

# The Ardsley Villager

A Publication of the Ardsley Village Board of Trustees

Visit us at <a href="http://www.ardsleyvillage.com">www.ardsleyvillage.com</a>		Always use 911 for emergencies
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>KEEPING THE LID ON PROPERTY TAXES – A NEW YEAR’S MESSAGE FROM MAYOR JAY LEON</b></p> <p>In the most recent village elections, I heard from many of you regarding your concerns about the rising cost of property taxes. This greatly concerns me as well, because I am not only your Mayor, but also a resident who finds it increasingly difficult to manage the cost of living in Westchester County.</p> <p>Most of you know that Ardsley village taxes only comprise about 28% of the total property taxes of a typical resident (with school taxes totaling about 60% and county and town taxes making up the rest). This by no means absolves the Board of Trustees of its responsibility toward its taxpayers, but it does dramatize the limitations we face in keeping your overall tax bill to a reasonable level.</p> <p>Still, Ardsley village taxes only increased by 3% in the 2007-08 budget, despite the construction of the new firehouse and various “unfunded mandates” imposed upon us by the federal, state and county governments. Due to these requirements, plus our liabilities in the ever-growing categories of medical, worker’s compensation, and pension obligations, a typical municipality’s discretionary spending is also limited.</p> <p>With this said, your Village Board of Trustees, Manager and Treasurer are always trying to find</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A MESSAGE FROM OUR ROOKIE TRUSTEE</b></p> <p>My first year on the Board has been quite a learning experience. Some of the projects I have been involved in include the start of Saturday recycling with the creation of a recycling depot on Elm Street, spearheading a new chapter of the village code for the historic preservation of stone pillars and stone walls, acting as a representative for the Livable Communities Initiative, and researching the possibilities for updating Ardsley’s Master Plan. I continue to work with the Traffic Committee (TPPS) in their endeavors to alleviate congestion and obtain more parking for our Village. – Beverly Levine</p> <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future.”</b> – John F. Kennedy</p> <p>ways to keep our residents’ village tax bill as low as possible, while maintaining the excellent services Ardsley residents have come to expect. Here are a few of the ways we try to manage the budget to keep its tax impact as low as possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several times per year, particularly at budget time, the Board of Trustees, along with</li> </ul>	<p>our Village Manager and Treasurer, review every line item in the budget, looking for potential savings and areas to cut. While this is an important procedure in budget management, this one exercise by itself will have limited impact in the overall bottom line without being done in conjunction with other measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This year, grants contributed to the improvement of McDowell Park and Bicentennial Park, and we have received grants for various police, fire and library items, as well as for records management and our Justice Court. Since I’ve been Mayor, I have tried to have us pursue grant opportunities more aggressively, which is a difficult feat with the village’s limited manpower (any resident with grant-writing experience who is looking to volunteer might find this an excellent way to provide a service to his/her community).</li> <li>• We increased our fund balance substantially in only a few years. This enabled us to receive a lower long-term interest rate on our bond for the construction of the firehouse, saving us interest payments for years. It also earns additional interest, which we can use to offset expenses.</li> <li>• The operative word in 2008 in municipal governing is shared services, and we are on the lookout for opportunities to find economies of scale with our neighbors. We will be sharing motor vehicle fuel with Dobbs</li> </ul>

Ferry when their new highway garage opens. We have an inter-municipal agreement with Hastings for disposing organic waste such as leaves and brush. We have joined with Dobbs Ferry to apply for a shared services grant to utilize a salt shed together. For many years have had a joint arrangement with Dobbs Ferry for the provision of transportation and hot congregate meals for our senior citizens. An even older arrangement has been the servicing of the South Ardsley and Chauncey fire protection districts by our own Ardsley Fire Department. As most of you know, we have entered into an agreement with Elmsford to supply their residents with library services. I have spoken to other municipalities about possibly sharing the costs and use of highway equipment, and we will continue to be on the lookout for opportunities in this area.

- We negotiated changes in our labor contract with one union that altered work rules that were costing the village money. It is difficult to eliminate entrenched work rules that are embedded in the labor contracts, but in a few instances we have been successful in making positive changes. For instance, the rules formerly awarded overtime to senior, higher paid employees at the expense of less senior, lower paid workers. Now all employees have an equal shot at overtime, which is a fairer system but also limits overtime costs.
- We try to retire debt early whenever feasible. Retiring a bond drops its interest and principal payments off the budget and saves us interest in the long run. Case in point -

it is a dangerous move to dip into the fund balance to cut taxes. This is because in the budget for the year after fund balance savings are used to pay expenses, those expense not only remain, they have probably increased. They must now be funded by additional taxes that were not accounted for in the previous year's budget, forcing the tax levy to be increased by larger percentages. Unincorporated Greenburgh ran into this exact problem this year – after two years of dipping into their fund balance to limit tax increases, those residents are looking at an unfortunate 19% tax levy increase. However, if a responsible portion of the fund balance is used to pay off and eliminate debt, that payment is wiped off the budget and the expense disappears, so taxpayers are not hit the following year. This is something we did this year by making final payments for a sanitation truck and bonds financing police and fire equipment.

- Where appropriate we consolidated short-term debt into our long-term serial bond for the firehouse construction. By depreciating assets over more years, it brings down the annual payments. For instance, we did this with a garbage truck this past year. It made sense that the truck, which has a depreciable life of 20 years, should be bonded over that period of time, rather than over five years at higher annual payments.
- Our franchise negotiations with Verizon and Cablevision resulted in one hundred thousand dollars in communication grants and included valuable connections at the library, community center and McDowell Park that will eventually enable us to

broadcast live from those locations on our government channel.

We will continue to be as vigilant as possible in looking for ways to minimize the tax impact on our residents, while maintaining the village's high standard of excellent services such as police, fire, highway and sanitation and recreation. We are also open to ideas on how to save money, particularly in the area of shared services. You can always forward me these ideas at [ardsleymayor@aol.com](mailto:ardsleymayor@aol.com), and I will share the most promising with the rest of the board. I hope you found this little treatise informative. I wish all of you the very best for a happy and healthy New Year.

#### **RECYCLING: IT'S THE LAW!**

Trustee Peter Porcino reminds us that Westchester County has announced that come February 1, the recycling laws that have been on the books for several years will be strictly enforced. Ardsley will be fined—and may have trucks turned back—if garbage contains items that can be recycled. That means that each of us **MUST RECYCLE!**

You can find the recycling guidelines on the back of your sanitation schedule which you should have received earlier this month. You can also go to the Westchester County website at [www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com) and click on the *environment* link, then the *recycling* link, where you can find all the information you need on recycling. The County's Quick Recycling Guide also has a list of organizations that will accept donations of used items.

Here are some simple recycling reminders:

**PAPER:** Paperback and hardcover books should be donated, not recycled. Waxed

cardboard, plastic and Styrofoam packing materials should be thrown out. **EVERYTHING ELSE**—papers, newspapers, magazines, brochures, catalogs, mail: envelopes and junk mail—can be recycled.

**PLASTIC:** Recycle plastic containers coded 1 or 2 on the bottom.

**PLASTIC BAGS:** Plastic bags cannot be recycled with the County. The County advises that if you store other recyclables in plastic bags you should dump the items into your recycling bin, and then dispose of the plastic bag. Some local stores, such as Stop and Shop in Dobbs Ferry, accept plastic bags for recycling.

**METAL:** Recycle food and beverage cans, clean aluminum foil and trays and empty aerosol cans. If your beverage containers are eligible for a deposit refund, by all means bring them back to the supermarket.

**GLASS:** Recycle clear, green or brown glass jars and bottles. Throw out light bulbs, drinking glasses, window and mirror glass, ceramics and kitchen cookware.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Ardsley is re-starting its environmental committee, and it will be looking at all aspects of government and citizen's conduct to see how we can reduce our impact on the environment. The committee, which consists of Trustee Peter Porcino, Lorraine Kuhn, Louise Giusti, Ellen Slipp, Ellen Fountain, and Susan Porcino, will be reviewing the Village government's practices and making recommendations for change, as well as advising on green initiatives. The committee will be looking to update the Village building code to institute green

building practices. And it will consider land use and open space policies. As for individual citizens, the committee will be reminding everyone of things they can do. The key phrase to remember is **REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE**. We all need to think about our purchases, how we can reduce the amount of materials we use and purchase, how we can reuse things we own and what we can recycle. The committee will also be providing information regarding alternative energy sources and programs in place to reduce energy usage. And finally, the committee will be working with merchants to find ways to institute environmentally friendly practices. Look for more information in the months ahead.

\*\*\*\*\*

**When Albert Einstein was introduced to Jack Warner, the studio head told the professor that he has a theory of relatives, too: "Don't hire them!"**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **NEW PROGRAM FOR 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> GRADERS**

The Ardsley Youth Advocate Program resumed providing services to Ardsley teens in November. The program first began serving Ardsley youth in the 1980's. Currently, the program is a collaboration between the Village of Ardsley and Student Assistance Services Corporation (SAS). SAS is licensed by the New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services through a contract with the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health. This program can be a great substance abuse prevention resource for the community. A variety of activities will be provided, many in collaboration with the Ardsley Recreation Commission. Other activities include education and consultation for teens and their parents, short-term counseling and

referral to other services. The program is available to all 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who live in the community. Allison De Luca, the 14 hour per week Student Assistance Counselor at Ardsley Middle School, has been selected as the new 21 hour per week Youth Advocate for the village. Allison has a Masters Degree in Social Work, previous experience in working with adolescents, and specialized training in prevention and early intervention strategies with adolescents at risk of having alcohol and other drug related problems. She is being paid and supervised by SAS and the Village of Ardsley.

Currently, there is "Open Recreation" on Tuesdays and Fridays after school until 6:00pm for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. All 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, including students who attend private and parochial schools, are welcome to come to the Ardsley Community Center, on 18 Center Street on Tuesday and Friday (unless otherwise noted) to play ping pong, foosball, pool, cards and board games or spend time with their friends watching their favorite show, playing video games on XBOX, or watching a video. Parents are invited to stop by and meet Allison when they drop their children off to participate in any Ardsley Youth Advocate Program activities.

The Youth Advocate Program began serving 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, but is committed to having activities and services for high school students as well. Allison is in the process of forming two Youth Advisory Boards, one for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders and one for high school students. Participation on the advisory boards will give youth the opportunity to develop ideas and plan events of interest to them such as talent shows, "Open Mic" night, Battle of the Bands and community projects. Allison De Luca is now available to meet with

students individually and in small groups for education and consultation, counseling, and referral for other services. Seventh and eighth graders and all high school students can meet with Allison to talk about their personal, peer, family or other issues that could increase their risk of using alcohol or other drugs, and /or concern about their peers.

If you have suggestions for preventing substance abuse in our community, or are worried about your teen or another teen in the community and would like to speak to the Youth Advocate, please call her directly at 914-693-7564 ext. 2524. All calls will be confidential. She will have evening hours available to meet parents and teens. All counseling services are free and confidential.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Groucho Marx: What kind of job do you have Ray?**

**Ray Bradbury: I'm a writer.**

**Groucho: What kind of rider? Pony Express, motorcycle, or what?**

**Bradbury: Writer. W-R-I-T-E-R**

**Groucho: Oh, that's refreshing – a writer who can spell.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**VILLAGE OF ARDSLEY  
507 ASHFORD AVENUE  
ARDSLEY, NEW YORK 10502  
914 693-1550 FAX 693-3706**

**MAYOR JAY LEON**

**DEP. MAYOR LARRY NARDECCHIA  
TRUSTEE GARY MALONE  
TRUSTEE PETER PORCINO  
TRUSTEE BEVERLY LEVINE**

**VILLAGE MANAGER GEORGE CALVI  
VILLAGE TREASURER MARION DEMAIO  
VILLAGE CLERK BARBARA BERARDI**

**EDIT/DESIGN: GEORGE CALVI**

**THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS: JAY LEON, PETER PORCINO, ANDREA FALICK, ALLISON DELUCA, THERESA DESTEFANO, BEVERLY LEVINE, MARIA COCUCCI, LARRY TOMASSO, ALAN GREENWALD, PIERRETTE RISSLAND, LORRAINE KUHN, & GEORGE CALVI**

## **ORIGINAL AMERICAN LEGION BUILDING RETURNS TO ARDSLEY**

In the fall 2007 edition of the Ardsley Historical Society Newsletter, Theresa DeStefano provided us with a thoroughly researched and detailed article on the old American Legion Post #458 building. The building began life as the McCartney Real Estate and Insurance Agency in the early 1900s. With the establishment of the local Legion post in 1921, Arthur McCartney offered his offices as their first meeting place. In the late 1940's the McCartney family gave the building to longtime employee Joann DeRosa who arranged for its shipment to Northfield Avenue in Dobbs Ferry and converted it into a garage. There the building remained until 2007 when Ms. DeRosa retired and moved into The Woodlands.

With the guidance of local engineer Paul Petretti, the purchaser of the property donated the building to the Village of Ardsley. Petretti and other volunteers are refurbishing

the building for relocation to Ashford Park sometime during the summer of 2008 as a memorial to Ardsley's veterans as well as The McCartneys. Back in April the Ardsley Village Board approved a resolution supporting Paul Petretti's efforts and established a Trust & Agency account for the sole purpose of accepting donations for the restoration and relocation of the building. Donation checks may be made payable to "Old American Legion Building" and mailed to the Ardsley Village Treasurer. To see the full text of the DeStefano article or join the Ardsley Historical Society, please contact Beverly Levine at [lzybones@aol.com](mailto:lzybones@aol.com).

\*\*\*\*\*

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Jan. 21<sup>st</sup> – M L King's B'day.  
Village Offices Closed**

**Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Village Bd. Mtg.**

**Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> – Village Bd. Mtg.**

**Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> – "Super Tuesday"  
Presidential Primary**

**Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> – Grievance Night**

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
WHITE PLAINS, NY  
PERMIT NO. 2026

**OR CURRENT OCCUPANT**