

The Mayor's State of the Village Address

Continued from Page 1

public hearings and we hope and expect that the public will participate.

At the end of this process, we will have a streamlined, up-to-date, and consistent code that will be easier for everyone to understand and follow. It will embody a vision of how Rockville Centre should look and how it should be developed that we can all be proud of. The code will be available online and in a new, easy-to-use printed format.

During the course of every year, we strive to improve the quality of life in our Village by delivering our core services reliably, by aggressively maintaining our infrastructure, and by adding facilities when the opportunity arises. We repaved another mile and a half of roadways in 2002 and we also began work on a major construction project.

The 50-acres of parkland we recently acquired from New York State is right now becoming the North Park sports complex. The project will be completed this year, adding premier soccer, lacrosse, and ball fields to the Village's recreational facilities.

And, finally, I must list among the outstanding accomplishments of 2002 the service performed by the volunteers of the We Care RVC Committee in planning and constructing the new 9/11 Memorial that now graces the Rockville Centre Village Green.

In my 16 years as Mayor, I have never felt more passionate in my desire to thank all those who came forward in the days and months following the tragedy of September 11, 2001 to assist members of our community who lost loved ones that day. And now those volunteers have added a permanent gift to the community: a monument and a memorial area that will forever provide us with a place for reflecting on that terrible day as well as a place to be inspired by the strength and generosity of our community.

Budget Challenges in 2003

Even with all our accomplishments, our future is not trouble-free. The general economic downturn affects governments and municipalities as well as individuals and businesses.

The drop in interest rates means that the revenue that comes to the Vil-

lage from funds in interest-bearing accounts has declined. Even more challenging for the Village budget is the effect of the stock market decline. We are required to pay premiums into the state retirement system and those premiums will continue to rise because they are the only way for the state to make up for those stock market losses.

We are also experiencing steep increases in health insurance costs through the state Empire Plan. In 2003, for the sixth year in a row, we will have to budget for a double-digit rate increase. Our health insurance costs are now fully 9 percent of the Village budget.

And we are also being required to make new payments to run our electric utility. The ISO, the Independent System Operator that took over the electrical power market in the state after deregulation, is now charging us \$1.5 million a year in new administrative and "capacity" costs we have never had to pay before.

The Rockville Centre Village government will be working hard this year to overcome these financial difficulties, but everyone will be affected.

On the new electric expenses, we are working on the state level with the Municipal Electric Utilities Association to contain the costs imposed by the ISO; we are working on the federal level with the American Public Power Association to maintain local control of this impor-

tant Village asset. We have also commissioned a comprehensive study of our electric system to determine the expected growth in our demand for power, and to understand our options for the future.

On the Village budget, I will continue to work through the New York Conference of Mayors, an organization that I will lead as president this spring, to contain state-imposed costs to villages and towns like Rockville Centre and to recover more of the tax money that leaves our Village and goes to Albany.

We will continue, as we have in the past, to present a balanced budget that reflects only the actual cost increases we are facing, while maintaining our infrastructure as well as our financial stability.

As we face our budget difficulties, we pledge to see that our residents and our business districts continue to benefit from our solid financial practices and our efficient operations.

Senator Dean Skelos, the New York State Deputy Majority Leader, has been our top ally in Albany and has assisted us financially in many of our Village projects, particularly the North Park sports complex.

I want to thank the Trustees for their continuing cooperation and I pledge to you as Mayor that I intend to keep Rockville Centre a desirable community to live in and raise a family.



This Month In Rockville Centre

One College Place, P.O. Box 950
Rockville Centre, New York 11571

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Dates & Events

Wednesday, February 5, 8 P.M.

BOARD OF APPEALS

Monday, February 10, 8:15 P.M.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Monday, February 17

PRESIDENTS DAY

Village Offices Closed

Wednesday, February 26, 8 P.M.

BOARD OF APPEALS

NOTE:

Videotapes of Board of Trustees meetings are broadcast on Cable Channel 76 on Wednesdays (8:15 p.m.) and Saturdays (1:30 p.m.) following each meeting.

Events are at Village Hall unless otherwise noted.

For general information:

Call 678-9300

Emergency Numbers

Fire **911**

Police **911**

Ambulance **911**

Electric 766-5800

Water 678-9252

Nights & Weekends
766-5800

Internet Address

www.ci.rockville-centre.ny.us

Printed on Recycled Paper

This Month In Rockville Centre

FEBRUARY, 2003

VOL. 52, NO. 1

The State of the Village

By Mayor Eugene J. Murray

The Village of Rockville Centre continues to be one of the best communities anywhere to live and raise a family. We enjoy a range and a quality of services second to none and we are constantly improving and upgrading them.

Our independent auditor has once again given Rockville Centre the highest rating possible for our finan-

cial condition; we have received yet another award for excellence in our financial reporting; and both Moody's Investor Services and Standard & Poor's have again assigned very high ratings to Rockville Centre's bonds.

Part of the reason for our outstanding reputation is that we are one of the

few municipalities in the region with our own high-quality and low-cost water and power. Businesses and residents alike benefit from the quick, reliable service and the low, stable rates provided by Rockville Centre utilities.

Our water rates have not increased since 1996; our electric rates have stayed the same since 1994. And we have maintained these low rates at the same time that we have improved our infrastructure, adding an iron filtration plant to our water system in 2001 and adding a third electric transmission line in 2002.

Many of these accomplishments occurred while the Village government was undertaking a very thorough, eight-month search to find a new Village Administrator, the key manager responsible for all Village operations.

In September we appointed Ron Wasson, a Village resident and former head of the Emergency Services Unit of the New York City Police Department to this important job.

During a 22-year career, Mr. Wasson was credited with reducing crime in some of the City's busiest precincts. In 2001, he was in command of the ESU during

the 9/11 tragedy. We are very glad to have a man of his abilities and experience running our Village.

Again last year Rockville Centre had a crime rate at 30-year lows. And we have added an enhanced 911 emergency system to our fire and police protection and to our ambulance service, streamlining and

simplifying emergency response.

In addition, we are reorganizing the department into 12-hour tours, providing a much more efficient use of our officers. The new system will enhance our already quick response time, will reduce overtime expenses, and will add flexibility to our training programs. We are aiming to have the best-trained small department in the state.

The Board of Trustees is also moving ahead with its comprehensive revision of the Zoning Code. This is only the second time since 1924, when the Code was first adopted, that there has been such a comprehensive review. This has been a long and complicated process and we are presenting our proposals to the public in phases. Each phase will have



Mayor Eugene Murray delivers his State of the Village address at the January 13 Village Board of Trustees meeting.

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Village Hall Comments

By Trustee Gregory F. Rinn



The Spirit of Rockville Centre

During my term as Village Trustee, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to meet and interact with a broad spectrum of residents in the course of various civic, religious, education, and recreation activities.

From infants and toddlers to retirees, I have met so many people: at the annual Ragamuffin Parade, at Breakfast with Santa's Helpers, at the South Side Middle School SADD walk, at our magnificent Public Library's 40th Anniversary, at the 9/11 Memorial dedication and service, at the Menorah lightings at our synagogues, at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. tributes, at the St. Agnes blood drives, at the American Legion services for our fallen veterans, at the numerous Guild for the Arts events, at parades and dinners sponsored by our sports organizations, and at the celebrations of our seniors by FOSSI, to name just a few.

Each of these events and occasions gave me insight into the make-up and core values of our community. Our residents are a diverse group of individuals who are well-informed, inde-



Trustee Greg Rinn at the community Chanukah party.

pendent, family-oriented, sensitive and caring, and they have tremendous pride in our community.

From the seventh graders who wanted to know how the trustees' "growing-up experiences" affected Village government, to the enthusiastic participants at the Holy Trinity Oktoberfest and at the St. Patrick's Parade who told me how much they love Rockville Centre and want their children to grow up and live here, each and every one has helped me to see the direction our Village should be headed in. We all want the Village to move ahead, both technologically and socially, into the 21st Century while maintaining our character and charm.

I feel the greatest challenge for a trustee is staying "tuned in" to all the segments of our community. Because of the independence and diverse nature of our residents, that is a difficult task. But I will continue to try to seek out and listen to all the ideas, desires, and needs expressed by our citizens and to blend them together to retain and nurture the spirit of Rockville Centre.

Time to Submit 'No Solicitation' Requests

Residents wishing to avoid door-to-door solicitors can take advantage of a Rockville Centre local law which establishes a "no solicitation" list. At the present time, you must renew your request annually.

To be included on the list, fill out the coupon and drop it off at Village Hall or mail it to P.O. Box 950, Rockville Centre, NY 11571. You may also e-mail your information to rvc@li.net.

All solicitors asking for money or contributions must register with the Village and are required to display

identification which indicates that a permit has been issued. Solicitors are given a copy of the no solicitation list with their permit.

If you are on the list and are solic-

This Month In Rockville Centre

Published by the Village of Rockville Centre
Eugene J. Murray, Mayor

Trustees
Mary Whalen Bossart
Wayne H. Lipton
John A. Matthews, Jr.
Gregory F. Rinn

For information concerning Village facilities, residents are invited to telephone Ron Wasson, Village Administrator, Clerk-Treasurer, 678-9300

Community News

General Election June 17

The Incorporated Village of Rockville Centre will hold a general Village election on Tuesday, June 17, 2003 for the following offices: mayor, two trustees, and Village justice, all for four-year terms.

Absentee Ballots Available

The Village will accept applications for absentee ballots for the June 17 general election beginning Tuesday, February 18.

Any registered voter who will be away from Rockville Centre at the time of the election or who is unable to leave home because of illness is eligible to vote by absentee ballot.

Save Old Glory!

The RVC American Legion has a drop-off location in the lobby at Village Hall, One College Place and Clinton Avenue, where residents may deposit worn out American flags between 8 A.M. and 4:30 P.M.

ited, the incident should be reported by calling 678-9224. Organizations violating the law are subject to penalties including, but not limited to, revocation of their permit.

NO SOLICITATION REQUEST

To: Village of Rockville Centre

Please add my name to the list of addresses that should not be solicited.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ Apt. _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

RVC Recreation Center News

Winter Recess Events

The Rockville Centre Recreation Center is sponsoring the following events during the Winter school recess:

Monday, February 17

Presidents' Day Relays for grades 1 & 2, from 10:30 A.M. to 12 Noon and grades 3 to 5, from 12 Noon to 1:30 P.M. No fee, but current Rec Card required; register by February 15.

Tuesday, February 18, 2:15-6 P.M.

Ice Skating Trip to the Long Beach Recreation Complex for grades 1 through 8. The \$10 fee includes skate rental and transportation.

Wednesday, February 19, 12:30-4:30 P.M.

Trip to Fun Zone in Farmingdale for grades 1 to 8. Fee of \$18 includes 35 game tokens, unlimited rides, and transportation.

Thursday, February 20

February Craft Activity (and a little hot chocolate) for kindergarten and grade 1 and grades 2 to 4: from 10:30 - 11:45 A.M. or 12 Noon to 1:30 P.M. Fee \$7. Specify time when registering.

Thursday, February 20, 2 P.M.

Annual Cherry Pie Eating Contest for grades 1 to 6. Celebrate George Washington's Birthday by seeing if you can down cherry or apple pie faster than other contestants in your age group. Register before Friday, February 15. Fee \$1.

Friday, February 21

Bowling at RVC Lanes Bumper Bowling for grades 1 & 2: 12 Noon to 2:30 P.M.; for grades 3 to 8, 12:30 to 3 P.M. Fee \$10.

All trip participants must be registered members of the RVC Parks and Recreation Department for the 2002-2003 year. To register, a parental permission slip and the appropriate fee must be submitted to the Rec Center office PRIOR to the day of the event.

Nursery School Registration

Registrations are now being accepted for the RVC Recreation Center's nursery school programs for the 2003 - 2004 school year.

Pre-K classes for those entering kindergarten in September 2004 are offered five days a week from 9 to 11:30 A.M. or



Register by February 15 for the annual pie-eating contest.

three days a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) from 12:15 to 2:45 P.M.

Pre-Pre-K for those entering kindergarten in September 2005 are offered four days a week (Monday through Thursday) from 9 to 11:30 A.M. or two days a week (Tuesday and Thursday) from 12:15 to 2:45 P.M.

To schedule an appointment to visit the school, call the Recreation Office at 678-9338.

February Events at the Senior Center

Special Events

Artist Charles L. Winslow, "The Thread Man" and founder of the L.I. Black Artists Association, will be honored at a reception on Tuesday, February 11 at 11 A.M. Examples of his internationally known style of thread art will be on display at the Sandel Center during Black History Month.

February Speakers

Karen Crovador and Jennifer Husser from Astoria Bank will discuss safe banking Tuesday, February 4 at 11 A.M. after the Men's Club 10 A.M. breakfast.

Joan Scully of the Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence will discuss elder abuse Tuesday, February 18 at 11 A.M. after the Men's Club 10 A.M. breakfast.



The annual Valentine's Day Party is Friday, February 15 at 1 P.M. \$2 per person.

Health and Wellness

Blood pressure screening Thursday, February 13 at 12:30 P.M.

Pre-register for a mammography screening on Tuesday, February 25 at 8:30 A.M. by calling 678-9245.

Arts and Leisure Activities

South Side High School students present a musical production on Sandel Sunday, February 2 from 2 to 4 P.M.

The monthly duplicate bridge games with Marie Fiorillo continue Sundays, February 9 and 23 beginning at 5 P.M. after a light dinner at 4. \$5 or \$7 per session. Register by calling 678-9245. A partner is not required.

Travel and Dining

A St. Patrick's Day fling is Friday, March 21 at Katie Daly's Irish restaurant, including live entertainment and dancing. \$24 per person.

An Italian Festival at Mt. Haven in the Poconos is Wednesday, April 30. Breakfast, luncheon, open bar, round trip transportation for \$58 per person.