

‘Nobody Saw It Coming’: Pleasantville Residents Shocked at Pharmacy Closing

August 4, 2021 Abby Luby 4667 Views 3 min read

The energy in the Pleasantville Pharmacy was both frenetic and bittersweet as customers waited to say goodbye to owners Salvatore Dileo and Ira Schwartz. Open for half a century, the pharmacy has been the go-to drugstore for countless residents who felt it was more like visiting an old neighbor than picking up a prescription. Several sources said Wednesday was the last day the pharmacy was open for business, but an employee on Thursday said on Facebook that today, Thursday, August 5, is the last day.

“Nobody saw it coming,” said Tara Klein, a 31-year resident of Pleasantville. “It started as a rumor and the reality is now shocking. They were truly the heart of this village.”

Most items were marked 50 percent off and were being grabbed off the shelves. A long line for prescriptions stretched from the back of the store to the front, a small crowd waited to purchase the discounted items. Customers were wishing Dileo and Schwartz well and good luck for the future.

“I wish you the best,” one woman said to Dileo. “You’ve helped me so much over the years.” Another said, “Thank you for going the extra mile.”

Others hugged the staff while saying goodbye. A woman exiting the store said she heard Dileo saying goodbye to his customers. “I’ve used this pharmacy since I moved here 45 years ago. I will miss them terribly.”

Chatter and rumors on the Pleasantville Facebook page 10570 411 started last week according to Klein. Some 145 comments expressed sadness and disbelief. Some on Facebook were taken aback by the lack of communication on the part of the pharmacy owners, others wanted to take the staff out to dinner, a few vowed to never get their prescriptions at a major pharmacy chain. A post presumed that all prescriptions were being sent to Walgreens, and other sources with more intimate knowledge said the same, but that has not yet been confirmed definitively by The Examiner. Some posts railed about how unfair it is for big drugstore chains and mail order companies to squeeze out independent competitors.

“It’s heartbreaking that these mom and business are really struggling in their local communities,” said Klein.





Emptied shelves at the Pleasantville Pharmacy.

Dileo and Schwartz were not just pharmacists who helped people, they were known to hanging out with customers and chatting about last night's baseball or football game. Schwartz was a special guest in 2014 on PCTV76, Pleasantville's local cable station, on the program "Around the Town" with Charles Hellmich. Schwartz said he and his first partner Joe Perez purchased the pharmacy from Bill Baldwin. "The store has always been in a continued ownership for at least 100 years," Schwartz told Hellmich.

The store expanded into a larger space about 20 years ago. Even from the early days in Pleasantville, Dileo and Schwartz took extra efforts to help residents. In the video

Schwartz told of folks arriving home too late to pick up their prescriptions and the pharmacy was closed: "we'd leave a prescription at the police department for them to pick up."

"It's a sad day in Pleasantville to lose this anchor business that has been the center piece on Wheeler Avenue for all these many decades," said Pleasantville Mayor Peter Scherer. "You couldn't ask for a better bunch of folks for all these many years."

The employee who posted to Facebook on Thursday said: "Today unfortunately will be the last day open and we are hoping to clear out the store. EVERYTHING IS 50% OFF EXCLUDING VITAMINS. Please feel free to come say our final goodbyes!"

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