The Park Hill Residents' Association

The Park Hill Reporter

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Autumn splendor from the loggia in the lower terrace garden of Untermyer Park, Yonkers.

Photograph by Jessica Norman

Protect Our Trees

by Kathryn Buckley

In this time of changing weather patterns, the importance of trees cannot be overstated. Trees sequester and use CO2 during photosynthesis and emit oxygen as a by-product of the process. Trees intercept airborne particles, reduce smog and enhance a community's respiratory health. Neighborhoods well shaded with trees can be 6-10 degrees cooler than neighborhoods without trees, reducing overall energy costs. Three trees properly placed around a house can save up to 30% of energy use.

According to City of Yonkers arborist Ralph Padillo, there are important tasks that should be done at this time of year to protect the health of your trees.

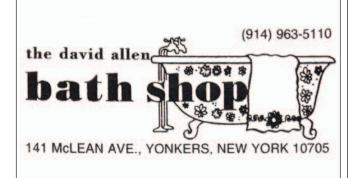
The removal of dead limbs is important as is performing due diligence in researching and selecting tree maintenance companies. Make sure that the tree company does not use spikes to ascend trees during its work. These spikes damage the tree's vascular system, which can lead to a progressive decline.

Fertilizing with nitrogen rich organic fertilizer and mulching around the base of the tree is most beneficial to a tree's health. Take care NOT to pile up the mulch against the base bark. Fresh wood chip mulch that includes green leaf matter is most nutritious for soil. Mulch should not be more that 5 inches deep to ensure adequate oxygen circulation during decomposition. The larger the tree, the larger the mulch ring should be, if possible.

Ralph would also like to bust a myth about tree health—NEVER thin the overstory of a tree in an effort to protect from wind. This actually weakens a tree. The more leaf mass a tree has, the better for the health of the tree, and a fuller tree is actually more helpful for wind dispersal. Reduction of limb length is a better option for reducing the size of a tree.

For more information and inspiration, go to: https://canopy.org/tree-info/benefits-of-trees/

Happy Fall!





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Call or email me to get my "Good News in Yonkers" e-mail newsletter about all the good things happening in Yonkers.

Protecting our Feathered Friends

by Shantell James

Our Park Hill neighborhood was developed by the American Real Estate Company over a century ago. When beautiful stately homes were built here, the great oak trees, steep terrain and dramatic stonework were preserved. Because of this consideration, we can observe a wonderful array of bird life. Cardinals, blue jays, woodpeckers, hawks, nuthatches, catbirds, sparrows, titmice and others inhabit our neighborhood.

But that is changing. Scientists warn that across the country we are experiencing a rapid decline in wild bird populations. Cutting healthy trees around our homes removes nesting and roosting places, while applying pesticides to our lawns can poison the birds, and planting exotic shrubbery does not provide them with their needed diet. We are witnessing the decline in the species of birds in Park Hill.

Birds offer natural pest control when they feast on mosquitoes and other bugs, saving us money otherwise spent on pesticides. Plant a native garden to attract birds and butterflies. Birds native to the area need seeds and plants that are also native. Keep some height in your lawn. Not only will you see birds

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and squirrels foraging, you will also cut down on the need to water your lawn. Instead of discarding fall leaves, you can push them to one side of the yard. Not only will they become fertilizer for your soil, they will also provide the birds with a source of food during the colder months.

Prospective homeowners in Park Hill are in awe of the majestic trees and the exposed bedrock throughout the neighborhood, yet one of the first repairs in the new home is often to cut down a tree. Why do this when trees provide shade in the summer, protection from the harsh winter winds, and prevention of soil erosion. Trees are also home to wildlife. Before cutting down a tree, you should consult an arborist, who will inspect your tree for disease. If it is perfectly healthy, hang up a bird feeder and watch the birds flock to your yard.

As we start to plan our gardens for next spring and summer, we can choose plants that will support our mini ecosystems. Here are some suggestions to help and sustain our feathered friends. Sparrows feast on blackberries and wild grasses. Cardinals thrive on sunflowers and elderberries. Crows and blue jays love acorns and beechnuts. Woodpeckers eat pine seeds, acorns and cherries. Butterflies swarm to milkweed.

Canaries were once used in coal mines to detect the levels of noxious gases that would harm the miners. If the bird became ill or died, the mine was evacuated. Is the decline of birds today likewise indicating something is wrong with our environment? Is it global warming and an increase in methane gas emissions or a lack of food supplies? Park Hill residents, let's do our part and care for the ecosystem we have been blessed to call our neighborhood.

Art by all-free-download.com

Hey, Why Is Pizza Barn Leaving?

by Kathryn Buckley

On the evening of October 16, Peter Cohn and I attended a meeting of the Planning Board at City Hall. We were there because of proposed changes to 60 McLean, also known as the Pizza Barn building, at the corner of McLean and Van Cortlandt Park Avenues. This news had raised concerns among members of the Residents' Association, the Friends of Sutherland Park and the South Broadway BID. That 114-year-old building and property are one of the major gateways to Park Hill and deserve our attention.

The current owner has the property up for sale and it is in a conditional contract contingent upon approvals from the city. The proposed plan calls for the building to have a single tenant: a storage facility called Life Storage. This company has many facilities nationwide, the nearest being on 399 Washington Street in Mount Vernon. As seen on Google Earth, the Mount Vernon facility is housed in a handsomely

landscaped red brick factory building that was built in the beginning of last century.

It is proposed that the entire facade of the existing McLean Avenue building be preserved with the brickwork cleaned, repointed, repainted and a 10 foot tall third story with a 10 foot setback added. This addition, as seen in the architectural renderings, would be clad in a textural cement board that would relate to the existing brick work. The question remains whether that ten foot mark is from the front edge of the overhang or from the peak—a potential 2 foot difference that could have a big impact on the streetscape. The Planning Board is considering that addition as part of its deliberations and it most likely will be different from the renderings.

There will be parking and loading bays inside the building where the automotive businesses are now. A total of 5 parking spaces will be created on McLean Avenue where there are now curb cuts. The Planning Board has proposed bollards at the curb to prevent trucks from parking on the sidewalk. Lee Ellman, Planning Director for the city of Yonkers, stated that based on traffic studies done at other





Existing businesses at the western end and mid-block of 60 McLean Avenue.

Photographs by Mark Blanchard



Architectural rendering of proposed building on McLean and Van Cortlandt Park Avenue.



Architectural rendering of the length of the building. Most of the existing details will be preserved. Renderings by Frank G. Relf Architect, P.C.

storage facilities in Yonkers, traffic will probably decrease. "People deposit their stuff and NEVER visit it again!" he said.

There are concerns that there be sufficient, attractive and possibly historically accurate lighting on all four sides of the building. Groundwork Hudson Valley has proposed a stairway up from Van Cortlandt Park Avenue behind the building as part of the new Greenway system, so lighting there is a safety concern. Planting trees on the sidewalk and designing planters that function as bollards could soften the streetscape with greenery. Plans thus far call for painting the entire facade. Planning Board Chairman Roman Kozicky voiced concerns about possible bright color selections and garish signage. It was also suggested that the brick could be cleaned

and kept in its natural color, which is more in keeping with the building's architecture and easier to maintain. As can be seen in the renderings, there is a large expanse of blank brick front that needs to be illuminated and softened with landscaping.

While it is a shame that there will no longer be smaller businesses, retail stores or eateries on that block, parking is the central issue to having successful businesses on that stretch of McLean. A building that size would require 60 parking spots if it were to be used as an office building and/or storefronts.

Let us all hope that the changes at our historic gateway will be for the better. By the way, Pizza Barn is moving to Central Avenue.

Community Garden Proud

A project of the Luther Burbank Garden Club and friends

It often takes just one dedicated person to initiate something that is good for all of us. Luther Burbank Garden Club member Denise Cachoian is such a person. In July, Denise spearheaded the beautification of Wendover Garden and the Travers Avenue greenway—at the corner of Wendover and Travers. The results are stunning.

Appealing to neighbors, she recruited volunteers to pull out weeds and dead brush. To bring this corner back to its former beauty, the volunteer crew applied topsoil and mulch, spread grass seed and planted flowering shrubs. In the Wendover Garden there are now roses, sunflower, verbascum, marigold, shasta daisy, sedum, echinacea, rudbeckia and Russian sage. The adjacent Travers Avenue greenway has new grass on fresh topsoil and features a planting of hostas encircling its nine trees.

This project took one full week to complete. Thanks go to volunteer gardeners Craig Schanz, Will Pinto, Patrick Mitchell, Gunn Sandberg, Donna Costa, Ted Poggiogalle, Mary Torres and Victor Mejia. Thanks



also to Hanan Johnson, who served food and drink; to high schoolers Diangeli Perez, Caitlyn Perez, and Danielly Zurita, and to our youngest volunteers, Ahlam Johnson, age 9, and Danyel Ramos, age 8. Neighbors May Gorman, Iris Blige-Pinto, Denise Gomez-Rivera, Hanan & David Johnson, Iklas & Boulos Ibrahim, Jimmy Dinanzio, Laurine Gaete and Edward & Susan Joseph provided cash to purchase plants, seed, and topsoil.

On October 12, Garden Club members and friends returned to plant bulbs. We can look forward to a display of daffodils and crocus flowers in the spring, thanks to a monetary donation from the Park Hill Residents' Association. Lucy Vigilant from PHRA, Michael Rivera and Garden Club members Corinna Kerber, Leah Rabadi, Gunn Sandberg, Kathryn Martin and Denise Cachoian undertook the bulb planting.

Undaunted, this crew then went on to spruce up the planter boxes along a stretch of McLean Avenue, filling them with seasonal chrysanthemums in bloom.

The Luther Burbank Garden Club, founded in 1923, is the oldest garden club in Yonkers. Its projects include the 911 Memorial on Rumsey Road, the McLean Avenue flower boxes, the Wendover Garden,



the Travers Avenue greenway, the Rumsey Road Tree Lighting Ceremony and Holiday Party, and the Wreath Decorating workshop. If you would like to become a member, check out its website at https://www.facebook.com/LutherBurbankGardenClub/and contact LBGC1923@aol.com.

Photographs by Leah Rabadi



Lanternflies Are Coming!

by Kathryn Buckley

If you have ever found yourself asking What is this sticky black film all over everything in the garden? or What is that swarm of gray moth-like bugs in the tree? or What are these muddy-looking smears on that rock? or Why is sap oozing from tiny open wounds on this tree trunk and it smells like the tree is fermenting? you may be witnessing an infestation of the newest wave of invading pests with no natural predators, the spotted lanternfly (SLF).

First discovered in southeastern Pennsylvania in 2014, the spotted lanternfly is an invasive pest from Asia. Adults and nymphs use their sucking mouthparts to feed on the sap of more than 70 plant species including maple, walnut, ailanthus, dogwood, fruit trees, grapevines and many ornamental plants. This feeding, sometimes by thousands of SLF, stresses plants, making them vulnerable to disease and attacks from other insects. This insect could impact New York's forests as well as the agricultural and tourism industries.

SLF excretes large amounts of sticky *honeydem*, which is the polite term for the clear, sticky, sugar-rich liquid waste excretions of sap-sucking insects. Honeybees, yellow jackets, butterflies and other sugar-gathering insects have been observed gathering honeydew directly from the anuses of spotted lanternflies. On a heavily infested tree, the trunk can be seen almost swarming with honeybees and yellow jackets trying to collect the honeydew. This excretion also attracts a fungus that appears as a black sooty mold. In our area of lower Westchester, sooty mold is mainly a nuisance, but in some extreme situations has actually



smothered out understory plants beneath the trees. It is unpleasant and requires lots of elbow grease to remove from patios, decks and lawn furniture. In Pennsylvania, where SLF populations are the densest, people can't be outside without getting honeydew on their hair, clothes and other belongings.

In agricultural areas of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the full extent of economic damage to growth and fruit yield in plants and trees is unknown at this time.

What can we do?

Learn how to identify SLF. See further sources listed for more information and photos to help with identification.

From September through November, the female lanternfly deposits eggs in rather nondescript batches of 30 to 50, cloaked with a brown waxy cover that turns scaly gray with age. These egg masses are often laid on tree trunks, but have also been discovered on substrates including stones, vehicles, firewood and lawn furniture. Inspect these outdoor items carefully for egg masses. These need to be scraped off, saturated with rubbing alcohol and thrown away.

If you visit states with SLF, especially Pennsylvania, be sure to check all equipment and gear before leaving. Scrape off any egg masses. Visit the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture webpage for more information on SLF in Pennsylvania.

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If you believe you've found spotted lanternfly

Take pictures of the insect, egg masses, and/ or infestation signs as described above (include something for scale such as a coin or ruler) and email to spottedlanternfly@dec.ny.gov

Note the location (address, intersecting roads, landmarks, or GPS coordinates.)

Resources and further information

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-10-02/america-isn-t-ready-for-the-lanternfly-invasion

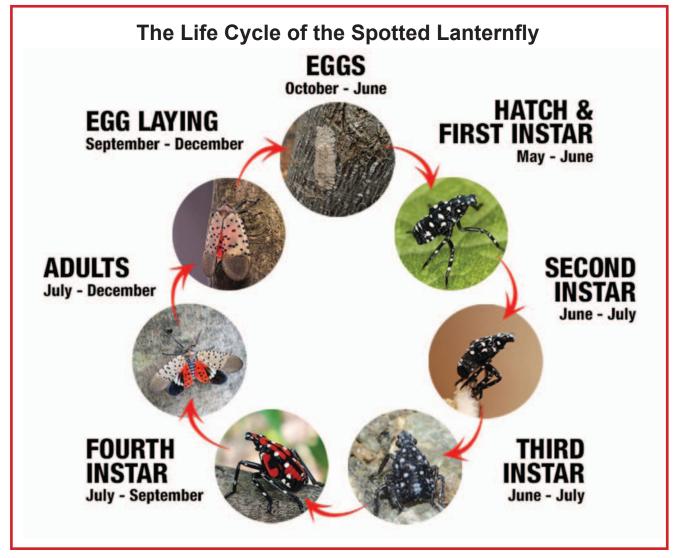
https://www.phillymag.com/news/2019/09/12/spotted-lanternfly-philadelphia/

https://spottedlanternfly.com/slf-facts-1

https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/113303.html

https://spottedlanternfly.com/who-we-are

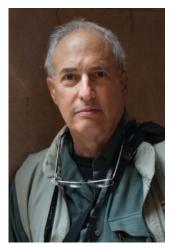
https://spottedlanternflykillers.com/pages/spotted-lanternfly



Meet Your Neighbor

Ralph Gabriner, photographer

by Hettie Jordan-Vilanova



Park Hill is a neighborhood full of artists. One of these creative people is photographer Ralph Gabriner. Like many residents in Park Hill, he and his wife, Dena Schutzer, a painter, migrated up from the city for the opportunity to have studio space in one of the neighborhood's graciously large turn-of-the-century homes.

As Ralph tells the story, witnessing a young man being shot on his block in Washington Heights in 1993 encouraged him to reach out to a friend who was already living in the neighborhood.

So, with their then 2 year old daughter, Emma, Ralph and Dena purchased the house that needed some TLC but was full of Victorian charm. The owner, Anys Thompson, died at 101 years of age in the house she had moved into as a young girl with her family in 1902. Ralph & Dena are only the home's second owners.

Ralph started his working career as a carpenter, so he was prepared for the repairs that were required. Dena was a little more skeptical, but with the promise of



Photographs by Ralph Gabriner

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studio space all her own, she reluctantly acquiesced. The house has beautiful ornate woodwork, coffered ceilings and bay windows, so there was much to welcome the new owners. When asked about what first attracted him to the neighborhood, Ralph reported "the late summer...the sound of crickets."

Ralph was born in Newark, New Jersey, and went to Bard College to study English literature. He discovered photography on a trip to Europe with his older brother in 1967. The two were in Amsterdam when his brother appeared one afternoon with a Danish girl on one arm and a camera on the other. The camera, a Voightlander Vitoret, became a new way of seeing the world. Surprised at how a photograph could change one's perception of a place or object, a life-long exploration of photography began.

Becoming a professional photographer was not as simple. Back in New York, working as a carpenter, he was asked by a friend to photograph some earrings. A simple enough request until you discover all the difficulties with lighting, backgrounds, lens requirements and exposures...so a long period of learning and experimentation followed and evolved into a career.

But the craft of photography, the making of a living as a photographer, is in part separate from the poetry of capturing images that reveal the magic of a moment, that engage the viewer in some detail unnoticed, unacknowledged. "I like small details that seem inconsequential...the curve of a railing, the spiral in an ivy, the knot in an old tree," Ralph explains. "I am attracted to entropy—the falling apart and disintegration of objects, the Japanese art of Wabi Sabi." He wants to be surprised by what he finds.

As a studio photographer, Ralph is still interested in how the photograph changes the object. In his shy meandering through life, he is always looking for the poetic context, following at an intuitive level, the images that give meaning and magic. The "magic" is my word, not his, because that is what I find in his work...delight and magic. I encourage you to visit his web site at: www.ralphgabriner.com and his collection of fine art books at: https://www.blurb.com. The newest book, *Phlox Discovers Her World*, is a beautiful children's story in which you will discover a new world among the hostas in your garden that you never considered.

Halloween in Park Hill





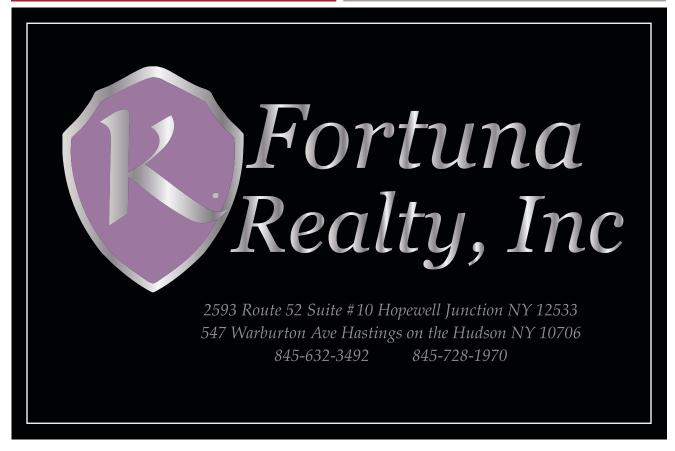
Photographs by Shantell James

Be a Good Neighbor

Don't blow your leaves into the street for your neighbors to pickup.

Bag them!





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Wreath Decorating Party!

Sunday, December 1st 2-5 p.m. at the Park Hill Racquet Club

Join your friends and neighbors for the first holiday event of the season Decorate two wreaths—one for yourself and one to be donated to help the Luther Burbank Garden Club's fundraising Festive cocktails and wine available for purchase

Reservations required \$30 per person by November 23 RSVP to Leah Rabadi at LBGC1923@aim.com

Sponsored by the Park Hill Racquet Club, the Park Hill Residents' Association, and the Luther Burbank Garden Club

nnual Park Hill Tree Lighting on Rumsey Road

Wednesday, December 4 at 7:00 p.m. followed by

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