

The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

APRIL , 2008

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Edgemont Community Council, Inc. cordially invites you to attend its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, **April 30, 2008** at 8:00 PM in the Greenville School Cafeteria, Glendale Road, Scarsdale, NY. We will begin our 61st year of service to the Edgemont Community.

On the agenda for the **April 30th** meeting are the President's Report; the Treasurer's Annual Report; the election of Officers and Directors of the Council for 2008-2009; a Guest Speaker; and the presentation of the Silver Box Award for Community Service.

Please join us for coffee and dessert between 7:30 and 8:00 PM

GUEST SPEAKER

This year's guest speaker is our Assemblyman, **Richard Brodsky**. Mr. Brodsky, a resident of unincorporated Greenburgh, represents the 92d Assembly District in Albany, which includes all of the Town of Greenburgh, including its six incorporated villages, a portion of Briarcliff Manor in the Town of Mount Pleasant and a small portion of Yonkers. Mr. Brodsky, a Democrat, serves as chairman of the State Standing Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions which, among other things, has jurisdiction over the MTA, the Thruway Authority, the Port Authority, and the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation. In recent months he has become a leading opponent of New York City Mayor Bloomberg's congestion pricing plan which calls for an \$8 toll on all traffic entering Manhattan below 86th Street.

THE SILVER BOX AWARD

The 2008 Silver Box Award for Community Service will be presented jointly to Sarah Stern and Mark Rosenblatt in recognition of their ongoing service to the Edgemont community. Their achievements are highlighted on page 5.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This has been a fabulous year for our school district, which is in its third year of a remarkable financial turnaround - with 3 consecutive years of single digit tax increases - while continuing to garner state and national recognition for excellence. Unfortunately, as you'll read in this issue, it has not been such a good year for Greenburgh which, even with spending increases at only a modest 5.5%, still had to approve a huge 21% tax hike for unincorporated Greenburgh, while surrounding towns and villages all managed to keep their tax hikes in the single digits.

ECC is the umbrella organization for all the Edgemont civic associations, and as such it is the only common forum representing the entire Edgemont community. As it begins its 61st year of service to this community, I ask that you support ECC by sending in your membership dues. In addition to supporting the annual newsletter and other activities, your dues support the School Board Nominating Committee, which is funded solely by ECC. I also encourage you to become involved, either with your civic association or with ECC. The greater our awareness and participation, the more we will make a difference in the quality of life in Edgemont.

I look forward to greeting you personally on the 30th.

Bob Bernstein

The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

Founded in 1947 to determine community opinion on civic matters and coordinate community action thereon and to plan and promote the general welfare of the community embraced within Union Free School District # 6.

Officers and Directors

OFFICERS:

President	Robert Bernstein
1st VP	Michelle McNally
2nd VP	Todd Garvelink
Treasurer	John Sganga
Recording Secretary	Pamela Ray
Corresponding Secretary	Lisa Wexler

DIRECTORS:

John Blakley	Larry Rusoff
Karen Ford Kelly	Robin Schaffer
Christine Klerer	David Stern
Neal Lerner	David Younger
Madelon O'Shea	

SBNC Representatives

Burt Lefkowitz	Eric Kantor
Siobhan Dolan (alt)	

Newsletter Editors:

	Mark Baron
Robert Bernstein	Michelle McNally

The eight member Associations of the Edgemont Community Council, Inc. are

- The Central Park Avenue Civic Association
- The Cotswold Association, Inc.
- The Edgemont Association
- Fort Hill Association
- Greenridge Association
- Longview Association
- Northern Greenville Association
- Southern Greenville Association

The Edgemont Community Council, Inc. Newsletter is published annually by the Board of Directors and is distributed without charge throughout the Edgemont Community

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

In accordance with the Council's by-laws, the election of Officers and Directors will take place at the Annual Meeting. The following names have been placed in nomination as Officers for 1 year terms; Directors for the terms indicated; and School Board Nominating Committee Representatives and Alternates, as indicated, by the Nominating Committee.

OFFICERS:

President	Robert Bernstein
First Vice President	Michelle McNally
Second Vice President	Todd Garvelink
Treasurer	John Sganga
Recording Secretary	Pamela Ray
Corresponding Secretary	Lisa Wexler

DIRECTORS:

3 Year Term Ending June 30, 2011	Pamela Ray
	Andrea Weiss

SCHOOL BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES:

Regular Member— 1 yr term ending 6/30/09	Siobhan Dolan
Alternate Member—1 yr term ending 6/30/09	Marilyn Greenwald

Just a reminder from your Board of Directors about Voter registration. All citizens of the United States who are registered voters are eligible to cast a ballot in the School District budget vote and election on **Tuesday May 20, 2008**. The voting place is the Gymnasium at Edgemont Junior/Senior High School on White Oak Lane. The polls will be open from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM. Registration information can be obtained from the School District at its business office at Edgemont Junior/Senior School on White Oak Lane during normal school hours.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Unprecedented Tax Increase

Town taxes for 2008 will increase by a whopping 21.1%, and it's not because of any extraordinary expense. Expenditures in both the unincorporated (town outside villages) and town-wide budgets will rise by only 5.5% and 6.1%, respectively. Rather, for the past several years, the Town has been offsetting increases in its expenses by drawing down millions of dollars each year from the town's "accumulated fund balance." The "accumulated fund balance" consists of revenues received in excess of town spending year after year. Last fall, however, the Town's auditor informed the Town Board that it could not draw down as much as it had in the past without jeopardizing the Town's bond rating.

As a result, on the eve of the November election, Supervisor Feiner announced a whopping 23.05% tax increase. In December, the Town Board was able to whittle that number down to 19.45%. In March, however, the town announced that taxes in unincorporated Greenburgh would increase further, bringing the total 2008 increase to an astounding and unprecedented 21.1%. In Edgemont, where the average house is assessed at around \$30,000, this translates to an increase in town taxes of approximately \$760.

The Town has, meanwhile, been trying to cut expenses. For example, the Town recently eliminated senior level positions in the Planning Department, the Town Attorney's department, and at the Theodore D. Young Community Center in Fairview. The Town has also left unfilled the Town Engineer's position. Even though these savings in salaries and benefits total more than \$500,000 for this year alone, the Town decided to continue taxing unincorporated Greenburgh residents in 2008 as if none of these cuts had been made, rather than offset the current tax increase. Instead, the Town wants to use this new "accumulated fund balance" to soften the impact of the double-digit tax increase that our new town comptroller has said we should expect to see in 2009.

Comprehensive Plan

One of the reasons for the huge tax increase is that the value of assessed ratables for commercial properties in the unincorporated area continues to plummet. Over the past two years alone, total assessed value in unincorporated Greenburgh went down by \$14.1 million -- a 4.3% decline -- due almost entirely to write-downs in the assessed value of the

town's commercial property. As a result, even without taking any cost increases into account, residential taxpayers have to pay at least that much more in town taxes just to pick up the slack. And in Edgemont, the assessed value of commercial property has also declined markedly -- so much so that even with the large number of new homes built, along with renovations to existing homes, the total assessed value of property in Edgemont today is the same as what it was 18 years ago -- \$72 million. What this means is that residential taxpayers in Edgemont are paying a far greater percentage than they used to not just in town taxes, but in school and other taxes as well.

To deal with these problems, as well as many others, in December 2007, the Town hired Ferrandino and Associates, Inc. to assist in the development of a Comprehensive Plan for the town's unincorporated area that includes an updated Central Avenue Comprehensive Development Program. A comprehensive plan is the framework for all the land use laws and regulations in the town. On March 8, a town kick-off meeting was held at the Veteran Park Multipurpose Center. Residents were invited to give input on a number of issues, ranging from economic development to traffic and infrastructure, land use, the environment, affordable housing and quality of life issues. The meeting was well attended and people were enthusiastic about the project. The comprehensive plan steering committee will hold a series of smaller meetings throughout the town to seek input on community, neighborhood and town issues. **A meeting in Edgemont has been scheduled for April 10 at 7:30 PM in the Greenville School Cafeteria.** Your input is important to the success of this plan. Please mark your calendars, and plan to attend.

Dromore Road Property

In February 2007, the Town's Planning Commissioner issued a determination that a 2+ acres parcel on Dromore Road is not in the Central Avenue zone, which permits multi-family housing, but rather is in the R-20 (1/2 acre) zone, which allows for single family residences only. The owner/developer of the property filed an appeal of the Planning Commissioner's determination with the Town's Zoning Board. In October the Zoning Board voted to uphold the Planning Commissioner's determination. The developer has filed suit in federal court to have the Zoning Board

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued from page 3)

decision overturned. The town is defending the Zoning Board decision and is using outside counsel to deal with this matter.

Edgemont Burglaries

In response to a rash of burglaries that occurred last summer and continued into the early fall, ECC sponsored a community meeting with Police Chief John Kapica and Crime Prevention Officers last October. Since then, ECC has continued to stay updated on events so that we can keep Edgemont residents informed. While the number of break-ins has declined because suspects as well as an actual burglar have been apprehended, recent incidents indicate we have not seen the last of them. Chief Kapica continues to remind residents to use their burglar alarms, to leave lights on when they go out, to stop mail and newspaper deliveries when they leave for a vacation and to report any suspicious cars, including limousines, or any other suspicious activity to the Greenburgh Police at 682-5300.

Taxter Ridge Lawsuit

The Taxter Ridge Lawsuit, also known as the Bernstein lawsuit, continues to take new twists and turns.

In February 2005, the State Supreme Court in Westchester ruled that it was unlawful for the Town to charge only unincorporated Greenburgh taxpayers for the cost of acquiring and maintaining Taxter Ridge, a 187-acre parcel of parkland that was open to all town residents, including residents of the town's incorporated villages. The court rejected application of the so-called Finneran Law, which requires that the town charge only unincorporated Greenburgh residents for the costs of parks restricted to their use. However, at the urging of the villages, the Town appealed that ruling and the villages filed an amicus brief.

In February this year, the Appellate Court reversed the lower court decision and adopted the Town's and Villages' position that the Finneran Law - which was enacted in 1982 at Greenburgh's request only for Greenburgh -- mandates that the cost of town parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities must always be charged only to residents in the town's unincorporated area. The court also held that the Finneran Law mandates that unless the villages consent in advance (and agree to pay the taxes) the use of all those parks, play-

grounds and recreational facilities must be restricted to unincorporated area residents only, and that the only exception (not applicable here) is if the terms of a federal grant require otherwise. Mr. Bernstein has informed the town that he is appealing that ruling.

In the meantime, the Town now has to deal with the ramifications of the ruling it fought so hard to get and now realizes may not be so easy to comply with. The reason is that the Town has for years made many of its parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities open to all town residents, including residents of the villages - without getting advance consent from the villages and, of course, without charging them any taxes either. For example, the Town has been informed by its legal department that it may have to abandon its practice of offering membership in the town pool at Veteran Park to village residents who serve as volunteer firemen or ambulance workers, or who have disabled children. Under the court ruling, unless the villages agree to pay their fair share of taxes to support the town's parks, those village residents may now have to be served by whatever facilities their respective villages have to offer.

Similarly, the Town may have to abandon the tennis bubble deal, under which, in exchange for allowing a private vendor to winterize and upgrade the tennis courts at Veteran Park, the town agreed to lift residency restrictions. Under the court ruling, those residency restrictions are supposed to be mandatory and may not be able to be waived.

Because the appellate court ruling conflicts with the town's practice of offering open access to its parks and recreation facilities, Feiner is seeking to have the Finneran Law amended to give the Town Board the authority to open town parks at its discretion but still charge only the unincorporated area taxpayers for their cost.

Feiner presented a proposed amendment in February, at which time he explained that he wanted the Town Board to approve it as soon as possible so that it could be sent to the state legislature for passage before that group recessed in June. At a meeting on March 4, residents throughout the unincorporated area expressed opposition to discarding Finneran's use restriction provision, and asked the Town Board to delay action on this matter. In response, Feiner organized a committee to review the Finneran Law

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🌿 The Silver Box Award to Sarah Stern & Mark Rosenblatt 🌿

Since 1950, the Edgemont Community Council has presented its Silver Box Award for Community Service 53 times. It has gone to a pair of individuals twice and to a husband and wife 4 times. Three of those four awards were to a husband and wife jointly (the Toffs, the O'Sheas and the Orces). In 1988 Susan Davis was the honoree and then, seven years later, her husband Bill was recognized by the Community.

2008 marks the fourth time that a wife and husband will, together, be honored in Edgemont. With great pride and admiration, the Edgemont Community Council will award this year's Silver Box jointly to Ms. Sarah Stern and to Mr. Mark Rosenblatt.

Ms. Stern, the outgoing president of the Edgemont School District, is being recognized for her leadership in contributing to the school district's stunning financial turnaround. She is also being recognized for her many years of service to the community as chairman of the School Board Nominating Committee, as chairman of the district's Great Books program, as a former ECC director, and as a

former chair of the Silver Box committee.

Mr. Rosenblatt is being honored for his having helped found the Edgemont School Foundation which, since the early 1990s, has contributed well over a million dollars to support and enhance the value of an Edgemont education. Mr. Rosenblatt also chaired the Edgemont Village Exploratory Committee which produced a substantial independent white paper in 2005 that will serve as a guide for those who may seek to incorporate Edgemont as Greenburgh's seventh village, and for those who might oppose such an effort.

Ms. Stern, who grew up right here in Edgemont, is the second child of a Silver Box recipient to be honored. The first time was in 1993 when John Moyle was honored. John's father, William was the Silver Box honoree in 1955. Sarah's mother, Betsy, was honored in 1982.

Please come to the annual meeting and help congratulate these two very distinguished award recipients.

🌿 Edgemont's Civic Associations 🌿

The Edgemont Community Council is a large umbrella organization for all residents of the Edgemont Community. There are 8 local civic associations in the Community as well, whose presidents serve as directors of ECC. Our member associations are –

Central Park Avenue is on the east side of Central Ave and includes the following address: 300; 330-356; and 370-372. This organization is currently not functioning and as a result, sends no delegates to the School Board Nominating Committee.

Edgemont Association is one of the two original Edgemont civic associations, with boundaries running from Central Avenue to the Bronx River Parkway, Dromore Road to the Yonkers line east of Old Army Road and the co-ops with addresses 500-509 Central Ave.

Ft. Hill encompasses the area north and south of Underhill Road. It runs from Fort Hill Road south to include Stonleigh Close and the east side of Anadale, and west along Sheridan. On its northern side it includes Rock Hill Lane and goes west to Sprain Road.

Greenridge is centered around streets adjacent to the Scarsdale Golf Club and has a Hartsdale address.

Longview runs from Central Avenue west to Sprain Parkway, from the north side of Ardsley Road to the invisible east/west line that runs down the middle of Sheridan Road.

Northern Greenville includes Scarsdale Country Estates; Scarsdale Meadows; Stoneridge Manor and all of the area behind the post office north to Healy Avenue.

Southern Greenville roughly corresponds to boundaries of Central Avenue west to Sprain Parkway, Jackson Avenue to Ardsley Road.

The Cotswold Association dates back to the late 1920's. Its boundaries run from the Yonkers line to Ardsley Road, from Central Avenue to the west side of Old Army Road.

❧ PRESIDENT'S REPORT ❧

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and make suggestions for changes. It is not clear at this time if any proposed amendment will be sent to the state legislature before its June recess or whether, with the matter still being litigated in the courts, the legislature would even consider an amendment at this time.

❧ Scarsdale Teen Center (STC) ❧

Three years ago an Edgemont student became involved with the Scarsdale Teen Center, which hosted band performances and other activities. As the STC's first Edgemont teen liaison, he worked on getting more Edgemont kids involved. Events were advertised at the high school, and in 2006 STC's activities were brought to the attention of the Edgemont Committee on Community Health (ECCH). ECCH and members of the community visited STC and after a series of meetings began to consider ways for the Edgemont community to contribute to the STC so that Edgemont kids could participate in a neighborhood social and recreation center. ECCH spoke with ECC about this, and our group was enthusiastic about finding a way to support it. In July, 2007, as a result of efforts by ECC president, Bob Bernstein, Bill Ryan, Chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators, announced that the county would award STC a \$35,000 grant to launch the participation of Edgemont kids in the center. The county intends to renew the grant for the coming year. Meanwhile, Edgemont Recreation Corp. also contributed \$30,000 last year and will do so again this year.

STC is an example of how communities working together can achieve good things. In addition to funding from the Village of Scarsdale and the above-mentioned sources, funding also comes from private donors. We hope Edgemont families will give this important resource for our kids its support.

❧ Ardsley Road Resurfacing ❧

We have been informed by County Legislator Tom Abinanti's office that this project will start in the latter part of the third quarter.

❧ Crane Road Bridge Project ❧

The County's environmental review to identify potential impacts resulting from this project is underway. Three design alternatives are being considered. One alternative is to reconstruct the bridge; the other two alternatives call for replacement of the bridge. The project includes measures to improve pedestrian access from Greenburgh and Scarsdale to the Bronx River Parkway Reservation and Metro North. The County expects to complete a final design report this summer. Further information can be found at the County's website: westchester.gov.com.

❧ Greenburgh Library ❧

In May 2005 Voters approved a \$19.8 million library expansion (although in Edgemont the proposal was narrowly defeated). Construction began in January 2007. The town expects the project to be complete by the end of this year. The town attributed only 2% of the 21% tax hike this year to the library expansion.

❧ Membership ❧

Membership in ECC continues to grow. For the 2007 year, membership reached an all-time high of 270 families. In addition to our sponsorship of the School Board Nominating Committee, a healthy financial position will enable us to keep you well informed and well represented. We appreciate your support and welcome hearing from you. ECC meetings are held the first Monday of the month, except during July and August. You can also reach us by email at www.edgemontcommunitycouncil.org.

❧ Traffic & Safety Reminder ❧

Council reminds all drivers to observe local speed limits; to obey traffic signals — especially stop signs and to be considerate of pedestrians

Council reminds you to support the Edgemont Foundation. The purpose of making grants to the Edgemont School District in This past year the Foundation made several large grants to the



Foundation operates as a not for profit corporation for the order to fund miscellaneous, but worthy, unbudgeted projects. Edgemont School System. Any size gift is appreciated.

Check the Blue Book for civic association meeting dates and contact information. Please help support Council's efforts, and those of the local associations as well, by becoming a member of your local association in addition to Council.

Remember, membership in The Edgemont Community Council is available at two different levels. Regular Membership at \$15 and Supporting Membership at \$30.



REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SCHOOL BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accordance with the current School Board Nominating Committee By-Laws, Sections A.4(a&d), Designation of Members of the Committee "...The second announcement must include the dates and places of the meetings at which elections will be held and the names of all candidates previously submitted who will be considered for election. ... **If an organization does not comply with the foregoing requirements, its designees shall not serve as a member of the Committee**" Only the individuals named below from their sending organizations will be eligible for election and subsequent seating on the Committee.

Central Park Avenue

2 Year

1 Year

Alternate

Edgemont

May 19, 2008— 8:00 PM

Edgemont High School Faculty Lounge

2 Year Tim Adler

1 Year Darrel Seife— completing 2 year term

Alternates Deborah Schenfeld; Lisa Bucksler-Sholtz

Fort Hill

TBA

2 Year

1 Year

Alternate

Greenridge

June 1, 2008 — 4:00 PM

Will be announced in the Association's mailing

2 Year

1 Year Urvashi Kohli— completing 2 year term

Alternate

Longview

May 12, 2008 – 8:00 PM

Greenville School Library

1 Year Judy Seiff— completing 2 year term

1 Year Margie Lewis — completing 2 year term

Alternate Laura Cooperman

Northern Greenville

April 14, 2008 — 8:00 PM

2 Year Pam Bove

1 Year

Alternate

Southern Greenville

May 18, 2008 — 3:00 PM

Castle Walk cul-de-sac

2 Year Calvin Chin

1 Year Gary Stern

Alternate

Cotswold

May 4, 2008 — 4:00 PM

Will be announced in the Association's mailing

2 Year Wendy Amer Hirsch

1 Year Lisa Feldman— completing 2 year term

Alternate Mark Romney

Edgemont Community Council

April 30, 2008 — 8:00 PM

Greenville School Cafeteria

1 Year Eric Kantor—completing 2 year term

1 Year Siobhan Dolan—completing 2 year term

Alternate Marilyn Greenwald

Annual Meeting
April 30, 2008
Greenville Cafeteria
8:00 PM

The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.
PO Box 1161
Scarsdale, NY 10583-9161

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The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

P.O. Box 1161
Scarsdale, NY 10583-9161

I am interested in furthering the activities of the Edgemont Community Council and would like to become a member.
Enclosed are my family's dues for the year July 1, 2008—June 30, 2009.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

eMail Address: _____

Regular Membership \$15

Supporting Membership \$30

Your comments please: