

GREENWICH BUSINESS

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Beach Ball has Sweet Connection

Gary Farn's Fragrance Company Lures Lilly

BY CHRISTINE CHAGARIS

Put Greenwich Point, a gala dance and a hint of fragrance together and what do you get? Greenwich's fourth annual Beach Ball on July 12 to benefit the Greenwich Point Conservancy.

This is the first year that the ball will actually be held on the Point, on a bluff overlooking the Manhattan skyline.

All of the proceeds from the ball will go directly to the upkeep and restoration of the buildings gracing Greenwich Point, which have a significant history.

The event, as an added bonus, will have a "Lilly Pulitzer" theme, paying homage to the legendary designer of brightly colored, cotton resort wear with its signature large, distinctive prints. The Lilly theme will extend to Lilly prints on the ball's tablecloths to golf carts decked out in "Lilly" regalia.

Lilly Pulitzer, a.k.a. Mrs. Enrique Rousseau of Palm Beach, Fla., is tentatively scheduled to make an appearance at the festivities. Incidentally, Pulitzer is launching her new Lilly Pulitzer fragrance line on Nov. 1. The Lilly Pulitzer stores, including the boutique on Greenwich Avenue of the same name, will be among those carrying the scent.

The fragrance connection coalesces with the Beach Ball via local businesswoman Alison Farn Leigh, who, along with her sister, Kendra Farn Finz, and Sara Baker Keller, is a co-chair of this year's ball.

Farn Leigh is the president and CEO of Gary Farn, Ltd., an Old Greenwich based, family-owned fragrance sales and distribution company.

The company, started by Farn Leigh's father, Gary Farn, in 1976, represents upscale, boutique brands in the luxury fragrance retail sector. The company will license the Pulitzer fragrance line.

"The Lilly brand has a definite following," said Farn Leigh of the brand, whose bold, splashy prints – ranging in colors from pink, green and yellow to red – are classic.

Gary Farn, Ltd. also licenses a luxury fragrance by Judith Lieber and is the exclusive distributor for other scent lines, such as the French brand Annick Goutal, Ferragamo and new English brand Miller Harris. Gary Farn, Ltd. also recently launched its manufacturing arm, Pulse Points.

"We don't have the same pressures as a big company because we are family owned,"



GREENWICH CITIZEN photos / Christine Chagaris

Members of the Gary Farn, LTD team are, from left Lori Mariano, vice president of brand development; Heather Lindgren, vice president of sales; Alison Farn, CEO and president; Theresa Plavoukos, vice president of marketing; and Kathleen Pierce, public relations manager.

said Farn Leigh. "We have a very hands-on approach, as we represent niche-oriented, boutique brands."

She went on to say, "In a luxury market, people are looking for brands they can attach to. A perfumer's brand is an expression of the artist, of that particular perfumer. Customers want uniqueness, and I think our brands offer that."

Ball Benefits Greenwich Point

Business aside, the "Lilly connection" to the ball is a culmination that suits Farn Leigh just fine, as she is "passionate" about Greenwich Point, having grown up in nearby Riverside.

Likewise, her friend and Old Greenwich resident, Rachel Franco, the Beach Ball's honorary co-chair this year, feels the same way. "My grandparents lived here, so I've been coming a long time to this area," she said.

Franco's husband, Chris, is the president and founder of the Conservancy. The five-year-old organization is privately run but has entered into a private/public partnership with the Town of Greenwich. Greenwich Point, which covers 147 acres, is home to several historic buildings as well as home to a variety of flora, birds and salt marshes.

This area, also known as Tod's Point, was named for original resident J. Kennedy Tod,

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CEO, GARY FARN, LTD.

who resided there at the turn of the century. The Tod mansion stood on the property until the 1970s. The Town of Greenwich purchased the point in 1945 from New York Presbyterian Hospital, heirs to the Tod estate.

One of the more prominent buildings on the land is Innis Arden Cottage. The cottage originally was used as housing for nurses visiting from New York Presbyterian Hospital. Plans are in the works for the building to be transformed into an environmental education center for young people.

"Hopefully, it all will be finished by next year," said Rachel Franco. "The Bruce Museum will be moving its Seaside Center there, which will include labs for students and a lecture hall."

Chris Franco added, "We're thrilled that the cottage is reemerging after decades of neglect to be recognized as one of the most beautiful and historic buildings on Long Island Sound."

The cottage's exterior will also follow "green" – environmentally sound – principles, and will be among the first Platinum level "LEED" certified public buildings in Connecticut.

Other buildings dotting Greenwich Point are the Chimes Building, one of two in Fairfield County that operates on music; the Boathouse on Eagle Pond, once home to the Long Island Long Shore Sailing School, and the Seaside Center Building, the oldest building on Greenwich Point.

The Greenwich Point Conservancy to date has raised over \$750,000 toward preservation and restoration of these buildings.

For information on the Conservancy, visit www.greenwichpoint.org or call 637-4851.

When You're so Far 'Ahead of the Curve' You Disappear A20



IN BRIEF

Business Loans Available To Storm Affected Entities

July 25 is the deadline for businesses to apply for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans for those affected by the severe storms and flooding that occurred on Oct. 11, 2007.

"Businesses that suffered economic losses as a result of the disaster and want to apply for low-interest loans from the SBA are urged to do so before the July 25 deadline," said Gov. M. Jodi Rell.

Loans are available up to \$1.5 million for small businesses that suffered substantial economic injury from the disaster. These working capital loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that could have been paid had the disaster not occurred. These loans are not intended to replace lost sales or profits.

The interest rate on these loans is 4 percent, with a maximum term of 30 years. The SBA determines the amount of economic injury and the terms of each loan based on the financial circumstances of each borrower. The SBA determines eligibility for the program based on the size and type of business and its financial resources. Loan amounts and terms are set by the SBA and are based upon each applicant's financial condition.

To obtain a loan application, contact the SBA's Customer Service Center by calling (800) 659-2955 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., or by e-mailing disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. Completed applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

State Assistance Keeps General Re in Stamford

General Reinsurance (Re) Corp. will receive help from the state in its move to a new headquarters in Stamford, keeping the company in Connecticut and retaining its more than 800 jobs while continuing the state's leadership role in the insurance and financial services sector.

Under the agreement, a \$9 million loan from the Department of Economic and Community Development will go toward fixtures and equipment in the new facility. The state Bond Commission is expected to approve the loan at its next meeting.

In addition, the company will be eligible for up to \$19.5 million in Urban and Industrial Sites Reinvestment tax credits. Gen Re is also pursuing \$2.1 million in sales and use tax exemptions through the Connecticut Development Authority (CDA) to help defray the cost of construction. The exemption is subject to approval by CDA's Board of Directors.

"Connecticut has long been a world leader in finance and insurance, but we risk losing that position unless we remain proactive about keeping the companies we have and recruiting new ones to the state," said Gov. M. Jodi Rell. "This agreement with Gen Re is definitely a win-win for Connecticut. We are retaining more than 800 high-quality jobs and strengthening one of the keystone industries that will sustain economic growth for years to come."

Stamford-based Gen Re, a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., is a holding company for global reinsurance and related

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Alison Farn Leigh, CEO of Gary Farn, Ltd., left, and Rachel Franco, honorary co-chairs of the Beach Ball, go over some last minute details for the Lilly Pulitzer-themed benefit, which takes place tomorrow at Greenwich Point.