

MAYOR MARVIN'S COLUMN

As the summer approaches, I want to remind residents of procedures/regulations that are seasonal in nature. Our ban on the use of gas powered leaf blowers took effect on June 1st and continues until September 30th. Call the police desk to report any violators. We also ask that you bag grass clippings this summer. We can pick them up much more frequently, preventing the pungent piles that detract from the landscape. Twigs, yard waste and grass clippings can also be comingled if bags are used vs. our vacuum equipment.

If possible, most environmental experts suggest watering lawns once a day in early morning when evaporation is at its lowest, thus maximizing the effectiveness of the watering. Also, keeping grass at a higher than normal length (3") allows for a stronger turf which is the best weed control there is, thereby negating the need for pesticides which cling as poisons and chemicals to shoes, skin, pet hair and birds.

In the same vein of eco-stewardship, I am pleased to announce that our Village was second of all the 45 plus communities in Westchester County in the percentage of recycled tonnage. Bedford led the County but we followed at a 65% level. To put in perspective, the national average is 35%. Also on these hot days, it is helpful to remember that a fan uses 80% less energy than an air conditioner and the new fluorescent bulbs use 75% less electricity than the conventional ones and last ten times longer.

Summer is unfortunately also synonymous with tax season in Bronxville. Every resident should have received a bill last week. Taxes may be paid without penalty if they are received in person at Village Hall or postmarked no later than June 30th. In an effort to save time, money and paper, you will notice that on this bill the second half stub and return envelope has been included. Please save for the December payment. We will be sending out an e-alert as a reminder as the June 30th deadline draws near. Our e-alert system relays important and topical civic information and I urge all residents to sign up. Simply go to the Village website and add your e-mail address at the prompt. Several residents have called because despite 0% tax increases in both the School and Village budgets, their tax bill still reflected an increase. This is a result of the State of New York decreasing subsidies for the STAR exemption of approximately \$200 to \$300 depending on your particular exemption.

In an effort to keep up with the times, we were able to join a State of New York program which allows us to collect parking fines and violation fees with a Mastercard or Visa without paying the 2% to 3% transaction fee. The program only applies to fines and does not cover parking space rental or commuter buyout fees. A credit card can be used either in person at Village Hall or by downloading the form on the Village website and mailing it to the Parking Office.

We know that many residents would prefer to pay their property taxes with a credit card as well, but we have yet to find a program that absorbs the transaction fee. Without this, the Village would be losing a great deal of money if we shouldered the cost. As an example, on a tax bill of \$40,000 with a credit card fee of 3%, the Village would only be collecting \$38,800 on that bill, leading to large cumulative losses.

In an effort to constantly upgrade our services, we have had discussions with a parking management company to ensure that we are using what limited parking inventory we have in the most optimal way as well as reviewing whether the amount of time slotted on meters in various locations is really the most useful to the consumer.

With many residents traveling for extended periods of time in the coming weeks, it is important that your home still looks occupied. Even though you may have mail and newspapers held, Pennysavers, ads and phone books left at the door are a tell tale sign of an empty house. Tell a neighbor of your plans and ask them to pick up any items left at your home, and urge them to occasionally park in your driveway. An extra set of eyes monitoring your home is so helpful. Also, alert our police desk of your travels and we will add your home to our vacant house list and have an officer go by on a daily basis. You may also leave a key with our police department to be used only in an emergency situation. Also remember to lock windows as well as doors.

Bike thefts also unfortunately increase in the summer months, so be sure to always lock them and do not leave out in the yard.

Just this past week, a home burned in Harrison due to hot embers igniting the morning after a barbeque. Do not throw away charcoal until it is completely cooled and keep the barbeque and propane tanks a healthy distance from the house or garage.

And finally, since our young people will be out of school and playing more outside, please be careful when driving our narrow and curvy Village streets.

Thankfully, summers are traditionally very quiet in the Village, but increasing your attentiveness to your home and property is always a smart precautionary measure.