

MAYOR'S COLUMN

I wanted to update residents on a variety of initiatives occurring in the Village this spring. The Trustees have trimmed the capital budget in the last two weeks from a proposed budget of \$1,504,000 to \$1,194,000. The new number is also lower than last year's \$1,341,000. We are mindful of the challenging economic times so we worked hard to craft a lean budget while not sacrificing maintenance of our infrastructure. For example, we are allocating more in this year's proposal on piping, sewers, and drainage, than in past budgets. The paving and curbing budget has remained essentially flat but with a 25% increase in pavement costs, we will pave less streets than desired. Reductions were found by essentially requiring things to last a little longer, as we are all doing in our homes. We have put off the purchase of some vehicles, equipment and painting projects.

We will, however, be painting all the crosswalks in the business district in the coming weeks. We are hoping that the increased visibility will promote safer walking throughout the Village. We continue to look at the intersection at Park Place and Kraft Avenue near Starbucks and improvements will be made in the near future.

We were blessed with spectacular weather on Memorial Day which helped make our veterans' remembrance a huge success. Thanks goes to residents Cindi Callahan and Jane Staunton for spearheading this effort which has become a model for Westchester. If you would like to add your name to the Village's Veterans' Scroll of Honor, just call Village Hall. We would be happy to include you.

I want to also thank our Grand Marshals Si and Vicki Ford. Selecting the Fords as Grand Marshals was just a small way to say thank you to an exemplary couple for their decades of service to our Village.

Our vibration and noise study quantifying the effects of the new third high speed track on adjacent Village homes is nearing completion. All the field readings have been collected, with samples from homes from the Tuckahoe border to the Yonkers line. The engineers hired by the Village also have all the Metro North documents to compare information and refute if warranted. We expect a draft report by month's end.

Our negotiations for a new contract with the Teamsters, who represent our 23 public works employees, has begun. We are also continuing our talks with the police union in the hopes of reaching agreement very soon. Our

negotiations are very positive and collegial. Our police officers had a very successful fundraiser/social at the Women's Club over the Memorial Day weekend. I know I can speak for them as well as all our Village employees when I express their appreciation and gratitude for any kindnesses extended.

In the past week, the Village received word that our grant request to the State Assembly for "open space" monies had been approved. This was all thanks to the efforts of our Assemblywoman Amy Paulin. The Village will receive \$25,000 to be used for costs associated with the rehabilitation and enhancement of Village parks. We are targeting refurbishment work at Sagamore Park and Bicentennial Park.

Our next Citizens' Advisory Committee will take place this week as well as the last meeting of the Cabin Committee chaired by former Mayor Sheila Stein. Both committees have been much needed additions to Village government. The Citizens' Advisory Committee, with two members from every election district, has become the eyes and ears of our community and helped the Trustees be ahead of the curve on many issues.

Our Cabin Committee is a cross section of cabin neighbors and Village residents and the Trustees placed our confidence in their recommendations for the property going forward. They will have a final report in the coming weeks.

As your representatives, the Trustees and I have received many letters from politicians and citizen groups questioning the need for and size of government at the County level. I would like to hear your thoughts on this topic, so please feel free to call or e-mail at bronxvillemayor@optonline.net. By way of information, the Village's portion of the County property tax bill is approximately \$8 million yearly.

Finally, we received word that former Bronxville Mayor Bert Hugill turned 100 at his home in California. Bert was Mayor from 1959 to 1965 and served as a Trustee for five years prior. One of his proudest accomplishments was assisting in settling a strike at Lawrence Hospital. Perhaps Bert's milestone demonstrates that public service prolongs life!