



NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 523 • Ardsley, New York 10502

www.ardsleyhistoricalsociety.org

Volume 23 No. 3 - Fall 2008

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARDSLEY LIBRARY

Ardsley Public Library's creation and development runs parallel to Ardsley Village's growth and expansion.

In the early 1900s, Ardsley Village was a sleepy quiet place with a small one-building Village Hall that housed the Police Department, the Village Jail, the Village Justice Courtroom, the lower grades of the grammar school, and the Ardsley Public Library, which was located on the upper floor. With time, the Village grew to have a new Village building, a new grammar, middle and high school along with a new public library that had a home of its own with all the facilities needed to serve its current population.

To better appreciate and understand the history of the Ardsley Public Library, the following are "Highlights in the History of the Ardsley Public Library," taken from *Ardsley New York, Village of Ardsley 100 Years of Village Life, 1896-1996, 100th Anniversary Journal*. It was written by Jeanne R. Dolgin, who was a member of the original board of directors of the Ardsley Public Library. There is also an updated section about the current Ardsley Public Library written by Angela Groth, who is the current director of the Ardsley Library.



Original entrance of the
Ardsley Public Library

Ardsley Public Library (cont'd)

Ardsley's centennial year, 1996, is also the 25th consecutive year of uninterrupted library service in our community. We celebrate these years of growth and achievement. The unique history of the Ardsley Public Library may be divided into five time periods. There is no official record of a formal library service in Ardsley before 1923.

1923-1941

During these years, a Free Association Library was located on the second floor of the Municipal Building on Ashford Avenue. It was supported in part with Village funds and private contributions. This library was incorporated by five Village residents who became Library Trustees: B. Wilbur McDowell, John H. Wickham, Frank H. Addyman, William S. Newkirk and Benjamin C. Corey. The New York State Certificate of Establishment is dated May 10, 1923.

The library served a population of 1500, which included Ardsley, Woodlands and Chauncey. Although the collection was limited (800 volumes), it was used especially by school children. According to Arthur Silliman, an Ardsley historian, the entire book collection was donated to the war effort during World War II.

1942-1971

For almost thirty years, library service did not exist in Ardsley. Residents used libraries in neighboring communities by purchasing a non-resident card. The population in Ardsley rapidly increased during the 1950s and the need for library service became apparent. Several library study committees were formed during these years, but despite their efforts, Ardsley remained without a library.

In 1967, Mayor Richard Payne appointed still another study committee. Members of this committee included Maxwell Lillienstein, chair; Jeanne Dolgin, Rita Joselow, Thomas Edmonds, Barbara Wayne, and Barbara Springer. This committee analyzed options for providing service

and prepared a report which was submitted to the Village Board on June 20, 1968. Possibilities under consideration were an affiliation with Dobbs Ferry or Greenburgh or creation of an Ardsley Public Library.

In 1969, Mayor John Powell appointed Jeanne Dolgin, a librarian, to chair the committee and prepare a recommendation to the Village Board. The recommendation was to be based in part on a post card survey of Village residents. This survey was prepared and conducted by Jeanne Dolgin and Rita Joselow with assistance from the Westchester Library System. The results clearly demonstrated that the majority of Ardsley residents who responded did want library service and preferred a library located in Ardsley.

Based on the recommendation of this committee, the Mayor and Village Board voted unanimously on March 19, 1971 to establish a Public Library. They appropriated \$20,000-\$30,000 for this purpose and appointed the first Library Board of Trustees: Jeanne Dolgin, Rita Joselow, Charles Macko, Ward Thorpe and Charles Wayne, on April 19, 1971. These acts of affirmation by the Village Board mark the birth of the Ardsley Public Library.

1971-1984

On April 24, 1971, Ward Thorpe was elected first president of the Library Board. The most pressing concern of this board was to find a suitable library facility. For more than a year, various alternatives were considered, including portable classrooms, an Army surplus building and the former Ashford Avenue school.



Ardsley's cramped library interior
(From the Greenburgh Inquirer)

Simultaneously, the Village Board attempted to purchase from New York City land on American Legion Drive known as the "aqueduct blow-off property" for a library building. The final decision of the Library Board was to rent a vacant store in the Hillcroft shopping area on Center Street. On June 25, 1972, this storefront library was officially opened with one part-time professional librarian and 40 volunteers.

Ardsley Public Library (cont'd)

On opening day, there was a collection of 2,450 books, many donated by the Westchester Library System. During this period, various other goals were achieved. The New York State Board of Regents granted a provisional charter in the library in June, 1971. The library became a member of the Westchester Library System in July 1971. The Friends of the Ardsley Public Library was incorporated and approved by the State of New York in September 1971. Roberta Silman became the first president of the Friends. In May, 1975, the Village completed its purchase of the land from New York City for the purpose of a library building.

Rita Joselow became the second president of the Library Board in 1975 and served until 1977. An Absolute Charter was granted to the library in 1978. The storefront library served the community well in this twelve year period. The collection, staff and programs increased. Rita Norman was appointed the first assistant to the director and Lois Izes became the first full time children's librarian.

However, it was generally recognized that the storefront was a limited facility and could only be considered temporary.

A group of concerned Village residents formed a committee, chaired by Robert Silman and Allen McKenzie, to gather data to support the need for a new library building. Guided by this committee's extensive report, the Library Board considered several proposals and architects' plans and voted to initiate a building program. Ultimately, Jeanne Dolgin, president of the Library Board, appointed Floyd Lichtenberg, a library trustee since 1977, chairman of the fund raising committee. Under his leadership, a dedicated committee obtained the requisite money to build a one-story 3,000 square foot library structure.

Among the donors were the Gannett Foundation, Ciba-Geigy, Thomas Carvel, New York State through the efforts of Senator John T. Flynn and Assemblyman Richard Brodsky. Additional support came from generous community donors and fund raising activities. Ground-breaking took place on January 17, 1984 and the dedication on October 21, 1984, inaugurating a new era in library service for the Village.

1984-1993



Groundbreaking of the Ardsley Public Library
January 17, 1984

Library Director Miriam Porter retired in June 1987 and Marcia Pfeffer became the new director a few months later. Expansion of services occurred as the library prepared for the introduction of automation. By this time, the Ardsley Public Library had become a full partner with all other libraries in the Westchester Library System, and in 1992, the library collection numbered 30,304 books and included many non-book materials.

Jeanne Dolgin, in 1987, completed ten years as the third president of the Board and was succeeded by Floyd Lichtenberg. The Carvel family continued to be benefactors of the library. They discussed with Floyd Lichtenberg the feasibility of constructing a separate children's library to memorialize Thomas Carvel. A total of \$450,000 was donated by the Thomas and Agnes Carvel Foundation for this building.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on June 14, 1992. On May 2, 1993 the two-story children's library was dedicated. Both these events were attended by Mrs. Agnes Carvel and other members of the Carvel family and Foundation. This new addition provides space on the second floor for a meeting room, a staff room and a Historical Society room.

Ardsey Public Library (cont'd)

1993-1996

The completion of the children's Library marked the end of the Ardsley Public Library building program and the beginning of a higher level of sophisticated services to the community.

The Friends of the Ardsley Public Library, with strong leaders such as Rita Norman, Lois Izes, Lydia Dallis, Angela Groth and others, has evolved as the most important library support group. This organization has continuously provided library volunteers and money for a wide variety of programs, and supplements the library budget in many ways.

The creative talents of Barbara Novich have enhanced the attractiveness of the library. In October 1993 Floyd Lichtenberg received the New York State Association of Library Boards Velma K. Moore Award. This is the highest award of NYSALB and gives statewide recognition to the Ardsley Library.

The library's future is bright as we prepare for the 21st century. It is almost fully automated and ready for the internet and the information superhighway.

Yet our new and larger facilities, with the adjacent Floyd Lichtenberg Park—dedicated in 1988—lovely landscaping, benches and walkways and the rustic wooden bridge maintain the atmosphere of warmth and friendliness with which we began in 1972.

Jeanne Dolgin, 1996

1996-2008

Since the celebration of Ardsley's centennial in 1996, many changes have occurred at the Ardsley Public Library. By the end of 1996 the library was fully automated using the first of four operating systems. "Utlas" was followed by "CARL," and subsequently by the fully online system "Dynnix." In 2006, ten years after the Ardsley centennial, the library was switched to a new operating system, "SIRSI," which we are currently using as I write this in 2008.

These upgrades made it possible for everyone with access to the internet to view the catalogs of all libraries in Westchester and, most astoundingly, allow anyone with an active library card to remotely reserve an item from any library in the county 24/7, regardless of whether a library is open or not.

This resulted in a new shift in library service. While in 1996 one was able to request an item from a different library only with the help of a librarian, our patrons were now able to search the catalog themselves and electronically reserve any item available in the county. The number of items being transferred between Ardsley and other libraries jumped from 1,000 items a year to 2,000 items a month!

Library Director Marcia Pfeffer saw us through our initial computerization and retired at the end of 1996. Susan Farber joined our staff as the new director shortly after, and led us through another change in the computer operating system until she left to take another position in December of 1998. Angela Groth, the current director, has experienced all four of the library system transitions, having been promoted from within from library clerk to children's librarian to library director in January 1999.

While the high tech life of library services continues to advance, many things remain the same. The dedicated, hard-working staff, volunteers, Board of Trustees and Friends of the Ardsley Public Library continue to strive to make the library a welcoming, efficient and well-run organization.

In 2004, the library received national recognition for its dedication and hard work. The Ardsley Public Library was ranked as one of the 100 greatest libraries in the nation, according to a national survey published in the October 2004 issue of *American Libraries*, the official journal of the American Library Association. When compared nationwide with over 1300 similar-size libraries on 15 key points of service, Ardsley Library was recognized as one of the ten best public libraries in its population class (2,500-4,999).

Ardsley Public Library (cont'd)

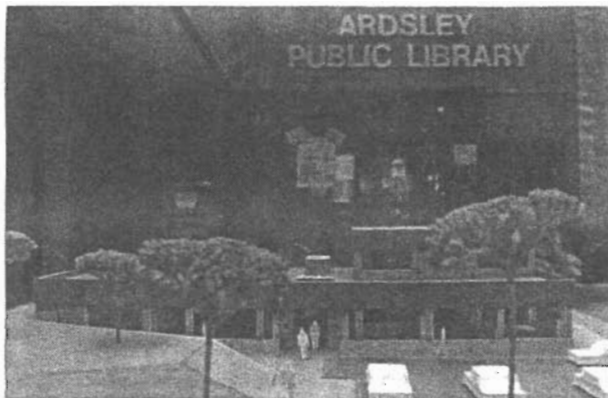
In October 2006, the library contracted with the Village of Elmsford to provide library service to its residents, thus doubling the population served by the library. This merger has brought to mind the early efforts made by our citizens in the nascent years of the library. The current Board of Library Trustees includes Lydia Dallis as president, Beverly Levine as vice-president, Ellen Hopkins-Fountain, Peter Keil, Susan Randol, Susan Sterling and Rita Joselow as secretary. Rita was one of the first appointed library trustees in 1971.

Sadly, the library lost one of its founding members, Jeanne Dolgin, and also Floyd Lichtenberg, who was responsible for organizing contributions from residents and businesses of Ardsley to construct the original building.

After years of discussion and planning, the library engaged an architect and went out to bid for a 2,200 square foot addition and renovation. As I write this, preparation for the foundation is in progress and our work space has become smaller to accommodate the temporary walls that will allow us to remain open while construction is underway.

Stay tuned—who knows what the next ten years will bring!

Angela Z. Groth, Director
Ardsley Public Library
October 2008



**The architect's model of the expanded library
outside the entrance of the current building**

ADDITIONAL WORLD WAR II VETERANS

The following are World War II veterans that were not included in our Spring/Summer 2008 *Newsletter*.

HERBERT C. SCHUMAN

U.S. Air Force: Radio Gunner
South Pacific Theater
Quote: "War is no picnic."

MILTON D. MITLER

U.S. Navy Ensign
South Pacific Theater: Invasion of Saipan and
Okinawa
Quote: "The War made me grow up quickly."

DR. GERALD S. WEINBERGER

U.S. Navy: USNR - V-12 Program
WWII: Brooklyn Naval Hospital, New York
Korean War: St. Alban's Naval Hospital, Queens, NY
Marine Hospital 25 miles north of
Seoul

THOMAS PASQUALE

U.S. Navy: Fire Controlman
Third Class, USNR
Pacific Theater on U.S.S.
Colorado
Citations: American Theater
Medal; Philippine Liberation
Ribbon 1 Star; Asiatic Pacific
Medal 3 Stars; Victory Medal



The Ardsley Historical Society Newsletter is published three times each year. The Society was established in 1982 and is chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Its purpose is to collect, preserve, and disseminate the history of Ardsley to members and to the public.

Archives are open to the public on Tuesdays from 10 am to 12 noon, or by appointment, at 9 American Legion Drive. Our phone number is 693-6027. Subscription to the Newsletter is included in membership dues, which are:

Individual:	\$ 12.00
Family:	15.00
Senior Citizen:	10.00
Student	8.00
Sponsor:	35.00
Patron:	100.00

All articles, queries, and replies should be addressed to the editor, Mary Lichtenberg. Although every attempt is made to maintain historical accuracy in the Newsletter, the editor and the Society assume no responsibility for errors. The editor also reserves the right to edit where necessary.



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Dear Friends,

Your Ardsley Historical Society is again asking you to join us or renew your membership for the coming year. Since 1982 we have been gathering historical information about the Village of Ardsley. We have resource information from many of our older residents as well as Oral Histories on videotapes by many of our residents reminiscing about the past. We have completed research on the history of Ashford Avenue and documented the houses on our main street. We have given lectures in the Ardsley schools as well as giving monetary awards to graduating seniors. Three times a year our members receive our informational newsletters filled with reminiscences of old Ardsley.

We will continue with all of these projects and future projects, BUT we cannot accomplish any of our work without your assistance. Won't you volunteer your time to help us in our endeavors AND become an active member by sending in your dues for next year?

Our monthly social meetings are held during the months of October, November, December, March, April and May in the Community Room of the Ardsley Public Library. Members enjoy the programs and socialization and refreshments. The hours for the Society's office are Tuesdays, 10 AM to noon and by appointment. Our phone/message machine number is 914-693-6027. If you have any historic materials you would like to donate to the Society, please let us know and if you would like to be interviewed for an Oral History video, call us and we'll be there in a flash!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NEW

RENEWAL

NAMEPHONE.....

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

- Individual.....\$12 with calendar Family..... \$15 with calendar
 Sponsor.....\$35”..... Patron\$100.....”.....
 Seniors.....\$10”..... Student\$5”.....

Make checks payable to: ARDSLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY and
MAIL REMITTANCE TO: Beverly Levine, 69 Bramblebrook Rd., Ardsley, NY 10502