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Although every attempt is made to maintain accuracy in the newsletter, the editor and the Society assume no responsibility for errors. They also reserve the right to edit where necessary.

LIFE WITH MARY

By George F. Calvi, Editor

LET'S BE HONEST. Mary Kamens was unique. Having worked in the Ardsley Village Clerk's office from 1955 to 1996, she always aimed to please, and would do anything for anyone at any time. As generous as she was with her time though, by no stretch of the imagination could she be defined as a spendthrift. To be brutally candid this Manhattan haberdasher's daughter was the most frugal individual I ever met, perhaps with the sole exception of my own mother who saved everything from paper clips to rubber bands to uncanceled postage stamps she painstakingly soaked off envelopes. Since Mary did not drive, she regularly bemoaned the loss of the nearby Pickwick Movie Theatre in Dobbs Ferry, yet she would not purchase a VCR or subscribe to cable television. Nor would she buy an air conditioner for her own comfort in her tiny three-room apartment on King Street. Consequently, she spent many a summer weekend afternoon transcribing Village Board minutes not because she really needed to, but because the air conditioning in Village Hall was delicious! Her words, not mine. But to be fair, her restrained ways did not extend to all aspects of her life. Though she did not spend money on herself, she regularly helped with the expenses of loved ones, in particular I was told, financing the law school education of her grandson.

I arrived in the Ardsley municipal offices in the spring of 1990 shortly after Mayor Morty David convinced me to accept the job as Village Manager while treating me to hot dogs at Ardsley Kosher (now Ardsley Cucina). The hot dogs, by the way, were great! How could I say no? As you may imagine, Ardsley municipal offices were a much different place back in the early 1990s. The economy was in the dumps still suffering from the crash of 1987. That first summer I worked in the old Village Hall, the phones rarely rang, and visitors were few and far in between. And when they did arrive, they strolled right into the respective offices whether they were



invited or not. The HVAC system could be temperamental, and the ancient wooden window frames were a struggle to open. The offices sat right above the bays of the fire department, and when the trucks had to be tested once a week, the diesel fumes wafted right upstairs, so much so I was able to scrawl on the walls "Clean Me" as anyone could customarily do on the surface of a dirty car. It was that bad! I could say more about that, but that is a story for another time.

While I was the Assistant to the Supervisor of the Town of Ossining, I had spoken to Mary Kamens a number of times on the telephone conducting salary surveys for the municipal budget process. Though her voice was familiar to me, when I finally met her in person, I was not prepared to see how petite she was. Born on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and a widowed mother of two daughters, Mary Kamens was first a Senior Stenographer, then Deputy Village Clerk, and ultimately the Village Clerk. She knew her stuff. She knew where everything was located, and she knew practically everyone in the Village. In short, she was an institution. But by 1990, well into her 80s, like many institutions of a certain vintage, she was slow to welcome or accept new ideas and innovations. Moreover, the Village had become her life. No matter what

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

So, there we were, sitting in the conference room, the production assistant, one of her colleagues, Village Clerk Barbara Berardi, and me. The subject of conversation was a proposed major motion picture with some scenes to be shot in the Village. Locations were to be scouted, and talks were to be scheduled with downtown merchants. Instructions were voiced that all outdoor activities be coordinated with Police, Fire, and Highway personnel. The Village Clerk advised about film fees and applications that needed to be completed and filed. All seemed to be moving smoothly until the production assistant

revealed there would be vintage automobiles, and the actors would be wearing vintage clothing. Upon hearing the word vintage, out of curiosity I inquired, "What are we talking about here? the 1920s? 1930s? Perhaps the 1940s? As the production assistant turned her head to respond, I took notice for the first time just how young she actually was. Very politely she said, "The 1980s." As those words beamed into my brain like a heat seeking missile, I spun out of the chair, headed to the door, and bellowed, "Meeting's over!"

Of course, the meeting was not over. Just a bit of over-reacting on my part. I gingerly reclaimed my seat, as I attempted to digest that verbal bombshell that had just been lodged at me. I simply had not been prepared to hear the words "vintage" and "1980s" uttered in the same breath. For those of us of a certain age in 2012, the 1980s remained in our minds a cherished and relatively recent part of our history. How could this young whippersnapper dare to describe our heyday as vintage! The audacity of it all! Of course, long story short, Martin Scorsese got to direct in Ardsley a segment of his film, *The Wolf of Wall Street*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Jonah Hill, and others, mostly at the former Westchester Garage, once all the t's had been crossed and all the i's had been dotted, and the rest is history.

The word "vintage" is a funny word. In fact, it holds different meaning for different people. As mentioned earlier, for some of us the 1980s were literally yesterday. For some, who weren't even born yet in the 1980s, the decade is ancient history -- unless you're a big fan of *The Goldbergs!*



Leonardo DiCaprio and Jonah Hill peeking into the former Westchester Garage, 2012

"ideas will wither as quickly as ripened fruit on a desiccated vine."

It all depends on one's "perspective," another one of those funny words that has a range of meaning for many people. The very music, food, hairstyle, clothing, and beverages enjoyed by one group of people, may be anathema to others. It's just the way it is, or as some would say: C'est la vie! That's life! There's not much one can do about it. One just accepts there are always going to be differences, and move on with the business of life. Or

can we? What should happen when resources are limited, and we have to make choices? Take this newsletter. The people who currently write articles number less than a handful, but their range is wide. They are a hardy few, and in my humble opinion they do a fine job. But they are limited, not in scope of subject matter, but rather in longevity. After all, just like the milk container in your fridge, we all have expiration dates. Yours truly has written somewhat folksy articles these past five years of the events he lived through during his 24.5 year tenure

with the Village. Another member of the historical society often digs deeply writing about obscure items in a highly detailed scholarly manner very much akin to the style found in an Ivy League law review. And yet a third member exhibits a down home talent of showcasing stories in plain English about subjects in a way neither of the two aforementioned writers ever approach. Sprinkle in the occasional contributions from other members, and we have here, what my late brother, Larry, used to say, a good thing going.

And although this is all well and good, the momentum cannot be sustained indefinitely without a regular infusion of new blood. We need new members who can write articles. I can't emphasize that more. People are very generous in contributing ideas about what we should be writing about, but without good writers to add some flesh to the bones, those ideas will wither as quickly as ripened fruit on a desiccated vine. It's as simple as that. So, if you enjoy this historical society newsletter, if you want to see it continue to exist, and you enjoy writing, please contact our president, Peter Marcus (pmmarcus@optonline.net). He's a very congenial fellow who will be happy to chat with you, and hear your ideas about subjects you would like to write about. You don't have to have the urbane styling of a Frank Bruni, or the wordsmithing talent of a John McWhorter, or even the politically-charged healthy skepticism of a Phil Reisman, but being able to string a noun and a verb together along with a few adverbs and adjectives in a phrase that resembles the local vernacular would be a plus. No pressure. So, please give this request some thought. Come up with an idea for an article that others might enjoy reading in the community, and start typing away! We all have a story to tell. There is no secret to story-telling. As Earl Hamner, Jr.'s fictional character John-Boy Walton often used to ponder back on his grand-daddy's eponymous mountain, "An author writes best about what he is most familiar with." So can you! And who knows? If you're really good there might even be an editor position with the historical society in some lucky Ardsley resident's future!

George F. Calvi, Editor



ARDSLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Become a part
of history*

If you enjoy history . . .

If you enjoy writing . . .

If you enjoy lending a hand . . .

If you would like to volunteer . . .

*If you enjoy the
Ardsley Historical
Society newsletter and
would like to become a
part of the team . . .*

Contact Peter Marcus at
914-393-3222

or email

*petermarcus@
ardsleyhistoricalsociety.org*

ARDSLEY LITTLE LEAGUE . . . A BRIEF HISTORY



AHS's own Matt Arone at 8 years old, during his Ardsley Little League days

MINOR LEAGUE ROSTER

WINKS

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| Player No. | |
| 1. | Benjamin Baker |
| 2. | Richard Brandon |
| 3. | William Britt |
| 4. | Richard Cabot |
| 5. | Charles Crisi |
| 6. | Dennis Ducharme |
| 7. | Gaston Ducharme |
| 8. | Bruce Evans |
| 9. | Donald Hassell |
| 10. | Jeffrey Kane |
| 11. | Arthur Kanning |
| 12. | Charles Kalmykow |
| 13. | Ralph Kaufman |
| 14. | Douglas Lubbers |
| 15. | Charles Schafer |
| 16. | John Schneider |
| 17. | Gary Silverman |
| 18. | Paul Wasserman |
| 19. | Ronald Wedekind |
| 20. | Donald Woodrow |

Sponsor: Quick as a Wink Cleaners
 Manager: Walter Preminger
 Coach: Ed Rizzo
 Coach: Sol Silverman
 Uniform:

LIGGETT REXALL

- | | |
|------------|---------------------|
| Player No. | |
| 1. | John Alexandroff |
| 2. | Joseph Americo |
| 3. | Kenneth Berland |
| 4. | Jack Clark |
| 5. | Richard Clark |
| 6. | Richard Donahue |
| 7. | Thomas D'Auria |
| 8. | Craig Glassman |
| 9. | Mark Gross |
| 10. | John Hutchinson |
| 11. | John Kipp |
| 12. | Raymond Laudato |
| 13. | Michael Miller |
| 14. | William Nannariello |
| 15. | Richard Presthold |
| 16. | Bruce Rayburn |
| 17. | Thomas Sheils |
| 18. | Fred Suthergreen |
| 19. | John Thomas |
| 20. | Robert Weiss |

Sponsor: Liggett Rexall
 Manager: Milton Mitler
 Coach: John Hutchinson
 Coach: Israel Golden
 Uniform: White-Scarlet

Minor League roster from the 1956 league



Judge Wilbur MacDowell watching first ball he has just thrown, opening day 1956. Jim Esposito on right of Judge. Bill Fernandez, third right of Judge, with arm in air trying to guide ball.

By Matt Arone

The Village of Ardsley has a good reputation around the county for many things. Nice parks and trailways, good pizza parlors and restaurants, and a highly rated school system. But Ardsley is also known for its well-respected and always competitive Little League program. Although the village (and schools) are complete with many different athletic programs and teams, baseball and softball has always proven to be the most popular and successful. The high school teams have held state championship parades through the village for both their varsity baseball and softball teams in their history, and one of the primary reasons for that is due to the incredible job the volunteer adults do dedicating their time to the Ardsley Little League. So here's a little history lesson on the beginnings of this top-notch program.

In the fall of 1955 (yes.... 67 years ago), league founder Bill Fernandez started the movement, and on December 15, 1955 in the municipal building an organizational meeting complete with election of officers was held. It was at that meeting Edwin Pancoast Jr. was elected the first ever president of Ardsley Little League. Committees were formed that night so that the boys (not the girls yet) could get ready to play in the spring of 1956. By February, the league had four teams set and ready to play. The first four sponsors in Ardsley Little League history were the Ardsley (Tri-Village) Rotary Club (nicknamed "The Wheels"), the Ardsley Lions Club, the Ardsley Fire Department and the Ardsley Acres Hotel Court (still located at 560 Saw Mill River Road). Mr. Fernandez was the Umpire-In-Chief that first year. Those four teams all played during opening day (May 20th) at the newly built McDowell Park in 1956 after the first parade and grand ceremonies. Appropriately, it was that day that the park was named and dedicated to Judge B. Wilbur McDowell, who was in attendance. There was only one field then. The first ever game in Ardsley Little League history was The Lions Club (managed by Watson Bell) vs. The Fire Department (managed by Robert Rayburn). Games were also played at Woodlands Park on Saw Mill River Road that inaugural season. Over 250 boys participated in year one as there were five other younger teams that took part. And the following season, a reported 335 played ball in three leagues. The Majors, Minors and "Farm" Leagues housed boys ages 8-12. Mr. Pancoast served two years as league president (he then moved on to a league officer) before Mr. Fernandez stepped in to run the league in 1958

and 1959. Fernandez gave a hint on one of the reasons he began organizing the league in his first president's letter when he said baseball is "a game that everybody likes, but a game that had become difficult to play for lack of facilities." Teams were divided up equally before each season as evaluation "try-outs" were held indoor in the gym at the public-school building at 520 Ashford Avenue. These try-outs were done complete with adults holding clipboards as they watched kids with hand-written numbers safety-pinned to their backs as they ran, threw and fielded ground balls (a practice that continued at the Concord Road School well into the 1980's).

By the time the league hit their 10-year anniversary in 1965, the program was on their 8th president (Adam Damascus), an 11-person board of directors and 11 committee chairs. Twenty-nine teams provided over 475 boys an opportunity to play ball. Some of the local team sponsors our readers might recognize were Tracy's Shoe Shoppe, Louis' Supermarket and Riccio's Delicatessen. The league also expanded into some youth basketball (established 1957) and flag football (established 1967) programming on the side to keep the players busy during the off-season. The league had certainly developed into a successful athletic program by then, but one very important thing was missing.....the girls.

Before the girls got on the diamond, the women got involved first as the "Little League Auxiliary" (manned by the mothers) which was formed in 1967. Led by President Connie Keane, this 15 all-female group used "a lot of feminine inventiveness and woman-power to smooth out the operations of Ardsley Little League." Duties included patching the equipment, assigning umpires, scheduling games and running the snack bar. Mrs. Keane was the wife of Mr. Joe Keane who had been the field supervisor for the Ardsley Little League for many years by this time. I could only guess this is where the push began for the young female athletes to have the same opportunities to play as the boys did.

An article in the Herald Statesman on February 26, 1970 announced the Ardsley Little League was recruiting girls for a softball division. Up until then, it doesn't appear that any girl interested in playing baseball had the opportunity to play with the boys. "Any girl in grades five through eight, living in the Ardsley School District who wants to play softball..." were welcome to register by getting an application



1962 Opening Day Ceremonies



1962 Opening Day Ceremonies



1962 Opening Day Ceremonies

from “Mrs. Jon H. Hammer of 12 Westway, Hartsdale.” Mrs. Jon Hammer turned out to be the first commissioner of the girls’ softball program for the Ardsley Little League, aka Mrs. Pat Hammer. Mrs. Hammer “knew athletics and liked to work with young girls and could take over the program” according to the annual handbook from 1970. In March, Mrs. Hammer ran a try-out to organize five teams of girls in the “Lassie League.” Sixty-seven girls in grades 5-8 registered and played an 8-game season starting April of 1970. Under league president Dan Kelly, games were played on the newly developed Field #3 at McDowell Park and the teams did not have local sponsors attached to their team names. The Bobcats, Cougars, Jaguars, Tigers and Wildcats all practiced once a week before the games began and women such as Mrs. Hammer, Kathy Malley, Dolly Smith and Phyllis Scheiner were the coaches. Joining those women as first year coaches was Mr. Al Cerrone who coached his daughter, Valerie. And it is important to mention that the head coach of the Cougars year-one was Marie Stimpfl, who would serve as our mayor from 1983-1988. Mrs. Stimpfl is known as one of the pioneers for women’s sports in our village as she coached CYO basketball and girls’ softball in Ardsley into the late 1990’s, even after her own children had grown and left the program. In fact, Mrs. Stimpfl was just posthumously inducted into the Ardsley High School Sports Hall of Fame in October of 2022 for all her accomplishments.

By 1972, Ardsley Little League had over 600 boys and girls participating. There were 35 boys’ teams and 8 girls softball teams. Although the girls still did not have team sponsors, the boy’s teams had sponsors such as Ardsley Big Top, Westchester Garage, Ardsley Pizzeria and Cerrone Real Estate. The year 1976 was the first sign of any female playing baseball on a boys Freshman (1st year) baseball team according to the annual booklets. 1978 was the final “Father-Son” dinner as it was appropriately changed to the “Parent-Child” dinner in 1979 under president Gene O’Gull. Over the years, those dinners included many famous athletes as guest speakers such as New York Yankee Hank Bauer, Chicago Bear Running Back Gayle Sayers and New York Mets first baseman Ed Kranepool. A year later, Ardsley Little League celebrated their Silver Anniversary with 25 boys’ teams and 10 girls’ teams which had sponsors by then such as Marty’s Mug N’Munch, Flo’s Card & Party Center, and The Water Wheel Inn. When the league entered the 1990’s under president Sam Young, the program had molded four consecutive high school baseball state championship teams and numerous award-winning girls’ softball teams. By then, the number of teams leveled out, the “Parent-Child” dinner became a Family Day Picnic and sponsors included places we can still remember such as Razzleberry’s, Captain Video and Sunnydale Farms.

In more recent years, McDowell Park and the league has seen many more quality improvements. Renovations at the park included an additional field as well as a tee ball field. Lights were put on Field #1 for night play. New bathroom facilities were added in the early 2000’s. Summer and Fall tournaments are run by the league each



Little League Parade travels up Heatherdell Rd to Mc Dowell Park



1982 First Place Softball team



1982 Second Place Softball team

year. New players are still evaluated by the league, but not in military format like in the 1950’s. The village shares field maintenance responsibility with private landscapers. The league can also claim more high school state champions; this time on the girls’ softball side as the varsity team won the title in 2019.

Today, the league has almost 50 sponsors including some that have been part of the program for decades such as Camp Kennybrook, Ardsley Carvel and an original sponsorship from the Ardsley Fire Department (Ardsley Engine Co. #1). There’s a website for schedules and rosters instead of the annual handbook. The league has 15 spring teams nowadays, however the format of youth baseball and softball has changed in recent years where the kids will not only play in-house at McDowell Park, but they also will travel to play against other local little league teams such as Elmsford or Harrison. The program is as strong as ever and still maintains the stellar reputation around the area as an outstanding

youth baseball/softball program. You can believe the reason the program is still so strong today is the same reason it successfully got off the ground back in 1956. The volunteer parents deserve most of the credit. Whether it was league founder Bill Fernandez in the 50’s or current league president Andrew Hambleton now, the volunteers make this program go. They coach, umpire, run the snack bar, order equipment, schedule the games, manage the website, organize the team photos and drive the kids to the park. Without that volunteer determination to begin this league almost 70 years ago, and without that dedication now, Ardsley Little League wouldn’t be the home run it is today.

[Editor’s note: Author Matt Arone retrieved information from the Ardsley Little League annual handbooks from 1957-1990; Ardsley Little League’s website; and Ardsley Little League’s Facebook page. He was also provided information from historical newspaper articles by Village Historian Robert Pellegrino. – GFC]



2022 “Historians” Little League team sponsored by the Ardsley Historical Society

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP UNVEIL REVOLUTIONARY WAR MARKER

By Peter Marcus

Anyone driving along Farm Road towards Ardsley High School in the past four months may have noticed a blue and yellow historical marker. This marker commemorates a six-week period in the summer of 1781 when 4,000 Revolutionary War soldiers under the leadership of General George Washington encamped on both sides of Heatherdell Road (at that time called Military Road), including areas now part of the High School and Concord Elementary School grounds. The encampment began July 6th and ended August 16th, and soldiers trained under officers, among them Alexander Hamilton. The significance of the encampment can be better understood in the context of three other locations: General Washington's headquarters at Joseph Appleby's farmhouse (no longer standing) on Secor Road near where the WFAS radio antenna is now located; the simultaneous French encampment of French soldiers under General Rochambeau on and near where Sunningdale Country Club is located today off Underhill Road; and General Rochambeau's headquarters at the Odell House on Ridge Road. The Odell House, now undergoing restoration with plans to eventually become a museum, was where Washington and Rochambeau met frequently to plan their strategy. The joint encampment arose out of France's entry into the War.

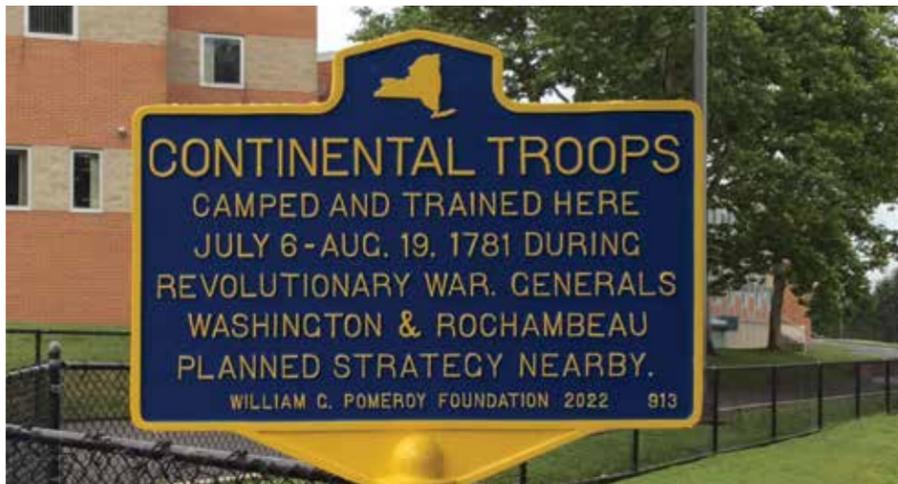
The early battles against the British showed that the British had the advantage in troop numbers, equipment, and training. Despite General Washington's pleas to the Continental Congress for more troops, equipment, and money, the Continental Army continued to be at a marked disadvantage against



Mr. Marcus and Dr. Schoenfeld after the marker unveiling



Peter Marcus, Historical Society President, and Rob Pellegrino, Village Historian, stand beside a map of the 1781 encampment showing the location of all 8 historical markers, including the locations of the French Troops and the Odell House, as well as the newly unveiled marker at Ardsley High School. The map and all of the markers can be viewed on the Society's webpage at www.ardsleyhistoricalsociety.org/ardsley-encampment-historical-marker



the British. This forced the Americans to consider other options. France's assistance was brokered by Continental Congressman Benjamin Franklin. France's view was that the "enemy of my enemy is my friend," the common enemy being Great Britain. Once France's assistance was finalized, it provided the Americans with much needed cash and soldiers, and allowed them to trade freely with French merchants in their ports around the globe.

General Washington's original plan had been to attack the British forces in New York. However, the information discovered during the Grand Reconnaissance made Washington reconsider this plan. The Grand Reconnaissance was the joint French-American military operation in Westchester County and the Bronx from July 21st to 23rd for the purpose of surveying British troop strength at various locations to determine if a successful attack there was possible. It soon became clear that it was not since the British forces had control of the "high ground" and they had superior troop strength. As the Generals debated strategy, they received news of French Admiral de Grasse's plans to sail into Chesapeake Bay with much needed troops and supplies. They then devised an ambitious plan to march together to Yorktown, Virginia, and engage the enemy there. The decisive battle ended on October 19 when British General Lord Cornwallis surrendered to the Americans. After five long years the new nation had finally gained its independence.

In May, 2021, Peter Marcus, President of the Ardsley Historical Society, applied to the Pomeroy Foundation for an historical marker to recognize this significant event in Ardsley's history. The lengthy and detailed process included establishing proof for the marker's proposed text through original documents dated as of the time of the encampment (i.e., primary sources). In December, the application was approved along with a grant to purchase the marker. At the end of June, the marker was installed and formal dedication of the marker occurred on October 22 at an unveiling ceremony. After introductory remarks from Dr. Ryan Schoenfeld, Ardsley Schools Superintendent, and Mr. Marcus, four students from the Ardsley Middle School History Club, Siya Arora, Adrienne Tapia, Anthony Porco, and Ari Laurient, along with their two faculty advisors, Sean Grady and Andrew Nappi, each read parts of an historical narrative which covered the beginning of the French entry into the War through the British surrender at Yorktown. Finally, it was time for the unveiling of the marker. At the start of Saturday's



event, Mr. Schoenfeld had covered the marker with an "Ardsley" blanket. Now the Superintendent invited all of the students in the audience to gather around the marker, along with Mr. Grady, Mr. Nappi, and Mr. Marcus, and at the count of three, the students removed the blanket and the marker was officially unveiled for everyone to see and appreciate.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLABORATES WITH MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCAL HISTORY CLUB

By Peter Marcus & Robert Pellegrino

This past summer two social studies teachers from Ardsley Middle School, Andrew Nappi and Sean Grady, planned a club for students interested in learning about local history. Once the new school year was underway, they contacted Peter Marcus, President of the Ardsley Historical Society, and Rob Pellegrino, Village Historian, and asked if the Historical Society would be interested in working with the club, beginning with giving those students who joined a tour of the Ardsley American Legion Post building located in Ashford Park beside the Wall of Honor. Of course, the Society was thrilled with the creation of the club and the immediate interest in collaboration.



On "Welcome Back Ardsley" Day (September 24) nearly 20 members of the club visited the American Legion building where veterans of World War I and World War II once met to support one another and to discuss their experiences fighting for our country. Mr. Pellegrino first gave the students a brief history of the Wall of Honor, explaining that the original Wall was located at the large northbound bus stop at the corner at Ashford Avenue and 9A, and was constructed shortly after WWII began through the volunteer efforts of students, parents, and others for the purpose of listing the names of those serving in WWII. The Wall was expanded to include the names of more than 250 residents of the Ardsley School District who served our country during WW II, and the names of 14 young men who made the ultimate sacrifice. Moving into the building, Mr. Pellegrino discussed various WWII artifacts as well as artifacts and written materials relating to local residents who served in WWI (including a gas mask and description of the drives for families to collect fruit pits for making gas

mask filters), and a Civil War veteran who would later become an Ardsley school teacher during the District's little red schoolhouse years and then its principal at the four room schoolhouse that preceded the High School Building (now the Ashford Court Condominium). Club members were able to handle certain artifacts, and throughout the tour asked penetrating questions; for sure, a few future local historians among them.

On September 29, Mr. Nappi and Mr. Grady escorted 15 members of the club to meet Mr. Marcus and Mr. Pellegrino on the second floor of the Ardsley Public Library where Mr. Marcus had laid out a number of the Society's more prominent artifacts, among them a Revolutionary war cannonball. The students listened as Mr. Marcus and Mr. Pellegrino explained the significance of each artifact. They helped the students learn about Ardsley's past: from the development of the Ardsley school system, to the importance of the local railroad line that served the Village from 1890 to 1958 and helped it develop from a farming community to a residential community; and to the role that the area played in the Revolutionary War.

On October 6, the students voted on which artifacts to include in the display cases in their school's main lobby. Club members used their knowledge of these topics to create a brief narrative that was posted alongside each artifact in the cases where they arranged the artifacts. The club's efforts and the displays have been a great success, highlighted in a School District wide announcement (Sharing Success – October 21). The Society is happy to support the club and looks forward to further collaboration with them in the future.



ONE MORE TALE OF THE FIRE CHIEFS: THE VINNY COULEHAN YEARS 1991-1993, 2010-2012

By Vinny Coulehan

I joined the Village of Ardsley Fire Department in October 1975. My memories of those early days were a busy time. The Ardsley FD always prided itself with training and qualifications for the job of a Volunteer Firefighter. I continued my training and became an MPO - driver and pump operator in July of 1977 right after the July 13th Blackout.

In April 1984 I was elected Captain to the Ardsley Engine Company, and thereafter in 1985, I began a separate phase of my FD activity becoming one of the initial members of the Westchester County Hazardous Material Response Team both as a technician and a team leader. I continue to support this to the present time. In April 1989 I was elected 2nd Assistant Chief and then Chief of the Department in April 1991. During my first tenure as chief the department continued to improve fire safety and prevention in the community, and conducted a number of babysitting safety programs working with the Ardsley PD and ASVAC.

The year 1992 was a busy one. The Ardsley Fire department replaced the 1970 Young pumper with a 1992 Beck pumper. Interestingly, the 1970 Young Pumper was auctioned off to the Caribbean Island of Montserrat and remained in service for several more years. The year ended with a near tragic fire at the old Water Wheel Inn Restaurant on Saw Mill River Road, now the present site of the affordable housing development.

In 1996 the Ardsley Fire Department sponsored the Westchester County Volunteer Firefighters Parade to coincide with the 100th Anniversary of the Fire Department. I served as the Chairperson of the committee and worked with the



Village on a host of very memorable activities culminating with our first Carnival and Fireworks display.

In 2005, I returned to the officer ranks becoming Fire Chief again in 2010 - 2012. Over the years I have continued to support training members to become qualified pump and ladder operators. Additionally, I have maintained my active service and qualifications to support the FD. Most importantly, I value the members of the Village of Ardsley Fire Department that I have worked with over the years. We have had many good times, some challenging times, and some heart-breaking times, but in the end, I am lucky to have been able to be involved with a very good organization.

[Editor's note: As Village Manager, I was always impressed by how much energy Chief Coulehan possessed, particularly how he was able to perform his duties for the FD while maintaining a full-time day job, advancing his formal education, and being a devoted family man to his wife, Dottie, and their three children, Marissa, Mark, and Michael. In addition to his duties as Chairman of the AFD 100th anniversary committee, Vinnie simultaneously Co-Chaired the Village's centennial committee along with Library Board President Floyd Lichtenberg, Village Trustee Lydia Dallis, and former Mayor Dick Fontana. For those too young to remember, the infamous blackout of July 13, 1977 was a 25-hour outage after a bolt of lightning struck an electrical substation in Westchester. According to Wired.Com and Wikipedia, the blackout generated rioting, the looting of 1,616 stores, and the setting of over a thousand fires in NYC's boroughs. Though much of Westchester was knocked out as well, with some mayhem recorded, the county suffered nowhere near the degree of NYC. - GFC]

day of the week I came to Village Hall Mary was there. She was either typing the Village Board of Trustees minutes, the Planning Board minutes, or the Zoning board minutes, and of course, the never-ending public notices that had to meet the deadlines of the local newspapers. And why was I there on weekends? My predecessor, Tim Itoni, currently the Westchester County Clerk, had departed the Village in late March. I did not arrive until May 15. During the interim, a foot-tall pyramid of white envelopes, Manila envelopes, packages of all kinds, and phone messages had grown on the Manager's desk, and it took me an entire summer to sort them all out. In those pre-Internet days when a government agency sent out a mailing that was not responded to as quickly as it anticipated, the agency generated a second mailing, and a third mailing until a response was provided. In short, there was a lot of paper on my desk. Village Clerk Kamens and Village Treasurer Marion DeMaio did what they could prior to my arrival but honestly much of it was beyond their respective areas of familiarity. Moreover, they had their own jobs to perform, and they themselves were single person acts, that is to say, they had no skilled deputies to act in their stead when needed. Yes, there were volunteers and the occasional part-timers to assist, but they were highly transient and limited in scope as to what they could perform, with the sole exception of Victoria DeNardo, a one-person dynamo, who did her best to fill in wherever possible, but even she got bogged down with the wealth of tasks that needed to be addressed. To say the offices were understaffed in 1990 to accomplish the tasks that had to be done is a vast understatement.

During that first summer, more often than not, Mary and I were in the offices, evenings and weekends, doing our thing: she transcribing minutes for three boards, me playing catch up. One day curiosity caught the best of me and I asked Mary why she really was in Village Hall on the weekends. That was the conversation when I first learned she had no air conditioner, no VCR, nor cable television subscription, not because she couldn't afford the latter two, but because she had little use for them. Why she never shelled out for a small window air conditioner remains a mystery to me. She did share that she spent much of her discretionary time on weekends reading the Sunday New York Times from cover to cover particularly the financial section and the book reviews.

Now, having been working on computers since at least 1982 when I first enrolled in graduate school in Pittsburgh, arriving in Ardsley was a bit of a culture shock when I asked where my desktop computer was and they handed me a yellow legal pad! Yes, the Village had no computers. No modern phone system with voice mail or call forwarding. No fax machine. Not even a good old Pitney Bowes postage meter! Each day Mary would call Highway Foreman Louis Pascone to send up either Laborer Hassan Pathan or Janitor Andy Prihoda to come to Village Hall to handle the mail. And when I say handle, I mean handle. Depending on how their spirit moved them the men would either moisten with a small sponge or lick every postage stamp, carefully affix them to the envelopes, rubber band the envelopes, and ultimately drop them into the nearest mailbox which at

the time was across the street in front of the old Bank of New York building. I don't recall ever hearing the fellows complain. I imagine the task of affixing stamps was far more appealing than pulling weeds or mopping floors.

Naturally, when I first arrived, I was eager to make an impression. My first major action was getting the ball rolling to persuade the Village Board to pass a bond issue to cover the costs of procuring desk top computers, modems, and printers, for which the bulk of the implementation must be credited to Village Treasurer Marion Demaio who regularly communicated with, strike that, jostled with our computer service consultants at KVS Information Systems in Buffalo, to work out all the kinks. Shortly after installing the computers, I went to work on my first Village Newsletter, and upon seeing the final proof before it went off to Efficiency Printing in White Plains, I was very proud until . . . Well, let's just say my satisfaction did not last very long.

Once the newsletters were in the possession of the post office, almost two thirds of them came back as undeliverable! As I glumly gazed at the pile sitting on the wooden table, shaking my head, marveling at all the mail stamped Return to Sender, I asked Mary, "How could this have possibly happened?" Before she could provide me with a response, future Village Trustee and Library Board president, Lydia Dallis, happened to walk into the room. Taking note of the pile, she questioned, "What is this?" I advised her, and she asked if she could take a closer look at it. As she poured over the addresses of the rejected newsletters she proclaimed, "Dead," "Dead," "Dead," "Moved," "Moved," "Moved," "Dead." Copy after copy after copy received a similar response. I looked at Mary and asked, "When was the last time you updated the mailing list?" She paused and then replied, "It may have been a while." Then she came back with, "Do you have any idea how expensive it is to update those metal plates? Totally mystified, I asked Mary, "What are you talking about? Plates? What plates?" She stood up, sauntered over to a nearby walk-in closet, and rolled out this unwieldy metal contraption with the word, Addressograph, emblazoned on its lid. Smiling, I inquired, "Just how old is this machine." She shrugged, "I don't know, perhaps only a few decades." I nodded, and asked "How is it updated?" She replied, "Each home's address is meticulously stamped into the metal of each plate . . ." I didn't hear the rest. As my eyes were about to pop out of my head I asked "You have heard about paper mailing labels?" "Yes," she said, "But you don't expect me to type the addresses of all 1500 households on sheets of label paper? Do you?" "Of course not," I exclaimed, "but we are going to ask the Greenburgh Assessor for a set of property address labels. As for the 100 or so businesses in the Village we'll have to create our own labels. That should require no more than a single sheet." I continued, "As for that Addressograph, let's roll it back in to the closet where it belongs." And that's where it resided until the end of the decade when it fittingly "went down with the ship" as the entire old Village Hall was demolished.

Mary's abhorrence of being wasteful knew no bounds. I recall the first time that I needed to send a letter via certified mail. I asked Mary if we had any of those special

green cards to fill out and attach to the envelope. "Oh sure, they're up there on the top shelf between the potted plants across from my desk." I thanked her, spun around, and sure enough, there they were. But something was amiss. The cards looked a bit faded. Upon second glance, they looked a lot faded. I examined them closely as if one were examining a potentially counterfeit twenty-dollar bill. Yes, the words inscribed indicated it was for certified mail, but then I noted the date on the card that is present on all federal stationery and forms, and the date indicated in the corner was 1964! Even in 1990, that was a long time ago. I asked Mary, "You don't send out too much in the way of certified mail, do you?" "Hardly," she responded, "It's a bit overpriced." "No worries," I shot back. "I'll bring the letter myself to the post office during my lunch hour, and bring you back a fresh supply of certified mail cards."

And then there were the McKinney's supplements. Lawyers of a certain age will fondly recall that a full set of those black leather-bound books, officially known as McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York State Annotated, with various topics of law imprinted with gold lettering on the spine focusing on everything from Real Property to Agriculture to Zoning, were in the days before the Internet, de rigueur, in every respectable law office as well as in Village Clerk offices. Each year, the publishers, Thomson Reuters, would send out a huge box to each client filled with pocket supplements for each volume to update them with changes in the law, albeit at a cost. One day the Village Attorney approached me and advised "We have a problem." She had attempted to use one of the McKinney's volumes, and noted an unusual problem with the supplement at the back of the book. It was falling apart. No, actually it was disintegrating. I inquired, "Is it a manufacturing defect?" She replied, "I don't think so. In fact, it was probably in good shape when it first arrived." Baffled, I inquired, "What do you mean?" "The copyright on the supplement stated 1965," she sheepishly replied. As my jaw dropped, I walked in to the Village Clerk's office, "Mary, it looks like we haven't been keeping up with the annual McKinney's pocket supplements." She very pleasantly replied, "Yes, I know, but you know the laws really don't change all that much. I really thought it was a waste to be purchasing all those supplements year in and year out." Totally blown away, I did an about-face, and asked the Village Attorney to please join me in my office. "Look, I don't want to make a big deal out of this. Please list which volumes you absolutely need to reference on a regular basis, and I will ensure those supplements start arriving with regularity. If there are volumes we just never use, I am going to weed them out. No use in maintaining books that never get cracked open." Mary appeared at my door and inquired, "Is there a problem?" I responded, "No, no problem that can't be resolved. I will be providing you with a list of pocket supplements that need to be purchased." "Oh, okay," she politely responded, "When I get the list, I'll be happy to secure a purchase order from the Treasurer."

This octogenarian's greatest guilty pleasure was that she loved to smoke. Though Heaven help her if she ever had to actually purchase a pack of cigarettes. From time to time, she would hit up a former Mayor or other visitor to Village

Hall for a cigarette. Not surprisingly, the main supplier for her habit was Ardsley's Finest. Every cigarette smoking police officer knew that when he visited the second floor Mary would be hitting him up for a Marlboro or Winston. And upon accomplishing her goal, she would steal away to the fire escape adjacent to the Building's Inspector's office to savor her ill-gotten gain, sometimes joined by the Building Inspector himself.

One day, Detective Jimmy Noone let me know that a new fax machine was operating in the Police Department. I immediately scrambled downstairs to his office to see a demonstration and inquire about his vendor. Several days later I secured a fax machine for the Village Clerk's office. Upon its installation, I advised Mary that she no longer had to send Hassan Pathan to deliver the public notices to the office of The Rivertowns Enterprise then located in Hastings on Hudson. Rather she could now easily slip the notice into the fax machine and a copy would arrive in Hastings in seconds. Mary responded that she thought that was wonderful! As she uttered those words, I noted a slight arch to her left eyebrow above her eyeglass frames which momentarily made me suspicious, but I brushed it aside. About an hour later, I called Mary to inquire if Hassan was around because I wanted him to drop off some forms for the crew at the Highway Department on Elm Street. She said he would be back shortly. Well, when he arrived much later than I expected, I asked him, "Hey, Hassan, where have you been?" Hassan, one of the gentlest human beings I ever encountered in all my years in local government, bashfully responded, "I was in Hastings at the offices of the Rivertowns Enterprise." I quizzically looked at him, and asked why.

TIME TO UPGRADE!



He very quietly whispered so that no one else could hear, "Mary sent me there to make sure the faxed public notice had actually arrived at the newspaper office." His remark

left my mouth so far agape a squadron of house flies could have flown in. I very politely thanked Hassan, headed for my office, closed the door, and collapsed into a convulsion of laughter.

I would be remiss if I did not make reference to one of the most curious things I encountered upon arriving in Ardsley in 1990: The 10:00 am tea break. Yes, you read that right. Each day at 10:00, all activity would come to a temporary halt. Mary and the staff would assemble in the Board Room just long enough to enjoy their tea, and the fresh scones secured by the Village Treasurer from the Riviera Bakery back in the day when it was located on Colonial Court in the Village Green. Should a resident or other visitor happen to stop by during that interlude, they were invited to sit and join the staff in the partaking of tea, or choose to return when it was over. Being the new kid on the block, I tolerated this for a short while, but with the introduction of computers that autumn, and the introduction of other technological advances, time was at a premium, and that quaint little practice unceremoniously fell by the wayside. While we're on the topic of food, I have to confess that other than those scones I don't recall ever seeing Mary consume anything. Rumor did have it that on her lunch hour, if she left the office, she would make a bee-line down to Margie's, a small luncheonette then operated by Yogi and Nirmal Singh, to have a cup of coffee and a small sandwich. Though the stores have long since been reconfigured in the CVS mall, Margie's would have been roughly located a door or two north of the current Sunshine Bagels. Margie's was a great place to get a quick bite and catch up on the local gossip with friends and acquaintances, pick up a local newspaper, even purchase a colorful glossy postcard with local scenes though many of those scenes portrayed on the cards were already quite dated back then! Some of our locally elected officials or wannabees even met there informally to strategize their plans for the next Village elections.

Mary was enchanted with her IBM Selectric typewriter, the standard workhorse of many offices in the 1980s. She had in her top desk drawer a full collection of those little silver gadgets the size of a golf ball that provided her with scores of different fonts. The problem was the typewriter was no longer as reliable as it once was, causing the repairman to be a regular visitor to the office, far too often for my taste. I decided it was time for me to have the "talk" with Mary. "Mary, I know you love your IBM Selectric, but for Pete's sake, it's the 1990s! Everywhere else most office workers have already graduated from Lanier or Compaq word processors to desk top computers utilizing WordPerfect packages, and we're still fumbling with electric typewriters. It's time for

you to do the same." Her face suddenly somewhat ashen, she stared at me in disbelief. "In fact, the next time your IBM Selectric breaks down, it's being replaced by a desktop computer." Though it was never my intention, I sensed that I had figuratively driven a stake through her heart. She merely nodded. I couldn't tell if she was just trying to please me, or she was slicing and dicing me in her mind with some super-duper Ronco kitchen widget. I must have made an impression because in a matter of days I received a type-written notice that she was retiring --- and it was rumored in some circles that people were blaming me!

Yes, at the age of 86, Mary Kamens retired from the Village of Ardsley and relocated to an apartment in Manhattan for the remaining several years of her life to be closer to her beloved theatres and museums, and the corner newsstands that hawked those thick issues of the daily New York Times and her beloved Sunday Times edition. It's highly doubtful those newsstand vendors ever sold Mary a single pack of cigarettes. Bet you 10 to 1 though, she acquired cigarettes off her apartment building doorman assuming her building had a doorman. As stated earlier, Mary always had a way with the men in uniform in Ardsley when it came to securing cigarettes. The uniformed doormen of Manhattan would not have stood a chance.

Oh, by the way, we're not quite done just yet. I have one more anecdote to share involving one of nature's little darlings. You see whenever Mary sauntered into my office quiet as a mouse, I knew something was brewing. Often it had to do with an infuriated resident looking to vent about something perhaps about a past due tax bill, or a beloved tree having been cut down, or a fence being erected, too high, too low, wrong place, wrong side, wrong type, wrong color, and they were demanding to see the Mayor! I'd been down this road many times before, and more often than not the infuriated resident did have a valid point for me to explore. My usual response was: "They'll have to settle for me. Send them in! Let's hear them out!" Admittedly these impromptu "social calls" were not my cup of tea, but after all, Village Managers manage the Village. It's what we do.

On one particular occasion, the circumstances were a bit, shall we say, unusual. "There's a squirrel in the Village Board room," she whispered as she entered my office. Caught off guard, I asked "A squirrel? A live squirrel? Where?" She advised it was sitting on top of the door frame of the Assessor's closet. I exited my office and walked into the Village Board room, and sure enough, there it was, a small, perhaps young, definitely terrified and shivering, red squirrel, cautiously spying us from above. Though I hadn't had much experience in dealing with squirrels, except for the multitude of thieving gray ones I used to encounter on the grassy expanse of Edward's Parade at Fordham's Rose Hill campus during my undergraduate days, I knew enough not to get too close to a wild animal cornered inside of a building. Wisely, Mary suggested, "Let's notify the Police Desk." The officer at the Police Desk though sympathetic was unable to assist because he was alone at the moment and both police cruisers were out on patrol. He did say he would notify Greenburgh Animal Control right away. Mary asked me "What do we do next?" I said, "We wait, and go



L-R: Victoria DeNardo, Secretary; John Caley, Plumbing Inspector; Marion DeMaio, Treasurer; George Calvi, Village Manager; Mike Fanelli, Building Inspector; Mary Kamens, Village Clerk (circa 1995) photo by Bill Schropp

about our regular business. But first we lock the front door to the Board room so no one walks in and frightens the squirrel any further, or receives a rude surprise."

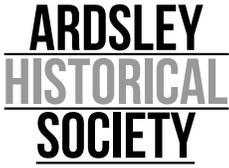
The Animal Control officer arrived expeditiously equipped with a huge butterfly net. I had to stifle a smile. It was the kind of net featured in many a Hanna - Barbera or Looney Tunes cartoon, that never landed on its intended goal but rather on someone the likes of Elmer Fudd. Regaining my composure, I asked, "How can we assist?" He responded, "First, we open all the windows. Next, ensure all staff stays behind closed doors." I looked at Mary. "I guess he means me. I'll go join Victoria and Marion in her office" she said. "Good idea," I responded as I turned toward the Animal Control Officer. "I'm sticking around for this." I couldn't determine if he was agreeable with my decision or not, but it didn't matter. I wasn't moving.

The Animal Control Officer climbed a wooden chair and attempted to net the squirrel. The frightened animal was having none of that. In a leap that would have made Ricochet Rabbit proud, the squirrel landed on the floor, hopped onto the Trustees' dais, jumped off the dais, landed on a nearby table, scattered some papers, probably some historical society calendars that Barbara Novich had dropped off for sale, and halted, seemingly to catch its breath. The Animal Control Officer attempted to take that opportunity to net the animal, but it leapt yet again this time across the floor and through the open window nearest the entrance to the room and on to a tree trunk. Wiping his brow, the Animal Control Officer proclaimed, "Well, that's that," and he shouted to the staff behind closed doors that the coast was clear. Since it was approaching 4:00 pm I offered if they wanted to go home early. Perhaps having had their fill of excitement for the day, all took me up on my offer except Mary, "Are you kidding? I have Zoning Board minutes to transcribe." And she proceeded to do just that.

I felt compelled to share this last story to illustrate the incredible work ethic of Mary Kamens. Nothing was going to stop her from completing her tasks. The woman rarely missed a day of work. She was there daily at 8:00

am, sometimes earlier, and often worked beyond 5:00 pm. During the summer of 1990, we witnessed those notorious mind-numbing public hearings to retrofit fire sprinklers in commercial establishments that were always SRO and always lasting beyond midnight. Yet through it all, Mary was there every single night taking minutes, never once exhibiting any exhaustion. I don't know how she did it. Inclement weather was never an obstacle for her, either. If it snowed, she requested a ride from either the DPW or the Police Department, and put in a full day. Though she did the work of three people, she never requested a stipend for preparing the minutes for the Village Board, the Zoning Board, or the Planning Board, nor did she request additional compensation for attending all those evening meetings. And don't forget, she was well into her 80s by the time we crossed paths. Though she did induce a bit of agita for me from time to time, I always knew she held the best interests of the Village at heart. As I said early on, she was unique, and I don't expect the Village will ever see the likes of her again.

[Editor's Note: Thanks to the sleuthing skills of Village Historian Robert Pellegrino, we learned that Mary's husband, Irvine Kamens died on December 15, 1955 of a heart ailment at Dobbs Ferry Hospital, as per the December 16th edition of the Yonkers Herald Statesman. He was only 43. Mr. Kamens was a semi-abstract artist associated with such advertising firms as Lester Rossin Associates. In the fine arts, he was known for the abstracts "Kingston Station," and "Whale." Influenced by Cezanne, some of his work is or was shown at the Museum of Modern Art. Having only moved five years prior to 55 Park Avenue, Ardsley in the newly developed area known as 21 Acres, Irvine and Mary had two daughters, Constance and Katherine. The obituary revealed that Mary's maiden name was Judson. If anyone is speculating, there is nothing to indicate her family had anything to do with the large former Judson estate or Judson Avenue in the Village. Further sleuthing by Mr. Pellegrino seems to indicate that she once lived at 105 E. 2nd Street in Manhattan in the Lower East side section known as the East Village. Her father's name was Jacob K. Judson. We know she had at least one sister, Judy Leff. - GFC]



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