

# The Island Current

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## Island Clubs and Homes Recover from Isaias

By KAREN NANI



Photos by SALLY CONNOLLY, RICK DeWITT and MARK NANI

Tropical storm Isaias hit City Island hard on Aug. 4, 2020, blowing boats off their moorings from the yacht club fleets and breaking limbs off trees on several Island streets. The storm blew in and out quickly, leaving calm seas behind for the next night's Big Tom Sailboat Race (bottom right photo).

The three yacht clubs on City Island took hits from tropical storm Isaias on Aug. 4, 2020, but recovered quickly with the help of launch operators, members and tow boats. Fallen tree branches knocked down power and cable wires around Island streets, but outages were surprisingly short-lived compared to those in neighboring communities in Westchester, Long Island and Connecticut.

Isaias unleashed dangerous winds and heavy rain throughout New York City with nearly as much power as it had after making landfall as a hurricane in North Carolina. The storm arrived early Tuesday afternoon in Eastchester Bay with southwest wind gusts that occasionally exceeded 65 mph, according to Morris Yacht Club Mooring Director Joe Kramer.

Weather forecasters predicted its arrival on Aug. 4, but Isaias surprised boat owners and Con Edison with its intensity, which lasted from about 2 to 6 p.m. Harlem Yacht Club Vice Commodore Peter Green told *The Current*: "Tropical Storm Isaias dealt some of our boat owners a significant blow (pun intended). Many news reports described the impact of this weather event as being as destructive as Hurricane Sandy in many ways. Although

City Island did not get the destructive tidal surge, there were significant sustained winds from the southerly direction, which turned to westerly as the storm center blew through."

All three yacht clubs had boats break loose or drag from their moorings during the high winds of Isaias. The launch at the Morris Yacht Club broke off from its float and had to be rescued by operators Joe Kramer Jr. and Nick Calbo, who heroically swam out to retrieve the club's tender during the storm. Seven sailboats from the Morris fleet eventually broke loose but were recovered with help from TowBoatUS, which is run by Islanders Dan Cavaluzzi and Chris McGuire. Dan told *The Current* that Isaias's winds were more dangerous than those of Hurricane Sandy eight years ago and that City Island was lucky the storm lasted only four hours.

According to Mr. Kramer, "one sailboat washed up on Horton Street beach, another onto Earley Street and another wound up in Throggs Neck. All repairs to our floats were done in-house, and we were fully operational within 24 hours."

Mr. Green reported on similar heroics by Harlem Yacht launch supervisor David

Sandoval, "who risked his own safety to assist three boaters (non-members) who were unable to get into their dinghy from their boat. He brought them back to the club to wait out the storm."

The City Island Yacht Club Commodore, Ira Bigeleisen, was also proud of the fast recovery achieved by club members and staff. "We had a few boats break loose and some 'sailed' to the other side of Eastchester Bay, but there was no damage to our docks or clubhouse." He proudly reported that the weekly Big Tom Wednesday Night Race, hosted by the City Island Yacht Club, took place as scheduled the evening after the storm.

"Ironically, the only problem was lack of wind," he told *The Current*.

Meanwhile, Island residents cleared fallen tree limbs by calling private companies and waiting for Con Edison and Verizon to repair downed wires. Although not many Islanders lost power, a number of homes experienced a series of brief power outages that lasted only a moment or two but continued intermittently for several hours. As *The Current* went to press, most Island homes had fully regained power, telephone and television service, but cut tree limbs and branches remained in piles awaiting removal by the New York City Parks and Sanitation Departments.



## BRIEFLY...

### SIDEWALK SALE TO BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY CENTER

will take place at 190 Fordham Street on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. To donate goods for the sale, please call Patty Grondahl at 914-882-9578. A 50/50 raffle will be drawn on Sept. 12; if you wish to purchase a ticket, call 718-885-1145.

**COVID-19 TESTING** is being offered at the North Central Bronx Hospital seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Room 1A-05 (off the lobby by the main entrance), 3424 Kossuth Avenue (corner of 210th Street). The testing involves no out-of-pocket expense. Results for the nasal swab test will be available within 48 to 72 hours, and within 3 hours for the antibody test.

**A NEIGHBORHOOD CLEAN SWEEP**, sponsored by City Island Rising, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, e-mail [CityIslandRising@gmail.com](mailto:CityIslandRising@gmail.com).

## 45 BLOTTER

Complaints reported from City Island to the 45th Precinct during June, July and August 2020. Unfounded complaints are not included in the list.

- 7 – HARASSMENT
- 1 – AGGRAVATED HARASSMENT
- 1 – GRAND LARCENY
- 3 – LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT
- 5 – ASSAULT
- 1 – DRIVING WHILE INTOXICATED (DWI)
- 2 – LOST PROPERTY
- 1 – ROBBERY
- 4 – CRIMINAL MISCHIEF GRAFFITI

Police provided details on the following arrests and incidents for the period from June 22 through Aug. 3, 2020.

6/26 – Police from the 45th Precinct arrested two female Islanders, 29 and 66, and charged them with assault on City Island Avenue at 6:45 p.m. Cross complaints claimed that the first defendant, 66, punched the other female in the head during a dispute between neighbors. Then the second defendant, 29, was charged with assaulting the other female during the same dispute.

6/28 – At 6:14 p.m., three off-Island males, 30, 49 and 54, were arrested and charged with assaulting three other off-Island males during a dispute over parking spots on City Island Avenue.

6/29 – At a commercial establishment on City Island Avenue, a male staff member told police that he was harassed by a female suspect who had been fired from the business but kept returning and making threatening remarks to members of the staff.

6/30 – Reports of graffiti were observed to a mailbox, FDNY call box and a fire hydrant on Minneford Avenue near Kilroe Street.

7/3 – An off-Island male reported that an unknown driver backed into his car at 10:50 a.m., hitting his rear door and then leaving the scene of the accident.

7/4 – On Winters Street, a male Islander reported that the rear license plate

of his vehicle was missing at 10 a.m.

7/8 – On City Island Avenue at 7 p.m., a piece of paper with racist remarks was placed on a commercial building, causing alarm in an act of harassment.

7/9 – On City Island Avenue at 7 p.m., an off-Island male told police that he received threatening texts messages and photos in order to extort money from him in an act of aggravated harassment.

7/11 – At 9:15 p.m., an off-Island male on a bicycle was struck by a black Infiniti vehicle, which then fled the scene of the accident.

7/13 – On Pilot Street, a female Islander reported that she was harassed by an unknown female at 5:40 a.m. The victim was in her vehicle when the other woman came up to the window and made remarks that caused alarm.

7/13 – At 12:30 a.m., an Island female told police that her sister was being harassed by a female neighbor who kicked her door and left garbage bags in front of the door on Pilot Street.

7/18 – An incident of grand larceny was reported at 11 a.m. on City Island Avenue. The off-Island victim parked a jet ski in a lot and when he returned, the fuse box had been removed.

7/19 – Police arrested an off-Island male and charged him with DWI at 4:20 a.m. Officers responded to a traffic accident and observed that the motorist had bloodshot eyes and slurred speech.

7/19 – On Schofield Street at 11 a.m., a female Islander reported harassment by a male Islander during a verbal dispute over an ongoing condominium issue.

7/28 – A robbery occurred at a commercial establishment on City Island Avenue at 10:20 p.m. An unknown male entered with a firearm and demanded all the money from the case register and the employee's cell phone. He then fled the scene and there were no injuries.

7/30 – At 6 p.m., an Island female on Winters Street told police she was harassed on Facebook by a male who posted comments causing alarm.

8/3 – On Minneford Avenue at 12 p.m., an Island female told police that two males posted harassing statements about her on Facebook.

THE ISLAND CURRENT  
P.O. Box 6  
City Island, N.Y. 10464



EDITOR: Karen Rauhauser Nani

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Sara S. McPherson  
COPY EDITOR/WRITER: Barbara Dolensek  
ART EDITOR: Marguerite Chadwick-Juner

Editorial Office: 718-885-0760  
Display Advertising: 718-885-1636  
or: [margci@aol.com](mailto:margci@aol.com)  
Subscriptions: 718-885-9268  
[www.theislandcurrent.com](http://www.theislandcurrent.com)

DISTRIBUTION: Emily Leni  
SUBSCRIPTION: Rose Kolb  
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Margaret Lenz  
BUSINESS MANAGER: Judith Rauh

STAFF: Maria Swieciki, Ed Heben, Marsha Treiber, Jane Protzman, Bill Stuttgart, Tom Smith, Virginia Danegger, Monica Glick, Maria Sutherland, John Sheridan, and Johanna Paciullo.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Rick DeWitt and Matt Panza

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS: Stephanie Ribaudo, Lorraine Nicoletti. Masthead and special artwork by the late Theodore J. Mazaika. Cartoon format originated by Russell Schaller Sr.

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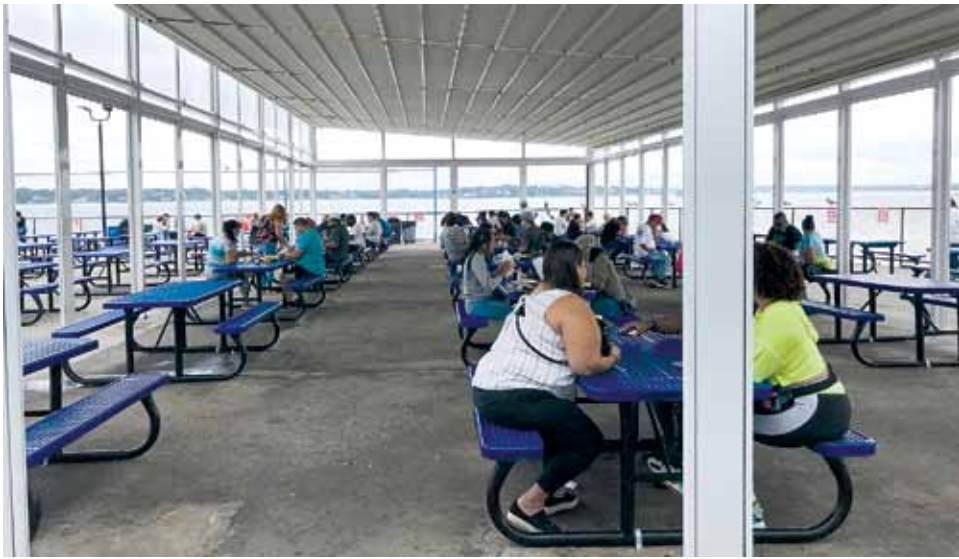
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# Island Restaurants Survive the Pandemic

By BARBARA DOLENSEK



Photos by BARBARA DOLENSEK and KAREN NANI

With a great deal of hard work and improvising on the part of the proprietors, most of City Island's restaurants have been able to stay in business during the devastating pandemic, including (above): Johnny's Reef, (top to bottom at right) Artie's Steak and Seafood and The Black Whale.

Although boat building and sail making were once the major industries on City Island, there is no question but what the primary business here and now is restaurant dining. There may be as many as 30 establishments on City Island where one can buy food, to eat in or take out, and miraculously—thanks to a great deal of hard work on the part of the proprietors—most of them have been able to stay in business during the devastating pandemic. State and city officials have proclaimed that in-house dining is not allowed in New York City, and no date has been set for the lifting of this drastic rule, although restaurants in Westchester County have been allowed to serve clients indoors so long as social distancing is observed.

City Island is a very short distance from Westchester County, yet diners eager for seafood and, presumably, the ability to dine in a seaside location, have visited City Island in droves since early spring, although for a couple of months only take-out food was available and a number of restaurants closed down for several weeks. The City Island Chinese restaurant, for example, has re-opened only recently, and the Snug remains closed, although the Diner next door has been steadily serving customers since the pandemic hit.

Starting at the southern end of the Island, Johnny's Reef, which regularly closes during the winter months re-opened for limited days in April, when customers began flocking to purchase take-out dinners. According to manager Jimmy Verzis, business is only about 50 to 60 percent of what it is in normal years, but on weekends this summer, the parking lot has been pretty full. At first, the only option was take-out, but the outdoor area, part of which is covered, has been crowded ever since outdoor dining was allowed earlier in the summer. A new system was put in place for waiting in line to order, and this will likely stay even after dining regulations return to normal. Mr. Verzis was happy to report that he has been able to keep at least 50 of his employees working, many of whom have been working at Johnny's Reef for decades.

Ezekiel Sierra, manager of the Lobster Box, closed the restaurant in mid-March and didn't reopen until the first week in May, when they began to offer take-out meals for the first time. With the loosening of dining restrictions, he rented tents and tables, which he installed in a section of the large parking lot in order to accommodate as many as 80 or more customers. He hopes that the indoor restriction will end soon, although Mayor de Blasio continues to waver on any definite date even for limited indoor seating. He is concerned that without indoor dining, he may have to close the restaurant, which is now operating at 50 percent of its usual business. He told *The Current* that special events and parties are what drive much of the Lobster Box business, and this has been impossible during the pandemic. He felt especially sorry for

Scavello's, however, which has been hit the worst by the restrictions.

Like Tony's Pier, the Sammy restaurants and Johnny's Reef at the southern end of the Island, the Lobster Box has been careful to monitor the behavior of their customers on their properties, but during warm weekends, City Island Avenue and the side streets have suffered greatly from excess traffic, the lack of parking and restrooms, excessively loud music, and the need for diners to eat in their cars. Trash disposal and rude behavior have been a serious problem for residents all over the Island, but the southern end has suffered the most, although residents in the neighborhood of Seafood City might argue with that assumption. When the parking lot at Seafood City became overcrowded and the owners closed the gates, the traffic in the neighborhood of Bowne Street posed a serious issue with parking, trash and rude behavior. Seafood City quickly engaged workers to clean up the surrounding streets of garbage thrown out, but they noted that much of what was picked up came from McDonalds and other fast-food restaurants.

Sam Chernin, who grew up on City Island, reported that both Sammy's Fish Box and Sammy's Shrimp Box, as well as the Sea Shore Restaurant at the north end, have been coping well with the pandemic. He told *The Current* that he is incredibly grateful for the loyalty of his employees since day 1 as well as for the support of loyal customers, whose health he has protected by giving out at least 10,000 face masks, plus gloves and sanitizers. The menus remain basically the same, as have the prices, in spite of the numerous changes he has had to implement for both take-out and outdoor dining. He has insisted on 10 to 12 feet for social distancing rather than 6, and he has put his outdoor tables at double the mandated distance. He closes outdoor dining early, with the last seating at 9:15 and the parking lot empty at 11 p.m.

Sam told *The Current* that he suspects the restrictions about indoor dining may relax if reopening the schools to students does not result in a spike in Covid-19 cases. If cold weather arrives before that happens, he may go back to take-out only, or, as he put it, "roll with the punches." He has invested in plexiglass partitions and other equipment for limited indoor dining so that he will have a head start when it is finally permitted.

Some of the adjustments he has had to make involve working with neighbors by helping to limit parking and traffic into nearby blocks by posting signs and providing barriers. He himself and his daughter Lauren have themselves done some garbage pickup, as do his employees on a regular basis. He no longer takes reservations for diners, and parties of more than 10 are required to be seated separately. But on the whole he feels that in spite of the disruptions, City Island will do better than just survive this crisis. He remembers years ago when the traffic onto the Island,



especially after Orchard Beach closed at 7 p.m., used to be far worse than it is now. Some residents find that hard to believe, but as Orrin Fordham pointed out in an editorial published in the *Island Drift* in 1895 (when the bridge was made of wood and the vehicles were pulled by horses) that off-Islanders were causing all kinds of traffic problems here. Some things never change.

The City Island Diner never closed during the pandemic, offering take-out food with delivery from the very beginning. Donna McGowan was happy to be able to set out tables on the sidewalk, when New York City declared this legal without the need to purchase an expensive permit to do so, but she feels that the governor and the mayor have done serious and lasting damage to the restaurant business in New York City. She was especially unhappy that city officials will not allow drinks to go and that they had to close the appealing tiki bar at the Snug shortly after it opened. However, she told *The Current* that they have been able to pay their bills, even if they have not been able to turn a profit.

Artie's Steak and Seafood closed for six weeks to get a handle on issues of safety and best practices, but then reopened with take-out dinners and now sidewalk dining. Owner Spiro Chagares admits that they have been struggling to reshape the business, which originally accommodated 178 diners but is now far less. Although the restaurant might have been able to accommodate more outdoor diners if they put tables in the parking lot, as he first envisioned, Spiro wanted his customers to have places to park and decided to restrict seating to the sidewalks on both sides of the restaurant. In spite of the changes, he has worked hard to keep his staff on the job by rotating or reducing hours; he feels a strong obligation to keep them employed since some have been working for Artie's for more than 25 years. Like most of the other restaurants on the Island, he had to invest in new equipment, such as heaters, sidewalk partitions and umbrellas, items that may not be needed once the cold weather sets in. It is still not clear when indoor dining will be allowed, and he finds that many diners from off the Island are confused by the restrictions, which are not in place in Westchester County.

Calliope Rigos of the Black Whale was also late to reopen after the start of the pandemic, although she opened up for dinner take-out and delivery in April before the weather became warm enough for outdoor dining in the patio behind the restaurant, weather permitting. She has gone back to her usual menu, much to the

relief of her regular customers, but she regrets deeply the loss of holidays, the craft fair and other City Island events, and she now asks customers to make reservations in advance (call 718-885-3657). In order to accommodate the patio dining space, Calliope installed a small sink for hand washing, and she notes that her restroom is easily accessible from the patio. Like Skip Giacco of Lickety Split, she is concerned by bad behavior on the Avenue, especially late at night, with cars speeding and people acting rudely and even aggressively. She hopes that by the end of August, there will be less traffic and the cooler weather will prevail, although like the other restaurateurs, she is uneasy about the regulations being imposed on indoor dining once it becomes impossible to dine out-of-doors.

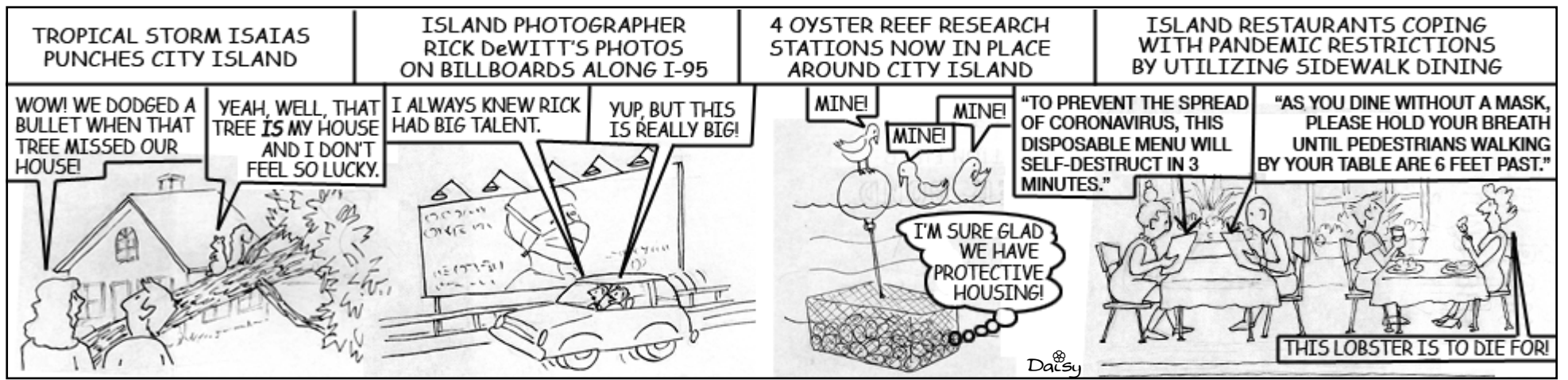
The Crab Shanty, like Sam Chernin's restaurants, started by offering take-out food very early in the pandemic, having closed for only two weeks. The owner, Michelle Debitetto, told *The Current* that her employees were nervous at the beginning but that she was very careful to reassure them by offering masks and gloves and by posting signs about social distancing. She feels very fortunate that business has remained relatively stable, thanks to regular customers, although take-out pickup was somewhat stressful at the beginning. She put cones in the parking spaces in front of the restaurants because double parking was creating hazardous conditions for traffic on the Avenue and on Tier Street. She points out that she could have obtained a permit to place tables in those lanes but did not do so because of concerns about danger. She made it clear that residents upset with the lack of parking for local shops have been allowed for years to park in the Crab Shanty parking lot from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. every day.

She feels very fortunate that she was able to obtain a government-funded loan and that her landlord (Sam Chernin) has been very supportive. She provides the same menu as always, with the addition of a few dishes that are suitable for take-out, such as lobster rolls, fish and chips and other hand-held items, and she has opened up an outside dining area behind the parking lot. As with all of the other restaurants, garbage pick-up has been a constant issue, and every day her parking valet cleans up the sidewalks and streets two blocks in each direction. She welcomes the health inspectors, who have visited twice, measuring tables and giving advice and recommendations about materials.

At the north end of the Island, the

*Continued on page 12*





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.

**Civic Concerns**

To the Editor:

I'm deeply concerned by the increasingly alienating manner in which the City Island Civic Association interacts with members of our community. When I submitted questions to them (primarily about their silence on the racist incidents in this neighborhood), I hoped to receive a thoughtful reply. What I didn't expect was having my questions deleted and getting kicked out of their Facebook group without warning or even an explanation.

How can this group claim to represent the interests of residents if they refuse to even acknowledge our concerns? The Civic Association has been criticized for having a blind spot on issues of race, and responds like the one I received unfortu-

nately only reinforce that notion.

Black Lives Matter on this beautiful island, and all residents deserve to feel safe when walking down the street and respected when voicing their concerns. I hope that the Civic Association will reconsider its stance and do a better job of communicating with anyone who reaches out to them.

Ellen Amy Cohen

**Parking Problem**

To the Editor:

I'm a former 20-year resident of City Island and a frequent visitor. I think it's a shame that the Crab Shanty restaurant illegally blocks numerous legal parking spaces 24/7 with orange cones in front of their establishment, spaces that should be available to City Island residents and visitors.

They are taking away business for the CI market and other nearby stores. Why does the NYPD allow such illegal behavior? Be assured if this was a resident, they would be ticketed immediately by the traffic officers, yet the same officers pass by daily without issuing any summons. Simply disgraceful.

Name withheld

*Editor's note: The Crab Shanty parking lot has always been made available to shoppers during the daytime hours of 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.*

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# C.I. Oyster Reef Welcomes Oyster Research Stations

By SALLY CONNOLLY, with CODY CARROLL and ALANA PECORELLI



Photo by CHRISTINE FROHNERT

Cody Carroll (left) and Alana Pecorelli measure the growth of baby oysters attached to quahog shells 10 days after they were suspended in cages from a City Island dock, as part of the City Island Oyster Reef (CIOR) project. CIOR recycle bags were awarded to those who participated in the CIOR Virtual 5K race on the weekend of Aug. 7 in commemoration of National Oyster Day on Aug. 5, and are available at Clipper Coffee, Kaleidoscope Gallery and JGL Liquors for a suggested donation of \$5.

The City Island Oyster Reef (CIOR) has been hard at work this past summer preparing for the arrival of four oyster research stations, which will be placed at four locations around City Island, thanks to the efforts and expertise of numerous City Islanders and the support of the Billion Oyster Project (BOP). Over the next year it is anticipated that these Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) will grow to adulthood and begin the important business of filtering the waters. One oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water each day.

An oyster research station (ORS) is a cage constructed of steel mesh that houses up to 1,000 baby oysters. The cages are part of a city-wide oyster restoration program that is overseen by BOP, a non-profit committed to bringing oysters back to the waters in New York Harbor and western Long Island Sound. These oysters are grown strictly for environmental purposes and are not for consumption.

On Aug. 11, Orion Lillyreed, the City Island Fishmonger and CIOR board member, along with interns Cody Carroll and Alana Pecorelli, went to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where they picked up CIOR's allocation of cured quahog shells with pre-attached oyster spat (baby oysters). The shells were placed in an ice-filled cooler to preserve them during the trip back to City Island, where they were counted by volunteers, who divided the juvenile oysters among four prepared cages.

Dick Sadler, a clamdigger and CIOR volunteer, and Alana Pecorelli, who is currently earning a master's degree in environmental science, constructed proper rigging for the ORS cages. This involved a lesson in knot tying (bowline, clove hitch), precise measuring, splicing of polypropylene lines and quality-control testing. Two of the cages were fabricated with a mooring rig to hang freely in their assigned locations, while the other two were built to hang directly off designated docks. Joe Burck of JJ Burck Hardware and Marine generously offered his expertise in designing the rigging for the cages.

Cody Carroll, CIOR intern, who is earning her master's degree in Animal Behavior and Conservation at Hunter College—along with dedicated CIOR volunteers Adjie Henderson, Maria Caruso, Ellen Grace, Christine Frohnert and Rus-

sell Heath—brushed naturally occurring sediment off each quahog shell and meticulously counted each of the dime-size spat attached to the shells, marking the total number on each shell, for a grand total of 3,451 oysters. The process was a tedious one but an important step in the overall goal of monitoring the cages. An accurate count of deployed baby oysters will help assess the ability of oysters to survive around City Island, information that will contribute to the CIOR's ultimate goal of reestablishing oyster beds that were so numerous here a century and a half ago.

Once the cages were ready for launching, each one received three bags of quahog shells, roughly 900 oyster spat per cage. The first two cages were tagged and hung from docks, and the next two were hung with help of Mike Carew, of Captain Mike's Diving Service, and his first mate, Ben Bottner, on two different moorings that had been set in place by Larry Berger of Two C's Marine. Dick Sadler lassoed a line over each of the mooring balls in order to safely secure the skiff and to properly anchor the cages.

Cody and Alana, along with CIOR volunteers, will monitor the growth and mortality rate of the juvenile oysters at each of these locations and look closely at the conditions relating to water quality and water flow with the aid of scientific equipment. This information will be helpful in pinpointing areas around City Island that provide healthy conditions for oysters to grow.

CIOR is grateful to the following organizations that helped guide CIOR to this point: the Billion Oyster Project, NY/NJ Baykeeper Soundview Oyster Reef Project, SUNY Maritime College, Coastal Steward, New York Restoration Project, Save the Sound, Captain Mike's Diving Services, Gaia Institute and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Look for the CIOR webinar on Wednesday, Sept. 16, at 7 p.m. with Diana Fu, Education Field Science Specialist of the Billion Oyster Project, who will talk BOP's innovative work on oyster restoration in the New York City area and how to monitor oyster research stations. Please e-mail [cityislandoyster@gmail.com](mailto:cityislandoyster@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining this webinar. All are welcome to join!

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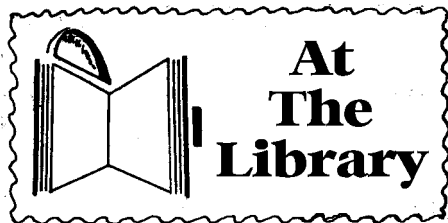
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Photo by BARBARA DOLENSEK

Lisa Baccus and her St. Bernard puppy greet customers at the recently opened pet store Jax & Brownies, 626 City Island Avenue.



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718-885-1703

As of Aug. 3, the City Island branch has offered a grab-and-go service, which allows patrons to access a limited area of these branches to return materials and pick up holds. Reserve your items online or by phone, and you will receive an e-mail when your items are ready, at which point your items will be automatically checked out to your account. You can then head to your selected branch for contactless pickup. Simply grab your items from the holds shelf—then go! There will be no need to stop by the circulation desk for checkout. The same goes for returns—rather than visiting the desk, there will be a designated bin where you can return any items you currently have.

The process of reserving an item is the same as always. You can place a hold on an item online or over the phone, which will put your request into a queue until a copy becomes available. The wait time will vary depending on how many others have reserved the item and how many copies we have.

During this time, patrons are encouraged to explore the online resources available on NYPL.org. Both SimplyE and Overdrive can be accessed from any smartphone, tablet or e-reader. Once either app is downloaded, use your NYPL library card number (found on the back of your card) and 4-digit PIN to log in. Once you are logged in, you will have access to an extensive collection of electronic materials that can be downloaded onto your device free of charge! If certain items are unavailable, you can place a hold on them so that they appear on your device once they become

available.

Additionally, you can still call our helpline at 917-ASK-NYPL (917-275-6975) or contact the City Island Library staff directly on our Facebook page. Not only will we do our best to answer any questions that you may have, but we will be posting information about some of the NYPL's remotely accessible databases for you to check out while you are at home.



**Jax & Brownies Pet Supplies** recently established itself at 626 City Island Avenue (Jackie Kall's former office) and will be open on weekends: Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Although there are plenty of supplies for dogs and cats, the shop also carries food and toys and equipment for pet birds, reptiles and fish. Visit their website at <https://jax-brownies-pet-supplies-llc.business.site/> or their Facebook page. If you have questions, e-mail [jbpsuppliesny@gmail.com](mailto:jbpsuppliesny@gmail.com). Or drop by when the shop is open and meet Lisa Baccus and her beautiful St. Bernard puppy (see photo).

Lovers of flowers and plants will be delighted to hear that **Jill's Cottage** at 152 City Island Avenue, has reopened for weekends from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Customers are invited to text their orders to 631-282-4810 or to post your suggestions and wishes on Jill's Cottage Facebook page. She will check availability and quote you a price.

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# A CAUTIONARY BIKE TALE

By SCOTTY MURDOCK



Photos courtesy of SCOTT MURDOCK

Scotty and Carleen Murdock about to leave their hotel, a converted castle, for another day of biking across Denmark.

In the last issue of *The Island Current*, the 45 Blotter provided by the 45th Precinct contained this cryptic disturbing entry: “6/20 - On the Pelham Bridge, police responded to a fatal traffic accident at 5:10 p.m. An off-island bicyclist was struck accidentally by a motor vehicle.” I subsequently learned that the person struck and killed was Edward Marrow, a 43-year old father of two teen-age children from the Soundview neighborhood of the Bronx. He had apparently biked to Orchard Beach with a few friends, and they were heading home when the accident occurred. According to a preliminary investigation conducted by the NYPD’s Collision Investigation Squad, Mr. Marrow was on a pedal-assist electric bike traveling southbound on the bridge’s sidewalk when he apparently lost control of the bike, went off the curb and onto the roadway, and was hit by a 2018 Jeep Wrangler traveling north-

bound. He sustained fatal head trauma. The name of the 28-year-old driver of the Jeep has not been disclosed, and no charge has been brought against him.

My wife, Carleen, and I have biked across the Pelham Bridge many times for many years, but never without serious concern about how dangerous an undertaking it was. On every trip, the passing vehicles appeared to be speeding above the legal limit. Transportation Alternatives (“Trans-Alt”), a not-for-profit organization that advocates for better walking, biking and public transit for New Yorkers, takes the position that Mr. Marrow’s death “could have been prevented.” It points out that the Bronx has very little safe cycling infrastructure just three percent of New York City’s protected bike lane miles are in the Bronx.

And Pelham Bridge is no exception. It was designed for driving, with four lanes for car and truck traffic and only a very narrow sidewalk on the northbound side without any fencing or other provision to protect people on bikes. Moreover, because the sidewalk serves pedestrians and bikers going in both directions, there is little tolerance for error and considerable risk that someone, on or off a bike, will fall or inadvertently be pushed into the oncoming traffic. Riding southward is particularly unnerving for cyclists, since having to face oncoming traffic is something usually, and appropriately, unlawful for bike riders. The one piece of good news from TransAlt is that the Pelham Bridge is set to be replaced by 2022, although City Island’s experience in getting its new bridge supports considerable skepticism regarding this “good news.”

My wife and I are especially aware of the dangers involved in biking because we have been enjoying the activity even before our marriage in 1970, when we started regularly biking together as a form of exercise, exploration/sightseeing and adventure. What became our love of doing so continues to this day.

For viewing the countryside, cars move along too fast and walking limits how much



The ghost bike installed in Pelham Bay Park to commemorate the death of Edward Marrow on June 20, 2020.

you can see, but biking seems just about right to us. We started out with Schwinn 3-speed bikes, but in time replaced them with a series of multi-gear Trek bikes commensurate with the increasing challenge of our rides. When Carleen gave up long-distance running after her second New York Marathon in 1986, we started taking early morning rides on Saturday and Sunday as frequently as we could.

We lived in Pelham Manor from 1974 to 2018, when we moved to City Island. One of Carleen’s favorite training runs was from Pelham to City Island and back, and it became our weekend morning bike route. In fact, we enjoyed that ride so much that it became our active default, particularly after we got to know Laura of Laura’s Café and stopped there for coffee and some breakfast nearly every time. Early on a Pelham neighbor, Samah Iskander, joined us on a regular basis, and not too long thereafter, his wife, Sylvia, made us a quartet that rides together to this day.

As much as we enjoyed the City Island ride, we soon realized that we were capable of expanding the scope of our regular trips, and we did so by moving our halfway stops from Pelham to as far as Greenwich, CT, on the east, Westchester County Airport on the north, and Hunts Point on the west. The key standards for evaluating a turning point were: Was it accessible with limited use of major highways? Was a non-duplicative return route available? And was there a memorable bakery or coffee shop?

Over the years, our biking quartet also took even longer rides together, such as to the Battery and across the George Washington Bridge and up the Palisades. We also embarked on some long organized rides (some of them multiple times), such as Bike New York (45 miles); Bloomin’ Metric (75 miles); Transportation Alternatives (75 miles), and Tour de Bronx (50 miles). Carleen and I together did two double Centuries, riding 200 miles in two days: STP (Seattle, WA, to Portland, OR), and Tour de Wagner (Westchester County to Vermont), an annual charitable fundraiser for Special Olympics. I also did eight more of those Tours.

However, the most memorable cycling experiences for Carleen and me were three weeks spent on our own touring Denmark and two weeks a few years later touring Brittany. On the first trip, we brought our own bikes, as the airline then did not charge extra for them. I reassembled the bikes in the airport, and our only other luggage were the panniers, or saddle bags, which we carried on the plane. They contained everything we had brought for the bike trip. On the Brittany trip, we rented bikes there, as the shipping cost for bikes had by then become prohibitively expensive. These trips were pretty good compatibility tests, as on both trips, we never got more than 150 yards from each

other on or off the bikes.

One thing I learned the hard way early on, regardless of whether it was a legal requirement or not, was always to wear a helmet whenever on a bike. Early one evening before dinner with some houseguests from Boston, I told Carleen that I was going to take a short but very quick ride to and around Glen Island, and that I would be home in time for dinner. However, as I sped around the island, my front wheel suddenly sank halfway down into a small gap between two of the large concrete blocks of the sea wall. The bike stopped almost instantly, but I was vaulted forward head-first over the handlebars, apparently hitting the sea wall with the forehead section of my helmet. I was knocked unconscious, and when I came to, a couple of good Samaritans were tending to me and had an ambulance on the way. The ER doctor at the New Rochelle hospital where I was taken said that my helmet had been cracked in two, and that if I hadn’t been wearing it, the blow to my head would probably have killed me. (I also had a long and jagged laceration across my left cheek and no feeling on that side of my face, but that is another story, with a happy ending.) I got home that night much too late for dinner, and since then, I have never moved even two feet on my bike without a helmet on.

Biking on and out from City Island is still our favorite form of exercise, and we know that it has become far more popular since the Covid-19 restrictions have limited other alternatives. Most bike riders are aware of the risks involved, but we would like to draw everyone’s attention to the two white bikes in Pelham Bay Park.

To memorialize Mr. Marrow’s death, an organization called Ghost Bikes.Org recently installed a white-painted or “ghost” bike, decorated with facsimile flowers, at the intersection of Shore Road and City Island Road immediately north of the Pelham Bridge. *Ghost Bikes.Org* is Brooklyn-based and prepares the memorial bikes at the Greenpoint Reform Church. As is customary, the bike was probably donated to Ghost Bikes; the chain, brakes and gears were stripped, and the bike was chained to the posts of a traffic sign to prevent its removal. Next to the bike is a small plaque that read: Cyclist Killed Here—Rest in Peace—www.ghostbikes.org. During the last 15 years, more than 200 such memorials have been set up at New York City crash sites in memory of the cyclist or pedestrian killed there. The practice has led to the creation of similar organizations elsewhere in the U.S. and in countries around the world. There is another ghost bike in Pelham Bay Park on the east side of City Island Road, about halfway from the City Island bridge to the first traffic circle. Ghost bikes have many supporters, and many serious detractors as well. On the organization’s website, there are many moving communications of appreciation from family and friends of decedents recognized with a ghost bike.

We hope that the presence of two ghost bikes in Pelham Bay Park sends a powerful message to all who enjoy riding their bicycles in the area—do not ride without a helmet! And, if we had a City Island cycling club, we could advocate for at least cautionary signage on the Pelham Bridge for both the sidewalk traffic and the cars and trucks, and monitor the design of its eventual replacement on behalf of both pedestrians and bike riders.

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Photo by ARDHMIR MALZIU

On Monday morning, August 17, 2020, a group of volunteers joined Councilmember Mark Gjonaj to clean up the beach in Pelham Bay Park just north of the bridge. The clean-up was co-sponsored by the City Island Civic Association and partnered with the Bronx Borough President Rubén Díaz Jr. and the Department of Parks & Recreation.



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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.

### City Island Nautical Museum

Unfortunately, the pandemic has made it impossible for the museum to open to the public this year; visitors to the Island are our usual guests, and this year off-Islanders are coming here for food, not to visit the community. If anyone wishes to have access to the museum archive for the purposes of research, please call 718-885-0507. Our oral history project, originally scheduled to be launched in May, is on hold for the present time, and we plan to launch it in the spring of next year.

In the meantime, be sure to look at the museum's website, [www.cityislandmuseum.org](http://www.cityislandmuseum.org), as well as our Facebook page, which Tom Nye enriches regularly with new groups of historic photographs.

Our City Island masks have been selling well, and we have reordered stock, so be sure to order one for yourself and more for your family. The masks, which show a section of the nautical chart featuring City Island, are available for \$15. Call 718-885-1616 for information or to place an order.

We are happy to report that three webinars about City Island have been presented through the New York Adventure Club, with one more to go on Sept. 1 at 5:30 p.m. ([www.nyadventureclub.com](http://www.nyadventureclub.com)). This has brought in welcome revenue since we have been unable to welcome our rush of summer visitors.

**Barbara Dolensek**

### American Legion Post 156

Our next meeting will be on Sunday, Sept. 13, at 12 noon, our first meeting after the summer break. Dues are \$55 for the 2020–21 year. Please drop them off at the Post, and make sure your name is on the envelope.

This meeting will be conducted outside under the tents that the Post has provided. We will exercise Covid-19 compliance, and I look forward to a safe gathering.

The Queen of Hearts game of chance has been suspended until we can open the Post again.

All retired flags should be dropped off in the old mailbox by the Post's flagpole.

Post 620 was to be the host post for the First District Visitation, which serves as an opportunity to meet with fellow legionnaires of Bronx County and the Department of NY Leadership for the 2020–21 year. This event has been canceled out of an abundance of concern for the safety of all Legion family members.

The annual Pumpkin Sale will be held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 2 through 4. Details to follow.

Please visit our website for the latest information and an ability to e-mail the Post directly: [Leonardhhawkinspost156.com](mailto:Leonardhhawkinspost156.com), where you will find an e-mail link to reach us too!

Thank you to the entire City Island community for all your support over the past 100 years. It's our honor to be your community partner. Enjoy your Labor Day weekend!

**Peter C. Del-Debbio**

### AARP 318

Our chapter has been notified by the National AARP that all chapter meetings must be discontinued for the remainder of 2020 as a necessary precaution against Covid-19. Although we are disappointed, we look forward hopefully to 2021. Until then, stay well and be safe.

**Carroll A. Reid**

### Garden Club of City Island

The Garden Club is staying busy in spite of the pandemic. For now, we have replaced our membership meetings with a monthly newsletter as a way of staying abreast of club activities and remaining in touch. The July newsletter included an article by City Island's own birder, Jack Rothman, who shared his observations last spring, including his amazing photographs.

The club's beautification efforts are going on as usual. Members replaced the spring pansies in our containers on City Island Avenue with more heat-tolerant plants, such as yellow marguerite daisies, dark pink portulaca and purple and white petunias. The summer plants have filled in nicely and have been surviving the hot weather. We want to thank the residents and businesses who have been helping us keep the plants lush by watering the containers.

The club's beautification fund drive letters were distributed by our members to residents on City Island, and we want to thank all of you who were so very generous this year in making donations to the Garden Club Beautification Fund Drive. Along with our other projects, your donations pay for the plants in the containers and will pay for the holiday wreaths in the late fall. Future donations should be sent to P.O. Box 43, City Island Station, Bronx, NY 10464.

**Judy Judson**

### St. Mary, Star of the Sea

Masses continue to be celebrated: weekdays (Monday through Friday) 7 a.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. and Vigil Saturday Evening, 5:15 p.m.; Sunday 9 and 11 a.m.

Because of Covid-19 and social distancing concerns, the annual Outdoor Mass will not take place. We look forward to celebrating the Outdoor Mass next year.

On Saturday, Aug. 22, 12 students from the OLA/St. Mary's Religious Education Program received the Sacrament of Confirmation administered by our Pastor, Rev. John M. Knapp.

OLA/St. Mary, Star of the Sea will be following the new Archdiocese's "Family Based Parish Religious Education" approach, meaning that classes will be held remotely. Although we do not have all the details yet, we are currently working with both the Archdiocese's Faith Formation office and Sadler, the religious book publisher that has devised a new on-line portal for the teachers and students to communicate and use. All students will still be assigned to classes, and catechist teachers will be assigned to each class, just as if they were physically in the classroom. We will contact you in a few weeks with information regarding registration once it has been finalized. The registration fee has been reduced this year by \$50; instead of \$125, the fee will be \$75 for one child, \$100 for two children (instead of \$150) and \$125 for three or more children (instead of \$175).

It is our hope that you will register with us and have your children continue with their religious education. It is so important, especially during these trying times, that a child learns about and strengthens his or her faith. Please note as well that any students who are due to make their sacraments must be enrolled in religion classes this year. Thank you for your patience, and we will keep you posted as we continue to finalize further details regarding this year's program. If anyone has any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Teri Kurtz at the Religious Education office by telephone at 718-885-1440 or by e-mail at [smsrled@yahoo.com](mailto:smsrled@yahoo.com).

St. Mary's Thrift Shop remains closed until further notice; donations are not being accepted at this time.

**Rose Dietz and Teri Kurtz**



Photo by FRANCINE ALHEID

The Garden Club's planter in front of the City Island Library.

### St. Mary's Thrift Shop

Watch for our re-opening. Signs and flyers will be posted. We hope to see you soon.

**Arlene Byrne**

### City Island Republicans

John Cummings is the party candidate for Congress. He is a fellow City Islander and will need our full support. He is running on both the Republican and Conservative lines. We are hoping to have a meeting before the election, depending on current pandemic guidelines.

Our Post Office box is still Box 19.

**Fred Ramftl Jr.**

### City Island Civic Association

At a board meeting in July, two new committees were announced: a Unity and Solutions Committee and a Membership Committee. Two community officers from the 45th precinct attended the meeting; NCO Jessica Griesinger explained that the defunding of the NYPD has eliminated traffic agents, so City Island did not get any this summer.

The Municipal Services Committee reported that City Island had requested and received from the NYC Department of Sanitation 13 additional trash cans for the summer. Also, Mark Gjonaj's army of volunteers called the Wild Cats has been very effective at cleaning up trash along the avenue. The NYC Parks Department will be adding new trash bins to the Catherine Scott Park Promenade and reports that it cleans the park every day. The Water Safety Committee has joined forces with other concerned groups along Eastchester Bay to share strategies and to support one another's efforts.

Since the pandemic's early days, City Island Strong has brought out the best in our community. Participating organizations include the houses of worship, Chamber of Commerce, American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary, PSS Senior Center, the Scouts, and several restaurants and local businesses, as well individuals, our Councilmember and State Senator. Everyone came together to make sure that no one would do without. We are still available to help; send an e-mail to [Cityislandstrong@gmail.com](mailto:Cityislandstrong@gmail.com).

The Civic will continue to focus on what we can do for the community, so we need to be positive and support residents in dealing with quality-of-life and safety issues. For example, if you see something, say something: call 311, help your neighbors, and adhere to Covid-19 regulations set by NYC and NYS: wear a mask in public, observe social distancing and avoid large groups. With regard to beach access, a number of street-end beaches are privately owned and legally fenced; some are city-owned but are fenced with permission in order to prevent liability caused by vandalism, accidental drowning, late-night parties, etc.

The Civic Association was founded in November 1950, and this 70th anniversary

will be celebrated in the November issue of *The Island Current*. The Civic has never and will never take a political stance. Candidates have been invited to attend meetings but the Civic does not and will not endorse individuals or political parties or platforms.

We do not know when we will be able to hold an in-person meeting, so stay tuned. To become a member of the Civic, send your annual dues (\$20 per year or \$50 for a three-year membership) to City Island Civic Association, P.O. Box 117, Bronx 10464, or pay online at [paypal.com](http://paypal.com) to [city.island.civic@gmail.com](mailto:city.island.civic@gmail.com), the "friends and family" option. Please note that joining the Civic Facebook page does not represent membership in the association.

**Jane Protzman**

### Trinity United Methodist Church

On Sunday, Aug. 1, at 10 a.m., Trinity resumed in-person worship in the Sanctuary. All persons wearing masks entered through the Fellowship Hall entrance on Bay Street, where attendance was recorded and temperatures were taken. While maintaining social distance, attendees then entered the Sanctuary, where seating is staggered. At this time, there is no singing, but hymns are played by the extraordinary organist Joy Kim. For the foreseeable future, this is how we will worship in person. Every effort is being made to thoroughly clean the facility after the service, and at this time, no groups are using the property. Trinity understands these are unprecedented times. Many people will not feel comfortable coming to a service, even while wearing a mask and social distancing, so the services will be live-streamed and recorded for YouTube. To request information about the live stream, e-mail Pastor Dave at [david.jolly@nyac-ucm.com](mailto:david.jolly@nyac-ucm.com).

The new hours for the Food Pantry are Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m.

City Island life and Trinity United Methodist Church are far from back to normal. Our Sunday School and Budget Shop will re-open in the future, and it will be a while before we can sing out loud in the sanctuary.

For more than two months, Peter and Brian Hickey, two Scouts from Troop 211, made it possible for Pastor Dave to deliver his sermons and post them to YouTube. Because of their efforts, when many were fearful of leaving their homes, they could still see their pastor deliver a comforting weekly sermon. Great job!

Trinity also needs to thank many members and friends who have done so much to aid in reopening and to keep the business of the church functioning in these hard times. We thank Pat LaPorte, Rick DeWitt, Claire Fitzgerald, Babette Martin, Myla Martin, Chris Martin and you, our neighbors. We thank all who have donated time, talents, prayers and finances. All three other Houses of Worship have supported our Food Pantry. City Island and the Bronx: Trinity salutes you!

**Rick DeWitt**





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

The City Island Community Center Board of Directors is happy to introduce our newest board member, Melissa Cebollero, who will head up our health programming and write the monthly Community Center News column.

The Community Center has been closed because of the coronavirus, but work on behalf of the City Island community has not stopped! The board continues to meet remotely to address timely issues and to welcome new members as well as current members. Community centers are part of New York State's phase 2 reopening plan but have not been approved for any indoor activities as of yet. We are following all of the ever-evolving protocols for safe reengagement so that when we are approved for reopening, we can do so with the upmost safety of our members and community in mind.

In that vein, we have been actively fundraising to support the implementation of safety protocols for the center. Having to close during these months has definitely strained our already small operational budget. To help jump start some fundraising efforts, the board organized a community street sale on Aug. 8, and we raised close to \$500! A second sale is planned for Saturday, Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 190 Fordham Street. If you have items to donate for the sale, please contact Patty Grondahl at 914-882-9578. All proceeds will go directly to the operating budget of the City Island Community Center.

We are also running a 50/50 raffle that is currently at \$375. Raffles are still available, and the drawing will be held on Sept. 12 during the street sale. If you

are interested in purchasing raffle tickets, please leave a clear and detailed message at 718-885-1145.

Finally, we are beginning our annual Fall membership drive. Please consider renewing your membership or joining the only community center on City Island. Annual membership for an individual is \$20 and for a family \$30. This is such an excellent way to support your local community. You could also consider a charitable donation to the center that will directly support our reopening efforts during the pandemic. For more information on how to renew, join or donate, please contact the Community Center at 718-885-1145 and leave a clear and detailed message.

The board thanks its current membership and broader community for your continued support. Please stay safe and enjoy these last weeks of summer!

For up-to-date information, visit [www.cityislandcommunitycenter.org](http://www.cityislandcommunitycenter.org), or call 718-885-1145, or like us on Facebook and check FB for news and information.

Please note that the Orchard Beach AA Group offers remote programming seven days a week at 7:30 a.m. Go to [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us) and put in #781-386-7680.

Melissa Cebollero

### Grace Episcopal Church

The coronavirus has altered many aspects of our lives. People are confused and frightened and dealing with almost unprecedented uncertainty. As we explore new and different ways of living together, many of us find comfort in those things that are constant: family, dear friends, worship (in whatever form) and our congregation at Grace Church.

Our sincere thanks to Kevin Boyle and John Skinner, who are making it possible for us to connect and worship together on a regular basis. On Sundays at 10 a.m., we have our online church service. Please join our service from your computer, tablet or smartphone via <https://www.gotomeet.me/JohnSkinner1>. You can also dial in using your phone: +1 (571)

317-3122 Access Code: 386-753-157. If you are new to GoToMeeting, get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/386753157>.

**New to Grace:** We are now open for prayer between 2 and 3 p.m. every Wednesday. Grace Church is located at 116 City Island Avenue on the corner of Pilot Street. Those who are not able to attend in person are invited to pray at home. Feel free to visit at any time during the hour. Please enter by the main entrance, and a church member will seat you, observing social distancing. The use of a mask is required; hand sanitizer will be available at the door. Please join us for a time of prayer, with masks on, sitting socially and safely distanced in the pews, We pray for each other, for ourselves, the sick, the lonely, the caregivers. And as Father John suggests, "find a moment to be thankful for our lives and those things that bring us comfort and joy."

Our congregation will endure. Vestry is continuing to hold monthly online meetings coordinated by Senior Warden Bruce Weis. A vestry committee is also planning for live-streaming of our Sunday service, along with plans for our eventual return to public worship. Paul Nani reports that Cuba, our sexton, checks on the building daily; our treasurer, Kathy Lonergan, sorts the mail and visits the office during the week; Evyonne Baker, our volunteer office assistant, is continually updating our website, which now has Father Covington's sermons posted.

**Sunday School:** Mrs. Nani looks forward to meeting again in person with her Sunday School when Grace Church reopens its doors later this year. The group, which ranges in age from 2 to 14, will participate in a Youth Service shortly after reopening. Meanwhile, members of the Sunday School have been attending the virtual online services led by Father John throughout the summer. 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](mailto:karenrn1@optonline.net).

**Grace Music Ministry:** The Grace-Tones are eager to return to singing for residents at area nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, as well as supporting local businesses with shows featuring hymns about the power of God's eternal grace, love and joy, when it is safe to do so.  
Sandy Dunn

### Temple Beth-El

This year's High Holy Days will happen where you are. Your home will be your shul, which means that your routine space will need to become sacred for you. We will partner together to make that happen, so that the High Holy Day journey is high, deep and fully real exactly where you are.

Here are a few things to expect about this year's High Holy Day journey, and what you'll need to do to make the most of it: You, your friends and family must RSVP in advance before Sept. 1 to participate. Please go to our website, [YourShulBythesea.org](http://YourShulBythesea.org). This page will also include our High Holy Day schedule, materials for download and access links for services and other High Holy Day experiences. With these instructions for registration will come opportunities to list names in our Yizkor Book of Remembrance; names (\$18 each) will be collected by Aug. 31.

High Holy Day Schedule: Saturday, Sept. 12, Selichot; 7:30 p.m.; Friday, Sept. 18, Erev Rosh Hashanah, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, Sept. 19, Rosh Hashanah 1, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday, Sept. 20, Rosh Hashanah 2 (10 a.m.); Sunday, Sept. 20, Tashlich (conditions permitting), 3 p.m.; Friday, Sept. 25 Shabbat Shuvah, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Sept. 27, Kol Nidre, 6 p.m.; Monday, Sept. 28, Yom Kippur, 10 a.m. Please join us!

Jodie Sadovsky

### American Legion Auxiliary Unit 156

Unit 156 will likely cancel our September meeting because of concerns about social distancing, with the hope that the regular meeting schedule will resume in October. Quilters by the Sea QOV may hold a Sew Saturday on Sept. 12. Members are advised to watch for e-mail updates from unit leadership.

Harlan Sexton

### PSS Senior Center

At this time the city's Department for the Aging does not have any definitive plan to reopen senior centers. However, PSS City Island is ready at a moment's notice and has reopening plans already in place whenever we get the word.

In the meantime, our Facebook page (PSS City Island Center) is updated regularly as new information becomes available for our members. It provides instructions on how to access exercise classes online and our remote arthritis class, as well as an updated online calendar for the center.

Shelf-stable food is distributed on Tuesdays, and a fresh meal is distributed on Thursdays, both from 12 to 2 p.m. Face masks are also provided.

Updates are usually sent out on Mondays via phone to all our members through an 877 number, and our staff regularly calls our members individually to check on their well-being. If you are not on our calling list, please e-mail [pattis@pssusa.org](mailto:pattis@pssusa.org) with your name and phone number, or call the center at 718-885-0727.

Until we're together again, stay safe and healthy.

Patty Attis

### City Island Rising

We look forward to doing another virtual meeting on Thursday, Sept. 10, at 7 p.m. On Aug. 20, we hosted a successful Census phone bank, in which we reached out to nearly 200 neighbors and encouraged them to fill out the census form before the deadline of Sept. 30. Completing the form takes only 10 minutes and helps to secure more funding for our schools, roads and hospitals. We will do another phone bank before the deadline so please check our social media channels or e-mail us at [CityIslandRising@gmail.com](mailto:CityIslandRising@gmail.com) for more updates.

We will also be doing a neighborhood-run "clean sweep" on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you would like to sign up, please e-mail us.

Additionally, we've been working with the NY Sea Grant program to document extensive flooding on and around City Island and Pelham Bay Park. We will be hosting an orientation in the coming weeks so more people can learn how to report and document this flooding so we can fight for the resiliency improvements our community deserves.

Finally, on the good news front and through working with Assembly Member Benedetto, Senator Biaggi and the NYC Mayor's Office, we were able to secure a school speed camera for City Island Avenue. Hopefully this will curb some of the speeding problems on the Avenue.

John Doyle

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### God Bless Grandparents

Given the current problems in our country, grandparents have been recognized as more precious, vulnerable and giving than ever before, so it seems fitting to look at films about them. There is something for everyone's interests—classic, comedy, drama, fantasy, horror, musical and science fiction.

**Little Lord Fauntleroy** (1936) is the story of 8-year-old Ceddie (Freddie Bartholomew) who lives with his American mother (Delores Costello) in 1880s Brooklyn. His British father was disowned by his grandfather, the Earl of Dorincourt (C. Aubrey Smith), who disapproved of all Americans. When Ceddie's father dies, the Earl decides to recognize Ceddie as his heir. He brings Ceddie and his mother to England, where the stern and grumpy old man is soon won over by Ceddie's kindness and honesty. When another woman insists that her son is the Earl's true heir, Ceddie's friends, candy store owner Silas Hobbs (Guy Kibee) and Brooklyn bootblack Dick Tipton (Mickey Rooney), go to England to help.

**Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory** (1971) is a musical fantasy film starring Gene Wilder in the title role. The film tells the story of Charlie Bucket (Peter Ostrum), a poor child who desperately wants to be among five children to win a Golden Ticket hidden in a chocolate bar so that he and his grandfather (Jack Albertson) can visit Willy Wonka's chocolate factory. There are wonderful songs in the film including "The Candyman" and "Pure Imagination." In 2014, the film was selected for preservation in the U.S. National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

In **On Golden Pond** (1981) retired school-teacher Norman Thayer Jr. (Henry Fonda) and his wife, Ethel (Katherine Hepburn), spend every summer in their cottage on a New England lake. When their daughter, Chelsea (Jane Fonda), wants to take a vacation with her fiancée, Bill (Dabney Coleman), they leave Bill's 13-year-old son Billy Ray (Doug McKeon) in the care of Norman and Ethel. When Norman takes on a grandfatherly role and becomes close to Billy Ray, Chelsea sees her father in a new light, which heals their strained relationship. Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn both won Oscars in this spectacularly filmed and acted drama.

Shirley MacLaine portrayed a grandmother in three different films produced 10 years apart. It's definitely time to get out your handkerchiefs for **Terms of Endearment** (1985), in which she plays widow Aurora Greenway, an overbearing mother to her daughter, Emma (Debra Winger). Against her mother's wishes, Emma marries an unreliable teacher, Flap Horton (Jeff Daniels), with whom she has three children. When she discovers that Flap is cheating, Emma takes the children, returns to her mother and becomes ill. Jack Nicholson provides some much needed comic relief as Aurora's love interest, next-door neighbor and former astronaut Garrett Breedlove. Although the film garnered 11 Oscar nominations and 5 wins, including Best Picture, MacLaine for Best Actress, Nicholson for Supporting Actor, and James L. Brooks for Director and Screenplay, I personally found it too sad.

**Mrs. Winterbourne** (1996) is a comedy in which a pregnant Connie (Ricki Lake) is abandoned by the father of her child. Despondently, she takes a train home to Boston, and on board, she meets Hugh and Patricia Winterbourne (Brendan Fraser and Susan Haskell), a wealthy couple also expecting a baby. When the train crashes, Connie wakes up in a hospital to discover

that the staff thinks she's Patricia Winterbourne, who died in the wreck along with Hugh. Led by sharp-tongued Grace (Shirley MacLaine), the Winterbournes had never met Patricia, so they don't know Connie isn't Patricia. Although Connie isn't trying to cheat anyone, she realizes that this isn't a bad environment for raising her baby, especially after she meets Bill Winterbourne, Hugh's twin brother (also played by Fraser).

In **Her Shoes** (2005) is the story of Rose (Toni Collette), a dowdy lawyer who is plagued by the antics of her gorgeous sister, Maggie (Cameron Diaz). After a huge fight between the two, each embarks on a new life, and watching them blossom in their own ways is enchanting. Shirley MacLaine is terrific in this poignant and well-written film as the grandmother they never knew they had.

Set in St. Petersburg, FL, **Cocoon** (1985) is a gentle fantastical family film that tells the story of a group of elderly folk living in a retirement community. The outstanding ensemble cast includes Wilfred Brimley and Maureen Stapleton as Benjamin and Mary, grandparents of the very sweet David (Barrett Oliver). Real-life husband and wife Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy are Joe and Alma Finley, a lady's man and his loving wife. Gwen Verdon and Don Ameche are Bess McCarthy and Art Selwyn, a dancing pair of singles. Jack Gilford and Herta Ware are Bennie and Rose Lefkowitz, a complainer and his sickly wife. When the men trespass and go swimming in a pool filled with strange pods, their youth and vitality are restored. There they have a close-encounter with aliens Walter (Brian Dennehy) and Kitty (Tawnee Welch, Raquel's stunning daughter). Steve Guttenberg is on hand as fishing boat captain Jack Bonner, Kitty's "love" interest. This heartwarming film earned Ron Howard his first Oscar as Best Director.

**Parenthood** (1989) is a feel-good poignant ensemble comedy that tells the story of four suburban siblings and their families over the course of a single summer. Jason Robards is his usual superb curmudgeonly self as the family patriarch, Grandpa Frank Buckman. Hardworking Gil (Steve Martin) and his stay-at-home wife, Karen (Mary Steenburgen), are trying to help their oldest son, Kevin (Jasen Fisher), overcome emotional problems. Gil's sister Helen (Dianne Wiest) is a single mother raising a sullen adolescent son (Leaf Phoenix) and an independent-minded daughter (Martha Plimpton) in love with a seeming loser (Keanu Reeves). Gil and Helen's sister, Susan (Harley Jane Kozak), is married to Nathan (Rick Moranis), an incredibly controlling overachiever husband. When long-lost brother Larry (Tom Hulce) shows up with yet another get-rich-quick scheme, he brings with him a surprise addition to the family, giving wise Grandpa Frank even more to handle.

In the dramatic courtroom thriller **Music Box** (1989), Michael J. Laszlo (Armin Mueller-Stahl), an anti-Communist Hungarian-American immigrant, is threatened with having his U.S. citizenship revoked and being deported to Hungary to stand trial for war crimes. Laszlo insists that it is a case of mistaken identity. His daughter, tough Chicago defense attorney Ann Talbot (Jessica Lange), motivated by her son Mikey's (Luke Haas) deep love for his grandfather, unwisely decides to defend her father.

**The Princess Diaries** (2001) is a sweet family film that stars Anne Hathaway as Mia, a 15-year-old high-school girl who has been raised in San Francisco by her mother, Helen (Caroline Goodall), who wanted her to have a "normal" upbringing. When there is a surprise visit from Mia's grandmother Clarisse (Julie Andrews), who just happens to be queen of the (fictional) country of Genovia, Mia's world is turned upside down.

Set in modern-day New Zealand, **Whale Rider** (2002) is the story of Pai (Keisha Castle-Hughes), a young Maori girl whose twin brother dies in childbirth along with their mother. Pai's grandfather Koro (Rawiri Paratene) is devastated when her father, Porourangi (Cliff Curtis), refuses to take over as tribal chief and deserts the family. Left in the care of her grandparents, Pai is heartbroken that her grandfather thinks of her as just a worthless girl. When a pod of whales is washed ashore, Pai is presented with an insurmountable challenge and opportunity to prove herself and become a hero to her people.

**Little Miss Sunshine** (2006) is a bittersweet comedy about an unconventional family that goes on a road trip to take young Olive Hoover (Oscar-nominated Abigail Breslin) to the rather appalling "Little Miss Sunshine" beauty pageant. The other passengers on the relic VW bus include her grandfather (Best Supporting Oscar winner Alan Arkin); her father, Richard (Greg Kinnear), and his wife, Sheryl (Toni Collette); Sheryl's suicidal brother, Frank (Steve Carell), and teenage brother, Dwayne (Paul Dano). The film also won a Best Screenplay Oscar and was nominated for Best Picture.

For horror film fans, M. Night Shyamalan's **The Visit** (2015) is the terrifying story of Becca (Olivia DeJonge) and Tyler (Ed Oxenbould), a brother and sister who are sent to visit their grandparents, Nana (Deanna Dunagan) and Pop Pop (Peter McRobbie), whom they have never met, because their single mother (Kathryn Hahn) wants to take a much-needed vacation. The grandparents live on a remote Pennsylvania farm, and although they seem nice at first, they exhibit increasingly disturbing behavior, which is recorded in a documentary being made by Becca.

**Grandma** (2015) stars Lily Tomlin in the title role as the widow Elle, who has just gotten through a difficult breakup when

her 18-year-old granddaughter, Sage (Julia Garner), unexpectedly shows up in need of money for an abortion. Temporarily broke, Grandma Elle and Sage spend the day trying to get their hands on some cash, making unannounced visits to old friends and flames, including Elle's ex-husband (Sam Elliott). The film was shot in 19 days with a budget of \$600,000.

In **Gifted** (2017) we see how grandparents may not always be the wisest choice for raising an orphan. This is the story of Frank Adler (Chris Evans), a loving single man who is educating and nurturing his seven-year old niece, Mary (Mckenna Grace), a math prodigy. Frank wants to follow his late sister's desire for a normal school life for Mary, but when Mary's formidable grandmother Evelyn (Lindsay Duncan) learns of Mary's mathematical abilities, her ambitions for her granddaughter threaten to separate Frank and Mary.

In **The Farewell** (2019), aspiring Chinese-American writer Billi (Awkwafina) dearly loves her paternal grandmother, Nai Nai (Zhao Shu-zhen), who lives in Changchun, China. Billi's parents, Haiyan (Tzi Ma) and Jian (Diana Lin), inform her that Nai Nai has been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and is predicted to have only a few months left to live. The family keeps this a secret from Nai Nai herself. Instead, a wedding for Billi's cousin is planned in China as an excuse to unite the family and to spend what is expected to be one last time with Nai Nai. Billi is conflicted about Chinese cultural beliefs that result in a family's refusal to disclose such a life-threatening disease to the matriarch. Uncle Haibin (Jiang Yongbo) contends that the lie allows the family to bear the emotional burden of the diagnosis, rather than Nai Nai herself—a practice of collectivism that differs from the individualistic values common in Western culture. Billi later learns that Nai Nai told a similar lie to her husband up until his death when he was terminally ill. The credits reveal that six years after her diagnosis, the woman on whom Nai Nai's character was based is still alive.

In **Downton Abbey** (2019) the Lord and Lady Grantham (Hugh Bonneville and Elizabeth McGovern) and their valiant staff prepare for the most important moment of their lives. Set in 1927, the film recounts a visit by the king (Simon Jones) and queen (Geraldine James) to the family's estate in the Yorkshire countryside. As the royal staff descends on Downton, the family and servants are pitted against the royal entourage, especially the queen's lady-in-waiting, Lady Bagshaw (Imelda Staunton), who has fallen out with the family, especially with Lady Mary's (Michelle Dockery) grandmother, the Dowager Countess (Maggie Smith). The relationship between Lady Mary and her grandmother is quite moving and significant for the future of Downton.

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

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# In The Garden

By MARY COLBY



Photo by MARY COLBY

Fall bulb catalogs. So many decisions.

## Autumn is Bulb Planting Time

Last week, I made my rounds to some Westchester garden centers to look for fillers to furnish the late autumn garden. If you are looking for cosmos, tithonia, gloriosa daisies or sunflowers, you are out of luck. The stock of plants in many nurseries is depleted. In the time of Covid, gardening seems to have become one of the top pastimes, hence the shortage. And that's a good thing, for the biodiversity of the area is being boosted and replenished by all these busy gardeners.

Thinking of the shortage of plants available, I realized that it was time to put in an order for spring bulbs, which really do add brilliance and color when little else is blooming from the cold ground. My catalogs had arrived unusually early in June! Van Engelen, Brent and Becky's, John Scheepers, and Dutch Gardens are spread out all over my kitchen table.

Most plots are small on City Island, leaving some of us to carry the bulbs hither and thither wondering where to place them. So planning where to tuck in your bulbs beforehand is of great importance. Also, it is a good idea to consider if you will scrap them after blooming (tulips) or if they will become a permanent planting to enjoy every year. With this in mind, if your plot is small, wouldn't it be a joyous sight to see your front lawn sparkling with crocus? *Crocus tommasinianus* bloom in late winter, followed by the giant crocus later in April. These can be safely mowed

to return year after year.

Alliums are on my list, as they take up no space at all. You can just squeeze them in between perennials for a spectacular May display. Consider the taller purple sensation, which mixes well with more naturalistic plantings, and the shorter christophii and schubertii for melon-sized balls of starry fireworks. Allium Mt. Everest is white if you crave it. *Nectaroscordum siculum* is an allium-like bulb, with drooping, bell-shaped creamy green flowers on stiff stems. They nod nicely and mix well with oxeye daisies, iris and poppies.

*Daffodil poeticus*, rapture and thalia are treasures for me, as are small stands of the blue muscari and chinodoxa. These form pools of the color I most love to see, for blue is the rarest of all in the garden.

If you are a lily lover, now is the time. Lilies for early summer are the martagons or turk's caps, with dangling, downward-facing blooms. Bigger and bolder for mid-summer are the oriental lilies, which hold their heads high like Casa Blanca, a pure white variety, and fantasia in pink. Lastly, the trumpet lilies, such as regale, are truly romantic. Over the years, I have sometimes had the time to grow lilies in pots. To keep them through the winter, sink the pots in the ground. Come spring, remove and nurture them to blooming size. It is of great value to have plants you can move around in the garden. By having them in pots you can pop them in anywhere for new and better displays. This works great with dahlias as well. I love the practice of having extras on hand to shape-shift the borders.

Of course, there are the smaller collectable bulbs for the enthusiast. Adonis flower, maybe the earliest to show besides the snowdrop, bursts forth in a ruff of sunshine even on the coldest days of March. The pagoda, incurved flowers of erythronium, show off like a fancy party dress while adorning a front walkway. I wait for them every year. And then lastly come the cyclamen hederifolium, so achingly lovely that you must keep planting more and more.

Teeny tiny or big and blowsy, bulbs take the least amount of effort to grow and give you the most bang for your buck. But order quickly, before the rush.

Mary Colby is available for consultation, garden plans and installation. Call 917-804-4509.



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

## Dirty Dozen Tax Scams: 2020 Edition

The "Dirty Dozen" is a list of common tax scams that target taxpayers. The list is compiled and issued annually every year by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), and this year it includes many aggressive and evolving schemes related to coronavirus tax relief, including Economic Impact Payments. The criminals behind these bogus schemes view everyone as potentially easy prey, and everyone should be on guard, especially vulnerable populations such as the elderly.

Although tax-related scams usually increase at tax time, this year scam artists are using the pandemic to try stealing

money and information from honest taxpayers. As such, taxpayers should refrain from engaging potential scammers online or on the phone. Here are this year's "Dirty Dozen" tax scams:

### 1. Phishing

Taxpayers should be alert to potential fake emails or websites looking to steal personal information. IRS Criminal Investigation has seen a tremendous increase in phishing schemes utilizing emails, letters, texts and links. These phishing schemes are using keywords such as "coronavirus," "Covid-19" and "Stimulus" in various ways.

These schemes are blasted to large numbers of people to get personal identifying information or financial account information, including account numbers and passwords. Most of these new schemes are actively playing on fear of the virus and concern about the stimulus payments.

Do not click on links claiming to be from the IRS, and be very wary of emails and websites as they may be nothing more than scams to steal personal information. As a reminder, the IRS will never initiate contact with taxpayers via email about a tax bill, refund or Economic Impact Pay-

ments.

### 2. Fake Charities

Criminals frequently exploit natural disasters and other situations, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic, by setting up fake charities to steal from well-intentioned people trying to help in times of need. Fake charity scams generally increase during disaster times like these.

Fraudulent schemes normally start with unsolicited contact by telephone, text, social media, email or in-person meetings using a variety of tactics. Bogus websites use names similar to legitimate charities to trick people into sending money or providing personal financial information. They may even claim to be working for or on behalf of the IRS to help victims file casualty loss claims and get tax refunds.

Taxpayers should be particularly wary of charities with names similar to nationally known organizations. Legitimate charities will provide their Employer Identification Number (EIN) if requested, which can be used to verify their legitimacy. Taxpayers can find legitimate and qualified charities using the search tool on [IRS.gov](https://www.irs.gov).

### 3. Threatening Impersonator Phone Calls

IRS impersonation scams come in many forms, such as threatening phone calls from a criminal claiming to be with the IRS in which the scammer attempts to instill fear and urgency in the potential victim. These types of phone scams or "vishing" (voice phishing) pose a major threat. Scam phone calls, including those threatening arrest, deportation or license revocation if the victim doesn't pay a bogus tax bill, are reported to the IRS year-round and are very common. These calls often take the form of a "robocall" (a text-to-speech recorded message with instructions for returning the call).

The fact is the IRS will never threaten a taxpayer or surprise him or her with a demand for immediate payment. Nor will it threaten, ask for financial information over the phone, or call about an unexpected refund or Economic Impact Payment. Taxpayers should contact the real IRS or consult a tax and accounting professional if they are worried there is a tax problem.

### 4. Social Media Scams

Social media enable anyone to share information with anyone else on the Internet. Scammers use that information as ammunition for a wide variety of scams. As such, taxpayers need to protect themselves against social media scams, which frequently use events like Covid-19 to try tricking people. These methods of trickery include e-mails in which scammers impersonate someone's family, friends or co-workers.

Social media scams have also led to tax-related identity theft. The basic element of social media scams is convincing a potential victim that he or she is dealing with a person close to them that they trust via email, text or social-media messaging.

Using personal information, a scammer may e-mail a potential victim and include a link to something of interest to the recipient that contains malware intended to commit more crimes. Scammers also infiltrate their victim's e-mails and cell phones to go after their friends and family with fake e-mails that appear to be real and text messages soliciting, for example, small donations to fake charities that are appealing to the victims.

### 5. Economic Impact Payment or Refund Theft

Great strides have been made against refund fraud and theft in recent years, but they remain an ongoing threat. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, this year, criminals have turned their attention to stealing Economic Impact Payments as provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Much of this stems from identity theft whereby criminals file false tax returns or supply other bogus information to the IRS to divert refunds to wrong addresses or bank accounts.

Recent victims of this type of scam include residents of nursing homes and other care facilities when concerns have been raised that people and businesses may be taking advantage of vulnerable populations who received the payments. Economic Impact Payments generally belong to the recipients, not to the organizations providing the care.

Remember that economic impact payments do not count as a resource for determining eligibility for Medicaid and other federal programs. They also do not count as income in determining eligibility for these programs.

### 6. Senior Citizen Fraud

Seniors are more likely to be targeted and victimized by scammers than other segments of society, and fraud targeting older Americans is pervasive. Financial abuse of seniors is a problem among personal and professional relationships but seems to be less of a problem when the service provider knows that a trusted friend or family member is keeping an eye out and taking an interest in the senior's affairs.

Also, as older Americans become more comfortable with evolving technologies, such as social media, scammers have moved in to take advantage. Phishing scams linked to Covid-19, for example, have been a major threat this filing season. Seniors need to be alert for a continuing surge of fake e-mails, text messages, websites and social media attempts to steal personal information.

### 7. Scams Targeting Non-English Speakers

IRS impersonators and other scammers also target groups with limited English proficiency. These scams target those potentially receiving an Economic Impact Payment and request personal or financial information from the taxpayer.

Phone scams are often threatening in nature and pose a major threat to people with limited access to information, including individuals not entirely comfortable with the English language. These calls frequently take the form of a "robocall" (a text-to-speech recorded message with instructions for returning the call), but in some cases may be made by a real person. These con artists may have some of the taxpayer's information, including the address, the last four digits of the Social Security number or other personal details, which makes the phone calls seem more legitimate.

One of the most common scams is the IRS impersonation scam in which a taxpayer receives a telephone call from someone claiming to be with the IRS threatening jail time, deportation or the revocation of a driver's license. Taxpayers who are recent immigrants are often the most vulnerable and should ignore these threats and not engage the scammers.

### 8. "Ghost" Tax Return Preparers

Selecting the best return preparer is important because he or she is being entrusted with a taxpayer's sensitive personal data. Most tax professionals provide honest, high-quality service, but dishonest preparers pop up every filing season committing fraud, harming innocent taxpayers or talking taxpayers into doing illegal things they regret later.

Taxpayers should always avoid so-called "ghost" preparers who expose their clients to potentially serious filing mistakes as well as possible tax fraud and the risk of losing their refunds. Because many tax professionals impacted by Covid-19 may have closed their offices, taxpayers should take particular care in selecting a credible tax preparer.

Ghost preparers don't sign the tax returns they prepare. They may print the tax return and tell the taxpayer to sign and mail it to the IRS. For e-filed returns, the ghost preparer will prepare but not digitally sign as the paid preparer. By law, anyone who is paid to prepare or assists in preparing federal tax returns must have a Pre-

Continued on page 15



## Obituaries

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



Photo by RON TERNER

### Anthony (Buddy) Pontecorvo

Anthony Pontecorvo, whom everyone called Buddy, passed away on Aug. 3, 2020, at the age of 96.

Buddy was born on City Island on July 9, 1924, one of the few remaining true clam diggers, and he lived here his entire life. In a profile published in *The Island Current* in 2014, he reported that he was born in the back of a small store on City Island Avenue, a candy shop and newspaper store that his parents ran in a building located on the northeast corner of Carroll Street, where Buddy eventually built his own hardware store.

He grew up in a house on Banta Lane, which was surrounded by shipyards that worked around the clock; the property was eventually sold to the government when World War II started, and the family moved to Carroll Street, where Buddy's son still lives.

Before Buddy was drafted into the Army, he worked in an electrical shop on the Island, and after the war ended, he started his own hardware store at the southeast corner of Carroll Street and City Island Avenue. He recalled that "the site was at one time a food market called Olson's Market [which] used to supply a lot of stuff to the boats that would pass through here. In 1947 people by the name of Jenkins owned the hardware store. . . but the store was closed more than it was open. My father worked for Jenkins as a carpenter foreman in the boatyards at the foot of Carroll Street, and as the hardware store closed, I said to my father, let's rent that store, and we did."

At first Buddy worked out of a catalogue, but he eventually learned the business and stayed with it. Eventually he bought the property across the street and built the hardware store that he ran for many years. "At the time I was born there were very few houses, maybe one on this block, one on the next block. And at least 80 percent of the people here then weren't permanent residents." But World War II changed everything.

After the war he did what he had to do to build his hardware store into a City Island institution, expanding and adjusting his inventory to meet the changing hardware needs of an island that was evolving from a ship-building center to a residential community. He was able to fix almost anything that was brought to him; he had a wealth of knowledge and was always available to help everyone who needed help.

On Feb. 16, 1958, he married the love of his life, Lucy, and they moved to Hawkins Street, where they welcomed three children: Theresa, Grace and Joseph. He was an active member of the American Legion Leonard Hawkins Post 156 and participated every year in the Legion's Memorial Day parade. He also attended Civic Association meetings well into his 80s and even helped put the chairs away at the end of the evening. He remained in the hardware business for 64 years, until 2011, when he sold it to Karl Hoedel, who promptly changed the name from Hardware & Yacht Supply to Buddy's Hardware

and Marine.

Buddy Pontecorvo was predeceased by his wife, Lucy, in 2014; he is survived by his three children: Theresa and her husband, James; Grace and Joseph; his four granddaughters, Jamie and her husband, David; Michelle, Bonnie and Alyssa; and his great-granddaughter, Adriana.

A memorial Mass was held at St. Mary, Star of the Sea on Aug. 6, and he was interred at Pelham Cemetery.

A local legend, Buddy will be greatly missed.

### Jose Vidal Rodriguez

Island resident Jose (Joe) Rodriguez passed away on Thursday, June 18, 2020, at the age of 68. He was born on Oct. 3, 1952, in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, and moved to the Bronx at the age of 10.

Before his retirement, Joe worked at Yonkers Hardware Store and at F&F Supply in Hunts Point.

He is survived by his longtime partner, Karolee Jarnecki, whom he met at Yonkers Hardware; by his younger brother, and by two children from a previous marriage.

For those of you who might have passed by him on City Island Avenue early in the morning, he always had a smile and a kind word, and for the dogs, there was always a treat.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Posh Pets Rescue ([poshpetsrescue.org](http://poshpetsrescue.org)).

## Restaurants

Continued from page 3

Lobster House was one of the first to offer take-out seafood lunches and dinners, and business has continued briskly, especially now that the restaurant has been able to open an outdoor dining area that overlooks the water. John Mandarino reported that business was off for a couple of months but then it has become nearly normal on weekends. The restaurant doesn't take reservations for sit-down dining—it's first come, first served—and the take-out meals remain popular.

Another restaurant that has found outdoor dining very successful is Portofino, whose owner, Mario Rugova, sees some positive notes in this difficult time. He has found staff hard to get, with former employees choosing not to return, so he now has his five children and his wife, a cook at Montefiore, working with him. He has 20 well-spaced tables on his back patio overlooking Eastchester Bay, and he has found his customers to be well-behaved and enthusiastic about the food. He is very pleased to note that many of his diners are young City Island residents. Although he invested heavily in improvements before the pandemic, he knows that as the weather cools, he will have to rent tents and heaters if he is going to continue serving out-of-doors.

It is likely that Island residents will never be entirely happy with the traffic caused by restaurant customers, made worse this summer by the double parking, garbage and aggressive behavior that have emerged during the pandemic. However, we must acknowledge the fact that the owners of the restaurants here have gone to great lengths to accommodate residents as well as their customers, while facing management and economic challenges caused by circumstances beyond their control. Let us all hope that by the time the weather cools down, the coronavirus remains under control, allowing us to return to life as usual.



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# BACK TO SCHOOL 2020: IT'S A BRAVE NEW WORLD

By JOHN SCARDINA

As parents, we know well the rhythm of past summers: August rolls around, kids get bored and suddenly we are shopping for school clothes and buying notebooks and pencils. This has probably not changed much for most of you, although school outfits seem a little less necessary in the age of sweatpants and other comfy clothes for sitting in front of a computer screen!

Some of my advice about going back to school is the same as always:

- Start working toward an appropriate bedtime at least two weeks before school starts. Remember, children and teens need 9 to 10 hours of sleep to fully function.

- Start establishing routines for daily activities that involve cognitive challenges and paper-and-pencil tasks: read a book along with your student; get out some practice math sheets; do some cooking together and double the recipe to practice fraction skills; watch a documentary together and discuss the facts presented; go on a nature walk and start a "naturalist's calendar" of what you see each time you go out; set aside time every day for "training the brain."

- Create spaces that help to organize activities: Where will Johnny do homework? Where does the bookbag go after school? What needs to happen to make a room a suitable learning environment?

- Start a chore list. Here's a new motto for you. "Nobody lives rent free in this house!" Chores create community-centered and family-centered consciousness and provide opportunities for positively helping other family members.

- Practice appropriate rituals for saying goodbye, for saying hello when returning home, and for going to sleep. Especially during the pandemic, we don't want to take for granted the benefits of loving words with our loved ones.

What is different for 2020 and the likelihood of at least some on-line learning?

- Do what you can to upgrade your internet access and computer capability.

There are numerous free resources for help here: Google "Free Resources for NYC Families" and get connected before school begins. Contact me if I can help out with this ([johnscardina@hotmail.com](mailto:johnscardina@hotmail.com)).

- Be sure to create the "time and place" requirements for virtual schooling. These may be the same as you always had but now may be changing in order to get the best wi-fi access in your living space and the quietest spaces when younger siblings are home.

- Set up a schedule, the way we educators do in school, and do your best to stick to it on the home "virtual school" days. Teachers know the value of routine in the classroom, and when you need to be in "teacher mode" you can certainly benefit from predictable times for various activities.

- Be sure everyone is getting enough physical activity, sleep, social time and spiritual support. This is especially true for you as a parent: you have a lot to manage these days!

- Be as civic-minded as possible. This is a national election year: set the right example by voting and letting your children know the value of democracy in action. Also, support those social causes that are dear to you. We are tasked as citizens to create each day the kind of country we want to live in, so be your most inclusive/just/generous/activist self in living your values.

Finally—and most importantly—let's be sure we realize that we are all in this together, but that we have vastly different access to resources. Our families do not share the same advantages when it comes to computer equipment, income, housing space and childcare. City Island needs to be a "beloved community" (as Martin Luther King Jr. used to say) and embrace all of its members. This is a time to be generous where you can help others, compassionate with everyone and courageous when facing challenges.

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# American Legion

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Times and heights of high and low water (Eastern Daylight 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

**SEPTEMBER 2020**

| DAY                 | TIME<br>HH MM | HEIGHT<br>FEET | TIME<br>HH MM | HEIGHT<br>FEET | TIME<br>HH MM | HEIGHT<br>FEET | TIME<br>HH MM | HEIGHT<br>FEET | DAY    |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------|
| 01 Tue              | 0616          | -0.07          | 1211          | 7.89           | 1829          | 0.20           |               |                | Tue 01 |
| 02 Wed              | 0030          | 8.17           | 0655          | 0.08           | 1250          | 7.91           | 1908          | 0.26           | Wed 02 |
| 03 Thu              | 0107          | 7.99           | 0729          | 0.30           | 1323          | 7.84           | 1941          | 0.39           | Thu 03 |
| 04 Fri              | 0139          | 7.76           | 0754          | 0.55           | 1349          | 7.72           | 2003          | 0.56           | Fri 04 |
| 05 Sat              | 0201          | 7.51           | 0800          | 0.75           | 1404          | 7.62           | 2016          | 0.70           | Sat 05 |
| 06 Sun              | 0219          | 7.29           | 0818          | 0.86           | 1427          | 7.56           | 2043          | 0.83           | Sun 06 |
| 07 Mon              | 0248          | 7.10           | 0851          | 1.00           | 1500          | 7.50           | 2120          | 1.00           | Mon 07 |
| 08 Tue              | 0326          | 6.91           | 0931          | 1.19           | 1540          | 7.41           | 2204          | 1.2            | Tue 08 |
| 09 Wed              | 0411          | 6.72           | 1016          | 1.42           | 1626          | 7.32           | 2255          | 1.39           | Wed 09 |
| 10 Thu              | 0502          | 6.57           | 1108          | 1.63           | 1718          | 7.25           | 2352          | 1.51           | Thu 10 |
| 11 Fri              | 0600          | 6.52           | 1205          | 1.74           | 1816          | 7.26           |               |                | Fri 11 |
| 12 Sat              | 0100          | 1.48           | 0707          | 6.62           | 1310          | 1.69           | 1921          | 7.39           | Sat 12 |
| 13 Sun              | 0221          | 1.23           | 0819          | 6.93           | 1421          | 1.41           | 2028          | 7.66           | Sun 13 |
| 14 Mon              | 0331          | 0.79           | 0921          | 7.38           | 1533          | 0.92           | 2130          | 8.01           | Mon 14 |
| 15 Tue              | 0425          | 0.29           | 1012          | 7.89           | 1634          | 0.33           | 2226          | 8.36           | Tue 15 |
| 16 Wed              | 0512          | -0.18          | 1059          | 8.36           | 1728          | -0.24          | 2316          | 8.62           | Wed 16 |
| 17 Thu              | 0556          | -0.55          | 1144          | 8.74           | 1818          | -0.68          |               |                | Thu 17 |
| 18 Fri              | 0006          | 8.73           | 0640          | -0.76          | 1229          | 8.97           | 1908          | -0.93          | Fri 18 |
| 19 Sat              | 0055          | 8.66           | 0724          | -0.77          | 1316          | 9.02           | 2000          | -0.95          | Sat 19 |
| 20 Sun              | 0145          | 8.40           | 0811          | -0.58          | 1405          | 8.87           | 2056          | -0.75          | Sun 20 |
| 21 Mon              | 0239          | 8.01           | 0901          | -0.21          | 1457          | 8.55           | 2159          | -0.39          | Mon 21 |
| 22 Tue              | 0340          | 7.53           | 1000          | 0.28           | 1558          | 8.12           | 2310          | 0.01           | Tue 22 |
| 23 Wed              | 0458          | 7.11           | 1117          | 0.76           | 1719          | 7.72           |               |                | Wed 23 |
| 24 Thu              | 0023          | 0.31           | 0622          | 6.92           | 1239          | 1.04           | 1848          | 7.55           | Thu 24 |
| 25 Fri              | 0132          | 0.43           | 0734          | 6.99           | 1351          | 1.06           | 2000          | 7.61           | Fri 25 |
| 26 Sat              | 0234          | 0.41           | 0836          | 7.23           | 1454          | 0.89           | 2101          | 7.77           | Sat 26 |
| 27 Sun              | 0331          | 0.31           | 0931          | 7.53           | 1550          | 0.64           | 2155          | 7.95           | Sun 27 |
| 28 Mon              | 0421          | 0.21           | 1020          | 7.80           | 1640          | 0.39           | 2243          | 8.07           | Mon 28 |
| 29 Tue              | 0507          | 0.17           | 1105          | 8.00           | 1725          | 0.21           | 2327          | 8.08           | Tue 29 |
| 30 Wed              | 0548          | 0.21           | 1146          | 8.08           | 1806          | 0.14           |               |                | Wed 30 |
| <b>OCTOBER 2020</b> |               |                |               |                |               |                |               |                |        |
| 01 Thu              | 0008          | 7.99           | 0625          | 0.33           | 1222          | 8.05           | 1843          | 0.17           | Thu 01 |
| 02 Fri              | 0043          | 7.81           | 0655          | 0.51           | 1252          | 7.94           | 1913          | 0.27           | Fri 02 |
| 03 Sat              | 0112          | 7.58           | 0711          | 0.69           | 1308          | 7.81           | 1931          | 0.40           | Sat 03 |
| 04 Sun              | 0128          | 7.37           | 0715          | 0.78           | 1320          | 7.76           | 1943          | 0.50           | Sun 04 |
| 05 Mon              | 0145          | 7.22           | 0741          | 0.85           | 1347          | 7.75           | 2011          | 0.60           | Mon 05 |



**WILDCAT SERVICE CORPORATION**

By now, you have probably noticed the bright green shirts and garbage bags of the Wildcat Service Corporation on City Island Avenue. Maybe you have read about them in *The Island Current*, too. We have. Here's what Barbara Dolensek wrote in June: "After the [Mother's Day] weekend, the restaurants did a great deal of the clean-up along the Avenue, as did Councilman Gjonaj's Wildcats." The Councilman himself took out a full page ad in the June *Current* in which he alluded to the Wildcats, who have been helping to keep City Island clean on Saturdays through Mondays this spring, summer and, with any luck, this fall, too.

We did a little digging to find out more about this organization, and here is what

we found. The Wildcat Service Corporation was founded in 1972 by a gentleman named Herb Sturz. Their mission statement "is to create opportunities for individuals with barriers to economic well-being," and their motto is "the power of work." How refreshing to learn of an organization touting work as something much more than a paycheck or a simple means to an end. For Mr. Sturz's Wildcats, work is transformational. That is its power: the power to change lives.

The "individuals with barriers to economic well-being" referenced in the mission statement above are individuals who have been incarcerated. Each year Wildcat Service Corporation helps thousands of incarcerated individuals navigate the road back to self sufficiency and respect. They do it through four programs: The Women's Project, Rikers Smart, Jails to Jobs and the Neighborhood Improvement Program. It is the Neighborhood Improvement Program that has brought the Wildcats to the attention of City Islanders.

Here's how it works: in partnership with New York City Councilmembers, as well as New York State senators, teams of Wildcat participants go out into neighborhoods in need of their services and get the job done. Some of the services that they provide include street and sidewalk cleaning, trash removal, graffiti/signage removal, power washing, landscaping, tree and flower planting and integrated pest management. They will even respond to 311 calls, specifically those made by elderly or handicapped individuals who are in need of snow removal.

We think we speak for the vast majority of City Islanders when we say that we owe the Wildcat Service Corporation a vote of thanks. Next time you see one of these team members, let him or her know how you feel. Bring them a bottle of water. Offer to buy someone a cup of coffee. There is power in gratitude, too!

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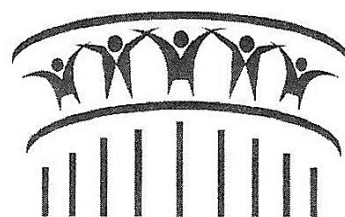
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# Tax Tips

Continued from page 11

parer Tax Identification Number (PTIN). Paid preparers must sign and include their PTIN on returns.

Unscrupulous preparers may also target those without a filing requirement and may or may not be due a refund. They promise inflated refunds by claiming fake tax credits, including education credits, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and others. Taxpayers should avoid preparers who ask them to sign a blank return, promise a big refund before looking at the taxpayer's records or charge fees based on a percentage of the refund.

Taxpayers are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of their tax return, regardless of who prepares it.

## 9. Offer in Compromise (OIC) Mills

Taxpayers need to be wary of misleading tax debt resolution companies that can exaggerate chances to settle tax debts for "pennies on the dollar" through an Offer in Compromise (OIC). These offers are available for taxpayers who meet very specific criteria under the law to qualify for reducing their tax bill. But unscrupulous companies oversell the program to unqualified candidates so they can collect a hefty fee from taxpayers already struggling with debt.

These scams are commonly called OIC "mills," which cast a wide net for taxpayers, charge them pricey fees and churn out applications for a program they are unlikely to qualify for. Although the OIC program helps thousands of taxpayers reduce their tax debt each year, not everyone qualifies for an OIC. In Fiscal Year 2019, there were 54,000 OICs submitted to the IRS. The agency accepted 18,000 of them.

## 10. Fake Payments with Repayment Demands

Criminals are always finding new ways to trick taxpayers into believing their scam, such as putting a bogus refund into the taxpayer's actual bank account. Here's how the scam works:

A con artist steals or obtains a taxpayer's data including the Social Security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and bank account information. The scammer files a bogus tax return and has the refund deposited into the taxpayer's checking or savings account. Once the direct deposit hits the taxpayer's bank account, the fraudster places a call to them, posing as an IRS employee. The taxpayer is told that there's been an error and that the IRS needs the money returned immediately or penalties and interest will result. The taxpayer is told to buy specific gift cards for the amount of the refund.

The IRS will never demand payment by a specific method. There are many payment options available to taxpayers, and there is also a process by which taxpayers have the right to question the amount of

tax we say they owe. Whenever a taxpayer receives an unexpected refund and a call unexpectedly demanding a refund repayment, he or she should reach out to the banking institution and the IRS.

## 11. Payroll and HR Scams

Tax professionals, employers and taxpayers need to be on guard against phishing designed to steal W-2 forms and other tax information. These are Business Email Compromise (BEC) or Business Email Spoofing (BES). They are particularly common with many businesses closed and their employees working from home because of Covid-19. Currently, two of the most common types of these scams are the gift card scam and the direct deposit scam.

**Gift card scam.** In the gift card scam, a compromised e-mail account is often used to send a request to purchase gift cards in various denominations.

**Direct deposit scam.** In the direct deposit scheme, the fraudster may have access to the victim's e-mail account (also known as an e-mail account compromise or "EAC"). They may also impersonate the potential victim to have the organization change the employee's direct deposit information to reroute their deposit to an account the fraudster controls.

BEC/BES scams have used a variety of ploys to include requests for wire transfers, payment of fake invoices as well as others. In recent years, the IRS has observed variations of these scams where fake IRS documents are used to lend legitimacy to the bogus request. For example, a fraudster may attempt a fake invoice scheme and use what appears to be a legitimate IRS document to help convince the victim.

The Direct Deposit and other BEC/BES variations should be forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) where a complaint can be filed. The IRS requests that Form W-2 scams be reported to [phishing@irs.gov](mailto:phishing@irs.gov) (Subject: W-2 Scam).

## 12. Ransomware

Ransomware is malware targeting human and technical weaknesses to infect a potential victim's computer, network or server and is a rapidly growing cyber-crime. It doesn't just affect individuals either. Recently, Garmin Ltd., a GPS and fitness-tracker company, was the victim of a ransomware attack and asked to pay \$10 million in "ransom" to restore its systems. Malware is a form of invasive software that is often frequently inadvertently downloaded by the user. Once downloaded, it tracks keystrokes and other computer activity. Infected ransomware looks for and locks critical or sensitive data with its encryption. In some cases, entire computer networks can be adversely impacted.

Victims generally aren't aware of the attack until they try to access their data, or when they receive a ransom request in the form of a pop-up window. These criminals don't want to be traced, so they frequently use anonymous messaging platforms and demand payment in virtual currency such as Bitcoin.

Cybercriminals might use a phishing e-mail to trick a potential victim into opening a link or attachment containing the ransomware. These may include e-mail solicitations to support a fake Covid-19 charity. Cybercriminals also look for system vulnerabilities where human error is not needed to deliver their malware.

If you think you have been a victim of a tax scam, please contact the IRS, your accountant or your attorney immediately.

# CLASSIFIED

All classified ads must be prepaid. Rates: \$6.00 minimum for 20 words or less. Over 20 words—30 cents per word. Type or print your ad and mail with check or money order to: The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, N.Y. 10464. ADS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 20th OF EACH MONTH except December and July.

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WATERFRONT CONDO FOR SALE: Luxurious waterfront duplex at the historic Sailmaker Condominium complex- \$550K. This totally renovated apartment facing Long Island Sound features a large kitchen, living room, dining room, 3 bedrooms, 2 full baths, full size washer & dryer, 2 terraces, 2 outdoor assigned parking spots, 2 wood burning fireplaces, walk in closet and attic storage. For more info, please call Listing Agent: Maria Swieciki at TODAY REALTY, CORP. 718-885-0017 cell. Sorry, no dogs allowed, non smoking property.

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT: Commercial building, centrally located on City Island with office and warehouse spaces available for rent. Please call 914-760-1106.

PARENTING IS A JOURNEY AND SOMETIMES WE NEED A GUIDE: As an experienced child development specialist/certified school psychologist/parent educator who has worked in schools for over forty years., I will help you unlock the potential inside your student and yourself and develop a plan for success at home and in school, right here on City Island- you can walk to my home office! Visit [www.ThinkLaughLearn.com](http://www.ThinkLaughLearn.com) for details or call John Scardina 718-885-9305.

CITY ISLAND SOUVENIRS: Sweatshirts (children's and adult), T-shirts, mugs, postcards, bumper stickers @ Kaleidoscope Gallery. 280 City Island Avenue, 718-885-3090. [www.kaleidoscope280.com](http://www.kaleidoscope280.com).

OWENS TREE EXPERTS: Tree trimming & removal. Free estimates. Fully insured. Call 718-885-0914.

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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.



Jennifer Brick married Matthew DeVito on June 12 on King Avenue.

Happy birthday wishes on Sept. 2 to Stephen Swieciki with love from the Swieciki and Iovieno families. Enjoy your special day!

The Ulmers want to wish a very Happy Sweet 16 on Sept. 18 to their granddaughter (and Kentucky-born girl), Allison Grace Kratzer. Mimi and Papa love you to the moon and back!

The Brick family proudly announces the marriage of Jennifer Brick to Matthew DeVito on June 12 in beautiful City Island.

Welcome wishes to Bay Street's newest residents, Katie and Daniel Brick.

September birthdays greetings go out to Cait O'Dwyer (Sept. 23), Tommy Lott (Sept. 24) and Tina Ruggiero (Sept. 28). Enjoy!

Maria Swieciki



Allison Grace Kratzer will celebrate her Sweet 16 birthday on Sept. 18.

On Sunday, July 19, Trinity United Methodist Church held a small, outdoor worship service to celebrate the 90th birthday of Island resident George Cavalieri. Befitting George's strong faith and generosity, he chose to give the gifts, making a donation to start a fund to upgrade the Sunday School rooms and Budget Shop. They are pleased to once more join in worship in the sanctuary on Sundays at 10 a.m. For the safety of all, each person needs to wear a mask and follow safe-gathering provisions.

Happy birthday to Mike Rauh, who is training for a virtual New York City Marathon. According to the New York Road Runners, he has to run 26.2 miles in one trip, but gets to do his own course. It needs to be run between Oct. 17 and Nov. 1. We'll let you know next month where he will complete the race.

Happy birthday to Dan Wright!

Bay Street birthday greetings go out to Jean Anderson and Bob Swieciki, who celebrate on Sept. 12. Enjoy your special day!

Happy 37th anniversary on Sept. 11 to Marine Street's Ann and Chuck Butterworth.

Kudos to Island Current photographer Rick DeWitt, whose photos can be seen on the billboard for Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center along I-95 near New Rochelle. When Rick is not wearing his Current hat, he is the staff photographer at Sloan Kettering. Good eye, Rick!

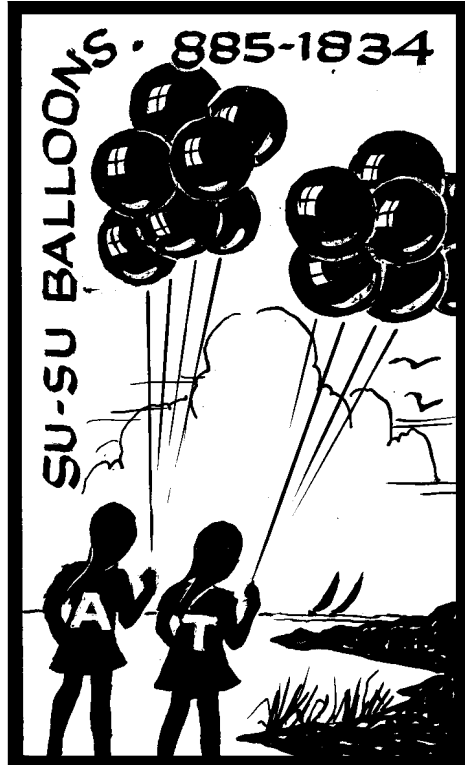


Photo by RICK DeWITT

On July 19, 2020, Trinity Church held an outdoor worship service to celebrate the 90th birthday of longtime member George Cavalieri.



Photo by RICK DeWITT

Photography by Islander Rick DeWitt is featured larger than life on two billboards along the I-95 corridor near New Rochelle, one of which is pictured above.

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