

The Island Current

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One Dollar

VIP VACCINATOR!

By KAREN NANI



Photos Courtesy of UN/IESKINDER DEBEBE

The United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres received his Covid-19 vaccine on Jan. 28, 2021, at a Bronx vaccination center from Islander Dr. Jeannine Giacobelli (top photo). The same day she also vaccinated Hawkins Street resident Joseph Gelsi (bottom).

Lifelong Islander Dr. Jeannine Giacobelli was volunteering to administer Covid-19 vaccines on January 28, 2021, when a surprise visitor arrived. The United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, came through the door at Adlai Stevenson High School in the Bronx and rolled up his sleeve for the shot.

"I am part of the New York City Medical Reserve Corps, and we are called up in emergencies," she told *The Current*. But until this year, she had only been asked to volunteer following Hurricane Sandy in 2012. "Now with the pandemic, doctors have been asked to help with the demand at vaccine hubs."

On that Thursday, she had administered vaccines to more than 80 people from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., when a security team arrived requesting a physician to "vaccinate an important person from the U.N." Dr. Giacobelli got the nod and thought she was done when, ironically, another diplomat with an earlier appointment arrived. So she was doubly surprised when a camera crew came through the door, followed by the Secretary General, who sat down at her station.

The 71-year-old Mr. Guterres was eligible to receive the vaccine on the basis

of his age. Dr. Giacobelli was asked to administer the shot slowly for the cameras and then monitor the Secretary General for 15 minutes after the injection. "He was a very lovely man, and we had fun chatting while I monitored him for any reaction," she explained.

On UN News and via Twitter, he expressed his gratitude and good fortune at receiving the "jab" and urged the international community to ensure that vaccines become available to everyone on an equitable basis. "With this pandemic, none of us are safe until all of us are safe," he wrote.

In December 2020, Mr. Guterres declared that he would happily receive the vaccine in public and said that vaccination is a moral obligation, according to UN News. "Each one of us provides a service to the whole community until there is no longer a risk of spreading the disease."

The busy day for Dr. Giacobelli continued when she later vaccinated her stepfather, Hawkins Street resident Joseph Gelsi, who showed up for his appointment at the Bronx hub. "My wish is that all City Islanders can be vaccinated as soon as possible and we can make the Island Covid-free. If I could set up a vaccination

site on the Island, I would do it!" she said.

Raised on City Island, Dr. Giacobelli attended New York University and graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans. She completed a residency in general surgery at Einstein Hospital in the Bronx and also has a masters degree in public health from Columbia University. She became an assistant professor of health policy at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan.

In medical school, she met Arturo Mazzeo, and they married 15 years ago. They now live on King Avenue and have three children. Dr. Mazzeo is an anesthesiologist at Winthrop Hospital in Mineola on Long Island. Both of their practices have changed dramatically since the onset of the coronavirus crisis (see June 2020 issue of *The Current*).

Once they had their first child, Dr. Giacobelli stepped out of the "clinical research world" and started her own aesthetic dermatology practice in Tuckahoe, NY, known as Dr.G.MD. Her successful dermatology practice was put on hold for four months at the start of the pandemic as it involves elective surgeries and procedures. The practice has reopened following proper safety guidelines, but she is glad that she had the time to volunteer with the Medical Reserve Corps.

What does the future hold for the husband and wife physicians? In June, Dr. Mazzeo told *The Current*, "we are definitely on the downside of this pandemic, but it is far from over." His prediction proved true as City Island, as well as many areas of New York City and State, experienced spikes in infection rates from November through January. Hopefully, Dr. Giacobelli will get her wish to have a vaccination site right on City Island, as many residents continue to struggle to get appointments for the Covid vaccine.

CITY ISLANDERS GET THEIR SHOTS

As of Feb. 23, City Island ranked among the top communities in New York City for having vaccinated residents. Of the adult population (3,510), 414 (12 percent) were partially vaccinated, and 412 (12 percent) were fully vaccinated. The only other areas in the City with higher rates were Douglaston, Fieldston, and Breezy Point.

OLD-FASHIONED SNOWY WINTER



Photos by RON TERNER and RICK DeWITT

The first major snowstorm of 2021 roared in on Jan. 31 and dumped 18 inches of snow on the tristate area, including City Island. More snowstorms followed in February, far surpassing the totals of the last couple of years and reminding Islanders of winters past.

BRIEFLY...

AMERICA'S CUP WEBINAR launched by the City Island Nautical Museum will be available free on Monday, March 1, at 7:30 p.m. to the first 100 respondents to register. Go to www.cityislandmuseum.org and register. Earlier webinars, on Hart Island, artists of City Island and P.S. 17 memories are now available on YouTube.

THE BOY SCOUTS SPRING FLOWER AND BAKE SALE will be held at Trinity Methodist Church at Bay Street from Thursday, April 1, through Saturday, April 3.

FREE TAX PREPARATION for all making less than \$68,000 a year will be available at the City Island Community Center, 190 Fordham Street, every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. You must make an appointment; call 718-931-1721. Bring with you proof of identification (driver's license, passport); Social Security cards for yourself, your spouse and dependents (or your TIN, taxpayer identification number, if you don't have one); birthdates for you, your spouse and dependents; wage and earning statements from all employers; interest and dividend statements from banks; a copy of last year's federal and state returns; proof of bank account routing and account numbers for direct deposit, such as a blank check; total paid for daycare provider and his/her tax i.d. number; forms 1095-A, B or C (Affordable Health Care statements), copies of income transcripts from IRS and NYS, if applicable. To file a joint return and to file electronically, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

45 BLOTTER

Complaints reported from City Island to the 45th Precinct from Jan. 21 through Feb. 23, 2021. Unfounded complaints are not included in the list.

- 1 - PETIT LARCENY
- 1 - AGGRAVATED HARASSMENT
- 1 - LEAVING THE SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT
- 1 - UNLICENSED OPERATION OF A MOTOR VEHICLE

1/21 - On Marine Street at 9:30 p.m., a male Islander reported an incident of petit larceny. The victim returned to his parked vehicle and noticed that both license plates

were missing.

2/11 - A male Islander reported an incident of aggravated harassment on Fordham Street at 3:45 p.m. He told police that an unknown person called him on the phone threatening to stab him. He hung up and then received threatening text messages.

2/14 - At 2:40 p.m. on City Island Avenue, an unknown vehicle struck the parked car of a male off-Islander and then fled the scene of the accident.

2/14 - Police from the 45th Precinct arrested a male Islander, 45, and charged him with aggravated unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle. Police stopped the driver because of illegal front window tint and upon investigation found that the driver's license had been suspended.

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Anchor Fridge Feeds Islanders

By KAREN NANI



Photo by GEORGE GIBBONS

The Anchor Fridge, located at 110 Schofield Street near the corner of City Island Avenue, is feeding families on City Island during the pandemic. It was organized by Islanders Ariadna Phillips and Dan Treiber with produce supplied by David Diaz and others.

When the pandemic dragged on through the second half of 2020, a group of Islanders organized a walk-up source of meals for residents experiencing “food insecurity,” a term being used across the country to refer to the uncertainty around basic necessities caused by the Covid-19 crisis.

The Anchor Community Fridge was set up near 239 Play at the corner of City Island Avenue and Schofield Street around Christmas last year. Anyone in need of food can open the refrigerator and help themselves to “produce and dairy without questions or judgment,” according to Islander David Diaz, who helps maintain the fridge. Mr. Diaz and his son, Jake, also deliver food to locations such as Pilot Cove and are among many Islanders who have reached out to help their neighbors in need during the pandemic.

Mr. Diaz credits the creation of the Anchor Fridge to Islanders Ariadna Phillips and Dan Treiber. Ms. Phillips, a long-time educator in the South Bronx, founded South Bronx Mutual Aid, a local volunteer group of neighbors helping neighbors that arose in response to the Covid-19 pandemic (see *Letter to the Editor*). They have been delivering food and supplies during the pandemic throughout the Bronx and Upper Manhattan directly to families and community fridges.

“Around 108 community refrigerators have been created across the city, but Ariadna and Dan made it happen on City

Island,” he told *The Current*. His experience helped. Mr. Diaz had previously volunteered for “food relief” programs sponsored by the campaign of U.S. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Mr. Diaz was raised in the Throggs Neck section of the Bronx and currently works in finance, but he uses his knowledge of non-profit food sources to help stock the community fridge. He often drives on Fridays to pick up food distributed by organizations such as RAP (Relief Access Program) for the Bronx and the East Side Coalition. He was delighted to report that generous Islanders have also been donating food and homemade meals to the refrigerator.

The Anchor Fridge is popular, according to Mr. Diaz. He explained that it can sometimes be filled to overflowing after Friday stocking, but is empty by the next day. “There are Islanders in need and this is one way to help seniors and others privately.” Everything in the fridge and pantry is donated by the community and free and accessible to the public 24/7. The organizers can be reached by e-mail at info@southbronxmutualaid.com or Instagram at either @SouthBronxMutualAid or @AnchorFridge.

The refrigerator has been a team effort and yet another example of community spirit and cooperation during the pandemic. Islander John Doyle of City Island Rising gives Mr. Diaz a special nod: “David has been giving out meals to hundreds of City Islanders for months.”

45th Precinct Welcomes New Captain with Bronx Roots

By KAREN NANI



Photo Courtesy of the 45TH PRECINCT

Current editors Karen Nani and Barbara Dolensek met with the new commanding officer of the 45th Precinct, Captain Isaac Soberal (second from right) and Community Affairs Officer Hannah Rahn Rivera (left) on Feb. 9, 2021.

The new, young commander of the 45th Precinct, Captain Isaac Soberal, took over the helm of one of the largest NYPD precincts (by area) in January 2021 following the transfer of Captain Thomas Fraser.

In his first full interview as commanding officer on Feb. 9, Captain Soberal told *The Current* that he was surprised and delighted by the assignment because of his personal and professional history in the Bronx. “I was born in the Norwood section of the Bronx and attended Bronx High School of Science.” After graduation from Ohio State University, he joined the army and eventually took the test for the NYPD in 2007.

“I had to choose between ‘playing soldier’ and a long term plan that my (future) wife supported,” Captain Soberal explained. He passed the exam and was first assigned to Police Service Area Seven of the housing division in the South Bronx. As he toured the sector with other rookies, he realized he was passing the buildings where his father and grandparents still lived.

“I am not used to talking about myself. This is my first interview,” he modestly explained, but it is clear that he rose quickly through the ranks. He patrolled in housing from 2007 to 2012. He was then promoted to sergeant and served in lower Manhattan and eventually Brooklyn before returning to the Bronx in 2016. “I was assigned to the 40th Precinct as Special Project Lieutenant in charge of all enforcement (anti-crime) teams.” His next promotion to captain came in 2018 and led to command assignments in the 41st (Hunts Point) and 46th Precincts (Fordham area).

Along the way, Captain Soberal married his college sweetheart, Melanie, and they moved to Astoria, Queens, which enabled his promotions to captain in the Bronx (NYPD officers are not allowed to live in the precincts where they work). They are the proud parents of four children, three girls, including identical twins, and one boy. (This reporter noticed several photos of his young family on the credenza behind his command desk.)

When asked about his predecessor, Captain Soberal spoke highly of the job Captain Fraser had done at the 45th and noted that NYPD precinct commanders are typically moved every two to three years.

So what goals does the new 38-year-old captain have for his command? “It’s important to do a good job. I am dedicated 100 percent to fixing problems.” Because the precinct covers many different neighborhoods, he acknowledged that “problems” differ greatly—from quality-of-life issues such as traffic (a recurring problem on City Island) to crimes like shootings and robberies, more common in other parts of the precinct.

Captain Soberal was familiar with City Island and its restaurants from growing up in the Bronx. When asked how he will address traffic congestion specifically on City Island, he told *The Current* that he has already requested additional officers for “special days” when heavier traffic is expected, including Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day and other holidays that draw visitors to the restaurants. His Community Affairs Officer Hannah Rahn Rivera confirmed that they expect 16 additional traffic agents and two sergeants to help deal with congestion on City Island on these special days.

Captain Soberal summed up his role this way: “As the executive officer at the 40th Precinct, I implemented the policies of the captain. Now I have to *make* policy as commander of the 45th. But I don’t want to be just an administrator.” In fact, he drives around the precinct two days and evenings each week because he believes that “you need to get out and get a good feel for the community.”

Editors from *The Current* praised the efforts of a number of officers under the new captain’s command, including Officers Rivera and Vargas. These officers have specifically supported efforts to improve life on City Island and prevent crime, including providing information for *The Current* blotter.

When asked about the challenges of command during the pandemic, Captain Soberal said that the positivity rate at the precinct was down from previous months and most officers, including himself, had received at least the first dose of the coronavirus vaccine. Ironically, the vaccines are being administered at Rodman’s Neck, the police firing range, which has a tech center. The editors of *The Current* told the captain that many City Islanders have problems with the noise coming from the firing range but were glad to hear about a positive use of the nearby area.

Welcome aboard, Captain Soberal!

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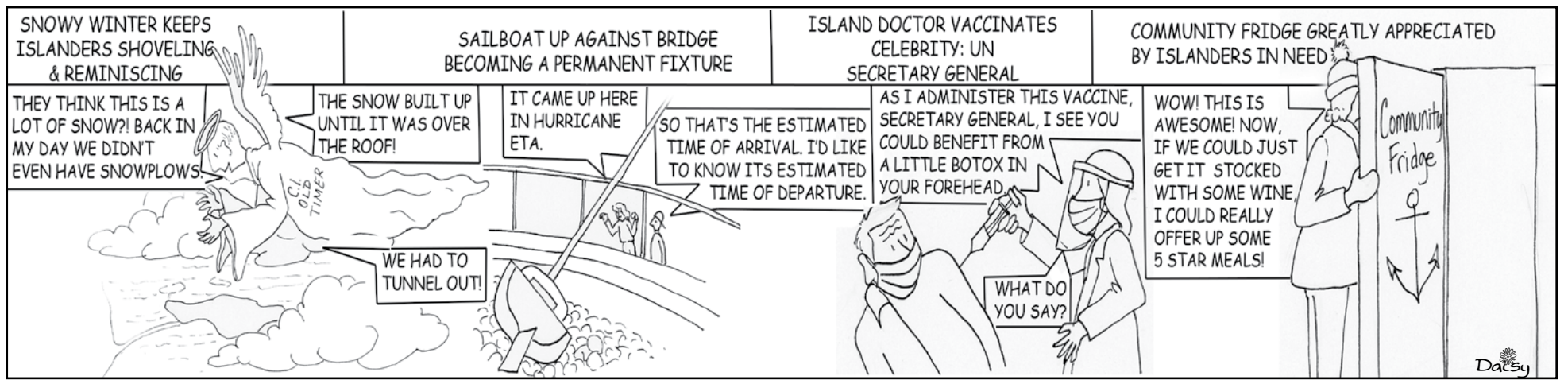
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Pharmaceutical Concerns

To the Editor:

A fraud is being imposed on seniors or on anyone who has a repeat prescription when a pharmacy charges the patient's insurance for refilling a medication for which a refill order was not requested by the patient or the doctor.

Check your monthly drug report from Medicare or your insurance company to make sure that you actually received only the medicine you ordered. Call the customer service number on your insurance card right away to report any charges for medicine you have not ordered or received.

When your doctor orders a prescription for you, ask how much medicine you will get. If the script can be refilled, make sure the order clearly indicates "no automatic refills."

A second pharmacy fraud is when the number of tablets actually given to the patient is less than what was ordered. Before you pay for the medicine, count the number of pills in the container. If the pills are small and loose, ask the pharmacist to recount the pills while you watch.

These simple, common-sense precautions can prevent serious complications for you later. A hurried grab-and-go can be hazardous when medication is involved.

Name Withheld by Request

Food for All

To the Editor:

South Bronx Mutual Aid is a local volunteer group of neighbors helping neighbors that arose in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. City Islander Ariadna Phillips, a long-time educator in the South Bronx, founded our group in April 2020. We have been delivering food and supplies during the pandemic throughout the Bronx and Upper Manhattan directly to families and community fridges. South Bronx Mutual Aid launched Anchor Fridge on Dec. 3, 2020, in partnership with City Islanders for Equity. Together, we saw the need for more community fridges to support ongoing community care efforts in the Bronx.

Anchor Fridge is located at 239 City Island Avenue at 239 Play, the amazing antique toy store owned by Dan Treiber and Reina Brill. Dan, along with more friends from City Islanders for Equity, built Anchor Fridge's shelter from repurposed wood, and Reina is our phenomenal fridge artist. 239 Play has played a sizable role in supporting this wider food distribution work throughout the pandemic, serving as a food and donation storage and redistribution point for South Bronx Mutual Aid. This space has allowed us to share food and donations with more community fridges, families, and mutual aids

around the city.

Many City Islanders come by regularly to help us clean and restock the fridge as part of this volunteer community care work. Nicole Blackman and David Arvelo are a few island residents you will frequently see caring for the fridge, but there are many more that stop by often to drop off what they can. We are so appreciative of Joanne Valletta and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 156 for the winter clothing and baby items they were able to gather and donate to our group, as well as our friends and neighbors that often pick up and drop off food and other items to more than two dozen other community fridges between the Bronx and Upper Manhattan.

That said, everyone is welcome to stop by Anchor Fridge whenever they would like, whether to pick something up, drop something off or offer a helping hand in tidying up. Our saying is "give what you can, take what you need." Everything in the fridge and pantry is donated by our community and free and accessible to the public 24/7. Folks interested in connecting with us are welcome to e-mail info@southbronxmutualaid.com or visit us on Instagram at either @SouthBronxMutualAid or @AnchorFridge; we maintain both pages. Monetary donations are also welcome at <http://sbx.ma/donate>.

In terms of community guidelines, we ask that packaged food items and produce donated to the fridge be fresh/not expired, and that all prepared meal items be labeled on the container with meal name, ingredients and date of production. We cannot accept any open containers, expired items, partially consumed items or unlabeled prepared foods. For any folks that are interested, we welcome more neighbors to join us—the more the merrier—in cleaning and restocking the fridge, as well as driving to pick up food donations.

We are so appreciative that all of this is made possible through the efforts of many City Island residents, as well as community fridge and mutual aid volunteers and organizers in Uptown Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens who

collaborate with us. We thank Hungry Monk NYC and Fenix Community Fridge in Ridgewood; Angie Park, owner of Botanical Market in Allerton; David Diaz of Loving the Bronx; our friends at City Island Rising, and City Island establishments such as Augie's and Archie's Tap

and Table, to name a few. All these folks have been amazing in supporting South Bronx Mutual Aid and Anchor Fridge with ongoing food and PPE supply donations. For all this and more, we are so grateful.

South Bronx Mutual Aid

Skateboard Park at Orchard Beach

By BARBARA DOLENSEK

In September 2018, Islanders were horrified to learn that Drew Cottam, 18, the youngest son of Gary and Vicki Cottam, had been killed driving on the Hutchinson River Parkway near the City Island exit. A few months later, Drew's family and friends met with the Parks Committee of Community Board 10 and asked that a skateboard park be built in his memory at Orchard Beach. At Board 10's January 2019 meeting, the resolution to support the construction of a skate park, which had the support of Councilmember Mark Gjonaj, was unanimously accepted.

In July 2019, Blake Cottam, Drew's brother, posted an online petition addressed to the City Council asking for funding for the skate park, a petition that has by now gathered nearly 5,700 signatures. In November Parks staff met with Councilmember Mark Gjonaj to look at three potential sites around the District, but when Councilmember Gjonaj appropriated \$3 million for the project, he specified Orchard Beach, the location favored by Drew's family and friends. As Blake told *The Current*, Orchard Beach is preferred not so much for its proximity to City Island but because he felt that it could support a relatively advanced facility that would appeal to serious skateboarders and could attract and accommodate special events and competitions.

A community meeting to discuss the project was scheduled to be held in

March 2020 but was canceled because of the pandemic. In the meantime, the Parks Department began working with a landscape architecture firm that engaged Spohn Ranch to design the skate park, which will replace three existing volleyball courts. A design is expected in about nine months and if accepted will take at least a year to a year and a half to construct.

A virtual community meeting was held online on Jan. 21, 2021, and most of the comments were enthusiastic about the idea of a skateboard park in Pelham Bay Park, which has no such facility in spite of being the largest park in the city. However, some were concerned that the location at Orchard Beach might prove difficult for skaters from other parts of the Bronx to access, especially during the off-season. Access by bicycle is an option, although there are dangers involved in biking to Orchard Beach, especially on the Shore Road Bridge and on the road from Bartow Circle where there is no bike path. There were also concerns raised about maintenance funding (with the Parks budget at an all-time low) and supervision during the off-season in case of injury or vandalism.

However, supporters of the location at Orchard Beach remain enthusiastic about the potential for a major skate park, one that would add value to the park, along with the planned renovation of the Pavilion. Questions of maintenance and supervision need to be addressed, but since popular support for the project is so positive, it seems likely that a skate park at Orchard Beach could become a reality within the next few years.

PERMANENT PART OF THE SEASCAPE?



Photo by PAUL NANI

Urgent requests are being made by Island organizations to appropriate authorities to have the wrecked sailboat up against the City Island Bridge removed, so far without success. The boat washed up on Nov. 15, 2020, following high winds left over from Hurricane Eta and is becoming a fixture on the south side of the bridge.

Water Main Update

During the last week in February, the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) hopes to be able to make progress with the installation of the water mains between Pelham Bay Park and City Island. Weather may interfere, but the plan is to deliver and unload the 20-inch water mains at the location next to the Seashore parking lot on City Island and to complete the installation inside the south subaque-

ous tunnel. DDC will then pressure test the water mains beneath the water.

Work will take place between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays. Any resident who wishes to receive e-mail notifications of the work schedule for the project should contact Maria Caminero, the Community Construction Liaison for NYC DDC Project #HED564, by calling 929-447-5407 or by e-mailing Cityislandcccl@gmail.com.

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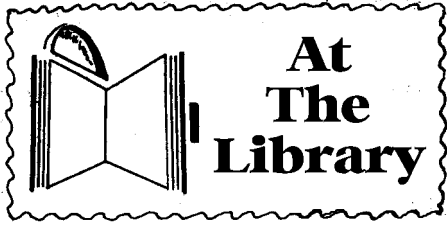
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VIRTUAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Online Family Storytime: Join us for a live, online program with songs, rhymes, and favorite read-aloud books as we show you that Storytime is fun for the whole family. Ideal for caregivers with multiple-aged children. Tuesdays at 11 a.m.

One-on-One Help: Databases for Children: Are you interested in exploring some databases that can help with your child's schoolwork? Book 30 minutes to speak with a Library staff member! Mondays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

VIRTUAL TEEN and TWEEN PROGRAMS

Teen Fanfic Group. Teens will gather together to talk fanfic, fandom culture, and writing! Bring some writing if you want a critique! Wednesdays, March 3, 17, 24 and 31, at 3:30 p.m.

Crafty Reads for Teens and Tweens: Join a book club that inspires crafting! This month is "Homeless Bird" by Gloria Whelan, and the craft is needlework. Teens can come together to learn about cross-stitch, knitting, crocheting and embroidery. Bring your own projects and any supplies your preferred form of needlework requires.

(No reading required!) Friday, March 5, at 3:30 p.m.

Teens Talk Books: Memoirs. Get together to talk about memoirs of your favorite activists, celebrities, and historical figures. Friday, March 19, at 3:30 p.m.

Make A Zine: Think about the challenges you have faced recently and identify the tools (real or imagined) that have helped you cope. Make a zine, or short magazine, which shows others how to use these tools. You will need paper, pens, pencils, or markers. Friday, March 26, at 3:30 p.m.

VIRTUAL ADULT PROGRAMS

NYPL/WNYC Book Discussion: This month we are reading and discussing "Black Buck" by Mateo Askaripour, a debut novel following a young Black salesman at a mysterious, cult like, and wildly successful startup where nothing is as it seems. Tuesday, March 2, at 3 p.m.

Virtual 1-on-1 Classes: Topics include Help with Databases for Adults, NYPL Catalog and e-Book Borrowing, and Getting Started with e-Books. These classes will be scheduled in half-hour time slots. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Quotemeal: Start your weekend with some brainfood! Join us virtually for a deliciously fun conversation about quotable books, and be sure to jot down a few examples that will amuse, uplift or motivate your fellow readers. Thursday, March 4, at 10:30 a.m.

Parents' Picks: Parents, have your little ones left you with tiny windows of opportunity to catch up on your reading and/or binge-watching? Join a group that understands. The City Island Library is inviting parents to gather virtually and discuss all of your "little breaks" material! Tuesday, March 16, at 2 p.m.

Trivia: St. Patrick's Day: Everyone loves to celebrate St. Patrick's Day, but how well do you know Irish history? Regardless of how you're spending the holiday, stop by for an hour

and test your knowledge of Ireland and Irish-American history. You might be surprised by how much you learn! Wednesday, March 17, at 2 p.m.

Online: Meet the Collection: Looking for something to read? A topical introduction to the library's circulating collection. Thursdays at 1 p.m. March 4: Open Book Format; March 11: Irish Authors; March 18: Classical Rome; March 25: Women's History.

Open Book Hour: What Are You Reading Now? Many of us have been indoors looking for ways to pass the time. One of the most popular activities at home is reading. Join us and share selections with other readers. Saturday, March 13 and 27, at 3:30 p.m.

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

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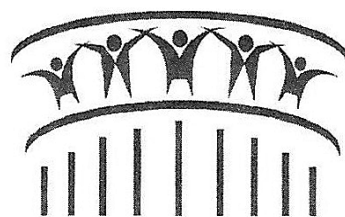
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From EDWARD D. HEBEN, C.P.A.

The Covid-Related Tax Relief Act of 2020

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, H.R. 133 included funding for the government, extensions for expiring tax extenders, tax relief under the Covid-related Tax Relief Act of 2020, and many more items. Passed by both the House and Senate, it was signed into law by President Trump on Dec. 27, 2020. Let's take a look at a few of the highlights related to pandemic taxpayer relief under the bill.

INDIVIDUALS

Economic impact payments: \$600 per taxpayer (\$1,200 for married taxpayers filing jointly) and an additional \$600 per qualifying child (under age 17). The recovery rebate payment begins to phase out, starting at \$75,000 of modified adjusted gross income for single filers, \$112,500 for heads of household and \$150,000 for married taxpayers filing jointly. These payments are similar to the ones many taxpayers received earlier this year under the CARES Act.

Unemployment benefits: Additional unemployment insurance in the amount of \$300 has been extended for an 11-week period that began Dec. 26, 2020.

Educator expenses: Clarification that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used for the prevention and spread of Covid-19 will be treated as a deductible expense, retroactive to March 12, 2020.

Charitable contributions, Nonitemizers: The \$300 above-the-line deduction for cash contributions given to a qualified charitable organization is extended through 2021 and increases to \$600 for married taxpayers filing joint returns. In 2020, the maximum amount was \$300.

Charitable contributions, Itemizers: The increased contribution limit to qualified charities that was specified in the CARES Act is extended through 2021 and applies to individuals and corporations. Amounts of up to 100 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI) are allowed as deductions (same as 2020). In 2019, the limit for the deduction for cash contributions was 60 percent of AGI.

Earned Income: For the 2020 tax year, taxpayers may use earned income amounts from the immediately preceding tax year when figuring the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Additional Child Tax Credit.

Flexible spending arrangements: Taxpayers can roll over unused amounts from 2020 to 2021 and from 2021 to 2022, and employers may allow employees to make a contribution change mid-year in 2021.

Money purchase pension plans: The Covid-related Tax Relief Act of 2020 also allows money purchase pension plans to be included as a qualified retirement plan, retroactive to the CARES Act. The CARES Act allowed taxpayers to make penalty-free withdrawals of up to \$100,000 from certain retirement plans for coronavirus-related expenses, with the option to pay tax on that income over a three-year period or recontribute withdrawn funds.

BUSINESSES

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans: Retroactive to the effective date of the CARES Act, PPP loans that are forgiven will be treated as tax-exempt income. Gross income does not include loan forgiveness for Economic Injury Recovery Loans (EIDLs) and certain other loans or loan repayment assistance. Under the CARES Act, taxpayers receiving an EIDL were required to reduce any PPP loan forgiveness by the amount of the EIDL. In addition, businesses with 300 or fewer employees with a gross revenue loss of 25 percent in any quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019 are eligible for a second round of PPP loans.

Deductible expenses: Deductions are also allowed for deductible expenses (that

would otherwise be deductible) paid for with the proceeds of a forgiven PPP loan. This reverses earlier IRS guidance that stated no deduction would be allowed. This tax provision applies to the second round of PPP loans as well.

Payroll tax credits: Refundable payroll tax credits for paid sick and family (Families First Coronavirus Response Act) leave are extended through March 2021. Employers are not required to provide paid leave after Dec. 31, 2020; however, employers may still claim the credit if the employee would have qualified for paid leave if the mandate had been extended beyond Dec. 31, 2020, and the employer provides paid leave.

Employee retention tax credits: Implemented as a refundable credit under the CARES Act, the employee retention tax credit (ERTC) is extended through June 30, 2021. The following also applies for calendar quarters beginning after Dec. 31, 2020:

The credit rate is increased from 50 to 70 percent of qualified wages.

The limit on per-employee creditable wages is increased from \$10,000 for the year to \$10,000 for each quarter.

The required reduction in a year-over-year decline in gross receipts on a quarterly basis is reduced from 50 to 20 percent.

When determining the relevant wage base, the definition of a "large employer" that can only claim the credit for employees that are not working because of the Covid pandemic increases from more than 100 to more than 500 employees.

Certain government employers are now allowed to claim the ERTC.

Safe harbor allowing employers to use prior-quarter gross receipts to figure eligibility.

New employers in 2020 (i.e., those not in existence in 2019) can claim the credit.

Furthermore, and retroactive to the date of the CARES Act, the ERTC is expanded to allow employers who receive PPP loans to qualify for the credit with respect to wages that are not paid with forgiven PPP proceeds. It also clarifies that group health plan expenses can be considered qualified wages even if no other wages are paid to an employee.

Employee portion of payroll tax deferral: The repayment period for deferral of payroll tax is extended through Dec. 31, 2021.

Active-duty members of the Armed Forces, down 1 cent from the rate for 2020, and 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations. The charitable rate is set by statute and remains unchanged.

The standard mileage rate for business is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile, including depreciation, insurance, repairs, tires, maintenance, gas, and oil. The rate for medical and moving purposes is based on the variable costs, such as gas and oil. The charitable rate is set by law.

Taxpayers always have the option of claiming deductions based on the actual costs of using a vehicle rather than the standard mileage rates.

Before tax reform, these optional standard mileage rates were used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes. However, it is important to note that under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, taxpayers cannot claim a miscellaneous itemized deduction for unreimbursed employee travel expenses. Taxpayers also cannot claim a deduction for moving expenses, except members of the Armed Forces on active duty moving under orders to a permanent change of station.

Taxpayers can use the standard mileage rate but must opt to use it in the first year the car is available for business use. Then, in later years, they can choose either the standard mileage rate or actual expenses.

Leased vehicles: Typically, if the standard mileage rate is chosen, then leased vehicles must use the standard mileage rate method for the entire lease period (including renewals). Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, however, the IRS is allowing employers to switch from the vehicle lease valuation method to the cents-per-mile method (56 cents for 2021 and 57.5 cents for 2020) when determining the value of an employee's personal use of a vehicle during the pandemic and is effective as of March 13, 2020.

Keeping the Faith During a Pandemic

By JOHN SKINNER



The following is the first in a series of how City Island's houses of worship have been coping with the pandemic and its restrictions

Although Grace Church is the oldest church on City Island, having been established 172 years ago in 1849, the congregation today is relatively small, with only a few young people and many older parishioners. The weekly attendance at Sunday services is about 30 people in a sanctuary that can seat 120, but amazingly, unlike many other churches, this small group has been able to conduct Sunday services without interruption during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Like many small churches, it is governed by a vestry, which is composed of six people who serve overlapping three-year terms. The rector, Father John Covington, who lives in Manhattan, is retired from full-time ministry but has served Grace Church for five years, traveling to City Island to lead Sunday services and special holiday services and ceremonies.

When in March 2020 the pandemic made it impossible for Grace to hold in-person services, the vestry surveyed the congregation and elected to install internet service in order to set up a live-streaming system. Because research and installation would take time and effort, a transition committee was formed to get the service in place in time for Advent in the late fall. In the meantime, Island resident Kevin Boyle took on the task of hosting the first remote service via GoToMeeting on March 22 and continued to host services until August. Father Covington led the services from his home, and Caroline Coppola, Grace's minister of music, played music remotely for the congregation. After resolving a number of issues such as "unmuting," everyone in attendance was able not only to worship

but also to participate in closing prayers and "virtual coffee hour" after the services.

In June 2020, the vestry worked with a number of organizations to provide guidance to parishioners, including the Episcopal Diocese of New York, the Center for Disease Control, the State of New York, New York City, the National Association of Pastoral Musicians and the American Choral Director Association. After conducting an online survey of the parishioners in July, the vestry found that although most of the congregation wanted to return to in-person worship, the issue of safety could not be ignored. After vestry approval, we arranged for the installation of internet service at Grace. Kevin then designed and installed a custom, live-streaming system, which replaced the GoToMeeting program and enabled parishioners to access services online via YouTube. This made it possible for services to continue without interruption until in-person worship could begin on Dec. 6, 2020.

Return to in-person worship made it possible for Christmas services and the Christmas pageant to be held in the church, and the live-streaming system enabled family members across the country to participate. This introduction of live streaming has also opened up a number of future possibilities for Grace Church, such as expanding outreach to the City Island community, Guest Internet for church members and visitors while encouraging the participation of young people to help run the live-streaming system.

The annual meeting of the parish in January 2021 provided a welcome opportunity for Grace Church to celebrate the fact that worship had continued throughout a difficult year with no interruption, surely a milestone for City Island's oldest church.

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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.

Temple Beth-El

Temple Beth-El (TBE), "your shul by the sea," is a stimulating non-denominational, welcoming place for observance of Jewish traditions. Jewish Renewal is the style of our deeply spiritual, innovative, all-inclusive and open-minded worship. All Temple offerings are online via Zoom. Many tutorials for registering a new free Zoom account are available online. You do not need an account to join our offerings. To participate in any of our offerings please e-mail yourshulbythesea@gmail.com, and identify which you would like to attend.

For the month of March, Rabbi David Evan Markus will lead Friday night Shabbat services on March 12 and 26. Other services will be community led on March 5 and 19. Please see our calendar for our community-led Havdalah services. On Sunday, March 28, from 6 to 9 p.m., please join Rabbi David and the Temple Beth-El community for the second seder of Passover on line. All services are held in a joyful celebratory manner.

To members we offer Torah study, mystical teachings, ethics study, social gatherings and rabbinic office hours. We also offer for the community meditation, yoga, qi gong/ tai chi and Feldenkrais classes, suitable for all persons, ages, body types and experience levels. Pre-registration is required. Suggested free-will offering \$10 per session. All classes and services begin promptly, so sign in 10 to 15 minutes early. A schedule can be found on our website, www.yourshulbythesea.org. We look forward to seeing you.

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

Prayer Group: TBE has an informal prayer group to hold members, friends & family in prayer for healing. If you feel called to join this group, please e-mail us at yourshulbythesea@gmail.com.

Our newsletter has returned to a monthly schedule; if you would like to be on our mailing list, please e-mail us. For additional information and membership opportunities, check out our website, www.yourshulbythesea.org.

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

Jodie Sadovsky

St. Mary's Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop is open on Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in its temporary home in the gym at St Mary's school. We will be closed on March 4, 6, 11 and 13, and will reopen on March 18 with our spring and summer collection. Hope to see you soon.

Arlene Byrne

St. Mary, Star of the Sea

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

The Lenten devotion of Stations of the Cross will be held each Friday during Lent at 7 p.m., except for Good Friday on April 2, when it will be held at 12 noon.

Children in our Religious Education Program are preparing for First Penance which will be held March 20. The eighth-graders are beginning to work on their confirmation requirements. If you have any questions regarding the program, please don't hesitate to contact Teri Kurtz at the Religious Education office by calling 718-885-1440 or by e-mailing smsrled@yahoo.com.

The last Sunday of the month, March 28, will bring us to the holiest week of the

church year when we prepare to celebrate the sacred mysteries of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord. March 28 is Palm Sunday, when palms will be blessed and distributed at all the Masses. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings at 8 a.m. we will have the service of Tenebrae consisting of psalms and readings. The Solemn Commemoration of the Lord's Supper will take place on Holy Thursday evening, April 1, at 7:30 p.m. followed by adoration until 10 p.m.

On Good Friday we will have Stations of the Cross at 12 noon. The Solemn Commemoration of the Passion and Death of Jesus will take place at 3 p.m. The Solemn Easter Vigil will take place at 8 p.m. and will be held at Our Lady of the Assumption Church. Masses on Easter Sunday are at 9 and 11 a.m. Reconciliation Monday will be held on March 29 from 3 to 9 p.m.

Rose Dietz and Teri Kurtz

Trinity United Methodist Church

Trinity will continue Sunday 10 a.m. in-person worship in the Sanctuary. All persons wishing to attend must wear masks and enter through the Fellowship Hall entrance on Bay Street. Attendance is recorded and temperatures are taken. While maintaining social distance, attendees then enter 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. Trinity understands that 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-umc.com.

The new hours for the Food Pantry are Sundays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. If you wish to drop off food, make sure it is non-perishable. Leave it at the pantry table between 2 and 4 or leave it on the front porch of the parsonage at 113 Bay Street.

Rick DeWitt

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 156

The unit will have its regular monthly meeting on March 2 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Members will be sent a link to attend the meeting.

We thank all our members, family and friends who donated to the February ALA Unit 156 and South Bronx Mutual Aid Coat & Sweater Drive. One thousand items were donated, including diapers, formula and clothing. All donations went directly to families and veterans in need. The ALA Auxiliary Unit 156 Facebook page has videos about this from Joanne Valletta and Ariadna Phillips of South Bronx Mutual Aid.

Quilters by the Sea QOV held its first Sew Saturday of 2021 on National Sew Day, Feb. 6. Two Quilts of Valor award ceremonies are planned for veterans Tom McShane and Tom McMahon.

Harlan Sexton

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.

Grace Church is now open for in-person worship on Sundays at 10 a.m. Grace Church is located at 116 City Island Avenue on the corner of Pilot Street. Please enter by the main entrance, where a church member will welcome you. The use of a mask is required,



Photo by BRUNO LAPPONESE

Quilters by the Sea QOV gathered on Feb. 6 to prepare the next Quilt of Valor.



Photo courtesy of AUXILIARY UNIT 156

Joanne Valletta (at left) and Ariadna Phillips of South Bronx Mutual Aid pack the van full of donations to families and veterans in need.

social distancing will be observed, and hand sanitizer will be available at the door. You can also watch our service on Youtube via a link that is distributed weekly. To be added to the distribution of this link, please contact us at gracecityisland@gmail.com. The link is also found on the Grace Church website: <https://www.gracecityisland.net>.

Grace Church is also open for prayer between 2 and 3 p.m. each Wednesday. Those 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, 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."

Holy Week Services: Palm Sunday, March 28: Palm Sunday procession and Holy Eucharist at 10 a.m. Reading of the Passion Story; Maundy Thursday, April 1, Holy Eucharist at 7:30 p.m.; Good Friday, April 2, Good Friday Liturgy at noon; Easter Day, April 4, Easter Eucharist and egg hunt beginning at 10 a.m.

January 24, 2021, marked the 110th anniversary of the passing of Adele Bolton (1830-1911), one of the founders of Grace Episcopal Church. History has it that, beginning in 1849, Miss Bolton was rowed over in a boat from Pelham, where her family lived (there was no City Island bridge until 1873) to organize worship and a parish on City Island. When Grace Episcopal Church was built in 1862, she persuaded her brother, the Rev. John Bolton, to create a beautiful stained-glass window above the altar entitled "The Trial of Christ," which was restored a few years ago and is still in place today. At the time of her death, Adele Bolton was 81 years old.

Members of the Sunday School plan to present the Passion of Christ on Palm Sunday, March 28. Each student will participate either by reading a passage from the Gospel or by representing Jesus, Pontius Pilate, Mary Magdalene and other biblical figures

in costume (with masks). If possible within safety guidelines, there will also be an Easter Egg Hunt for the members of the Sunday School following the service on April 4. If you would like to be part of Grace's Sunday School, call Karen Nani at 917-853-4401 or e-mail her at karenrnl@optonline.net.

Our music ministry is offering an opportunity for all to participate in music during our worship services. No prior musical experience is necessary. Contact Caroline Coppola, Minister of Music, for more information and a demonstration of our hand chimes (geccimusic@gmail.com).

The GraceTones 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

PSS Senior Center

PSS City Island is currently open Tuesday and Thursday from 12 to 1:30 p.m. to distribute meals, masks, sanitizers and more as we receive them. Please be sure to listen to the One Call Now sent to members to update them on meal pickups, virtual classes and new groups.

If any members need instruction on how to use their tablet, iPad, iPhone or Smartphone, please contact the center and we can schedule a time with you privately. We want everyone to have the option to join our Zoom and other available classes. Our Facebook page (PSS City Island Center) is updated regularly as new information becomes available for our members. It also gives instructions on how to access exercise classes online, our remote classes on balance, arthritis, crafts and nutrition, as well as our singing group. Staff members regularly call our members individually to check on their well-being. If you are not on our calling list, please e-mail pattis@pssusa.org giving your name and phone number, or call the center at 718-885-0727. Until we're together again, stay safe and healthy.

Patty Attis



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

Happy March from the board of the City Island Community Center. This month shepherds in spring during the Equinox on March 20 and the season of Lent celebrated by Christians across the globe. It is a time of reflection and new beginnings.

Although the Community Center remains on restricted utilization because of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are actively engaging in safe and critical community engagement to bring our members and broader community much-needed resources. Thanks to Councilmember Mark Gjonaj, the Community Center will host free tax-preparation sessions on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Appointments in advanced are required, and all safety protocols will be followed.

Approved Programs include:

AA Meeting: Saturdays and Sundays at 7:30 a.m. All are welcome.

NA Meeting: Thursdays at 7 p.m. All are welcome.

Friendly Reminder - you can help support the City Island Community Center through an official membership. Our membership drive continues! If you need a renewal form, please call 718-885-1145 and we will mail you one. We greatly appreciate all those who have already renewed or have made a generous donation on behalf of a group or business.

For up-to-date information, visit www.cityislandcommunitycenter.org, or call 718-885-1145, or Like us on Facebook and check FB for any changes in classes.

Have a safe and warm month!

Melissa Cebollero

Holiday Services

Trinity United Methodist Church
113 Bay Street

Services in-person and also online via Zoom
Thursday, April 1: Holy Thursday service, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 2: Good Friday service, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 12: Easter Sunday Sunrise Service at Pelham Cemetery on King Avenue, 6:15 a.m. Easter Worship at Trinity Church, 10 a.m.

St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church

City Island Avenue near the bridge

Sunday, March 28, Palm (Passion) Sunday: Masses at 9 and 11 a.m. Blessing of Palms at all masses.

Monday, March 29: Reconciliation Monday, 3 to 9 p.m.

Thursday, April 1, Holy Thursday: Tenebrae, 8 a.m. Solemn commemoration of the Lord's Supper, 7:30 p.m. Adoration to 10 p.m.

Friday, April 2, Good Friday: Tenebrae, 8 a.m. Stations of the Cross, 12 noon. Commemoration of the Passion and Death of Jesus, 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 3, Holy Saturday: Tenebrae, 8 a.m. Solemn Easter Vigil, 8 p.m. to be held at Our Lady of the Assumption Church.

Sunday, April 4, Easter Sunday: Masses at 9 and 11 a.m.

Temple Beth-El

480 City Island Avenue

All Temple offerings are online via Zoom e-mail yourshulbythesea@gmail.com

Sunday, March 28: Passover Second-night Seder, 6 to 9 p.m.

Grace Episcopal Church

116 City Island Avenue at Pilot Street

Services in person and also online at Grace Church Live Stream;

<https://www.gracecityisland.net/>

Sunday, March 28, Palm Sunday: The Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist, 10 a.m. Sunday School presentation of the Passion of Christ.

Thursday, April 1: Maundy Thursday, Holy Eucharist and Stripping of the Altar, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 2: Good Friday service, 12 noon.

Sunday, April 4: Easter Sunday, Festival and Holy Eucharist, 10 a.m. Sunday School

Easter Egg Hunt following the service.

AARP 318

Our chapter has been notified that because of Covid-19 all chapter meetings will be discontinued until further notice. At this time there are no updates. We will keep you posted once we hear otherwise. Be safe and hope you are enjoying 2021.

Carroll A. Reid

American Legion Post 156

The next meeting is Sunday, March 7, at 12 noon via the Zoom app. Dues are past due; \$55.00 for the 2021 year. Please drop them off at the Post, and make sure your name is on the envelope. We are operating at 25 to 35 percent capacity, so we remain unable to offer the hall for rental. We will continue to update the community as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, and we resume full operations.

The Queen lives! Please come in and play the Queen of Hearts game of chance each week. The weekly drawing is held at 7 p.m. on Saturday night. The jackpot grows each week until someone selects the Queen of Hearts. The game is open to all, and the proceeds help fund projects around the Post.

All retired flags should be dropped off at the Post for proper disposal. Please put them in the former mailbox by the flag pole.

On Saturday, Feb. 27, at 12 noon the Quilt of Valor Committee will honor Thomas McShane. A drive-by/walk-by at his residence at 94 Marine Street will happen around 1:30 p.m. Harlan Sexton, Joanne Valletta and Unit President Doreen Gallagher will wrap Tom in his Quilt Of Valor. All are welcome to attend, but please wear masks and maintain social distancing. This will be conducted rain or shine.

On Sunday, March 7, at 1:30 p.m. the Quilt of Valor Committee will be honoring Thomas McMahon. A drive-by/walk-by at his residence at 611 Minneford Avenue will take place about 1:30 p.m. Harlan Sexton, Joanne Valletta and Unit President Doreen Gallagher will wrap Tom in his Quilt Of Valor. All are welcome to attend, but please wear masks and maintain social distancing. This will be conducted rain or shine.

Happy St. Patrick's Day on March 17.

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.

Peter C. Del-Debbio

City Island Rising

Our county, city and community continue to grapple with the coronavirus, and we're here to help. If you and your family are in need of face masks, face shields or hand sanitizer, please fill out this webform (<https://bit.ly/CIRisingFaceMasks>) and we will drop them off to you. Additionally, thanks to a grant arranged by State Senator Alessandra Biaggi, we are partnering with Archie's Tap and Table to deliver hundreds of meals to neighbors in need. These meals are delivered on a weekly basis. Please contact us at CityIslandRising@gmail.com if you wish to arrange a delivery.

The year is already off to a fast and productive start, and we have hosted two community meetings via Zoom. If you missed them, head over to our social media channels <http://facebook.com/cityislandrising> and Twitter @CI_Rising and you can watch them. Send us your feedback and ideas via the e-mail above. We have already hosted some wonderful guests, including Ariadna Phillips of the Anchor Fridge Project, Michael Paulson of the Public Power Campaign and representatives from the group Transportation Alternatives to discuss our mutual concerns about safety conditions in Pelham Bay Park. And this was only our meeting in January!

In February, we hosted Chef Alex of Archie's Tap and Table who has been working with our board member David Diaz to deliver hundreds of meals to those in need. We also had Kevin Fisher of the PTA at P.S. 175, who provided a wealth of information about the school and how the organization is operating in these difficult times. Rising was able to raise over \$500 for the PTA and the Eastchester Bay Cat Project during "Giving Tuesday" last year.

Finally, we arranged for an information session with the NYC Campaign Finance Board to discuss the new "Ranked Choice Voting" method and how it works, so that you can be prepared for the upcoming June primary election. Thank you to board member Luisa Benedetto for arranging the presentation and discussion as well as moderating the event. In keeping with our goal of being a transparent organization that provides honest and accurate information, all of these recordings are available online for you to watch. You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel so you get updates when every video posts online.

On the "good news" front: if you live on City Island, you know that if you're on a phone call as you're entering/exiting the Island, you are likely to drop that call. In fact, that has been identified as one of the worst dead zones in all of NYC. This goes beyond being a minor inconvenience, as it can also become a safety issue if your car breaks down in Pelham Bay Park. Several neighbors complained about this at a recent meeting, and we reached out to Verizon communications, which has examined the problem and is now developing a plan to improve service in the park. Improvements are still about a year away, and we will update you all as more information on this plan becomes available.

Are you looking to get out of the house while maintaining safe social distancing? We are hosting our second "Walking Group" on Saturday, March 6, at 2 p.m. (Rain date Sunday, March 7, at 2 p.m.). We will be meeting again at Hawkins Park and take a stroll down City Island Avenue. All are welcome.

John Doyle

Garden Club of City Island

The Garden Club has held its Feb. 1 meeting via Zoom. Our presenter was Nancy Kalieta, whose PowerPoint presentation was entitled "Victorian Language of Flowers." She lives in Buffalo, NY, and was recommended by the Federated Garden Clubs of NYS. Her presentation was fun and interesting, and we learned a great deal about British culture during the reign of Queen Victoria, when flowers were used as codes for otherwise unmentionable words such as "love." Members were able to ask Nancy questions and to make comments during the presentation and during the business meeting that followed. It was great to connect with another gardener from across the state.

At our March 1 meeting, Sue Avery from 9th District Garden Clubs will offer a presentation on "Waterwise Gardens." Although we are blessed in New York with having abundant water, conserving water is always a good idea and not having to water so frequently is very appealing. The meeting will start at 10, and we ask everyone to log on early to make sure that the technology is set up before we start. Members who have not used the Zoom online meeting platform can get help from our secretary, Ellen Murphy, by calling or e-mailing her. This is a great way to connect and still stay safe.

Members have been sending in photographs of plants and gardens to Charline Evers for our Facebook page. She has received a number of beautiful photos, and we encourage members to send in more as the opportunity arises. Just pull out your phone when you see something in your garden, inside or out. As a reminder, please send them to Charline's e-mail address, preferably in jpeg format.

Behind the scenes, plans are under way for our spring and summer activities. We will be delivering fund-drive letters and keeping up with our public gardening activities. For now, the Post Office garden and the containers are under a blanket of ice and snow waiting for spring.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Garden Club, please contact a member, who will refer you one of our officers. We will make sure to include you in our meetings, whether in person, via Zoom or just to receive a newsletter. We hold our meetings the first Monday of every month at 10 a.m., and our next meeting will be on April 5.

Judy Judson

St. Mary Star of the Sea Church
Holy Week Schedule 2021

PALM (PASSION) SUNDAY-MARCH 28

VIGIL MASS-SATURDAY-5:15 P.M.
SUNDAY-9:00 A.M., 11:00 A.M.
(Blessing of Palm at all Masses)

RECONCILIATION MONDAY
MONDAY, MARCH 29

FROM 3:00-9:00 P.M.

HOLY THURSDAY-APRIL 1

8:00 A.M.- TENEBRAE (No Morning Mass)
Consists of Psalms and Readings
SOLEMN COMMEMORATION OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER - 7:30 P.M.
Procession to Repository
Adoration to 10:00 P.M.

GOOD FRIDAY-APRIL 2

8:00 A.M.-TENEBRAE (No Morning Mass)
Consists of Psalms and Readings
STATIONS OF THE CROSS-12:00 NOON
COMMEMORATION OF THE
PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS-3:00 P.M.

HOLY SATURDAY-APRIL 3

8:00 A.M. TENEBRAE (No Morning Mass)
Consists of Psalms and Readings
(No 5:15 pm Mass)

SOLEMN EASTER VIGIL-8:00 P.M.
**WILL BE HELD AT OUR LADY OF THE
ASSUMPTION CHURCH**
(Fulfills Sunday Obligation)

EASTER SUNDAY-APRIL 4

Masses- 9:00 A.M., 11:00 A. M.





Sixth Annual Bingeworthy Television, Part 1

The shutdown has provided many of us with way more time to fill than we had ever imagined. Therefore, I'm doing this annual column in two parts. As always, I provide a range of limited to very long-running completed series, which are presented in the order of the amount of time a person is willing to invest.

The Spy (Israeli; 2019, 6 episodes) is based on the real-life story of former undercover Mossad agent Eli Cohen (Sacha Baron Cohen). In the early 1960s, Cohen goes to Syria, where he gains the trust of military leaders and their rich friends to learn about Syria's biggest anti-Israel secret initiatives. Noah Emmerich plays Dan Peleg, Eli's Mossad handler; Hadar Ratzon Rotem portrays Eli's neglected and suspicious wife, Nadia; and Waleed Zuaiter is featured as Amin Al-Hafz, a military officer who thinks he's found the perfect ally in the undercover Cohen. For those who have found Sacha Baron Cohen's comedy (Borat, Ali G) offensive, be aware that in 2019, Baron Cohen was in fact awarded an International Leadership Award by the Anti-Defamation League for leadership in fighting bigotry and prejudice.

The Queen's Gambit (2020, 7 episodes) is an American coming-of-age period drama whose title refers to an opening strategy in chess. It covers the life of Beth Harmon (Anya Taylor-Joy), an orphan who discovers a spectacular aptitude for chess when she is taught by William Shaibel (Bill Camp), a janitor in the orphanage where she has been placed. Set from the mid-1950s into the 1960s, the series follows her rise to prominence in the chess world as she struggles with drug and alcohol dependency, the result of practices in orphanages at that time of medicating children to keep their behavior in check. With the assistance of her adoptive mother, Alma Wheatley (Marielle Heller), she competes in chess tournaments around the country and eventually the world. Thomas Brodie-Sangster is on hand as Benny Watts, one of Beth's most challenging competitors as the reigning US chess champion who eventually becomes her mentor and friend.

Contact (French, 2015-17; 10 episodes over two seasons) is a supernatural police procedural drama in which Thomas Adam (Thomas Jouannet) helps his police detective brother, Eric (Alexis Loret), solve dangerous crimes. Although he is a civilian, Thomas uses his amazing gift: when he touches an object, he knows its story and the thoughts of its owner. Before long, even Eric's skeptical captain, Lena Ortiz (Hélène Seuzaret), comes around as Thomas reads objects to find significant information the cops don't have.

Firefly (2002-3, 15 episodes plus film) is an American Space Western set 500 years in the future. The series is set in the year 2517, after the arrival of humans in a new star system, and follows the adventures of the renegade crew of *Serenity*, a "Firefly-class" spaceship consisting of a crew of nine, which includes owner and captain Mal Reynolds (Nathan Fillion); second-in-command Zoe Washburne (Gina Torres); pilot and Zoe's jealous husband, Hoban Washburne (Alan Tudyk); companion (a 26th-century geisha) Inara Serra (Morena Baccarin); mercenary Jayne Cobb (Adam Baldwin); ship's mechanic Kaylee Frye (Jewel Staite); trauma surgeon Simon Tam (Sean Maher); Simon's sister child prodigy, River Tam (Summer Glau);

and moral guide Derrial Book (Ron Glass). The show takes place in a multi-social future, primarily a fusion of Western and East Asian societies, where there is gross class inequality. It was followed by the film *Serenity*, which continues the storyline from the series.

The Paradise (British; 2012-13, 16 episodes over two seasons) is based on an Emile Zola novel about the founding of Le Bon Marché in Paris, the world's first department store. This series moves the setting to Victorian England and dramatizes the development of Britain's first department store, the Paradise. Denise Lovett (Joanna Vanderham) is an ambitious, lowly shopgirl who captures the eye of the store's handsome and charming owner, John Moray (Emun Elliott), who recognizes her intelligence and creativity, much to the consternation of the head of ladies' fashion Miss Audrey (Sarah Lancashire). But the situation becomes complicated because Moray is dependent on Lord Glendenning (Patrick Malahide) for financing and is the object of the affection of Glendenning's daughter Katherine (Elaine Cassidy).

Brooklyn Bridge (1991-93, 33 episodes over two seasons) is about a Jewish American family living in Brooklyn in the middle 1950s. The premise is partially based on the childhood of executive producer and creator Gary David Goldberg, and somewhat resembles my own childhood in Pelham Parkway South. The story centers on adolescent Alan Silver (Danny Gerard) who lives with his parents, Phyllis (Amy Aquino) and George (Peter Friedman), and his younger brother, Nathaniel (Matthew Louis Siegal). Stealing every episode are their grandparents Sophie (Marion Ross) and Jules (Louis Zorich), who live in the same building. Jenny Lewis plays Irish Katie Monahan on whom Alan has a crush.

Designated Survivor (2016-19, 53 episodes over three seasons) stars Kiefer Sutherland as Tom Kirkman, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the U.S. President's Cabinet. On the night of the State of the Union address, he is chosen as the "designated survivor," that is, the person who would become President if some catastrophe should befall the Capitol. When the unimaginable does occur, he is thrust into the position of President and leader of the free world. He must struggle to keep the country from dissolving into chaos as he recreates the Cabinet and Congress while investigating who was behind the attack. The supporting cast includes Natascha McElhone as his immigration attorney wife, Alex; Adan Canto as Chief of Staff Aaron Shore; Italia Ricci as Special Advisor Emily Rhodes; Kal Penn as White House Communications Director Seth Wright; and Maggie Q as CIA Case Officer Hannah Wells, who is assigned find out who was behind the Capitol attack.

Ray Donovan (2013-20, 82 episodes over seven seasons) is a crime drama starring Liev Schreiber in the title role as a "fixer" for celebrity clients, arranging bribes, payoffs, threats, crime-scene clean-up and other illegal activities. He has a complicated relationship with his family including his wife, Abby (Paula Malcomson); his kids, Bridget (Kerris Dorsey) and Connor (Devon Bagby); and his brothers Terry (Eddie Marsan), a former boxer who has Parkinson's disease; Bunchy (Dash Mihok), who was abused by a priest as a youth, and boxer/limo driver Daryll (Pooch Hall) as their biracial half brother. Jon Voight is featured as Mickey, the Donovan Dad, who creates havoc after being released from prison. Katherine Moennig appears as Ray's investigative assistant Lena Burnham and Steven Bauer as right hand man and ex-Mossad agent Avi Rudin.

Based on the Israeli Series **Prisoners of War** (reviewed in my Third Annual column), **Homeland** (2011-20, 96 episodes over eight seasons) stars Claire Danes as bipolar CIA agent Carrie Mathison. When Marine Sniper Sgt. Nicholas Brody (Damien Lewis) returns home to his wife, Jessica (Morena Baccarin), following eight years in captivity, Carrie believes he has

been turned by al-Qaeda leader Abu Nazir (Navid Negahban) and is a threat to America's national security. Her mentor is CIA Division Chief Saul Berenson (Mandy Patinkin); her boss is Counterterrorism Center Director David Estes (David Harewood); and her most significant colleague is CIA operative and assassin Peter Quinn (Rupert Friend). The various settings where seasons take place are Washington DC, Afghanistan, Berlin and New York City. Through the series Carrie functions as a CIA operative, Middle East Station Chief, Head of Security for a private foundation, and Special Advisor to the first woman President of the United States. There are various astonishing twists throughout the series, which make this a true espionage thriller.

Yes, I rewatched all 261 episodes of **NYPD Blue** (1992-2005, 261 episodes over 12 seasons) during the shutdown, and it was every bit as good as I remembered from its original airing. Other than the lack of current day technology, the shows don't seem at all dated. Set in a fictional Manhattan police precinct, the stellar ensemble cast was led by Dennis Franz as Detective Andy Sipowicz. Other detectives included John Kelly (David Caruso), Bobby Simone (Jimmy Smits), Danny Sorenson (Rick Schroder), and John Clark Jr. (Mark-Paul Goselaar), all of whom played Andy's partners

over the life of the series. Other significant characters included Andy's love interest, ADA Sylvia Costos (Sharon Lawrence); Detectives Greg Medavoy (Gordon Clapp), James Martinez (Nicholas Turturro), Diane Russell (Kim Delaney), Baldwin Jones (Henry Simmons), Jill Kirkendall (Andrea Thompson), and Connie McDowell (Charlotte Ross); and Precinct Secretaries Donna Abandonado (Gail O'Grady) and John Irvin (Bill Bocktrup). For 10 seasons, the precinct was run by Lt. Arthur Fancy (James McDaniel), who was eventually replaced by Lt. Tony Rodriguez (Esai Morales). The series is always interesting with plots as relevant today as they were 20 years ago.

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




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50 Years of Stormy Weather

Photos by RENA HANSEN, RON TERNER, SALLY McPHERSON, BARBARA DOLENSEK, GEORGE GIBBONS and RICK DeWITT

Over the past 50 years, *The Island Current* has covered many storms that have affected City Island, but only one of the storms rated four pages of coverage and 34 photographs showing the damage it caused all over the Island. That was the unnamed storm of December 1992, or, as *The Current* called it, THE STORM. Hurricane Gloria rated a front page in October 1985 and a few photographs, as did Hurricane Floyd in 1999, but many much-feared storms, such as Hurricane Isabel in 2003, were given relatively short shrift. Irene in August 2011 got front-page coverage but only four photographs and a caption, although the following year, Hurricane Sandy rated not only a front page but also 8 photographs in full color. Still, the unnamed "storm of the century" wins hands-down as providing the most dramatic coverage, just as it provided Island residents the most dramatic storm since 1938.

Although a few of these storms were pretty dramatic, over the past 50 years *The Island Current* has covered virtually every weather episode of any consequence, including snowstorms, hurricanes, line squalls and nor'easters, and photographs have featured snow shovelers, fallen trees, damaged boats and flooded areas. Here are a few examples.



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.



Catherine Ambrosini

Longtime Island resident Catherine Ambrosini died on Jan. 22, 2021. She was born in the Bronx to the late Anna Porcelli and Frank Brescia and was a proud resident of City Island for many years. She was married to the late Anthony "Ambro" Ambrosini, in whose honor the park next to P.S. 175 is named.

Although Catherine lost her eyesight to diabetes in the 1990s, she continued to work in the Empire State Building at the Empire Diamond Corporation, a job she loved, until she was 80 years old. Strong and determined, she worked there for more than 50 years.

A funeral Mass was on Jan. 27 at St. Mary, Star of the Sea Church, and interment took place at Pelham Cemetery.

Catherine is survived by her loving daughter, Donna, and her daughter's fiancé, Bentley. She is also survived by her sister, Thomasina (Mazie) Salzarulo (Brescia).

In lieu of flowers, a memorial donation may be made to the American Diabetes Association, online at <https://www.diabetes.org/donate/donate-memorial>, by phone at 1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383), or by mail at P.O. Box 7023 Merrifield, VA 22116-7023.



Raymond D. Savarese

Raymond D. Savarese of Holland Patent, NY, died at the age of 80 on Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021, at St. Elizabeth's Medical Center in Utica, NY, with his family by his side.

He was born in the Bronx to Francis and Kathleen (O'Keefe) Savarese and lived on City Island for many years.

He enjoyed watching his favorite sports teams, which included the NY Mets and the Buffalo Bills. He was a loving husband, father and grandfather and will be forever missed.

Raymond was predeceased by his parents, his brothers Kenneth and Arthur and his sister, Evelyn. He is survived by Mary Savarese, his wife of 55 years, his children and their spouses: Raymond II and Beth, David and Kim, and Donna and Eric. He also leaves eight grandchildren, Raymond III, Armando II, Valentino, Richard, April,

Mary, Seth and Dylan, as well as a nephew and many nieces and great-nieces and nephews.



Lucy Zec

Longtime resident Lucy Zec, born Luce Prendivoj, passed away on Jan. 5, 2021, at the age of 91.

Lucy emigrated from Croatia at the age of 29 with three young children. She lived in Manhattan and in 1992 moved to City Island, where she resided for 26 years.

She was a talented, self-taught tailor and seamstress, a profession she worked at for over 75 years, until the age of 86.

She is survived by three children, two grandchildren and many nieces, nephews and cousins across the globe.



Jack Ullman

Jack Ullman, a resident of City Island for many years, passed away on Jan. 16, 2021, at the age of 91.

Jack was born on Sept. 5, 1929, and grew up in Chicago with an older brother. His father was from Latvia and his mother was of Lithuanian descent. His childhood summers were spent at a beach on Lake Michigan, where he loved the water and built a crude boat with his friends.

He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, spent his Army days in Washington, DC, got married and returned to University of Illinois for his Ph.D. in Physics.

He worked in Strasbourg, France, for two years as a post-doctoral fellow, a time he enjoyed very much. After returning to America, he worked from 1962 to 1970 at Columbia University for the eminent nuclear physicist Chien-Shiung Wu.

Jack remarried in 1971, moved to City Island with his wife, Carol, and adopted two daughters. Ten years later the family moved to White Plains because one of the girls needed to attend school programs for gifted students and the other a school for special needs.

After 10 years there, his daughter Ann left for college and Esther was admitted to a group home, which left Jack and his wife free to return to City Island, where they lived on Pilot Street. For 25 years he

taught physics at Lehman College, where he joined their chorus and enjoyed their weekly rehearsals and biannual concerts right up until the start of the pandemic.

Jack became involved with the Hutchinson River Restoration Project from its start

in 2008 and served as secretary of the organization until recently. He very much loved his boat and being near the water on City Island and shared this happy life with his third wife, Inge, for the last six years.

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

MARCH 2021									
DAY	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	TIME	HEIGHT	DAY
	HH:MM	FEET	HH:MM	FEET	HH:MM	FEET	HH:MM	FEET	
01 Mon	0008	8.33	0637	-0.89	1229	8.17	1855	-0.90	Mon 01
02 Tue	0052	8.39	0725	-0.87	1316	7.90	1939	-0.70	Tue 02
03 Wed	0139	8.28	0817	-0.65	1408	7.47	2026	-0.34	Wed 03
04 Thu	0230	8.01	0918	-0.29	1505	6.96	2120	0.14	Thu 04
05 Fri	0328	7.62	1041	0.10	1616	6.48	2230	0.63	Fri 05
06 Sat	0440	7.24	1208	0.28	1759	6.25			Sat 06
07 Sun	0017	0.90	0626	7.09	1322	0.23	1920	6.38	Sun 07
08 Mon	0137	0.82	0746	7.25	1425	0.02	2024	6.72	Mon 08
09 Tue	0242	0.52	0848	7.51	1522	-0.22	2120	7.10	Tue 09
10 Wed	0338	0.17	0942	7.76	1612	-0.40	2209	7.44	Wed 10
11 Thu	0428	-0.13	1031	7.91	1658	-0.48	2254	7.67	Thu 11
12 Fri	0514	-0.33	1115	7.92	1740	-0.43	2335	7.78	Fri 12
13 Sat	0556	-0.38	1155	7.82	1817	-0.27			Sat 13
All times are Eastern Daylight Time beginning Sunday, March 14									
14 Sun	0012	7.77	0734	-0.30	1332	7.61	1949	-0.03	Sun 14
15 Mon	0144	7.67	0807	-0.12	1404	7.34	2010	0.24	Mon 15
16 Tue	0208	7.52	0831	0.12	1428	7.07	2018	0.46	Tue 16
17 Wed	0227	7.38	0846	0.35	1451	6.82	2041	0.64	Wed 17
18 Thu	0253	7.26	0914	0.58	1521	6.61	2117	0.86	Thu 18
19 Fri	0328	7.14	0952	0.83	1601	6.41	2200	1.12	Fri 19
20 Sat	0411	7.00	1039	1.08	1648	6.25	2248	1.39	Sat 20
21 Sun	0500	6.88	1133	1.28	1745	6.16	2343	1.58	Sun 21
22 Mon	0556	6.82	1236	1.36	1850	6.23			Mon 22
23 Tue	0046	1.61	0659	6.88	1354	1.22	2006	6.49	Tue 23
24 Wed	0156	1.42	0807	7.09	1507	0.86	2107	6.91	Wed 24
25 Thu	0309	0.98	0910	7.42	1600	0.41	2153	7.39	Thu 25
26 Fri	0410	0.40	1004	7.77	1645	-0.07	2235	7.89	Fri 26
27 Sat	0502	-0.20	1053	8.07	1727	-0.48	2317	8.32	Sat 27
28 Sun	0551	-0.72	1140	8.26	1808	-0.77			Sun 28
29 Mon	0000	8.64	0638	-1.06	1226	8.29	1850	-0.89	Mon 29
30 Tue	0044	8.80	0726	-1.19	1314	8.15	1934	-0.81	Tue 30
31 Wed	0131	8.76	0816	-1.08	1404	7.85	2020	-0.53	Wed 31
APRIL 2021									
01 Thu	0220	8.53	0913	-0.76	1458	7.42	2112	-0.07	Thu 01
02 Fri	0313	8.12	1021	-0.30	1601	6.96	2215	0.47	Fri 02
03 Sat	0416	7.64	1140	0.11	1729	6.62	2347	0.92	Sat 03



GIVING A GULL ITS DUE

And the prize for Most Taken For Granted Bird Species in our Area goes to (drumroll please)... the Seagull, of course (or just Gull, actually, since these birds do not live exclusively by the sea). Underappreciated as they may be, there is no denying a gull's intelligence. We had yet another illustration of it just the other day. There it was, in the shallows, using its webbed feet like a kind of shovel to dislodge what potential meal it could feel under the water. Over the years, we have watched ducks do this for shellfish and swans for horseshoe crab eggs but never a gull—a ring-billed gull in this instance. It was as if the bird hadn't just been watching the waterfowl around it but actually processing and learning from their techniques.

We're not sure what Audubon would say, but the adaptability of a species surely must count for something where intelligence is concerned. Consider all the different ways a gull knows how to get a meal. The variety alone suggests above-average wits. A closer look at individual strategies reveals the same. For example, a diving duck, such as a bufflehead, swims down into the deep water to find food. Gulls know this and will often wait at the surface in ambush, forcing the unsuspecting food finder to cough up its prize. We have watched them do it closer to shore, too, dabbling mallards and black ducks.

Another strategy of the gull is to fly high over a rocky beach with a shellfish of some sort in its beak. When dropped from the right height and onto the right rock (or dock), the poor piss clams, for example, are toast. Gulls know how to take advantage of

vulnerable mossbunker, too. Last fall, when the food fish were dying in droves (probably because of oxygen depletion issues in the water), a couple of herring gulls were making a literal killing by dragging dozens of the dying bunker from the water to the beach where they could be more easily torn to pieces. And if the sandy beach wasn't solid enough ground for the slaughter, the gulls brought the fish to the Fordham Street pier.

At Johnny's Reef, the laughing gulls have been yukking up the french fries for years. Before the fishing line was strung over the picnic area, they could pluck fries out of the air the way Lucy and Ethel plucked chocolates. And here's another example: at the beach, you may have noticed the gulls playing dumb off to the side of your sitting area. But that's not dumb. They're just biding their time, waiting for you to let your guard down. Then they pounce like the wild animals they are.

Undoubtedly, we've overlooked a few more interesting examples. If you know of any and would care to share, we invite you to at jdsstrat@msn.com. In closing, though, we would like to leave you with something we came across in preparing to write this article, something, we would argue, that proves without a shadow of a doubt that the seagull (excuse me, gull) deserves more respect around here than is its usual allotment: it seems that some gulls—alas, not City Island's own—have been observed stamping their feet on the ground to imitate rainfall; and that they do this so that earthworms are tricked into coming to the surface and becoming bird food.

Who said you have to be early?

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In The Garden

By MARY COLBY



Photo by MARY COLBY

Annual seed packets

Seed Sowing and Forest Bathing

I am sitting in front of a fire on a very cold snowy morning. It is Feb. 14. Outside I can see the crisscross tracks of deer marking their hungry route to my rhododendrons, cedars and magnolias. I walk out into the forest for a breath of air and instantly my spirits are lifted. The woods are haunted by silence and a certain amount of mercy. I have heard it said that trees give off chemical compounds that have a positive effect on the neurons of the brain. In Japan they call it forest bathing. I am at peace. The witch hazel buds are making tight little fists against the frigid air, but once brought inside they open their ribboned, lemony blooms to light up the kitchen. For me this is the first sign of spring.

I guess we have all become quite tired of winter by now. Already my grow-light stand is filled with sweet peas, morning glories, hesperis and lunaria corfu blue. I love the leaves of this last plant, which are blue edged, and the dried, papery seed cases are as beautiful as the flowers. March is the time to plant seeds. It is good to have some early blooming plants and, of course, to get the varieties you want that can't be had at the nurseries. Also, for the price of a packet you can have seven or nine of one thing in your garden, making for a naturalized look rather than one or two stand-alones.

Annuals bloom from seed in one year and are then finished. Half-hardy annuals will not succumb to early frost, so your bloom time is longer, stretching into the colder months of autumn. Biennials take two years to grow, and they flower in the second year. These are some of the most beautiful flowers, like white foxglove, Canterbury bells, and hollyhock, and are harder to come by. *Salvia sclarea turkestanica* or clary sage I cannot do without. In the first year, they form puckered, hairy, sage-green rosettes, and from these come three-foot-tall, curiously hooked, lavender-blue spires that light up the garden in June through July. Perennials are just that, but they require two years of growth before flowering on and on throughout the years.

I have set up a potting area in my laundry room. To watch the tiny plants emerge, so fresh and green, has been a source of joy. Even the envelopes of seed bring delight as they hold many gardens to come.

Here are a few tips to success with seeds. Use small plastic pots from 2 ½ to 4 inches, which have been scrubbed with soap and water to ensure that no fungus is present to contribute to damping-off disease. I use Espoma Organic Seed Starting Mix, which I put in a bucket and to which I add water. A peat-based mix must be moistened before planting in pots. The general rule is to cover the seed to the same depth of the seed itself. But read the instructions for each variety carefully. Some need light to

germinate. Small seed that is very fine must be laid on the surface and gently pressed in with a small board or with fingertips. Give them water with a fine rose-tip watering can and cover with plastic wrap until the seeds have germinated. Watch that they don't dry out and be sure to label them.

Transplant them to individual pots when they are large enough, with two or four true leaves. Knock them out of the pot and carefully handle them by the leaves. If you don't have time for this transplanting process, just sow one or two seeds per pot and pot them straight into the garden when the roots appear at the bottom of the pot. Feed them once a week with a weak Miracle Gro solution.

Unless the seeds are for shady conditions, the new plantlets will need strong light. I use grow lights from the Gardeners Supply company. I find they work very well, as will a very sunny window sill.

If you don't have the space, there are many wonderful plants that need sowing directly in the ground. These would include annual poppies, the *somniferum*, and the shirleys, which can be sown direct as soon as the soil is workable, or two to four weeks before your last frost date. This would include ammi (false Queen Anne's lace). I like green mist, *gloriosa* daisy, *clarkia* and larkspur.

Seeds to plant out-of-doors after the last frost date would be cosmos, sunflower, tobacco-nicotiana, amaranth, California poppy, nasturtium, morning glory and zinnia. Prepare the soil to a fine tilth, sow very thinly, mark them well and keep moist. Be sure to space them as instructed on the packet, discarding some without care.

I've never liked marigolds all that much, but the new Kilimanjaro white looks fanciful. *Orlaya* is on my list too, for it is white, and I know very few gardeners who don't favor this color. I am mad for white, and of course for blue, the rarest color of all. White sweet peas and morning glories on teepees, white sunflowers, white four o'clocks and white poppies, all in a sea of blue larkspur, and later a sea of Queen Anne's lace. I'm dreaming and still in the forest. Dreaming of flower schemes to come and of the hellebores that are sleeping under the snow.

It is a bit of work but even if you sow one or two kinds this year, it will be so rewarding to have something that you have nurtured from seed in your garden. This, I believe, is very good therapy during a pandemic or during any time in life that proves to be difficult. Being one with your garden and improving its health have a direct impact on the health of the gardener. There is something so sacred about it all, don't you think?

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

Prepare the Child for the Road, Not the Road for the Child

By JOHN SCARDINA, Certified School Psychologist

When I was growing up, if there was a problem at school, the consequences at home would far outweigh the consequences in school. My parents believed in accountability, and they would never have dreamed of disputing the word of a teacher.

Although there can certainly be times when school personnel are wrong—operating out of their own biases—in general we educators work with hundreds of children, and our perspective on behavior has been tested on many more individuals than live in your home. Yet in recent years, parents choose to question the school about disciplinary issues and clear the way for their children to avoid consequences. Sometimes this allows our children to think that others will take care of any consequences.

In their book "The Coddling of the American Mind," Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt suggest that there have been three great "untruths" perpetuated by the current Boomer generation: that adversity leads to fragility rather than resiliency; that emotional beliefs are always true; that some people are "good" and some people are "bad" (often referred to as the "false binary").

We now have "snowplow parents" undoing the "helicopter parents" of yesterday, clearing the road ahead of all obstacles so Johnny can glide through life hassle free. We also validate our beliefs based upon the strength of our feelings rather than the examination of those beliefs by our intellect:

it must be "right" if it feels "right" to us. Finally, we say that "good people cannot be racist" and "bad people have nothing to offer" rather than look at the common humanity and fallibility of all people.

As Scott Peck said in the opening line of "The Road Less Traveled": "Life is difficult." Wisdom—deep learning that shapes our character—comes at a cost, and that cost often involves discomfort, suffering and loss. Nobody wants to see their child hurting, but hurting is a necessary part of growing up. The true gift of a skinned knee or a loss of electronics for a week or a need for restitution for property lost or broken is the lesson learned: nothing comes for free.

I am a firm believer in "tough love": high-affection, high-awareness and high-involvement parenting that allows for appropriate exploration and pain as part of growing up. We have heard of recent college graduates who show up at their new jobs expecting everything to be easy and nurturing: employers scratch their heads and wonder what has happened to maturity and responsibility.

Let your children fall down and fail and make mistakes. Provide the opportunity for them to make amends and learn from their experiences. Allow them the gift of pain when they need to suffer a bit. In the end they will be ready for the road ahead and not be waiting for the world to take care of them.

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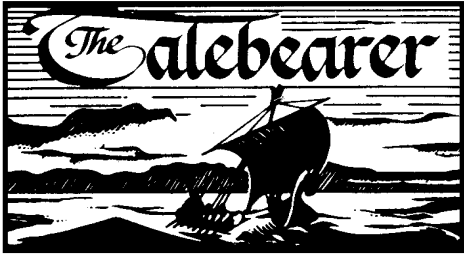
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Information for the Talebearer must be received in writing no later than the 15th of the month except July and December. Mail to The Island Current, P.O. Box 6, City Island, NY 10464; include your name and telephone number.

Lauren's aunt, Rita McKenna Lynch, and Lauren's cousins, Karen Nani and Patty Lynch Jawski, are very proud of her accomplishments.

Welcome to the world, Catherine Lane Hennessy! So proud are her parents, Dr. Christopher Hennessy and Erin Hennessy, Esq.; grandparents, Pat and Dave Hennessy; and big sister, Maggie.

Anniversary greetings on March 28 to Bay Street's Anne and Scouse McIntyre.

Welcome to spring on March 20! Hope everyone is safe and looking forward to nice weather.

Maria Swieciki



The Eastchester Bay Stray Cat Project celebrated one year of managing the local feral cat population.



Catherine Lane Hennessy



Chelsea Rodstrom and Matthew Allen were married on Nov. 28, 2020.

Best wishes for a lifetime of happiness to Rochelle Street's Chelsea Rodstrom and Matthew Allen, who were married on Nov. 28, 2020. Matthew is a native of Bloomfield Hills, MI, and the wedding took place in Ohio, where the couple first met in college in 2009. Proud parents are Rose and Walter Rodstrom and Martha and Michael Allen. Excited siblings are Justin, Matt, Rebecca, Nicky, Lisa and Dan.

Keep up the good work to City Island's Eastchester Bay Stray Cat Project, which just celebrated its one-year anniversary since it formed a "TNR" (Trap, Neuter, Return) group to help the local feral and stray cat population. The group is on its way to obtaining a non-profit status and were able to help 80 cats and kittens in 2020! For more information, e-mail City-IslandTNR@gmail.com.

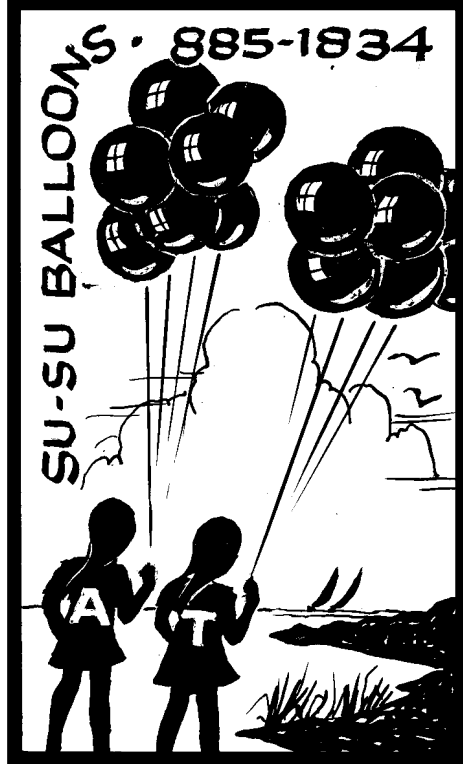
Congratulations to all the Islanders who have persisted and been vaccinated so far against Covid. According to news reports in mid-February, City Island was Number 1 in the city for the percentage of adults vaccinated.

Happy March 31 birthday wishes to Pell Place's Barbara Stiene, with love from your family and friends. Enjoy!

Lauren McKenna, Esq., daughter of clam diggers Carol Gauss and Robert McKenna, was named the 84th Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association, the oldest Bar Association in the United States.



Lauren McKenna has been named 84th Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association.



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