

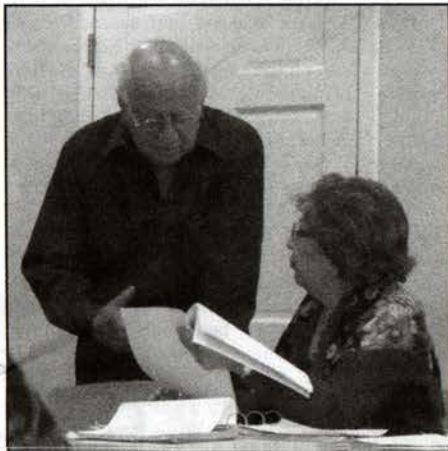
# THE BOOKMARK

TOWN OF PELHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY

## “Creative Aging”— A Popular Program Returns to the Town of Pelham Public Library

One of this year’s more outlandish Super Bowl commercials—and yes, that’s saying something—featured a group of elderly friends going out for what could be described as an inspired night on the town. It was inspired, that is, if the breadth of one’s vision for a vibrant old age is about eating post-midnight enchiladas.

As buffoonish as the commercial is, it makes a point: aging shouldn’t be about endless Bingo games but more active approaches to keeping mind and body sound.



That’s where “Creative Aging” programs like the one currently being offered at the Town of Pelham Public Library comes in. This free, grant-funded program allows participants to draw on their untapped creativity while also building relationships with neighbors in a relaxed environment.

### SETTING THE STAGE

This year, the workshop, which begins this Friday (March 1) and runs from 10:00am-noon most Fridays through May 3, is titled “From Page to Stage: Storytelling through Playwriting.” During the eight-session series, participants will be guided through the process of writing a scene from a play. Open to adults age 55 and up, sign-ups are being accepted until the series is full. A public reception and performance will conclude the series and be held on Saturday, May 4 from 2:00-4:00pm.

“We are happy to continue to offer another learning experience in this playwriting workshop,” said Patricia Perito, director of the Library. “We’re grateful to Lifetime Arts (the funder of the program) for recognizing the need to engage adults in creative expression and for selecting libraries as the ideal vehicle to promote this experience.”

The program has been designed by the Library following guidelines from Lifetime Arts, which works with the Westchester Library System and other organizations to create instructional programs for older adults. “Traditional programs for older adults are sort of passive entertainment,” said Maura O’Malley, president/CEO of Lifetime Arts and a Pelham resident.

“When older adults are more actively engaged, they have a better quality of life,” adds Patricia Braja, development director of the Westchester Library System.

### FOR ALL INVOLVED, RICH REWARDS

This year, the course is being led by Frank Ingrasciotta, an actor, playwright and director whose one-man show, “Blood Type: RAGU,” about growing up as a first generation Italian-American, won a 2012 United Solo award for Best Comedic Actor and Writer/Performer. Mr. Ingrasciotta, who has taught creative aging programs at other area libraries, explains: “I love, love, love this population—mature students—because it’s just so rich, the stories that come up.”

A look at past work by Creative Aging participants demonstrates how

engaging the program is. In a piece from the 2011 program, Alma Torres-Warner wrote about her mother, nicknamed Censita, who was born in Puerto Rico in 1904 and emigrated to New York City as a teenager. “During the day, she would fashion her hair in very simple, but elegant styles. Sometimes it was pulled back straight and wound into a beautiful salt and pepper chignon at the base of her neck,” she wrote. “This look, with the lovely simple drop earrings which she wore in her pierced ears, gave her the appearance of a classic beauty.”

Ms. Torres-Warner says that the memories of her mother surfaced during the Creative Aging class where participants were asked to write about a friend. Through the writing process, she discovered that the “friend” she was really describing was her mother, and the piece flowed from there.

### BENEFITS, BOTH TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE

For Greta Facey of Pelham, who has also been part of the program, Creative Aging has uncovered talents she never knew she had. “I certainly never would have thought that I would have any artistic ability,” she says. Her work has included poetry.

Creative Aging writers have written about serious topics such as the passing of family members, and more lighthearted ones, like making chicken soup and going to summer camp.

While the outcome of the Creative Aging program is usually a tangible body of work, those who have been involved with it also point to a less tangible—but equally important—result: new friendships.

Mr. Ingrasciotta wants to ensure the program continues to deliver on that promise. “My vision is to build community, where it’s a safe space for writing and a safe space for sharing,” he says.

For more information or to register, please call The Town of Pelham Public Library at 738-1234.

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- Children’s Programs—*
- Chess Instruction with John Gallagher: 3/4, 3/18; 7:00-8:00pm. For ages 7 and up. Registration required.
- Fun Fridays: 3/8, 4/5, 5/3; 7:00pm. Early-evening program that lets kids in Grades 1-5 enjoy a movie, arts and crafts, games and stories. Homework assistance and tutoring also offered. Registration required.
- Sheldrake Spring Program, conducted by Sheldrake Environmental Center, Thursday, March 28, 2:00-2:45pm
- Earth Day PJ Storytime, April 22; 10:30-11:00am. Special Earth Day edition of the Library’s PJ storytime. For infants through pre-schoolers.

*Teen Programs—*

- Teen Advisory Board meeting, March 11.

- Movie Screening: Title TBA, Thursday, March 21; 6:30pm.

*Adult Programs—*

- Adult Book Club, March 7 and the first Thursday each future month through September (except July); 7:30pm.

- Computer Classes: Introduction to Microsoft Word 2010, part B, March 4; Library Databases, March 11. Both classes from 10:00-11:00am. Registration required.

- Resume Writing Workshop, March 16; 10:00am-4:00pm. Registration required.

See [pelhamlibrary.org](http://pelhamlibrary.org) for more information programs or call 738-1234.



### Who is this man?

He served you in 1966. Where did the years and hair go?



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Discussions are completely confidential.

Please call.

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