in the form of a charming con man named Starbuck (John Garcia), who manages to persuade two members of the family, the father, H.C. (Scott Griffith) and his son Jim (Torrey Rodriguez) to believe that he can bring rain for a mere \$100. His promises are dismissed, however, by the skeptical son, Noah (Matthieu Regney), and daughter Lizzie (Elizabeth Paldino), who refuse to believe that he is anything more than a thief and a liar.

As the play develops, it becomes clear that Starbuck, H. C. and Jimmy live in a world of dreams, in which rain is possible, a plain daughter can find a husband, and a "fast" girl can be a young man's true love. Noah, on the other hand, chooses to face reality head on by making Jimmy face the fact that his girlfriend will probably break his heart and by persuading his plain sister

to accept the likelihood that she will remain an old maid in spite of her father's conviction that she can find herself a husband.

The plot thickens as the local sheriff (John Schwam) and his deputy File (Christopher Meindl) learn that Starbuck is in fact a con man and try to arrest him at the ranch, although Lizzie, whom File secretly admires, has begun to change her mind about the rainmaker.

Nick Sala, who directs the production, feels that this play about having hope and faith in love will resonate with all of us during these difficult times, and this "pre-viewer" was touched by the sensitive way in which the actors expressed both the exterior and the interior aspects of their characters.

"The Rainmaker" will be performed at Grace Episcopal Church Hall, 116 City Island Avenue at Pilot Street, on Feb. 27 and 28, March 5, 6 and 7 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 28 and March 1 at 3 p.m. Call 718-885-3066 or e-mail [tickets@cityislandtheatergroup.com](mailto:tickets@cityislandtheatergroup.com) to reserve tickets.

This fine production promises a wonderful 10th year for the group, so don't miss it.

## Warrior Football and Cheerleader Registration

Warrior chief Jerry Demers announced that the 2009 registration for flag, tackle and cheer teams will be held at Lehman High School on Sundays March 1 and 8 at 11 a.m.

Registrants should be accompanied by an adult and must bring a copy of their birth certificate. Enter through the side entrance by the field and proceed to the gym. Lehman High School is located at 3000 East Tremont Avenue.

Chief Demers told *The Current* that many City Islanders have participated in Warriors over the years, including some season MVPs.

Players will be weighed in, have their

photo taken and be required to run a timed 40-yard dash if weather permits. Participants should wear sneakers.

The flag football division includes boys and girls ages 5 to 7. There is no weight restriction. The tackle program will have divisions of age and weight from 7 to 14 years depending on the number of registrants. Cheerleading teams include participants ages 6 to 13.

Practices begin in August on weekday evenings for the fall football season. Games are played on Saturdays and Sundays at Pelham Bay Park and Lehman High School.

Registration is on a first-come first-served basis. Those who fail to register in the spring are not guaranteed a roster spot in August even if they are returning players. For more information, call 718-829-7574 or go to [www.bronxwarriorsfootball.com](http://www.bronxwarriorsfootball.com).



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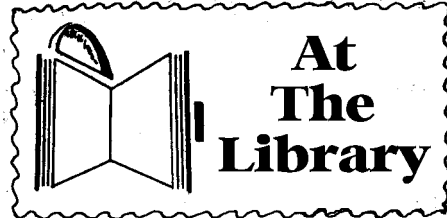
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If you have a new business, or if your old business is offering a new service, write to *The Current*, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464 by the 10th of the month.

Scheduled for the month of March at **Starving Artist Gallery and Cafe** are: Sunday, March 1, 3 p.m.: Cellar, including classics to classic rock with cello and guitar by Elizabeth Glushko and Peter Tascio; Friday, March 6, 8 p.m.: Kagero, Japanese gypsy rock, Saturday, March 7, 8 p.m.: Gillen & Turk (Fred Gillen Jr. and Matt Turk), singer-songwriters; Sunday, March 8, 3 p.m.: Kat Spina, blues / jazz / acoustic; Friday, March 13, 8 p.m.: NYC Blues Trio, rockabilly / blues / country; Saturday, March 14, 8 p.m.: Nicola, "Wickedly awesome... Nicola delivers from the very first note!"; Sunday, March 15, 3 p.m.: Seth Okrend, blues / classic rock; Friday, March 20, 8 p.m.: Deuces Child, Gigi and Lou, acoustic / folk / country; Saturday, March 21, 8 p.m.: Allen Chapman, rock / alternative / jam band; Sunday, March 22, 3 p.m.: Theresa Sareo, "sweetheart of the Starving Artist," with Ethan Hartshorn on percussion / ukulele / guitar; Friday, March 27, 8 p.m.: "Take the Stage" Open Mike Night for songwriters / comics / poets / actors; Saturday, March 28, 8 p.m.: October Road, Barbara Blasucci and Charlie Spina; Sunday, March 29, 4:30 p.m.: Lou Volpe's Starving Artist Jazztet.

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### Special Event

Come join us on St. Patrick's Day, Tuesday, March 17, to watch the parade on a giant television screen in our community room.

### Adult Programs

**Basic Computer Instruction:** Tuesday mornings at 10:30 a.m. Given in English, Spanish and Albanian.

**Book Group:** People are invited to join our book discussion group. The book for March will be "Girlbomb" by Janice Erlbaum. Wednesday, March 25, at 3:30 p.m.

**"Wii" Bowling:** For adults and seniors, March 6 and 20, 1 p.m.

### Children's Activities

**Toddler Program:** Thursdays, March 5, 12, 19 and 26 at 10:30 a.m. Pre-registration required. Ages 18 to 36 months.

**Arts and Crafts for St. Patrick's Day:** Tuesday, March 10, at 3:30 p.m. Ages 5 to 11.

**Baby Story Program:** Thursday, March 12, at 1 p.m. Moms and babies are invited to join us for stories, songs and rhymes.

**"Wii" for Kids:** Wednesday, March 18 at 3:30 p.m.

**Picture Book Program:** Every Thursday at 3:30 p.m.

### Young Adult Activities

**Yu-Gi-Oh:** Every Wednesday from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

**Teen Time:** Games every Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

We are located at 320 City Island Avenue at Bay Street. For information about any of the programs above, call the City Island branch at 718-885-1703.

## Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum Events

Celebrate women's month with Bartow-Pell Mansion as it continues its annual winter lecture series highlighting strong female figures who left their mark on American history. Each lecture will be followed by light refreshments. The fee for each lecture is \$23 per person or \$60 for all three dates; the fee for members is \$45 for all three dates. These Speakers in the Humanities events, are made possible through the support of the New York Council for the Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Lectures are free, charge is for refreshments. Please call to register (718) 885-1461 or [info@bpmm.org](mailto:info@bpmm.org).

On Thursday, March 5, at 1 p.m., Nadema Agard, director of Red Earth Studio, will present "Pocahontas: An Algonquin Icon." This lecture explores the legendary figure from an Algonquin traditional world view, a Western historical context and the contemporary perspective of Algonquin women of the greater Northeast, using literary references, images, video clips and music. Pocahontas will be presented in the context of her cultural and spiritual beliefs as a child born to be a special medicine person and chosen for a great destiny. Her post-European-contact history will show her to have been a businesswoman, landowner, Christian convert and diplomat in contrast to the popular American cultural stereotype that has evolved. Her image and historical legacy will be explored in the lives and work of Algonquin women today.

The lecture series is completed on Thursday, March 12, at 1 p.m. with Linda Russell, a balladeer/musical historian who will present "Remember the Ladies: A History of American Women in Song." Ms. Russell will share a musical survey of the history of women in America. By looking at the popular songs of the past—the ballads, love songs, suffrage anthems, work songs and dance tunes—we can trace the perceptions and realities of women's lives. The music of the day shows the role of

women in 18th- and 19th-century American society. Accompanying herself on mountain and hammered dulcimers, pennywhistle, guitar and limberjack, Linda Russell explores the images in the songs, interspersing the music with lively commentary that includes excerpts from diaries and letters in which the women tell their stories in their own words.

At the end of the month, spark your artistic talent as you partake in a hands-on workshop. On Saturday, March 21, from 12 noon to 3:30 p.m., you can learn how to make Ukrainian Easter Eggs as the site will be holding a Pysanky Workshop. If you have ever been fascinated by the complex craftsmanship of the decorated Ukrainian egg, then this is the workshop for you! In the setting of Bartow-Pell's L'Orangerie, you will learn the beginning steps of making your own Ukrainian Easter Egg, which could be a new family heirloom! The participants will be working with very hot wax and permanent dyes, so you are advised to wear appropriate clothing. It is a long workshop, so bring lunch, as only light snacks will be provided.

The fee for the workshop is \$15 per person; members \$10. Appropriate for 16-year-olds and older. Registration is required as space is very limited. Call 718-885-1461 or [info@bpmm.org](mailto:info@bpmm.org).

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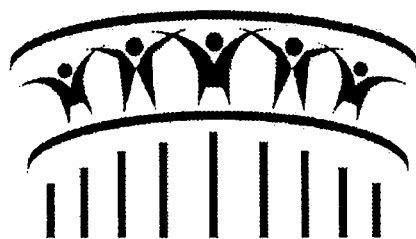
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# NEW YORK BOAT SHOW 2009

By BILL CLANCY



Photo by GREG CLANCY

The tireless *Island Current* reporter Bill Clancy at the New York Boat Show of 2009 (or was it 2008?).

The "big shew" this year, the 104th edition, was held from Dec. 13 to 21, 2008. Thus, for the cognoscente out there, making '08 the year with the most boat shows ever. Possibly also to force some City Islanders, for better or worse, to make two trips downtown in one year instead of their usual one. Overall comments that we heard at the Javits Center that afternoon were quite negative. A week before Christmas everyone is shopping, it was said, and everyone is working, unlike the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, when many folks are off, college-age folks in particular. People are looking to get through Christmas and are not even thinking about summer and boats.

The show was advertised as a Christmas shopper's paradise, but that concept did not become reality for anyone we talked to. This attitude was visibly apparent by the paucity of spectators. Having been there many times with a big crowd, my crew always enjoys the spectacle when you do not have to wait on any lines. This was different, however. We were looking for the crowd. A New York trait is to be very suspicious of any advertised event that nobody seems to have heard about. After an hour or so, we started to wonder if the subways had gone on strike, or worse. It was thought-provoking, so much so that one of the crew, nicknamed Batman, had to leave us early in case he was needed. Nevertheless, we girded up our optimism, cloaked ourselves in the hope of our new President and waded into the annual adventure that we love, the New York Boat Show.

Taking a new tack, for a change, we looked at the program before going in to the exhibits. We never get to see any of the live demonstrations, so we decided to sample them first. We headed toward the "Onrust Historic Rebuilding Expo." As luck would have it, this was the most interesting exhibit of the evening. Permit me a little background. The *Onrust* was the first boat built in Manhattan. It was a replacement craft for the *Tijger* of Adrien Block, who in 1613 had followed Henry Hudson's 1609 trip, the original exploration of New York Harbor. Due to a fire on the *Tijger* in late 1613, Block's men built primitive shelters on lower

Manhattan Island.

Over the winter and spring, with the assistance of some Native Americans, the Dutch settlers built the *Onrust*, a 42-foot *jacht*, from the verb *jagen*, which translates as "sailing fast." Gerald de Weerd, director of the Maritime Museum of Terschelling and former director of the National Institute of Ship Archaeology of the Netherlands, is in charge of the re-creation project of the *Onrust*, in conjunction with the New York Quadricentennial Celebration of Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage and of this exhibit at the Javits.

On the floor in front of us was the partially framed hull of a 12-foot boat tender typical of that used by a Dutch *jacht* of the early 17th century. We were impressed by the heaviness of the timbers. A classic old-time sailmaker named Denk, who sported a little tie, was cross-stitching a hem on the perimeter of the canvas sail with long, rapid, upward strokes of his needle and palm. He was a very serious looking gentleman, reminding me of Pete Collins of Ratsey fame. There were also two woodcarvers, American volunteers, who were in charge of the carving and turning of the rigging blocks, anchor and sail winches, galleon pieces and figurehead that will be used on the *Onrust*. The leaping lion figurehead, which you will see next summer on the bow of the *Onrust*, was being carved out of a poplar log. The carver estimated 200 hours for the completed piece. It was fascinating!

We had a very nice conversation with nautical engineer, historic ship architect and master shipwright Gerald de Weerd. He told us that, in the early 1600s, the Dutch were a small population of rich, adventurous and business-minded people. There was funding for many voyages to the Near and Far East and to the New World. What was needed were faster craft and speedier construction. A concept for prefabricating, if you will, the *jachts* was devised to speed up the building process. The keel, keelson, floor timbers and bilge frames were assembled in one location. The upper frames were cut or bent in another, and the deck houses, rails, spars, booms, winches and rudder came from a third location. These ships started relatively small, 60 to 80 feet, and



Photo by VIRGINIA DANNEGGER

Mary Danegger (r.) with the boat show's water skiing squirrel.

increased in length as the 17th century progressed. They were spirit rigged with a mainsail, fore staysail and jib with a leeboard.

As an apprentice boat-builder in Nevins and Minneford myself during the late 1950s and early 1960s, I was very impressed, to say the least. We did a lot of hand work with adzes and planes, but the heavy work was done with big band saws, big table saws and a myriad of electric and pneumatic hand-held tools for drilling and sanding. Gerald was a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic representative of his country and his craft. He was also impressed when I told him of what I thought was a Nevins concept—that of building a boat upside down to take advantage of gravity when fastening and planning the hull.

His main task this year is the completion of the *Onrust* on the banks of the Mohawk River in Rotterdam Junction, New York. The launching will take place in April, so watch for its appearance in our local waters over the summer. The first event will be the Hudson River Opening Day in June. There will be a parade of boats from local marinas, boat and yacht clubs circling the Statue of Liberty and heading north to start the relay up to Albany. The *Onrust* and the *Clearwater* will take the lead. The *USS New York*, a Navy transport ship built with recycled steel from the World Trade Center will also be commissioned. It should be quite an event!

Going from the sublime to the ridiculous, we moved 50 feet away to see Twiggy, the waterskiing squirrel. She is a veteran movie star and a favorite of children of all ages. It is a very entertaining show as Twiggy is towed around a circular tank by a radio-controlled boat. She looked to be happier when she nestled in the jacket pocket of her trainer.

Still in the same area, we saw a picture of Diva Maria of WWE Smackdown fame. Maria is known for her skills in the ring, and her fans know that "with legs like that," this Diva is a must see! Ditto for Spongebob Square Pants, who only appeared on Saturday. The last thing we looked at in this demo area was the ad for the stars of Discovery Channel's Emmy Award-winning series "Deadliest Catch," Captains John and Andy Hillstrand. With a combined 52 years at sea, the brothers have an adventure series of fishing on their 113-foot craft, *Time Bandit*. The show takes place in the Bering Sea, while enduring the world's most dangerous conditions. These men were look-alikes for Islanders Chris Parker and the late Craig Sowa. The Hawkins Post duo could be Tommy McMahon Sr. and Tim Smyth.

Walking over for a libation, \$5.50 domestic, we saw the always impressive *Miss Geico*, the world's fastest offshore racing boat. This legendary boat is powered with the same turbine engines that flew missions in the first Gulf War and is capable of speeds of more than 185 m.p.h. I will never forget the day that my *Kitty Clyde* crew witnessed the shocking accident of the *Bronx Thunder*, a smaller version of *Geico*. Johnny Barron brought his launch out to pick up the pieces.

While taking our break, we heard that the *Cricket 2*, the 40-foot wooden boat owned by the recently deceased legendary Captain Frank Mundus of Montauk, would be going up for sale over the winter. Mundus has always been thought to have inspired the Captain Quint character of the "Jaws" movie. (That movie, by the way, caused late-night swimming from moored boats to the beach to be seriously reconsidered for quite a few years. Thank God it was in the good old days.) Troop 211 Eagle Scout Extraordinaire Alex Torres will be among the bidders. About 20 years ago, Alex met the crusty Mundus at this very same boat show. They discussed bang-sticks and shark-tooth necklaces.

The other interesting conversation we overheard that day, and have since read about, had to do with the America's Cup, an event that has become like a military secret since moving overseas to New Zealand and Spain in recent years. Sometime this winter, oral arguments are going to be heard in the Court of Appeals of New York State between Larry Ellison, billionaire owner of the BMW Oracle Racing team, and Ernesto Bertarelli, billionaire owner of *Alinghi* and current holder of the Cup. Mr. Bertarelli contends that the Cup holder has the right to pick the next challenger and venue. He has selected a new Spanish yacht club, Club Nautico Español de Vela, and this resulted in a 19-month legal battle.

Meanwhile, the inaugural Louis Vuitton Pacific Series took place in February in waters off Auckland, New Zealand, and *Alinghi* was beaten in four races by Emirates Team New Zealand. Vuitton had long been the financial and organizational impetus behind the challenger series but was overruled in 2007 by Bertarelli. The Vuitton series was organized by Grant Dalton, director of Emirates Team New Zealand, and Bruno Trouble, a silver-haired Frenchman, former skipper and longtime representative of Louis Vuitton's interest in the America's Cup. To cut costs and promote close racing, these matches were conducted in similar, evenly matched pairs of yachts, a sea change from the design differences that typically define Cup competition.

Rumor has it if Oracle wins in court, there is still a chance the two teams will contest the Cup later this year in multihulls: BMW Oracle's trimaran, a 27-square meter leviathan dubbed *Dogzilla*, and an *Alinghi* multihull still under construction. After all that information, I am ever reminded of why (thanks to Pat LaScala) I have good-running twin Chrysler 318s in my bilge instead of chain plates.

Back to work now, we stop to see old timer Ed Donlin of Super Ship Bottom, one-coat magic bottom paint. I have always been fascinated by this product but never got around to using it. The story goes that it is good for two seasons, three if you put a second coat near the waterline. It contains 62.5 percent cuprous oxide and goes over any dull paint without sanding. Ed was on a break but we noticed a new brochure which we will quote from, given City Islanders' thirst for and love of history. "The Phoenicians and other earlier seafarers used tar, sulfur and other nasty coatings to keep barnacles off and worms out of their wooden hulls. The early Europeans and Chinese used copper sheeting to protect their vessels. When the first Europeans visited Tahiti, the native girls traded sexual favors for nails pulled out of the underwater sheeting. Some sailors were hung, and that is why there are two meanings for the term getting nailed, one good and one bad."

We passed a table with a few brochures

Continued on page 15



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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

#### MARCH

Saturday, March 14, **St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance**, St. Mary, Star of the Sea School, Minneford Avenue and Kilroe Street.

Thursday, March 19, **Community Board 10 meets**, 7:30 p.m., Preston High School 2870 Schurz Avenue, Bronx, NY 10465.

Thursday, March 26, and Friday, March 27, **Kindergarten Registration for City Islanders only**, 9 to 2 p.m., P.S. 175, 200 City Island Avenue (see School News).

Saturday, March 28, **POTS Program**, St. Mary's School Yard, Minneford Avenue and Kilroe Street, drop-off between 4:30 and 5 p.m. Menu: baked ziti.

Saturday, March 28, **Temple Beth-El Anniversary Dinner Dance**, Lido Restaurant.

Tuesday, March 31, **City Island Civic Association meets**, 7:30 p.m., Community Center, 190 Fordham Street.

#### Grace Episcopal Church

Grace Church celebrates Holy Communion, the Eucharist, every Sunday at 10 a.m., and you are warmly welcomed to join us. Church school is offered approximately three times a month, beginning at 10 a.m. (see specific dates, below). The Rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent (Confession) is especially recommended during Lent and may be scheduled by contacting Mother Patty Alexander at 718-885-1080 or [RevPPA@aol.com](mailto:RevPPA@aol.com).

Here is an overview of what's happening at Grace Church during March:

Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m.: Men's Ministry Breakfast. All men are invited to participate. For further information or to RSVP, please call Joe Nixon at 718-885-1492.

Sunday, March 8, 10 a.m. Children's Church School. All school-age children are welcomed!

Sunday, March 15, 10 a.m.: Children's Church School.

Thursday, March 19, 9 a.m.: Memorial Service on Hart Island/Potter's Field. Please contact Mother Patty Alexander by Monday, March 9, if you would like to take part.

Sunday, March 22, 10 a.m.: Children's Church School.

Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Grace Church 160th Anniversary History Project Open House. All Island residents who have been connected with Grace in any way are invited to drop by the Parish Hall today with stories and photos to be included in a book in honor of our 160th Anniversary. (Photos will be scanned on-site and returned immediately.) Come, sit and have a cup of coffee and share your reminiscences! For more information, please contact Evyonne Baker in the Grace Parish Office or at [neuvearts@yahoo.com](mailto:neuvearts@yahoo.com).

Rev. Patricia Alexander

#### Boy Scout Troop 211

Troop 211 began 2009 in action, with four events in five weeks. At the Bronx Merit Badge Fair in early January, a handful of Troop 211 scouts earned merit badges, including Citizenship in the Nation and Personal Management. At the end of January, scouts competed in the Klondike sled competition in Alpine, New Jersey, testing their skills in camping and outdoor activities while running miles against other troops.

In February, Troop 211 was proud to be

out in uniform marking the anniversary of scouting during Scout Sunday at St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church. Finally, 211 scouts were treated to CMS stunts, motocross and loud car-crushing action at the Monster Truck Jam on Long Island.

This has been a great start to what should be a busy year for City Island's Boy Scout troop. Keep an eye out for senior scouts as they begin service projects to earn the highest ranks in scouting. Troop 211 appreciates any support the community can muster to help these projects along.

The flower sale will take place Easter week at Trinity Church on Bay Street. See you all there and thanks in advance. For more information about Troop 211, please e-mail [Troop211ideas@yahoo.com](mailto:Troop211ideas@yahoo.com).

Scoutmaster Waldo Persteins

#### Trinity United Methodist Church

Our worship service and Sunday school begin at 10 a.m. Bring your children for Sunday school to further their knowledge of the teachings of Jesus Christ. We often have a coffee hour after the service. Please come and join us for worship and fellowship.

The Budget Shop will be open March 3, 7, 17, 21 and 31, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please call Jay Howard (718-885-2192) to volunteer for scheduling. A plea to all City Islanders: we need a volunteer to lead the Budget Shop behind the scenes. You do not need to be a member of Trinity. The Budget Shop is our main fund-raiser, and we really need help. Please call Myra Martin at 718-885-1049 or Ellie Hebard at 718-518-7241 to review the responsibilities of the behind-the-scenes leader. A working crew has already been established but we need a leader.

A 2009 Lenten Group Bible Study will meet for five Sunday sessions in our Fellowship Hall from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (sharp), beginning on Sunday, March 1, through the following Sundays of Lent up to and including March 29.

This group will study the New Testament Second Letter to the Corinthians, chapters 1 through 7. The theme is "Paul, Apostle for Open Hearts." A subject-by-subject and verse-by-verse study of the text, with discussions and teachings, will focus on the subjects presented by the text.

George Cavalieri, Trinity's Lay Leader/Speaker, will be moderator. No registration is required and all materials are provided. Everyone is welcome. Come and receive a Lenten blessing in preparation for the Easter celebration of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life. For further information, if needed, call Reverend Sue at 718-885-1218.

Easter Sunday Sunrise Service. An informal ecumenical gathering for the annual outdoor Easter Resurrection celebration will meet April 12 at 6:30 A.M. inside Pelham Cemetery, beneath the "big tree" facing east.

This celebration will consist of prayer, praise and singing, with scripture readings by members of the community and a meditation, entitled "Resurrection, A Living



## REGULAR MEETINGS

### Weekly Twelve-Step Meetings on City Island

#### Narcotics Anonymous:

Sundays at 2 p.m., St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church, City Island Avenue near the Bridge.

Thursdays at 8 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church hall, 113 Bay Street.

#### Alcoholics Anonymous:

Mondays at 8 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church hall.

Tuesdays at 8 p.m., St. Mary Star of the Sea Church.

Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., Grace Episcopal Church hall, 116 City Island Avenue (at Pilot Street).

Hope," by George Cavalieri. If the weather is severely inclement, the meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall at 113 Bay Street.

Ellen Hebard

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

On March 6, the first Friday of the month, we will hold our monthly Holy Hour with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 4 to 5 p.m. All are welcome to attend this special period of prayer.

The Lenten devotion of Stations of the Cross will be held each Friday evening during Lent at 7 p.m.

Our gala St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance will take place on Saturday evening, March 14, in St. Mary, Star of the Sea School. The band is called "Good Clean Fun," and the night promises to be filled with just that. For more information and to check for available reservations, please call Margaret Knapp at 718-885-1048.

All are welcome to join us at our monthly Hospitality Hour on Sunday, March 8. It will be held in the rectory after the 10 a.m. Mass.

On Saturday, March 28, our children, mostly second-graders, will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time. The ceremony will take place in our church at 11 a.m.

On Tuesday, March 31, the eighth-graders from our school and parish who are preparing to receive the sacrament of confirmation will participate in a retreat day at the Marian Shrine in Stony Point, New York. This day is part of the immediate preparation for the sacrament, which will be administered on Tuesday, April 28.

The March meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday, March 30, at 7 p.m. in the rectory.

Sr. Bernadette, osu

## City Island Republicans

We hope everyone is staying warm during this long winter. We do have some news.

First, we are happy to report that our party is returning to its roots. We feel that the best way to create jobs is to reduce the corporate tax rate which is around 30 percent, one of the highest in the world. By reducing taxes, businesses would therefore have more money to spend on growing their business and would need to hire more people.

We would like to wish the Borough President well on his new endeavor. There will be a special election, most likely in April, to elect a successor. Upon Mr. Carrión's official resignation, the mayor has 45 days to call a special election. A special election is often held when an office becomes vacant in the middle of a term. Unlike some states, there is no primary for a special election. Any special election for a New York City public office is conducted in a non-partisan manner, where party affiliation is prohibited from being listed next to the candidates' names. Each candidate creates his or her own party line. In such an election, there are often many candidates since the playing field is leveled. Any registered voter is allowed to vote in a special election. A date has not officially been set as of the time the *Island Current* went to press.

The last special election on City Island was when Guy Vellella (R) was elected to succeed the late State Senator John D. Calandra (R) in April of 1986.

Our next meeting will be noted in the April issue of the *Island Current*. Stay tuned!

Fred Ramftl, Jr., President



## Healthy Senior Exercise Program

We are happy to announce that Islander Tracy Tomsen will be teaching Yoga Stretch on Thursdays at 10 a.m. Tracy is a certified yoga stretch instructor and currently teaches at the New Rochelle Y. We are grateful to Tracy for volunteering her time for City Islanders. Our schedule has changed as follows. Monday: Sittercise; Tuesday: Cardio Fitness; Wednesday: Orchard Beach Walk; Thursday: Yoga Stretch, and Friday: Arthritis Exercise (free). With the exception of the beach walk, all classes are at Grace Church Hall at 10 a.m. Classes are \$2 and anyone over 50 is welcome to join. For information or for transportation to the programs, please call Patty at 914-882-9578.

Pat Grondahl

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

**Open 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 at 190 Fordham Street. All members are encouraged to attend. For up-to-date information visit [www.cityislandcommunitycenter.com](http://www.cityislandcommunitycenter.com).

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**City Island Physical Therapy:** Licensed physical therapist with private office space. For an appointment call Janine Mantzaris at 917-577-1752.

**NEW CLASSES**

**Art Classes with Laury: Story and Picture:** Six classes for grades K through 2. Mondays 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. on Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9, 23, March 2, 9. Limited to eight students. \$50 fee. A second series of classes will continue on March 16, 23, 30, April 6, 20, 27 (\$50). **Build a Beast Workshop:** Nine classes for grades 4 through 8 on Tuesdays from 3:30 to 5 p.m. on Feb. 3, 10, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7, 21 (28-make-up). Limited to six students. \$120 fee. **Portfolio Prep:** Nine classes for grades 5 through 8. Tuesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 3, 10, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7, 21, (28-make-up). Limited to six students. \$100 fee. **Storytime Art:** Six classes for preschoolers with an adult on Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m. on Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12, 26, March 5. Limited to eight students. \$50 fee. New series will continue March 12, 19, 26, April 2, 23, 30. **Experimenting with Materials:** Nine classes for grades 3 and 4 on Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:45 p.m. on Jan. 22, 29, Feb. 5, 12, 26, March 5, 12, 19, 26. Limited to eight students. \$80 fee. Call Laury Hopkins at 718-885-3202 to sign up or for more information. Leave a message!

**Anyone interested in losing weight?** If you would like to join a weekly weight-loss group, one will be starting soon at the Community Center, tentatively scheduled for Thursday evenings. Call Deana Weyhrauch at 917-418-1377.

**Bosu Balance Training:** Every Tuesday and Thursday at 9 a.m. for an hour. \$15 per class. One-on-one personal training is also available. Call Janet at 646-544-4292 for more information or to make your reservation!

**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 after school. Call Deirdre at 201-679-1450 or visit [\[mara.com\]\(http://mara.com\).](http://www.deirdreo-</a></p>
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**Tae Kwon Do:** Traditional classes to benefit you physically, mentally and spiritually. Some benefits include improved cardiovascular health, better focus and concentration, increased flexibility and lean body mass. Children will learn courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit. Tuesdays 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 11 a.m. \$10 per class, twice weekly. Call 718-885-3702.

**Sally's Playground** Ages birth to 5 years. Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. \$7 per child, \$4 for siblings. Buy a five-visit card and get one visit free. Call Sally at 718-885-0349 for more information.

**Drama Club** Thursdays 7 to 8 p.m. \$1 dues per week. Ages 8 through 14. Starts Jan. 15. Community Center membership is required for these classes. Call Laury Hopkins at 718-885-3202 to sign up or for more information. Leave a message!

**Youth Center:** Saturday evenings 7:30 to 10 p.m. Please call Jay Howard at 718-885-2192 or Deana Weyhrauch at 917-418-1377 for more information. We are looking for volunteers to staff the nights. If you are interested in helping out, PLEASE CALL!

**ADULT PROGRAM**

**Salsa Dance:** Dance your stress away to the basic beats of salsa. No partner necessary. \$50 per month or \$15 per class. Friday nights, 7 to 8:30 p.m. Call Nilsa at 917-838-6501.

**Belly Dancing: Shimmy by the Sea.** Theresa Mahon (a.k.a. Salacia) teaches the oldest documented dance in the history of mankind—Egyptian belly dancing. It is a low-impact way to get in shape and tone your body while having lots of fun. Terry has been a professional belly dancer for 23 years and a teacher of the art for 15 years. Classes are held every Monday evening at 7:30 pm. The fee for each one-hour class is \$15. Call 845-358-0260.

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

**Aerobics with Mary:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday: Half-hour low impact at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 9 to 10 a.m. Call Mary Immediato at 718-885-0793. New class added: Saturday, 9 a.m.

**Yoga:** A beginner to intermediate class that includes Hatha and Namaste yoga with some Saroopa (restorative yoga). Also tai-chi, which will help balance immune system and reduce pain. Please contact Marc Kaplan for inquiries at [marc@ohm-chi.com](mailto:marc@ohm-chi.com) or call 718-885-2445.

**FAMILY PROGRAM & MIXED AGE GROUPS**

**Vilma's Music Together:** Music and movement for children ages birth through 5 and adults that love them! Saturdays 10 to 10:45 a.m. For more information, call 718-882-2223, visit [www.funmusictogether.com](http://www.funmusictogether.com) or e-mail [info@vilmasmusictogether.com](mailto:info@vilmasmusictogether.com).

**Chess Club:** Monday evenings from 7 to 11 p.m. For ages 13 and up. No need to register, just show up! Call Bill at 718-541-3995 for more information.

Amy Gottlieb

**Sons of the American Legion Squadron #156**

We would like to report that the Superbowl Party was a success. A good time was had by all.

The corned beef and cabbage dinner at the post will be held on Sunday, March 15. We were told that there will be enough food for everyone this year. Swing by the Post for times and seatings.

Vice Commanders for membership, Fred Ramftl and Scott Murphy, would like to remind everyone that 2009 dues are overdue. Dues are \$30 and can be mailed or dropped off to the Post.

Past Commander Peter Booth reported that on Friday, March 27, the State Commander of the Sons of the American Legion will be visiting the Post. There will be a reception at the Turner Club later that evening.

We wish everyone a happy St. Patrick's Day!

Fred Ramftl, Jr.

**Legion News**

The Ides of March usually herald the end of winter and the advent of spring, March 20. I think everyone will welcome daylight savings time on Sunday, March 8. This winter has taken a severe toll on many Island families, with sickness and in some cases the demise of a loved one.

Within the past month, members Vinny Hecker and Jack Flynn passed on. Jack was a longtime resident of City Island and a member of the 8th Army Air Corps in World War II. He was shot down and spent part of the war as a guest of the German government. Vinny was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps and was imbued with a very patriotic fervor. An avid reader, he was very knowledgeable in world history. Masses for both were well attended, with Vinny's memorial Mass standing room only. Both were revered among their peers. An associate member, Randy Peterson, also met his untimely demise in February. A longtime resident and father of four, Randy was a dock builder by trade. A number of other Islanders too have been called by their maker.

A Post Everlasting Service will be held as part of the regular meeting on Monday, March 2. Those to whom we will be paying homage are Louis Probst, Thomas Gallagher, Earl Rickard Jr., Randy Peterson, Vincent Hecker Jr., John M. Flynn, James Lake, James Schollhamer, Less Miller, Mike Sarlo and Richard Bach.

The family of Earl Rickard has donated to the Post the American flag that accompanied Earl to his final resting place. The flag will be flown from the flagpole at the bridge until it is deemed no longer serviceable, at which time it will be disposed of properly.

Comrade Shipp informed me that he and

Joe Hauser, an associate member, replaced all damaged flag brackets along City Island Avenue. Joe, incidentally, is doing the plumbing work associated with the major renovations at the Post.

The mid-winter conference held in Albany was attended by Comrades William Clancy, Ed Shipp, Joe Goonan and Doug Mallen. Ed attended the compliance meetings; Bill Clancy and Joe Goonan attended Veterans' Affairs and the legislative agenda. Doug Mallen was the official photographer. Commander Dave Carman anticipated scintillating reports and lots of photographs.

All of the above have again packed their bags and are off to Washington D.C. for Hill Day, a legislative conference of great importance.

Both Bill and Joe, stressed out after the Albany conference, embarked on vacations, Joe and spouse to Aruba, where they unwound on the beach. Bill met his son and daughter-in-law in Switzerland. An expert in winter sports, Bill joined the U.S. bobsled team for a few runs.

I've been asked again why no newsletter. I'm not affiliated with the staff of that publication, but Comrade Treat informed me that since Jack Katz retired, it has been hard to fill his shoes. Mike has been in contact with Val Shibley, who has promised to become more active as a writer.

Remember those on sick call, associate member Bill McDaniel and Buddy Pontecorvo.

The annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner will be on Sunday, March 15. There will be two seatings for this festive occasion. Last year some celebrants found the corned beef in short supply. Blamed were robust appetites and a shortage of beef. This year the corned beef will be purchased preshrunk.

Those of you who might have watched "Sahara," a World War II movie, may have recognized Joe Strongoni, who played the part of a German sergeant. Humphrey Bogart was the star of the show. Joe, if you didn't already know it, landed on Omaha Beach during WWII and won the Silver Star, Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He also was awarded a New York State medal, but he always said that his most coveted decoration is the good conduct medal.

Meetings for the month of March will be March 2 and 16 for regular meetings, March 9 for an executive board meeting.

I happened to meet Keith Manfredonia at Dave Carman's on Senior Citizens' Day. Keith told me that Keith Jr. just enlisted in the Coast Guard following his graduation from high school. Mike Treat is ready to recruit him for the Legion. Thanks to Mike, our Post can hold its head high. Since the WWII veterans are passing away at a rate of about 1,000 veterans every day, the ranks are dwindling.

Until next month, at ease.

Russ Schaller, Sgt. Emeritus

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### World War II: A Modern Depiction

The year 2008 brought forth four films that each consider an aspect of World War II. **The Boy in the Striped Pajamas** is an original film tackling a topic that has not been the primary focus of any holocaust movie that I can recall. It is the story of a Nazi official (David Thewlis) who moves his family to "the country," where they will live on "a farm." His wife (Vera Farmiga) puts up with the move, but as time goes on her conscience starts to trouble her. The "farm" in question is in reality a concentration camp, and this official is its commandant. The story is largely told through the eyes of their son, Bruno (Asa Butterfield), an adorable and imaginative 8-year-old who is upset that he has had to leave his Berlin friends. Because his parents are evasive when he questions them about why the farmers are wearing striped pajamas, Bruno goes on his own secretive investigation. He befriends Shmuel (Jack Scanlon), a Jewish boy he meets by the barbed-wire fence. He visits often, and in a quest to help Shmuel, Bruno places himself in great jeopardy. These two innocent boys are unaware of the truth of the situation, and the ending is the most haunting of any film I have ever seen.

On a more optimistic note, **Defiance** is the true story of the Jews of Belarus who hid in the forest during World War II, where more than 1,200 people survived the Nazi persecution. The group is led by the Bielski brothers. Tuva (Daniel Craig) wants to save as many people as possible and serves as the voice of calm in chaos. Zus (Liev Schreiber) is the angry one with a hair-trigger temper who wants to kill Nazis. Asael (Jamie Bell) is the youngest, trying to be helpful and to survive. How the group sets up a successful and sustaining village in the wilderness is quite amazing. Self-proclaimed "intellectuals" such as Shimon Haretz (Allan Corduner) and Isaac Malbin (Mark Feuerstein) eventually learn ways to contribute, along with the skilled workers in the community. There is a fair amount of violence, but the ethical considerations and challenges of self-government are equally interesting. The cold winters were as great a challenge as eluding the Nazis and making a tenuous peace with the Soviet forces. This film was directed by Edward Zwick, whose body of work I featured in my column last summer.

The term **Valkyrie** refers to Hitler's plans to mobilize the German home army. In the film of the same name, Hollywood director Bryan Singer shows how Claus von Stauffenberg (Tom Cruise), a count and colonel, wants to use this plan to assassinate Adolf Hitler (David Bamber). Although he lost one eye, an entire hand and several fingers, Stauffenberg is relentless in his drive to realize his plans. Among the officers involved in the assassination plot are Major General Henning von Tresckow (Kenneth Branagh), General Friedrich Olbricht (Bill Nighy), General Friedrich Fromm (Tom Wilkinson), General Ludwig Beck (Terence Stamp) and General Erich Fellgiebel (Eddie Izzard). History has already told us that the conspiracy failed, but this is still a suspenseful tale in the telling. The excellent cast is a good deal better than its star, Mr. Cruise, who is unable to give us any real insight into his character's motivation.

Although **The Reader** only touches on World War II, it is the best film of the lot. Kate Winslet is extraordinary as Hanna Schmitz, a woman in her mid-30s who forms a romantic attachment to a 15-year-

old boy, Michael (David Kross). Their sexual connection is very powerful, as are the scenes in which he reads to her. One day he arrives at her apartment to find that she has moved away without a word. Eight years later, he is in law school, where he has been selected by his professor to be among a chosen few to attend a real-life trial of Nazi prison guards. He encounters Hanna in the courtroom, an event that changes both his life and hers. The secrets that are revealed are more surprising than one might imagine. Kate Winslet has been nominated for and has won many awards for this performance, which is absolutely stunning. Much of the film is told as flashbacks of the adult Michael (Ralph Fiennes). What he does for Hanna is a supreme kindness. The ethical dilemmas, the simplicity and yet complexity of both Hanna and Michael keep the viewer thinking about the film long after leaving the theater. To me, that is one of the top criteria for excellence in filmmaking.

And until next time, happy viewing. . .

**Molly Schroeder, Ph.D.**  
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### Public School 175

Although a short month, February has been quite busy. Students in Grades 3 through 8 have been working diligently with their teachers to prepare for their standardized math tests that will be given in March.

Our Sports & Arts after-school program has been in full swing, with students participating in cooking, athletic activities, bookmaking, visual arts and homework help. In addition, over the mid-winter break, small groups of students went roller skating in Seaford, Long Island, and bowling; they attended the "All Access Tour" at Madison Square Garden, where they visited the N.Y. Knicks locker room, and went into Manhattan to visit Ripley's Believe it or Not and the *Intrepid*.

Thanks to a grant from Councilman James Vacca, we are able to provide an after-school arts program for students in Grades 6 through 8. Students are working with teaching artists from the Bronx Arts Ensemble on drama, chorus and photography (which is being taught by City Island's own Ron Turner).

Fifth-graders have been busy working with teaching artists from the Bronx Arts Ensemble and their classroom teachers on their May performance of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory." After seeing the rehearsals, we can tell that this is going to be a marvelous production! A portion of the grant from Councilman Vacca is also being used to subsidize this performance. In April, as an extension activity, the students and teachers are going to see "Wicked" on Broadway and will meet with one of the actors after the show to learn more about what goes into a professional production.

The P.S. 175 tradition of the sixth grade trip to Camp Greenkill will continue this

year in April. We are most fortunate that Mr. Rauh has promised to accompany our students for the 24th consecutive year!

Seventh-graders are gearing up for two learning-filled trips that will take place in the coming months. In March they will go to Philadelphia and in May to Boston. Both trips tie in with what the students have been learning in social studies.

Our eighth-grade students and parents have been meeting with Ms. Crawford and Ms. Gisante to plan for the momentous June event—graduation! This month they held the annual Valentine's Day Sale fundraiser, which provided an opportunity for schoolmates to purchase Valentine's Day gifts for their family members. The fundraiser was a huge success! This year's senior trip will be an overnight visit to Washington, D.C.

Please keep in mind these important dates. Parent-teacher conferences will take place on Thursday, March 19, from 1 to 3 p.m. and from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The Book Fair and Science Fair display will take place on this day as well. Kindergarten registration for City Island residents only will take place on March 26 and 27 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Ongoing registration will continue on Thursday mornings beginning in April from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Eighth-grade graduation will take place on Wednesday, June 24, at 9:30 a.m. The eighth-grade dance will take place that evening, from 8 to 10:30 p.m. The awards night dinner is Thursday, June 18, at 6 p.m. The kindergarten moving-up ceremony will take place on Tuesday, June 23, at 9:30 a.m. and will be followed by a family celebration in the field adjoining the schoolyard.

The Citizens-of-the-Month for February are: Aiden Sanchez and Frankie Lubelli (kindergarten), Joseph Cruz and Alexa Gjonaj (first grade), Leena Peloso and Carolina Clara (second grade), Destiny Nieves and Gianna Cambria (third grade), Alana Zayas (fourth grade), Kathleen Kramer and Emmett Shanley (fifth grade), Donatea Zefi and Julie Yang (sixth grade), Julia Texidor and Jaelyn McIntyre (seventh grade), Cray Garza and Jeanette Leonard (eighth grade).

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# The Far Side of the Bridge

A Column about  
Bronx County  
By MICHAEL SHANLEY

## The Bronx and Its Presidential Past—Famous and Infamous

After a marathon Democratic presidential primary season, followed by a closely contested and enthusiastic presidential race and an historic presidential election and inauguration, many people are experiencing a political hangover. To my knowledge, there is only one sure cure for a hangover: the hair of the dog. For this reason, I have decided to examine presidential history in the Bronx.

Two American presidents lived in the Bronx during their youth, both in the Riverdale neighborhood in the west part of our borough. In fact, these two presidential homes are the closest in proximity than any two presidential homes anywhere in the entire country, separated by only a few hundred yards.

In the summers of 1870 and 1871, the family of Theodore Roosevelt rented a home in the Bronx with views of the Hudson River and the Palisades. This home still stands at 254th Street just west of Independence Avenue. Today it is part of Wave Hill, a 28-acre public garden and cultural center.

The future president was 12 and 13 years old during his summers in the Bronx, and his time here significantly deepened his love of nature and appreciation of the outdoors. It was this passion that would later prompt him to dedicate himself to the preservation of millions of acres of American parkland, including tracts of Yosemite, Grand Canyon and Crater Lake National Park.

More importantly, for the Bronx, he and a group of hunting buddies formed the New York Zoological Society in 1895 to protect wild species. Not only did his efforts help

save the American bison, but his "society" became the world-famous Bronx Zoo, now part of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

During his presidency, Theodore Roosevelt enacted legislation protecting the Palisades from development, forever preserving that magnificent view that he came to love during his summers in the Bronx. This stunning view is the focal point of the Wave Hill estate.

In September 1927, millionaire businessman Joseph Kennedy moved his family from the Boston suburb of Brookline, Massachusetts, to the west Bronx. With his business ventures concentrated in New York and Hollywood, Joe Kennedy felt that Boston no longer made sense as the Kennedy home base. He rented a 20-room mansion at 5040 Independence Avenue, directly across the street from Wave Hill. The Kennedy family spent almost three years living there. During that time, John F. Kennedy—the future President—attended the Riverdale Country School from fifth through seventh grade.

On November 5, 1960, just two days before Election Day, John F. Kennedy, then senator from Massachusetts, returned to the Bronx on the last swing of his historic presidential campaign tour. Tens of thousands of ecstatic Bronxites lined the Grand Concourse to cheer the returning candidate. JFK addressed the crowd at the intersection of the Grand Concourse and Fordham Road, often considered to be the cross roads of the Bronx.

Kennedy opened his address with these remarks: "I come to New York City by myself and ask for your support. I come to the Bronx as an old Bronx boy. I used to live in the Bronx. . . . Therefore, I come back here to this part of New York City to ask for your support in this campaign." John

F. Kennedy carried the Bronx with an overwhelming majority and was elected the 35th President of the United States.

There are also Bronx ties to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his First Lady, Eleanor. Both were frequent visitors to the Bronx, primarily because of their close friendship with Edward J. Flynn, who was Executive Chairman of the powerful Bronx County Democratic Committee from 1922 to 1953. Eleanor Roosevelt was a beloved and familiar figure at the annual Bronx Ladies Democratic luncheon held at the fashionable Concourse Plaza Hotel. At that time, this was one of New York City's most important Democratic Party political events of the year.

In October 1940, during his campaign for re-election, President Franklin D. Roosevelt made his usual pilgrimage up to the democratic stronghold of the Bronx. The President rode in a big open coupe with his close friend Ed Flynn, while a thick crowd of well-wishers cheered the presidential motorcade all along East Tremont Avenue from the sidewalks, apartment windows, fire escapes and roof tops.

Two women viewing the procession from the rooftop of 465 East Tremont Avenue noticed a local boy, known to the community as a "bit odd," standing on an adjoining roof. As the president's car approached, the women noticed that the 18-year-old boy had a pistol. One of the women confronted the boy. He then turned and shot her and then her companion. The boy ran down the steps, sprinted for several blocks, and entered

another apartment building before fatally turning the gun on himself. Thankfully, the two women recovered, the potential assassination was hushed up, and the shootings were reported as freak attacks on two neighbors by a deranged boy.


On Nov. 1, 1950, two Bronx men carried out an assassination attempt on President Harry S. Truman. During the presidency of Harry Truman, the White House was found to have serious structural faults and was completely gutted and rebuilt, and while it was undergoing renovation, the President resided at Blair House. The presidential assassination attempt resulted in the death of one White House police officer and the death of one assassin. President Truman was not harmed.

The two gunmen were Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, and both were Puerto Rican independence activists who met each other while living in the Bronx. Torresola died in the incident, and Oscar Collazo was sentenced to death. A few days before the execution date, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment by President Truman. He received a pardon by President Jimmy Carter in 1979, was released and went back to Puerto Rico, where he died in 1994.

Another infamous name linked to a successful presidential assassination is Lee Harvey Oswald. He too had a Bronx connection. In August 1952, Oswald and his mother, Marguerite, relocated to New York City from Texas and moved in temporarily with family friends. The following month, in late September, the Oswalds rented an apartment at 825 East 179th Street, Apt 3-C, in the Bronx. Thirteen-year-old Lee was enrolled in P.S. 117, a junior high school on Morris Avenue and 176th Street. The following year, he was enrolled in P.S. 44, a high school located at 1825 Prospect Avenue, near Crotona Park.

Lee, described as a loner, was often teased by his classmates about his Texas accent and Western-style clothing and he was frequently truant from school. The Oswald family left the Bronx in 1954 and relocated to New Orleans, Louisiana. Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested for assassinating President John F. Kennedy, on Nov. 22, 1963. Two days later, while being transferred under police custody from the city to the county jail, Oswald was fatally shot by Jack Ruby, an incident that was captured live on television. In 1979, the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) concluded, based on disputed acoustic evidence, that Oswald assassinated Kennedy "probably as a result of a conspiracy."

*Note: Michael Shanley is a native Bronxite and long time resident of City Island. He is a licensed tour guide for New York City specializing in Bronx County. Comments are welcomed at BxShanley@optonline.net.*




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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.

### Joseph Ricciardi

Joseph Ricciardi, of Centre Street, passed away on Feb. 4, 2009, after a long illness. He was 75 years old. A lifelong resident of the Bronx, Mr. Ricciardi had been a resident of City Island since 1987.

He served in the United States Air Force and was employed by Chase Manhattan Bank and Yonkers Raceway. For many years he served with the Kiwanis Club and was active at Camp Sunshine in Casco, Maine, a camp for children with life-threatening illnesses.

A funeral service was held at St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church and burial took place at St. Raymond's Cemetery.

Mr. Ricciardi is survived by his wife, Arlene "Mert" Ricciardi; his sons, Louis and Joseph Jr.; their wives Sharon and Alice; and grandchildren Brian, Elisa and Christopher.

### Robert Rodstrom



Robert Rodstrom

Former Island resident Robert G. Rodstrom passed away on Dec. 30, 2008, at the age of 40 after a long illness, with his family at his side at the Summit Nursing Home.

Robert, who was born June 28, 1968, attended St. Mary, Star of the Sea School and Salesian High School. He enjoyed fishing and hunting and was a wonderful storyteller. His wit would brighten anyone's day. He parked cars at many of the City Island restaurants and made many friends there. He was a proud member of the Teamsters Local 851 and worked for Airborne Express, both in New York City and in Connecticut. He lived in Goshen, New York, before entering the nursing home.

Robert is survived by his parents, Richard Sr. and Dolores; his brother Richard Jr., and sister-in-law Michelle; his nieces Nicole and Brittany of Goshen, New York; his sister Nancy and brother-in-law Cory Fontana, and nieces Samantha and Sabrina of City Island; his sister Debra and brother-in-law Fred Provincial and nephews Michael and Frederic of Goshen.

His life will be celebrated at a memorial Mass at St. Mary, Star of the Sea in the spring and he will be interred at Pelham Cemetery.

### Sister Kristen Wenzel, osu

Sister Kristen Wenzel, a resident of



Sister Kristen Wenzel, osu

City Island for more than 30 years, entered peacefully into eternal life on Sunday, Feb. 1, 2009. Born in Washington, D.C. on March 30, 1939, she attended Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School and came to New York to attend the College of New Rochelle. In 1961 she entered the Community of Ursuline Sisters in Beacon, New York. She continued her education at the Catholic University of America where she obtained a Ph.D. in sociology. Her dissertation focused on the attitudes of New York Clergymen towards Black Africa. She went on to do postdoctoral studies at the University of California at Berkeley.

Her ministry began at the College of New Rochelle, where she was a full professor of sociology and served as Director of the Women's Studies Program. She also was the college's director of Institutional Research. She will be remembered particularly at the college as being very instrumental in introducing and developing the Social Work Program.

After 20 years at the College of New Rochelle, Sr. Kristen held several administrative positions in other universities. At Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut, she served as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Mission, and Executive Director of the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding. Later at the Graduate Center for the City University of New York, she served as Senior Administrative Associate and the Director of Doctoral Program Evaluation. Her latest position in higher education took her to Fordham University, where she was the Director of the Office of Academic Effectiveness and a co-chair of the Middle States Institutional Self-Study. She authored scores of articles in professional journals of sociology and theology that evidenced her abiding interest in women and minorities.

Sr. Kristen was an active member and integral part of St. Mary, Star of the Sea parish. After becoming ill, she left higher education and served as Administrative Assistant to the principal of St. Mary's School. She also was a concerned member of the City Island civic community, working with the Chamber of Commerce and serving as the secretary. She also was a member of the board of directors of the City Island Archi-

tectural Heritage Preservation Foundation. She served on many other professional boards, development boards and those of organizations serving the poor.

Her funeral Mass, a joyous celebration of her life, was celebrated at St. Mary, Star of the Sea on Feb. 4, 2009, and brought together Ursuline Sisters, family and many parishioners and City Island friends. Donations in memory of Sr. Kristen may be made to the Ursuline Ministry Fund at 1338 North Ave., New Rochelle, NY 10804, or to St. Mary, Star of the Sea Parish.

### Laura Sadler

Laura Sadler, a longtime Island resi-



Laura Sadler

dent, passed away after a long illness on Feb. 13, 2009. She was 89.

She was born Laura Wiedeman in New Rochelle, New York, on Dec. 12, 1919, and passed away at the Sadler family home in

the same room in which her husband, Ed, was born nearly 93 years earlier.

She married Captain Edward Sadler on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 1945, and moved to City Island, where she began a lifelong journey of volunteerism, caring and compassion.

In the 1940s she joined the Eastern Star organization and Trinity Methodist Church, where she was instrumental in creating the Budget Shop, which still operates today. Her tireless work with the Ladies' Auxiliary, Budget, Flowers and endless food tables made her an institution at Trinity.

But her greatest legacy by far is her compassion and commitment to those who were sick and lonely. Carrying food and other goodies, she would visit countless shut-ins, hospitals and nursing homes several times a week, offering a friendly smile, a hand to hold and the thought that someone cared about them. She made sure these special people got the care they deserved.

She did all of this while raising four grateful children and several dogs and keeping house for a well-fed husband.

Since she was one of a kind, she will be missed by her family, friends and the community she loved (including the canine community that knew her so well).

Predeceased by her daughter, Bonnie Lalli, who passed away in 1999, Mrs. Sadler is survived by her husband of 64 years, her son Edward and his wife, Joni, of Chestertown, Maryland; her son Richard of City Island; and her daughter, Jeanne Pezone of City Island, as well as nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Interment took place at Pelham Cemetery on City Island. Donations may be sent to Trinity United Methodist Church on City Island.



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

### Ten Things the IRS Wants You to Know About Identity Theft

1. If you receive a letter or notice from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that leads you to believe someone may have fraudulently used your Social Security number (SSN), respond immediately to the name and address or phone number printed on the IRS notice.

2. If you receive a letter from the IRS that indicates more than one tax return was filed for you, this may be a sign that your SSN was used fraudulently.

3. Another sign that you may be the target of identity theft is an IRS letter indicating you received wages from an employer unknown to you.

4. The IRS has a department that deals specifically with identity theft issues. The IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit is available if you have been in contact with the IRS about an identity theft issue and

have not achieved a resolution.

5. You can contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit by calling the Identity Theft Hotline at 800-908-4490 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. local time (Alaska and Hawaii follow Pacific Standard Time).

6. The IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit is also available if you believe your identity may be at risk of being stolen as the result of a lost or stolen purse or wallet or because of questionable activity on your credit card or your credit report.

7. The IRS never initiates communication with taxpayers about their tax account through e-mails. If you receive an e-mail or find a Web site you think is pretending to be the IRS, forward the e-mail or Web site URL to the IRS at [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov).

8. The IRS has many more resources available to help inform taxpayers about identity theft on the IRS Web site at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), where you can access information on how to report scams and bogus IRS Web sites. You may also visit the IRS Identity Theft Resource Page, which you can find by typing Identity Theft Resource Page in the search box on the [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) home page.

9. The Federal Trade Commission is also available to assist taxpayers with identity theft issues. You can reach them at 877-ID-THEFT (877-438-4338).

10. Visit [OnGuardOnline.gov](http://OnGuardOnline.gov) for protection tips from the Federal government and the technology industry.

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HH = hours; MM = minutes  
*Tide chart by Tom Smith*

MARCH 2009									
DAY	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	DAY
	HH MM	FEET	HH MM	FEET	HH MM	FEET	HH MM	FEET	
01 Sun	0119	8.10	0749	-0.28	1346	7.20	1959	-0.01	Sun 01
02 Mon	0205	7.99	0839	-0.01	1437	6.87	2048	0.32	Mon 02
03 Tue	0257	7.75	0936	0.34	1534	6.52	2144	0.71	Tue 03
04 Wed	0356	7.44	1050	0.67	1643	6.26	2252	1.04	Wed 04
05 Thu	0506	7.17	1246	0.68	1820	6.25			Thu 05
06 Fri	0041	1.09	0643	7.12	1402	0.34	1956	6.65	Fri 06
07 Sat	0216	0.66	0818	7.41	1502	-0.12	2058	7.19	Sat 07
All times are Eastern Daylight Time beginning Sunday, March 8									
08 Sun	0420	0.05	1021	7.77	1655	-0.54	2251	7.69	Sun 08
09 Mon	0515	-0.52	1114	8.04	1744	-0.86	2338	8.08	Mon 09
10 Tue	0605	-0.95	1202	8.15	1829	-1.00			Tue 10
11 Wed	0023	8.30	0652	-1.17	1247	8.09	1911	-0.95	Wed 11
12 Thu	0105	8.34	0737	-1.15	1330	7.89	1951	-0.73	Thu 12
13 Fri	0145	8.23	0820	-0.91	1412	7.57	2027	-0.37	Fri 13
14 Sat	0223	7.98	0903	-0.51	1453	7.20	2058	0.07	Sat 14
15 Sun	0302	7.66	0945	0.00	1536	6.82	2125	0.54	Sun 15
16 Mon	0342	7.31	1031	0.53	1626	6.48	2157	1.00	Mon 16
17 Tue	0429	6.96	1125	1.01	1728	6.24	2241	1.42	Tue 17
18 Wed	0534	6.68	1229	1.36	1838	6.16	2340	1.75	Wed 18
19 Thu	0658	6.56	1332	1.51	1942	6.25			Thu 19
20 Fri	0128	1.87	0804	6.62	1429	1.46	2038	6.48	Fri 20
21 Sat	0237	1.72	0859	6.78	1519	1.29	2127	6.76	Sat 21
22 Sun	0330	1.41	0946	6.97	1601	1.04	2209	7.03	Sun 22
23 Mon	0413	1.01	1026	7.14	1637	0.76	2242	7.28	Mon 23
24 Tue	0450	0.59	1056	7.28	1706	0.48	2303	7.54	Tue 24
25 Wed	0523	0.18	1118	7.41	1730	0.21	2324	7.83	Wed 25
26 Thu	0555	-0.19	1145	7.52	1758	-0.02	2355	8.12	Thu 26
27 Fri	0629	-0.45	1220	7.59	1833	-0.17			Fri 27
28 Sat	0031	8.34	0708	-0.58	1300	7.58	1912	-0.18	Sat 28
29 Sun	0112	8.43	0750	-0.54	1344	7.46	1955	-0.03	Sun 29
30 Mon	0158	8.37	0837	-0.32	1432	7.24	2043	0.25	Mon 30
31 Tue	0247	8.14	0931	0.03	1526	6.95	2136	0.63	Tue 31
APRIL 2009									
01 Wed	0342	7.78	1037	0.42	1629	6.67	2240	1.02	Wed 01
02 Thu	0447	7.38	1215	0.67	1754	6.54			Thu 02
03 Fri	0019	1.23	0614	7.09	1339	0.60	1938	6.77	Fri 03
04 Sat	0202	0.96	0805	7.18	1445	0.33	2046	7.21	Sat 04
05 Sun	0310	0.43	0913	7.46	1542	-0.01	2142	7.67	Sun 05
06 Mon	0408	-0.14	1009	7.72	1634	-0.30	2232	8.06	Mon 06
07 Tue	0500	-0.62	1100	7.88	1721	-0.49	2318	8.31	Tue 07
08 Wed	0549	-0.93	1146	7.90	1805	-0.53			Wed 08
09 Thu	0001	8.41	0634	-1.02	1229	7.81	1846	-0.41	Thu 09
10 Fri	0041	8.36	0717	-0.90	1310	7.62	1923	-0.17	Fri 10
11 Sat	0118	8.19	0757	-0.61	1349	7.37	1954	0.17	Sat 11



**THE CRIME OF THE LAST CENTURY**

We received our monthly e-mail from the East Bronx History Forum and read with interest of an upcoming event in May. A guide, Richard Sloan, will lead a tour of the Bronx to various sites of significance concerning the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. Many readers may be surprised to learn that the Bronx figured as prominently as it did in what was considered the crime of the century in 1932. Many more readers will be even more surprised to learn that City Island also figured into the unfortunate spectacle that the case was to become.

Bruno Hauptmann, the man tried, convicted and executed for the kidnapping, was a Bronx man who spent hours paddling about in canoes rented from Dixon's Boat House, now J.P.'s Restaurant. This seemingly innocuous fact gets thorny when it is considered that the man who fingered Hauptmann—a man named John Condon—also spent a lot of time on City Island. Condon, or Jafsie, as he came to be known, was a businessman with an office and other properties on the Island. It is not clear where this office was situated, however. We have placed it at three different locations: the "corner of Beach Street and King Avenue;" at 313 City Island Avenue (i.e., the old pizza shop near the corner of Fordham Street); and at a site "adjacent to Dixon's."

It is possible that Condon and Hauptmann may have come into contact on City Island at some point; some have suggested specifically that there was casual contact at a place known as Bunnie's Fry Shop. In fact, there were some contemporary reports

that put Lindbergh himself, Condon, and the kidnapper together in a mysterious garage on City Island, where ransom was exchanged. Most accounts, however, have this exchange taking place at a Bronx cemetery. Those who believe that Hauptmann was an innocent man have posited that it was through that casual contact on City Island that Condon was able to finger Hauptmann.

Another interesting City Island connection involved Condon's young secretary, Jenny Barton. Apparently, Ms. Barton had a curio shop of some sort at 313 City Island Avenue. (If true, this may help to narrow down the site of Condon's office.) Ms. Barton lived for years with a man some City Islanders referred to as Boo Barton, for his reclusive ways. Together they lived in what became the very run-down house at the end of Ditmars Street. The last time we checked, that house had undergone extensive repairs.

Finally, about half the \$50,000 ransom money that Charles Lindbergh paid out to the man he hoped would get him his son back was never recovered. Recovering it would not have been very complicated since most of it was in gold certificates that were being recalled at the time by the Roosevelt administration. Not only that, but the bills were marked. Those who make the tour this May will, no doubt, have a few things to say about where that money may still be hidden. How many would guess that it might be right here on City Island?

As always, we welcome your feedback and invite your input at [jdsstrat@msn.com](mailto:jdsstrat@msn.com). Or we can be contacted care of *The Island Current*, P.O. Box 6, Bronx NY 10464.

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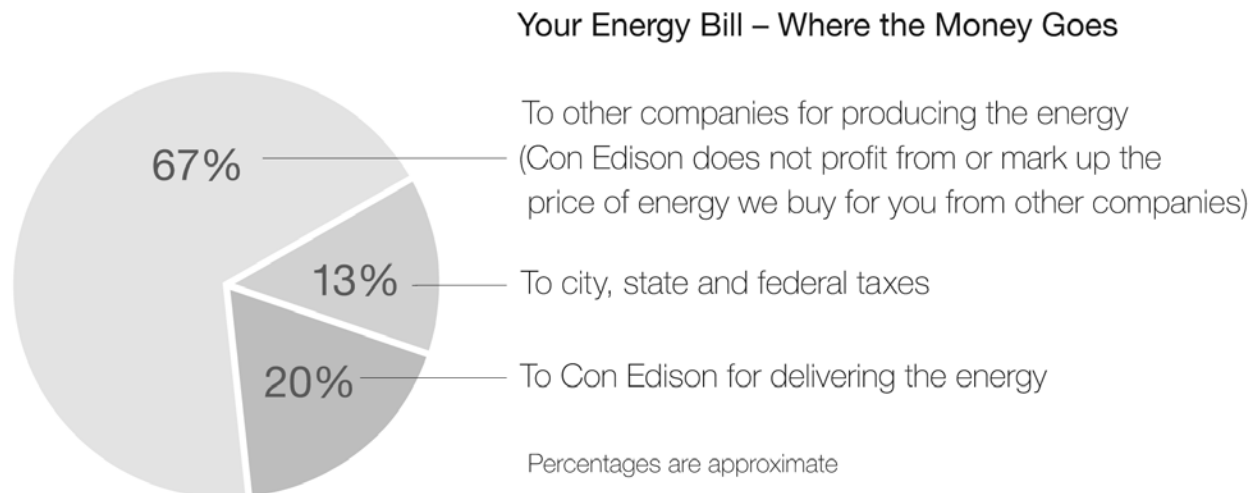
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## BOAT SHOW

Continued from page 1

from Kingsborough Community College, which were nicely done and looked interesting. What caught my eye was the Maritime Technology Program, currently the only non-military training program in the Northeast. This is a full-time, 60-credit, two-year program leading toward a captain's license. Currently graduates are employed as captains, mates, and deckhands aboard the variety of vessels plying their way around New York Harbor, or are working as marina managers, mechanics and boat salespersons. It sounded great!

A lot of the courses at the community college level seem to me to be totally obtuse. Navel contemplation and the like. Score one for KCC. One bit of trivia regarding the campus is that it has an active nautical light onsite (U.S. Coast Guard Light List #31687). It must be a beacon or range light for Sheepshead and Jamaica Bays out to the Atlantic. If students really want to learn the maritime industry, they should inquire about SUNY Maritime at Fort Schuyler. Many Islanders are graduates and doing well. Our most recent is Virginia Nye '08. The campus is located at the end of Pen-yfield Avenue in Throggs Neck, under the

Throggs Neck Bridge.

One last piece of information regarding education is the plan to have the new NYC Harbor High School, located now in Bushwick, Brooklyn, moved to Governors' Island in 2010. There have been many proposals for this beautiful island since the Coast Guard moved to Virginia some years ago, but they were all nixed by the cost of ferry service. Everyone knows the Board of Ed has an endless supply of coins of the realm from the City, State and Fed, but I don't know about this one. Someone should look into a bridge, even a moveable floating bridge the Army Corps of Engineers could build. Remember folks, Mike Clancy is coming home in six months. As Ed Shipp says, "Anything is possible when the sky is the limit." Other possibilities would be a cable car like the one to Roosevelt Island or a subway stop up from one of the tunnels passing under-water. OR maybe leave it where it is!

This article is getting long now, and I have not reported about one of the thousand boats on sale at the show. Maybe next year. This is why we love the show. It inspires so many other musings. Greg and I were the last remnants of the crew, so we headed north to check in with Katie McMahon of Dolce y Gabbana fame for a status report of our beloved City Is.

P.S. I write this article on Valentine's Day with a heavy heart, because of the recent unprecedented number of deaths and serious illnesses. Old friends and good Americans all. Jack Flynn: WW2 POW; Vinny Hecker: Vietnam era; Randy Petersen: Vietnam; Laura Sadler: Trinity Methodist Church; Lt. Bill McDaniel (at home); FDNY; Cathy Seaman: Hawkins Post Auxiliary (at home). We will miss them all. We will pray for them. God speed them to eternal rest.

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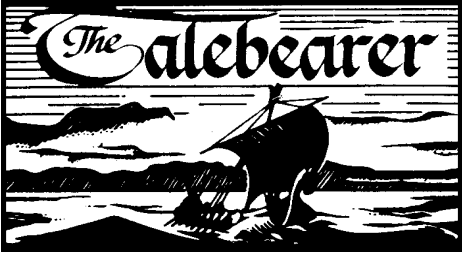
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Information for the Talebearer must be received in writing no later than the 15th of the month except July and December. Mail to The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464; include your name and telephone number.

It's a boy! Congratulations to Larry and Eileen McGonegal on the Jan. 21 birth of William (Will) Francis McGonegal. Proud grandparents are Judy and Frank DiMaio and Kathy and Jack Abele of Southold, Long Island.

It's another boy! Congratulations to Michael and Christina DiMaio on the Jan. 29 birth of Trevor Michael DiMaio. Guess who the proud (and busy) grandparents are! His other grandfather is Dr. Paul Brenner of Los Angeles.

Best wishes for a lifetime of happiness to Joe and Letty Rivera-Pena, who were married at St. Mary, Star of the Sea on Oct. 31. A reception for family and friends followed at Artie's Restaurant.

David and Margareta Silva of Carroll Street are proud to announce the birth of their son Nicholas James on Dec. 4, 2008. Nicholas weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 20 inches long; he joins his older siblings, Isabella, Anna and Anthony. Welcome to City Island, Nicholas.

Birthday wishes also go out to the Silvas' oldest child, who turns six on March 9. Happy birthday, Bella!

Happy 19th birthday to Marine Street's Christopher Butterworth, who will celebrate his big day on March 8, with love from your family.

Belated happy 18th birthday to Alanna McIntyre, with love from your godmother and family.

Surprise and happy birthday to Karen Ulmer Kratzer, who celebrated her big "40" on Jan. 29. Her parents, brother, sisters, niece and nephews drove out to share in her special day.

Good luck to James Gisante, who celebrates his 17th birthday on Feb. 27. James is headed out to California for a taping of a spin-off of the MTV show "Made." We wish him all the best.

Belated 8th birthday wishes to Hailey Nelson on Feb. 23, with love from your family.

Happy 11th birthday to Joseph Nelson on March 10 and also to his dad, Joe, on March 28, with love from your family.

Happy anniversary to Anne and Scouse McIntyre on March 28.

Happy birthday on March 31 to Pell Place's Barbara Stiene, with hugs and kisses from your family and friends.

Congratulations to three of our young City Islanders—Blake Cottam, Gregory Sexton and Kyle Zima—on their acceptance to the high schools they applied to. Blake and Gregory will be attending Xavier High School in Manhattan and Kyle will be attending Salesian High School in New Rochelle. We are all very proud of your achievements. From your loving parents.

Maria Swieciki



William Francis McGonegal with proud parents Larry and Eileen McGonegal.



Loving parents Michael and Christina DiMaio show off Trevor Michael DiMaio.



Joe and Letty Rivera-Pena at their wedding reception on Oct. 31, 2008.

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