The Park Hill Residents' Association

# The Park Hill Reporter

Volume 40, Issue 1 | Summer 2020

*Wisteria on Ridge Road*

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Park Hill is a richly diverse neighborhood -

In these difficult times the Park Hill Residents' Association
works to represent and support all the members of our community.
Our mission is to bring the community together
to celebrate our shared experiences and work together to build a better community.

**In that spirit we wish to thank all our essential workers!**

All of you who have gone to work so others could stay home and be safe.
Those in our community who are first responders—doctors, nurses, hospital staff,
EMS workers, firemen and police, who risked their lives daily to take care of others;
but also those who have kept us supplied with food, mail and much needed deliveries;
and those who picked up the trash and kept the city operating.

*Thank You!!!*

Your Kindness is Everything

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## Welcome, Captain Ralph Carozza!!

Greetings, members of the community from Captain Ralph Carozza, Commanding Officer, Third Precinct.

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I am Captain Ralph Carozza. I am the newly assigned Commanding Officer of the Third Precinct. I have been a member of the Yonkers Police Department for over twenty years. I spent my first six years here as a patrol officer in our Third Precinct and I am happy to be back. In 2015 I returned as the Executive Officer and worked with Captain Peter Butler. I would like to build on the relationships that we started then as well as create new ones that will better our community. In 2016 I was elevated to Detective Lieutenant and reassigned to the Internal Affairs Division, where for the past four years I've overseen investigations of alleged misconduct. Lieutenant Mulvey will remain as our Executive Officer. We both look forward to meeting everyone again once the community meetings start back up. I am available to you for all your precinct concerns.

Lastly, I would like to thank my predecessor, Captain Patrick McCormack, for the great work he did here. I hope to build on your collective accomplishments and continue to serve our residents here in our Third Precinct.

Best regards,
Captain Ralph Carozza

Captain Ralph Carozza
Commanding Officer
Third Precinct
City of Yonkers Police Department
914-377-7425
Ralph.carozza@ypd.yonkersny.gov

# Our Community Garden

The Park Hill Residents' Association supports three garden sites in the neighborhood: around the Park Hill sign on Rumsey Road; Sutherland Park on Overcliff Street, in partnership with the Friends of Sutherland Park; and the Travers Avenue Greenway—at the end of Wendover Road, in partnership with the Luther Burbank Garden Club.

Denise Cachoian organized volunteers to help clear and plant the area along the Travers Greenway. In March volunteers worked over the course of several days to clear away the various items that were dumped in the ravine. In May Denise asked the City of Yonkers to deliver topsoil and mulch. Volunteers planted hostas around each tree.

As spring and summer arrived, trees and flowers bloomed to remind us of the natural beauty of our community. ■

*Top: Joe Young-Sadowski, London Reyes, Denise Cachoian, Jenifer Young, Hettie Jordan-Vilanova. Bottom right: Lucy Vigilant-Smith and Denise Cachoian.*

# Grow Your Own Pollinator Garden

by Charlie Nardozzi

## Why Pollinators?

Most gardeners know that pollinating insects, birds, bats and other creatures have been on the decline for many years. This is a concerning problem because pollinators are vital to healthy ecosystems and our way of life. It's estimated more than one-third of the food we eat and 90% of the flowers blooming are dependent on pollinator activity.

While the Monarch butterfly and honey bee get most of the press attention, there are many other lesser noticed insects and creatures that pollinate plants. Bumble bees, mason bees, orchard bees, and squash bees are just some of the other native bees that pollinate flowers. Flies, such as hover flies, are also important pollinators. Hummingbirds, beetles and even bats will pollinate certain plants as well. So, protecting pollinators goes beyond honey bees and butterflies. Luckily, there are ways home gardeners can help.

### *What Pollinators Need*

Flowers are certainly important as pollinator food, but before I dive into those, let's talk about nesting, water and shelter for our pollinator friends.

Nesting sites are critical to pollinators. Many pollinators don't form hives like honey bees. In fact, some of the best pollinators, such as mason bees, are solitary insects that nest in pieces of wood or in the ground. That's why it's important to check the identity of your bees or flies coming out of the ground before reaching for the spray can. Leaving meadows or little mowed areas, brush piles, stumps, downed branches and logs in your

*photo by Holly Well at pixabay.com*

landscape help create some of the nesting sites and shelter pollinators need. Also, a mix of deciduous and evergreen shrubs and trees in an island is a great place for pollinators to hide while flying and feeding.

Water is critical to pollinators as well, especially in hot dry areas and areas experiencing drought. Having a bird bath or small pond on your property helps provide a water source. Even creating mud puddles helps. If you have clay soil, simply wet the soil in a protected low area periodically to create a mud puddle and leave it. You'll find butterflies and insects will gather on sunny days to drink the water and get the added benefit of the minerals in the soil. And, of course, limit the use of pesticides in your landscape to protect pollinators.

### *The Right Plants*

Ultimately, it's having the right plants in your landscape that will make a huge difference to the survival of pollinators. These include wild and cultivated plants. Some of the best pollen plants in spring, when pollinators are just emerging and are hungry, are plants we consider weeds. Dandelion, for example, is a great pollinator plant because of the abundance of flowers blooming in groups. Allowing white clover in lawns to flower by mowing

higher offers good pollen and nectar for pollinators. In summer, "weeds", such as milkweed and goldenrod, are important food sources for a variety of insects.

We can help pollinators by changing our gardening practices and growing pollinator friendly plants. Let's start with trees and shrubs. Most gardeners don't think of these are good pollinator plants, but native trees and shrubs are important. In my New England area, willows, black cherry, oaks, serviceberry, elderberries and dogwoods are important plants for insects, birds and beetles. While it's okay to have some exotic plants in your gardens, native plants are a better food source than exotic plants for pollinators.

### *The Best Flowers*

Gardeners love flowers and so do pollinators. The first rule when flower gardening for pollinators is to select pollinating plants that bloom at different times. Having something blooming from early spring until fall is essential. Start with primulas and spring flowering bulbs and keep the show going until asters, verbena and goldenrods are blooming.

The next important aspect is to have some heirloom varieties in your garden. Heirloom or open pollinated annual and perennial flowers have nectar and pollen that pollinators can identify and need. Hybrid flower selections are beautiful but may not help pollinators. Some, such as new echinacea like 'Hot Papaya', have been bred so they don't even resemble the original coneflower. Insects looking for food won't recognize this plant. Others, such as the 'Senorita Rosalita' cleome, have sterile seed and are not a good pollen source for insects. You can plant beautiful hybrids, just include some heirlooms for the bees and butterflies, too.

Plant your flowers in groups so they are easier to find for pollinators and remember specialty plants, such as butterfly weed (Ascelpias), are a food source for certain butterflies. Check local resources of lists of native flowers in your area.

It's not just what we plant, but how we garden that can help. In fall, cut back the foliage of the annuals and perennials, but leave the plants in the garden. The method of chopping and dropping the foliage provides areas for pollinators to overwinter. Of course, if you had heavily diseased plants, you should remove them. In early spring wait until you've had at least 4 to 5 days of 50F temperatures before you clean up the garden. Pollinating insects that did overwinter need time wake up in spring and move out of their winter homes around your plants and under leaves in the garden. In the vegetable garden, let some vegetables go to seed. We often let Florence fennel go to seed because it produces beautiful yellow umbels of flowers in late summer that the insects love.

Just by being a little more conscious of your plant choices, making sure you have something in bloom, especially early and late in the year and adjusting our gardening practices, we can create the habitat and food sources, no matter how small the yard, that are essential for pollinators. ■

*Charlie Nardozzi is an award winning, nationally recognized garden writer, speaker, radio, and television personality. He has worked for more than 30 years bringing expert gardening information to home gardeners through radio, television, talks, tours, on-line, and the printed page. Charlie delights in making gardening information simple, easy, fun and accessible to everyone. He's the author of 6 books, has three radio shows in New England and a TV show. He leads Garden Tours around the world and consults with organizations and companies about gardening programs. See more about him at Gardening With Charlie.*

*Article reprinted from The National Gardening Association Newsletter, June 19, 2020.*

# Our New City Councilwoman, Tasha Diaz

by Marilee Scheuneman

For those of you new to Yonkers, our city government operates under a strong mayor form of government with a Legislative branch comprised of a City Council President and six City Council members, all of whom are elected by the citizens of Yonkers.

Tasha Diaz was elected to serve beginning in 2020 as Councilwoman for the Third District, which covers most, but not all, of Park Hill. Ms. Diaz met with PHRA board members and a few Park Hill residents in the Spring to learn of our complaints regarding traffic issues on Park Hill Avenue. Another issue of great concern for Park Hill is the need for trash receptacles located throughout our neighborhood. She will work with us and the Department of Public Works to get this done.

Tasha Diaz serves all her constituents with warmth and compassion. To quote her, "I was born in Yonkers; I have lived here all my life. Not only that, I raised my kids here, and I believe firmly in our duty as a community to take an active part in our government." She is an energetic activist and community leader who has long been involved in supporting tenants' rights. During this Covid-19 pandemic, she has participated in food drives for those in need and has dropped off fresh produce to front line workers at St. John's Hospital. She is tech savvy with a presence on the Iinternet and Facebook. (I heard she fought to get cable installed at City Hall.) She is on top of things and in touch with us. We welcome her as our representative.

You can call her at 914-377-6313. John Rubbo, 914-377-6314, is Councilman for District 4, which covers a much smaller piece of Park Hill. Anthony Merante's District 6 also includes a small piece of Park Hill, 914-377-6316. In two years we will have the opportunity for redistricting, with the hopes of fitting all of Park Hill into one district. ■

## PARK HILL TAG SALE

**August 8 - 9**

**Maximum of 10 people at a sale at any time**

**Socially distancing at least 6 feet apart**

**Masks or face coverings required for everyone**

**Hand sanitizers must also be provided**

**Email buckleyjim@msn.com to get on the map.**

**The Park Hill Residents' Association Annual Meeting will be conducted via Zoom**

*Date and Time to be announced*

# Free Library

Lucy Vigilant-Smith believes in the importance and pleasure of books, and that they expand our horizons and build our knowledge. Thus arose her idea to offer a free library to her Park Hill community, just as she did with her young students at PS Nine in the Bronx.

Along with the help of PHRA Board members and her husband, Dwight, she assembled and mounted this free library at Glenbrook Avenue at the corner of Van Cortlandt Park Avenue. Sources for the books for all ages are from her collection, Book Fairies and her neighbors.

Here's how it works: take two books from the box, one for yourself and one to pass on to someone. Do not return the books. Happy Reading! ■

*Top: Neighborhood children and their parents using the Free Library.*
*Bottom: Marta Mercedes, left , Lucy Vigilant-Smith and Kathryn Buckley, center, assembling the library. Lucy, right, stocking the shelves.*

# What's Happening

**Outside Dining**

**Dia y Noche** 640 McLean Avenue, Monday-Friday 4 pm to 11 pm, Saturday & Sunday 12 pm to 2 am. Telephone 914-476-2786.

**DeCosta's** 400 Yonkers Avenue, closed on Monday, Tuesday-Thursday 11:30 am to 10 pm, Friday & Saturday 12 pm to 11 pm, Sunday 2 pm to 10 pm. Telephone 914-964-8887.

**Reconstruction of the stone wall** going up the hill on Van Cortlandt Park Avenue along the southern edge of Sutherland Park is continuing. The city crews have been working for weeks repointing and reconstructing the retaining walls.

As the redevelopment of the Phelps Dodge building moves forward at the corner of McLean and Van Cortlandt Park Avenue, the area and uses will change. The iconic Pizza Barn, with its red umbrellas will be gone and the car service garages will move to other locations. The traffic patterns will change with fewer cars going in and out of the garages and less double parking along the street.

*Van Cortlandt Avenue*

**The Yonkers Greenway** project will not go out for bids this summer as planned because the Covid-19 shutdown has delayed the Final Design Report (FDR). When finalized, the FDR will need to be reviewed and approved by the New York State Dept. of Transportation, which is funding a major part of the project via a grant. Once the FDR is approved, the consultants hired by the city of Yonkers can complete construction documents. The Yonkers planning office hopes that this can be completed in early 2021, then bids can be sent out and construction can begin in the spring.

The Greenway, initiated by the local Lawrence Avenue community and GroundWorks Hudson Valley, is now being managed by the city of Yonkers. The firm of Barton & Loguidice was hired to design and prepare construction documents.

The Greenway, which will begin in Van Cortlandt Park and end at the daylighting of the Saw Mill River in downtown Yonkers (Van Der Donck Park) will include a variety of public amenities from playgrounds and pocket parks, public art and murals, to bike lanes.

The southern section of the Greenway, which uses the old Putnam Railroad right-of-way, will include a paved path through a natural area. At the intersection of McLean Ave. and Van Cortlandt Park Ave., adjacent to Pelton and Sutherland Parks, the Greenway moves back along the street to join the bike lanes along South Broadway. ■

# Park Hill Residents' Association Annual Dues

Dear Neighbors,

We are living in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has upended our lives, as well as the economy, and it will be a long road to recovery. Having a strong Residents' Association allows us to strengthen our community. The Park Hill Residents' Association Membership Plan is tiered, allowing members the flexibility to donate varying amounts in support of the ssociation's activities in the community. It takes a lot of hearts, minds, hands, and resources to make our events and initiatives happen. Please join us, volunteer, get involved, and send in your dues today.

The support you provide by joining PHRA brings these important benefits to the community:

- A large membership gives Park Hill a stronger voice with the City
- Financial support mantains three Park Hill gardens
- Printing and mailing of the Park Hill Reporter and other notices
- Liability insurance for the Board and for public gatherings
- Maintenance of the PHRA website and other social media platforms
- Sponsoring and organizing events that bring the community together, including the Rumsey Road Christmas tree lighting, annual meeting, tag sale, and cleanup events
- Racquet Club rental for our PHRA events

This year the PHRA Board is working closely with our new councilperson, Tasha Diaz, to increase police presence and to address litter, speeding, parking, and safety. We will continue to publish the Park Hill Reporter and email you announcements on topics of interest. We respond to all individual inquiries and suggestions from our neighbors from our website (Parkhillyonkers.org).

Thank you for your support. We look forward to working with you over the coming year to help keep our community strong, safe, and resilient.

**Membership Form** (please check desired membership level)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Cell phone: _____

Email **(important)**: _____

☐ Member - $30 ☐ Friend - $50 ☐ Supporter - $75 ☐ Ambassador - $100

Enclosed is my payment for $_____. Please make checks payable to Park Hill Residents' Association and remit to: **Park Hill Residents Association, P.O. Box 59, Yonkers, NY 10705**.

Or you can pay quickly online by clicking the **Member Sign Up tab** at the top of the main page of our website at www.parkhillyonkers.org.

If you are interested in volunteering (board member, newsletter, cleanup), please check this box ☐ and someone will contact you.

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**A message to our customers**

All of us at David Allen Bath Shop and M. Fraitag Plumbing & Heating hope that all Park Hill residents are staying safe and healthy during these trying times. We want to assure you that we're here for all of your plumbing repair and enhancements needs, and that we've exercised the utmost care when implementing COVID-19 precautions. Please call to make your next appointment in your home or in our show room today.

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**Code Enforcement 366-6888**
**Parks Department 377-6425**
**Finance Department 377-6141**
**Website: yonkersny.gov**

## The Park Hill Reporter

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## The Yonkers Land Conservancy, Inc.

P.O. Box 8
Yonkers, NY 10705
www.YonkersLandConservancy.org

*Check the Park Hill website*
*for upcoming events*

**www.parkhillyonkers.org**