

PLAZA VOICE

WINTER 2003

Village of Great Neck Plaza

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 Jay Ferkin, and Gerry
 Schneiderman
Clerk/Treasurer Patricia
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PLAZA ADOPTS DOMESTIC PARTNER REGISTRY

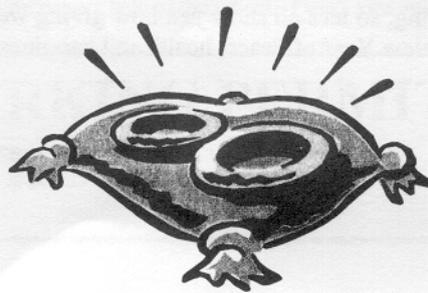
Our village made history as the first village on the peninsula to adopt into law a domestic partner registry. The law was adopted at the Board of Trustees November 5th meeting.

The domestic partner registry had been proposed at an earlier board meeting and met with much support. At that time, the only issue had been a \$100 fee for registering. The mayor and the board felt that the fee should be kept low, consistent with what the Town of North Hempstead charges for a marriage license, \$50. The \$50 fee, not \$100, was included.

Mayor Celender said, "It is important for the village to recognize domestic partnerships, both gay and straight, and for the partners to have a means of recognition. By passing this legislation and providing the partners with a certificate, it may assist them in obtaining health care and death benefits. It does not burden the village administratively at all. There is a nominal expense which is offset by a filing fee that is set at a level commensurate with a marriage certificate. I am proud of the village board for being the first Great Neck village to adopt such a registry and for keeping Great Neck Plaza in the forefront of communities passing model legislation. This is a very important statement for a village to make in this day and age. It sends a signal of diversity, of openness and of welcome to all people in the community."

Included in the Plaza's domestic partner registry legislation are the requirements that persons submit an affidavit of domestic partnership and declare: each is a resident of the village or at least one must be employed by the village; neither is married; each is 18 or older; each is "competent" to enter into a contract; each is unrelated by blood "in a manner that would bar marriage in New York State," that they share a common household; both are in a "close and committed, financially independent personal relationship and intend to remain in the relationship;" each is the other's sole domestic partner; neither has terminated a previous domestic partnership within 60 days; and each agrees to file an affidavit of termination in the event that the domestic partnership is terminated.

As written into the law, the intent is to "benefit the interests of the village and its residents to strengthen and support all caring committed and responsible family arrangements by recognizing "domestic partnerships" as a valuable relationship and family unit and by establishing a mechanism for the public expression and documentation of such domestic partnerships."



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Memo from the Mayor

Dear Friends,

The Holiday Season is upon us and we are rapidly getting ready to close yet another year. While we in village government strive hard to find ways of delivering services more responsively, efficiently and effectively to you, we must look at ourselves and feel very fortunate for what we have here in Great Neck Plaza. We are a prosperous and thriving community, but not all here have enough and there are those within Great Neck that are facing difficult economic times. Some rely on the generosity of others to make ends meet, or to put a hot meal on the table for their family. At this time of year and in the spirit of giving, I urge you to reach out and help someone less fortunate, or someone in need...a friend who is sick, or lost a loved one, or just needs some love and encouragement. It is a time to be selfless and contribute in any way you can to make the world a better place for the Holiday Season. It's a time to go out of your way a little bit and help people who really need it. Show people how much you care by devoting a moment of your time and energy to brighten their spirits, in even the subtlest of ways. Here are a few suggestions I have to be a philanthropist during the merriest time of the year:

Volunteer At A Shelter

Going to a shelter and helping to serve food to needy people is such a simple gesture and also a very rewarding one. It is something that requires only a few hours of your day, and demonstrates your compassion for those who are less fortunate. You can volunteer here in the community at St. Aloysius' food pantry. I know it would be a beautiful experience. It's a chance to see these people's eyes light up when they realize people are out there caring for them, and that they are not alone in their loneliness and time of need.

Donate Blood

Donating blood has everything to do with being generous and making sacrifices. Our village blood drive was a big success a few weeks ago, but if you missed it, there are other blood drives going on in the community. You can contact **Long Island Blood Services** at (516) 752-3595 to find out how to donate blood. There are many people out there who are suffering from diseases and may be able to be saved if they receive a matching blood sample from someone like you. Just a few minutes of discomfort is a small price to pay for possibly saving someone's life.

Visit A Nursing Home Or Children's Hospital

There is nothing that old or sick people like more than visitors. People coming in to brighten their day and help them enjoy life again, if only for a moment. Sure, it is really sad to see people in this state of mind/health, but it's the least we can do to show them that we care and allow them to enjoy their "golden years" of life. You can visit our Senior Center at 80 Grace Avenue, the Grace Plaza Nursing Home on St. Paul's Place, or our two assisted care facilities; the Atria at 55 Great Neck Road, and the Sterling Glen at 96 Cutter Mill Road. The seniors will vastly appreciate some upbeat energy added to their day, it makes it all the more worthwhile.

Donate Your Old Stuff

Many people, myself included, hold on to possessions and things from the past like there is no tomorrow. I still have my college notebooks sitting in my closet which I can't part with. Being a very sentimental person, I understand the desire to keep things, even if you don't need them. However, that board game sitting in your closet that you haven't touched since 1995, would make a little needy child somewhere very happy. Same thing about the clothes or winter coat you have sitting in boxes in the closet or basement that haven't fit you for years, it would be very kind to give these items to people that would really appreciate them.

Adopt A Pet

Every year, millions of animals are put to sleep because of the overpopulation problem and people not spaying and neutering their pets. I can say from personal experience, that nothing brightens your life up more than having an animal in your home. Save a little cat or puppy from being put to sleep, and welcome them as a new addition to your family for the new year. Call the North Hempstead Animal Shelter at (516) 944-8220 for further information on how you can adopt a pet.

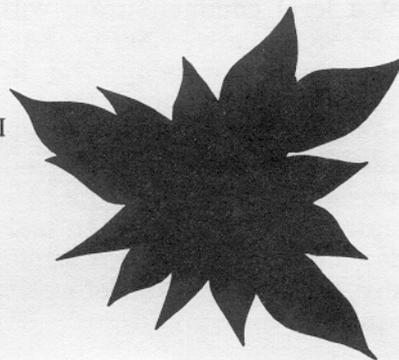
Meals On Wheels

There are hungry and sick people in the community who would like nothing more than to see your face on their doorstep holding a home cooked meal for them. It is so simple to hop into your car and deliver food to people that are hungry, or lonely or sick. For further information, contact a local synagogue or church, or the Volunteer Coordinator at Catholic Charities at (516) 733-7044, to volunteer for home visits to clients in the Meals on Wheels Program and Senior Residences. Why not take an hour out of your day to show these people some warmth and compassion?

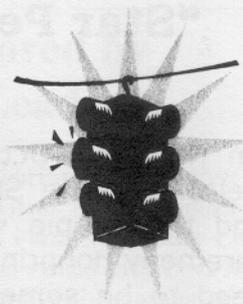
These are just a few things you can do to contribute to the season of giving. If everyone did one thing during this time of year that was generous, then think of the overwhelming impact that would have. It's the season of giving, so let's all show just how giving we can be. May I and the Board of Trustees wish you a New Year of Peace, health and happiness!



Jean A. Celender, Mayor



"TRAFFIC TALK" by Sheldon Goodman, PhD



The writing of this column will most assuredly guarantee that I will not win the Traffic Psychologist of the Year award. I will proceed nonetheless. What was once considered an element of communication has been transformed into a transportation issue with the impact upon the latter being considerable. I do not use the word "considerable" without thought as a October 2002 report by the Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association reported that more than 137 million Americans have a cell phone, more than double three years ago. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 73% of cell phone use subscribers use their phones while driving to keep in touch with family and friends, conduct business, call for assistance and report emergencies. It is estimated that, measured in minutes, 60% of all cell phone conversations in America take place while one or more parties to the call are behind the wheel. The cellular industry therefore stands to lose billions if Americans stop using their cell phones while driving.

Every new technology introduced into our society has the potential to create change in how we conduct our day-to-day activities. It takes time to adapt and develop the appropriate ethics and guidelines to go with them. I will attempt to present the data as I have researched it and understand it and present it in as objective manner as possible. The regulating of cell phone use is controversial, less so is the role of the driver. We have a special obligation as a society to be decent human beings and to protect, as best we can, each other from harmful influences.

Some questions I would like to pose and ask us to consider and discuss with our legislators, insurance companies police departments and in community forums as we proceed will be the following: 1) should there be restrictions on the conditions under which a driver can use a cell phone? 2) How effective are the laws in preventing the use of these devices? 3) Are there affective methods to enforce regulations on use? 4) Is there a need for formal standards on the design or use of in-vehicle technologies?

A sizable chunk of our attention will be devoted to presenting information that will suggest that cell phone conversations may interfere with the ability to react to sudden events like a pedestrian darting into traffic or a car running a red light and may as much as quadruple the risk of an accident. A car phone can ring at any time, and there may be a sense of importance or urgency in a phone call that drastically disturbs the driver's ability to attend. Furthermore they can even at the most inopportune times cut in. Legislative initiatives to restrict hand-held devices are a step in the right direction but are unlikely to eliminate problems associated with cell phones while driving because these problems are attributed in large part to the distracting effects of the phone conversation themselves (with some research identifying the first few minutes of the call as the most dangerous-especially if the content is of a highly emotional nature).

In its boldest outlines motorists who use hand-held and hands-free cell phones while driving are at risk from suffering from a form of tunnel vision that endangers themselves and everyone else with whom they share the road. I am using tunnel vision to describe a phenomenon wherein you are not processing peripheral information as well. David Strayer a psychologist at the Univ. of Utah whose team has conducted a series of studies on cell phone use goes on to say that "even though your eyes are looking right at something, when you are on the cell phone, you are not as likely to see it." Among the objects that may be overlooked are traffic signals, stop signs, pedestrians and other vehicles.

Nonetheless, we should be cautious in interpreting the results as showing cellular phones as harmful and in need of further restrictions as the research at this stage would be prudently understood to be associational and not causative in nature. A good deal of the information being generated in the media and elsewhere is anecdotal in nature and this form of evidence is unreliable. Researchers are having difficulty with the task of pinning down the statistics on incidences in which cell phones contribute to crashes. Thus we may read one statistic in one report and some contradictory percentage in yet another. This trend is rapidly changing though as a virtual army of governmental and private agencies as well as universities are actively involved in remedying this costly lapse in terms of human carnage. The benefits of their use (e.g., reporting accidents, medical emergencies, aggressive and drunken driver) need also to be taken into account. We need to collect real-time data on the driver's visual behavior while recognizing what the driver is doing -the context of the situation is crucial in making decisions that are wise and enforceable.

We will continue the dialogue in the next edition of Plaza Voice but here are some suggestions that while obvious, may be helpful if your cell phone **must** be used: 1) Do not look at the speaker while talking; 2) assess the traffic situation before placing or receiving calls, making sure you are fully aware of road and vehicle distractions; 3) there is a tendency to drive slower and drift within your lane- so drive in the slow lane and if possible pull over to a safe place - avoid being a crime victim, do not stop in dangerous areas and keep your doors locked; 4) program frequently called numbers into your phone's memory; 5) familiarize yourself with your phones operations 6) if your phone is connected to your car's power source, disconnect your phone before using jumper cables- the surge could damage your phone; 7) keep your calls brief and frequently check your side and rear view mirrors.

Driving safely must take precedence over phoning. When on the road, you should concentrate on safe and defensive driving, not on making phone calls. As a nation we have attempted to tackle the drinking and driving problem as well as seatbelt and child safety seat issues. It's time for motorists to be held accountable for all illegal and high-risk behaviors behind the wheel. I wish you and yours a happy, *safe* holiday season.

**GREEN STREET PARKING PERMITS ARE VALID
THROUGH THE END OF YEAR 2004**

“Star Performer” Ceremony Honors

On Thursday, October 30, 2003, Mayor Jean Celender welcomed nine Star Performers who were nominated and the people who nominated them, to an official ceremony honoring them. To qualify for this award you need to be someone who goes out of your way to make people feel special, and make Great Neck Plaza a better place to work, shop and live. Potential “Star Performers” greet you with a smile, are eager to help, treat you with dignity, respect and patience so that it’s a genuine pleasure to do business in the Plaza. Many thanks to Waldbaum’s for providing the bagels and to Dunkin’ Donuts for bringing delicious muffins, donuts and coffee! Here is a list of the recipients and their nominators:

Bill Reilly, manager of Waldbaums, was nominated for his community minded spirit by keeping his store running on emergency generators during the recent August blackout. Sandy Kreisberg nominated Lisa Babcock of the Steven Robert Salon, for her heroism in aiding and comforting a sick man until the ambulance arrived. Gloria Weiner nominated Jacki Oliveri, and Rosa Isaeian both of Cion Salon, for their great service. Juan De Los Santos of Alpien Cleaners was nominated by Nadine Feingold, who was unable to attend, but sent a letter praising him for always going “above and beyond” for his customers. Chiara Digena and Albert Sazinger, both of Waldbaum’s, were nominated by Joan Antonoff for exceptional service at all times. Stephen Goodman nominated Giedre Mazelyte, of Hi-Tech Photo, for her winning smile, efficiency and warm greeting. Subash Nath, manager of Dunkin’ Donuts was nominated by Pat McGrath for welcoming his customers warmly, keeping the store spotlessly clean and serving wonderful coffee.

All the nominees were given proclamations from Mayor Celender and received accolades from the audience. In the group Photo (from left to right) are Chiara Digena, Albert Sazinger, Rosa Isaeian, Jacki Oliveri, Giedre Mazelyte, Mayor Jean Celender, Lisa Babcock, Subash Nath and Bill Reilly. Missing from the photo is Juan De Los Santos.

NOMINATION FORM

If you wish to nominate a “Star Performer” please fill out the form and we will invite you and your “Star” to attend the next award presentation.

Name of your nominee:

Their employer _____

Four words that best describe the nominee:

My name & phone number:

Send this form to VGNP,
Carol Teplin, 2 Gussack Plaza,
Great Neck NY 11022



WELCOME NEW BUSINESSES IN THE PLAZA

Mayor Celender and the Board of Trustees are happy to welcome the following businesses who have opened in the Plaza. Stop in and warmly greet these people and say "hello." They bring new life to our community!

- **Aesthetic Associates, LLP (Medical Spa), 8 Bond Street, 482-2424. Dr. Kelly Mattone and staff specialize in non-surgical cosmetic procedures.**
- **Mario Valentino, 37 Middle Neck Road, 466-8383. Fine Italian footwear, designer bags and accessories.**
- **Spin City Billiards, 24 Great Neck Road, Come visit this exquisite facility and learn the difference between billiards and pool!**
- **Only Don't Know Tea House, 4 Bond Street, 829-5111. Come see this unique restaurant, craft shop and tea house and relax!**
- **Wireless One, 9 North Station Plaza, 504-1331, cell phones and accessories...**
- **Café Kriza, 45 Middle Neck Road, a café straight out of the movies, serving pastries, sandwiches, coffee and beverages. Try it!**
- **Gracie & Schola, Inc., 7 North Station Plaza, upscale, unusual ladies boutique!**
- **Rolly Polly, 10 Grace Avenue, delicious hot and cold rolled sandwiches of all kinds, vegetarian wraps and box lunches too!**

If you would like to have a ribbon cutting to celebrate your grand opening, please call the village and ask for Carol Teplin. She will help you to coordinate the event and announce the news to the various service clubs and dignitaries in Great Neck.

Tourism Explored by Community Leaders

At the invitation of New York State Tourism representative, Ed Lewi of Albany, people from the Great Neck Chamber of Commerce, the Village of Great Neck Plaza, The Rotary Club, The Lion's Club and The Kiwanis Club visited an "I Love New York" fair at Belmont Park. After being given a tour of the park, the group was treated to a video presentation showing how several towns on Long Island run similar fairs. A discussion ensued and the representatives were given many tips on how to bring tourism to our region. A meeting will be set up to further pursue this exciting way to bring out of town tourists to visit Great Neck attractions, shops, restaurants and hotels. If you are interested in learning how you can volunteer on this committee, please call the Village of Great Neck Plaza at 482-4500 and ask for Carol Teplin.



(Standing from left to right) Hal Schafer, Kiwanis Club, Carol Teplin, Village of Great Neck Plaza, Ed Lewi, NY State Tourism. (Seated) Leslie Gross, Rotary Club President, Sabina Miller, Lion's Club President.

SR CITIZEN RENT INCREASE EXEMPTION

Since 1975 the village has had a program to help eligible senior citizens remain in their apartments by freezing the rent. Owners of apartments under this program receive 100% of the legal rent, the village subsidizes the difference of the lease increases. Eligibility is limited to heads of households, 62 years of age and over who have been residents of the village of at least 2 years, whose total 2003 household income did not exceed \$20,000. Luxury apartments are exempt from this law. Anyone wishing information on this program may contact Housing Commissioner Sheryl De Los Rios, Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. at 482-4500 X104.

Village of Great Neck Plaza 2004

Village Board of Trustee Meetings

Convenes Wednesdays at 8 P. M.

January 7th & 21st

February 4th & 18th

March 3rd & 17th

Village Court Dates

Convenes Tuesdays at 7 P. M.

January 6, 13 & 27

January 20th, Trials

February 3, 10 & 24

February 17th, Trials

March 4 (Thurs) 9th and 23rd

March 18th (Thurs.), Trials

Great Success for the Plaza Annual Blood Drive

The Village of Great Neck Plaza, in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Great Neck, The Kiwanis Club, The Lion's Club, and the Great Neck Chamber of Commerce, ran a blood drive on Wednesday, November 13th. The hours of collection were from 8 A.M. to 1:30 P.M., and was held in the Great Neck Plaza Village Hall. The blood that was collected is vitally important to distribute to local area hospitals. Based on our successful drive last year at this time, our amount of recommended pledges needed to reach the goal is 35, and with your help, we processed 59 donors! This is a remarkable number for an abbreviated blood drive!

We depended upon our restaurants and food shops for donations of food, candy, coffee, bagels and donuts to make our blood drive "*Great Neck Special*". We thank each business below for their community spirit and generosity: Antonino's Italian Restaurant, Best Bagel, Bruce's, CVS, Dunkin Donuts, La Gioconda, Starbucks, The Village Feast, The American Diner, Twigs Card and Stationery and a very special "thank you" to our massage therapist volunteers, Sara from "Salus Spa" and Irene Karp from "Step Up to Health."

We also started a new coupon program in conjunction with local restaurants, which entitles any person donating blood to a free lunch, when they are with someone who purchases another lunch of equal or greater value. We thank the following restaurants who proudly participated in this program: Pancho's Border Grill, Daruma of Tokyo, D'Anna's Italian Restaurant and Seed.

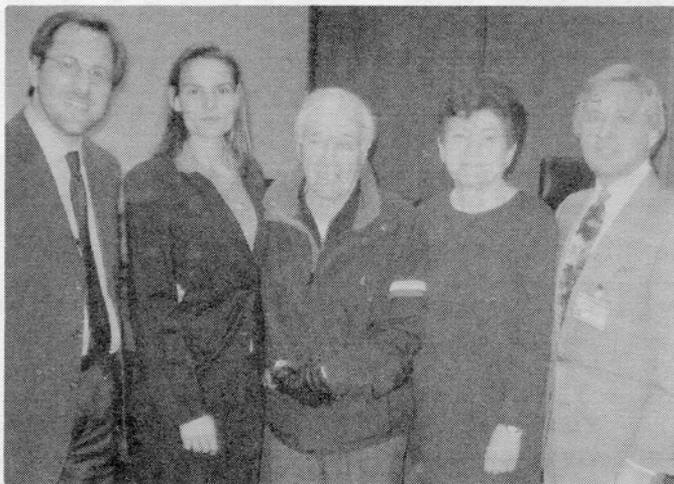
Pictured (from left to right): The 2003 Committee: Leigh Laitenen, Sheryl De Los Rios, Roger Chizever, Joe Murray and seated: Carol Teplin, Sabina Miller, Hal Schaefer and Lenni Friedman.



THE PLAZA HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE WILL BE HOLDING ITS FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BOND STREET DISTRICT, MON. FEBRUARY 23RD, AT 7:30 P.M. CALL 482-4500 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Co-Op & Condo News

The Great Neck Co-op and Condominium Council met on Monday, November 10, 2003 at the Plaza Village Hall where Jennifer Mincin of the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management addressed the organization on the needs of individuals and Board Members in the event of an emergency. Jennifer told us that disasters can occur anytime and can affect anyone. She stressed it is important to be prepared for and know how to respond to various types of emergency situations. Being prepared can enable you to take better control of situations and make knowledgeable decisions regarding "sheltering in-place," evacuations, staying in designated shelters, and overall safety and survival.



Marc Schneider, Jennifer Mincin, Speaker; Gerry Kahn, Fern Rogers, Stu Hochron,

Disaster Survival Kit....

Ms. Mincin said whether sheltering in-place or evacuating to a local shelter, it is important to have essential items already prepared to either self-sustain at home or take with you to the shelter. She added, if you are sheltering in-place, each individual must plan to be self-sustaining for up to 72 hours, but in reality, assistance may be available sooner. She offered the following suggestions:

Consider these items when assembling a disaster kit:

- Toiletries
- First aid kit
- Medical alert bracelet
- Portable cooler with ice
- Plastic garbage bags
- Non-perishable canned or packaged food and non-electric can opener
- Auxiliary medical equipment (i.e., oxygen, scooter battery, hearing aid)
- List of all emergency contacts, doctors, current medications
- Flashlight, portable radio, extra batteries
- Prescription/life-sustaining medications (5-7 day supply)
- Checkbook, cash, credit cards, ATM card
- Water (one gallon per person per day)
- Childcare items (food, diapers, etc.)

Consider these additional items when preparing to evacuate to a shelter:

- Sleeping bags, blankets, pillows
- Sturdy/hard-soled shoes
- Important papers (valid identification, proof of address, insurance policy, etc.)
- Rehabilitative and auxiliary devices (hearing aids, glasses, cane, walker, dentures)
- Extra clothing, infant necessities, rain gear
- A cell phone with spare batteries

For more information on Emergency Preparedness for you personally as well as for your Co-op or Condo you can contact Jennifer Mincin at the Nassau County Office of Emergency Management (516) 573-0636 or you can go to any of the following web sites: www.fema.com; www.nysemo.state.ny.us; www.co.nassau.ny.us; www.redcross.org

Membership applications for 2004 are available by contacting Fern Rogers. If your building is not yet a member of the Great Neck Co-op & Condominium Council, WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? It's not too late. You can still join by sending your check for \$150 along with a list of all the members of your Board to:

Fern Rogers
Great Neck Co-op & Condominium Council
75 South Middle Neck Road-Apt. 4C
Great Neck, NY 11021

The next scheduled meeting of the Co-op & Condo Council will be on Monday January 12, 2004 at 7:30 P.M. in Great Neck Plaza Village Hall when we will be discussing "Reassessment, What does it mean for Co-ops & Condos". We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

For more information please contact the following: Stu Hochron, Co-Chair (516) 466-6443/stu@hochron.net (e-mail); Fern Rogers,

**VILLAGE OF GREAT
NECK PLAZA**

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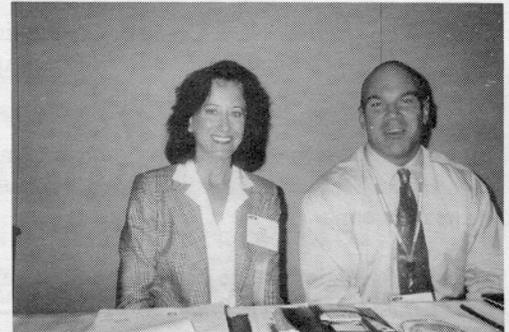
**visit our website:
www.greatneckplaza.net**

Mayor Celender Presenter at URISA Conference

Mayor Jean Celender attended and was a presenter at the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA) Annual Conference and Business Expo this past fall. The conference, hosted this year in Atlanta, attracts planners, government officials, GIS professionals and IT managers from around the country. Mayor Celender's session, entitled "Growing your 2-D GIS into a 3-D GIS and Visual Simulation," was co-presented with Paul Patnode, AICP, of the Environmental Simulation Center (ESC) located in New York City. ESC is the village's consultant on a New York State Council on the Arts grant to develop an innovative public participation tool for the village, employing interactive virtual reality technology linked into a Geographic Information System (GIS).

Their session was a case study of the Village's 3-D visualization model which links it to its 2-D GIS database. The 3-D model simulates the Village of Great Neck Plaza, photo-realistically representing existing buildings and historic sites, and provides the Village with a powerful planning tool to design and evaluate historic preservation, traffic calming measures and a wide range of initiatives, including potential zoning changes and design review. The 3-D model gives greater public awareness of the importance of preserving historic sites and to maintaining the quality of life in our charming village. Users are able to simulate walking, driving or biking through the village to see how the village presently looks, and how it might look in the future after historic sites are landmarked and preserved, traffic calming techniques implemented and other physical changes are made in the environment.

Stated Mayor Celender, "The 3-D simulation model is a great tool to assist us in public education and outreach as we move forward in designating historic districts and sites. The public is better able to understand what is proposed when you can provide them with real-life, spatial representations of their community and show them how structures exist in the downtown." Mayor Celender stated that this has been a great opportunity to build this 3-D model, utilizing a \$15,000 New York State Council on the Arts grant and a matching contribution by the Village. "Because we are such a small village geographically, only one-third of a square mile, we have an extremely manageable database and are able to try out this type of model."



Pictured here are Mayor Celender and village consultant, Paul Patnode from the Environmental Simulation Center, presenting at the conference.