

Two Dollars

By VIRGINIA DANNEGGER and KAREN NANI



Photos by CELINE COLLADO and JESSE COWAN

P.S. 175's volleyball team won the New York Edge League championship in their first season. Shown above are the victorious teammates after the game on Jan. 25, 2025 (top photo, kneeling, l. to r.): co-captain Azariah Maisonet, captain Angelina Vrettros and assistant coach Richard Flores. Standing: Angelina Jones, Faith Bonilla, Waverly Treiber, Noah Esdelle, Nishara Conley, Khalil Murphy, Peyton Sims, coach Edosomwan Nosazena, MVP Ava Cautillo, Imani Cruz, Adalia Vega, London Patterson, Genesis Velazquez, Olivia Cross, Elijah Gorzko and Alexa Gierum. Not shown: Maxine Alvarez. On Dec. 21, 2024, P.S. 175 eighth-graders Adalia Vega and Peyton Sims were picked to play in a "girls only" flag football championship game at MetLife Stadium (bottom photo).

What a great start for the newly formed P.S. 175 co-ed volleyball team that began practicing in the fall of 2024 and won the league championship in January 2025.

The winning team was put together by Jesse Cowan, who has been a paraprofessional teacher at City Island's only public school for nine years. Jesse is also the Site Director for the New York Edge after-school program, which operates the after-school activities at P.S. 175 and 150 other schools around the city.

“The New York Edge program has been working tirelessly to insure our kids are receiving amazing opportunities,” he told *The Current*. He explained that there had been a volleyball club last year at the school organized by teacher Anthony Esposito. In 2024, Jesse found coaches

and enough interested players to form a competitive team in the New York Edge league. He was quick to give credit to head coach Edosomwan Nosazena and assistant coach Richard Flores, as well as to parent volunteer Joann Cautillo.

The team of 18 athletes was made up of sixth- to eighth-grade girls and boys ages 11 to 14. They had an eight-game season beginning in December 2024, and they went undefeated through January 2025. They practiced after school in the P.S. 175 gym and played league games on Saturdays in Queens and the Bronx.

They went to the playoffs and swept Middle School 355Q for the championship, winning all three (out of five) games for the title. The final game was played at M.S. 127 on Castle Hill Avenue in the Bronx. The proud team was led by players Angelina Vrettros (captain) and Azariah Maisonet (co-captain). The championship and season Most Valuable Player (MVP) was Ava Cautillo. “Her serving was phenomenal and she scored a lot of points for the team,” Jesse explained, noting that there were more girls on the team than boys.

The success of the volleyball team wasn't the only historic first for P.S. 175. In 2024, Jesse also formed a co-ed flag football team, which competed in another New York Edge league. Although they didn't win the championship, two of the eight girls were picked to play in a "girls only" championship game on Dec. 21 at MetLife Stadium, where the New York Jets and Giants play. Adalia Vega and Peyton Sims represented P.S. 175 and were hailed as "all stars" by Jesse.

Principal Julie Porras praised “Coach Cowan’s” efforts with the after-school programs and teams. “He is too modest to tell you that he will receive a United Federation of Teachers (UFT) award on March 28.” The award is given to a paraprofessional teacher who goes above and beyond supporting students and setting high expectations. “We applaud his love for the students, his laughter and his sense of community,” Ms. Porras told *The Current*.

Not bad for one of New York City's few remaining K-to-8 public schools. For the first time, there is also a pre-K class at the school, which began in September 2024 (see September 2024 issue of *The Current*). The P.S. 175 school spirit will also be on display at the P.T.A. annual card party on March 14, 2025 (see *Briefly* this issue).

By KAREN NANI

Many Islanders have experienced the joy of hearing Elizabeth Farnum sing at various local events—the lighting of the annual Christmas Tree in Hawkins Park and the Holiday Concert at St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church. But did you know that there are many professional accomplishments in Elizabeth's international music career, including a Grammy nomination and a tour with the popular Riverdance show.

Let's start at the very beginning, as the Rodgers and Hammerstein song says. Elizabeth was born in the small Massachusetts town of Lunenburg to Barbara and Albert Henreckson. She has one sister, Deborah, and she describes her birthplace as having "more cows than people."

Elizabeth's interest in music and singing started early, and she went on to graduate from the Hartt School of Music in West Hartford, CT. After college, she performed in summer stock in Maine and then headed to New York in 1986 to pursue a Broadway career. She landed a role in the Cole Porter musical "Jubilee."

In the early 1990s, she switched her sights to opera and sang in productions including the Metropolitan Opera's "Die Meistersinger" by Richard Wagner. Always expanding her musical horizons, Elizabeth became interested in ensemble music and studio recording in 1992, and she joined a group called Pomerium. The group's "Creator of the Stars" was nominated for a Grammy award, the music industry's highest honor. During the decades that followed, Elizabeth was featured on more than 30 recordings, four of which were nominated for a Grammy award.

Praised by the *New York Times* for her “honeyed tone,” Elizabeth became one of the most highly sought-after vocalists in the field of modern or new music primarily



Photo by RON TERNER

Elizabeth Farnum

composed in the 21st century. She appeared as a guest soloist with many prominent modern music ensembles throughout the United States, Europe and Asia, and she had a featured role in the U.S. premiere of Pascal Dusapin's "To Be Sung," presented by L'Opéra Français. "I have sung on five continents and felt like a celebrity in Japan after one recording hit #1 on their charts," she told *The Current*.

It was music that led Elizabeth to another milestone in her life. In 1986, she answered an ad for a soprano with a Bronx community theater group described as a “portable repertory theater” that gave performances at senior centers and for shut-ins throughout the Bronx. She sang Cole Porter’s “I Get a Kick Out of You” for her audition in front of a musician named Ken Farnum. Although the group eventually dissolved, the relationship flourished. Ken

Continued on page 7

Editorial

For the past 54 years, *The Island Current* has been made available to many of its readers thanks to loyal distributors and businesses here on City Island. Unfortunately, one of the distributors has reported to us that they are losing money because the paper is being taken off their counter without being paid for. This is sad and frustrating. We would like to remind our community that everyone who works on *The Current* is a volunteer and that our advertisers contribute to enable the paper to keep going.

The Current has been a staple in the City Island community for over five decades. Very few small towns can boast that they have their own newspapers to deliver local news, events, celebrations, honors and losses. It's one of the charms that makes ours a unique community. We ask for your help in helping us to continue this tradition and enabling it to thrive. We hear from many people near and far who tell us how much they look forward to reading *The Island Current*. The price of \$2 a copy is still very low, but it allows us to keep up with the ever-increasing costs of printing, paper and mailing.

Immerse yourselves in your Island, buy from one of our distributors, order a yearly subscription mailed to your home, or, if you have the means, become an advertiser or a distributor. A list of distributors who will continue to carry the paper is below, and a form you can fill out and return if you prefer to get the paper by mail is on page 16. Thanks to all our faithful readers.

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Burck's Boat Store
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BRIEFLY...

GLAM, GLITTER & GROOVE is the theme for the 2025 P.S. 175 card party. Everyone is invited to join the fun on March 14 at Scavello’s on the Island, 101 City Island Avenue at Pilot Street, starting at 6:30 p.m. The Parent Teacher Association at P.S. 175 works hard to raise money to cover expenses and enrichment programs for the students. Donated prizes will be raffled off, and they need every cent to maintain the kinds of programs that set the school apart. The cost is \$70 per person, which includes a three-course sit-down dinner, valet parking, beer, wine and soft drinks. For tickets and information, go to www.cityislandpta.org.

AN OPEN CALL TO ARTISTS: Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum will hold an exhibition featuring contemporary art with the opening reception scheduled for Saturday, April 5, 2025, at 2 p.m. and on view through Sunday, April 27, 2025. The submission deadline for possible inclusion in the show is Friday, March 28. The theme of this year’s exhibition will focus (pun intended) on artists’ perception of how they view—and ultimately capture—a vision of themselves or the world around them. The curators of “Perception: An Art Exhibition” are Mary Colby, Alison McKay and Bill Rainford. The application for artists can be accessed on this website: www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org.

CITY ISLAND MUSEUM POSITION OPEN: The Museum is looking for a part-time paid administrator who will assist the trustees in several areas, including, but not limited to, working with docents during museum open hours; tracking income, expenses and membership; handling inquiries and correspondence, and working on grant applications. If interested, please send resumé to cinmcityisland@gmail.com.

ATTENTION ALL 1958 GRADUATES OF ST. MARY’S & P.S 17. We are having a reunion at the American Legion hall on City Island on Sunday, May 4, starting at 2 p.m. For St. Mary’s, we are finding it hard to connect with John Magliano, Joseph Petruccione, Angela Mastro, Veronica Eagan, Roseanne Paladins, Mary O’Sullivan, Robert Hagerty. For P.S. 17: Jeannie Doublestein, Teddy Grau, Richard Schaumber, Susie Payne, Billy Howard, Mary Jane Casales, Diane Henshaw, Frances Coughlin, Laura Albanese. Please e-mail Jane Gelsi by April 1 at janegggg@verizon.net with your yes or no response, as well as any additional people you may be aware of. Cost and menu to be determined.

THE CITY ISLAND ROADIES invite you to a festive St. Paddy’s Day 5K run on Saturday, March 15, at 11 a.m. at Orchard Beach! After the run, cool down at The Snug, where specials and prizes await runners and those wearing the most festive attire. Entry is \$15 per runner or \$30 per family (plus fees), with proceeds supporting a free teen class at The Pearl this spring. Registration is open to the first 100 participants—secure your spot today! No cash payments will be accepted on race day. For details and to sign up, visit bit.ly/CI-SPD5k or contact the City Island Roadies at rrodstrom@gmail.com, Jacqueline.Ciarletta@gmail.com, or LNye610@gmail.com.

CALLING ALL BEACH STREET & ST. MARY’S PLAYERS: Join in a tribute to Susan McCauley, the director of long-ago but never-forgotten City Island summer musicals in the 1970s! On Saturday, April 12, at 7:30 p.m., the Snug (302 City Island Avenue) will remember Sue and the gifts of theater and friendship she gave to many young Islanders. Join them for a sing-a-long with hits from many of the shows Sue directed, from “The Wizard of Oz,” “Annie Get Your Gun” and “The King and I” to “Godspell,” “West Side Story,” “Jesus Christ Superstar” and many more. Pianist Alex McFarland will play favorite songs from these classic Broadway shows. Come sing your favorite tunes, see old friends and share memories of summer theater fun on Beach Street and at St. Mary’s as we honor Sue! \$10 cover charge for the musician; proceeds over the cost of the pianist will go to the City Island Theater Group. Contact suemccaulytribute@gmail.com to RSVP or to ask questions.

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER: On Tuesday, March 4, the night before Ash Wednesday, a traditional pancake supper will be held at Grace Episcopal Church on City Island Avenue at Pilot Street from 5 to 7 p.m. All are welcome! The menu will include pancakes, bacon, sausages, hot cross buns and hot and cold beverages. Fr. Kevin Moroney (“The Singing Vicar”) will be providing musical entertainment. A donation of \$10 per person is suggested. For more information, call the parish at 718-885-1080.

CITY ISLAND THEATER GROUP will present John Pielmeier’s “Agnes of God” on Friday, March 14; Saturday, March 15; Friday, March 21; and Saturday, March 22; at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, March 16, and March 22 at 3 p.m. All performances will be at Grace Church Hall, 116 City Island Avenue. There will be a talk-back with the cast and director immediately following the performance on Sunday, March 16. Tickets are \$30 for general admission and \$25 for seniors and students and can be purchased on line by visiting the website www.cityislandtheatergroup.org,

FOCAL POINT ARTIST’S CHOICE EXHIBITION will be on view from March 8 through 29, with an opening reception from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 8. If you want to bring in your work, the deadline is March 4 and the hanging fee is \$20. The Focal Point Gallery is located at 321 City Island Avenue and is open daily except Sunday.

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45 BLOTTER

Complaints reported from City Island to the 45th Precinct during January and February 2025. Unfounded complaints are not included in the list.

- 1 – GRAND LARCENY
- 2 – LEAVING THE SCENE PROPERTY DAMAGE
- 1 – ROBBERY

Police provided details on the following incidents for the period from Jan. 21 to Feb. 12, 2025.

1/23 – On Kirby Street at 1:30 p.m., an Island male reported an incident of grand larceny. Victim states that an unknown person removed approximately \$1,900 from his checking and savings accounts. The money was taken from two separate ATMs in the Bronx.

1/25 – At 11:24 p.m. on City Island

Avenue, a person called 911 and stated that someone had hit a parked vehicle and fled the location on foot leaving the keys in the ignition. Police attempted to locate the owner of the vehicle with negative results. The vehicle was then towed.

2/2 – An Island male told police that when he arrived home at 9:10 p.m., he saw a black SUV hit his fence on City Island Avenue. He further stated that he was trying to take pictures when he got into a verbal dispute with the defendant, who left the scene without giving any information.

2/7 – At 10:20 a.m., an Island male reported a robbery. He stated that he was walking home when two unknown males approached him from behind and struck him on his back with an unknown object. The victim told the police that the two defendants displayed a silver-gray firearm, reached into his pocket and took \$400. The victim is unsure exactly where the incident took place, possibly City Island Avenue or Minnieford Avenue.



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BILL RAINFORD, BARTOW-PELL PRESIDENT

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photo by SUSAN CHESLOFF

Bill Rainford

Last year the official name of the Bartow-Pell Mansion in Pelham Bay Park was changed to Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum and Garden, and the role of president also underwent a change, with the election of City Islander Bill Rainford as president, the first Bronx resident to hold that title.

Bill, who has been a City Island resident since 1989, has volunteered at Bartow-Pell for several years. He served as a board member from 2007 to 2013 and as co-chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee even after he retired from the board. His return to the board is especially important at this time, since there are a number of projects under way that will benefit from his expertise as a professional building designer and contractor.

The first project involves the carriage

house, which needs repairs of various kinds; the second is the replacement of the septic system, and the third involves serious structural repairs to the main building. All three projects will cost about \$7 million, which has been funded by the NYC City Council, the Mayoral Initiatives, Office of the Bronx Borough President, and Department of Parks & Recreation.

Ten years ago, a major restoration took place on the exterior of the main building, which was built in 1836, but much needs to be done to the interior, such as shoring up the joists that support the second and third floors, which have suffered over years of use. Bill Rainford is exceptionally well qualified to see this project through to completion.

The capital project will be managed by the Historic House Trust and the Department of Parks & Recreation, which owns the building, and it is expected that work will begin this year and be completed within two years. The mansion is a National Historic Landmark and a New York City Landmark, which includes the exterior and much of the interior. The Parks Department does not, however, own the furniture, draperies, works of art and other collections, which are the property of the Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum.

When asked how he can manage to fit the supervision of these projects into a busy work week, Bill responded by saying: “The stories of cultures and classes come alive here at Bartow-Pell, and these remind us that everyone—from indigenous people to modern-day industrialists—has played a part in our history. We are fortunate to be entrusted as stewards.”

Scout Project at the Temple

By ERICA STERLING



Photos by ERICA STERLING

Eagle Scout Victor Lopez-Sterling and fellow City Island Scouts transformed the old basement floor at Temple Beth-El into a beautiful new space in January 2025. Shown above are the dedicated scouts (top photo, l. to r.): Luca Mazzeo, Brian Hickey, Liam McAniff, Matthew Clancy, Lucas Sipas, Victor Lopez-Sterling and Jayden Martinez (lying down). Victor Lopez-Sterling is shown with his grandfather Eric Sterling (bottom photo).

Eagle Scout candidate Victor Lopez-Sterling recently began his service project, the last step in his scouting journey with City Island Troop 211, to renovate and beautify the community space at Temple Beth-El. Victor joined the troop in the first grade and has participated in life-skills training, service projects and camping trips ever since. He has volunteered in the completion of many service projects for the scouts and is grateful for the help he is currently receiving from his troop at the temple.

Victor got the idea to reach out to the temple because he frequently walks by the building but didn't know much about it. Over the years, he has participated in scouting projects at Grace Episcopal Church, Trinity Methodist Church, the Hutchinson River Restoration Project and the American Legion, and he has even visited completed Eagle projects in Puerto Rico. Victor's troop leader, James Goonan, was able to connect Victor with Stu Sorell, who was happy to work with Victor on a specific plan for the temple



project, which will consist of lower level floor renovation and re-tiling and landscaping the yard area.

On Saturday, Jan. 25, 2025, the scouts met at Temple Beth-El to remove the current flooring and prepare for the next steps of installing tile. The troop is grateful to Bowie of Zeus Painting on City Island for helping Victor organize the project and to Connolly Flooring for assisting on demo day. Victor looks forward to working with Bowie to complete the finished flooring over the winter break. In the spring, he will work on beautifying the outdoor greenspace and expects to complete his rank of Eagle Scout by June 2025. His grandfather, Eric Sterling, a long-time resident of City Island, achieved his rank of Eagle Scout in 1959 and is very excited to attend Victor's Eagle ceremony.

Victor is thankful to everyone who has donated money and time to assist with the purchase of tile and other materials, as well as those who have helped by providing physical labor to make this plan a reality. The troop is still raising money and would appreciate any donations to help with costs. Please contact Erica Sterling at 917-670-6777 for more information.



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

Scouts at the Temple

To the Editor:

Led by Victor Lopez-Sterling, who is working for his Eagle Scout badge, several City Island scouts volunteered to raise money and to help remove the old vinyl floor tiles from Temple Beth-El of City Island. He and his fellow scouts Jayden Martinez, Brian Hickey, Matthew Clancy, Thomas Riordan, Luca Mazzeo, Liam McAniff and Lucas Sipas all volunteered their time and their strength to transform the old basement floor into a beautiful new space. These boys exemplify the best of City Island, and Temple Beth-El is extremely grateful for this support.

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2025 Camp Schedule

Session I June 30 - July 18
Session II July 21 - August 8

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Learn more at the CIYC Open Houses



Bartow-Pell Events

Both a New York City and a National Landmark, Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum, 895 Shore Road in Pelham Bay Park, offers programs, exhibitions and special events that speak to contemporary life, connect the past to the present and cultivate appreciation for the area’s historical, natural, and cultural resources. The museum is open to the public Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 12 to 4 p.m. For more information or to make reservations, call 718-885-1461 or visit www.bpmm.org. Museum admission is \$15 adults, \$12 seniors and students. Members enjoy free admission. Private group tours of 10 or more and school class trips are available daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with advance reservation.

From March 1 through March 9, the Red Monkey Theater Group will present “Emma,” a play by Amy Frey based on the novel by Jane Austen at Bartow-Pell. Emma Woodhouse is talented and preco-

cious, loved by all who meet her, but she is over her head as a matchmaker and puts multiple hearts on the line, including her own. Saturdays March 1 and 8, 5 and 8 p.m.; Sunday, March 2, 2 and 5 p.m.; Thursday, March 6, 7 p.m.; Friday, March 7, 7 p.m., Sunday, March 9, 2 p.m. Cost: Adults \$40; Students, Seniors, Bartow-Pell members, \$30.

On March 20 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. hear a presentation by author Mike Virgintino on “Freedomland,” which was located where Co-op City is now.

On March 22, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. students are invited to learn how to create amazing, changing color patterns with kaleidoscopes.

And on April 5 from 2 to 4 p.m. come to the opening reception of “Perception: An Art Exhibition,” a month-long exhibition of contemporary artwork featuring artists from the New York metropolitan area. Curated by Mary Colby, Bill Rainford and Alison McKay. Join us in the Orangerie for the opening reception. The reception is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

To purchase tickets to these events, visit www.bartowpellmansionmuseum.org.

Shore Road Bridge Update

Information regarding the future Shore Road Bridge published in the February issue of *The Current* has been updated by the NYC Department of Transportation. There will be no temporary bridge, after all, but the new bridge will be constructed alongside the existing bridge, as originally planned. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will begin in early 2026, to be completed by the end of the year, and permits will be obtained in 2027. A preliminary bridge plan will be released in 2026, and a public hearing will be held. The final bridge design is scheduled for completion by the end of 2027. Construction will begin the following year and is expected to be complete by 2034.

City Islanders Consider Bally’s Casino Proposal

By JOHN DOYLE

On Monday, Feb. 17, representatives of Bally’s Golf Links presented their proposal for a casino and hotel to a meeting of City Island Rising, part of an expansive outreach effort being coordinated on behalf of the Bally’s Corporation, which has met with groups throughout the eastern Bronx. This proposal, one of 11 being considered for three downstate licenses, is the only Bronx application and is focused on Community Boards 9, 10 (where the site will be constructed) and 11.

Bally’s was represented at the meeting by Stanley Schlein, a longtime City Island resident who is well known in the political sphere, and Jason Ortiz, a political consultant. Mr. Schlein explained that Bally’s is seeking to convert the existing golf course, which they purchased early last year from the Trump Corporation, into an “integrated resort,” which would include a full-service casino, a hotel with a capacity for 500 patrons, a 2,000-person theater, with additional amenities such as a spa and dining areas. The buildings are being proposed to be more than 200 feet high, which, should the project come to fruition, will not be visible to the Throggs Neck community, thanks to additional trees and screening on the perimeter of the property.

Mr. Schlein and Mr. Ortiz said that the project would be built and operated with union labor and that project labor agreements are already under way. The project would create 15,000 construction jobs and 3,500 to 4,000 permanent jobs, all of which will be unionized, according to Bally’s. They claimed that the average job would have a salary of \$110,000, with the lowest paid position, a dishwasher, at \$80,000 annually. Mr. Schlein stressed the “economic boon” this development would bring to the Bronx, which often lags behind the rest of the state in terms of jobs and incomes. If approved, the casino

would make Bally’s the Bronx’s second largest employer, second only to Montefiore.

The presenters stressed that beyond the \$3 billion dollars of investment in the site, they would spend \$70 million to improve the roadways and traffic into the facility and would have to contribute over \$100 million to Parks projects to cover the alienation permissions they would need to build on existing parkland. Additionally, Bally’s claimed to have an agreement with the city so if the project advances, the 45th Precinct would receive additional police protection. They also have designated that a police substation be a part of this construction proposal.

There are several steps being undertaken by Bally’s to advance this proposal, and they all allow for public input. First, a Universal Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) is required to receive permission to construct an R8 district on this site, a process that will start with a hearing at Bronx Community Board 10 on Feb. 28. It will then go to the City Planning Commission, the City Council and Mayor. Bally’s will ask for a 15.7-acre alienation of the existing parkland on site (the entire course is 222 acres, according to published reports), which will require approval from the State Legislature and Governor.

Bally’s must then have their application approved by a majority of the Community Advisory Committee, consisting of the Governor, Mayor, State Senator, Assembly Member, Council Member, and Borough President. Then finally, after receiving these approvals and submitting a \$1 million non-refundable bond, the Governor’s Gaming Facility Location Board will make the final determination. Mr. Schlein estimates that should all of these steps be achieved, construction would start in 2030.

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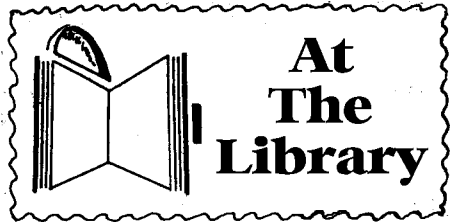
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On Dec. 14, 2024, Dan's Parent's House toy store on City Island hosted a book signing for "Work," a children's book about people loving their jobs. The book, written by Shaina Feinberg and illustrated by Julia Rothman, includes Dan Treiber and Reina Brill as owners of Dan's Parent's House. Shown above at the signing are (l. to r.) Julia Rothman (also in the photo at right), Reina Brill, Dan Treiber and Shaina Feinberg.





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MARCH CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Start with Art: Promote early literacy through art while getting creative! Young artists will explore colors, shapes and more while working on motor skills—and creating some fun crafts along the way. Limited to 12 children and caregivers per session. First come, first served. Mondays at 11 a.m.

Family Storytime: Join us for a live program with songs, rhymes and favorite read-aloud books as we show you that story time is fun for the whole family. Limited to 15 children and caregivers per session. Tuesdays and Fridays at 11 a.m.

Steam Play: Focuses on giving children the freedom to create, design, engineer and innovate in their own way by experimenting with provided toys. Ages 6 to 10. Thursdays at 3 p.m.

Little Learners: Adventures with Flor! Let's go on a journey! Every session we will visit and explore a new story and create our own musical adventure with Latin Grammy nominee Flor Bromley. This program is presented in English and Spanish for children from 0 to age 3 and their caregivers. Please arrive on time. Program space is limited. Thursday, March 27, at 11 a.m.

MARCH TEEN & TWEEN PROGRAMS
Teen Unwind: Every Tuesday at 3 p.m.

Unplug & Relax: Relax in analog, with board games, books, word puzzles and anything else without a screen. Tuesday, March 4, at 3 p.m.; Celtic Knots: Celebrate Irish-American Heritage Month by learning about the history and symbolism of Celtic knots, and learn how to draw them! (Irish-American Heritage Month). Tuesday, March 11, at 3 p.m. Women's History Trivia: Test your knowledge of the history of women in the United States! (Women's History Month). Tuesday, March 18, at 3 p.m. Crafters: Create art—painting, crochet, writing, drawing, and more—in any way you wish! Tuesday, March 25, at 3 p.m.

MARCH ADULT PROGRAMS
Craft & Chat: No need to craft alone! Whether you draw, embroider, sew or anything else, bring your current project to work on while socializing and sharing light refreshments. We will provide basic backup supplies. Thursday, March 27, at 5 p.m.
One-to-One Resumé and Job Search: Subjects will include job search and resumé help. Online with Google Meet; please register online at www.nypl.org/locations/city-island. Every Thursday at 11 a.m.

City Island Book Club: Every month a new title will be chosen and copies will be available for pickup on a first-come, first-served basis. Call us for details on what we're reading. Monday, March 3, at 5 p.m.

Island Writers: Do you have a passion for writing? Join us for our Island Writers, a creative writing group. This group is for writers of different levels and expertise. We are here to help one another on the journey of self-expression and creativity! Every Tuesday at 1 p.m.

Why Knot? Declutter your yarn collection by crafting for a cause! The City Island Library invites knitters and crocheters on all levels to meet up and make scarves and hats to be donated to a non-profit organization that supports veterans. This program will be hosted by a staff member, and we will learn from each other as we work on our projects. Beginners should bring size 7 or 8 knitting needles or a size J or K crochet hook and a ball of worsted weight yarn to begin their crafty journey. Every Wednesday at 2 p.m.

Movie: To be announced. Saturday, March 29, at 2 p.m.

For any or all programs listed, please go to <https://www.nypl.org/locations/city-island> or call 718-885-1703 for more details and to register. Programs are subject to change.



Francesca Falciano, former owner of Creative Images, is offering home hair care services to City Island seniors (men and women), including manicures and pedicures. This offer started because some of her own clients were not able to venture out to the salon anymore. If anyone is interested in at-home hair care services may contact her via e-mail at francafalciano@gmail.com or call 914-879-8072. City Island references are available.

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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 following information was collected for *The Current* by Louise Del Giudice, Licensed Real Estate Agent, Century 21 Marciano

Address	Sale Price	Closing Date
One-Family Houses		
164 Horton Street	\$765,000	10/7/24
70 Buckley Street	\$745,000	10/18/24
101 Pell Place	\$650,000	11/22/24
38 Tier Street	\$646,000	11/15/24
76 Reynolds Street	\$1,100,000	12/10/24
383 King Avenue	\$660,000	12/19/24
101 Earley Street	\$623,000	12/20/24
Multi-Family Houses		
106 Carroll Street	\$750,000	10/30/24
447 Minneford Ave.	\$739,000	11/8/24
Condominium		
51 Island Point	\$775,000	1/22/25



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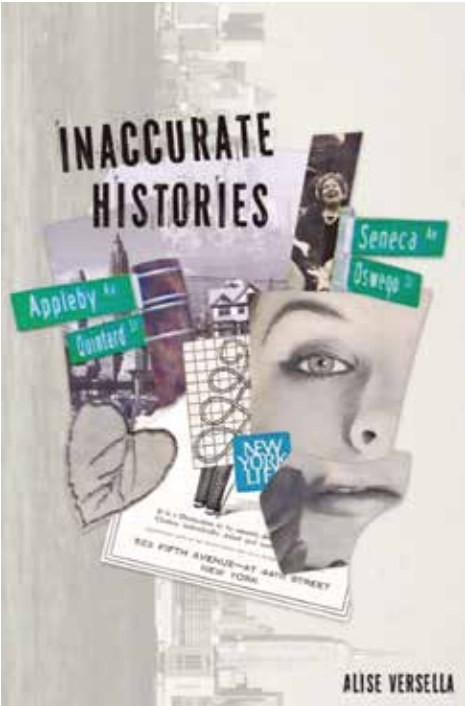
A Current Review
By BARBARA DOLENSEK

INACCURATE HISTORIES

Alise Versella
Golden Dragonfly Press, 2025; paper-
back \$16.99 (available on Amazon)

This recently published book of poems written by Island resident Alise Versella is an unusually appealing read, even for those who don't spend much time reading poetry. These poems do not rhyme, nor do they praise or promote, but they do express the emotions felt by anyone with family ties, with memories of childhood, both good and bad. Of special interest to women, especially those of Italian descent, the poems nevertheless convey thoughts, ideas, fears and hopes that affect all of us, that everyone can find relevant and meaningful.

Alise is originally from Staten Island and has lived in New Jersey and Manhattan, but she is now happily living on City Island. Her work has been widely published in journals and anthologies, and she has performed extensively at poetry festivals, as well as teaching in libraries and schools. This is her fifth book.



CITY ISLAND'S CONNECTIONS
TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD

By BERNARD WITLIEB

For most of the 19th century, City Island was essentially an isolation booth, with no fast, reliable communications link to the mainland. The telegraph was invented in 1837 in England, and on May 24, 1844, Samuel F.B. Morse sent his first coded message: “What hath God wrought?” A snide response might be “Delay,” because it was not until 1877 that Islanders could avail themselves of the device.

On March 23 of that year, the Mount Vernon Chronicle reported that “City Island is to be provided with telegraphic facilities. In a few months a line will be put up by the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph Company. The terminus will probably be the store of S[tephen] D[ecatur] Horton, near the lower end of the Island,” a building that still stands on the corner of Marine Street. And on June 2, the Sag Harbor Corrector noted: “Masters of vessels bound to New York via Long Island Sound can communicate with consignees by telegraph from City Island, just established, and save the expense of harbor towage.”

During the following year, 1878, the Sandy Hook Quarantine Company and the City Island Telegraph Company joined forces to control the flow of maritime traffic by monitoring arrivals and departures, vessel locations and movements to and from ports. In March 1890, Western Union bought out the two local companies.

Nature and humans disrupted the system several times. Lightning from a storm on May 31, 1894, caused a break in the ground wire of the telegraph cable, which

cut Islanders off from “other parts of the world,” and emitted sparks that frightened Mr. J. Applebaugh, the operator in charge. In November 1894, the wheels of a horse-drawn carriage carrying the wife and daughter of shipyard owner Archibald Robertson careened into a telegraph pole at Main Street and Cemetery Lane (now City Island Avenue and east Tier Street).

A cable between City Island and the rest of New York City came in handy after Jan. 8, 1896, when a tugboat facing some difficulties dropped anchor at the bridge over the Harlem Ship Canal (Spuytten Duyvil at the northern tip of Manhattan). But the lifted anchor broke the shore-to-shore connection, rendering the Police Department telegraph and telephone cable useless. The solution? Use the 10-year-old City Island cable.

The time between Alexander Graham Bell’s patent of March 7, 1876, and the first appearance of telephones on City Island was a mere six to eight years. On Aug. 26, 1882, the New Rochelle Pioneer reported that starting in the fall telephone poles would be erected in New Rochelle, Larchmont, Pelham and City Island. But the names of Island subscribers did not appear until the spring and summer of 1884. They included the wealthy: financier William Belden, Bay View Hotel proprietor Carsten Von Liehn, prominent contractor Samuel Booth and a few others, including tradesmen who wanted “to keep pace with the times.” However, the telephone connection to the outside world operated only on weekdays.

Until at least 1896, no cable was laid



Photo courtesy of the CITY ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This building on the corner of Marine Street, once owned by the Horton family, served as a general store and as a telegraph station, which was taken over by Western Union in 1890.

between the Westchester Police Station and the police substation on City Island, a situation worthy of the Keystone Kops. After the telegraph office closed at 8 p.m., Westchester had to make telephone calls to Jordan’s Hotel in Pelham Bay Park, where the staff would relay messages to the occasional horse car driver from Bartow—occasional, because the cars only ran to meet the New York, New Haven and Hartford trains, which arrived an hour apart until just past midnight. Important or emergency calls at nighttime often would go unanswered till the morning.

The system also was at the mercy of human behavior. On July 3, 1885, the Chronicle reported that disgruntled customers threatened to have the attendant at the telephone main office replaced because he was “not diligent in paying attention to calls.”

In those days, the telephones had no dials and were attached to the wall. Several subscribers shared the same line, and operators stood by to make calls upon oral requests by subscribers. Operators were still employed on City Island until 1960, when this became the last community in New York City to get dial telephone service. Until then eight operators in a private home on Schofield Street connected all calls. To pay your telephone bill, you had to go to a store on City Island Avenue. Many older Islanders will remember Ruby Dill, who taught kindergarten for many years at P.S. 17; when she retired from the school, she took a job accepting bill payments for the telephone company.

The dial exchange on City Island began as area code 212-TT5, which was later changed to 718-TT5 and is now 718-885. It wasn’t until early 1986 that new telephone lines were installed to enable call waiting, etc., and this conversion caused a great number of problems that were finally resolved during the summer. Another series of headaches for Island



Photo by RON TERNER

A common City Island sight in 1980 B.C. (before cellphones).

residents and businesses resulted from a telephone failure on Aug. 18, 1993, when a repair crew inadvertently cut through a main cable during routine work. Between 300 and 400 phones went out of service, and while repairs were being made, a bank of eight telephones were set up in front of Hawkins Park, where residents could make free local calls. Long-distance calls were blocked, but the 900 lines were left open. By the next day those lines were also blocked, but by Aug. 20, complete phone service was restored and the free phones were removed.

On Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024, most of City Island lost internet contact with the outside world caused by an automobile accident in Pelham that destroyed the Verizon wiring that provides connection to City Island. But those who continue to use their old-fashioned land lines had no problem reaching the outside world.

Farnum

Continued from page 1

and Elizabeth were married in 1991.

How did they wind up on City Island? “Kenny’s grandmother used to bring him to the island when he was young,” Elizabeth explained. When Ken brought his fiancée to City Island, “it took me only one second to fall in love with the place.” They initially lived on Fordham Place and eventually bought a house on Minneford Avenue.

Now her mother and sister also live on City Island, and Elizabeth has a strong community spirit. She often sings with her husband on keyboard at Islanders’ event, including funerals and weddings (she sang at this reporter’s son’s wedding in 2013). She and Kenny, as she calls her husband,

recorded a CD of liturgical music called “Sail the Soul” in 2003, and they continue to provide their music gratis to community events and services at Fordham University (Ken graduated from Fordham Prep).

For the last two years, Elizabeth has been the Leader of Song at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Scarsdale. In addition to her active music career, she has a keen interest in nature, animals and the environment and is a New York State-licensed wildlife rehabilitator.

You can read more about Elizabeth’s career at <https://www.thevillagetrip.com/elizabeth-farnum-2023/>. You can also find out where to purchase or obtain some of her recordings, including one with Grammy winner Bobby McFerrin called “Vocabularies,” by e-mailing her at elizabethfarnum99@gmail.com.

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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.

Grace Episcopal Church

Grace Episcopal Church, located at 116 City Island Avenue on the corner of Pilot Street, a place of worship and fellowship for 175 years, is open for in-person and remote services. For more information, call the parish at 718-885-1080.

Worship schedule during the month of March: Sunday services at 10 a.m. led by Father Kevin Moroney. After the service, we offer coffee hour, a time for refreshments and fellowship. All are welcome. We have birthday and anniversary prayers during the second Sunday of the month.

Pancake Supper: On Shrove Tuesday, March 4, Grace is planning to hold its famous pancake supper from 5 to 7 p.m. in the parish hall. The menu will include pancakes, bacon, sausages, hot cross buns and hot and cold beverages. Fr. Kevin (“The Singing Vicar”) will be providing musical entertainment. A donation of \$10 per person is suggested (see *Briefly* this issue).

Bishop Visitation: Bishop Allen Shin will be visiting Grace on Sunday, March 9, and all are welcome for the service at 10 a.m. and a reception to follow in the parish hall. While here, the bishop will confirm or receive anyone who wishes to do so. Confirmation is for anyone who is ready to take the baptismal vows that their parents and godparents took for them as children, and the reception is for those who would like to formally join the Episcopal Church. Please let Fr. Kevin know if you are interested, and he can tell you how to prepare.

Sunday School: Members of the Church School participate in the liturgy every month. We will begin preparing for the presentation of “The Passion of Christ” to be presented on Palm Sunday, April 13, during the 10 a.m. service. If you would like to be part of Grace’s Sunday School, call Karen Nani at 917-853-4401 or e-mail her at karenrn1@optonline.net.

Food Pantry: Grace Church collects non-perishable food items and delivers them to the Trinity Methodist Food Pantry after the fourth Sunday of every month. Please bring items to Grace any Sunday, and we will bless them before delivery to Trinity.

Grace Tones: Composed of members of the church choir and singers from on and off City Island, the Grace Tones perform at area nursing homes and rehabilitation centers. If you would like to join, remember that you don’t have to sing like an angel, just have the desire to help lift the spirits of those in need. Interested? Please call Sandy Dunn at 917-566-1296 or e-mail accentfix@gmail.com.

Karen Nani

Sons of the American Legion

Greetings to all. I hope everyone has been keeping warm and safe this winter. I would like to thank all who attended our Super Bowl and Pig’s Knuckle parties in February. And, of course, a big thank you to all of those who set up, cooked, and cleaned for both events.

Our meeting this month will be on Thursday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m. We encourage all members to attend these meetings. Fresh input is always welcome. We look forward to seeing you there. And if you have not done so already, please make sure to send in or drop off your 2025 dues at the Post.

On March 15, we’ll be hosting our St. Patrick’s Day Party from 4 to 8 p.m. Price per person is \$40, which includes beer, wine, soda and an authentic Irish menu. Contact the Legion at 718-885-0639 or stop in at the Post 156, 550 City Island Avenue, for further details.

I would also like to mention that, coming up on April 5, the Post will be hosting our American Legion Family Day, when all are welcome to come visit and enjoy an afternoon of food, fun and activities. Look for further details in next month’s issue.

Peter Chadwick

American Legion Auxiliary

We were honored to have sent a \$2,000 donation to My Brother Vinny, an amazing organization that helps previously homeless veterans across New York State with housewares and furniture. We are so proud to be able to help in any way we can.

Our meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Legion. We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting, March 4.

Please e-mail all inquiries for membership or for supporting the American Legion Family’s commitment to serving our community, veterans and all military personnel and their families to Ala156correspondence@gmail.com.

Service, Not Self.

Michelle Del Pozzo

Trinity United Methodist Church

Please note! Church service is now 9:45 a.m. on Sunday mornings, and communion is the second Sunday of the month. Sunday School is every Sunday at 9:45. Wednesday Evening Prayer: 6:45 p.m. in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

Upcoming dates to remember: Scout Sunday; March 5, Ash Wednesday, 7:30 service; April 13, Palm Sunday; April 20, Easter, 6:10 a.m. sunrise service at Pelham Cemetery, 9:45 a.m. service at Trinity.

Every Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m. the Food Pantry will be open in the hall. The Budget Shop is open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is fully stocked with bargains galore. Thanks to everyone for their patronage and donations.

Rick DeWitt

City Island Oyster Reef

The winter months are a bit quieter for City Island Oyster Reef. We recently had our annual meeting, where we reviewed our annual report that captures our work during 2024 and covers our cumulative work since we began in 2019. Some highlights from our work over the past five years are as follows; we recycled 47,770 pounds of shell from six City Island restaurants (Tony’s Pier, Johnny’s Reef, Sammy’s Fish Box, Sammy’s Shrimp Box, Sea Shore, and Seafood City). We recorded 51 fish and invertebrate species in our monitoring sessions. We worked with 10 schools in the Bronx. We conducted more than 150 monitoring sessions. A total of 19,000-plus hours of volunteer work were donated by residents of City Island and the greater NYC community.

We are working to prepare for the 2025 field season, which opens in April. This



Photo by MARY McINTYRE

Dr. Martha Livingstone, a court-appointed psychiatrist (Michele Keener), is seeking the answers to hard questions from young Sister Agnes (Sofia Castellano) in the City Island Theater Group’s March presentation of John Pellmeier’s play “Agnes of God.” This is a story of questioning beliefs, often with scientific facts clouded by faith, an intense drama that the audience will be able to discuss with the actors and director at a talk-back on Sunday, March 16, following the 3 p.m. production. See BRIEFLY for more information.

year, in addition to our monitoring of oyster cages and water-quality monitoring sessions, we will be doing intensive fish monitoring at Delmour’s Point and Pilot Cove, which is a requirement of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation in order to get permits for oyster reef construction. Our newly restored website will go live at the end of March to will give you details about our upcoming events and the monitoring sessions that we encourage you to sign up for.

Soon we will be hosting a kick-off meeting for our Viva la Sound Environmental Festival on Thursday, March 20, at the Harlem Yacht Club at 5 p.m. On Saturday, April 26, we will be hosting a clean-up of the Living Shoreline behind P.S. 175 from noon to 2 p.m. with our partners, the Surfrider Foundation NYC, the NYPD School Safety Division and the City Island Scouts.

Sally Connolly

Temple Beth-El

Welcome to Temple Beth-El (TBE), “your shul by the sea,” with Rabbi Barbara Symons. We look forward to singing and dancing in prayer and studying Torah and the world with any and all peoples.

Our shul is a stimulating non-denominational, welcoming place for the observance of Jewish traditions. Jewish Renewal is the style of our deeply spiritual, innovative, all-inclusive, and open-minded worship. Our offerings are either on Zoom only or take place at shul with a Zoom option. You do not need a Zoom account to participate. To

participate in any of our offerings please e-mail yourshulbythesea@gmail.com, and let us know which event you would like to attend.

To members and non-members, we offer Torah study, educational classes related to Jewish history, study groups on a variety of topics, social gatherings and rabbinic office hours. Pre-registration may be required for some offerings. A schedule and Zoom links can be found on our website, www.yourshulbythesea.org. We look forward to welcoming you.

The following are events for March 2025:

EREV (Friday Evening) Shabbat Services (All services begin at 7 p.m. unless indicated otherwise)

March 7: Zoom Shabbat with Shari and Monty

March 14: Shabbat at TBE and on Zoom, with Rabbi Barbara and Band

March 21: Zoom Shabbat with Stu

March 28: Shabbat at TBE and on Zoom with Rabbi Barbara and Band

The Shabbat service on March 14 will start with a Purim celebration. Costumes? YES! Noisemakers? YES! Triangle-shaped pastries? YES!

Torah Study Saturday, March 8, 10 a.m. Zoom only.

The installation of Rabbi Barbara Symons will take place on Sunday, March 2, from 4 to 6 p.m. Please join us as we formally install Rabbi Barbara Symons into our loving community. Show your love by adding your wishes to our journal: full page \$108; half page \$54; single line \$18. Check our website (www.yourshulbythesea.org) for submission information.

Do you have a special topic you might like to speak about? Let us know. We’d be happy to host you.

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

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

Rachel Stark, President, and Shari Berkowitz, Vice President

AARP Chapter 318

AARP meets in Trinity United Methodist Church hall on Bay Street. The next meeting will be March 13 at noon. This will be our St. Patrick’s Day luncheon. For reservations call Cathy Kehoe at 718-824-0037.

Cathy Kehoe

St. Mary's Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop is open on Thursday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Watch for our end-of-season bag sales. We will be closed from March 22 to April 2 and will reopen on April 10 with our Spring Collection.

Hope to see you soon.

Arlene Byrne

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

Our Center is in full swing for the new year. You now can pay your dues for the very first time by Zelle; our QR Code will be on our Facebook page and on our Instagram page. Thank you to all our current members for your loyal commitment to the Community Center. You can find all of our up-to-date happenings on our Facebook page and on our bulletin board, which is located near the main entrance of the Center at 190 Fordham Street.

Monday: **Latin Dance** private lessons are available after 6:30 p.m. Have you ever wanted

to feel as if you could join “Dancing with the Stars”? Well, here is your opportunity. Contact Melissa Rosado at 347-739-2076.

Monday: **Irish Dance**, 6 to 8 p.m. Kids and adults are both welcome, even just to observe the class. Contact Caitlin Kelly at 914-262-4517.

Tuesday: **City Island Civic Association** meets last Tuesday of the month (except December).

Wednesday: **Latin Dance** private lessons available before 1 p.m. Contact Melissa Rosado at 347-739-2076.

Thursday: **Family Zumba Class**, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. With its high energy and simple dance moves, Zumba is the perfect physical activity for parents and kids. Contact Teasha at 646-770-4254.

Friday: **Girl Scouts Troop 1814**, every other week from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Contact Melissa Rosado at 347-739-2076.

Saturday: **AA**, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Contact Jason at 917-496-9615 or Jay at 201-988-2515.

Saturday: **Yoga** from 10 to 11 a.m. Contact Teasha at 646-770-4254.

Sunday: **AA**, 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. Contact Jason at 917-496-9615 or Jay at 201-988-2515.

All classes taught at the Center can be paid to our amazing teachers by Zelle.

Thinking of a place to host your next workshop or kid’s birthday? How about a work event or a holiday work party? Rent our affordable venue and directly support our non-for-profit organization.

For availability, call Cheryl Riordan at 347-843-5076.

Melissa Cebollero

St. Mary, Star of the Sea

Masses continue to be celebrated on weekdays Monday through Friday at 7 a.m., on Saturday at 8 a.m. with Vigil at 5:15 p.m., and Sunday at 9 and 11 a.m.

Wednesday, March 5, 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 a.m. and 12 noon. Ashes will be blessed and distributed at all Masses.

Our monthly holy hour will be held on Friday, March 7, from 4 to 5 p.m. All are invited to attend this special period of prayer.

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

Special prayers for the eight children from Our Lady of the Assumption/St. Mary Star of the Sea Religious Education Program and Villa Maria Academy who will receive the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation for the first time on Saturday, March 15, at 1 p.m.

St. Mary’s Thrift Shop will be open on Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Rosette Dietz

PSS City Island Center

PSS City Island Center is located at 116 City Island Avenue at Grace Episcopal Church. Stop by the Center to check out the many exciting activities scheduled for March.

Gabriela Penaloza is our new social worker at the Center. She will be able to assist with benefits and entitlements such as Meals-on-Wheels, SNAP, Access-A-Ride, SCRIE and Medicare/ Medicaid. Please call the Center at 718-885-0727 to book either Monday or Friday appointment. Julio, our technology instructor is at the Center on Tuesday afternoons.

Free tax help for older adults will be available at the Center with CPA Clinics on most Wednesday and Thursdays starting at 11 a.m. Please call the Center for more information. The tax professionals are certified IRS tax counselors who will assist in the filing of your tax returns.

Please stop by PSS City Island Center and check out our calendar for more details on these and other activities we have to offer. All you need to do to join is complete a membership form. Membership is free so if you are 60 or older please join us. Members have access to the Center’s classes, activities, special membership-only trips/ events, as well as a variety of support services.

Lunch in the Center is from 12 to 1 p.m. Pick up for lunch will be available at noon as well. Once a week a plant-based meal is served.

We offer in-person and remote classes; remote classes are through Zoom. Please pick up a calendar for login information and check for weekly updates. If you are interested in receiving free nutritional counseling with a nutritionist over video (Zoom, FaceTime, WeChat, etc.), please call the Center at 718-885-0727.

March Activities

(get calendar as activities are constantly updated.)

Thursday, March 6, at 12:30 p.m., Live Irish Music with Jimmy

Thursday, March 13, at 1 p.m., Dish with Dina: Food Connects Us

The Current Schedule

All of our exercise instructors are certified. Classes are free but donations are much appreciated.

Monday

9 a.m. Tai Chi with Lucy (remote and in-person)

10:30 a.m. Balance Class with Susan (remote and in-person)

11:30 a.m. Mensa Mondays

1 p.m. Introductory Spanish with Maria

Tuesday

9 a.m. Cardio Fit with Mary (remote and in person)

10 a.m. Yoga Stretch with Mary (remote and in person)

11 a.m. In the News

12:15 p.m. Tech Assistance with Julio

1 p.m. iPhone Class

12:45 p.m. Daily Dad Jokes

1 p.m. Board Games-Play Chess, Scrabble, Canasta, Mahjongg

Wednesday

10:15 a.m. Arthritis Exercise with Patty G. (remote and in person)

12:45 p.m. Crafter’s Corner/Crochet with Sandra and Carla

Thursday

9 a.m. Tai Chi with Lucy (remote and in person)

10 a.m. Acrylic Painting with Lois (in person)

1 p.m. Trivia Thursdays

Friday

9 a.m. Yoga Stretch with Mary (in person and remote)

10 a.m. Zumba with Maria (in person and remote)

11 a.m. Blood Pressure Testing

11:30 a.m. Brain Games

Transportation: Transportation is available daily for morning shopping trips which include Lidl, Aldi, Key Food, Stop N Shop, Trader Joes and Target. These trips depart at 9 a.m. Please call Alex at 347-834-6466 for the monthly trip calendar and/or to reserve a seat.

Susan Rosendahl-Masella

City Island Civic Association

The next meeting of the City Island Civic Association will be Tuesday, March 25, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. at the City Island Community Center. Feel free to bring any matters or concerns to the meeting, and we will do what we can to be of assistance to you. Bring a friend or neighbor with you.

You can e-mail the Civic at city.island.civic@gmail.com to ask for assistance. Calling 311 beforehand (and getting a reference number!) to register a complaint about anything from a flooded street to a broken streetlight, graffiti or potholes is the best way to document your issue. Send your complaint number to the Civic Association. Remember that all our elected officials have full-time staff to assist constituents with community issues.

The district office for Councilmember Kristy Marmorato is at 1925 Williamsbridge Road, Floor 2, Bronx, NY 10461. Phone: 718-931-1721. The Legislative Office is at 250 Broadway, Suite 1554, New York, NY 10007; telephone 212-788-7375. The website is District13@council.nyc.gov.

State Senator Nathalia Fernandez’s Albany office is Legislative Office Building, Room 814, 188 State Street, Albany, NY 12247; the telephone number is 518-455-3595. The District Office is 3853 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10465; telephone 718-822-2049 and the e-mail address is fernandez@nysenate.gov.

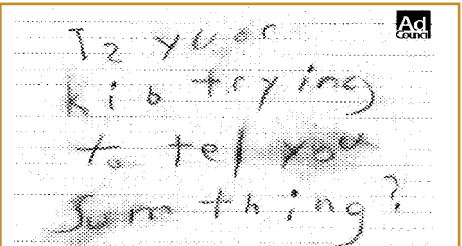
Assemblymember Michael Benedetto’s Albany office is Legislative Office Building, 188 State Street, Albany, NY 12247; the telephone number is 518-455-5296, and the e-mail address is benedettom@nyassembly.gov. The District Offices are at 3602 East Tremont Avenue, Suite 201, Bronx, NY 10465; telephone 718-892-2235, and 177 Dreiser Loop, Room 12, Bronx, NY 10475; telephone 718-320-2220.

As of press date, the new commanding officer of the 45th Precinct has not yet been selected. In the meantime, our NCO is Officer Rugovac; telephone number 917-434-8847. Our Community Affairs Officers are Hannah Rivera (hannah.rivera@nypd.org) and Wilfredo Sanchez (wilfredo.sanchez@nypd.org).

City Island is represented by Bronx Community Board 10, 3165 East Tremont Avenue, Bronx, NY 10461; telephone 718-892-1161; on Facebook at BronxCommunityBoard10; Twitter: @BronxCB10; Instagram: @BronxCB10.

We are now collecting dues for 2025 membership. \$20 for one year or \$50 for three years. Please send to P.O. Box 117, Bronx NY 10464 or via PayPal to city.island.civic@gmail.com. Remember to use the “friends and family” option so a service charge is not deducted.

Cathy Cebek



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Tenth Annual Bingeworthy Television

Olive Kitteridge (2014, 4 episodes) is a four-hour HBO miniseries starring Frances McDormand in the title role as a grumpy retired schoolteacher who lives with her husband, Henry (Richard Jenkins), in a seaside town in Maine. Henry is a kind, considerate man who runs a pharmacy downtown. They have a troubled son named Christopher (Devin Druid at age 13, John Gallagher Jr. as an adult) who dreads coming home. Zoe Kazan is featured as Denise Thibodeau, an employee at the pharmacy, with whom Henry is smitten; and Bill Murray appears near the end as widower Jack Kennison. The series spans 25 years of Olive’s life, during which she has experienced problems of depression, bereavement, jealousy and friction with family members and friends. *The miniseries won eight Primetime Emmy Awards including Outstanding Limited Series, Outstanding Lead Actress for McDormand and Outstanding Lead Actor for Jenkins.*

Fleabag (British, 2016, 12 half-hour episodes over 2 seasons) will not be to everyone’s taste; however, this show is a completely original, raunchy, crazy black comedy, which was written by and stars comic actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge in the title role. Based on her 2013 one-woman show of the same name, Phoebe portrays a character who continuously breaks the fourth wall (i.e., talks to the audience) and she provides a running commentary about everything that is happening and how she feels about it all. Grieving the loss of her mother and best friend, she has no filter as she navigates life and love in London. Primary supporting characters include her sister, Clair (Sian Clifford), her widowed father (Bill Paterson), who marries her godmother (Olivia Colman), with Andrew Scott joining the cast in the second season as The Priest. A running gag throughout the series is a gold statuette that wends its way from episode to episode, here and there, now and then, almost as if it were a live character, bringing some big laughs along the way. The series is replete with copious amounts of foul language and sex, so be forewarned. *Phoebe Waller-Bridge won Best Actress in a comedy series from the Emmy Awards, Golden Globes and Screen Actors Guild. The series also won Emmy Awards for Comedy and Writing, as well as a Golden Globe for Comedy Series.*

Mare of Easttown (2021, 7 episodes) is an American small town crime drama starring Kate Winslet in the title role as a police detective who faces many challenges resulting from overlapping work and family relationships exacerbated by self-doubt. Mare has custody of her young grandson, having lost her son to suicide, and has her mother (Jean Smart) living with them. Much to her consternation, her boss, Chief Carter (John Douglas Thompson), calls in County Detective Colin Zabel (Evan Peters) to assist her in solving a recent case related to an unsolved one from the previous year. The excellent supporting ensemble cast also includes struggling young mother Cailee Spaeny (Erin McMenamin), Julianne Nicholson as Mare’s closest friend Lori Ross, Angourie Rice as Mare’s daughter Siobhan, and Guy Pierce as Mare’s potential love interest Richard Ryan. *The series received 16 Emmy nominations and won four, including Lead Actress for Winslet, Supporting Actress for Nicholson, and Supporting Actor for Peters.*

The Pacific (2010, 10 episodes) is based on the accounts of Marines in World War II. This excellent miniseries follows the intertwined journeys of three U.S. Marines in the Pacific Theater—PFC Robert Leckie (James Badge Dale), PFC Eugene B. Sledge (Joseph Mazello) and Sgt. John Basilone (Jon Seda)—from their first battle against Japan on Guadalcanal, across the sands of

Iwo Jima and the horror of Okinawa, to their ultimately triumphant but difficult return home after V-J Day. The horrors of war in the Pacific are absolutely haunting, from the Bushido code of the Japanese soldiers (death rather than surrender) and the horrific weather and insects to watching their friends being slaughtered. All defined a generation of self-sacrificing men who experienced the worst theater of the war. After being injured and sent to a hospital, Leckie can’t wait to rejoin his group. We watch Sledge go from a frail innocent young individual to a man hardened to the blood and gore around him to an extremely sensitive person at home. After Guadalcanal, Basilone was selected for the Medal of Honor and transferred back to the U.S. to travel the country helping to sell war bonds, but he missed making a contribution in a more meaningful way, ultimately training new recruits. The production team behind “The Pacific,” including Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, was also behind HBO’s award-winning miniseries **Band of Brothers** (2001). *At the Emmy Awards, the series won Outstanding Miniseries and was nominated for Outstanding Directing. The On-Line Film and Television Association (OFTA) awarded the show Best Miniseries, with nominations for Best Actor for James Badge Dale and Joseph Mazzello and Best Supporting Actor for Ashton Holmes*

Secret City (Australian, 2016–19, 12 episodes over 2 seasons) is a geopolitical spy thriller concerning the rising tension between China and the United States, as seen through the eyes of Canberra press gallery journalist Harriet Dunkley (Anna Torv). With the help of her ex-, Australian Signals Force Director and transgender woman Kim Gordon (Damon Herriman), Harriet gets closer to the truth by uncovering a set of interlocked conspiracies that threaten her career and her life and endanger the freedom of every Australian. The second season is called **Secret City: Under the Eagle**, and the story continues with Harriet unwittingly ensnared in a military and political cover-up directed by Minister for Home Affairs Catriona Bailey (Jacki Weaver). Harriet’s search for the truth leads her back into Canberra’s corridors of power, this time working for a maverick Independent MP. What she unearths is a military program so secret even the Prime Minister knows nothing of its existence. *The series won several Australian Logie awards including Most Outstanding Actress for Anna Torv and Outstanding Supporting Actor for Damon Herriman. It also won an Australian Directors Guild award for Emma Freeman.*

Call My Agent (French, 2015–20, 24 episodes over 4 seasons) is set in a talent agency in Paris called A.S.K. Three agents and partners in the agency, Mathias (Thibault de Montalembert), Gabriel (Grégory Montel) and Andréa (Camille Cottin), work diligently to keep their movie industry clients happy and their business afloat, while sometimes there is conflict between their personal and professional lives. Also featured are Andrea’s assistant Camille (Fanny Sidney), Mathias’s assistant Noémie (Fanny Sidney), Gabriel’s assistant Hervé (Nicolas Maury), receptionist and aspiring actor Sofia (Stéfi Celma), and introduced in the second season new owner Hicham Janowski (Assaad Bouab). A delightful aspect of the series is that several famous actors chose to appear in various episodes including Isabelle Huppert, Juliette Binoche, Sigourney Weaver, Jean Dujardin and Isabelle Adjani. Aging agent and partner Arlette (Liliane Rovère) is on hand as an advisor who is never without her darling dog, Jean Gabin. *It won Best Comedy Series at the 49th International Emmy Awards.*

Peaky Blinders (British, 2013-2022, 36 episodes over 6 seasons) is a crime drama centered on a family of mixed Irish Traveller and Romani origins based in Birmingham, England, starting in 1919, several months after the end of the First World War. It focuses on the Peaky Blinders street gang who get their name from sewing razor blades in the peaks of their caps. The primary character is Tommy Shelby played superbly by Cillian Murphy who is not only the gang’s leader, but a WWI hero of such stature that he was intertwined in the highest levels of British Government including Winston Churchill. The primary family members are Aunt Polly (Helen McCrory) and siblings, Arthur (Paul Anderson) who suffers from severe PTSD

from the war, Ada (Sophie Rundle), and John (Joe Cole). Trying to rid Britain of its crime is Inspector Chester Campbell (Sam Neil), who arrives from Belfast to try to achieve that goal. Other significant characters include Tommy’s first wife and former undercover agent Grace Shelby (Annabelle Wallis); known communist and Ada’s husband Freddie Thorne (Iddo Goldberg); leader of an Italian gang in Camden Town, Darby Sabini (Noah Taylor); leader of a Jewish gang in Camden Town, Alfie Solomons (Tom Hardy); a wealthy widow who owns racehorses May Fitz Carleton (Charlotte Riley); Polly’s biological son Michael Gray (Finn Cole); and Tommy’s second wife ex-prostitute Lizzie (Natasha O’Keeffe). Though the characters seem to only drink, smoke and murder, they have ambitions beyond their gangland existence. The primary characters rub up against each other in varied dimensions that cause Tommy to say repeatedly throughout the series “Nobody listens to me.” *Among its many accolades, varying British Television Awards were given six times for Best Drama Series and nine times for Best Actor for Cillian Murphy.*

The Crown (British, 2016-23, 60 episodes over 6 seasons) is the story of Queen Elizabeth from the time of her coronation as a young woman till her abdication 50 years later, exploring her private journey behind the public façade (played for two seasons each by Claire Foy, Olivia Colman and Imelda Staunton). The six-season series begins shortly before the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten (Matt Smith, Tobias Menzies and Jonathan Pryce) in 1947, and ends with the 2005 wedding of Prince Charles (Josh O’Connor and Dominic West) and Camilla Parker Bowles (Olivia Williams). Featured characters include Elizabeth the Queen Mother (Victoria Hamilton, Marion Bailey, and Marcia Warren); Princess Diana (Elizabeth Debicki); Prime Ministers Winston Churchill (John Lithgow), Anthony Eden (Jeremy Northam), Harold Macmillan (Anton Lesser), Tony Blair Bertie Carvel) and Margaret Thatcher (Gillian Anderson); Princess Margaret (Vanessa Kirby, Helena Bonham Carter and Lesley Manville); Dodi Fayed (Khalid Abdalla) and his father Mohamed Al-Fayed (Salim Daw). *In 2021 it won all seven drama categories at Primetime Emmy Awards, becoming the first show to sweep them all. The series was also nominated three times for Outstanding Drama Series, while also winning Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series for John Lithgow as Winston Churchill and Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series for Claire Foy. It won two Golden Globe Best Television Series–Drama Awards and two Screen Actors Guild awards for Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama.*

Told from the perspective of an unseen documentary filmmaker **Modern Family** (2009–20, 250 half-hour episodes over 11 seasons) employs an ensemble cast and is

presented in a mockumentary style, with the characters often speaking directly to the camera. This delightful comedy series offers an honest, often-hilarious perspective of family life. Parents Phil (Ty Burrell) and Claire (Julie Bowen) are seriously challenged by wanting an honest, open relationship with their three kids: Haley (Sarah Hyland), who is trying to grow up too fast; Alex (Ariel Winter), their other daughter, who is too smart for her own good; and Luke (Nolan Gould), their rambunctious young son. Claire’s dad, Jay (Ed O’Neill), and his second (much younger) Latina wife, Gloria (Sofia Vergara), are raising two sons together: Manny (Rico Rodriguez) and Joe (Jeremy Maguire). Jay’s gay son, Mitchell (Jesse Tyler Ferguson), who is also Claire’s brother, and his partner Cameron (Eric Stonestreet) have adopted Vietnamese Lily (Aubrey Anderson-Emmons), completing one big—straight, gay, multicultural, traditional—happy family. *The series won a total of 22 Emmy Awards, including five Emmy Awards for Outstanding Comedy Series, four Emmy Awards for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series (twice each for Eric Stonestreet and Ty Burrell), and two Emmy Awards for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Comedy Series (both for Julie Bowen). It also won the Golden Globe Award for Best Television Series–Musical or Comedy.*

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



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CI Pharmacies Then and Now (or Not)

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



For the past five years, City Island has had no pharmacy, and most residents appear to have adjusted to driving off the Island or to receiving medications by mail. However, over the past 150 years, City Island Avenue (or Main Street, as it was originally called) seems to have had as many pharmacies as it had marine supply shops.

In 1874 George E. Reynolds opened a pharmacy at 307 City Island Avenue “where will be found constantly on hand a full line of Toilet Articles, Perfumery, Stationery, Patent Medicines, and Standard Remedies.” And before the end of the 19th century, there were at least three more pharmacies on the Island, several of which advertised in “The Island Drift,” a precursor to *The Island Current* edited by Orrin Fordham, grandson of the man who put City Island on the oyster map. Reynolds was honored in the 1920s when a street on City Island was named for him.

Cook’s Pharmacy was first located at the corner of Main and Schofield Street, and later in the 1890s on the corner of Main and Orchard Street (now City Island Avenue and Hawkins Street). According to its advertisements in *The Island Drift*, the pharmacy was open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., with “night calls promptly attended.” Cook’s also sold fancy toilet and proprietary articles, as well as soda and root beer for 5 cents, “refreshing, delicious, cold, invigorating.”

The fact that a pharmacy would sell many products that weren’t medicinal has led over the years to the term “drugstore,” but only a licensed pharmacy can sell prescribed medications, whereas a drugstore can sell only over-the-counter medications.

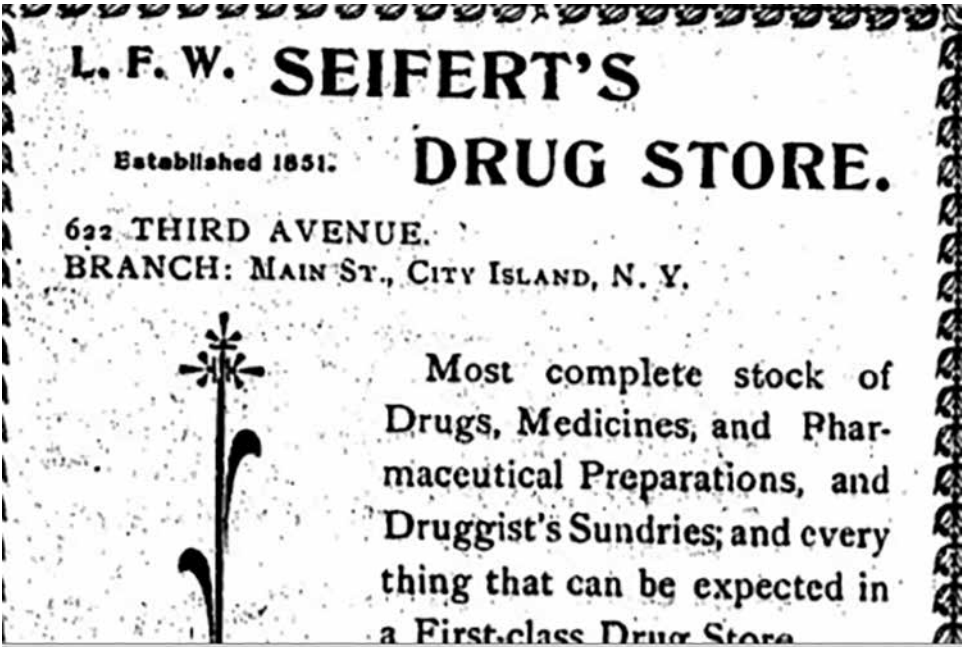
On Aug. 5, 1900, Island apothecary L. F. W. Seifert put his label on a bottle that once contained a pharmaceutical substance but is now in the collection of the City Island

Nautical Museum. And in 1910 a man named Louis Leyes owned a pharmacy on the Island but before long left the business to become a machinist. We know from the story about the polar bear incident that took place on City Island in 1910 (see last month’s *Current*) that at least two pharmacies were here that provided chloroform that helped put Silver King in his cage. One of the stores may have been Niedlich’s, which was located at 530 City Island Avenue at the time. In the 1970s, that location became Say Cheese, a wine and cheese restaurant, for a while and is now Captain Mike Carew’s Dive Shop.

The building at 282 City Island Avenue, now a private house, was a pharmacy for several decades, beginning with a pharmacist named Felix Hirseman, who began his career as a druggist clerk in Manhattan but eventually moved to City Island and by 1912 was elected president of the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York. Hirseman sold the pharmacy to another German immigrant, Otto Alpers, who in turn sold it to Otto P. Gilbert in 1915.

Clam digger Elsa Gilbert Kroepke, daughter of Otto Gilbert, recalled in 1984 that “when my father got this store, you didn’t have your various drugs packaged. You had to package them yourself, like bicarbonate of soda, Epsom salts, boric acid and things like that. It was my job to fill those boxes. My father would come along and spot-weigh them. And I started with that when I was nine years old. Whenever anything had to be done like that, ‘Elsa, come in, you have boxes to fill.’”

Across the street, at 307 City Island Avenue, George Reynolds sold his store in the 1920s to a pharmacist named Samuel Bierman, who had been born in Austria in 1900 and came to the United States at the age of 12.



Photos by BARBARA DOLENSEK

The bottles at the upper left were used by the Gilbert, Seifert and Leyes pharmacies on City Island; the counter at the right came from Gilbert's Pharmacy and is now in the Nautical Museum. The Seifert ad appeared in the *City Island Drift* in 1899.

In 1932, Bierman moved the pharmacy to 311 City Island Avenue, on the northwest corner of Fordham Street, where it remained until 1960 or 1961. Winifred Walsh Doane, who grew up on Pilot Street during the Depression, was impressed by the modern look of the store, where “its tiled floors and white, chromium-trimmed countertops were spotlessly clean. You sensed that the germ count here was low and it was safe to buy prescription drugs.” Bierman’s was also “the place of last resort for late shoppers as the December holidays approached,” although his prices were among the highest, “so I rarely shopped there.” In addition to his work as a pharmacist, Bierman was one of the founders of Temple Beth-El in 1934 and a founder of the City Island Board of Trade (now the Chamber of Commerce).

In 1962 or 1963 Peter Kalemkerian bought the Bierman Pharmacy at 311 City Island Avenue and moved it across the street to Gilbert’s Pharmacy, where he kept that name until he retired during the 1980s. The building at 282 City Island was sold as a private house in 2002. The original counter, where Elsa Gilbert filled boxes with pharmaceuticals, is now in the Community Room at the City Island Nautical Museum.

Although the small building at 474 City Island Avenue is best known as Lina Petite’s hair salon, Calgagno Pharmacy was located there at some point during the middle of the 20th century. After Lina left, the shop became Amanda Bear party store, then an antique shop and is now owned by Brenda Prohaska, who plans to open a real estate office there.

In 1986, the Federation of Cooperatives opened Co-op Pharmacy at 290 City Island Avenue in a building owned by Gabe Scavello, but it closed in mid-August 1991 after the pharmacist filed for bankruptcy and took all of his prescription records with him. Less than a year later, pharmacist Tony Sementilli (who owned other pharmacies) reopened the Co-op Pharmacy and renamed it the City Island Pharmacy. Until he got approval from NYS Licensing Board, he had to fill prescriptions at his Manhattan store and deliver them to City Island.

In 1993, Joe Miccarelli became the pharmacist at the City Island Drug Store, and he

was the only one on City Island for many years. However, he left suddenly on March 13, 2017, in the middle of the snowstorm, much to the surprise of City Island residents, after having given the community one day’s notice. He had been at the pharmacy for 24 years and had another six years on the lease. He instructed his customers to shop at CVS in Pelham Bay, but for the first time City Island was without a pharmacy.

However, a few months later, a new drug store appeared at 290 City Island Avenue, Island Pharmacy & Discount, an independent pharmacy (not part of any drugstore chain), which opened its doors in February 2018. The new proprietor, Anthony Dangelo, hired a pharmacist but left the store in 2021 and moved to a new location, at 250 City Island Avenue, where he opened A Taste of Italy, now 2 PaiZan Pizzeria Cuccina.

Soon after Anthony moved, a new pharmacist rented 290 and opened a new shop, keeping the same name, Island Pharmacy & Discount. However, City Island residents were shocked to learn in 2023, when the shop closed, that the proprietor had been indicted for having operated a scheme that defrauded Medicaid and other insurance plans.

A man named Boris Amino had been distributing black-market medications to Island Pharmacy & Discount along with numerous other pharmacies in New York City. According to court documents, the store at 290 City Island Avenue was operated by Christy Corvalan, who purchased the counterfeit medications from Aminov, dispensed them to patients, billed their insurance policies for the full value of the HIV medication and bought the medications back from the patients who were willing to forego treatment for cash. In April 2024, Amino was sentenced to nine years in prison, with three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay restitution of more than \$13 million and to pay forfeiture of \$4.4 million. Ms. Corvalan was ordered to pay the victims restitution of more than \$13.6 million.

One can only imagine that George Reynolds or Otis Gilbert would be spinning in their graves if they realized what had become of their honorable profession.

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A Current Review
By BARBARA DOLENSEK

GERALD SUMMERS &
MARJORIE BUTCHER:
Makers of Simple Furniture

Martha Deese
Hatje Cantz, 2024; \$80 (available on Amazon, \$60.66)

This handsome book of nearly 400 pages is the result of many years of research on the part of City Island resident Martha Deese, who has a master's degree in decorative art history and three decades of experience as an administrator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Gerald Summers was an important furniture designer who produced hundreds of pieces in London for a company called Makers of Simple Furniture, which he had founded with his partner, Marjorie Butcher, in 1931.

The furniture produced by the Makers of Simple Furniture consisted of ingenious works in plywood that helped establish Great Britain as an important contributor to modern furniture design. Their most famous product was the Bent Plywood Armchair, which received a great deal of attention at the time. Unfortunately, the onset of World War II in Britain led to the closing of their business, but as Martha Deese proves in this new book, their work deserves to be studied and admired today for its originality and beauty.

Thanks to Marjorie Butcher's fine memory and her collection of documents, designs, and photographs, Ms. Deese has been able to compile a volume that not only illustrates in detail the history of this groundbreaking firm and its products but also brings to life pre-war Britain and the roles played by the press, the art world, and the popular market for modern furniture.

Martha Deese's article on Gerald Summers was published in 1992 in the Journal



of Design History and has been considered the most important source of information on his work. That is until now, thanks to the publication of this comprehensive and beautifully illustrated volume.



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Times and heights of high and low water (Eastern Standard Time)									
Heights in feet above soundings printed on charts of water adjacent to City Island. Times shown are nautical times. For times on the table beginning with 1300, subtract 1200 to get ordinary PM time (e.g., 1625 - 1200 = 4:25 P.M.). Times less than 1200 are A.M. times (e.g., 1154 = 11:54 A.M.).									
HH = hours; MM = minutes									
Tide chart by Tom Smith									
MARCH 2025									
DAY	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	TIME HH MM	HEIGHT FEET	DAY
01 Sat	0617	-1.2	1211	8.3	1827	-1.1			Sat 01
02 Sun	0031	8.9	0703	-1.3	1257	8.2	1908	-0.9	Sun 02
03 Mon	0117	8.9	0751	-1.1	1345	7.8	1953	-0.6	Mon 03
04 Tue	0205	8.7	0847	-0.7	1437	7.4	2044	-0.1	Tue 04
05 Wed	0259	8.3	1000	-0.3	1538	6.9	2153	0.3	Wed 05
06 Thu	0404	7.8	1117	0.1	1657	6.5	2327	0.7	Thu 06
07 Fri	0523	7.4	1227	0.2	1821	6.3			Fri 07
08 Sat	0045	0.8	0648	7.2	1331	0.2	1936	6.4	Sat 08
09 Sun	0152	0.7	0859	7.2	1530	0.1	2137	8.7	Sun 09
10 Mon	0350	0.4	0957	7.3	1621	-0.1	2228	7.3	Mon 10
11 Tue	0441	0.1	1046	7.5	1708	-0.2	2312	7.3	Tue 11
12 Wed	0529	-0.1	1130	7.5	1753	-0.3	2353	7.5	Wed 12
13 Thu	0614	-0.2	1212	7.5	0634	-0.2			Thu 13
14 Fri	0030	7.6	0655	-0.3	1249	7.5	1911	-0.1	Fri 14
15 Sat	0101	7.7	0733	-0.3	1320	7.3	1942	0.1	Sat 15
16 Sun	0125	7.6	0805	-0.1	1344	7.1	1959	0.4	Sun 16
17 Mon	0144	7.6	0827	0.1	1405	6.9	2010	0.6	Mon 17
18 Tue	0211	7.5	0843	0.4	1434	6.7	2037	0.9	Tue 18
19 Wed	0246	7.4	0913	0.6	1511	6.4	2114	1.1	Wed 19
20 Thu	0327	7.2	0954	0.9	1554	6.1	2158	1.3	Thu 20
21 Fri	0414	7.0	1046	1.2	1645	5.9	2251	1.5	Fri 21
22 Sat	0507	6.8	1146	1.3	1741	5.9	2351	1.6	Sat 22
23 Sun	0605	6.8	1300	1.2	1844	6.0			Sun 23
24 Mon	0059	1.5	0710	6.8	1442	0.9	1959	6.3	Mon 24
25 Tue	0232	1.1	0826	7.1	1532	0.5	2111	7.0	Tue 25
26 Wed	0346	0.4	0934	7.5	1613	0.1	2202	7.7	Wed 26
27 Thu	0436	-0.2	1027	7.9	1653	-0.3	2248	8.4	Thu 27
28 Fri	0524	-0.8	1116	8.3	1735	-0.7	2333	9.0	Fri 28
29 Sat	0612	-1.3	1205	8.4	1819	-0.9			Sat 29
30 Sun	0020	9.3	0701	-1.5	1254	8.4	1904	-0.9	Sun 30
31 Mon	0108	9.4	0749	-1.5	1343	8.3	1950	-0.7	Mon 31
APRIL 2025									
01 Tue	0157	9.3	0839	-1.2	1432	7.9	2039	-0.4	Tue 01
02 Wed	0248	8.9	0937	-0.7	1527	7.5	2136	0.1	Wed 02
03 Thu	0345	8.3	1049	-0.2	1636	7.0	2301	0.6	Thu 03
04 Fri	0457	7.7	1201	0.2	1754	6.7			Fri 04
05 Sat	0022	0.8	0618	7.3	1908	6.6			Sat 05



Surviving Winter in Time for Spring

Birds flying south for winter represent only one of a whole host of strategies that birds in our neck of the woods have for surviving winter. For example, woodpeckers stay warm in tree cavities that they built themselves for you know what in spring. So do Eastern screech owls, but with a twist: they will often let woodpeckers do the work and then take the protected spot over when it's convenient. Don't blame the owls, though, or their nature. We have seen woodpeckers do it to other woodpeckers.

Woodpeckers have also been known to use the ridges of tree bark for caching or storing food. So do nuthatches, crows, bluejays and our favorite, the black capped chickadee. Chickadees are also able to enter a kind of semi-state of hibernation by lowering their body temperature, which allows them to conserve energy on cold winter nights. Then, when it's time to wake up, they know how to shiver, which generates heat.



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Of course, finding and consuming food in the daylight hours is another important strategy. If possible, birds have been known to overeat and then live off the extras if and when conditions dictate. According to David Sibley, the golden crowned kinglet eats the equivalent of 27 large pizzas a day to survive in winter. No wonder they move about as fast as they do: they've got a lot of work to do. Huddling close for warmth, Eskimo style, is another tried and true strategy but evidently not for the kinglet. Anyone who has been on Hunter Island recently can vouch for the mourning doves, though, and their penchant for staying close when it's cold.

Some of the strategies birds have for surviving the cold are on display even when it's not winter. For example, mallards and other waterfowl often sleep with their heads turned and beaks tucked under their wing feathers. They do this to conserve heat, since beaks tend to be a more susceptible-to-the-cold part of a bird's body. For the same reason, you will also see mallards from time to time resting on one leg, with the other one tucked away beneath more feathers. In cold water, a mallard's fins and legs are protected by a specially adapted heat exchange between blood that flows from the extremities and blood that flows from the mallard's core.

Whatever their strategies, survivors that have made it this far have once again earned the right to pass along their DNA this spring. And it is this timeless evolutionary cycle that ensures the survival of the species.

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In The Garden

By MARY COLBY



Photo by JACQUELINE VAN DER KLOET
Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*) and hellebore orientalis

March On

Now it is March and for gardeners spring has arrived. Not so for non-gardeners. My husband says spring has arrived when people cast off their coats and women wear shorts. People without a propensity see spring as a meadow of April buttercups, but the gardener sees a meadow of aconites in full bloom in early February. If you can afford to buy 1,000 aconites, the reward would be great, but even a small patch of 10 will give you such pleasure on a freezing day in an ice storm.

I love the small bulbs and corms, as they are some of the earliest plants to flower. Iris reticulata comes into bloom in early March, and nothing will deter these little stalwarts from flowering. Witch-hazels and hellebores are already in flower, and a wonderful partner for them would be the demure little snowdrop. The best

snowdrops to have are the cheapest ones to acquire. G. Elwesii, and G. nivalis are great self seeders. They form clumps and their seeds blow into the most unexpected places, leaving one with a naturalized look. They love moist ground and shade. Crocus, chinodoxa, muscari, scilla and ipheion will all follow in the sun. The time to dig up snowdrops is when they are in the green, so right after flowering. Maybe a friend will give you some this year.

March for me and many others expresses the severe impatience for anything green. The surge of excitement is palpable as I watch the camellias burst open on their shiny waxy trees. The sun has returned, and shoots of daffodils are coming fast, as are the horny husks of skunk cabbage emerging in the woods. Everything feels more hopeful as it is all covered in that pale delicate shade of green, heralding the most exceptional of days.

I've always measured time by how long a plant will take to flower. I'd think, "Oh in three years these seedlings will be flowering, and I'll be fifty six, or this tree will reach maturity in 15 years and I'll be 45." So to my young readers, plant trees, shrubs and hedges for your garden will be well furnished with that beauty of age by the time you are in your third or fourth decade. This will also leave a legacy of landscape for the next generation to enjoy. If you are of advanced age like me, you can plant skip laurels or arborvitae to give you a nice hedge for privacy in short order.

As I write to you, the violet's leaves are emerging and the euphorbia characias wulfenii have formed hooks on their crooks ready to flower from March on. So March on, keep the faith, we have made it through the dark days. It is spring.

You can visit Mary, in her studio-gallery at 276 City Island Avenue, on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. She is available for consultation, garden plans and installation. Call 917-804-4509.

Feeling Helpless in a Changing World? Get Up and Do Something About It with Your Kids

By JOHN SCARDINA, Certified School Psychologist

So much is happening around the world right now that we often can feel overwhelmed. Whatever your political orientation, you may be struggling to keep up with a cascade of changes that soon may be impacting our families on a daily basis: climate events, economic uncertainty, geopolitical instability and a fundamental set of questions about what it means to be a citizen. What is one to do?

Humans evolved in small communities. Child-rearing, food security, protection from danger and communal awe of the divine all came about through face-to-face contact on a daily basis with a common purpose in mind: sustainable life and well-being. We have a small community here on City Island. What can we do—as adults and with our children—to create sustainable life and well-being for all?

- **Think globally, act locally:** Share your resources with global organizations that do work that reflects your values. Sit down with your kids and talk about where to make contributions. They may want to save the whales while you may want to eradicate smallpox. Both can be valid, yes? In the meantime, support our local groups who are trying to make a difference: think both/and instead of either/or when it comes to your advocacy.

- **Choose action over despair:** Go to a rally to support a cause you believe in. Take your kids. Take advantage of the local bird walks and clean-up opportunities. Show up to support a local politician

you have voted for and make your advocacy a topic of family discussion. Join a local Habitat for Humanity project and bring your teenagers. Doing nothing is a choice and sometimes not a healthy one.

- **Change your family's lifestyle:** Compost. Make food donations every time you go shopping. Drive less. Stop buying water in plastic bottles. Sit down as a family and write to your elected representatives every Saturday morning over a family pancake breakfast. Do all of this with your kids. Make family commitments over dinner to make the world a better place—whatever that might mean to you.

- **Listen to your children's concerns and validate them as you seek to create a family plan of action:** One of the best things we can do as parents is to model listening skills. Take time to hear what your child is saying, respond with empathy and then ask, "What can we do about that?" It will work every time.

Citizenship in the USA is both a privilege and a responsibility. Work to have a government that mirrors your values. Children learn from their parents what it means to be a patriot and a citizen.

Living on City Island is also a privilege and a responsibility. Strive to have a community that mirrors your values. Children learn from their parents what it means to be part of a community.

So what are you waiting for?

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.



William Ebinger

William (Bill) Henry Ebinger, former resident of City Island, passed away at home in Vero Beach, FL, on Jan. 19, 2025, at the age of 81, after a brief battle with cancer.

Bill was born on May 25, 1943, at University Heights Hospital in the Bronx. The only child of Emma (Moller) and William Ebinger, Bill spent most of his childhood between his family home in Pelham Bay and his grandmother's house on City Island. It was there that he developed his love of the sea while boating, fishing and clam digging with his cousins and friends on Long Island Sound. After graduating from St. Simon Stock High School in 1961, Bill started his career with the New York Telephone Company, first as an installer, then as a repairman and then in second level management. He was very proud to tell people of the "36 years, 5 months and 6 days" he spent with "Ma Bell."

In 1965, Bill and Linda Hugo were married at St. Mary, Star of the Sea and moved to City Island, where they raised their three children, who quickly adopted Bill's love of City Island and the sea. While continuing his career with the phone company, Bill enjoyed lobster fishing with his two cousins, George and Jimmy Goehl, and many a fine lobster dinner was served in the Ebinger home on King Avenue.

When Bill retired from the phone company after having lived on the Island for over 40 years, he and Linda moved to their family home in Cossayuna, NY. Because he never lost his love of the sea, Bill could not adjust to freshwater fishing in a lake, but he did learn to love country living while sitting on his deck overlooking Cossayuna Lake and enjoying the peace, quiet and beauty all around him. Here in the country, all of the family could gather together for holidays and vacations and enjoy each other's company and that of friends and neighbors.

In 2021, after years of snow birding, Linda and Bill moved to Vero Beach, FL, where they spent the last few years of Bill's life making new memories and gathering new friends and neighbors. Bill will be remembered by all who knew him as a kind and loving man, whose warmth and humor endeared him to many but whose love and devotion to his family and friends were unmatched.

Bill is survived by his beloved wife, Linda, his cherished children Debbie Psanis (Peter) of Sebastian, FL, Kurt (Jacqueline) of Mahopac, NY, and Bill (Stephanie) of St. James, NY; and his adored grandchildren and great-grandson; Jason, Samantha and Danielle Psanis; Nicole, Taylor and Kurt Ebinger Jr.; Drew and Dylan Ebinger; and Lucas Psanis. Bill will also be deeply missed by his many brother- and sister-in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.



Celia Brosnan

Celia Brosnan, a longtime resident of City Island, passed away on Feb. 10, 2025.

Celia was born in England on Jan. 5, 1938, and came to New York in the 1960s with a PhD in neuroscience. She built a career in neuropathology at Einstein College of Medicine, where she focused on research in multiple sclerosis. Always humble, Celia succeeded because of her quiet yet determined work ethic. She was known for her generosity with her time to help others.

Celia's scientific interests primarily encompassed immunology, multiple sclerosis and autoimmune processes. In her work in immunology, she investigated proinflammatory cytokines, heat shock proteins and the role of astrocytes in multiple sclerosis. She was a talented researcher, whose work was consistently supported by the National Institutes of Health.

Her friends remember her quick wit and sense of humor, which she kept throughout her struggles with Parkinson's disease. She loved City Island, where she made many friends and enjoyed her views of the sunset from her windows. After 50 years in the United States on a green card, Celia became a U.S. citizen during the pandemic, marking an important personal milestone in her adopted home.

Celia is survived by her sister, Margaret Clutterbuck; her sons, Jamie and Andrew, and daughter-in-law, Barbara; and two grandchildren, Chloe and Aileen. She is also fondly remembered by colleagues and friends, including Cedric Raine, Herb Schaumberg, Lucy Brown and Sunhee Lee.



Margaret Murphy

Margaret "Peggy" Murphy, who worked on City Island for about 40 years, passed away on Jan. 12, 2025.

She was born on March 5, 1960, to Robert and Catherine Murphy, and was a lifelong resident of the Country Club section of the Bronx. She attended Jay John College for Criminal Justice but moved from family's tradition of law enforcement to civil law. She worked as a paralegal and real estate broker for the Cormac McEnery Law Firm on City Island for four decades. She was well known to City Island residents and left the firm only a few months before her final hospitalization.

She was predeceased by her parents and her younger brother, Terrance Murphy and is survived by her brother Robert Jr.

She was known for her love of her far-flung, extended, family, cooking, gardening and her dog Fiona. She will be buried in the Murphy family plot in Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Westchester County.

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YOUR AD COULD BE HERE!

City Island Culinary Club

By KENNY SELESKY

Greetings! I have so much to catch you up on, as we have been very busy cooking up slow-cooker meals. We enjoyed Swedish meatballs made by Ginger, as well as scrumptious Salisbury steak meatballs by Lisa and Rocco. Cathy made a delicious Hungarian goulash, and I made a loaf of bread in the slow cooker, which worked well, to my surprise. For the second half of last month, we made soups. With the extremely cold and snowy weather we've had this winter, a warm bowl of soup was perfect for body, mind and soul. We enjoyed making French onion soup; Maria made New England clam chowder, Sue made matzo ball soup and Linda made a very tasty carrot and chestnut soup.

Our next theme is chicken, around which we will construct an entire meal. If you want to join us, please call 917-533-7873 for details. Here is a recipe for the easy roasted carrot and chestnut soup to enjoy during these chilly winter days. I promise you will love it.

4 shallots, minced
6 cups chicken stock
½ teaspoon fresh ginger, grated
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
¾ cup (5.5. ounces) chestnuts, roasted and coarsely chopped, for soup base
6 to 8 ounces crème fraiche
1 ounce of chestnuts, roasted and finely chopped, for garnish
¼ cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a bowl, combine the carrots, oil, salt and pepper; toss to coat. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake until the carrots are tender and golden around the edges, 45 to 50 minutes.

Melt the butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Add the shallots and sauté, stirring until tender and translucent, 4 to 5 minutes. Add the carrots, stock, ginger, allspice and chestnuts and bring to a simmer.

Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 15 minutes.

Using a Vitamix, immersion hand blender, regular blender or food processor, purée the soup in batches until smooth. Return the soup to the pot and season with salt and pepper.

Garnish each serving with a dollop of crème fraiche and a sprinkling of chestnuts and parsley.

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



Happy March birthday to Dottie Tomsen.

Happy March 8 birthday wishes to Christopher Butterworth, with love from your family.

Anniversary wishes to Bay Street's Anne and Scouse McIntyre, who celebrate on March 28.

Ben and James Rodstrom turn the Big Four this month, and the boys are in full force! All six cousins are eagerly awaiting the next get-together to have a whirlwind of fun and adventure with Mimi, Pop Pop and all the crew!

Best wishes for a lifetime of happiness to former Islander Anjulee Sebastian and her fiancé, Tony Francis. The recently engaged couple are planning an October wedding.

Kudos to the P.S. 175 co-ed Volleyball Team on their championship win in January 2025.

Belated Sweet 16 birthday wishes



Ben Rodstrom turns 4 this month.

to Islander Maggie Moroney, who celebrated her special birthday on Feb. 11.

Happy birthday wishes to longtime Islander Peter Klopfer, who celebrated his birthday by blowing out lots of candles on Feb. 16.

Happy 80th birthday wishes to Dottie Tomsen, with love from your family and friends.

Hello, spring, on March 20.

Maria Swieciki

358 City Island Avenue
City Island, NY 10464
jgl358@verizon.net
718-885-0200



James Rodstrom also turns 4 in March.



Congratulations to Peter Klopfer, who celebrated his birthday in February.



Congratulations to Anjulee Sebastian and her fiancé, Tony Francis.



Maggie Moroney (center) celebrated her birthday with her sister, Elsa, and her father, Kevin.

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