

# THE ARDSLEY VILLAGER

AUTUMN 2006

WWW.ARDSLEYVILLAGE.COM

## A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR LEON

Your village board has been extremely busy during the several months since you bestowed upon me the privilege of serving as your Mayor. The following is only a few of the initiatives we have been working on:

**New Firehouse** – Our old firehouse was literally falling apart, and an independent inspector told the village over five years ago that the 100+ year-old structure could no longer be renovated. Our fire department is now temporarily located in the former Westchester Garage across Route 9A from Ardsley Hardware. The old building was demolished in late August and construction began shortly thereafter on the new structure. We look forward to completion some time in the autumn of 2007.

**Village Web Site** – I have been working closely with Assistant Village Manager, Debbie Henneberry and our

Webmaster to improve our web site. Forms, applications for permits, meeting agendas and minutes have been posted to the site, and they are easily navigable from the home page. In addition, the entire Village Code is now accessible online through the website. Our next goal is to redesign the entire site and to make it more attractive and usable.

**Chamber of Commerce** – Deputy Mayor Larry Nardecchia has been instrumental in reorganizing our Chamber of Commerce. There have been several well-attended meetings, and we received some valuable feedback from our local business owners. We welcome their comments and offer any assistance our village government can provide to insure their businesses are a success. We also encourage our residents to patronize our local merchants whenever possible.

**Beautification** – Trustee Gary Malone has been working hard to improve the look of the village, and the downtown

area in particular. New local laws have been passed to compel dumpster owners to enclose them and keep them neater. The fine schedule for quality of life infractions have been increased to keep them in line with other municipalities and to discourage non-compliance. We also included a small fund in the current budget to use as a stipend to supplement our code enforcement.

**Development** – Trustee Peter Porcino has reorganized the Ardsley Development Review Committee, which “keeps an eye” on projects being proposed within and outside of our borders. Currently there are proposed projects adjacent to Ardsley in unincorporated Greenburgh, Dobbs Ferry and Hastings within the Ardsley School District that total well over 100 units collectively. Our review committee, chaired by Mark Mildner, attends the various land use meetings in these municipalities and works to minimize the size, scope and impact these projects will inevitably have on our village. In addition, the village has

joined forces with Greenburgh and Hastings to question the lack of a workable traffic plan in the Environmental Impact Statement for Ridge Hill, the mammoth project being developed in Yonkers that will essentially construct a new town only a few miles south of our border. Peter and I have represented the village on a negotiating committee that is trying to convince the developer and the city of the wisdom of scaling down the project and/or funding traffic alleviation projects in the surrounding areas. We hope a satisfactory conclusion is reached in the near future in a conciliatory manner.

#### **Village Officials Committee**

– The six villages of the Town of Greenburgh have formed a committee consisting of each of the Mayors and one trustee from each village. Ardsley has been represented by Trustee Michael Kolesar and me. While I hope that the scope of our work expands in the months to come, our current focus has been on the controversy surrounding the Town budget and the allocation of funding for Town parks and recreation. This is a very complicated issue, but in a nutshell, we are working to prevent our residents from being taxed to support parks and recreation programs and facilities that are redundant with our own programs and services, and of which few of us ever use. If this happens, your Town tax bill could

increase by hundreds of dollars per year with no increase in services. We respectfully consider this to be extremely unfair to Ardsley residents, and we are working to insure the tax structure remains equitable.

**Traffic** – No summary of activity within the village would be complete without a rundown of our continuing efforts to alleviate traffic and enhance safety within the village. I have had multiple discussions with officials from the county and state, along with mayors of surrounding municipalities to search for solutions. Our Traffic, Parking, Pedestrian and Cycling Safety committee (TPPCS) has also been brainstorming ideas for more local solutions. The following are a few of the initiatives considered:

**We** held a public hearing in September to discuss making Colonial Court (the road which straps around the Village Green – or Starbucks – shopping center). Such a move eliminated cars attempting a left turn into Starbucks from the northbound lane, which blocked traffic as well as Center Street. Note this was accomplished with the cooperation of the owner of the Village Green. This change had been discussed for many years, but we finally got it off the ground this autumn and it will be in place for a 180 day experimental period.

**We** have hired a traffic expert (Adler Consulting) to analyze Route 9A as it has never been before, and to make recommendations to improve the traffic flow. The plan is for the consultant to assist me in future meetings with the State and County DOT to convince them of how dire our situation is. The consultant is being funded by a grant from our State Senator, Nicholas Spano.

The reports for the Walkable Community Workshop and the Safe Routes to School workshop have been submitted to state and county agencies for future reference. We have already used them in our efforts to apply for grant money to improve traffic in the village.

**Some** time in the not too distant future I hope to commence a plan to turn portions of Heatherdell Road between Concord Road. and Windsong Road into a school zone, with improved curbing, sidewalks, crosswalks and signage. We need to make our village safer for children to walk to school, which will remove cars from the roads and will contribute toward the fight to decrease childhood obesity by increasing physical activity.

**As** you can see, we're working on all cylinders despite limited resources. Please permit me to close by encouraging all of our residents to get involved

with our community in some manner. Consider volunteering for our fire department, our ambulance corps, or CATV committee or one of the several committees working to improve our village. As an unpaid volunteer myself, let me assure you, it will make a difference for your family and your kids, and you will feel better about yourself for your efforts. Thank you for your consideration, and I'll keep you up to date on village items of interest in future newsletters.

Sincerely,

*Jay Leon*

#### FROM THE VILLAGE CLERK'S DESK

##### Dogs

Residents are reminded that dog licenses must be renewed on an annual basis. All dogs over four months of age should be licensed with the Village Clerk. Rabies vaccinations must be current for a license to be issued. Please contact Village Clerk Debbie Henneberry at 693-1550 if you require further information. **Dog owners, pursuant to Village Code, please remember that dogs must be kept on a leash not more than six feet in length and dogs should not be walked on other residents' lawns.**

#### FIRE DEPARTMENT

##### New Firehouse on Horizon

After years of planning, the design for Ardsley's new firehouse is complete. The new building will provide for more apparatus space as newer fire trucks have grown in size over the years. There will also be new office space for the Fire Department and Engine Company, which has been sorely needed for some time now. The new firehouse will be built on the existing site, which necessitated the Fire Department moving into temporary quarters during the 14-month construction schedule. The temporary site is the former Westchester Garage on Saw Mill River Road, which the Village will be leasing. That building has been modified to allow the fire apparatus to be stored there and to build a meeting room for the Engine Company. Construction of the new building began in late August after the bidding process is completed. Many man-hours have been invested in this project by the Engine Company's Building Committee. During construction of the new Municipal Building, the Fire Department began looking into rehabilitating the existing structure to meet its current needs. In 1996, the Engine Company hired a company called Fire Service Buildings Design Consultants to study the Municipal Building to see if the existing structure could

be modified to meet its needs. The results of that study indicated that the building could not be renovated to comply with the necessary building design standards for a modern firehouse. Given this report the Engine Company approached the Village Board about building a new firehouse. In 1998 the Village hired the architectural firm Schaardt, Fullan & deSilva to once again look at the feasibility of renovating the current building. The results of that study indicated that there were serious structural problems with the existing building. The study also indicated that previous alterations made it impossible to renovate the building so that it would meet current building codes. In December 1999 the decision was made to design a new firehouse and Schaardt, Fullan & deSilva was hired to do the job. Unfortunately, in July 2004 the architectural firm closed its doors before completing the plans for the new firehouse. In September 2004, the Village hired Sullivan Architecture of White Plains to complete the design of the firehouse. The plans were completed and bids were awarded last spring.

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The annual election of officers for the Ardsley Fire Department and Engine Company No. 1 were held in

April. The following members were elected to office:

Chief of Dept. Joseph Cipollone

1<sup>st</sup> Asst. Chief Ronald Gretczko

2<sup>nd</sup> Asst. Chief Richard Thompson

Capt. Vincent Coulehan

Capt. Mark Florkowski

Capt. Joseph Corvino

Pres. Douglas Berletic

Vice Pres. Troy Roberts

Treas. Nicholas Maranino

Recording Sec. Padraic Murray

Financial Sec. William Watson, Jr.

### **BUILDING DEPT.**

The Building Department receives a large amount of building permit applications in the spring and summer. As you consider what projects to tackle this year, please keep in mind that building permits are required for all structural work such as additions, renovations, and decks, and for most non-structural improvements such as finished basements, kitchen and bathroom renovations, fences, and swimming pools.

Before beginning a project, please make sure that you obtain the proper permits. Applications are available at village hall or online at [www.ardsleyvillage.com](http://www.ardsleyvillage.com). If

you are unsure about whether you need a permit for a project or not, you should contact the Building Inspector, Larry Tomasso, at [avinspector@optonline.net](mailto:avinspector@optonline.net) before beginning the project.

### **RECORDS MANAGEMENT / ARCHIVES**

Recently the first shipment containing microfilm of accounting records, planning and zoning applications, as well as building permit drawings was sent to Iron Mountain for storage. This was done in response to State guidelines for records retention and would be imperative should any disaster occur in Ardsley. This microfilm can easily be retrieved.

The Village is progressing very well in cataloging and documenting its records. In the future additional documents will be microfilmed. One copy of the microfilm is always kept on-site in the Village should any necessity arise to view the documents. A big thank you to Lois Duggan who has spearheaded this effort.

### **BIBLIOBYTES**

The library continues to have all those new books and DVDs—we get them hot off the presses and they are usually wildly popular, so feel free to place a hold on them. If you need help to access

the catalog online or choose to let us do the work for you, just call...we'll be happy to assist.

Join the knitting craze and chat with some neighbors. We continue to have an adult "Sit and Knit" group on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 and have now started a knitting club for kids aged 7 and up after school on Thursdays at 4:00. Drop in and share your stories and get some pointers or lend a hand to a struggling knitter. Everyone is welcome! We've also got a great collection of knitting books—come check them out! Our adult readers book discussion club still meets the third Thursdays each month beginning in Sept. Come join us! Look for some special programs, especially an art program for adults. Call if you are interested 693-6636. Hope to see you soon.

Angela Groth

### **FROM THE VILLAGE JUSTICE: PATRICIA BASINI**

A major milestone—thirty years of public service for the Village of Ardsley—was recently reached by Justice Court Clerk, Patricia Basini, whose reputation for patience, courtesy, integrity, competence and dedication is exemplary.

The Village Court handles a variety of legal matters,

including criminal, traffic, parking, civil, landlord-tenant and local ordinances. Each case demands special knowledge and attentiveness on the Clerk's part.

Throughout the week, even when Court is not in session, the Court Clerk has the responsibility of insuring that cases are timely and accurately processed, monies are properly received and recorded, and, where possible, anxieties are reduced. The position requires dignity, fairness and equanimity.

For much of her lengthy tenure, I have had the pleasure of observing Pat in Ardsley's Justice Court. Respected by judges, attorneys and parties alike, Patricia Basini has performed exceptionally well in her vital public role over the past thirty years.

Walter Schwartz

### **TPPCS REPORTS**

The committee has been focusing on the recommendations coming out of the Walkable Community and Safe Routes to Schools Workshops on ways to make the Village more pedestrian and cycling friendly for residents and students alike. A series of recommendations have come out of the Committee to the Village Board to initiate changes along the Saw Mill River Road corridor between

Ashford Ave. and the Heatherdell/9A light and the Heatherdell-Concord Rd. and High School corridor to make it safer. There are also recommendations coming out of the committee regarding the planned rehabilitation of the Ashford Ave. bridge and its impact on traffic in Ardsley and Dobbs Ferry. The Committee has its meetings monthly, usually the Thursday preceding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Village Board meeting each month, at Village Hall at 7:30 pm. They are open to the public. We are always looking for residents who would like to actively participate in shaping the way traffic in our Village will look in the future.

South County Trailway Update: – Ardsley has recently acquired (for \$1) additional space at our Elm St. access to the trailway (where the buses used to be parked between our existing spots and the landscaper's yard) which will more than double the existing parking – up to 10 spots. Hopefully, the new slots will be formally painted, but you can certainly use the space now if the current 4 spots are filled. Work began in April on a new southern section beginning at Barney Street (where the trailway currently terminates) and Tuckahoe Road. Work was expected to be completed by the end of the summer. Next year they will extend the trailway to the

Bronx County line (Van Cortland Park).

Plans were in the works to have a ramp installed from the Ashford Ave. Bridge down to the Trailway. The work would be done as part of the bridge rehabilitation project, now tentatively scheduled to begin in 2008. We need all the political support we can get to actually get it built.

Gil Harris

P.S. TPPCS Chairman Gil Harris recently relocated to Eastchester. We wish to thank him for his efforts on behalf of the Village.

### **CATV UPDATE**

Your committee, as part of the Greenburgh Consortium, is entering its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of negotiation efforts with Cablevision, on its franchise renewal. The process has been complicated by Verizon's entry as potential competitor. In the meantime, we developed plans, based on the results of the survey you participated in, to provide for the additional programming you requested which were presented Village Board of Trustees. The Committee is always looking for volunteers who want to learn about the various aspects of what we do, from the actual production of the programs through the developing of new programming ideas and their

implementation. We are in the process of upgrading equipment so we can move from the current videotape environment to a digital / DVD-based environment, which should improve the broadcast quality of programs and make them easier to produce. If you are interested, please contact Village Clerk Debbie Henneberry.

Steve Greenbaum

### **HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

The village has arranged for the DPW to issue tags to be placed on plastic garbage bags left at curbside. The village code requires garbage to be placed in rigid containers which hold the plastic bags. Please adhere to this code to prevent garbage not being picked up.

### **CELL PHONE RECYCLING**

In an effort to promote the proper disposal of cellular telephones, Westchester County passed a local law prohibiting the disposal of cell phones in the conventional waste stream, effective June 1, 2006. Violations range from a warning to a fine of \$250.

Cell phones and their batteries contain a number of toxic chemicals, which have been associated with cancer, and a range of reproductive, neurological and

developmental disorders. If disposed of in the traditional waste stream they will form toxic dioxins once they get into the soil and groundwater. For certified drop off centers, please contact 914-813-5420 or [Westchestergov.com](http://Westchestergov.com)

### **SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS**

Village resident Jack Gross advises us that married couples receiving Social Security benefits are entitled to 50% of their spouses benefits, whether they have worked or not, or receiving benefits based on their own work records. For instance, say one spouse is receiving \$2500 per month, & the other spouse's benefits are \$500 then the difference (at 50% of \$2500) should be \$750 beyond what he/she was receiving before or \$1250.

Of course, Social Security may make additional adjustments for Medicare. On the other hand, the monthly change could be six months retroactive. We're told that SS makes this adjustment automatically upon applying for benefits, but as we've learned from one resident that is not always the case. This may merit a call to Social Security today.

### **VILLAGE ELECTIONS**

Residents are reminded that the General Elections will

take place on Tuesday, November 7. The polls will be open from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm at the Community Center and St. Barnabas Church. In addition to the positions of US Senator, Governor, Attorney General, Comptroller, State Senator, and Assemblyman, two Village Trustee positions and Village Justice appear on the slate. For election information call the Town Clerk's office at 993-1500.

### **FAREWELL 505**

"How does one say goodbye to a building?" asked Village Justice Walter Schwartz this past summer at a meeting of the Village Board of Trustees. Of course, he was referring to the recently demolished 505 Ashford Avenue whose cornerstone was set in 1887. Originally constructed as a two room, two story schoolhouse for the grand sum of \$3,175, the building went through a series of transformations over the decades as a high school, a storage depot, a kindergarten, a library, as well as the home of the Village Board of Trustees, the Village Clerk, the Village Manager, the Village Treasurer, the Justice Court, and the Police and Fire Departments.

"Of course, changes are inevitable," said Schwartz. "In more recent times, the appearance of the building

was altered to make room for additional fire bays, and to comply with federal guidelines regarding accessibility, and that was all and good because despite many facelifts, the building's noble character remain unchanged."

"Finally, however, poor health and age overcame all else at 505 Ashford Avenue, and the decision was made to retire this venerable old institution and replace it with a modern structure."

The preceding excerpt was derived from a presentation, ***"Municipal Building, a Final and Lasting Tribute,"*** delivered by Village Justice Walter Schwartz,

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**Mayor Jay Leon  
Deputy Mayor Larry Nardecchia  
Trustee Michael Kolesar  
Trustee Gary Malone  
Trustee Peter Porcino**

**Village Manager George Calvi  
Village Treasurer Marion DeMaio  
Village Clerk Debbie Henneberry**

**Edit / Design: George Calvi  
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on July 5, 2006. To see a full draft of the presentation, please refer to the most recent edition of the Ardsley Historical Society newsletter.

### **NEW HOME FOR ASVAC**

ASVAC Captain Pat Hoffman reports there are huge changes in store for the Ardsley Secor Volunteer Ambulance Corps. In September, the pre-fab building that had housed the ambulance corps since its inception in 1962, was demolished. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, the last of four sections of the new pre-fab building was delivered. On Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, the building was lifted by crane into place on its new foundation. Though it is operating out of

temporary quarters, ASVAC continues to respond to its average of more than one call a day. The corps anticipates having the pre-fab building fully operational and ready for occupancy in mid-November.

ASVAC is a voluntary organization which receives no tax dollars from the Village Budget. We welcome your donation to help support daily expenses. Likewise, we are always seeking dedicated individuals interested in becoming a member. We provide all training. For information, call Pat Hoffman at 693-9382.

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***A Happy Halloween and a  
Happy Thanksgiving to  
one and all!***