



91st Assembly District

Larchmont - Mamaroneck - New Rochelle - Port Chester - Rye Brook and Rye

September 20, 2023

Dear Friends,

This newsletter brings information on cybersecurity protection, lithium battery safety guidance and new state grant opportunities for arts funding.

I have also included my comments delivered at our area September 11<sup>th</sup> ceremonies. Our communities lost many individuals, and we continue to see the loss of first responders and others stricken by 9/11 related illnesses. I attended events in Mamaroneck, New Rochelle and Rye. The outdoor Port Chester ceremony, always a meaningful gathering at Lyons Park, was rained out this year.

I have been a leading advocate for digital inclusion programs around the state. As part of that work, I collaborate with the New York State Digital Equity Network (NYSDEN), a statewide network of groups that have been providing these programs for many years. I was recently a signatory on the letter NYSDEN submitted to comment on the state digital equity plan being drafted now. Westchester's STEM Alliance and their president, Meg Käufer, have been leaders in this effort. You can read the NYSDEN advocacy letter [here](#) that provides important information on how we should grow digital equity programs.

The lithium battery safety information was provided by the New Rochelle Fire Department, which is making an effort to spread the word regarding best practices to prevent this common cause of unnecessary fires in Westchester, New York City, and around the country.

Events also highlighted below included the opening of a new Wallauer Ace Hardware store in Mamaroneck. Also of note is a lecture at the Jay Heritage Center in Rye.

Below you will find:

- 9/11 Ceremonies
- Lithium Battery Safety
- Cybersecurity info session

- Ribbon Cutting at Wallauer Ace Hardware
- O'Neill Fellowship Talk at Jay Heritage
- Arts Funding
- Bond Act Project Deadline Extension

As always, do not hesitate to contact me or my staff on issues in this e-mail or any matter in which I can be helpful. My office number is 914-939-7028.

Warm regards,



**Assemblyman Steve Otis Statement, September 11, 2023 Ceremony**



We gather again to remember, honor, and celebrate the lives of those we know who we lost on September 11<sup>th</sup>. The feeling of loss has not diminished over time. If anything, the span of years that we have been without the friends we lost resonates more profoundly.

One act of love and defiance we all can take is to bring back the memories of the good times we had with our friends. Bring back how they lived, laughed and enjoyed family, friends and the life of our community. In this way we can bring them back, bring them closer to us.

We also must all live with the fact that the tragedy continues in new ways. We continue to lose first responders and others from September 11<sup>th</sup> illnesses.

We also have seen the passing of family members who went through the horrible

loss of their spouses, parents, siblings or children 22 years ago, who lived with the pain of what the evil of that day brought to their families and have now left us as well.

In the world we live in today, September 11<sup>th</sup> also needs to be a reminder of the importance of humanity and a warning that there are many steps on the way to evil. We can never forget the importance of humanity and respect for others in our country and around the world.

For me the most important thought for today is that we as a community think about the good times with the friends we lost, think about their essence, humor, devotion and spirit. Let us bring those memories forth and have them live in our hearts today. Let us celebrate their lives and comfort their families. Let us think about them on their happiest days.



**City of New Rochelle Fire Department  
Office of Fire Prevention**



**Public Service Announcement**



Lithium-ion batteries supply power to many kinds of devices including smart phones, laptops, scooters, e-cigarettes, smoke alarms, toys, and even cars. Take care when using them. In rare cases, they can cause a fire or explosion.

**The Problem**

- These batteries store a large amount of energy in a small amount of space.
- Sometimes batteries are not used the right way; batteries not designed for a specific use can be dangerous.

- Like any product, a small number of these batteries are defective. They can overheat, catch fire, or explode.

### **Safety Tips**

- Purchase and use devices that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Only use the battery that is designed for the device and only use the charging cord that came with the device.
- Put batteries in the device the right way.
- Do not charge a device under your pillow, on your bed or on a couch. Store batteries away from anything that can catch fire.
- Keep batteries at room temperature.
- Do not place batteries in direct sunlight or keep them in hot vehicles.

### **Signs of a Problem**

Stop using the battery if you notice these problems: odor, change in color, too much heat, change in shape, leaking, odd noises. If it is safe to do so, move the device away from anything that can catch fire. Call 9-1-1.

### **Battery Disposal**

- Do not put lithium-ion batteries in the trash.
- Recycling is always the best option.
- Take them to a battery recycling location or contact your community for disposal instructions.
- Do not put discarded batteries in piles.

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**Cybersecurity Training Sessions Available**



Navigate the digital world with confidence. Join us for an enlightening session sponsored by the Westchester County Cybersecurity Task Force. Learn the essentials of online safety, from identifying phishing attempts to understanding social media pitfalls.

**LIVE IN-PERSON DATES:**

**Grinton I. Will Library**  
1500 Central Park Ave, Yonkers, NY 10710  
September 13 at 6 P.M.

**White Plains Library**  
100 Martine Ave, White Plains, NY 10601  
October 4 at 11 A.M.

**New Rochelle Library**  
1 Library Plaza, New Rochelle, NY 10801  
October 26 at 6 P.M.



**George Latimer**  
Westchester County Executive



Cybersecurity threats are escalating and will only get worse as we head into a major election year. Human error is a significant factor in most breaches, and some basic awareness can make a big difference.

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## **Ribbon Cutting at Wallauer Paint ACE Hardware in Mamaroneck**



I recently joined local officials, the village of Mamaroneck Chamber of Commerce and the Pediatric Cancer Foundation to celebrate the ribbon cutting of the new Wallauer Paint ACE Hardware location at 960 Mamaroneck Ave by I-95 in the Village of Mamaroneck. Company President and CEO Ed Klein gave us a tour of the rows of hardware and paint supplies. This is an exciting new business opening in the village. The store is staffed by local residents and the company has moved to an employee shared ownership model.

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## **Jay Heritage Center Hosts First Margaret Nolan O'Neill Fellowship**



On September 8<sup>th</sup> I attended the inaugural Margaret Nolan O’Neill Fellowship Presentation at the Jay Heritage Center (JHC). The fellowship was established to advance scholarship in American History and foster dialogue of topics relevant to the evolution of our nation, the shaping of its democracy, and its place in the global arena. The fellowship was created in memory of Maggie O’Neill, who studied Political Science and Government at Columbia University. The fellowship provides an opportunity for an undergraduate or graduate student at Columbia University to pursue a 10-week course of study, which includes a stipend for an immersive summer experience.

The first O’Neill Fellow was Fenway Donegan, Class of 2025, who presented a talk about his research this past summer which focused on the history of land ownership during the pre-colonial period and after the founding of our country. The study provided a fascinating analysis of the difference between occupancy and ownership and how owners, including Native Americans and Loyalists, were dispossessed of their land holdings. The fascinating history of property seizure and the legal voiding of property rights was made possible through research of original materials and deciphering the law of property rights going back over three hundred years. Fenway conducted research working closely with staff at JHC and by using books and maps from the JHC collection, supplemented by materials found at the Westchester County Archives and the Rye Historical Society.

Congratulations to Fenway Donegan, the Jay Heritage Center and the friends and family of Maggie O’Neill for making this new academic fellowship possible.

Pictured above from left to right: Michael Gately, Assistant Director, Center for American Studies, Columbia University, Suzanne Clary, President, Jay Heritage

Center, Fenway Donegan, Margaret Nolan O'Neill Fellow in American History, and NYS Assemblyman Steve Otis

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**Governor Hochul Unveils Additional \$37 Million Capital Investment to Support Arts and Cultural Organizations at Ribbon-Cutting for Perelman Performing Arts Center**

Governor Hochul announced up to \$37 million in capital funding is available to nonprofit arts and culture organizations through the New York State Council on the Arts' Capital Projects Fund. The Fund has two grant categories: Small and Midsized Capital Improvement Grants and Large Capital Improvement Grants. This investment builds on the nearly \$132 million in capital awards made by NYSCA earlier this year, including new multi-year funding to facilitate large-scale capital projects that prioritize community development and placemaking.

The two opportunities are:

- **Small and Midsized Capital Improvement Grants for Arts and Culture:** This opportunity funds projects and nonprofit arts and culture organizations of any size, with grants of up to \$2 million that prioritize accessibility, artistry, cultural development, sustainability, health and safety, and structural and historical improvements. \$10,000, \$25,000, and \$50,000 no-match grants are available for organizations with operating budgets under \$2 million. Strong projects combine excellence in design with informed decisions about organizational capacity and community needs that will positively affect the future of arts and cultural organizations across New York.
- **Large Capital Improvement Grants for Arts and Culture:** This multiyear opportunity will support arts and cultural nonprofits across the state that are undertaking impactful, large-scale capital improvements. Grants will range from \$2 million to \$10 million for projects that have a total cost of \$4 million or more. This funding will support investments that allow organizations to thrive by expanding cultural programming, reaching new and diverse audiences, and promoting accessibility. These grants will also help advance the State's goals around economic development, diversity, equity and inclusion and will require all applicants to commit to social equity initiatives and access plans that serve all New Yorkers.



The application portal and guidelines for these opportunities are now open, and can be accessed on NYSCA's website, [arts.ny.gov](https://arts.ny.gov). The deadline to submit completed applications is January 11, 2024.

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### **NYS Extends Deadline For Environmental Bond Act Project Survey Ideas**

New York State has announced the extension of the deadline to submit project ideas for funding through the \$4.2 billion Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act survey from Sept. 15 to Sept. 30, 2023. The survey, available at <https://bit.ly/BondActSurvey>, has collected hundreds of project ideas from potential applicants and interested stakeholders so far.

