

## **MAYOR'S COLUMN**

This Thanksgiving weekend I had the privilege of representing the Village at two events which served to reinforce what a special place we call home.

On Thursday, I attended the interdenominational Thanksgiving service at St. Joseph's Church. Clergy from every church in the Village participated in an extraordinary ecumenical service of thanks that was one of the most moving I have ever attended.

Saturday, I officially opened the second annual Katie Welling Run. Over 450 runners, double last year's participation, turned out to honor the memory of our Village resident and support the Bronxville School Foundation.

Both events reaffirmed that kindness, friendship and love for community is alive and thriving in our Village.

As we continue to enjoy the holiday season in the Village, kindly remember our merchants who are there for us and generous to every cause in the Village throughout the year. Without them, Bronxville wouldn't be Bronxville.

On this coming Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, the Chamber will sponsor a special "Light Up The Town" complete with Santa and his elves and a tree lighting at day's end on Park Place.

Until year's end, the Trustees and I will be focusing on a variety of initiatives and bringing to a close many projects we began in 2008.

Metro North – We had a very productive meeting with Metro North officials dealing with vibration, noise and whistle blowing. Representatives will respond to our questions and concerns in the next two to three weeks. We promise to pursue these issues until we get some level of remediation.

Tree Donation Project – Thanks to the generous donations from Villagers to our new Tree Program, the Village planted five sizable street trees in the past weeks and we will continue to plant in our public spaces.

Flood Mitigation – We continue to work on flood mitigation at all levels. Village and School officials met with County officials to discuss the viability of the major mitigation ideas for the school area proposed by our consultants. We also met with Garden Avenue residents to discuss what we

can jointly do to alleviate their localized flooding issues. We completed all the necessary paperwork and applied to the County for mitigation grants for our various projects large and small. We have finished cleaning 90% of the pipes leading from the tennis courts through the school property and down to the Bronx River. A fair amount of silt and residue was discovered so we are confident the clean pipes will perform better in future rain events.

Village Bond Sale – We had a very successful sale of serial bonds in the amount of \$4.8 million to finance capital projects undertaken in the past four years. By converting from bond anticipation notes into longer term financing, we saved \$300,000 in this year's budget alone.

We continue to have our Aa1 bond rating even in this difficult time. Moody's gave us this high rating due to our healthy reserves, our fund balance and our very low direct debt burden of 0.4% of valuation, so we received a very favorable interest rate of 3.95%. This is all thanks to our Treasurer, Bob Fels, and our very capable Finance Committee who budgeted very conservatively this year.

Additional Parking – We are in the process of notifying commuters to move their cars to the Avalon parking lot on the New York City bound side of the train station for over-flow parking instead of using metered spaces in the Kraft lot. This will free up spaces in the Kraft lot for customer parking during the holiday season. We also began discussions with the Chamber on ways to effectively end the meter feeding on Pondfield Road and Park Place which results in decreased parking for patrons of our stores.

Sidewalk Maintenance – Recently, Village Hall has received complaints about the condition of sidewalks in the Village. The condition and maintenance of the sidewalks, both structurally and during storm events, are the responsibility of the individual homeowner or store owner. This is the norm in most towns and villages. We are able to issue violations for unsafe conditions when brought to the attention of our Public Works Department.

Finally, on a very sad note, one of our former mayors, George Shively, passed away on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. George was a graduate of Yale College and Harvard Law School. He was Mayor from 1967 to 1969. We send our condolences to his wife, Cynthia, and his 4 children and grandchildren, who continue to live in and stay so very involved in the Village.

Also, Stephanie Harrington, who covered Village government for our local newspaper and our new on-line paper, died on November 16<sup>th</sup>. We extend

our sympathies to her two sons and we will genuinely miss her presence at our monthly Trustees' meetings.