

The Village Green

Newsletter of the Village of Pomona

March Newsletter 2015



From the Mayor's Desk

Dear Neighbors and Residents,

Mayor Yagel

I hope that this communication finds you and your family safe and warm, despite the harsh winter. With this in mind, I wanted to share with you some items regarding your Village:

Village Elections - Don't Forget to Vote!!!

President Franklin D. Roosevelt once stated that "Nobody will ever deprive the American people of the right to vote except the American people themselves and the only way they could do this is by not voting." Village elections will take place on **WEDNESDAY, March 18, 2015** from 6 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at **Pomona Village Hall**, 100 Ladentown Road, Pomona, NY.

Personnel Changes in Pomona Village Hall

In the fall of 2014, there were several resignations within our Village government. This included a Village Trustee, Clerk, and Treasurer. And when an opportunity for cost containment and improvements presents itself, most well-run entities, seize upon the opportunity for improvements. This we have done, without sacrificing the services that our residents have come to expect and require.

In November 2014, Frances Arsa Artha was appointed to fill the vacancies created by the resignations of the Village Clerk and Village Treasurer. A meticulously detailed individual, Fran comes to us with a background in business management and tax accounting, has a degree in accounting, and is in the process of fulfilling the requirements for Enrolled Agent status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Starting a new job is a daunting task; however, Fran is a quick study and has been working with one of our former appointees (Treasurer) to maintain consistency in our financial reporting and record keeping. We are all confident that based on her initial months with the Village, she will continue to be a vital and integral asset to our Village government.

In October 2014, Nicholas G. Wilson was appointed as Village Trustee. His appointment came as a result of the resignation of Rita Louie, who recently contracted to manage a large tenant coordination project in NYC and was "... *finding it nearly impossible to keep up with the daily regular chores, let alone also pay attention to Village business.*" Trustee Wilson has always strived to serve his community, both in the public and private sectors. In the public sector, he served for over 22 years with the NYC Police Department, having received training from the US Department of Homeland Security, FEMA, the NYS Emergency Management Office, and NYPD Intelligence Division. A retired Lieutenant in the Counter-Terrorism Patrol Services division, he now works in the private security sector. He has served on the Village of Pomona Zoning Board of Appeals, in addition to assisting the Recreation Committee with various child-friendly events. His love of both sports and community has led him to coach and referee as well. We are all looking forward to him continuing to serve the Village and it's residents.

Mayor Deputy Mayor
Brett Yagel Leon Harris

Trustees
Ian Banks
Alma Sanders Roman
Nicholas Wilson

In November 2013, Louis Zummo joined our staff as our part-time Building Inspector. He joined us at an interesting juncture in our Village history as both the Zoroastrian and Sri Ranganatha Temples (both mentioned herein) were embarking on major capital renovations projects. Mr. Zummo has completed all the required state certifications and is also a certified Code and Fire Inspector. While the Village does have another [primary] Code and Fire Marshall, Mr. Zummo is able to assist in Code and Fire Inspections. He approaches his job with respect, accuracy, and attention to detail to ensure full compliance and residential safety. He is able to utilize all the tools at his disposal in order to complete his analysis and in special instances, has brought-in experts from the NYS State Buildings and Codes department.

Tartikov

Briefly, in July 2007, the Congregation Rabbinical College of Tartikov Inc. filed suit against the Village and its elected Trustees in U.S. Federal Court claiming violations of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA), Fair Housing, and complaints that our local laws were discriminatory. Rather than the Plaintiffs submitting an application, which all property owners must do for any proposed development, the Plaintiffs (Tartikov) instead started a lawsuit in Federal Court. Depositions (sworn statements) of Defendants (the Village and its elected/appointed officials) and the Plaintiffs were scheduled and held during the summer of 2014. More the 40 people were deposed on both sides, including former and current Village officials, the Village Attorney, and others. Here is where we stand now:

- Once depositions were concluded, our attorneys were able to make a motion for Summary Judgment to the Court. What this means is that we must prove to the Court that there is no material fact in dispute and that based upon the law, Tartikov's lawsuit against us should be dismissed. Memoranda of law supporting the Village's position were submitted. Hundreds of pages of exhibits and affidavits were produced. What we have shown to the Court, and what our Village community already knew, is that despite the allegations raised by Plaintiffs (Tartikov), the Village and its officials never engaged in discriminatory acts against anyone and that our laws are applicable to all, are facially neutral, and that Plaintiffs (Tartikov) have produced no facts to support their claims against the Village.
- At the same time, our attorneys are responding to Plaintiff's motion for Summary Judgment, which also involves Memoranda of Law, affidavits, factual statements and exhibits.

There is no question that the costs associated with this litigation have been exponential and unfortunately, our taxes will more than likely rise again (at least in the short-term). Fortunately, through surplus, we have been able to mitigate a large portion of the costs associated with our legal expenses, by amassing a surplus that was utilized to defray the costs so the impact would be less severe.

The Walmart Project, aka Minisceongo Park Project

Over the past several years, the Village filed suit against the Town of Haverstraw, Town of Ramapo, and Mt Ivy Partners, LLC (the developer of the proposed 'Walmart' Shopping Center) regarding the proposed development across from David's Bagels and the Mt Ivy Gulf Station. Environmental issues, traffic, procedural illegalities, amendments to town law for a specific developer, proposed use, self-created hardships, violation of town scenic law, as well as community character are but some of the issues that we raised. In fact, our points are so good, that one of the respondents (defendants) being sued has utilized these same points in another lawsuit with another adjoining municipality. Sometimes it's smaller government that sees the larger picture. And while tax ratables help to achieve the overall municipal goal at providing services while oversetting those costs, it must be balanced. Such is not the case here. We are still awaiting a court decision.

Patrick Farm

Water. Clean water. Vital to our very existence. Something that comprises up to 65% of the adult human body. And something that needs to be protected for our continued survival.

Recently, the Village of Pomona supported a petition submitted by ROSA to the NYS DEC to take jurisdiction over an additional 14+ acres of contiguous wetlands on the Patrick Farm. This has been a long-fought fight, and while we have known for many years that these wetlands existed, it was only through the continued efforts of ROSA and the Village, that these wetlands were identified. The Village supports the protection of these vital wetlands which are of unique and intrinsic value, which are necessary to help prevent flooding, protect wildlife, reduce water pollution as well as protect the health, safety and welfare of Pomona residents.

Taxes

Over the past three years most Village residents have seen a flat tax, a decrease, and then an increase in their Village taxes. And while cost containment is an ever present presence in every decision, safety, service levels, infrastructure improvements, the protection of our environment and quality of life, continue to be a priority of this administration. The Village budgets that were approved provided a solid foundation for achieving these results, while being cognizant of the current economic conditions, and being respectful of our fellow Village residents. However, as previously noted, our taxes will more than likely (and unfortunately) rise somewhat this year. We are anticipating that this is a short-term occurrence. However, be aware that there have been and will continue to be improvements made that will be seen by Village residents.

Capital Improvements in the Village

Over the past year, you have seen a number of improvements around the Village. These have included:

- Tennis Courts at van den Hende Park (off Beaver Dam Road)
- Fairty Pond at Secor Park (clean-up and gravel path restoration)
- Burgess Meredith Park (equipment rehabilitation, clean-up, and gravel path restoration)
- General clean-up of Village right-of-ways
- Back-up generator at Village Hall
- New fencing at Village Hall and
- Our new Welcome to the Village of Pomona signs.

In the coming months, a significant re-investment in our shared infrastructure is being explored. This will potential include exploring and securing bonds to repave our roads, as the price of oil, a primary component of asphalt, is at an all-time low. Additionally, I have reached out to our County, State, and Federally elected representatives to provide the Village with assistance regarding the roads on the top of the mountain in Pomona. For those who are unaware, since the Winter of 2007-2008, through a series of yearly Emergency Declarations, the Village of Pomona has incurred costs related to pre-storm, during, and post-storm related activities on these undedicated roads. This is to ensure ingress not only for Village residents residing on these streets, but Rockland County Emergency Services, and other State/Federal agencies, should accessibility to a Primary Component located on Cheesecote Mountain be required during either a County, Regional, State or National emergency.

Tennis Anyone?

– Village Tennis Courts – van den Hende Park (Beaver Dam Road)

For those of you who might be unaware, our Village has four (4) parks (both Passive and Non-Passive). In one of the non-passive parks, van den Hende, the Village has two (2) beautifully resurfaced tennis courts which can be enjoyed by Village residents and their guests. Constructed with top quality material and painted in US Open Blue and White, these courts are a true gem. To ensure that only Village Residents are utilizing these courts, you will need to come to Village Hall to obtain a key for the courts (deposit required). Besides this continued wonderful asset to our Village, an additional bonus is that the vast majority of monies utilized to refurbish these courts were paid for by entities other than the Village taxpayers (i.e., monies paid by Developers that were designated 'Monies in Lieu of Land') for large developments.

Fabric of Our Village Community – Staying in Pomona

Since March 2001, the Darbe Mahre Zoroastrian Temple (DMZT) congregation has called the Village of Pomona home. Located on the site of the former Pomona Jewish Center (circa 1967) on Pomona Road, the DZMT congregation determined several years back that an aging facility would neither deter them from calling the Village home nor deter them from practicing their faith's tenets of "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds." And so, in March 2014, after many years of planning and fundraising, the DZMT Congregation, as well as the entire NY area Zoroastrian Community, and invited guests, celebrated with a groundbreaking ceremony for what will eventually be the New Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr temple. The beginnings of this new temple are now visible on Pomona Road



Photo – Tania Savayan/The Journal News

- Since 1998, the Sri Ranganatha Temple Congregation has *also* called the Village of Pomona home. Over the years, thousands of devotees have visited the temple and worshipped here. For the past several years, the Congregation has embarked (amongst other things) on several capital renovation projects including the modernization of public areas and upgrading and weather proofing the temple roof. Perhaps, the most visible of these projects, was the replacement and re-dedication of the golden dome, known as the Vimanam Tower on the temple's roof. Located on Ladentown Road, the Congregation has always offered, and continues to offer help to anyone who is in need of assistance. All one needs to do is call or stop by. And as always, you will be greeted with the familiar and welcoming 'Namaste' greeting (rough translation - ("The Spirit within me salutes the Spirit within you").



So, what makes the fabric of our Village community strong, brilliant, resilient, and vibrant? 1) When our quality of life is not diminished or stripped from us; 2) When we not only listen, but hear what our neighbors are saying; 3) When we form bonds through our Village events (education, cultural (Pomona Cultural Center), etc.) and get to know our neighbors as friends; 4) When we lead others in the protection of our natural resources by challenging irresponsible over development that affects the air and water we all need. 5) When we protect our past, like in the instances of Noel Fernandez having her family's property placed on the state and national register, Joni Anger's efforts with the Preservation of the Ladentown Church, Ellie Litman's efforts on Historic preservation committee, and Barbara Pollitt's efforts on the Heritage Herb Farm on the Burgess Meredith property. Quiet persistent leaders, like these, are amongst us. Please help and join in and continue to save our history and be a part of the Village's History. So please, enjoy your Pomona. Past and Present, and please consider helping out so that future generations can enjoy it as well.

With best regards,
Brett Yagel
Mayor – Village of Pomona

P.S. - We have many Village events planned for the upcoming seasons, including the Pomona Music Festival tentatively being scheduled for September 2015. To help assist us and defray costs, and to be the first to know, please sign-up through the 'Contact Us' on our Village website. In this manner, we can send out an email blast and information you of these events at no cost, or limited cost events.

I look forward to seeing you at one, or all, of these events.

People to People



In October 2014, emails blasts were distributed, the Village Kiosk updated, and Pomona Village Hall became the drop-off location for the *Pomona Supports People-to-People* food drive. After several weeks, however, nothing was dropped off. So the Pomona Supports People to People organizer (Lynn Parsons Yagel), made a suggestion to go to the source. And so, on the weekend before Thanksgiving, Mayor Yagel, his wife, daughter, Trustee Wilson, and several friends) stood outside Stop-N-Shop and collected enough food to fill the upstairs Village Board Meeting Room. It's amazing what our Village community achieved. Thank you!



Tuesday Night Yoga Classes

For those of you who would like to get back in shape, every Tuesday night (weather permitting), Yoga classes are held at Pomona Village Hall. The one hour class begins at 7:15 PM. All you have to do is bring a Yoga mat and wear comfortable clothes suitable for exercise. Classes are free for Village residents and based on space availability non-residents may join for \$10. Instructor: Charlese Randolph. Hope you can join us! Beginners welcome.

Coffee with the Mayor

In September, Mayor Yagel hosted a Coffee with the Mayor at Pomona Village Hall. This type of gathering affords residents the opportunity to sit with the Mayor in an informal setting. If you are unable to come and discuss your issues at a Village Meeting, or are unable to attend a Coffee with the Mayor, you can always send Mayor Yagel an email at brett.yagel@pomonavillage.com or call Village Hall and leave a message. The next coffee with the Mayor is scheduled for Sunday, March 22, 2015, at 9a.m. weather permitting.

Gran Fondo New York 2015 – Sunday May 17th

Gran Fondo New York offers riders a challenging 100 mile route with 8,000 feet of climbing, including a climb up Bear Mountain. The ride is in the style of European cyclosportive, which is not a race, but includes a number of timed climbs and prizes for the fastest cyclists. The 2015 Gran Fondo New York will be held on Sunday, May 17th 2015. As in past years, Gran Fondo NY cyclists will be passing through the Village between 9:30 am and 2:15 pm. Go out and cheer them on!

Calling all Volunteers

One of the key ingredients to our Village's success has always been the Volunteers who have assisted us with our various events, committees, and causes. Whether it be the Pomona Music Festival, the Children's Halloween party (a big Thank You this past year goes to: Patti Wilson, Kay Olive-Kelly, Mary Ann Fenton & Rory Wilson, Chelsea and Kathryn Yagel, Samantha and Sabrina Loughman, Bryan Garbutt, Nicholas, Patricia and Ava Wilson, Tjokorda Gde Arsa Artha, and Rhoda, Fiona and Maia Zingale), the annual Children's Fish-in (Jeff Rosen and Burt Singer), donating time, artistic talents or items (Martin Joffee), donating their professional services for heating and A/C at Village Hall (Jeff Rosen) or serving on one of our boards (i.e., Historical – Ellie Littman, Joni Anger, Suzanne Kernan, and Noel Fernandez), this helps to make us a better community. If I missed someone, my apologies. We are always seeking volunteers and suggestions in order to continue the tradition of making ours a better community.

Summer Outdoor (Children's Movies) – Suggestions Welcome

Over the past several years, Trustee Leon Harris has undertaken running the children's Summer Outdoor Movie events on the Great Lawn at Pomona Village Hall. Some past showings have included: Frozen, Secretariat, Major League, Up, Rio 2, and others. This is a free event for all. Village residents and guests usually bring lawn chairs and blankets. We are currently in the planning stages so please, send in your suggestions. Sign-up for emails alerts so that when the movies and dates are finalized, you'll be the first to know. Additionally suggestions can be sent to leon.harris@pomonavillage.com

Keep Rockland [and Pomona] Beautiful

From April through May, thousands of your friends and neighbors will be out to clean up and beautify Rockland during the Great American Cleanup. Join fellow local residents and other volunteers, in a county-wide effort with Keep Rockland Beautiful. If you are interested in participating for a few hours, or please send in an email to our Village Clerk, Fran Arsa Artha at fran.arsaartha@pomonavillage.com or call Pomona Village Hall at (845) 354-0545.

THE POMONA CULTURAL CENTER PRESENTS...

Winter 2015 ~ Art Exhibition

“Primordial Emergence”

February 8 – March 22, 2015

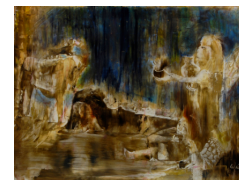
The Pomona Cultural Center is pleased to announce the Winter 2015 Art Exhibition, *Primordial Emergence*, featuring oil painting by Mark Weiss and sculpture by Cristina Biaggi.

Ancient myths and goddesses are the source of each artist's vision and inspiration; the depth and contour of lines translate into expressive details and abstract forms, visually comprehensible and imaginatively impressive to the eye. Exploring the way art communicates provides an opportunity to distinguish between subject matter and content of artistic stimulation, and the essence of artist's imagination. The ancient, mystical world transcends through the stunning work on canvas and paper by Mark Weiss and the subtle sculptural work by Cristina Biaggi. Together, they transform the human spirit and invoke the power of the mythological world.



The Opening Reception was Sunday, February 15, 2015.

There will be a Closing Reception on
Sunday, March 22 beginning at 3:00P.M.



Poetry and Music

The March Thaw Poetry Reading with Live Music by Ramapough Poet Society and Friends.
Sunday, March 8, 2015 at 3:00 P.M.

The Pomona Cultural Center is located in the historic stone Pig Knoll Schoolhouse at 584 Route 306, Pomona (just north of Pomona Rd.)

The Center highlights a diverse selection of fine artists and performers at its events. Renowned for its seasonal fine art exhibitions and multicultural experiences, the Center creates a welcoming environment and an eclectic offering for the local and surrounding communities.

All programs are sponsored by the Mayor Brett Yagel and The Board of Trustees of the Village of Pomona.

Gallery hours are Friday–Sunday, from 2:00 - 6:00 P.M.



March 2015

Visit the Village website at
www.pomonavillage.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Just Garbage	3 Yoga Village Hall 7:15–8:15 pm	4 Recycling Paper/Cardboard	5 Bulk Trash and Garbage	6 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00–6:00 pm	7 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00 – 6:00 pm
8 Winter Exhibition Poetry & Music 3pm PCC 2:00-6:00pm	9 Village Board Workshop Meeting Village Hall 7:30pm Just Garbage	10 Yoga Village Hall 7:15 – 8:15 pm	11 Recycling Bottles/Cans	12 Bulk Trash and Garbage	13 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00 – 6:00 pm	14 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00 – 6:00 pm
15 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00-6:00pm	16 Just Garbage	17 Yoga Village Hall 7:15 – 8:15 pm	18 VILLAGE ELECTION <i>Polls Open 6am – 9pm @ Village Hall</i>	19 Bulk Trash and Garbage	20 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00 – 6:00 pm	21 Winter Exhibition PCC 2:00 – 6:00 pm
22 Winter Exhibition Closing Reception Film, Poetry & Dance@ 3:00 pm PCC 2:00-6:00pm	23 Village Board Meeting Village Hall 7:30 Just Garbage	24 Yoga Village Hall 7:15 – 8:15 pm	25 Recycling Bottles/Cans	26 Bulk Trash and Garbage	27	28
29	30	31 Yoga Village Hall 7:15 – 8:15 pm				

Celebrate Spring!

Join us at the Pomona Cultural Center for a closing reception
 for the Winter Art Exhibition on March 22, 2015 @ 3:00 PM.

Featuring the works of Mark Weiss and Christina Biaggi...

... a poetry reading by Jessica Laser, a dance performance by Kristin Mangione,
 and a ten minute documentary film presentation by Emmy-nominated editor and
 filmmaker, Jen Finneran, featuring exhibiting artist Mark Weiss.

Garbage and Hazardous Waste:

Got Garbage?

Please remember garbage is picked up on Monday and Thursday but bulk trash is only picked up on Thursday. All garbage and bulk should be out by 6:30 a.m. because your pickup time cannot be guaranteed from week to week.

Recycling Reminders

Many residents seem to forget whether it's paper pickup day or bottles/cans/foil pickup day. An easy way to remember is that paper is ALWAYS the first and third Wednesday of the month, and bottles/cans/foil is ALWAYS the second and fourth Wednesday of the month. Whenever there is a fifth Wednesday during the month, there is no pickup on that day. This happens 4 more times in 2015 (April, July, September and December).

Hazardous Waste

There are many things that cannot be thrown into the regular garbage and are considered hazardous waste. Fortunately, here in Rockland, we have a place to dispose of these items. Paints, electronics, mercury thermometers, computers (all electronics), left-over medications, gasoline, antifreeze, old telephones and new type florescent bulbs are just a few of the things— for a complete list, see www.rocklandrecycles.com.

The location is Firemen's Memorial Drive just outside of the Village of Pomona. There are hundreds of additional items that they will take. During the week, you can drop off your items from 8 AM to 1 PM every Monday through Friday (except holidays). Saturdays: March 14, May 9, July 11, September 19 and November 7. Sundays: April 12, June 7, August 9, October 18 and December 6. (For a complete list of what is acceptable, call Village Hall at 354-0545 and ask for the green brochure 2015 Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off Facility.

And speaking of garbage - join the Recreation Committee on the third Sunday of every month for our POCUS group (Pomona Cleanup Squad). We meet at Village Hall at 10 a.m. and pick up trash on the side of the road to make our village a better, cleaner place!

Village Updates - Please Sign up!

Receive up-to-date village information as it becomes available. Submit your email address on our website (upper right corner where it says Contact) or send it to fran.arsaartha@pomonavillage.com. Your email address will NOT be given out or used for any other purpose. Please spread the word to neighbors. Note: Please include your home address because these notifications are only for Village residents.

Return Service Requested

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