

Rocky Hill Civic Association Bulletin

..... proudly serving the community for over eighty years

"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it." -Mahatma Gandhi

April 2008 Bulletin

Rocky Hill Civic Association (RHCA)

Feel free to email, phone or send your suggestions, updates and questions to:

88-19 Billings Street
Bellerose Manor, NY
11427-2646

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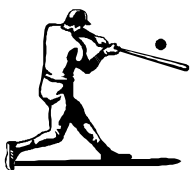
President Emeritus

Bernard Aquilino

Web site and Bulletin

Lynn Lodato

The Fiddler's Inn is under new management and now called **Rollin' Green**



"The true harbinger of spring is not crocuses or swallows returning to Capistrano, but the sound of the bat on the ball."

-Bill Veeck

April 8, 2008 Membership Meeting Agenda Tuesday Evening Meetings Start at 7:30pm



Membership Meetings Are Held in PS 18,
Located on 235th Court, directly off from Hillside Avenue

• Guest Speaker: Inspector Paul Piekarski, 105th Precinct

Inspector **Paul H. Piekarski** is in command of the 105th Precinct. He is known for keeping crime low and improving community relations. We are looking forward to meeting him and discussing local issues at this meeting.

• Distribution of Free Warning Signs for Dues Paying Members

Warning signs for your window or lawn for use in connection with the "Lawn Litter" Bill will again be distributed at the April Meeting. Residents on the north side of Hillside Ave. can call 718-465-4845.

Rocky Hill Civic Association: 80th Anniversary Celebration

A great time was had at Koenig's Restaurant by all who attended the wonderful celebration of our 80th anniversary. RHCA members were joined by other civic organizations and community organizations, as well as **Senator Padavan**, in an afternoon of good food, music, great company and lively dancing. Proclamations honoring the Rocky Hill Civic Association's many achievements were presented by **Senator Padavan** (see photo below) and were received from **Assemblymember Mark Weprin**.



We heartily thank **Bob Friedrich** for his lovely gift of flowers that many of us took home to replant. A highlight of the event was the presentation of Commemorative Carrying Cases to the **Block Captains** (photo below).



Special thanks to our Vice President **Linda Gritsch** who put so much time and effort into organizing this event and arranging the displays. And thanks also to all the **Board Members** who helped support the event.



A Message From Your President, Frank Toner

Please read the following reprint of the "History of the Rocky Hill Civic Association," which was created for the 80th Anniversary Journal. It is a testament to all of the fine work that has been done over the years to create and maintain our beautiful community.

A History of the Rocky Hill Civic Association (RHCA) Bellerose Manor, Queens New York - 1927-2008

In 1927, a small and dedicated group of local homeowners formed the Rocky Hill Civic Association. It was named after Rocky Hill Road, now known as Springfield Boulevard. The Association became incorporated in 1946.

In the late 1800's, this area was known as the rich man's playground, where the Astor and Vanderbilt families built their homes and entertained. Today, we ride our bikes and walk over the Motor or Vanderbilt Parkway, adjacent to Alley Pond Park. Opened in 1908, it was meant to be used for the renowned Vanderbilt Auto Cup Race. Naturally, the location became quite desirable and the founders knew development would be rapid. In the early years, there were problems with water, sewers, lights, taxes, garbage disposal, street paving and transportation. The Civic Association addressed these issues and has continued to do so throughout its existence.

In the 1950's, the Association won an aggressive campaign to create a local high school and the result was the building of Martin Van Buren High School in 1955. The impressive High School building takes up an entire city block and was designed by the famous architects Eggers and Higgins, who were also the architects for the Thomas Jefferson Memorial. Due to the construction, Hillside Avenue would flood after heavy rainfalls. The Association successfully lobbied to have sewers built and eliminated the problem for the entire area. Also during the 1950's, our Civic worked hard for the expansion of the local elementary school, PS 33. The outcome of this effort was the creation of PS 18, an entirely new school for the neighborhood. Another major victory during this time period was preventing the building of a bus garage on Winchester Boulevard and Hillside Avenue.

A significant victory that directly impacted every family in the community, was the Association being instrumental in eliminating assessments for public improvements and having the City Charter amended, making these payments part of the capital budget.

In the 1960's, the Association vigorously fought for and gained important zoning changes, having the north side of Hillside Avenue zoned for one family homes and the south side zoned for one and two family homes.

In 1977, the RHCA successfully worked to have the Post Office designate the area as Bellerose Manor, which appears on the original deeds of many homeowners. Also in this decade, the Association wisely and forcefully opposed the City from closing PS 18. The Civic was successful and PS 18 is still open to the neighborhood. The Rocky Hill Civic Association and its members consider providing a first-rate and accessible education to its neighborhood children, fundamental and critical issues for the community.

The dominant facility in the community has always been the Creedmoor Psychiatric Care Facility. In the 1970's, when its inpatient population had dwindled, New York City and other entities sought its land for various uses. A Men's Shelter was placed on the Creedmoor grounds in the 1980's and was also removed in the 1980's during the Koch administration. The Association fought to remove it due to its adverse effect on the neighborhood and supported the idea to replace it with the Rose House, later called "The Institute for Community Living." Rose House is a facility for mentally challenged adults. In the 1980's, our organization successfully fought the establishment of a New York City sanitation garage on the Creedmoor

⇒ A History of the Rocky Hill Civic Association Continued..

property. It also supported excellent uses of the property such as the placement of a S.N.A.P. Center for seniors and the establishment of the Father Richard Reder Senior Apartments in the 1990's.

Rocky Hill Civic Association has proudly supported many fine local organizations, including the following groups: HBQVB Little League, SNAP, the Local Volunteer Ambulance Corp. and a Youth League.

Today, the RHCA continues to work towards enhancing the quality of life for the over 1,000 households that comprise this Civic Association's neighborhood. This includes the area from Braddock Avenue to Union Turnpike (in the north) and from Stronghurst Avenue to Winchester Boulevard.

The Association has a vital and active Board and conducts 8 general Membership Meetings a year with interesting and informative guest speakers. It distributes, with the help of volunteer Block Captains, a monthly Bulletin and provides both a useful and interesting web site: www.rockyhillcivicassociation.com.

As new issues arise and our community develops, the Rocky Hill Civic Association persistently adjusts to the demands of maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for its members. RHCA continues to address issues and concerns that influence home values and neighborhood safety, such as graffiti removal, installing street lights, upgrading the condition of Winchester Blvd., noting, reporting and following up on building violations, campaigning against adverse zoning rules and fighting crime. It also actively promotes civic activism and voter participation.

In recent years, the Rocky Hill Civic Association has formed alliances with our neighboring civic organizations and joined the Queens Civic Congress. By forming these alliances, and also encouraging diversified member and neighborhood participation in the process, our Association becomes better equipped to meet new challenges and best serve the needs of our community.

⇒ Member Updates



Congratulations to **Rudy and Emy Manalac** of Range Street on the birth of their first grandchild, **Rianna**. Their grandchild was born on January 27, 2008. Rianna's parents are **Rhoderick and Louisa Manalac**, who are presently residing in Los Angeles, California.

⇒ Community News

Electronics Recycling and Clothing Donations: Saturday, May 3, 2008

Electronics Recycling and Clothing Donations will be accepted on **Saturday May 3**, at **St John's University Alumni Hall Parking Lot** (corner of Utopia Parkway and Union Turnpike). Cars enter at Gate 4 on Union Turnpike and 175 Street. For more information call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/nycwasteless.

Rocky Hill Civic Association, Inc. - Annual \$5.00 Dues Drive Receipt for 2008

Name: Email:

Address: Phone:

Please make your check payable to the **Rocky Hill Civic Association** and mail it with this coupon to:
RHCA Attn: Margaret Toner 88-19 Billings Street Bellerose Manor, New York 11427-2646