

The Island Current

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One Dollar

City Island and the Economy

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Barber Ben of the Hollywood Barber Shop, which has just opened on City Island Avenue at Ditmars Street, gives Bob Carmody a haircut (l. to r.): Ben Mulankandov, Bob Carmody and Ben's brother Joseph, manager of the shop.

The fact that the American economy is in trouble is not news to City Island. There are nearly 20 empty storefronts and at least one business, Paul Klein's Exotiqua, is preparing to close for good.

However, there are some signs that good news may be just around the corner. Skip Giacco, president of the City Island Chamber of Commerce, is looking ahead to the not-too-distant future when the commercial future of City Island will be brighter. He is hosting an open house for all Island businesses, large and small, at the Sea Shore Restaurant on Feb. 10, and he hopes that people will come willing to share their ideas and work together to put City Island back on the economic track.

He was pleased that at least five new businesses have opened during the past few months, traditionally the worst season for Island commerce. He was quick to point out, however, that Doggie Island, Krunch Time Fitness, Calico Juno Designs, City Island Tattoos and the Hollywood Barber Shop are not aimed at an off-Island clientele, and this is, he believes, why they have a chance of succeeding where other stores have not. "Businesses should be appealing to visitors, of course, but our main customers live right here on City Island." Mr. Giacco's business, Lickety Split Ice Cream, is a seasonal one, but he sells Christmas trees in December and doesn't otherwise budget for much income during the off season.

Bob Carmody of AER Realty was delighted to report that 2009 was his most successful ever in terms of income, with over \$6 million in sales, mostly thanks to the sale of the Laurels complex on east Tier Street. However, he acknowledges that the sales and values of one- and two-family houses dipped by about 15 to 20 percent, as did residential rentals. Nevertheless, sales on City Island began to pick up last October and prices began to stabilize, showing a slight increase in value.

As to commercial real estate, he says that of the empty storefronts, "two are in buildings that are for sale, ten are used by owners for storage or will soon be opened for business, three are empty simply because the owner chooses not to rent

or sell, and two are available for rent at this time." Nevertheless, the empty storefronts, whether they are used for storage or not, give a poor impression of the business possibilities here, especially since four of them are highly visible as one drives over the bridge: the empty Italian ice shop, two stores just south of Dunkin Donuts and a large three-part commercial space next to the bakery.

Jacqueline Kyle Kall, who has been selling real estate on City Island for many years, like her mother before her, is less encouraged about the market. She says that the property values have gone down but that mortgages are harder to get, with 30 percent down payments. As to the businesses, she regrets that so many residents go off the Island to shop. Home Depot and Costco offer greater bargains than small shops can afford to offer, and lifestyles have changed. She remembers when people actually had their shoes repaired and their hats blocked ("No one even knows what that means anymore!" she told *The Current*).

Mrs. Kall believes that the best way to utilize the empty shops is to convert them to ground-floor apartments, which could offer gardens in back and be accessible to people who have difficulty climbing stairs. Such a conversion would require a zoning change, however, and there is no indication that the owners of most of these empty stores are interested in filling them.

Indeed, many residents suspect that the landlords, most of them off-Islanders, don't care if their stores are empty or not and keep them that way for tax reasons or because they don't care about the community.

The Civic Association's Quality of Life Committee conducted a survey several months ago (see *The Current's* April 2009 issue) and determined that businesses catering to Island residents would be likely to succeed, as Skip Giacco predicts. In the meantime, the group talked to a number of landlords and persuaded them to allow the display of art work and photographs in their windows to make the emptiness less bleak.

As to the restaurants, business is off by about 20 percent, Mr. Giacco estimated, but they are holding their own for the most part, hoping for a good Valentine's Day and regular customers all of the other days!

In spite of the economic downturn, real estate developers seem to have their glasses half full rather than empty. The plans for the former site of International Underwater Contractors are moving ahead, with the City Council voting to authorize the change from manufacturing to residential zoning in order to accommodate 22 two-family houses. The developer, Tony Errico, told the community last year that he would start with only three or four of the build-

ings rather than develop the entire property so that he could approach the market in a conservative fashion. Sea Breeze Estates on Marine Street has been only on paper for the past 20 years, but the developers, GBG, Inc., are moving ahead with the final permit applications so that they can begin work soon on an apartment building complex with 32 units.

Another major building project seems also to be in the works, at least in the rumor mill, which is a nursing home on Eastchester Bay. No drawings exist for this project, and the sale of the site has not been completed, but *The Current* has its ear to the ground, so stay tuned!



Photo by RICK DeWITT

Lickety Split's Christmas trees came pre-decorated with sparkling snow this year.

HEAVENLY RESTORATION



Photos by DON EMMERT AND VIRGINIA DANNEGGER

Dennis (left) and Steve Owens of the Owens Brothers Tree Service and their crew worked hard to refurbish St. Mary's in December; they power washed, acid cleaned and sealed all the bricks on the church, including the rectory and the school. They cleaned and painted the gutters, replaced brick around the rectory and did spot pointing of bricks, and then they painted the steeple and regilded the cross. The cross was too high for their truck's ladder to reach, so firefighters Dennis Ward (left) and Kevin Wacha of Ladder Company 51 came to the rescue by putting on the finishing touches.

BRIEFLY...

BLOOD DRIVE, sponsored by the Bronx Masons, will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 9, between the hours of 3:30 and 8 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, 113 Bay Street (two blocks up from second traffic light). Almost anyone between the ages of 17 and 75 weighing a minimum of 110 pounds and in good general health can be a blood donor. Photo or signature ID and Social Security number are required at the time of donation.

GRACE CHURCH PEW-TIME FOR PARENTS: Grace Episcopal Church, 116 City Island Avenue at Pilot Street, has announced "Lambs," a new program for families with young children, which began on Christmas Eve and will continue throughout 2010 at the 10 a.m. service on the first Sunday of every month. This new program adds to the church's roster of child-friendly programs of regular Sunday School, summer Vacation Bible School and Youth Sunday. Grace won a competitive First Steps diocesan grant to cover the costs of the Lambs program, which will enable the church to offer the parents of young children uninterrupted worship time. Parents are invited to drop off their young children with Miss Natalie at 9:50 a.m. in the Parish Hall. No registration is required. For more information, call the Parish Office at 718-885-1080 or Harlan Sexton at 718-885-9749.

2010 CITY ISLAND REUNION: On Aug. 21 this year, beginning at 11 a.m., there will be a HUGE City Island reunion at Ambrosini Field. Come celebrate with friends you haven't seen in decades! Listen to live music by local bands, past and present! If you would like to be among the (voluntary/unpaid) performers that day, please contact Charlie DiMaggio at charliedimaggio@att.net. Admission is \$10 per person to cover expenses (tents, bandstand, Portapotties, permits, clean-up and miscellaneous items). Kids 12 and under get in free. All proceeds will be donated to the City Island Little League, so even if you're not sure you can attend, please donate anyway. If you would like to use this event as a fund-raiser for your City Island organization by selling snacks or beverages or other items, please e-mail us as soon as possible to make arrangements. We will be accepting requests on a first-come-first-served basis. For more information or to pay in advance, please e-mail cityislandreunion@yahoo.com or visit the Facebook group *The 2010 City Island Reunion*. Hope to see you there!

THE CITY ISLAND POWER SQUADRON will offer the American Boating Course at the City Island Yacht Club beginning March 1 at 7:30 p.m. Topics include fundamentals of safe boating, navigation rules and piloting techniques. The course material cost is \$75; instruction is free. Please call Jim Duffy at 718-863-3855 (please do not call after 9 p.m.).

BENEFIT FOR FIRE VICTIMS: On Saturday, Feb. 6, at 7 p.m., Grace Episcopal Church will present an evening of music and comedy in the Grace Church Parish Hall. This will be a benefit performance for those affected by the October 2009 fire at 415 City Island Avenue, which was home to Art of Beauty, To Go Express and a number of families. The show will feature some of the same performers who helped make last summer's USO Show such a success (including MC Chris Arena, Evyonne Baker, Bob Mulroy and Karen Nani). Admission will be \$10 and refreshments will be served during intermission. Grace is located at 116 City Island Avenue, at the corner of Pilot Street (across from the Lido).

ANNUAL WOMEN'S HERSTORY MONTH will be celebrated on Sunday, March 21, at 12 noon, at the City Island Community Center, 190 Fordham Street. This year they celebrate two special events: the 30th anniversary of Congress's official declaration of the month of March as Women's History Month and the 90th anniversary of women's right to vote, our 19th amendment to the Constitution. By popular demand, the Afro-Caribbean dance and percussion ensemble Retumba, which is based on City Island, will perform again, and students of P.S. 175 will participate for the first time. Also in store are a "Healthy Pot Luck Lunch," the presentation of the third Anne Hutchinson Award and a calming meditation guided by Brahma Kumaris teacher Indra Lal. Meet old friends and make new ones! Bring business cards, networking information and samples of what you do, or just bring yourself. Women and girls on and off the Island are invited, as well as boys and men of good will. A donation of \$2—more if you can, less if you cannot—will be collected at the door. The Planning Committee so far includes Cheryl Berent, Cheryl Brinker, Olive DeWitt, Violet Smith, Sue Bellinson, Eleanor Rae and Toby Liederman. For more information, or to be part of the committee, call Cheryl at 718-885-3098 or Toby at 718-885-3423.

LECTURE SERIES AT THE BARTOW-PELL: In March the museum will present three talks, "Hired Help" (March 4 at 7 p.m.), "High Society" (March 11 at 7 p.m.), and "The High Seas: Glimpses of Life in the 19th Century" (March 18 at 7 p.m.), focusing, respectively, on servants, socialites, and pirates. Authors Carol Wallace and Richard Zacks join Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum docent and former journalist Doug Hearle to present these varied glimpses on life in the 19th century. The evening lectures in the glorious Greek Revival interior of the mansion promise to be both enlightening and entertaining. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 seniors and children 6-17. Members: \$7 adults, \$5 seniors and children. Registration requested because seating is limited; call 718-885-1461 or e-mail info@bpm.org.

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"WAIT UNTIL DARK," a theatrical thriller by Frederick Knott, will be presented by the City Island Theater Group during the last two weekends in February (Feb. 19, 20, 25, 26, and 27 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 21 at 3 p.m.). Call 718-885-3066 for reservations. See you at the theater!

WARRIORS FOOTBALL: Chief Jerry Demers invites all boys and girls ages 5 to 14 to sign up for cheerleading or flag and tackle football. Registration for the upcoming season will take place at Lehman High School on Sunday, March 7, and Sunday, March 14, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Registrants should be accompanied by a parent or guardian and should have a copy of their birth certificate. Parents should find street parking and enter the school from the side entrance by the football field. Cheerleaders can be 5 to 13 years of age. Flag Football participants may sign up if 5, 6 or 7 years old. Tackle football is divided into three divisions which include Mites (7, 8, and 9) Pee Wee (10 and 11) and Junior (12, 13 and 14). For additional information, call Jerry Demers at 718-829-7574. The cost of Flag Football is \$130 (\$150 after March 14); Tackle and Cheer \$150 (\$170 after March 14).

45 BLOTTER

Complaints reported from City Island to the 45th Precinct during October and November 2009. Unfounded complaints are not included in the list nor are complaints for crime occurring on the mainland.

- 1 – CRIMINAL MISCHIEF
- 1 – BURGLARY
- 2 – LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT
- 1 – DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED

Police report the following incidents for the period from Dec. 1, 2009, to Jan. 19, 2010.

12/15 – A business owner on City Island Avenue reported damage to a wooden sign and filed a complaint of criminal mischief. No arrest was made.

12/31 – In the early evening, a parked vehicle was struck on Reynolds Street and City Island Avenue by an unknown vehicle that fled the scene. Later, another parked vehicle was struck on Ditmars Street and City Island Avenue, also by a vehicle that fled the scene. Both parked cars sustained minor damage.

1/14 – Police are investigating the burglary of a residential apartment building on City Island Avenue at 1 pm. Unknown suspects entered two apartments without permis-

sion and removed a camera from one apartment and a laptop computer and other property from the second apartment.

1/19 – Police responded to a motor vehicle accident involving three cars on the Shore Road near Split Rock Golf Course at 9:54 p.m. Upon arrival, police tracked the driver of one car, who had fled the scene on foot. They arrested a male, 46, and charged him with leaving the scene and driving while intoxicated. One of the occupants of another car, a female, 48, was taken by ambulance to Jacobi Hospital with serious injuries. Some Island residents were at the scene of the accident.

Warning: Police from the 45th Precinct want to warn Islanders again about an ongoing rash of breaking and entering incidents occurring nearby in the Bronx. Unknown perpetrators (white males, ages 30 to 45, both with brown hair) are impersonating Water Department inspectors saying that they have come to read homeowners' meters. Once the alleged inspector gains access to the home or apartment, an accomplice sneaks in and ransacks the residence. They are warning residents, especially the elderly, not to grant access to their homes unless they are absolutely sure that the inspector is legitimate. If unsure, call Con Edison or other agency to confirm the inspection, or call the 45th Precinct at 718-822-5414 and report your doubts.



Photos by ETHEL LOTT

A car accident on Dec. 5, 2009, on the corner of Hawkins Street and City Island Avenue alarmed Islanders walking by and business owners near the scene (photos above). The accident resulted in minor injuries to some of the drivers involved. Some Islanders also witnessed another very serious three-car accident on Jan. 19, 2010, on the Shore Road near the Split Rock Golf Course clubhouse. The accident left one person with potentially fatal injuries, and she was rushed to Jacobi Hospital. The driver of another car fled on foot from the scene but was tracked down by police and arrested (see *Blotter*). Police advise drivers to slow down in bad weather and remind everyone that it is, of course, illegal and dangerous to drive while intoxicated.

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EXPRESS BUS AT RISK AGAIN

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

Last year, when the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) was trying to trim its budget, it eliminated the City Island express bus (BxM7B) from its schedule. City Council Member James Vacca and other elected officials, as well as members of the community protested, and eventually, after some budget tinkering, the bus route was saved.

It has happened again, not only for the City Island express bus but for some other Bronx local routes as well. Now, however, Jimmy Vacca is head of the Council's Transportation Committee, and he plans to mobilize an even more active protest this time around.

The MTA claims that the City Island express serves only 70 customers a day and that eliminating the service would save \$204,000 a year.

"This latest MTA proposal is nothing more than robbing Peter to pay Paul," Mr. Vacca said. "Some lines that were originally in jeopardy have been spared, but others that we assumed were safe are now in danger. We have lines that are being

rerouted to make up for the cuts, but we now have less service in the communities those lines used to serve. None of this is necessary. The Council has put forth a fully funded plan to balance the MTA's budget without impacting any existing bus or train service. I am again calling on the MTA to consider all alternative plans before resorting to cutting services at a time when cash-strapped New Yorkers can afford it least."

Mr. Vacca hopes that Island residents who use the bus regularly will mount a protest, perhaps by writing letters to the MTA (Joseph Smith, President of the MTA Bus Company, 2 Broadway, New York, NY 10004-2207) or sending an e-mail (www.mta.info/faqs.htm; press the e-mail button).

He also urges everyone who is interested in saving the bus to attend a public hearing on Wednesday, March 3, at 6 p.m. at the Paradise Theater, 2403 Grand Concourse, at 187th Street. (A visit to this beautiful theater would be worth the trip in any case.)

VACCA PROTESTS CON ED RATE INCREASE

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

Council Member James Vacca recently alerted the City Island community, along with others in his district, to flood state regulators with telephone calls and e-mails in protest of Con Edison's "obscene" plan to raise the average household's electric bill by 13 percent, or roughly \$11 per month, over the next three years, even as the utility pulls in record profits.

Con Edison earned \$1.2 billion in net income in 2008, a 60 percent increase from two years earlier, according to public data reported by the utility. Shareholder dividends increased from \$533 million to \$618 million over the same period, a 16 percent jump. Yet even after hiking rates by 6 percent last April, Con Ed is now asking the state's Public Service Commission for three consecutive years of 4.3 percent hikes starting in 2010, in the hopes of raising revenue by nearly \$420 million a year.

"When the city or the state or even the MTA raises rates, it's bad enough, but at

least you know the money's being used to plug a deficit," Mr. Vacca said. "Con Edison is already operating with a surplus, and still they have the audacity to ask for another billion dollars from you and me. The Public Service Commission must recognize that middle-class New Yorkers are already getting pummeled by rising property taxes, sales taxes, water bills, and transit fares. They must say no to these outrageous hikes."

The Public Service Commission, whose five members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate, has the sole authority to approve or deny rate increases. To contact the Commission, residents can call 800-335-2120 or visit www.dps.state.ny.us and fill out the "PSC comment form" under the "Consumer Assistance" tab. The Commission is asking that public comments be submitted no later than Tuesday, Feb. 2.

WINTRY HOLIDAY MEMORIES



Photos by BOB BERENT, VIRGINIA DANNEGGER, RICK DeWITT and CAROL FITZPATRICK

A storm on Saturday, Dec. 19, left enough snow on the ground to make for a partially white Christmas 2009. Other happy holiday memories included the City Island Girl Scouts' Christmas recital (second photo) and St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church Carols Concert on Dec. 20 led by organist Ken Farnum. The menorah was lighted on Dec. 11, the first night of Chanukah, by members of Temple Beth El and State Senator Jeffrey Klein. Island children caught the season's spirit at the holiday craft workshop at the City Island Community Center on Dec. 19 (middle photos). The "Seasons Greetings" sign hung over City Island Avenue well into January 2010 welcoming everyone to the new decade. Islanders Tanya Kraemer and Barbara (Boo) Dennis dressed in period costumes and welcomed revelers to the Bartow Pell Mansion's Christmas celebration on Dec. 4 (right photo).



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Friend of the Library

To the Editor:
 For the past several months, the City Island Library has been very grateful to Elisa Huberman, an Island resident and a senior at the Hallen School in New Rochelle, for our wonderful holiday decorations. Elisa has been donating her community service time to help the library by decorating bulletin boards, reading aloud to children and telling stories to our young patrons.
 Elisa is creative and likes to occupy her time by reading, developing arts and crafts projects, drawing and animating original

themes. She has participated in a workshop at Walt Disney studios in California, and some day she would like to make movies and write children's books. Elisa likes to spend her free time traveling when possible, reading educational periodicals, browsing the Internet, watching television comedies and enjoying the company of friends and family.

Thanks, Elisa, for all the nice things you have done for the City Island Library!
 City Island Library Staff

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(CITY ISLAND, N.Y.) – Disney Vacation Club is proud to announce that James Livingston, Real Estate Salesperson for All Island Realty Group, Inc. and Paladino Realty Corp., has completed the official training program to become an authorized independent sales advisor for the vacation ownership company.

As part of his training, Livingston completed a carefully designed three-week training program consisting of one week of in-market training, one week of online learning and a final week of onsite training at the Walt Disney World Resort at Disney Vacation Club headquarters in Celebration, Fla.

"We are pleased to 'welcome home' Jimmy and everyone else in our new class of independent sales advisors and look forward to them helping families make lifelong memories as they begin spreading the word about Disney Vacation Club in their home cities," said Leigh Anne Nieman, Director of Business Standards and Regulatory Affairs. "Now families in New York will have the opportunity to learn about the magic of Disney Vacation Club from their trusted real estate agents."

A graduate of Westchester School of Real Estate, Livingston has worked for Paladino Realty Corp. for the past nine years. He holds dual licenses with both Paladino Realty Corp. and All Island Realty Group, Inc.

Disney Vacation Club, a leader in vacation ownership, revolutionized the timeshare industry in 1991 and has changed families' lives by helping them vacation in ways they never dreamed possible. Today, more than 420,000 individual members from approximately 100 countries and all 50 states have secured decades of Disney vacations – or vacations to any of the more than 500 other Member Getaways destinations – through the magic of Disney Vacation Club membership. These families have purchased vacation ownership with Disney Vacation Club because they believe in the Disney brand, which has long defined excellence in family entertainment.

For Information on Disney's Best Kept Secret
 Please call Jimmy at 347-203-2960
 Or E-Mail To Jim12531@yahoo.com



Photo by LARRY SAULNIER

This year's Pinewood Derby was held by Cub Scout Pack 211 on Jan. 15. Here are the winners: In the back row (l. to r.) are Joseph Leni, Damon Hamblin, Aiden Saulnier, John Tomsen, Joseph Krammer and Carlo Fine; in the front row are Aryn Glynn, Carlo Frigola, Joseph Goonan, Paul Mazzella, Jonathan Mazzella and Jacob Tirrado; not pictured Timothy Stein and Jeremy Filomio.

SENATOR KLEIN HELPS HANDICAPPED ISLANDER



Photo by RICK DeWITT

Toby Liederman holds her renewed permit facilitated by Sen. Jeff Klein.

When the Department of Transportation (DOT) refused to renew a handicap

parking permit for Island resident Toby Liederman, State Senator Jeff Klein was able to help her get the permit. Ms. Liederman first received a permit three years ago because of a medical condition involving her foot and sciatic nerve, but DOT denied the permit for 2010, even though she claimed she had a letter from a doctor explaining that her condition had become worse.

When Ms. Liederman contacted Senator Klein's office last November, his office responded immediately by contacting the Department of Health/Transportation at Bellevue Hospital, which had recommended the denial. Senator Klein's office expedited an appointment with a doctor who saw Ms. Liederman within the week and recommended that the permit be renewed.

"Struggling with an injury like Ms. Liederman's, where it's painful just to walk every day, is already hard enough. The Department of Transportation issues parking permits for a reason and I believe Ms. Liederman is the perfect example of someone who truly needs one. That's why I immediately took on her case, cutting through the red tape and fighting for a permit renewal," Senator Klein said.

Ms. Liederman said: "It was a great relief to get the permit because it truly helps me physically. I appreciate Senator Klein for going the whole nine yards and truly helping me resolve my problem."

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YOU GOTTA HAVE PARK!

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

The Parks Department recently collaborated with the Police Department to plant 52 trees in various places on the Rodman's Neck firing range. To the left of the young tree are the Parks personnel (l. to r.): Thomas Russo, Deputy Chief, Bronx Parks; Vincent Morrone, Supervisor, Bronx Borough Crews; and Marianne Anderson, Pelham Bay Park Administrator. To the right of the tree are Inspector Hurley and Officer Paul Mazzella.

Most New Yorkers forget about Pelham Bay Park during the winter. Orchard Beach attracts very few swimmers (in fact it is against the law to swim there after the lifeguards have gone off duty in September), and many walkers avoid the paths around Hunter Island, which are usually full of snow or mud.

However, many City Island residents love the park in winter. There are no admission fees at the Orchard Beach parking lot, and nothing is more bracing than a brisk walk along the 1.5 mile boardwalk. Dog walkers love to get their pets out for a run (on leash and not on the beach) after the crowds are gone, and the playgrounds and tennis courts are blissfully empty.

The park employees also love the winter and continue to offer interesting activities for nature lovers. In January alone, there was a Siwanoy Trail adventure hike, owl walks in the afternoon and evening, a "seal-shore safari" and a search for wintering waterfowl along the park's coastline.

As grant money comes in, work will continue on the restoration of Turtle Cove. Last June (as reported in the *Current's* November 2009 profile of park administrator Marianne Anderson), the invasive, non-native vines and shrubs around Turtle Cove were removed; over the years these plants have killed trees and overshadowed groundcover, preventing the regeneration of the natural understory.

Eventually, the ecology will be restored and pollution from run-off eliminated. More treatment will be needed in the spring to prevent loosestrife and phragmites from resprouting, and with the help of the Friends of Pelham Bay Park organization and additional funding, there will be a large-scale planting of saltmarsh grass. At the same time the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is scheduled to restore the tidal flow in Turtle Cove to help sustain the natural saltmarsh. Some residents of City Island have expressed concern that the removal of plants in Turtle Cove has destroyed the habitat for egrets and other birds; the loss of plant cover is temporary and has not affected the amount of wildlife normally sighted at the Cove

(see story on page seven).

There are also plans to continue New York City's Million Tree Program by coordinating a volunteer tree planting effort by the fall of 2010. In the meantime, the firing range at Rodman's Neck recently participated in the program by working with the Parks Department to plant 52 new trees along the front of the five ranges on the site and along the fence line on the shore facing City Island.

They had to remove 18 trees that had been damaged or killed by recent storms, and Parks Department personnel are gradually "picking away" at the old diseased poplars and other trees being killed by vines, planting in their place native trees that will help restore the forest in the area around Rodman's Neck.

The police officers at the range are delighted that their "landlord" has provided new plantings (see photo), which include oak, serviceberry, cypress and maples, as well as flowering fruit trees. Not only will these improve the appearance of the range, but the trees along the fence line will eventually help in muffling the noise created by gunfire. Most of the activities at the range are scheduled to be moved by 2014, although the bomb squad and a small amount of rifle practice will continue on Rodman's Neck. Ms. Anderson was quick to assure *The Current* that the land remains parkland and is leased only to the Police Department, so it cannot be used for other kinds of facilities should the Police Department leave altogether, unlikely as that might be. The officers also pointed out that tests for lead are made frequently and that lead is removed on a regular schedule.

There are still three more months to enjoy the park before the summer activity sets in, so be sure to keep up with the events there by visiting the park's website (<http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/pelhambaypark>) or by calling the administrator's office for information (718-430-1890). Consider volunteering for the park by joining Friends of Pelham Bay Park or otherwise getting involved.

See you on the boardwalk!

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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.

Stop by the **Hollywood Barber Shop** for a trim at 403 City Island Avenue, at the corner of Ditmars Street. Shop hours are Sunday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Basic haircuts are \$12, and discounts will be offered to children and seniors. Haircuts are available for men, women and children. The barber shop is owned by a father and son team, Alex and Ben Mulakandov, and is managed by son/brother Joseph. For more information, please call 718-885-1951.

We hope everyone has had an enjoyable winter and is well rested for a fantastic 2010 season. This winter the *Island Current III* (76 x 22 feet) has been fishing for winter codfish out of the Snug Harbor Marina in Rhode Island. The boat leaves daily at 4 a.m., weather permitting. We recommend making a reservation through ZERVE at 212-209-3370 or booking your tickets online at www.islandcurrent.com.

The address of Snug Harbor Marina is 410 Gooseberry Road, Wakefield, RI 02879, and the boat ride out to the codfish grounds is only 1.5 hours. We are generally one of the first boats to arrive at the fishing grounds.

The cost is \$95 for adults, \$90 for seniors and \$65 for children. All pricing includes free bait, tackle, rods, reels and parking. We offer multiple day-fishing packages and can provide you with hotel accommodations. If you are looking to stay over, consider the Ocean View Motor Inn; the contact person is Charles Brooks at 401-742-5315.

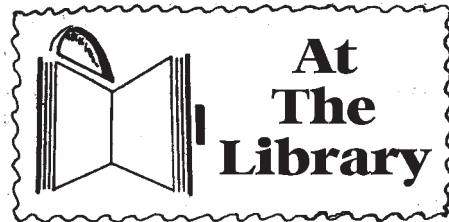
Our special hammer diamond jigs can be rented or purchased right on board. *The Island Current III* is extremely roomy and has a spacious heated cabin. We have limited our load to 50 passengers on open boat trips to allow for more room and fishing space. This is especially beneficial during the drifting days with a lot less tangles. We continue to offer private charter specials for both weekend and weekdays. Our large galley produces fine meals and snacks to warm up on cold winter days.

Some helpful suggestions include calling the night before to confirm sailing and weather conditions, booking your tickets through ZERVE or online at www.islandcurrent.com, dressing in layers to stay warm (a winter cap, wool socks and gloves are recommended). Remember, it is always a little colder out on the water.

Our website is updated daily for fishing reports, catch-of-the-week photos and general *Island Current* fleet information, including our 2010 schedule. We have already begun taking reservations for private charters for the spring, so call Captain Chris for the best dates and charter information. He can be reached 24 hours a day at 917-417-7557 and will answer all of your questions about fishing, charter, tides and tackle selection.

Krunch Time Fitness at 538 City Island Avenue had its grand opening in December and is looking forward to attracting many Islanders as regulars. Unlike other gyms in the area, Krunch Time is affordable and the only gym that offers specialized personal training for children as well as adults. People of all ages have the opportunity to work one-on-one with professionals in nutrition and diet, weight management, fat loss, cardio, healthy-heart improvement, toning and weight training. All new clients will receive a free, professional dietary and nutritional consultation and a body-fat analysis, a record of weight and body measurements that will enable you to track your

progress. Whether you want to tone up, slim down or build more muscle, the professionals at Krunch Time Fitness are dedicated to you and your goals. For an appointment, call 347-326-5575. The owner, Anthony Cecena, born and raised in the Bronx, has been involved in the fitness business for over 15 years. He began his career as a teenager working out in local gyms, and at the age of 20 he began training with the pros. It was here that he realized his passion for fitness and his gift for helping others achieve their goals. "I like to help people. I want them to feel good about themselves, and I enjoy showing them how to do it. This is what motivates me every day!"



February Children's Programs

Baby Lapsit Program: Wednesdays, Feb. 3 and 17, 10:30 a.m. Birth to 18 months. All welcome for story time and music.

Toddler Program: Thursdays, Feb. 4 and 11, at 10:30 a.m. Ages 18 to 36 months.

Valentine Arts and Crafts: Tuesday, Feb. 9, at 3:30 p.m. Ages 4 to 11.

Technology Program for Parents: "How to help your child succeed in doing research." Come join us on Wednesday, Feb. 10, at 10:30 a.m.

Picture Book Program: Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. Ages 4 to 11.

Green Apple Kids Free Green Workshop: Ben drives a bus but not any bus. Today Ben visits to tell us about his magical school bio-bus that uses waste cooking oil as fuel. Saturday, Feb. 6, at 12 noon.

Special Program: Make art with pop artist Michael Albert, the author of "An Artist's America." He will talk about his new book and his art, and he will teach the children his trademark style of art, "Cerealism," a technique of collage work made from cereal boxes. Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 3:30 p.m. Ages 4 to 12. Pre-registration is required.

Young Adult Programs

Graphic Novel Rewrite: Mondays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Manga Overdrive: Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Yu-Gi-Oh: Wednesdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Teen Time Game On: Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Special Program: Game Strike. Friday, Feb. 26, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Adult Programs

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

Resume Writing Workshop: Need help in writing or updating your resume? Come to our workshop. Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Special Program: Community Board 10 Meeting. Thursday, Feb. 18, starting at 7:30 p.m.

History Buffs: There will be a lecture discussing the steps that led up to the American Civil War from the close of the Revolution until the commencement of hostilities between the North and South. Presented by City Islander Jeremy McCue. Saturday, Feb. 13, at 2 p.m.

Special Book Discussion Group: Date to be announced in March.

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.



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

Address	Closing Date	Sale Price	Type
633 King Avenue	10/08/09	\$165,000	1 Family
163 Reville Street	10/29/09	\$550,000	1 Family
105 City Island Ave.	11/2/09	\$260,000	Commercial
44 Bay Street	11/18/09	\$450,000	1 Family
314 King Avenue	11/20/09	\$335,000	1 Family
49 Schofield Street	11/30/09	\$445,000	1 Family

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Pelham Bay Park in February

Be Mine Victorian Valentine Family Workshop: Saturday, Feb. 6, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Roses are red, violets are blue, make a valentine greeting at Bartow-Pell, or make a few! Children and adults are invited to create traditional Victorian valentines and learn about the history of this holiday. Registration is requested at 718-885-1461, or info@bpmm.org.

Seal-Shore Safari, Sunday, Feb. 7, 1 p.m. Seals hang out by the beach between December and March and you'll get to see them during low tide. Wear warm

and comfortable clothes. Bring your own binoculars if you have them. Meet at Orchard Beach Nature Center (enter the park from the Orchard Beach parking lot). The Nature Center is at Section 2 of the boardwalk. For more information call 718-548-0912.

Whoos Said That? Sunday, Feb. 14, 1 p.m. Winter is the best time to see wild owls in New York City. Don't miss this opportunity! Meet at Orchard Beach Nature Center. For more information call 718-548-0912.

Mansion Mysteries! Tuesday, Feb. 16.; Wednesday, Feb. 17, and Thursday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come to the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum and explore what life was like in the 19th century through creative activities, fun games and exciting stories. Recommended for children ages 7-9. Registration required. Cost is \$30 per child; members \$25 per child. Call 718-885-1461 for more information, or email info@bpmm.org.

Wacky Winter Waterfowl, Sunday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m. Join the Rangers on the third Sunday of every month through March to search for wintering waterfowl in and around the park's coastline. Bring your own binoculars if you have them. Meet at Orchard Beach Nature Center. For more information, call 718-548-0912.



Photo by MARY MCINTYRE

Two performers rehearse their roles in the City Island Theater Group's forthcoming production of "Wait Until Dark," a thriller by Frederick Knott. Justine Costanza (right) plays Susy Hendrix, a blind Greenwich Village housewife, and Hannah Glick plays Gloria, who lives in the upstairs apartment. Susy becomes the target of three thugs (played by Christopher Manetakis, Matt Regney and David Wetter) who are searching for heroin that is hidden in a doll her husband transported from Canada as a favor to a woman who has since been murdered. Eileen Marcus is directing the play. The production will be held at Grace Church Parish Hall, 116 City Island Avenue at Pilot Street, on Feb. 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. For reservations, call 718-885-3066 or e-mail information@cityislandtheatergroup.com.

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IS TURTLE COVE STILL ALIVE?

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

Anyone who drives regularly past Turtle Cove, either on the Orchard Beach Road or the City Island Road, has been watching the gradual elimination of vegetation in the area, and many have expressed concern that the birds that once frequented the area have permanently moved away for lack of cover.

One Island resident wrote to Ms. Anderson: "I have noticed on the north end of the cove that, because of the vegetation and cover, it had become a meeting area for those beautiful egrets. Dozens, sometimes as many as 30 or 40, would congregate in and around the north end of the cove during the day, which was very well hidden. Not only did you clean out the vines, but then you guys cut down everything, including the marsh grasses, bushes and young trees. You made it into a barren field. We have lots of grass all around the park and not many natural areas. Since the Parks Department cleaned out the vegetation, now nothing. All those beautiful egrets have disappeared."

Ms. Anderson explained that because of the temporary loss of cover, the egrets and herons and other species have moved north along Bartow Creek and the Lagoon or into the Hutchinson River Marshes, Goose Creek Marsh or south of Turtle Cove. "The fact that we've had a crew working in that area for six months is another reason the bird population is low; we have had a constant presence and it's been a bit noisy."

She assured him that "The marsh grass that we plant in the spring will provide a better feeding ground for wild-life, and once spring and summer return,

the grasses and wildflowers will provide cover, as will the newly planted trees.

Dr. Paul Mankiewicz, a biologist and plant scientist, director of the Gaia Institute, and Islander, has also responded to the worried residents, assuring them that "native tree, shrub and meadow cover seems to increase or optimize ecological productivity and biodiversity better than invasive plants, providing more habitat for birds in the process." He notes that over the past 30 years he has been watching Turtle Cove, its ecological value has decreased because of increasing sedimentation and the impact of invasive plants.

In spite of the activity in the cove, he has continued to observe egrets and herons there in substantial numbers. "Many of the wading birds that use the marsh and mudflat are not secretive species; they are used to open vistas and often hunt in low and high marsh and even in the neighboring upland meadow. After the Parks Department cleared the area, I counted at one time 14 snowy egrets there. I have also seen six species of wading hunters since the area has been opened up.

"Although some egrets and herons will stay into cooler weather, they mainly follow the coast south for winter, hunting in the shallows of estuaries and water bodies, with some species spending much more time upland as they head south and controlling rodents and insects in the process. I can virtually guarantee that all of them will be back in the spring. And the trees may now supply better roosts for some (black-crowned night herons like to get a little higher up and take a look around)."

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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

FEBRUARY

Sun. Feb. 7, **Open House**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. Mary, Star of the Sea School, 580 Minneford Avenue (see School News).

Tues., Feb. 9, **Blood Drive**, 3:30 to 8 p.m., Trinity United Methodist Church, 113 Bay Street.

Thurs. Feb. 18, **Community Board 10 Meeting**, 7:30 p.m., City Island Library, 320 City Island Avenue.

Tues., February 16, **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**, Grace Episcopal Church, 5 and 7 p.m. (see *Org News*).

Tues., Feb. 23, **City Island Civic Association meets**, 7:30 p.m., Community Center, 190 Fordham Street.

Sat., Feb. 27, **POTS Program**, St. Mary's School Yard, Minneford Avenue and Kilroe Street, drop-off between 4:30 and 5 p.m. Menu: beef stew.

MARCH

Wed. **March 3**, Hearing on C.I. Express Bus, 6 p.m., Paradise Theater, 2403 Grand Concourse at 187th Street.

Cub Scout Pack 211

On Friday Jan. 15, Cub Scout Pack 211 held its annual Pinewood Derby, and more than 30 scouts participated. Everyone had a great time, and there was exciting competition mixed with good sportsmanship.

The results are as follows: Tigers, first place Carlo Frigola, second place Joseph Goonan, third place Aryn Glynn; Wolves: first place Paul Mazzella, second place was a tie between Timothy Stein and Jacob Tirrado; third place also a tie, Jeremy Filomio and Jonathan Mazzella; Bears, first place Joseph Leni, second place Aiden Saulnier, third place Damon Hamblin; Webelos, first place Joseph Krammer; second place Carlo Fine; third place John Tomsen.

In addition to the den competition, the Cub Scouts held an overall pack-wide championship. The winners were Pack Champ Joseph Krammer, second place Carlo Frigola, and third place Paul Mazzella.

Congratulations to all the scouts who competed; they were all winners, and thanks to all the parents and volunteers who helped make this year's Derby another success.

Look for the pack at the 10 o'clock Mass on Scout Sunday, Feb. 7. Our meetings are Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church. Boys in the first through fifth grades are eligible to join. Stop by if you are interested.

Larry Saulnier, Cubmaster

PSS Healthy Senior Exercise Program

We are pleased to offer the following programs in February: Zumba with Stephanie on Monday at 10:30 a.m. at the Community Center; Cardio Fitness with Mary on Tuesday at 9:30 at Grace Church Hall; Sittercise with Patty on Tuesday at 10:30 at Grace Church Hall; Orchard Beach Walk: Wednesday (leave Pilot Street at 9:30 a.m.); Yoga Stretch with Michael on Thursday at 9:30 at Grace Church Hall; Arthritis Exercise with Patty on Thursday at 10:30 at Grace Church Hall. Call Tony at 347-834-6466 for transportation to programs and for a schedule of afternoon shopping trips. For further information, call Patty at 718-885-1891. Programs are funded by Presbyterian Senior Services, the NYC Department for the Aging and the NYC Arthritis Foundation.

Pat Grondahl

St. Mary, Star of the Sea

On Thursday, Feb. 4, there will be an important meeting of all parents whose children are preparing to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist this year. It will be held in St. Mary's School gym at 7 p.m. All parents are urged to attend.

Our monthly Holy Hour with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will be held on Friday, Feb. 5, from 4 to 5 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

Sunday, Feb. 7, is National Scout Sunday. St. Mary's will recognize the scouts at a liturgy at 10 a.m. that morning. All scouts should see their scout leaders for details.

All are welcome to attend our monthly coffee hour, which will be held in the rectory after the 10 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Feb. 7.

Since all our children who attend public school will be on vacation during the week of Feb. 15, there will be no religious education classes on Wednesday, Feb. 17. Classes will resume on Feb. 24.

Wednesday, Feb. 17, is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the holy season of Lent, a time of prayer and fasting. Masses on that day will be at 7 and 8 a.m., 12 noon and 7:30 p.m. Ashes will be blessed and distributed at all the Masses.

The February meeting of the Parish Council will take place on Monday evening, Feb. 22, at 7 p.m. in the rectory.

SAVE THE DATE: St. Mary's will hold a gala St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance on Saturday, March 13, in St. Mary, Star of the Sea School gym. Details will follow.

Sr. Bernadette, osu

Temple Beth-El

October 2009 marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of Temple Beth-El of City Island. The synagogue, unaffiliated, all-inclusive and egalitarian, provides an exciting place of observance for Jewish families who come from many different communities and cultures. We are a spirited congregation that gathers together under the leadership of the stimulating and innovative Rabbi Shohama Wiener.

Located at 480 City Island Avenue, between Beach and Bowne Streets, we conduct Sabbath services each Friday night at 7:30 p.m. Our doors are open to all, and we follow the Rabbi Marcia Prager prayer book, primarily in English, with easy-to-read typeface and singable Hebrew.

Tu B'Shevat, the New Year of Trees, will be celebrated with a seder at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 31. (Please call Nan Kaplan at 718-885-2445 for reservations and food contributions.)

Rabbi Shohama will conduct her next Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday, Feb. 5.

Purim will be celebrated with our annual play about Esther, with props, costumes, audience participation and of course hamen-tashen; a big shindig on Sunday, Feb. 28. Do plan on joining us.

Bob Berent

Trinity United Methodist Church

Our worship service and Sunday school are at 10 a.m. Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month. Prayer service is held every weekday at 9:15 a.m. We encourage you to bring your children to Sunday school to further their knowledge of the teachings of Jesus Christ. We often have a coffee hour after the service. Come and join us for worship and fellowship.

The children's Sunday School will be hosting a pasta lunch after the worship service on Feb. 7 in Fellowship Hall (approximately 11:15 a.m.). The meal is part of the



Photo by Bob Berent

The Dance The Word Ministry of Canaan Baptist Church regaled Temple Beth-El of City Island as they celebrated a special "Freedom" Sabbath service on Jan. 15, which coincided with the Torah portion that tells of the Jews' exodus out of slavery in Egypt. The "Freedom" Shabbos Service, led by Reb David Markus and joined by Rabbinic Pastor David Daniel Klipper, Cantor Elaine Faver and Reverend David Francis of Canaan Baptist Church, was truly inspiring.

national youth movement known as the "Souper Bowl of Caring," a drive to fight hunger. Please RSVP by Feb. 3 (917-592-6922) to reserve a place. Bring a monetary offering and one or more nonperishable items (no glass, please). All proceeds will benefit City Harvest. If you are unable to attend, you may still make a donation to this worthy cause any time between now and Feb. 14.

Trinity's Ash Wednesday service begins at 7:30 p.m.

A group Bible Study will meet for five consecutive Sunday sessions during Lent in Fellowship Hall, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. beginning Sunday, Feb. 21, through and including March 21.

This study will be on the Acts of the Apostles, beginning with the first five chapters written by Luke, the physician and companion of the Apostle Paul. It gives us the earliest record of the church, which began in Jerusalem, and the descent of the promised Holy Spirit. The theme for this continuing study is "The Apostles, God's chosen witnesses for Christ's resurrection."

George Cavalieri, our Lay Leader/Speaker, will be moderator. There is no registration or fee and the Bible texts will be provided. All are welcome to join us in an excellent Lenten discipline and preparation for the joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

Something new: group discussion for adults only (over 18) with free pizza and soda. Jay Howard will moderate this group on Sunday, Feb. 28, at 7 p.m. The theme is "What does the Bible say about love and lust?" Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained as all questions will be submitted in written form.

The Budget Shop will be open Feb. 9, 13, 23 and 27, as well as March 9, 13, 23 and 27. Will someone out there volunteer to lead Budget behind the scenes? Myra Martin will work right along with you to help and train you for this responsibility. It involves simply contacting the established crew for work dates and helping to glean items and price them. We need your help. Call Myra at 718-885-1049.

Ellen G. Hebard

Grace Episcopal Church

Weekly worship schedule: Grace Church celebrates Holy Communion every Sunday at 10 a.m. We also offer Evening Prayer in the Church every Monday at 7 p.m. and Morning Prayer on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. For more information about Grace, please call the Parish Office at 718-885-1080, or visit our website, www.gracecityisland.org.

Here is an overview of what is happening at Grace Church during February:

Tuesday, Feb. 2, 7 p.m.: Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke (Parish Hall). Join us as we read, pray through and discuss the Gospel of Luke; newcomers are always welcome. Also at 7 p.m.: Monthly Taizé Worship in the Church. All are welcome to join us for this contemplative service of quiet meditation, reflection, readings and music.

Saturday, Feb. 6, 7 p.m.: Benefit for October 2009 Fire Victims. Admission is \$10; refreshments will be served. (For further information, please contact Stephen Marcus at 347-964-1887 or steveraynoir@yahoo.com.)

Sunday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m.: "Lambs" Babysitting available, beginning at 9:50 a.m. in the Parish Hall. Following our worship, the young people of our Church School will collect donations for the "Souper Bowl of Caring," raising money for POTS (Part of the Solution) and toward the purchase of a cow for our linked village in Tanzania. Please give generously.

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m.: Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke (Parish Hall).

Tuesday, Feb. 16, 5 and 7 p.m.: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. Once again, the Grace Church Men's Group will cook up an old-fashioned "Fat Tuesday" (Shrove Tuesday) Pancake Supper before the start of Lent. Please note that this year we are offering two separate seatings. Cost is \$5, payable at the door.

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.: Ash Wednesday services of Holy Eucharist, Rite I, and the Imposition of Ashes.

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m.: Bible Study on the Gospel of Luke (Parish Hall).

Rev. Patricia Alexander

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.

Saturdays at 12:30 p.m., Grace Episcopal Church hall, 116 City Island Avenue (at Pilot 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.

St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church: 718-885-1440

Trinity United Methodist Church: 718-885-1218

Grace Episcopal Church: 718-885-1080



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.

NEW CLASSES

High-Low Impact Aerobics: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4 to 5 p.m. \$8.00 per class. For more information, call Sarah Persteins at 718-885-9122.

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 www.deirdreamara.com.

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 p.m. and Saturdays 11 a.m. \$10 per class, twice weekly. Call 718-885-3702.

Sally's Playground: Where children ages 1 through 5 enjoy indoor play. Wednesdays 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. Call Sally at 718-885-0349 with questions. \$7 per child (\$4 for each additional sibling.) Come and join the fun!

Family and Me Fitness: An exercise program for children (infant to 5) and parent(s). Music and stretching to benefit the children, toning and aerobic movement to benefit the adults with a focus on having fun. Tuesday and Thursday at 9 to 10 a.m. For more information, call Sarah Persteins at 718-885-9122.

Wilma's Music Together. Music and movement for children ages birth through 5 and the adults who love them! Saturdays 10 to 10:45 a.m. For more information, call 718-882-2223, visit www.funmusetogether.com or e-mail info@vilmasmusictogether.com.

Art Classes by Laury: Storytime Art, for preschoolers accompanied by an adult; 12:45 to 2 p.m., Monday or Thursday, Jan. 25-May 10, 12 classes \$100, \$10 for individual classes but you must call ahead. **Exploring Sculpture** in a variety of materials for K through third grade; 3:15 to 4:15

p.m. or 4:30 to 5:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 25-May 10, 12 classes \$100. **Drawing and Painting**, with inspiration from modern sources for grades 4-8, 3:30 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 26-May 4, 12 classes \$120. **Drama and Theater Arts**, with masks, costume design, improvisation, stage make-up, creative movement and more for ages 7 to 11; 3:30 to 5 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 28 through April 29, 12 classes \$100. Schedule with exact dates will be given out at the beginning of classes. There will be no classes during spring and winter breaks. For more information or to sign up, call Laury at 718-885-3202.

ADULT PROGRAM

Yoga With Emily: Yoga class now being offered on Wednesday at 10 a.m. All levels welcome. Call Emily Wilson at 347-886-4546 with any questions.

Ashtanga Yoga with Vincenza: Yoga Instructor certified by Synergy Yoga Center of Miami. Tuesday nights 7:30 for 1 hour. Please bring a yoga mat. Vmadonia59@aol.com or 917-440-3618.

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 (aka 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 p.m. The fee for each one-hour class is \$15. Call 845-358-0260.

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 Saroope (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 or call 718-885-2445.

City Island Civic Association: Meets at 7:30 p.m. on the last Tuesday of every month (except December).

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City Island Theater Group

The City Island Theater Group kicks off its 11th season with our next production, "Wait Until Dark" by Frederick Knott, and directed by Eileen Marcus.

The mystery thriller's heroine is Susy Hendrix, a blind Greenwich Village housewife who becomes the target of three thugs searching for the heroin hidden in a doll, which her husband transported from Canada as a favor to a woman who since has been murdered. The trio tries to convince Susy that her spouse has been implicated in the crime and that the only way to protect him is to surrender the doll. More murder and mayhem ensue when she refuses, with the stage lights turned off for the final scene when Susy levels the playing field by plunging her apartment into total darkness.

"Wait Until Dark" stars Islander Justine Costanza as Susy Hendrix, Daniel Figueroa as a patrolman, John Garcia as Sergeant Carlino, Christopher Manetakis as Mike Talmann, Matt Regney as Sam Hendrix, David Wetter as Harry Roat, Denis Zepeda as a patrolman and Islander Hannah Glick making her theatrical debut as Gloria.

The City Island Theater Group is located at Grace Church Hall, 116 City Island Avenue. Performance dates are: Feb. 19, 20, 25, 26 and 27 at 8 p.m. and Feb. 21 at 3 p.m. Call 718-885-3066 for tickets or visit us at www.cityislandtheatergroup.com. See you at the theater!

Nick Sala

City Island Republicans

We are moving forward. The momentum is on our side, especially since Brown won in liberal Massachusetts.

The Bronx Republican Party has reported that we already have some good candidates and that we are still screening people. Anyone interested in running can call 718-792-5800. The county is also in the process of setting up a candidates' school to help groom our present and future candidates. We are also planning a grand opening of the new headquarters at 3029 Middletown Road. Details will follow.

Our next meeting will be in April. Stay tuned for details!

Fred Ramftl Jr.

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Legion News

If you have visited the Post lately, you have no doubt noticed the progress being made. Stair pads have been placed on the staircase to the second floor. The rest room on the first floor is in the final stages of refurbishing. And the curtain to separate the bar from the meeting room has been ordered.

There will be two meetings in February: a regular meeting on Monday, Feb. 1, and an executive board meeting on Monday, Feb. 15. Both meetings will start at 7:30 p.m.

Several events are scheduled for February. The annual Super Bowl bash will be held on Feb. 7. Kick off time will be 5 p.m. The price is \$10. Sausage and peppers and wings will be served and there will be a cash bar.

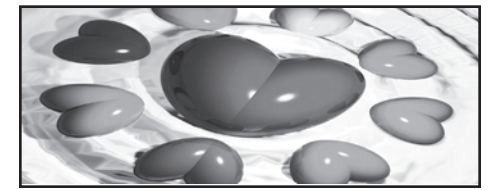
The annual Pigs Knuckle party will be on Saturday, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m. This popular event is sponsored by the Sons of the Legion. Please check the Post bulletin board for further information.

The stair treads alluded to above were placed by Jim Livingston and Mike Jawski. The Post thanks them for their help.

We'd like to thank those who volunteer their time to assist in Post endeavors. In this regard, we thank the following who participated in last year's pumpkin sale: Ed and Keith Shipp, Pete Zvara, Maureen Grogan, Peter Booth, John Musto, Jim Livingston, Bill Clancy Sr., Joe Goonan, Gene Veslesio, John Muhlfeld, and Nick and Judy Batista.

Until next month, at ease.

Russ Schaller, Sgt. Emeritus



Sons of the American Legion Squadron # 156

At our January meeting, we elected a new slate of officers for 2010. Walter Natiw will be our commander for 2010. The Vice Commander for Membership will be Fred Ramftl Jr., and our Vice Commanders for activities will be John Peters and Bryan Livingston. Vice Commander for Americanism is Vic Anderson Jr., and Jimmy Livingston will be our treasurer. Other officers include Tim Smyth as our Sergeant-at-Arms, Scott Murphy as Adjutant, Andy Natiw as Historian, and Past Commander Todd Davis as our Chaplain.

During the next few months, there will be many ongoing projects to approve the Post, although there is still no timetable as to when the first flush will take place in the new bathroom. The projects include improvements to the bar, for which plenty of volunteers will be needed. Jimmy Livingston and Mike Jawski did a great job putting new treads on the stairs; they even put individual carpets on the basement stairs. Job well done!

The annual Super Bowl party will be held on Sunday, Feb. 7. The kickoff should be around 6:30 p.m. The annual Pig's-knuckle Party will be held on Saturday, Feb. 27, at 7 p.m. Space is limited, so reserve early.

Fred Ramftl Jr.
 Vice Commander, Membership

Make your Valentine's reservation early!

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Public School 175

December was a month filled with educational and exciting activities. Our kindergarten students attended a performance of "A Christmas Carol" at the Lehman Center for the Performing Arts and second- and third-graders visited the Hostos Center for the Performing Arts for a production of "The Magic of Science."

As a connection to our Studio in a School Art Program, class 3M and the fourth- and sixth-grade classes visited the Kandinsky exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum and then participated in a workshop in the art studio there, where they had the opportunity to do abstract painting in the style of Kandinsky. Fourth-graders also visited the New York Botanical Garden for the Amazing Adaptations program, and sixth-graders attended a performance by the Boston-based Chamber Theater Group of classic short stories at Purchase College. Included in the performance were "The Tell-tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Jumping Frogs of Calaveras County" by Mark Twain, "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, "The Monkey's Paw" by W. W. Jacobs and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving.

"The Hollyrock Game Show" returned for its annual trivia competition. The students in grades K-8 were asked trivia questions in various subject areas and participated in physical challenges. It was great fun and very informative.

Finally, on Dec. 22, P.S. 175 got into the holiday spirit with our annual Holiday Sing. Children in grades K-8 all sang some of the great holiday classics, which is part of our rich tradition. This ended our year on a high note!

January promises to be just as exciting. Our fifth-graders have begun rehearsals for their spring performance of "Seussical, Jr." and, by the sound of things, this is going to be another fabulous P.S. 175 production! The Sports & Arts in Schools Foundation After School Program has resumed for grades five through eight. Students are participating in a variety of activities, including cooking and baking, athletics, games and homework help.

Community service projects continue as does preparation for P.S. 175's participation in the City Island Women's "Herstory" Month celebration that will take place in March. The last Friday of every month is School Spirit Day and the sale of P.S. 175 apparel continues. Available for sale to students, parents and the greater City Island community are P.S. 175 T-shirts, zippered fleeces, sweatshirt hoodies and hats, all either embroidered or silk-screened with the school logo. Please join us in sharing the P.S. 175 school spirit! Anyone outside of the school interested in making a purchase should contact our General Office.

The P.S. 175 family is excited about all of the opportunities we are able to offer our students that enable them to explore educational as well as enriching pursuits!

The citizens of the month for December 2009 were: Kindergarten: Devin Munafa and Joseph Peloso; first grade: Maria Leni and Kaltrina Rugova; second grade: Lauren Russell and Sarah Stark; third grade: Joseph Zayas and Peter Wiehler; fourth grade: John

Tomsen and Sabrina Fontana; fifth grade: Deisy Navarro and Megan Ploch; sixth grade: Ameer Baksh and Jake Desgroseilliers; seventh grade: Anastasia Lacina and LaToya James; eighth grade: Nicole Faicco and Samia Ali. Citizens of the month for January were: Kindergarten: Michael Gierum and Demetria Mantzaris; first grade: David Yang and Cole Wiehler; second grade: Serena Balassi and Rudy Etzel; third grade: Valentin Salas and Rebecca Lubelli; fourth grade: Destiny Nieves and Edwin Almodovar; fifth grade: James Albertelli and Deirdre Spencer; sixth grade: Michael Santomassimo and Francesca Paradiso; seventh grade: Ruben Caamano and Alexander Rosas; eighth grade: Shareef Walker and Yiliang Chen.

St. Mary, Star of the Sea School

As we begin our second semester, the passing of time never ceases to amaze us. It is true that time flies when it is spent creatively and productively. We began with a celebration of Catholic Schools Week, which was filled with activities that brought home the theme that St. Mary, Star of the Sea really pays off with "Dividends for Life." Our family-like atmosphere and our rigorous academic program provide the security and the skills that children need to flourish and become independent learners and responsible people. Our faith-based curriculum continuously reinforces that the education of the entire person is a top priority.

We are very excited to announce the creation of an SMSS band. More than 30 of our students from grades 3 to 8 have chosen from a group of six instruments and are receiving semi-private instruction on a weekly basis. In addition to their regular weekly music classes, our halls are filled with the sound of the flute, trumpet, trombone, bells, clarinet, saxophone and drums each week. Our students are excited to be able take their instruments home and practice. As a part of our own weekly music curriculum, the third and fourth grades are instructed in the violin. Enrichment through music is an essential part of educating the entire child.

The eighth grade has been celebrating the results of the TACHS exam (Catholic HS Entrance Exam). Now the difficult decision of picking the right school is at hand. We are very proud of these results, and we will continue to guide the students in this decision-making process. We are especially proud of our veteran junior high team for preparing our students so well. Congratulations to Ms. Audrey Cabbell, Mr. Evan Beskin and Mr. Robert Garrison, who are simply tireless in their efforts to prepare our students for high school.

If anyone is interested in registration, please attend our Open House on Sunday, Feb. 7, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. You will have the opportunity to take a tour, meet our faculty and speak to our students. St. Mary, Star of the Sea School may be the school that you have been seeking for your children, and you just did not realize that it was in your own backyard. If you are unable to attend Open House, please call the principal, Mrs. Jane Dennehy, at 718-885-1527.

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A Selected Filmography of Ryan Phillippe

Ryan Phillippe is an actor who came to my attention when **Crash** won the Oscar for Best Picture in 2005. In that film he plays Officer Tom Hansen, a well-intentioned rookie cop who tries to maintain his integrity while he is partnered with a racist officer, John Ryan (Matt Dillon). This is one of the many plots in which we discover that not everyone is all good or all bad. The outstanding ensemble cast also includes Don Cheadle as a black cop having an affair with his Latina partner (Jennifer Esposito), Sandra Bullock as the unhappy wife of district attorney Cabot (Brendan Fraser), and Thandie Newton as the light-skinned wife of actor Cameron Thayer (Terrance Howard). This excellent film dispels programmed societal beliefs and never fails to surprise the viewer.

Phillippe hit the silver screen in a primary role as the egotistical alcoholic athlete Barry Cox in the popular horror film **I Know What You Did Last Summer** (1997). The film also stars Sarah Michelle Gellar as his girlfriend Helen Shivers, Jennifer Love Hewitt as college-bound Julie James and Freddie Prinze Jr. as Ray Bronson, her blue-collar sweetheart. They are all involved in an accident, after which they dispose of a body and are subsequently stalked with a vengeance by a mysterious person in a raincoat. This film is a good example of the genre.

In **Little Boy Blue** (1998), Phillippe is cast as Jimmy West, a young man growing up in a dysfunctional family of the very worst kind. His father, Ray (John Savage), is a psychotic Vietnam veteran, who uses a gun to force Jimmy to perform unspeakable acts with his mother, Kate (Nastassja Kinski). Jimmy doesn't run away because of his devotion to his younger brothers, Mark (Devon Michael) and Mikey (Adam Burke). Slowly we discover that all is not as it seems in this very dark, tragic drama.

Playing by Heart (1998) is an excellent ensemble film containing back-stories of a number of people whose paths will ultimately cross. Sean Connery and Gena Rowlands play the long-married Paul and Hannah, one of whom has a terminal illness. Ellen Burstyn is an attractive widow who finally gets to know her gay son, Mark (Jay Mohr). Madeleine Stowe is Gracie, a married woman who is having an affair with Roger (Anthony Edwards). Gillian Anderson is Meredith, a theater director who fears commitment as she is wooed by the easy-going Trent (Jon Stewart). And there is Angelina Jolie as Joan, a haughty, aspiring actress who pursues the mysterious Keenan (Ryan Phillippe).

Several adaptations have been made of the novel "Les Liaisons Dangereuses," including **Dangerous Liaisons** (1988) and **Valmont** (1989). **Cruel Intentions** (1999) is a modern depiction of the story set in modern times featuring wicked rich

kids Sebastian Valmont (Ryan Phillippe) and his stepsister, Kathryn Merteuil (Sarah Michelle Gellar), who live in a Manhattan mansion. When Kathryn challenges Sebastian to seduce the virginal Annette (Reese Witherspoon), the headmaster's daughter at their prep school, Sebastian becomes smitten with the target of his cruelty.

Set in 1932 England, **Gosford Park** (2001) is a fascinating murder mystery that takes place during a weekend gathering of aristocrats and their servants. Kristin Scott Thomas is Lady Sylvia McCordle, host of the party, whose guests include American film producer Morris Weissman (Bob Balaban) and his often inappropriate Scottish valet, Henry Denton (Phillippe); matinee idol Ivor Novello (Jeremy Northam) and the Countess of Threntham (Maggie Smith). The staff includes the head butler, Jennings (Alan Bates), and the housekeeper, Mrs. Wilson (Helen Mirren). In this wonderful Robert Altman film, Phillippe finds himself in extremely talented company.

In the suspense thriller **Antitrust** (2001), Phillippe is Milo Hoffman, an intense computer genius who is recruited by his role model, Gary Winston (Tim Robbins), a creepy software corporation CEO, and moves to Silicon Valley with his girlfriend, Alice (Claire Forlani). Winston's company comes under the scrutiny of the Justice Department for flooding the market with inferior copies of competitors' products, and Milo has to deal with his conscience and Winston's ruthlessness.

Clint Eastwood's excellent **Flags of our Fathers** (2006) stars Phillippe as John Bradley, one of the six men who helped plant the American flag on Iwo Jima. Along with fellow surviving flag raisers Ira Hayes (Adam Beach) and Rene Gagnon (Jesse Bradford), Bradley is sent on a nationwide war bond drive. These scenes are intermingled with haunting memories of the battlefield.

In **Breach** (2007) Phillippe is very effective as FBI agent-in-training Eric O'Neill, who is assigned by his chief, Kate Burroughs (Laura Linney), to spy on Robert Hanssen (Chris Cooper). Initially, O'Neill isn't privy to the real charges against Hanssen, but he soon provides enough evidence to bring down this man, who spied for the Soviet Union for 25 years.

Stop-Loss (2008) is a powerful film in which Staff Sgt. Brandon King (Phillippe) and Steve Shriver (Channing Tatum) return home to Texas after a grueling tour in Iraq. To their dismay, the military has invoked its stop-loss policy, which requires Brandon to return to Iraq for another tour instead of being discharged. He faces an impossible decision: to turn fugitive or to risk his life again in combat. This is a thought-provoking film.

And until next time, happy viewing. . .

Carmine W. DeDonato

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The Far Side of the Bridge

A Column about
Bronx County
By MICHAEL SHANLEY

"The Bronx Miracle"

On the west side of the Grand Concourse—just below Van Cortlandt Park South—is a rocky outcropping sandwiched between an apartment building and a private home built on top of the ridge. If you look very closely, you will notice a statue sitting on top of this bluff, a landmark that might otherwise go unnoticed. Because I grew up in that neighborhood and went to the local parochial school just down the block, I have been aware of this spot since my childhood. It is known locally as a place where people congregate each evening at 7 p.m. to say the rosary. But for 17 consecutive days in the fall of 1945, this little patch of real estate captured the imagination and the attention of



Joseph Vitolo in 1945 at the age of 9 .

the entire city—and then the world.

It was the evening of Oct. 29, 1945, just two days before Halloween and a few months after the end of World War II. Nine-year-old Joseph Vitolo had finished eating dinner and went outside to play. Joseph was the youngest of 14 children born to Joseph and Theresa Vitolo, both of who were Italian immigrants. The Vitolo home was on Villa



Joseph Vitolo praying at the shrine as thousands look on.

Avenue, one block west of the Grand Concourse, in the Bedford Park neighborhood of the northwest Bronx.

As was typical in the tight-knit Italian section of the neighborhood, a large group of local kids were playing outside. The younger ones, ranging in age from 7 to 12 years of age, were playing in an undeveloped lot next to the Vitolo home. The narrow lot extended up a hill between Villa Avenue and the Grand Concourse to a bluff overlooking the famed Bronx boulevard. At some point just before 7 p.m., a group of seven children claimed to see a vision of a lady at the top of the hill. The children immediately dropped to their knees and began praying. At first, Joseph didn't see what the other children saw, but he joined his friends in prayer nonetheless. Moments later, however, Joseph claimed that the vision appeared to him as well and beckoned him by name. Initially frightened, he calmed when the lady spoke directly to him. He also said that she requested he return the next evening at 7 p.m. Although all the children present claimed to have seen the vision, only Joseph claimed to have heard her speak.

The kids rushed home excitedly to tell their parents what they believed they had just witnessed. Joseph's father became enraged when his son told him the story. He accused the boy of telling lies and slapped him. His mother, however, knew her son to be a truthful boy who wouldn't tell such tales, so she encouraged him to return to the lot to collect his thoughts. When he got to the lot a few moments later, he began trembling, fell to his knees, and drifted into a deep state of prayer. The apparition appeared to Joseph again, but this time her instructions were more detailed. "Return for 16 consecutive nights at 7 p.m." was what the boy claimed he was told by the vision he believed to be the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The news of the apparition began to make its way through the Italian neighborhood. By 7 the following evening, the lot next to the Vitolo home was filled with neighborhood people. Many were carrying rosary beads and candles, which they arranged in the shape of a cross. Quite a commotion stirred when all but the center candle blew out simultaneously.

The next day local men constructed an altar, and that evening, the crowd had swelled to more than 500 people as the story moved beyond Villa Avenue. Many of the newcomers were the Irish parishioners of St. Philip Neri Church, which is located just a few blocks to the south. The Irish lived just across the boulevard on the east side of the Grand Concourse. Once again, there were claims that all but the center candle mysteriously extinguished, and many skeptics were converted to believers.

With each passing day, the number of visitors swelled from hundreds to thousands. The stories of sightings, unexplained occurrences and even miracles were being rumored. The nightly observance had turned into a 24-hour vigil. A steady stream of people, many of them fragile, sick or feeble—mothers with ailing children, the handicapped, wounded World War II veterans and parents clutching photos of sons lost in the war—were among those who asked to meet young Joseph and to pray at the shrine. They would wait for hours outside the Vitolo home. Joseph met them all, one by one.

On Nov. 6, the archbishop of New York,

Francis Cardinal Spellman, came to see Joseph for a private meeting. He was also taken to the Times Square broadcast studio of Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, the popular radio (and later television) host. Other notables, including comedian Lou Costello (of Abbott and Costello fame) and Frank Sinatra also made the pilgrimage to the shrine. Sinatra supposedly gave Joseph a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Extensive newspaper coverage had turned the young boy into a media celebrity and the shrine on the Grand Concourse into a place of pilgrimage. People eager to witness a miracle, or in need of one, began arriving from all over New York and as far away as Cleveland, Ohio, and Canada. *Life Magazine* ran a story titled "The Bronx Miracle," and *Time Magazine's* story was called "Shrine in The Bronx." Reporters from Italian newspapers and international wire services showed up, and hundreds of articles circulated around the globe.

On Nov. 14, the final day of the alleged visitation, an estimated 30,000 people crowded onto the streets of the Grand Concourse and Villa Avenue, closing both to traffic. Over 100 police officers were on hand to keep order. Anticipation was at a fever pitch as Joseph said that the Blessed Virgin Mary promised the occurrence of a miracle on this final night. People were saying the rosary and singing hymns. In unison the crowd prayed, "Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

At just about 7 p.m., the skies opened up and rain fell on the masses below. Someone in the front of the crowd near the altar shouted "Joseph is not getting wet." The crowd became raucous, and a few women, suffering from hysteria, were pulled from the crowd and brought to nearby Fordham Hospital. Joseph was whisked home, and family members refused to let him answer the questions of the reporters present.

As the story faded from the headlines, so did the crowds. The Archdiocese of New York declined to make a statement on its validity, and as the days and months and years passed, local Roman Catholics forgot about the "Bronx Miracle," as *Life Magazine* called it. Today the site is called Queen of the Universe Shrine. A handful of devotees keep vigil and say the rosary each night at 7 o'clock, led by Joseph Vitolo who still lives in his childhood home on Villa Avenue. Each year the anniversary of the apparition is marked with a Mass and celebration, and devotees of the shrine travel from several states to attend.

Queen of the Universe Shrine: Located on the west side of the Grand Concourse, just south of Van Cortlandt Park South. The entrance to the shrine is at 3191 Grand Concourse. Walk up the steep flight of stairs and take a right. The rosary is said most evenings here at 7 p.m.

Note: Michael Shanley is a native Bronxite and longtime 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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From EDWARD D. HEBEN, C.P.A.

New York Tax Amnesty

A New York State tax amnesty program, first proposed by our very own State Senator and Deputy Majority Leader, Jeff Klein, allows delinquent taxpayers three months to clear up unpaid tax bills.

Enacted as part of this year's Deficit Reduction Plan, the 2010 "Penalty and Interest Discount Program" (PAID) for tax liabilities gives eligible taxpayers substantial reductions in penalties and interest accrued over time if they pay their outstanding taxes on or before March 15, 2010. The program is available for unpaid tax bills issued on or before Dec. 31, 2003, and taxpayers who participate in the voluntary compliance will receive an 80 percent reduction in accrued penalties and interest. For unpaid tax bills issued after Dec. 31, 2003, but before Dec. 31, 2006, taxpayers will receive a 50 percent reduction in penalties and interest.

"One of my top priorities this legislative session is to improve the fiscal health of not only of our state, but also that of our hard-working taxpayers," Senator Klein said. "Right now, New York State has more than \$4 billion in outstanding collectible taxes. A tax amnesty program has the potential to significantly slice that amount and help more than 400,000 delinquent taxpayers get back on their feet."

The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF) is mailing

letters to taxpayers who qualify for the PAID program. It has also posted information on its website at www.nystax.gov. You may also call 518-457-1726 for further details about the program; in-state residents can call 888-272-9697 for instructions on how to participate. All candidates must update their contact information through the DTF in order to find out if they qualify for the program.

Senator Klein is sponsoring another tax collection bill that would penalize delinquent taxpayers by not allowing state agencies to renew their professional licenses. Professional licenses are renewed every two to three years, so the bill would force taxpayers to keep up-to date on tax payments. In addition, Mr. Klein is also sponsoring legislation that would allow the DTF to post the names of the most egregious delinquent taxpayers online.

For purposes of the PAID program, an eligible taxpayer is any individual, business entity, trust or not-for-profit organization that has an outstanding and long overdue tax liability. However, a taxpayer who has been convicted of a crime under the tax or penal law and who is subject to a court order to pay a tax liability because of that conviction is not eligible to participate in the program.

An eligible tax liability is one that is fixed and final, and for which an assessment or final determination notice was issued on or before Dec. 31, 2006. However, an eligible tax liability does not include an assessment or final determination that includes any fraud penalties, willful failure to collect and pay withholding taxes, substantial understatement of tax and other fraudulent tax activities and abusive tax shelters.

The Tax Department will be sending written notice to each potentially eligible taxpayer, at the taxpayer's last known address, inviting the taxpayer to participate in the program. The notice will include a listing of eligible tax liabili-

ties, interest, penalties and the reduced amounts due under the program along with the potential compliance savings.

If a taxpayer does not make full payment of any eligible liability by March 15, 2010, the taxpayer will not receive any savings benefit. Thus, if a taxpayer concurs with the amounts requested, the program is a one-time opportunity to take advantage of the potential savings and liability will be deemed satisfied and paid in full.

Obituaries

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



Photo by RON TERNER

Ulla Brennan

Ulla Brennen

Ulla Brennen, who lived on City Island for most of her life, passed away at the age of 70 at Calvary Hospital after a sudden and unexpected diagnosis of cancer.

She was born on Sept. 14, 1939, in Aarkirby, Denmark, and moved to City Island after meeting Edmund Brennen, while he was vacationing in Copenhagen.

Ulla and Edmund (known as Red) had three daughters, Marcy, Brenda and Amanda, during their 19 years of marriage.

Ulla became a very successful real estate agent in Bronxville, New York, and lived with her girls in Yonkers and Rockland County for a time before eventually moving back to City Island.

In 1992, while visiting friends in Southampton, she was in a very serious automobile accident that left her with brain damage and other physical challenges. After two years of dedicated work from the staff at Stony Brook University Hospital and Helen Hayes Rehabilitation Center, Ulla was miraculously able to live on her own. She was in recent years a resident of Pilot Cove Manor.

Longtime Islanders remember Ulla's dynamic personality, her weekly yard sales on City Island Avenue and her tireless dedication to the community and to the Community Center. She was an active member of Grace Episcopal Church, and she enjoyed and supported the City Island Theater Group along with many other community activities. Her perseverance and bravery were immeasurable, and her strength was a comfort and inspiration to everyone who knew her.

Ulla Brennen is survived by her daughters and five grandchildren, Mitchell, Dusty, Travis, Russell, and Tracen. Her family is especially grateful to all of Ulla's friends, who gave her their support in the past and especially during these last few weeks, and to the staff at Calvary Hospital for their support, kindness and excellent care.

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

FEBRUARY 2010									
DAY	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	DAY
	HH MM	FEET	HH MM	FEET	HH MM	FEET	HH MM	FEET	
01 Mon	0029	8.28	0702	-1.25	1248	8.24	1928	-1.40	Mon 01
02 Tue	0119	8.26	0756	-1.16	1342	7.87	2016	-1.09	Tue 02
03 Wed	0211	8.08	0853	-0.89	1439	7.40	2108	-0.64	Wed 03
04 Thu	0308	7.78	0955	-0.52	1544	6.90	2206	-0.13	Thu 04
05 Fri	0414	7.46	1101	-0.14	1655	6.50	2312	0.34	Fri 05
06 Sat	0525	7.21	1208	0.13	1805	6.29			Sat 06
07 Sun	0020	0.66	0633	7.11	1311	0.26	1910	6.29	Sun 07
08 Mon	0124	0.80	0736	7.15	1410	0.26	2080	6.45	Mon 08
09 Tue	0223	0.78	0832	7.27	1503	0.19	2101	6.68	Tue 09
10 Wed	0315	0.67	0922	7.41	1551	0.11	2148	6.92	Wed 10
11 Thu	0402	0.53	1008	7.51	1634	0.05	2231	7.11	Thu 11
12 Fri	0444	0.41	1049	7.53	1712	0.05	2310	7.23	Fri 12
13 Sat	0520	0.32	1125	7.48	1744	0.09	2343	7.26	Sat 13
14 Sun	0549	0.27	1152	7.36	1806	0.14			Sun 14
15 Mon	0004	7.26	0606	0.21	1204	7.25	1813	0.14	Mon 15
16 Tue	0012	7.33	0623	0.12	1221	7.21	1832	0.08	Tue 16
17 Wed	0034	7.46	0652	0.05	1250	7.17	1903	0.05	Wed 17
18 Thu	0106	7.59	0729	0.05	1328	7.08	1941	0.12	Thu 18
19 Fri	0145	7.66	0811	0.15	1410	6.92	2023	0.27	Fri 19
20 Sat	0229	7.64	0858	0.33	1459	6.71	2110	0.50	Sat 20
21 Sun	0319	7.55	0951	0.55	1553	6.49	2204	0.75	Sun 21
22 Mon	0415	7.42	1053	0.71	1655	6.35	2305	0.92	Mon 22
23 Tue	0518	7.33	1211	0.72	1807	6.39			Tue 23
24 Wed	0017	0.92	0630	7.36	1352	0.42	1930	6.69	Wed 24
25 Thu	0148	0.62	0749	7.57	1501	-0.10	2046	7.19	Thu 25
26 Fri	0311	0.04	0903	7.90	1556	-0.63	2144	7.73	Fri 26
27 Sat	0412	-0.58	1003	8.20	1646	-1.06	2235	8.18	Sat 27
28 Sun	0507	-1.10	1057	8.36	1734	-1.32	2323	8.48	Sun 28
MARCH 2010									
01 Mon	0558	-1.41	1147	8.35	1819	-1.37			Mon 01
02 Tue	0009	8.58	0648	-1.48	1236	8.15	1904	-1.20	Tue 02
03 Wed	0056	8.49	0739	-1.29	1326	7.80	1949	-0.84	Wed 03
04 Thu	0144	8.23	0832	-0.90	1418	7.35	2037	-0.34	Thu 04
05 Fri	0237	7.85	0929	-0.39	1518	6.89	2131	0.23	Fri 05
06 Sat	0339	7.43	1031	0.13	1626	6.53	2237	0.76	Sat 06



OWLS, HAWKS, SWANS AND MORE...

So far this year, the owling has been as good as any in recent memory. Saw-whets, long-eareds and great-horneds continue to be the main attraction in our own local woods, but they are only the beginning. Birding Bob maintains that 14 different owl species have been positively identified in New York City parks, so you never know what you may find. We have heard of a snowy owl at Orchard Beach. Christine and her neighbor discovered a great-horned owl up a tree in her backyard right here on City Island. We wonder if it was the same bird we thought we heard in our own backyard about a month ago.

If you're interested in looking for owls on your own, find a bunch of evergreen trees in the woods on Hunter Island or the grove that was planted over the old Little League field; these are the most popular local spots, although you can't get much more local than your own backyard. Wherever you're looking, scan the ground first in search of fresh "whitewash" (aka owl droppings) or perhaps an owl pellet, which is the regurgitated remains of prey that could not be digested. Once you've located these, then you

can begin scanning the trees overhead. It is by no means a foolproof system, but it is a heck of a lot less foolish than scanning every tree in the neighborhood.

There have been multiple reports of hawk and falcon activity as well. One peregrine falcon seems to have taken a liking to the puddles in the Orchard Beach parking lot. It has been photographed bathing there on numerous occasions. A lone red-tailed hawk has staked a claim to a particular street light alongside the southbound Hutchinson River Parkway. It has been spotted there almost every day, unless it is raining. This being mating season, pairs of red-tailed—or perhaps the same pair—have been observed in various locations on the grounds of the Split Rock Golf Course. Sharp-shinned hawks have also made their presence known. Unlike owls, who prefer evergreens and who are nocturnal, hawks seem to prefer bare trees in the daylight, making them much easier to find.

The deer population continues to impress. Maria saw eight of them off to the right side of the road as you approach Orchard Beach from City Island. Eight at a time could be a record! In the lagoon across the road from Glover's Rock, Maria also saw what could be a record number of mute swans in one place in these parts—a full dozen.

For more information about the birds in and around City Island, you'll want to check out www.cityislandbirds.com. The last time we joined Jack on one of his regular bird walks he had added another lucky seven or so regular walkers. No wonder he didn't recognize us.

As always, we invite your input at jdsstrat@msn.com, or by way of *The Island Current* at P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464.

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From Pells to Parks (Part I)

A HISTORY OF BARTOW-PELL MANSION MUSEUM

By ELLEN BRUZELIUS



Images courtesy of BARTOW-PELL MANSION MUSEUM

This drawing of the Bartow-Pell house appeared in the April 1892 issue of *Scribner's Magazine* illustrating an article on the "New Parks of the City of New York."

Many people in the northeast Bronx and southern Westchester are well acquainted with the names Pell and Bartow. There are Pell houses scattered about, a Bartow Avenue, and then, of course, Pelham Bay Park and the town of Pelham. But the connection between the Pells, Bartows and the Parks department is perhaps not so clear.

I should know. I have had to puzzle it out during the last nine months since becoming Executive Director of the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum. Despite having lived in the area for close to 20 years, and visiting the museum and particularly its grounds innumerable times, I was never quite sure how it all connected. I suspect I'm not alone in this. Having now gained some "inside intelligence," I am eager to share what I've learned about the fascinating history of the mansion and its grounds.

In 1654 Thomas Pell (1603-1669), an English physician living in Fairfield, Connecticut, acquired thousands of acres of land from the Siwanoy Indians, mostly likely as a real estate venture. Stretching from what is today Westchester Square in the Bronx up through New Rochelle, this area was all part of Westchester County until the late 19th century. Legend has it that the purchase was formalized underneath what later became known as the Treaty Oak. That oak, or at least one thought to be it, was eventually encircled with a high wrought-iron fence to protect it, though, sadly, to no avail. An article in the April 18, 1909 issue of the *New York Times* noted that it had succumbed to high winds after having been set on fire by vandals a few years earlier. A new treaty "oak" was subsequently planted to commemorate the spot which is still there today. Bizarrely enough, this oak turns out to be an elm, one of the charming curiosities of the site's long history.

When Thomas Pell died, having no children of his own, he bequeathed his Westchester land and a house to his nephew, Sir John Pell (1643-1702?) of London. In 1687 Sir John received a royal patent from the governor of New York that tradition says authorized the use of the title "Lord of the Manor." Lord Pell's house stood southwest of the current Bartow-Pell mansion and was probably destroyed during the Revolutionary War.

The Pell and Bartow families were linked by marriage in the 1770s, when John Bartow Jr. married his second wife, his cousin Ann Pell. They acquired 232 acres of land from the Pells in the general area of where the Bartow-Pell mansion stands

today but sold it in the early 1800s to the LeRoy family. Robert Bartow, John's grandson, bought it back in 1836 and built the house and carriage house there today known as the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum.

By 1842 Robert and his wife, Maria Lorillard, and the two oldest of their nine children had moved into what was described by their neighbor Robert Bolton Jr. as "a fine stone house, in the Grecian style, which presents a neat front with projecting wings." Beautifully situated on a small rise, the house overlooked Long Island Sound with what must have been a truly magnificent view. Today that view is obscured by trees—a mixed blessing—as without them, the mansion would look out at the parking lot of Orchard Beach, built by Robert Moses in 1936.

The Bartow mansion was not the only grand house in the Pelham Bay area. As New York City became a commercial and mercantile center in the early 1800s, its wealth spilled over into Pelham, as the well-to-do sought out property with water views for summer homes and country estates. Prominent neighbors included James Augustus Suydam, a well-known art collector, and Dr. and Mrs. Richard Lewis Morris. Dr. Morris had been a New

York City Commissioner of Health, and Mrs. Morris was the sister of the renowned statesman Hamilton Fish. In all, some 20 grand houses dotted the Pelham Bay landscape. On either side of the Bartows were two particularly impressive houses: Hawkswood, on Rodman's Neck, built by Elisha King and later owned by the Marshall family, and John Hunter's mansion on Hunter Island. Today, the Bartow-Pell buildings are the only ones still standing, and as such, they provide an important link to the history of the area.

Robert Bartow died in 1868 and Maria in 1880, by which time the Bartow family presence on Pelham Bay was winding down. In 1884 the New York State Legislature passed a bill "laying-out public places and parkways" in the city and Westchester County and "authorizing the taking of lands for the same." The Bartow estate and adjacent farms were included in the land claimed for the future Pelham Bay Park. This decision did not meet with universal approval, however. For two years much debate took place over the value of the land that the city planned to annex by right of eminent domain. Finally, in November 1888, the matter was settled by the Supreme Court of New York State: over \$9 million was spent for the acquisition of parkland for Pelham and New York City, and just over \$200,000 went to the Bartow family.

The city, which annexed the parkland (and City Island) in 1985, did not quite know what to do with its new property. Pelham Bay Park was far from Manhattan, and transportation to and from was difficult. Vandalism was rampant, and the great mansions gradually deteriorated, although some, including the Bartow property, were rented out. A family named Turnbull lived there from 1894 to 1904; documents indicate that in 1900, they paid the grand sum of \$40 a month. They left, however, in 1904, and the house was then leased for nearly a decade to the Day Home and School for Crippled

Children, which offered free housing every summer for 40 children over the age of six.

By 1914 the Bartow mansion was a wreck, but salvation came in the form of the newly created International Garden Club (IGC), the brainchild of Alice Martineau, a British garden writer, and Zelia Hoffman, a socially prominent New Yorker. The club was modeled after England's Royal Horticultural Society, which in its heyday had as many as 18,000 members. The IGC negotiated a three-year lease with the Parks Commission to take over the house and grounds, with an eye to preserving the house and creating a home for the club. Their lease, or license, included restoring the house, putting the grounds in order and establishing experimental gardens, holding monthly exhibits, forming a library, offering monthly lectures, establishing a department of labor, with examinations for gardeners for a certificate from the society, giving free instruction to those desiring to qualify as teachers for Public School Gardens and helping other horticultural societies and garden clubs.

The terms also called for the IGC to spend at least \$3,000 at once on restoring the house, plus \$500 a year thereafter, but in fact, by the summer of 1915, some \$27,000 had been spent on restoration, which was done by the renowned architectural firm Delano & Aldrich. Work was also begun on a formal walled, terraced garden behind the house. In May 1915 a grand opening was held attended by a crowd of 3,000 and officiated by Governor Charles Whitman. During the dedication ceremony, a new oak was planted to replace the dead Treaty Oak. The following year, Mrs. Hoffman asked Frederick Law Olmsted, the nationally prominent landscape architect, to work on a design for the grounds and series of gardens. Much discussion ensued, but with the advent of World War I, the project was put aside, never to be resumed. (The second part of this story will appear in the March issue of *The Current*.)



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The Five Biggest Fitness Mistakes

Take a walk through any gym, and you'll notice many mistakes. Mistakes that waste time. Mistakes that put people in danger. And mistakes that are just plain stupid. Maybe you even make a few of these mistakes yourself.

By avoiding these common blunders, you'll put yourself on the fast track to results. Check out the following five fitness mistakes and the solutions you need to avoid danger and to get fit fast.

Mistake 1: You use the wrong weight

The goal is to challenge your muscles, not simply go through the motions. If you are able to complete 15 repetitions easily, then the weight is too light. On the flip side, if you aren't able to perform an exercise through its full range of motion and find yourself cheating on form, then the weight is too heavy.

The correct weights will feel challenging by your last few repetitions, but won't force you to sacrifice form.

Mistake 2: You do the same routine

You may have noticed that most people do the same exercises each time they visit the gym. Maybe you've been doing the same exercise routine as long as you can remember—if it isn't broken, then don't fix it, right?

The truth is that exercise routines have expiration dates, and that is the date that they begin to lose their effectiveness. As a rule of thumb never use the

same routine for more than four weeks.

Mistake 3: You don't warm-up

Most people consider warm-up time to be wasted time. They would rather jump right into the heart of the routine. What they don't realize is that a good warm up will allow you to perform at a higher intensity, which means greater results.

The point of a warm-up is to increase your muscle temperature. This increases blood flow, muscle contraction and reduces muscle resistance. Your warm up should last 5 to 10 minutes.

Mistake 4: You use bad form

Gyms are filled with people performing exercises with bad form. The two biggest reasons are that you aren't concentrating on the exercise, or you're trying to lift weight that is too heavy. Lifting with improper form almost always results in injury.

Take the time to achieve proper form, by doing so you'll avoid injury and will reap the full benefit from each exercise.

Mistake 5: You work out alone

People who exercise alone are less challenged, less accountable and typically see fewer results. It makes sense, doesn't it? Why rush to the gym if no one is there waiting for you? Why push yourself if no one is watching? Exercising alone is a recipe for disaster.

The best way to avoid injury and to see results is to work with me, your trusted source on fitness. I am passionate about seeing my clients achieve results, without wasting time, energy and effort on mistakes.



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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.

Congratulations to Islander Roger Nani, who published his first scientific paper as a graduate student at Cal Tech. The paper appears in the Jan. 20, 2010, issue of Organic Chemistry Letters. You may need to ask another Islander, Dr. Paul Mankiewicz, to have him explain the title: "Rapid Assembly of the Salvileucalin B Norcaradiene Core." Roger's grandparents, Lorraine and Arthur Rauhauser of Horton Street, are very proud, even though they don't understand it.

Happy February birthday wishes to Bay Street's Virginia DiGregorio, with love from your family and friends.

It's another boy for Greg and Trish Penny of Kirby Street. Jake Martin arrived two weeks early on Dec. 26, 2009, and was welcomed by big brother Joseph. Lots of hugs and kisses from Grandma and Grandpa Penny, Aunt Kim, Uncle John and cousins Kayla and Alyssa. Congratulations to Mommy and Daddy too!

Happy January birthdays to Francesca Strazzera, and Bernie and Ben Keschl. February birthday greetings go out to Frank, Victoria and, notably, Susannah Strazzera, who celebrates the BIG 50. Best wishes to all from Susan Strazzera.

Birthday greetings on Feb. 26 to Bay Street's Lucy Zec, with love from your family and friends.

God speed and best wishes for continued success to Tier Street's Keith Manfredonia, who graduated from Coast Guard boot camp in Cape May, New Jersey, on Jan. 22. Keith will be stationed in Boston Harbor. With love and kisses from your proud family.

Happy ninth birthday on Feb. 23 to Hailey Nelson, with love from your family.

Belated 19th birthday greetings to Alanna McIntyre on Jan. 18.

Happy, happy 80th birthday to Walter Huffell on Jan. 22, from his wife, Paula; daughter, Susan; son-in-law, Rob; and granddaughters, Michelle and Jennifer.

Happy Valentine's Day to all!

Maria Swieciki

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ISLAND CURRENT BEGINS 39TH YEAR!



Photo by LAURY HOPKINS

Members of the Island Current staff and their guests gathered for the newspaper's annual meeting on Jan. 10, 2010, at the home of longtime writer and copy editor Barbara Dolensek. Karen Nani, editor, and board member, Judy Rauh, highlighted different milestones during the past 38 years and acknowledged the contributions of everyone in attendance, including (front row): Maria Christina Swieciki, Miriam Kleinberg, Barbara Dolensek, Eileen and Cathy Mazzaro, and Russell Schaller. Second row: Karen Nani, Maria Sutherland, Maria Swieciki, Paula Huffell, Bette Heben, Ginger Danegger, Jane Protzman, John Sheridan and Rick DeWitt. Back row: Bob Swieciki, Ed Heben, Walter Huffell, Mary Danegger, Bruce Weis, Judy and Mike Rauh. Not shown: Marsha Treiber and Bill Clancy.

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