

MAYOR'S COLUMN

For the past few weeks, together with Chamber President John Byrne of Scarborough Fair, and Executive Director Michele MacMillan and upcoming Director Ruth Wood, I have gone door to door to speak with our merchants.

My previous perception of them as a hard working devoted group was only reinforced by our conversations. Our business district is a unique treasure of our Village and the owner of the stores are wonderfully caring people, many with long ties to our Village. They are doing their best to adjust to the changing economic realities and I urge you to support them as they have supported all our community institutions and charities throughout the years. Government, merchants and residents need to partner to keep our downtown vibrant. A successful business district provides not only convenient and needed products, but increased sales tax revenue and an ambiance that has a direct effect on the value of our homes. And our stores offer so much! The following is just a snapshot of some of the specialized goods and services that we have within walking distance of our homes.

- Silver Spoon, one of our high quality children's stores does customized monogramming on almost all items, and the store is so beautifully appointed, it appeared in a recent national TV show.
- The Wine & Spirit Emporium knows its customers and their tastes so well that you can just give them a name and they craft the perfect gift. Try asking Stew Leonard for this information!

- If you open a bank account at Citibank, you are automatically entered into a raffle for a free dinner down the street at Steve Palm's Underhills Crossing Restaurant.
- Steve Ircha has relocated his business from Manhattan to Paxton Avenue. He now heads a branch of GunnAllen Financial, Inc. a national brokerage firm in the Village.
- Noel Fine Arts on Kraft Avenue not only does art appraisals, painting and sculpture restoration, repairs on vintage watches and clocks and museum quality framing, but also has ongoing exhibitions featuring major artists.
- Fitness Together on Palmer Avenue is offering a free week of training for every 4 weeks committed to a new program.
- Value Drugs continues to stock just about everything and will deliver it all to your doorstep.
- Fierson's continues to offer designer exclusives on many children's items including the Lilly Pulitzer line.
- J. McLaughlin is partnering to help Hearts to Home, an organization started by Bronxville High School students to send phone cards to our servicemen and women overseas.
- Botticelli Bridal Boutique continues to be a destination for brides from the entire Metropolitan area and often featured in national publications.
- East India Designs on Pondfield is beautifully appointed with gifts in all price points and recently had scarf tying and henna events open to everyone.

- The Station House Pub & Restaurant has a burger to rival Piper's Kilt. Try the Fordham Burger. You will not be disappointed!
- Enchante' and Mano A Mano continue to stock the perfect gifts and have the most gracious and accommodating proprietors in Adrienne, Mario and Billy.
- Many of our merchants now have Web sites so you can shop after business hours or during that late night break.

Thanks to the cooperation of our commuters who moved their cars to the Avalon lot, you will now find many open spaces along Kraft Avenue in our municipal lot to park and shop. We are also looking to make our crosswalks more pedestrian friendly and close off our streets on occasion for more business district events and entertainment.

We are also increasing enforcement of the "crossing double yellow line" violations to reward shoppers who patiently wait for spaces, and punish those who don't. We have local legislation pending to prohibit chronic meter feeding in areas that would most benefit from rapid turnover of parking spaces.

The Chamber has done its part by planning more events for spring and summer to encourage residents to visit our shops, offering their members free professional advice on how to weather the economic storm with prudent business practices, and continuing to help merchants highlight their unique services.

Please do your part and keep our dollars local so we continue to enjoy and benefit from the Village we all treasure.