

# The Edgemont Community Council, Inc.

APRIL , 2011

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Edgemont Community Council, Inc. cordially invites you to attend its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, **April 27, 2011** at 8:00 PM in the Greenville School Cafeteria, Glendale Road, Scarsdale, NY. We will begin our 64<sup>th</sup> year of service to the Edgemont Community.

On the agenda for the **April 27<sup>th</sup>** meeting are the President's Report; the Treasurer's Annual Report; the election of Officers and Directors of the Council for 2011-2012; the presentation of the Silver Bowl award for service to our community; and a Guest Speaker.

### GUEST SPEAKER

This year's guest speaker will be Mayor Carolyn Stevens of Scarsdale. Mayor Stevens will address us on the topic of "Municipal Government: Controlling Your Own Destiny". She will discuss Scarsdale's experience in using professional management to run its operations; volunteerism; and Scarsdale's non-partisan term limits system.

### THE SILVER BOWL AWARD

This year the ECC will bestow its Silver Bowl Award for distinguished community service on longtime resident Paul Solomon. Paul joined the faculty of the Edgemont School District in 1974 and, since 1976, he has been the Executive Director of the Edgemont Recreation Corporation. In addition to providing a large and diverse sports activity program and running a summer day camp for Edgemont kids, Edgemont Rec has, under Paul's leadership, donated nearly \$2 million to our school district. Please turn to page 4 for a précis of Paul's service.

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Amid signs this spring that the country may finally be on the road to economic recovery, this has been yet another good year for our school district, which is in its sixth year of a remarkable financial turnaround -- with six consecutive years of single digit tax hikes, including this year's proposed hike of around 3% -- a remarkable feat considering huge increases in costs and tax cert obligations necessitated by a Town which hasn't had a reassessment in 55 years. At the same time, even though a dozen veteran teachers have accepted early retirement as part of an austerity move, no teachers have had to be laid off and the quality of an Edgemont education remains unmatched. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the Town of Greenburgh, which has not only increased town taxes to Edgemont residents by more than 46% since 2006 but, as you'll read in this issue, all of our pleas to cut town spending have fallen on deaf ears, plans for a town-wide reassessment to address the hemorrhaging of cash in our school and fire district are on hold and, even though he tells Edgemont residents otherwise, the Town Supervisor is still seeking consolidation of our fire district with that of Hartsdale and Fairview which, if spending remains the same, would result in an immediate increase in our fire taxes of more than 21%

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 64<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup>.

*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  
**1<sup>st</sup> VP** Marc Ackerman  
**2<sup>nd</sup> VP** Jonathan Faust  
**Treasurer** John Sganga  
**Recording Secretary** Karen Kelly  
**Corresponding Secretary** Larry Rusoff

**DIRECTORS:**

Gregory Adams Robert Klerer  
 John Blakley, Sr. Schuyler Kraus  
 John Coleman Geoff Loftus  
 Todd Garvelink Andrea Weiss  
 Jonathan Kelly

**SBNC Representatives** Catherine Woods  
 Nancy Shifren Jonathan Bender (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** Geoff Loftus  
**First Vice President** Marc Ackerman  
**Second Vice President** Jonathan Faust  
**Treasurer** Gregory Adams  
**Recording Secretary** Karen Kelly  
**Corresponding Secretary** Aubrey Graf-Daniels

**DIRECTORS:**

**3 Year Term Ending June 30, 2014** Alec Clarke  
 Matthew Jaffee  
 Monica Sganga  
 Andrea Weiss  
**1 Year Term Ending June 30, 2012** John Blakely

**SCHOOL BOARD NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES:**

**Regular Member— 2 yr term ending 6/30/13** Cary McGee  
 Sara Blotner  
**Alternate Member—1 yr term ending 6/30/12** Helene Orce

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 17, 2011**. 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. All high school students who will be eighteen years of age by May 17<sup>th</sup> are urged to register to vote as soon as possible so that they may be allowed to participate in the election.

ECC is holding a fundraising at Frankie & Fanucci's on Hartsdale Avenue on Tuesday, May 3. The fundraiser doesn't cost anything. Enjoy a meal at the restaurant or place an order for takeout. Present a flyer (available on ECC's website: [www.edgemontcommunitycouncil.org](http://www.edgemontcommunitycouncil.org)) to your server or when picking up food, and 20% of your bill will be donated to the ECC.

## 🌿 PRESIDENT'S REPORT 🌿

The Edgemont Community Council has had another terrific year in protecting and fighting for the rights of the 8500 residents of our school and fire districts.

The biggest issue on our plate continues to be high property taxes. Between 2006 and 2011, our fire taxes went up about 11%, our school taxes went up around 20% -- but our town taxes jumped by more than 46%.

Consequently, we at ECC have focused our attention on town taxation. We have pointed out that Greenburgh is the only town in the entire country that has two separate recreation departments, each with its own set of commissioners earning six-figure salaries, separate day camps, separate programs, separate staffs, and even separate facilities. We have suggested that combining the two departments could result in millions of dollars in savings and make more money available for programs for those economically at risk. We were ignored.

We have also pointed out that the Town has its own police SWAT team, even though it duplicates one available to us at the county level. And the Town operates its own after school program for children, even though every single school district in the Town already has its own after school children's program.

We have pointed out that, even though not mandated by the state, the Town spends hundreds of thousands of dollars a year on busing children each summer to camp, without even seeking to charge a fee to those who can afford to pay for it. Again, the Town ignored us.

We noted that the Town's taxpayer-financed meals on wheels program for senior citizens continues to subsidize meals for seniors in the neighboring towns of Mount Pleasant and Eastchester while the costs for operating this program continue to escalate, and urged the Town to outsource the program to fixed-price private not-for-profit contractors for town residents only, as our neighboring towns have done for their seniors, but the Town again ignored us.

Indeed, we showed the Town that had they accepted the fixed prices offered by the company that supplies meals to seniors in neighboring Scarsdale, we would be paying less for this needed service today than we currently pay -- but to no avail.

We also urged the Town in these times of austerity to cut services and personnel that are nice to have, like the Town's "Council on the Arts" and "energy consultant" -- but to no avail.

At the same time, we took a close look at the Town's new three-year contract for the police, saw that it raised wages by more than 10%, and, in contrast with our fire district, which generally charges only straight time for overtime, mandates that all overtime for police be charged at time-and-a-half, and asked that the Town at least delay approval of the contract until we could see the budget figures for 2011.

But the Town Board, which released the contract to the public only about an hour prior to its being voted on, ignored our plea.

On the bright side, we thought the Town was at long last serious about tackling the crippling problem of property reassessment, which has cost our school and fire districts millions of dollars annually in having to pay tax refunds, mostly to commercial property owners, as a result of tax certiorari settlements. The reason was that for the first time in the Town's entire history, it was planning to borrow several million dollars to cover its own anticipated tax cert obligations in 2011.

Unfortunately, the Town seems to have given up on reassessment, insisting instead on doing another study to follow up on a two-year study that preceded it.

The bottom line is that unless the county does it for us, which isn't very likely, or Edgemont incorporates as a village and undertakes to do its own reassessment, just as Bronxville, Pelham and Rye have done, and Mamaroneck and Scarsdale are planning to do, our school and fire districts will continue to hemorrhage cash to settle tax certs, while the value of our property tax base declines.

We have also had to do battle with the Town over the Town Supervisor's continuing effort to try to consolidate our fire district with Hartsdale and Fairview Fire Districts -- despite the fact that such consolidation would, by all accounts, including his, increase Edgemont's fire taxes by more than 21%.

At a recent "outreach" meeting in Edgemont, the Town Supervisor insisted that he was against consolidation for that reason. But at the same time, he was asking the state for a \$50,000 grant to study consolidation by falsely representing that such consolidation would reduce fire taxes by as much as 30%. We understand that our fire district is so incensed over that application and its false statements, that a complaint has been filed with the state Attorney General demanding an investigation.

We have also reached out to other parts of Town in an effort to try to get Town government under control. Thus, for example, when it appeared that the Town was not prepared to defend a \$4.6 million complaint filed against it by the Valhalla School District demanding that the Town honor a gift of town funds that the state comptroller deemed illegal, I successfully intervened with a Dobbs Ferry resident on the Town's behalf and filed a motion for summary judgment dismissing the complaint and seeking the return to the Town of \$1.8 million in payments illegally made to that school district.

I also brought ethics charges against two Zoning Board members, one for accepting money from the representative of a person with an application pending before the board,

*(Continued on page 4)*

## 🌿 Silver Bowl Award for Service to Paul Solomon 🌿

This year's Silver Bowl Award for distinguished community service will be presented to longtime Edgemont resident Paul Solomon. Mr. Solomon is a fifth grade teacher at Greenville who's been teaching in the Edgemont School District for 37 years. He is also currently president of the Edgemont Teachers Association. In addition, for the past several decades, Mr. Solomon has been executive director of the Edgemont Recreation Corporation, known as "Edgemont Rec," a private not-for-profit company which provides year-round recreational opportunities and a summer camp for Edgemont's children, and which has, under his helm, donated nearly \$2 million to the school district.

Mr. Solomon, who has lived in Edgemont for more than 25 years, became an obvious choice for the award last month when we learned that he, along with 11 other faculty members, agreed to accept the school district's "early retirement" offer, the result of which was to reduce next year's tax increase to nearly 3%.

Mr. Solomon started teaching at Edgemont in 1974, when he was hired to teach sixth grade "language arts." He has taught fifth and sixth grade at Greenville his entire career here. He also quickly became involved in the community, regularly attending school board meetings and becoming involved in Edgemont Rec.

He became executive director of Edgemont Rec in 1976. He has also been a member of the Edgemont Scholarship Council, organized charity basketball

games against the Greenburgh Police, advised Student Council, served on the district's professional development committee, community school goals committee, site-based management team, and revenue enhancement committee, to name just a few. He also initiated in the 1980s Greenville's fifth grade now traditional trip to Washington, D.C.

Among his many honors over the years, he was also named Edgemont School District Teacher of the Year and, as a member of the E-Club and an E-Day volunteer for the past 28 years, he is a past recipient of the Sven Sellberg Community Service Award.

As director of Edgemont Rec, he has overseen contributions to the school district for such amenities as a new track, scoreboards, basketball backboards, team uniforms, soccer and lacrosse goals, athletic equipment, playground equipment, the EHS weight room, the tennis and paddle tennis courts, chorus and band risers, new bleachers, batting cages and backstops, and new roofs for the gyms at Greenville and EHS.

He is also the proud father of Kristan, herself an Edgemont graduate, who received her entire elementary and high school education here at Edgemont.

Mr. Solomon's accomplishments at Edgemont for nearly four decades have been truly remarkable. He has earned the respect and admiration of the entire Edgemont community. Please join us at our annual meeting on April 27 at 8 p.m. at the Greenville School in honoring Mr. Solomon.

## 🌿 PRESIDENT'S REPORT 🌿

*(Continued from page 3)*

and the other for not disclosing that he had a business relationship with the applicant and his representative. The Town responded by demanding that the Ethics Board shut down all investigations against all Town officials, whether elected or appointed.

In the meantime, we continue to reach out to our fellow residents. Our Facebook page gets hundreds of "hits" every time we post an announcement. Our monthly meetings are very well attended. Our roster of ECC directors continues to reflect increases in membership among newer residents willing to take the helm and steer our community in the right direction.

Along those lines, this is my last report to you as ECC president. After four years in office, it's my turn to step down and let Geoff Loftus take the reins. It has been a privilege and honor to serve my fellow Edgemont friends and neighbors, and I thank you for the opportunity.

However, rest assured, as I give up the gavel, I do not intend to give up my commitment to continue to do what's right for our community.

Residents are reminded that minutes of the ECC, which meets the first Monday of every month throughout the school year, are posted on the ECC's website, [www.edgemontcommunitycouncil.org](http://www.edgemontcommunitycouncil.org).

**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**" In accordance with a 2010 change to Council's by-laws, unless Council's Board of Directors acts to fill a position, 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 23, 2011— 8:00 PM

Edgemont High School Faculty Lounge

2 Year Sarah Stern

1 Year Kelly Ivanoski

Alternates

**Fort Hill**

May 19, 2011—8:00 PM

1 Year Monica Sganga

1 Year

Alternate

**Greenridge**

TBA

Will be announced in the Association's mailing

1 Year

1 Year

Alternate

**Longview**

June 4, 2011

Will be announced in the Association's mailing

2 Year Scott Rothstein

1 Year Liz Silverstein

Alternate

**Northern Greenville**

2 Year

1 Year

Alternate

**Southern Greenville**

1 Year

1 Year

Alternate

**Cotswold**

May 1, 2010 — 4:00 PM

Will be announced in the Association's mailing

2 Year Andrea Weiss

1 Year Jolie Worobow

Alternate Laura Seeley

**Edgemont Community Council**

April 27, 2011— 8:00 PM

Greenville School Cafeteria

2 Year Carey McGee

1 Year Sara Blotner

Alternate Helene Orce

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

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**Annual Meeting**  
**April 27, 2011**  
**Greenville Cafeteria**  
**8:00 PM**



*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, 2011—June 30, 2012.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

eMail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Regular Membership \$15

Supporting Membership \$30

Your comments please:

