

Mayor's Column  
September 24, 2018

So much has been said of late about our county and not much has been positive vis a vis, federal and local tax implications, transportation issues and the high cost of goods and services.

But Westchester County, and Bronxville in particular, has so much to offer, rich in history and accomplishments.

The following is just a sampling of information about our home Village and County:

Bronxville Village

At the time of incorporation in 1898, Bronxville had 300 citizens.

We are now home to 3,358 female residents and 3,060 male.

With the exception of the Hasidic village of Kiryas Joel in Orange County, Bronxville is the only other community that is co-terminus with their school district.

Sixty percent of our residents live in single family homes vs forty percent in a combination of coops, condos and rentals.

The Village proper has over 70 acres of parkland.

However the largest park, Scout Field, is Westchester County property, 95% of which is in the cities of Mt. Vernon and Yonkers. Hence, we are not allowed to patrol the property.

Alfredo Field near Siwanoy is Village property but almost wholly in the Town of Eastchester. (The original soil from the field was sold and trucked to Queens for the 1939 World's Fair.)

- Approximately 23% of Village parcels are tax exempt properties.
- The NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law sets the minimum speed for Villages at 30mph. It can only be lowered if a school zone or a documented history of multiple serious accidents.
- The Village has no county owned roads and only one State Road, Route 22. The Village cannot pave the state road which was also constructed with no drainage catch basins on the entire stretch through Bronxville.

## Westchester County

Some “firsts” in the County:

- The first chapter of the Garden Club of America was founded in Bedford in 1938.
- Yonkers resident Leo Baekland invented one of the world’s first plastics in 1907 and his company manufactured the glossy brightly colored plastics that defined the 50’s and 60’s.
- The first elevator was built in Yonkers by the Otis Company.
- Founded in 1888, Yonkers resident John Reid developed St. Andrews Golf Club in Hastings, the first US golf course. (It was even here in Westchester that the dubious tactic of hitting a second ball or Mulligan got its name.)
- The first self-made female millionaire was Irvington resident Madame J.C. Walker who built a beauty empire manufacturing products geared to African American consumers.
- The first parkway in America was our own Bronx River. The river itself was rerouted and our Village border changed to accommodate its construction in 1925.
- The Union Church in Pocantico Hills has nine Chagall windows commissioned by David Rockefeller. This is the only series of Chagalls in America.
- Paddle tennis was invented in Scarsdale in 1928 and first played there at the Fox Meadow Club.
- Tuckahoe Marble was once considered the finest in the Country being used to build St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the New York Public Library, the Federal Reserve Bank, the Washington Square Arch, the US Capitol and the Washington Monument. (Our President Kennedy commemorative plaque is adhered to a piece of Tuckahoe marble generously donated to us by our neighbors.)
- Glen Island Casino, now Glen Island Harbour Club, was the premier hone of the BigBand Era and launched the careers of Ozzie Nelson, Les Brown, The Dorsey Brothers and Glenn Miller.
- John Peter Zenger wrote an article about an Eastchester Town election that heavily criticized the New York governor. Litigation over the article led to the immortalization of freedom of the press in the Bill of Rights, hence the name

Bill of Rights Plaza at the intersection of Mill Road and Route 22 in Eastchester.

- First visited by Italian explorer Verrazano in 1524 and later by Henry Hudson in 1609, English settlers arrived in the 1640's and named the County after the English city of Chester.
- Covering 450 square miles and 45 municipalities, Westchester County is larger than 40 countries.
- Crain's rated Westchester County the slimmest, fittest, healthiest county in New York State due to the low rates of obesity, inactivity and diabetes.