

Points of View

FROM THE EDITOR

Resurrecting Untermyer

Last month, the Enterprise reported on the continuing restoration of Untermyer Gardens in northwest Yonkers, near the Hastings border. The 43-acre park is all that remains of lawyer Samuel Untermyer's 150-acre estate, which included elaborate gardens and greenhouses.

The restoration was bolstered recently by a \$7,500 grant from the Garden Club of America to the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy, which is funding the improvements. The conservancy's award proposal was sponsored by the Garden Club of Irvington and seconded by the Little Garden Club of Rye.

The grant will help rehabilitate the Temple of Love, a circle of columns crowned with a filigree dome atop a manmade outcrop that overlooks the Hudson River. The conservancy is aiming to repair the temple and its waterworks, including several waterfalls, by fall 2015.

Though located in the city to the south, Untermyer has attracted the interest of the villages to the north. Many Rivertowns residents attended the conservancy's annual Summer Solstice Soiree on June 19. That event is the nonprofit's primary fundraiser.

Untermyer's centerpiece is a Persian garden surrounded by stone walls and turrets and crisscrossed by canals. Inside are fountains and sculptures and mosaics and architectural formations that date to 1912, when construction of the gardens began.

During the last two years, the plantings inside those walls started to rival the stonework. The beds feature an array of colors and textures thanks to full-time horticulturist Timothy Tilghman and gardener Jessica Norman. The conservancy funds their positions and promises to increase their ranks as the restoration extends beyond the Persian garden.

Norman is also the conservancy's social media ambassador. She updates its Facebook and Instagram pages daily with her often eye-catching photos. Even during the winter, when the gardens were dormant, she kept followers interested with photos of snowscapes and greenhouses.

Much needs to be done to restore Untermyer. The property deteriorated in recent decades, while owned by the City of Yonkers, which lacked the resources to maintain it. The few remaining structures fell victim to the elements and to vandalism.

Nonetheless, the conservancy is resurrecting this unique landmark, season by season, and earning well-deserved support for its efforts. For more information about Untermyer, including a schedule of weekly tours, visit www.untermyergardens.org.