

MS4 Annual Report Form

This report is being submitted for the reporting period ending March 9,

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Name of MS4/Coalition

Village of Ardsley

SPDES ID

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PAGE 12 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2021

Points of View FROM THE EDITOR The full picture

In recent years, a story has been unfolding throughout the Rivertowns. In the pages of this newspaper, that story has been told through listings, and photos, and articles, though not in a single narrative.

The photos next to this column, and on the opposite page, are part of that story. Both show recent invasive vegetation removal efforts held on weekends last month — one in Hastings and the other in Irvington.

During both events, most of that effort was made by volunteers who decided to spend a couple of hours cutting down vines and digging up shrubs. The vines choke trees while the shrubs crowd out native species. One shrub — Japanese Barberry — serves as a breeding ground for ticks.

Invasive trees, such as Norway Maples, infest the area as well. In Hillside Woods, volunteers painted white X-marks on hundreds of Norway Maples to be felled as part of the restoration of that forest.

Volunteer removal efforts tend to happen during winter and spring, while shrubs and vines are bare. Though spring is now two weeks old, the upcoming calendar includes more opportunities to help.

For info about an event in Ardsley on April 17, visit ardsleycan.org and click on "Earth Day 2021". For a long list of events in Hillside Woods, visit www.hastingsgreen.org and sign up to join a work session.

The other half of the story is the campaign to promote the planting of native species, especially those that attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

In the Rivertowns, the Pollinator Pathway movement started in Irvington. Since then, websites were launched for Ardsley (ardsleypollinatorpathway.org) and Hastings (hastingspollinatorpathway.org).

Nationwide, there is a website (pollinatorpathway.org) loaded with information, including sections for Pollinator Pathways in nine states. Click on "New York Pathways" for links to the Ardsley and Hastings websites as well as information about Irvington.

Upcoming events include a talk titled "Rebirth of a Woodlot" hosted by Irvington next Wednesday, April 7, and the second Hastings Seed Swap on Saturday, April 17, at the farmers' market. Check the websites for more info.

For those who want to participate in removing invasives and planting natives, whether on public property or their own, there is a plethora of information and opportunities thanks to their neighbors.

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FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021

Points of View FROM THE EDITOR For the Earth

Last month was all about honoring women. This month is all about helping the Earth.

What started as a single day in 1970 is now 30 days, at least in the Rivertowns. To coincide with Earth Month, there is a lot happening, as the stories in this week's issue reflect.

The subjects of those stories range from Grid Rewards and Community Solar to seed swapping and tree grafting. In addition, the happenings column for Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, and Hastings include listings for a host of events.

Those events range from invasive plant removal and webinars in Ardsley, to woodland walking tours in Dobbs Ferry, to a Zoom a Palooza in Hastings. In all three villages, there is even more on the schedule for later this month and into May.

To view full lists of events, visit the following websites — Ardsley (ardsleycan.org), Dobbs Ferry (sustainabledobbs.com), and Hastings (hastingsgov.org). On the Hastings website, click on "Boards & Committees" and then "Conservation Commission." The webinars require registering in advance.

Most of the events were organized by volunteers, such as those involved in Ardsley CAN, Sustainable Dobbs Ferry, and the Hastings Conservation Commission.

Some of the events require volunteers to show up, in particular to remove invasive vines at Pascone Park in Ardsley on Saturday, April 17 and to plant trees along Farmington Parkway in Hastings on Saturday, May 15.

The two largest volunteer efforts will be the Great Saw Mill River Cleanup on Saturday, April 24 and the Riverkeeper Sweep on Saturday, May 1.

The Great Saw Mill River Cleanup, organized by Groundwork Hudson Valley, includes five sites in the Rivertowns: Farmington Avenue in Hastings, Lawrence Street in Greenburgh, Chauncy Park in Dobbs Ferry, Bridge Street Plaza in Ardsley, and Woodlands Lake in Irvington. For more info, visit groundworkhv.org.

The Riverkeeper Sweep, organized by the eponymous nonprofit based in Ossining, includes three sites in the Rivertowns: Kinnally Cove, MacLachlan Waterfront Park, and River Glen Cove in Hastings Waterfront Park in Dobbs Ferry, and Scenic Hudson Park in Irvington. For more info, visit riverkeeper.org.

In addition, the second annual Hastings Bioblitz is happening this month. The blitz involves uploading photos of flora and fauna to iNaturalist, which is both an app and a website (inaturalist.org). To view the observations, visit that website and search for "Hastings Bioblitz." Last year, 42 participants observed 213 species.

Thanks to all of the organizers for offering so many opportunities to help the Earth and to learn more about it.

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021 THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE — PAGE 9

Volunteer hailed as star of Green Squad

By Kris DiLorenzo

Joseph O'Campo-Petrus of Ardsley received the Going Green Award for his volunteer work with the Westchester Parks Foundation's Green Squad. He was honored at the Volunteer New York! 2021 Volunteer Spirit Awards virtual breakfast on April 9.

Petrus, who is autistic, participates in Choices, a program for young adults run by The Arc Westchester, which supports children, teens, and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The agency participates in the Westchester Parks Foundation's volunteer program.

According to Volunteer New York, their Going Green Award is based on three criteria: activity, initiative, and impact. The award "honors volunteers who work to protect and beautify our environment and natural surroundings, advocate for the preservation of our planet, and strive to instill these values for our community."

Erin Cordiner, director of volunteer programs at the Westchester Parks Foundation, nominated Petrus, 24, for the award. "Joseph is the infectious, positive individual you didn't know your project was missing, but can't go without," she told the Enterprise in an email. "Watching Joseph interact with other volunteers is extraordinary, and always leaves me speechless. His enthusiasm and positivity exudes to all other volunteers, influencing them to jump in, with his can-do attitude, improving the experience for everyone."

"His enthusiasm and spirit even seep into our staff's mindset," she continued, "reminding us why we're here and



Joseph O'Campo-Petrus

inspiring us to mirror this same energy. Joseph represents the core of our organization's mission."

Petrus is involved in a range of volunteer work. For County Harvest, his group helps deliver rescued food from supermarkets to food pantries. For Let's Play It Forward, he and his group help pick up donated sports gear from a Somers location once a week and bring it to those in need. He also volunteers at the Community Center of Northern Westchester, taking donated sheets and blankets to local animal shelters. He's removed golf balls from the greens during the preseason at Dunwoodie Golf Course in Yonkers, and helped finish a project at Mohansic Golf Course in Yorktown Heights, painting the course's

golf range dividers. He loves his park cleanup chores most, though. As part of a trio from the approximately 25-member Green Squad, Petrus helps beautify public spaces at Tibbets Brook Park in Yonkers.

According to his The Arc Westchester supervisor, Rickey Michaels, Petrus keeps fellow volunteers organized and supplied with gloves, garbage bags, and other equipment. During the weekly maintenance of the 161-acre park, from late spring through the fall, he assists with plantings, as well as the removal of invasive species from the pond.

The Westchester Parks Foundation estimates that Petrus and his Green Squad co-workers spent nearly 1,150 hours tending the park and picked up nearly 1,200 pounds of trash last year. Petrus collects more trash than anyone.

"He is on a mission when he arrives at the park to have the most weight in his garbage bag by day's end. That is always his goal," The Arc Westchester community development officer Teresa Lombardi recounted. "Joseph makes sure to keep everyone focused on the task at hand. He challenges the others to try to beat the amount he picks up. This keeps everyone engaged and focused on picking up as much litter as possible, because they all want to participate in his challenge."

One park isn't enough, though. Petrus has asked to add another to his schedule, so starting April 27, he will be volunteering at the Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary in Rye as well.

Petrus graduated from Ardsley High School in 2017 and lives in the village with

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Petrus

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

his father, Benjamin Petrus, an essential worker. He joined The Arc Westchester in September 2017. In his spare time, the avid volunteer enjoys working out by running, jumping rope, and kickboxing. "He's very much into fitness, learning about nutrition, staying healthy, and being outside," Lombardi commented.

In his videotaped speech for the awards ceremony, Petrus said, "When I

go to my sites it makes me feel happy. I feel so proud of myself when I see all the work I have done. I like to see the people I volunteer with working hard with me."

He noted that the Read Wildlife Sanctuary, which is on Long Island Sound and abuts the landmarked Rye Playland, is his favorite site to volunteer because "everyone can enjoy the clean beach and park. I also love to see the rides and the beach."

Petrus concluded his speech by thanking his The Arc Westchester team, saying, "They always make me feel special by telling me I am doing a good job."

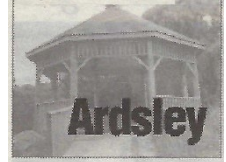
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Happenings

Earth Month events kick off with invasive plant removal at Pascone Park next Saturday, April 17, 10 a.m.-noon, followed by the webinars "The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway: How You Can Save Our Pollinators in Your Yard" next Sunday, April 18, 7-8:15 p.m., and "Composting, Food Scrap Recycling, and Food Waste Reduction 101" on Monday, April 19, 6-7:15 p.m. Visit ardsleycan.org to register and for a complete schedule of events.

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Happenings

Earth Month continues with webinars on "Native Gardening for Pollinators" on Friday, April 23, 7-8:15 p.m., and "Replacing the Green Desert: Native Plant Alternatives to Turf," on Thursday, April 29, 7-8:15 p.m. Visit ardsleycan.org to register.

To participate in Groundwork Hudson Valley's 12th annual Great Saw Mill River Cleanup on Saturday, April 24, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., visit groundworkhv.org for a list of locations and to register.

THE RIVERTOWNS Enterprise

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PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021



Hands full

Anne McCarthy of Scarsdale and Joan Segall of Ardsley remove construction debris near Lawrence Street during Groundwork Hudson Valley's annual Great Saw Mill River Cleanup on Saturday, April 24.



J.M. MACLEAN/RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

Bye bye invasives

Ishrat Jahan removes invasive vegetation at Pascone Park in Ardsley on Saturday, April 17, as part of a series of Earth Month events. For additional events, visit ardsleycan.org.

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PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 2021



From the pollinator garden tour at May 15.

Eco-committee aims to add to its success

By Kris DiLoreno

Through the coronavirus pandemic, forced much of its outdoor activity indoors last year, Ardsley's Conservation and Environmental Advocacy Committee (CEAC) was able to provide a solid account of its accomplishments and future plans at its Ardsley Board of Trustees meeting on June 23.

Since its formation last summer, CEAC made strides toward its two overarching goals: to promote reduction of greenhouse gas emissions toward meeting the state's nation-leading targets defined by the 2019 Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and to establish collaborations and programming on climate change issues at the local level.

CEAC's 2020 annual report cited Ardsley's designation as a Clean Energy Community, by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and the village board's decision to apply for Climate Smart Community status under the state Department of Conservation's CSM program.

A CEAC task force submitted an application for CSM "home status," and the result will be announced in September, according to CEAC chair Eda Kapis. If approved, Ardsley will receive a \$5,000 grant and points toward the next level of certification, Silver.

Though launched during the height of the Covid-19 crisis, CEAC's ambitious "Ardsley CAN: By 2050" initiative is on track to reduce village emissions by 50 percent by that date. The website also can provide an overview and program details. CAN stands for the pillars in the program — C: Carbon Reduction, A: Act Sustainably, N: Neighbor by Neighbor.

The carbon reduction component included various efforts in 2020 and 2021, and cooperation with neighboring villages to promote the 1-on-1 Union Grid Rewards program; the latter earned each village a \$5,000 NYSERDA grant and points toward their Clean Energy Community ranking.

The CAN program calculated Ardsley's carbon footprint and its sources using data from combined methods, but the progress report notes that the greenhouse gas estimates "will be adjusted based on 2021 usage data from ECLIPSE. We expect the reported figures to decrease." The report states, "Securing licensing of

a measurement methodology and toolkit will be key for emission reductions. CEAC anticipates that the ECLIPSE license will be the best fit," CEAC obtained that license.

ECLIPSE (not Emissions for Sustainability) is a Berlin, Germany-based global network that helps municipalities with local responses to climate change, aiming toward low-carbon, nature-based, resilient development.

ECLIPSE creates common definitions and measures all over the world, providing everyone with the same raw data, the same formula on how to do an inventory about cost savings," Kapis explained. "An inventory... gives you a way to determine what the benefits would be to making changes."

The ECLIPSE data can be used to estimate the greenhouse gas reduction and fuel savings of the existing solar panels on the roof of Ardsley's lighthouse and could be applied to future changes CEAC would like to see, including an electric fleet of the smaller vehicles used by the DPW, village hall, and police and fire departments.

"The fire chief is already looking into when an electric fire truck would be available," Kapis chuckled. "This is not near-term; we have to have a very long timeline to plan for such things."

CEAC's educational programming focused on practical actions individuals and municipalities can take to foster sustainability, such as changing lawn care habits, conserving water and electricity, composting food waste, and planting pollinator gardens. The committee itself became a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Watersense partner this year, agreeing to "promote the value of water efficiency and Watersense-labeled products, new homes, and programs," and feature Watersense on websites and related promotional materials.

The Pollinator Partners Project, spearheaded by Carol Soumarai, has become so high-visibility, especially since its pollinator garden tour on May 15 that Soumarai field has been invited to partner with the Mar Margolis of Tazewell's Pollinator Pathways to create pollinator demonstration gardens at Hart's Brook Preserve and Anthony T. Veterans Park, starting this fall. Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Fester sponsored the proposed collaboration.

Kapis made clear that CEAC has been mentored by or partnered with county departments, like school district, regional organizations, and local groups, and shared best practices with its similar committees in its sister-village group.

CEAC acknowledged its need for a grant writer, and replacing volunteers such as co-founder and chair Julia Benicome, who will run for village trustee this November. The committee has engaged roughly 30 percent of the population and expects to expand its outreach.

CEAC's upcoming activities are planned to align with the Village of Ardsley's Comprehensive Plan. CEAC has been making recommendations to the board about approving the NYSERDA Energy Code and a Complete Streets resolution, and encouraging the use of "low embodied carbon concrete" in roadways when possible. (Some streets slated for reconstruction are set to use this material.)

CEAC is also advising village administrators on incorporating green building practices in the construction of the new DPW building off Heatherdell Road, using renewable energy to operate that facility, and preparing to charge electric vehicles as they are integrated into the fleet.

Regarding the committee's full plate, Kapis said, "Half of this is fun, not work. We want to carry that forward. That lays the foundation for community participation. Success is really community engagement — and adding more value for the committee."

PAGE 6 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, AUGUST 20, 2021

Village explores feasibility of parking deck

By Kris DiLoreno

In the run-up to updating its Comprehensive Plan, the Village of Ardsley conducted surveys and community workshops to identify issues residents wanted addressed. Lack of parking in the Central Business District (CBD) was a major bugaboo.

On Aug. 3, Interim Village Manager Chardene Indelicato, authorized by a resolution passed by the Ardsley Board of Trustees on Aug. 2, signed an agreement with Weston & Sampson, a design, engineering, and environmental services firm in Albany, to prepare a feasibility study for a proposed single parking deck over the existing parking lot behind the Village

Green shopping center at 716-718 Saw Mill River Road and the adjacent Shell station at 730 Saw Mill River Road.

In Weston & Sampson's July 8 proposal letter, senior associate Jeffrey F. Budrow stated, "Based on preliminary estimates, this configuration may provide parking for approximately 70-100 cars, with ramp access near the intersection of Heatherdell Road and Saw Mill River Road."

The Comprehensive Plan, adopted in February, discussed the village's parking problems, noting, "there is very limited parking available in the downtown area, which compounds the challenge for businesses in the Business District, particularly in the Addyman Square vicinity."

Recommendations for creating more downtown parking suggested that "new parking facilities be built behind buildings and away from Route 9A frontage and streetscape," and that the Village replace scattered-site parking lots and curbside parking spaces with large, shared parking areas behind commercial buildings. One option was very specific: "development of additional parking solutions to expand access to the CBD (an example being the parking garage above the food control zone behind Starbucks)." Starbucks has since vacated its Village Green location. The plan also prescribed a first imple-

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Parking

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

mentation step: solicit developer proposals for a parking structure on the property behind the former Starbucks as part of a request for expressions of interest (REI) or request for proposals (RFP).

Before that happens, Weston & Sampson must perform the preliminary work to determine whether the site is appropriate for the purpose, first reviewing the Village's available information about stormwater effects and its provisions for handling stormwater, since the parking lot abuts the Saw Mill River. The firm will also review any existing parking studies in order to confirm the need for additional parking spaces.

The feasibility study must look at environmental and geotechnical information to assess whether the soil can support a parking structure, and take into account which permits would be needed from which government bodies, for various aspects of the project. To evaluate the number of parking spaces that could be made available, the firm will prepare sketches of two or three layouts based on different amounts of available space.

Weston & Sampson's report to the village board will include descriptions of their analyses, the proposed layout options, and estimates of construction costs, and will outline next steps for the design of the proposed parking deck.

The cost of the feasibility study is \$7,500.



The existing parking lot

The Beacon

ILLUMINATING ARDSLEY HISTORY

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VOL. 34 NO. 2 AUTUMN 2021

ONE BUSY LADY — REMEMBERING BARBARA NOVICH

By George F. Calvi

Along with Louise Giusti, Dorrie Kaufman, Theresa DeStefano, and Trustees Linda Pohlman and Dan Kelly, Barbara was on the Recycling Committee that got the curbside recycling pickup program off the ground, helped secure a grant for new recycling bins, and designed the first recycling schedule calendar in 1991.

Barbara participated in many other committees too many to enumerate here. But there was one group she took particular pride in and that was the Ardsley Garden Club. As I said earlier, Barbara loved flowers, and she particularly liked to enter flower displays in the annual competitions at St. Barnabas Episcopal church. It was a really big deal for her. She finally persuaded me to attend one year, and I have to say I was quite impressed with all I saw. I even witnessed a certain future village official in attendance who was being awarded the prize for best front yard. Her name should be familiar to all of you these days — Mayor Nancy Kaboolian.



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Village of Ardsley



Businesses clean up in the wake of flooding

By Jeff Wilson

It's been a year since the floodwaters of the Hudson River inundated the Village of Ardsley, and businesses are still cleaning up. The Village of Ardsley, which was hit by the floodwaters in June 2020, is still recovering from the damage. The floodwaters caused significant damage to businesses and homes, and the cleanup process is still ongoing.

Flooding

The Village of Ardsley is still recovering from the damage caused by the floodwaters of the Hudson River in June 2020. The floodwaters caused significant damage to businesses and homes, and the cleanup process is still ongoing. The Village of Ardsley is still recovering from the damage caused by the floodwaters of the Hudson River in June 2020. The floodwaters caused significant damage to businesses and homes, and the cleanup process is still ongoing.

SPRISSE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2021 THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE



Volunteers needed for planting at Pascone

By Jeff Wilson

The call is out for helping hands—green thumbs not required—to plant 500 native perennials in the circle at the entrance to Pascone Park. The volunteer activity, which will take place on two Saturdays, Oct. 9 and 16, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., is part of an ongoing effort to restore and improve public spaces, explained Village Trustee Steve Edelstein, who is spearheading the effort. "It's one of the reasons that I joined the board (over years ago). We could do better by our public spaces. This is deserving of some attention."

Susan Janculich of Ardsley, the landscape architect who designed the project, spoke about its aesthetic importance. "Pascone Circle is a very prominent feature in Ardsley," she said. "When we drive down Ashford Avenue, we see it all the time. It's a destination for parents and kids; middle school children are walking there all the time. It really is such an important place for our village."

Janculich also described the project in terms of its environmental benefits. "We're basically digging a hole, plopping a plant in and getting on to the next one. It's nothing that will take any lengthy maintenance."

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2021 THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE — PAGE 9

Walking tour sets the stage for the comprehensive plan

By Kris DiLorenzo

To initiate the implementation of the Village of Ardsley's Comprehensive Plan, approved in February, village officials and the plan's project team toured the village's historic core on Sept. 20. The village board, interim village manager Chantel Indelicato with confidential secretary Charles Hessler, Jessica Bacher, executive director of Pace University Land Use Law Center and land use and economic consultant Kevin Dwarka walked the area bounded by the Saw Mill River to the west, American Legion Drive to the east, the entrance to V.E. Macy Park to the north, and the intersection of Route 9A (Saw Mill River Road) with the New York State Thruway (I-87) on the south. The group's purpose was to begin assessing development potential. The implementation of the Comprehensive Plan is divided into sections covering land use analysis, infrastructure analysis, a public engagement report, and an action plan based on those findings. The village's revitalization will extend beyond the downtown borders, transitioning from the hub of commercial activity to more residential land use outward. To assess downtown development possibilities, the group observed current and conditions, noting opportunities and restrictions, "talking about it in very general, educational terms," Indelicato told the Enterprise on Sept. 28. "Everybody knows we need parking, the revitalization of the area, maybe reconfiguration on 9A. Really, it was a general conversation."

She mentioned examples of prob-

lems needing solutions. "Take Addyman Square. You need to revise some of it, and there are vacancies." The oldest building in the square dates to 1915. Any alteration to the square, whether to provide additional parking or change the face of a historic building, would require a long and possibly difficult governmental process including environmental investigation, since the Saw Mill River flows behind the square. Indelicato pointed out that the strip malls farther north on 9A have vacant commercial spaces, but the Village doesn't own those malls and therefore can't make changes at its own discretion. Open space exists in the village, for example, behind DeCicco's property and the property belonging to Sazan, the restaurant adjacent to it, but the land belongs to New York City, Indelicato said, and the Village doesn't have control over that, either.

The land use information gathered between a downtown commercial center, mixed-use, and residential areas is another quandary. "How do we connect the village?" Indelicato asked rhetorically. "That's always a big issue connection."

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Comp plan

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or barriers. They'll inventory the current transportation network, including pedestrian connections; electricity, water, gas, and sewers; and systems for managing storm water accumulation and flood prevention. Assessment will also include documentation of the various agencies and property owners that have jurisdiction and site control over whichever land and infrastructures affect future building. That assessment will help determine the kinds of capital improvements that will best improve downtown life and provide the greatest return on investment.

For public engagement, a second tour will be planned for residents, business owners, and property owners, and a survey will offer visual examples of various land use and infrastructural options. Later, the consultants will prepare an engagement report incorporating all public input on what residents and business owners would like to see in the downtown area.

After prioritizing all the information collected, the project team will develop a step-by-step action plan for implementing each priority.

Indelicato commented on the effects of the walking tour. "I think what we got out of it is that they're going to look at all of these things. The board was very clear that they're going to need input from the community, that it's not going to be done in a vacuum. It's necessary to look at the heights of buildings, their setbacks, the zoning aspects of it, and commercial sustainability... Everybody has the same issues, it's just a different place."

PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2021



Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Task Force members Arsha Benicome, Eda Kapsa, David Lee, and Chris Somerville

Village achieves Climate Smart standing

By Kris DiLorenzo

The Village of Ardsley has earned its first certification as a Climate Smart Community, a state initiative seeking local governments to adopt sustainable practices and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Village of Ardsley is the first in the county to achieve this certification.

It's important for Ardsley to be recognized as a Climate Smart Community for its commitment to climate action, and this program provides guidance on how to continue taking action.

Westchester Power's Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program for bulk purchasing of energy and adopting a benchmarking policy to track and report the energy use of municipal buildings. The CSC and CCA programs offer the Village a way to apply for grants.

Discussing the list of 22 actions the Village completed for its CSC certification, Mayor Nancy Kaloupek told the Enterprise on Oct. 1 that "a good number of these items, the Village had already done — the solar panels, the LED lights were already in place. You want to go over in the point list, in case not all the items are accepted."

Kaloupek was referring to actions the Village had completed, including municipal energy benchmarking, LED streetlights conversions, a solar installation on the firehouse roof, and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, which includes sustainability components.

On Oct. 4, Benicome elaborated on those accomplishments. "LED streetlights were installed on all village streets, and decorative lights were also changed to LED," he continued to say in a 400-word letter. "Climate action makes sense. It's also cost effective."

Benicome noted that Climate Smart Communities must certify every five years to show how they'll continue to take climate action within that period, reporting on maintaining actions already listed in prior certifications doesn't count toward successful certification.

The Village will expand its efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the said. "Energy benchmarking in municipal buildings started in 2019 and is ongoing. We're looking to do energy audits

on municipal buildings and we will be reviewing other high-impact actions. The Village will soon be discussing its plans for next year."

Ardsley hit its 22 marks from the local to the national level, as required by the state's Department of Conservation, which oversees the CSC program. Working with Sustainable Westchester in its regional programs was an important action. Other municipal services, initiatives, and activities that have become vital and more visible to village life are the recycling programs, inventorying greenhouse gas, planning for climate action, decreasing energy use, using clean/renewable energy, climate-smart materials management, waste reduction, climate-smart land use, sustainability, enhancing community resilience to climate change, water-smart landscaping, climate-related public events (Earth Day), and more. The Village's list of actions call for initiatives in "Tackling an evolving process of climate action," to include a Village/CCA annual progress report.

Benicome's role in the CCA, may change by the end of the year. She is running, unopposed for the village board seat that will be vacated by Trustee Laura P. D'Amico, who decided not to seek reelection in November. Benicome would most likely be able to remain co-chair of the CCA, however, the portfolio would remain the role of a coordinator. Decisions will be made before the village board's December reorganization meeting.

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Firefighter Anthony Baker, Assistant Chief Joan Podolski, and Captain Brendan Lindsay of the Ardsley Fire Department.

First responders honored for flood rescues

By Kris DiLorena

ARDSLEY — On Sept. 1, as Tropical Storm Ida flooded buildings and roads, the Village of Ardsley's first responders rushed from one emergency call to another in the middle of the night.

During the village board meeting on Sept. 7, Mayor Nancy Kabaolian issued a proclamation declaring Sept. 8 "First Responders Appreciation Day" to honor those who provided life-saving services during the deluge.

At the meeting, Padraic Murray, chief of the Ardsley Volunteer Fire Department, recounted three water rescues performed by members of the fire department, police department, and public works department, with assistance from Greenburgh's Fairview Fire Department and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation forest

rangers from upstate Hamilton County.

The rescues all happened in the area of Ashford Avenue, Cross Road, and Sprain Road, where the Sprain Brook flows between houses and woods.

The first occurred at 9:45 p.m., when Police Officer Brian Roemer helped a motorist escape a car trapped in rising water on Ashford Avenue at Pascone Park. Thirty-five minutes later, Assistant Chief Joan Podolski, Capt. Brendan Lindsay, and firefighter Anthony Baker responded to Cross Road and Exeter Place, where another motorist was trapped in a vehicle. Lindsay and Baker, wearing life jackets, waded into the water and helped the driver escape through a window.

Finally, there was a report of a woman trapped in a car that had washed off Cross Road at Markwood Road. Lt. Bryan Watson of the police department had the woman on

the phone until she stated the car had hit a deck and flipped over.

"Her car got lifted up, pushed behind a house, and she was stuck under one of the posts that was holding the deck up," Murray said.

Firefighters could not see the vehicle, so Podolski, Lindsay, and Baker attempted to proceed on foot until DPW Foreman David DiGregorio arrived in a payloader — a construction vehicle with oversized tires and a bucket on the front. The firefighters piled into the bucket and peered between houses for the car.

During the search, Fairview firefighters in a boat hit a partially submerged footbridge that damaged their vessel. "In order to save [the crew members'] lives, it had to be abandoned," Murray said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28



Officer Brian Roemer

Ida rescues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On Ashford Avenue, Roemer and DPW worker Rob Wooten spotted the car's taillights in a wooded area. The front end of the car was underwater. Roemer attempted to swim to the car, but was unable due to the current. DiGregorio then arrived with the firefighters.

"Her location had changed severely from the high flow of the water pushing her downstream," Murray said.

Baker — who is a lieutenant junior grade in the U.S. Coast Guard — was able to attach a rope to the car the other end of the rope was tied to the payloader. The rope enabled him, Lindsay, and Roemer to shatter the car's rear window without being carried away by the current and to

extricate the woman from the car.

Forest rangers in another boat transported the woman from the scene. She was conscious and alert, and was treated by members of the Ardsley-Secor Volunteer Ambulance Corps (ASVAC). "The forest rangers were pre-positioned down here prior to the storm, so if we did need them, they were already here," Murray explained.

Murray commented on the heroic efforts of the multidisciplinary team. "I was very thankful that everybody got out safely. I was very proud of all our members; they did an outstanding job. It was something we rarely train for. Our members went above and beyond. I do believe it's probably the first time in the history of the village that all four departments were on the same rescue. It was an amazing feat that we all worked together to accomplish one common goal."

the solar credit and the amount due, the municipality's savings that month, its total savings, and also the environmental impact the municipality's use of renewable energy has.

The agreement will last two years and commences on the date of the first electric utility bill displaying solar credits. After the initial term the agreement will be automatically extended yearly under the same terms, unless the

from the lobbies of buildings on Spring Street and Southside Avenue on Saturday, Sept. 18.

Thefts from accounts: Two hundred thousand dollars was removed from a Hastings resident's Citibank account on Thursday, Sept. 23.

BMW recovered: A 2007 BMW 318i with broken front and rear windows,

municipality or G&S Solar elect to terminate the agreement.

"This was a great opportunity for the Village of Dobbs Ferry to support the use of solar energy by signing up as a municipal customer," interim village administrator Richard Leins stated. "The innovative solar sharing program not only reduces the Village's carbon footprint, but will also garner the Village significant savings on its annual energy bills."

and no license plates, was abandoned on Warburton Avenue, at the Yonkers border, on the evening of Friday, Sept. 24. The car was registered to a resident of Long Island.

The Enterprise obtains its information from the Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings and Irvington police departments. All suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty in court.

MS4 Annual Report Form

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Garden club delivers advice to homeowners' doorsteps

By Kris Di Lorenzo

The Ardsley Garden Club is offering a new, free service to homeowners seeking landscape advice. Those in need can visit the club's Facebook page and send a direct message, or call president Linda Kell at 914.661.0334, to make an appointment for an hour-long house call.

However, the expert won't be consulting about which color roses would look best alongside the plant color of a house, or what patterns could be moved across an infield-strewn lawn.

The garden club is focusing on native plants, pollinator gardens, and invasive species. While walking with the homeowners to explore a property, a garden, or plans for a garden, a club member will develop a list of what should and shouldn't be done, where, and when.

Transplanted urbanites may be most in need of the garden club's guidance, Kell told the Enterprise on Oct. 9. "Most of these people who come up from the city don't know a twig from a leaf," she stated. "They don't know a weed from a native plant. That's where they really need help."

Nowadays the club is on "invasive patrol." Though porcelain berry vines with blue and purple leaves can carpet trees with lush greenery, and Asian bittersweet vines with golden orange berries are said to have full, lush and trees — and play a prominent role in house decorations such as hand-made lanterns, wreaths — both are invasive species that grow out of control, devouring, smothering, and choke trees. The longer they're allowed to stay, the harder they are to excise.

Clearing invasives is the first step in creating aesthetically pleasing, functional gardens. Location, location, location, might be the second.

Not every species will grow where a homeowner wants it, so, in sunlight, soil acidity or alkalinity, water access, chemical runoff from neighboring land, room for pool systems, what's growing or sitting nearby, and local animal behavior all factor into what a garden will or won't look like. There are plenty of practical considerations.

"You may have to move something," Kell says. "A garden is a work in progress. I've been here 45 years, it's not something you do overnight."

Educating people on the benefits of choosing native plants and grasses over golf course type lawns that use extravagant amounts of water and are useless in preventing erosion is part of the garden club's mission.

In its September "Going Green in Ardsley" newsletter, the Village Conservation and Environment Advisory Committee explained why. "Native plants have much deeper root structures that act as elevator shafts for water to prevent runoff. Grass has a very shallow root structure so it is not very helpful for absorbing water. Native plants also clean water, reduce stormwater runoff into our sewers and waterways, and sequester carbon from the air... planting them is essential to our climate adaptation strategy."

Continued on page 17



White Star Anemone blooms in Carol Sommerfeld's garden.

Gardens

Continued from page 9

Yellow black-eyed Susans, lipstick-red anemones, and a vibrant palette of other flora are magisterial black-and-orange monarch butterflies, yellow-and-black-striped bees, and hummingbirds dashing almost too quickly for their colors to be identified.

Nevertheless, the garden club also recommends planting pollinator gardens when cooler weather arrives and plants drop their petals. Bees, moths, and butterflies are still visiting gold-crested, asters, blue mistflower, and white anemones.

"This is a good time to plant, even though it's the fall," Kell writes. "We can give people a lot of plants, explain where to get them, and how to get started. There are different places to get 'plugs' or little native plants. Rosalee Nurseries in Hawthorne, Carlton in White Plains, and you can grow zinnias from seeds."

It's not easy to encourage people to eschew the habits of a lifetime and refrain from taking leaves, deadheading formerly flowering plants, and removing fungi and fallen branches during fall and winter, but those who do provide food and shelter for some pollinators, helping them survive cold and wet weather, reproduce, and show up in the spring.

A pollinator, novice or expert, may have further, detailed questions after the garden club's visit, but Kell will remain there. "It's one hour — it's not an all-day event." For in-depth analysis, particularly for potential pollinator gardens, she'll refer them to club member Carol Sommerfeld, who is also the organizer for Ardsley Pollinator Pathway (ArdsleyPollinatorPathway.org).

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2021

Points of View

FROM THE EDITOR



Pollinator prep

Despite rain in the forecast, Carol Sommerfeld of Ardsley laid out a buffet in her driveway on Saturday, Dec. 11. Under three adjoining tents were tables of baked goods and beverages as well as books and envelopes.

Inside the envelopes were assorted seeds. The occasion was the first seed swap hosted by the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway, an initiative led by Sommerfeld that promotes the planting of vegetation that attracts pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

The seeds were free and the seed swap was open to all. The attendees were from Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, and Irvington, including residents involved in pollinator pathway projects in those communities.

Renee Shamosh contributed heirloom tomato seeds to the swap. Her seeds (pictured above) were stuck to pieces of paper towel onto which their names were written in pencil. Shamosh is the horticulture co-chair for the Garden Club of Irvington.

The Garden Club of Irvington has started growing plants inside the greenhouse at the Greenburgh Nature Center (GNC). The club will hold their annual plant sale at the GNC on the Saturday before Mother's Day. For the holiday season, they decorated the GNC's main house with a tree made from fallen branches and other natural materials found at the nature center. The day after the seed swap in Ardsley, Hastings Pollinator Pathway Project (HPPPP) preppers worked on the Five Corners Garden they started this year at the intersection of Broadway, Farragut Avenue, and Main Street, adjacent to the Old Crown Aqueduct Trail. Two hundred and forty plugs of native grasses were added to the garden, along with 20 flowering native perennials and 16 ferns.

In the fall, the HPPPP raised \$1,700 through Kickstart for the Five Corners Garden. The HPPPP committee also hosted a well-attended Fall Fest that included a seed swap.

Though it will be months before plants start to grow outside, there is plenty to learn in preparation for more info, including events planned for the winter, visit ardsleypollinatorpathway.org, hastingpollinatorpathway.org, and www.pollinator-pathway.org/irvington.

PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2021



Prepping for spring

Boy Scout Tammy Sassano and his cousin Mikiam plant perennial plugs in the dirt at the entrance to Pascone Park on Saturday, Oct. 9.

IMAGE COURTESY RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE

PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2021



Carol Sommerfeld shows her backyard garden to Margie Lavender of Hastings and Karlaeun Blumbaum of Ardsley during the seed swap at her home on Dec. 11.

CAN! targets actions toward sustainability

By Kris Di Lorenzo

In November 2020, Ardsley's Conservation & Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC) launched Ardsley CAN! by 2030, a sustainability initiative aiming for a 50 percent reduction in the village's carbon footprint.

On Dec. 1, CEAC sent out an email blast marking the campaign's first anniversary. Its "top 10 accomplishments, and the group's name change to the CE-male Advisory Committee (CEAC).

acknowledged. To provide more information about what individuals can do, the said, Ardsley CAN! has reached out to its 300 seasonal participants.

Not only did some of CAN!'s accomplishments affect the village's carbon footprint by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but they also reduced energy bills for residents and small businesses.

For example, the village board voted unanimously to switch from Con Ed's

small-facility-produced energy to 100 percent renewable energy — hydro power — through an agreement with Westchester Power. CAN! estimates that emissions reductions achieved by this action are equivalent to taking about 700 gas-powered cars off the road in one year.

By informing individuals about Can

Continued on page 19

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Ed's GridTenders program, in which residents receive reimbursement for using less energy during peak times, CAN! enrolled more than 40 households. This action, which counted toward Climate Smart Community certification, helped secure a \$5,000 grant for the Village to use for climate projects. CAN! helped the Village complete enough sustainability actions to achieve bronze-level certification from the 2021 CEC program — the first time Ardsley qualified for certification, making it one of 11 new communities to certify in 2021.

The CAN! initiative also offered an educational component. 14 Zoominars on how to adapt various sustainable practices, among them simple adjustments in the home and yard, toward the 2030 goal.

Kapris spoke about one area Ardsley CAN! intends to highlight next year.

"It is our intention to make it very simple for people to consider how they're going to transition off fossil fuels. We're going to be doing programs to help them understand the lifetime of the equipment they have both in the home and in the driveway, to make it as

cost effective as possible for households in Ardsley."

Perhaps the most visible initiative is the Pollinator Pathway Project, which encourages the planting of gardens that attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies. The Pollinator Pathway, Kapris said, is about "How we're looking at ecosystems, how we're taking care of our yards, making this simple for people to think about how to improve land use in the village."

In addition, the Pollinator Pathway Project has created a map of Ardsley's pollinator gardens, and held its first tour of six gardens in May. Twenty gardens are now on the list for next year. The project also offers free garden consultations and has completed 44 so far.

The project's Zoominars covered topics including how to create one's own pollinator garden. More Zoom

events are taking place, but Sommerfeld is more jazzed about the live events projected for the spring.

"In collaboration with the Village and the Ardsley Garden Club, we're going to upgrade and expand the public library pollinator gardens, Sullivan Park, Pascone Park, and we just got a grant from the Bronx River Sound Shore Audubon Society," she said. "The Garden Club is managing the grant for us."

The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway will also collaborate with Tarrytown's Pollinator Pathway program and the Town of Greenburgh on educational gardens at Anthony F. Veterans Park and Hart's Brook Park & Preserve.

"We're looking for volunteers from the neighborhood," she added. "It's going to take a community."

Kapris summarized the carbon footprint reduction. When Ardsley CAN! by 2030 started, total emissions from the village were 100,040 metric tons of CO₂, including emissions from electricity, fuel for combustion engine cars, natural gas, and more. The date was estimated using the Ardsley zip code byproducts from CoolClimate, the U.S. EPA, and other sources.

"Our carbon footprint numbers will be updated in the spring," she stated. "We're choosing which tool to use now."

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Students plant bulbs in the high school courtyard on Oct. 28

MS4 Annual Report Form

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PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021

High-tech mapping of sewer lines begins

By Kris DiLorenzo

The Village of Ardsley has hired Albany-based Delaware Engineering to inspect and map its sanitary and storm water sewer systems, which consist of 130,000 linear feet of pipes built before 1960. The project began Nov. 13, and will take two or three months to complete, depending on the weather.

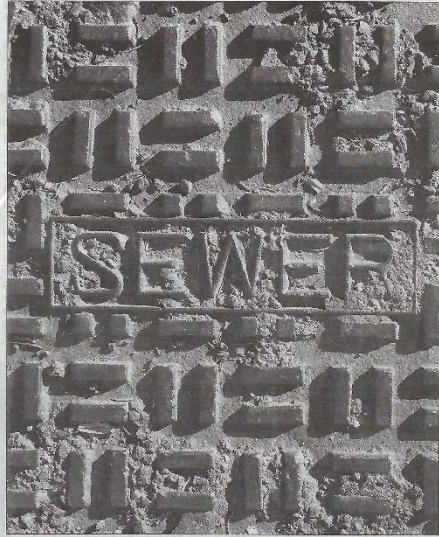
There has been some mapping for maintenance work in the past, "but not full-scale mapping with the technology we have now," according to Village Manager Joe Cerretani.

The process includes opening manholes, inspecting pipes, and using GPS to illustrate them on a map. The agreement with Delaware calls for "flushing all or some portion of the collection system to remove grease buildup and debris in order to ensure that video inspection of the entire system is possible."

The video inspection involves the use of a remote-controlled device with a camera to check for cracks, breaks, tree roots, and other issues. "It can calculate the distance it's traveled, so if I know where the issue is, which can be repaired as efficiently and effectively as possible," Cerretani said. "You can inspect the pipe without having to crawl through it like Andy Dufresne in 'The Shawshank Redemption.'"

Delaware will provide a prioritized list of potential capital improvements and suggest a course of action for the next several years to address replacements and repairs.

"It's a great initiative that the Village is undertaking," Cerretani said. "It's going to result in an invisible but invaluable benefit."

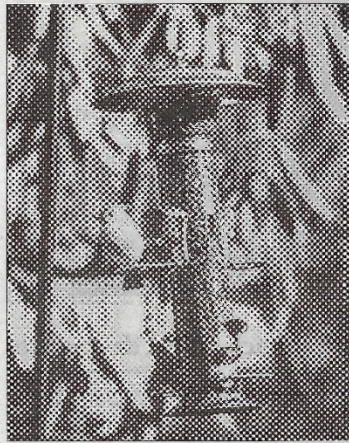


A manhole cover at the intersection of Jordan Lane and Heatherdell Road

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2022 THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE — PAGE 8

To promote biodiversity, birdscaping beats landscaping

By Jacqui Longo



One of the fescues outside Carol Soumarfield's home

Birdscaping

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Invasive, such as porcelain berry and sweet potato vine, can steal habitat from beneficial plants.

Soumarfield said winter is a good time to look at the landscape. "I did this and realized I was missing a lot of layers," she said. "Think about your yard where all those gaps, and how do you fill those gaps?"

The birds live in your "birdscape" the more varieties of birds you have, because each plant layer offers birds a different niche. The Ardsley Wildlife Center has published a guide, "Personal nature plans for Birdscaping," that features photos of plants, along with growth requirements and information about the wildlife that depends on them.

Pesticides are a major concern since birds eat insects and feed insects to their babies. Citrus entomologist Douglas Tallamy, author of the bestselling book

"During the winter deep freeze, gardeners' thoughts turn to spring landscaping. In Ardsley, the full-time volunteer committee has another mission — to plan some 'birdscaping' as well. In a Zoom get-together on Jan. 12, Carol Soumarfield, chair of the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Committee, presented a talk about birdscaping to local residents.

"When I moved to Ardsley in 1983, I remember hearing much more birds," she said. "Many eastern forest birds have been in population decline for example, are in 10-year declines or gone."

Since 1970, 170 million eastern forest birds have been lost, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Cornell researchers found that North America lost one in four birds over the past 50 years, and that the net population decrease of breeding adult birds in the U.S. and Canada since 1990 is 2.7 billion.

The reasons for the decline are complex, but not reversible. One of the reasons is a loss of habitat due in part to invasive vegetation. In addition, neonicotinoid pesticides are harmful to birds.

"We're starting to look for moving birds from the infrastructure," Soumarfield noted.

Soumarfield noted that climate change has resulted in unprecedented storm activity, leading to further bird population declines. Also, feral cats and feral dogs kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds annually in the U.S., according to an analysis published in

the journal Nature Communications in 2015. According to the American Bird Conservancy, cats have contributed to the extinction of 63 species of birds, mammals, and reptiles in the wild.

"It's not all is not lost. We are never going to stop development," Soumarfield acknowledged. "But what we can do is redevelop what we do, and do it right."

Homeowners with yards can remove non-native plants and replace them with natives. The idea is to create a habitat that provides food and shelter for native birds, and also for nesting, water for drinking and bathing, shelter from predators and the elements, places for birds to raise their young, and sources of food. No one tree, flower, or bush provides all these benefits to every bird.

"Landscaping should have layers," Soumarfield explained.

Homeowners should plant native trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous plants and low-growing ground cover plants. "Native birds spend much of their lives above the canopy, such as vireos, herons, and woodpeckers, which are not in the canopy," she said. "Native birds spend much of their lives in the canopy, such as vireos, herons, and woodpeckers, which are not in the canopy."

"Native birds spend much of their lives in the canopy, such as vireos, herons, and woodpeckers, which are not in the canopy."

They provide protection and food."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

birds on the plant, its nectar, and seeds. Soumarfield said it's important to make a plan that has been tested with natives. "There's an act before the New York legislature called the Birds and Bees Protection Act," she noted, referring to pending legislation to ban neonicotinoids.

The next two installments of the "Birdscaping" series will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 16, at 7:30 p.m. and Wednesday, March 16, at 6 p.m. For more information, visit ardsleypollinatorpathway.org.

PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2022



The Covelto Essex incinerator in the Westchester neighborhood, which burns 2,800 tons of municipal garbage from New York City and Essex County each day, near public housing complexes and an elementary school.

Film and talk to highlight ecojustice issues

By Patricia Robert

During the week leading up to Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the subject of environmental justice will be the focus of a film screening and a panel discussion hosted by the Village of Ardsley's Climate Advisory Committee and Multicultural, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee.

The film to be screened will be "The Sacrifice Zone," a 2020 documentary about the Ironbound neighborhood of Newark, N.J., where working-class people of color live alongside industrial facilities and close to the Port of Newark and Newark Liberty International Airport. The film highlights the struggle between activists and a garbage incinerator that releases chemicals into the air.

The film will be available to view online from Jan. 7-13. On Jan. 13, there will be a group screening at 7 p.m. after which panelists will talk on about the impact of waste management practices and policies in Westchester, as well as solutions to reduce waste and the burden on communities like the Ironbound.

To register for the screening and the discussion, visit www.ardsley.org. Ardsley resident Carl McGloth served as the master of ceremonies for the film, which was directed by Julie Winkler and produced by Talking Bytes Media, an nonprofit that Winkler co-founded. McGloth was instrumental in creating the film's potential for social change. That effort, he noted.

"Before New Jersey passed the most progressive environmental justice law in the land [in 2020], local politicians denied the film with the bill's leading advocate and sponsors to help 'get the bill over the finish line,'" she explained.

The "Sacrifice Zone" has been screened in seven national and international festivals and won the Best Short on Sustainability at the 2021 Environmental Film Festival held in Washington, D.C.

"Doctors of education, politicians, and environmental organizations have based past screening discussions to tell about environmental inequities," McGloth said.

In Ardsley, the primary organizer of the event is Asha Beaumont, who was elected to the Ardsley Board of Trustees in November. She is the former co-chair of the Climate Advisory Committee. The



The Toxic Tour bus drives down Uranium Avenue, also known as Chemical Corridor, in the Ironbound neighborhood. In a one-mile stretch, the bus travels past a nuclear gas plant, a sewage treatment facility, a fuel rendering plant, and mountains of chemical storage containers.

Beaumont stressed that the invitation to view the film and watch the discussion extends to all residents of the Rivertowns and beyond. "We are fortunate in the Rivertowns to not live in close proximity to toxic facilities and we find many people that we speak to simply don't know where their waste ends up or who is affected by it," she said. "However, our waste is being sent to a waste-to-energy incinerator called the Wheelabrator in Peekskill. It is one of the largest sources of air pollution in the county and their community is suffering health impacts as a result of it."

Dana Laurent, chair of the Ardsley Multicultural, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, attended the "Sacrifice Zone" and the issues it raises are relevant to Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which is Jan. 17.

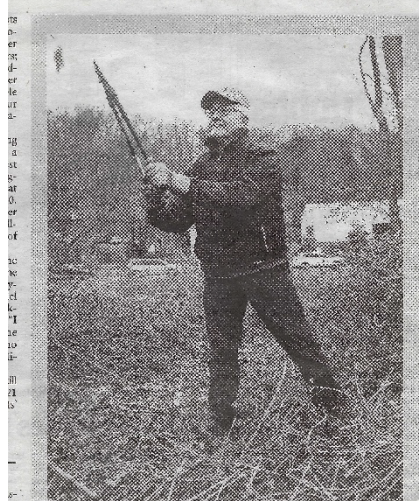
"We must all be held accountable for racial, social, and environmental justice and equity wherever it happens," Laurent said. "Our committee is dedicated to promoting and creating awareness so that progress can be made. We owe this to everyone, especially to the youth who are becoming more and more aware of issues of environmental justice."

Laurent credits her 13-year-old daughter, Ana, with her own growing activism. In August 2020, Ana was one of four middle school students who organized a rally in support of Susan Taylor that happened at Passaic Park in Ardsley.

"As a post-graduate nurse at Broward Hospital, I had never seen myself as having the time to be an activist," Dana Laurent said. "But Ana's action propelled me to get involved. Now I am shaped by that role."

Ani Laurent, now president of the student body at Ardsley Middle School, will be a panelist on Jan. 13. So will Brigette Griswold, executive director of Cromwell-Hudson Valley, a nonprofit based in Tarrytown, and Courtney Williams of the Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions, an effort to promote zero waste to make the Wheelabrator plant in Peekskill obsolete.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2022 THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE — PAGE 5



Invasives be gone

Photo of a field showing the removal of invasive vegetation along the Dutch County Parkway, south of Laverne Street, on Saturday, Feb. 12. The effort was organized by the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Committee.

MS4 Annual Report Form

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PAGE 8 — THE RIVERTOWNS ENTERPRISE FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 2022



The food scrap drop-off site at Veterans Park in Ardsley

Panelists raise environmental concerns

By Patricia Hohert

Following an online screening of "Taking Lives Media's award-winning documentary 'The Sacrifice Zone' on Jan. 13, a panel discussion focused on issues facing residents of Westchester County.

In alignment with the film, which describes the pollution surrounding the Ironbound neighborhood of Newark, N.J., panelists highlighted environmental concerns in Westchester communities largely populated by people of color and those with lower incomes.

The Village of Ardsley's Climate Advisory Committee (CAC) and Multicultural, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (AMDI) hosted the event. Trustee Anna Benenise, who is the village board's liaison to the CAC, served as organizer.

The panelists were Brigitte Griswold, executive director of Groundwork Hudson Valley, a nonprofit based in Yonkers; Courtney Williams of the Westchester Alliance for Sustainable Solutions (WASS); Anjali Southoff, environmental health science consultant and chair of health and community resilience teams for the Westchester County Climate Crisis Task Force; Ardsley Middle School student Ana Laurent; and Ardsley High School students Luke Lopez and Brian Thomas. CAC chair Ida Kopis served as moderator.

For the past two years, Groundwork Hudson Valley has embarked on a project in Yonkers called Climate Safe Neighborhoods, focusing on the issues of heat and flooding.

"Extreme heat is commonly called the silent killer," Griswold said, later adding that "it's here in Yonkers. It's here in the Northeast."

Groundwork Hudson Valley worked with NASA and NOAA's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to put together a heat vulnerability assessment based on satellite data. Griswold's presentation included maps showing that southwest Yonkers, where most of the city's black and brown residents live, has more asphalt and concrete and fewer trees, which results in a heat island effect.

Griswold then explained how the practice of "redlining," now illegal,

I can't vote yet, but I need to know that my government is taking action to protect my future — our future.

Luke Lopez

involved a government-sponsored agency — the Home Owners' Loan Corporation — that used red lines on maps to mark where people of color lived, which discouraged investment in those areas and resulted in industrial facilities being sited there. In Yonkers, she said, areas that were redlined are now the most prone to extreme heat and flooding.

Griswold also reported that positive work is being accomplished. This year, for the first time, a Climate Justice Task Force comprised of residents from the most vulnerable areas will work with the City of Yonkers on a climate action plan.

Williams also mentioned the wastewater treatment plant in southwest Yonkers, on the Hudson River. The 2022 Westchester County budget includes \$22.6 million for odor control measures at that facility and a methane recapture project that will allow it to generate 70 percent of its energy needs.

Williams, a professional career researcher who lives in Peekskill, talked about the Wheelabrator waste-to-energy incinerator in that city. The incinerator, which opened in 1984, burns waste from throughout Westchester County and generates electricity. WASS wants to reduce waste in an effort to reduce that facility's output.

"We need to be planning now for how to close Wheelabrator down," Williams said, noting that Westchester County extended its contract with the facility by 10 years in 2019.

In addition to following the Zero Waste Pyramid that includes reduce, reuse, recycle and recover, Williams promoted food scrap recycling programs. In the Rivertowns, food scrap drop-off sites exist at Veterans Park in

Ardsley, the Dobbs Ferry Department of Public Works, the Hastings Department of Public Works, and the Irvington Farmers' Market.

Southoff spoke about public health. During the coronavirus pandemic, she pointed out, people of color and those with lower incomes have been more likely to fall victim to the virus, and to have pre-existing conditions, such as diabetes and respiratory problems.

"There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle, because we do not live single-issue lives," Southoff said.

Marylane Shimsky of Dobbs Ferry, chair of the Westchester County Board of Legislators' Committee on Public Works and Transportation, also talked about reducing trash, especially food waste. Food waste, she said, "greatly increases energy usage at the incinerator," referring to Wheelabrator.

Lopez and Thomas, who are both juniors at Ardsley High School and co-presidents of the school's Environmental Task Force, stressed the need to reduce waste. Lopez is also a junior member of the CAC.

"I can't vote yet, but I need to know that my government is taking action to protect my future — our future," Lopez said.

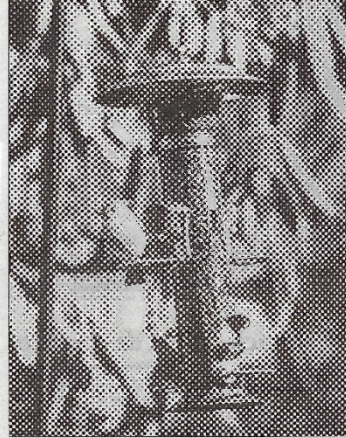
Inoue listed possible changes happening in New York State, such as bans on plastic bags and foam containers and packaging. Thomas mentioned giving away items through Buy Nothing groups on Facebook or donating them to nonprofits such as Midnight Run in Dobbs Ferry, which accepts clothing for men, toiletries, and blankets.

Laurent, an eighth-grader and president of the student body at Ardsley Middle School, is also a member of the AMDI. She kicked off the event with a tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. and connected his work and words with the subjects under discussion. To close out the evening, she spoke of how much she learned about systemic racism and environmental justice, and about possible solutions.

"We cannot be silent," she said, referring to a quote from King. Her mother, Dana Laurent, is the head of AMDI. To watch a recording of the panel discussion that followed the screening of "The Sacrifice Zone," go to ardsleycan.org.

To promote biodiversity, birdscaping beats landscaping

By Jackie Lopez



One of the feeders outside Carol Somerville's home

Birdscaping

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Invasive, such as porcelain berry and sweet potato vine, can steal habitat from beneficial plants.

Somerville said winter is a good time to look at the landscape. "I did this and realized I was missing a lot of birds," she said. "Think about your yard. Where do you have gaps, and how do you fill those gaps?"

The more levels in your "birdscape" the more varieties of birds will appear, because each plant layer offers birds a different menu. The Ardsley Pollinator Pathway is published as a guide. "Essential native plants for Birdscaping," that features photos of plants, along with growth requirements and information about the wildlife that depends on them.

Pontolillo also is a major concern since birds eat insects and feed insects to their babies. Citing entomologist Douglas Tallentire, author of the bestselling book

"During the winter deep freeze, gardeners' thoughts turn to spring landscaping. In Ardsley, the Pollinator Pathway Committee has another suggestion — to plan some "birdscaping" as well. In a Zoom get-together on Jan. 12, Carol Somerville, chair of the Ardsley Pollinator Pathway Committee, presented statistics about bird populations in North America and discussed how to help reverse the trend by making properties more hospitable to birds.

"I moved to Ardsley in 1983, I remember hearing much more birds," she said. "Many factors forest birds have been in population decline. For example, as in 16 seed thrushes are gone."

Since 1970, 176 million eastern forest birds have been lost, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Cornell researchers found that North America lost one in four birds over the past 50 years, and that the bird population decrease of breeding adult birds in the U.S. and Canada since 1998 is 2.9 billion.

Reasons for the decline are complex, but not irreversible. One of the biggest losses of habitat, due in part to invasive vegetation, is a decline in deciduous birds of forested wood. "We're starting birds by removing trees from the landscape," Somerville stated.

Somerville noted that climate change has resulted in unprecedented storm activity, leading to further bird population declines. Also, forest can't take outside kill an estimated 2.4 billion birds annually in the U.S., according to an analysis published in

the journal *Marine Communications* in 2013. According to the American Bird Conservancy, this has contributed to the extinction of 63 species of birds, mammals, and reptiles in the wild.

"It is not lost. We are going to stop development," Somerville acknowledged. "But what we can do is develop what we've done, and all of this is easy."

Homeowners with a yard can remove non-native plants and replace them with natives. The ideal birdscape offers building materials and sites for nesting, water for drinking and bathing, shelter from predators, and the elements, places for birds to raise their young, and sources of food. No one tree, flower, or bush provides all these benefits to every bird.

"Birdscaping should have layers," Somerville explained. "Redwood birdhouses should include native trees, shrubs, vines, herbaceous plants and flowers, grasses, and around cover plants. While some birds spend much of their lives above the canopy, such as vireos, herons, and ospreys, others, such as orioles and woodpeckers, nest high in the trees. Jays and cardinals prefer the mid-level heights, while nuthatches, chickadees, robins, and doves occupy small trees and shrubs, which can pick berries and seeds. Some birds are more comfortable close to the ground, such as juncos, dove finches, and robins."

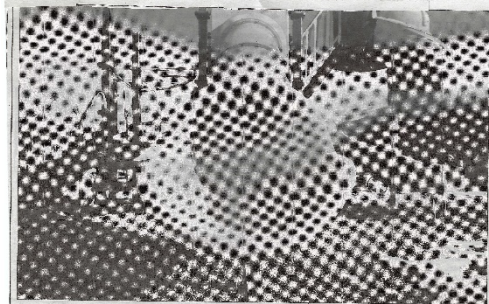
Vines also serve a beneficial purpose when they are native species, such as Virginia creeper. They're important for birds," Somerville explained. "They provide protection and food."

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feeds on the plant, its nectar, and seeds. Somerville said it is important to ask if a plant has been treated with pesticides. There's an act before the New York Legislature called the Birds and Bees Protection Act," she noted, referring to pending legislation to ban aerosols.

The next two installments of the "Birdscaping" series will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 16 at 6 p.m. and Wednesday, March 16 at 8 p.m. For more information, visit ardsleypollinatorpathway.org.

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The playground at Peconic Park

Village embarks on master plan for parks

By Jackie Lopez

The comprehensive plan adopted by the Village of Ardsley in spring 2013 named parks and recreation as a major focus for the future and development.

The Village is now seeking a consultant to create a blueprint for improving the village's parks and recreation facilities, protecting natural resources, and developing partnerships to deliver recreational programs and services. The move is intended to fulfill the mission of promoting the health and well-being of the community, environment, and economy.

The parks master plan will follow similar Comprehensive Plan principles for the process of design, citizen engagement, identification of elements, decision making, and implementation. Inclusion and equity, accessibility, sustainability, community participation, health and safety, and economic development are also key goals.

According to the Village's request for proposal (RFP) for conceptual proposals, the park, most recreational and cultural facilities, and participation, and equitable access to park facilities, programs and services, especially for people with disabilities, to create long-term adaptability and sustainability.

Parks plan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

ments," she said. "Many things have to be moved, maybe something has to be replaced, maybe we need more inclusive equipment, we might need a sprinkler park. Think trees, make them appealing and so on."

The parks master plan will also address issues of diversity and inclusion, as they apply both to the physical park to design and recreation programming. The master plan will ensure that parks are used not just for children, but are also made available with paths and facilities for people of all ages and abilities, and playground equipment and facilities are all accessible.

able to people with disabilities, per the Americans with Disabilities Act. Climate change is also moving forward on parks in the master plan. Flooding in Ardsley during the summer's Hurricane Ida exacerbated damage to Peconic and Peconic Park. For example, attending the Peconic Park board meeting, the mayor said the park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work.

The 12-acre Peconic Park has a playground, central field, basketball court, tennis courts, soccer field, baseball field, and a gazebo. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work.

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over time, the plan must also offer climate change adaptation strategies, such as energy efficiency, water conservation, stormwater management, and other measures to protect the park's infrastructure and resources.

The Village owns and operates two major parks and the Peconic Park. The Peconic Park is located in the northeast corner of the village. The Peconic Park is located in the northeast corner of the village. The Peconic Park is located in the northeast corner of the village.

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"Our third project was, very early on, to get to a complete review of the park and how best to utilize the property and equipment. We also had a lot of work on a particular park. In 2010, we had a park that was in a bad state and needed a lot of work. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work. The park is in a bad state and needs a lot of work."