

Newsletter

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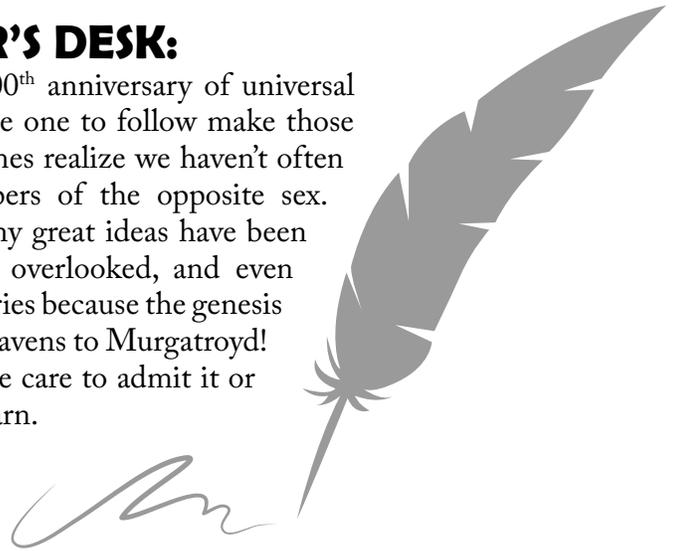
Walter M. Schwartz

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

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

As we rapidly approach the 100th anniversary of universal suffrage in 2020, stories like the one to follow make those of us born with XY chromosomes realize we haven't often really made it easy for members of the opposite sex. One can only wonder how many great ideas have been thwarted, dismissed, ridiculed, overlooked, and even appropriated through the centuries because the genesis of those ideas was launched, Heavens to Murgatroyd! by a woman! Gents, whether we care to admit it or not, we still have so much to learn.

– George F. Calvi



THE CURIOUS SAGA OF HEDVIG KIESLER AND THE INVENTION THAT ALMOST WASN'T

“My face has been my misfortune . . . a mask I cannot remove. I must live with it. I curse it.”

Though there is no evidence that our subject ever set foot in Ardsley the following story is offered for your review in keeping with the ongoing women's movement theme. Once proclaimed “the most beautiful woman in the world” Hedvig Kiesler (1914–2000) was often



touted by publicists as having raven flowing hair, perpetually pouted lips, alabaster skin, and exceptionally large, translucent blue eyes. In their view no other screen goddess during the Golden Age of Film, circa 1930–1950, could compare to that of the exotic actress born in Austria. In recent years, however, we have been reminded of a different facet of Hedvig Kiesler; one long overshadowed by her glamorous image. Kiesler was in fact from her earliest days a highly intelligent, intellectually curious inventor. Though her day job was successful screen siren, evenings she would stay home as often as possible, locking herself in her “invention” room devising and perfecting many ideas. As fate would have it she had a chance meeting with a composer named George Antheil at a film studio – mandated social function.

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HEDVIG KIESLER *continued from page 1*

Mesmerized by the man, Kiesler listened intently as he explained how he had composed a piece that involved the synchronization of 16 player pianos by automated remote control. Recognizing immediately that they were kindred spirits, the two hypothesized that if pianos could be synchronized to hop from one note to another why couldn't radio signals hop as well for guided torpedoes? Long story short, the two invented what became known as frequency hopping, and the partners sought and received a patent in 1942. Though initially spurned by the US Navy and told her pretty face could be put to better use by selling war bonds instead which, ever the patriot, she did quite successfully, the technology Kiesler and Antheil pioneered ultimately became the foundation of spread spectrum communication technology. We in 2018 know the technology as the heart and soul

of Bluetooth, GPS, Wi-Fi, and modern cell phones. Though recognition for the invention came late in her life, Kiesler sadly never earned a red cent for her efforts. Having suffered the indignity of being labeled an enemy alien on the heels of her very successful war bond tour, the US Navy added insult by appropriating her invention as soon as the patent expired in the late 1950s. Oh! In case you haven't figured it out yet, the refugee from Vienna who started out life as Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler, also went by the name of Hedy Lamarr. Yes, that Hedy Lamarr! – George F. Calvi, Editor

[The facts for the preceding story were derived from several sources but most heavily from "The Most Beautiful Woman in Film" by Ruth Barton, 2010 – GFC]

RETIRED VILLAGE JUSTICE PAYS TRIBUTE TO PATRICIA BASINI

A public servant is defined, simply, as a person holding a governmental job by election or appointment, but I always felt the term had a truer, deeper and more humbling meaning. In 40 years as an elected official in Ardsley, and 55 years as a practicing attorney, I have had contact with thousands of individuals who fell within the dictionary definition, but few who genuinely served the public day in and day out in such manner as to earn the respect, esteem, affection and admiration of those with whom they came in contact in their service. Many chose to lean back, insulate themselves from public view, enjoy the emoluments of the office, receive and distribute the patronage, and mark off the days until retirement.

Patricia Basini, Ardsley's Court Clerk for 40 years, who passed away in May, was exceptional in that she would have none of that, and for her four decades of public service in Ardsley, she earned and received the approbation of the public, lawyers, police, outside governmental agencies and, most certainly, the judges for and with whom she made great effort. The burdens and responsibilities of Court Clerk in a small village are many. The work takes place on the front, firing lines rather than in the back offices. The duties are full-time although the judge is part-time, and frequently the Court Clerk is without assistance. As such, the Clerk is often uninsulated from impatient, anxious, insistent or demanding parties or counsel. Aside from basic clerical duties such as preparing calendars, notifying parties, contacting a myriad of governmental agencies,

responding to phone calls, addressing complaints, and assisting the Court, the Clerk does double duty in also acting as a treasurer, receiving, recording, depositing and reporting fines and fees to state and local departments.

For 40 years, the last 34 as my Court Clerk and confidant, Pat was as much an integral part of the administration of justice--if not more---than the Village Justice, and performed all the work incumbent upon her in a manner that was at all times patient, courteous, respectful, even-tempered, attentive, detail oriented, efficient, trustworthy, discrete and exemplary. In every regard, Patricia Basini deserved to be called a true public servant.

[The preceding tribute was originally submitted for publication by Walter Schwartz to the Rivertowns Enterprise. A former resident of Ardsley, he and his wife, Harriet, now reside in White Plains, New York. In addition to serving 36 years on the bench, he served one year as Village Prosecutor, and four years as Village Trustee. Patricia Basini was succeeded by Anissa Slade as Court Clerk in March 2016. Mrs. Basini passed away on May 2, 2018 and is survived by her beloved husband, Tom. She is dearly missed by all. - GFC]



“JUST SIT RIGHT BACK, AND YOU’LL HEAR A TALE; A TALE OF A FATEFUL TRIP. . . .”

To anyone of a certain age, the above words are as familiar as any nursery rhyme learned in childhood. In fact, given the opportunity many of us could probably rattle off most of the verses without a moment’s hesitation. Of course, these words represent the opening ballad lyrics for the classic TV sitcom known as “Gilligan’s Island” that appeared on CBS from 1964 through 1967, followed by numerous television movie sequels, and lasting mortality in syndication. And what young red-blooded American did not ponder from time to time the vital question: Mary Ann or Ginger? Or as some have suggested: Gilligan or the Professor?

The actress who portrayed the character, Ginger Grant, was prominently featured as a voluptuous castaway movie star. Professionally known as Tina Louise, she started out life as Tatiana Blacker born in New York City in 1934. She burst on the national scene in the Broadway play, “Little Abner (1957),” performed in several notable motion pictures like “God’s Little Acre (1958)” and “The Stepford Wives (1975),” starred in a number of soap operas, and even had a recurring role as J.R. Ewing’s secretary on “Dallas” before her character was knocked off. Perhaps this is all old news for many, but what many don’t know is that a very young Tina Louise, or should I say Tatiana Blacker, was once a resident of the Village of Ardsley.

In her 1997 memoir, “Sunday,” Louise relates, in a child’s voice, how she was shunted off to a boarding school at the tender age of six, circa 1940, by her parents who were divorcing. The slim 47 page book describes in vignettes her trials and tribulations at the Ardsley School for Girls. Finely chronicled in an Ardsley Historical Society article, dated 2013, by then newsletter editor, Theresa DeStefano, the Ardsley Heights Country School and Camp for Girls, as it was formally called, was established in 1922 and remained open until 1942. Located on Prospect Avenue, the school sported an ice skating / roller rink, a fountain and swimming pool, a dining pavilion, dormitories, and classrooms. Its amenities fit the bill for those “parents who for professional or other demands” were not able to provide a nurturing family atmosphere at home. In the eyes of a bewildered young Tina though, the school was anything other than nurturing. Though it seems she made friends easily she desperately missed her parents, and longed for their rare weekend visits to the school. Her mother was 24 at the time,



her father ten years older. The relationship soured two years after Tina’s birth, and they went their separate ways, leaving custody of the child with the very young mother. Though it seems the estranged parents did their best to remain engaged in their child’s life they did not make it easy for her. Were they both to show up on visitation day, the child would initially be elated, but that elation would quickly evaporate as she witnessed her parents argue as to whether or not it was their day to visit. In time, despite living in a beautiful apartment with a maid at her side, Tina’s mother could no longer pay her share of the tuition at the Ardsley school, and her father, having remarried with a new born son at home, took her to live with him and his new family, making good on an earlier promise to his daughter who was thrilled to make the move.

In the book’s Forward, Tina Louise wrote, “Hearing and reading about so many people having children at a young age rekindled my desire to get out to the public . . . and call attention to the fact that young children are entitled to a warm and nurturing upbringing, and real maturity is needed in order to provide this.” She further added “A child must be nurtured in every way possible, with affection, care, and intelligence. But most of all always feel safe.” True to form at the time she wrote this book, she became a volunteer reading teacher for the New York City Public Schools and remained so until at least 2013. She continues to maintain a home in New York City, and has held many telephone conversations with our Village Historian Robert Pellegrino. Someday she may even consent to sit down for an interview with the Ardsley Historical Society. – George F. Calvi, Editor

BEA CAPORALE TAKES LIFE IN ARDSLEY ONE DAY AT A TIME

“THERE WAS LITTLE TO NO TRAFFIC IN ARDSLEY BACK IN THE 1940s AND EARLY 1950s,” said Bea Caporale. That one statement in and of itself illustrates just how much life has changed in this little village with traffic a perennial headache for every elected official to contend with for the last several decades. And thank goodness there was little traffic back then for there were only two police officers to handle it. Bea recalls that one of the officers, a patrolman, was named Hector Campbell. Though there were five people in her family, the Caporales like most families owned only one automobile, if a family owned one at all.

Bea’s parents were Ardsley native Mary Filomena of 766 Saw Mill River Road and Charles Caporale. He was born in Italy and immigrated to the United States when he was sponsored by an aunt in Dobbs Ferry. A veteran of World War I he received his citizenship papers after the war, and became active with Ardsley’s volunteer fire department. Mary and Charles met in the 1920s while working at Anaconda Wire & Cable Company on the Hastings waterfront. Once married, Mary remained at home as was the custom for new wives at the time. She would not return to work outside the home until World War II during which she worked many shifts around the clock. The marriage produced three children: two sons and a daughter. Like their father both sons served their country in the armed forces. As young adults John Caporale, who is still living, would join the Merchant Marines, and Louis Caporale would become a lifer in the United States Marine Corps. Sadly, he died in October 1997. It was a close-knit Italian family. For Christmas Eve there might be as many as ten relatives clustered around the table consuming spaghetti aglio e olio (spaghetti with garlic and olive oil). Bea’s mother was an excellent cook, though her father would prepare some delicious meals from time to time like many Italian men then and now. He even prepared meals for his fellow volunteer fire fighters at the firehouse. After dinner he would work at Canning Greenhouse in what is now Greenburgh’s Anthony Veteran Town Park.

Bea fondly recalls the names of businesses that served the community during her youth such as Doc Engleman’s Chemist Shop, Perillo’s grocery

store, Andy Reed’s grocery store, The McCartney Agency, and the Pascone family’s Chocolateria in Addyman Square. She graduated from Ardsley High School in 1945. Though she planned to attend Albany State Teachers College, despite her parents’



wishes, she decided to stay local so as to remain in close contact with her friends. Shortly thereafter, she commenced working as a stenographer for Seagram’s Distillers in New York City; a career that would end as a meeting planner with the same firm 40 years later.

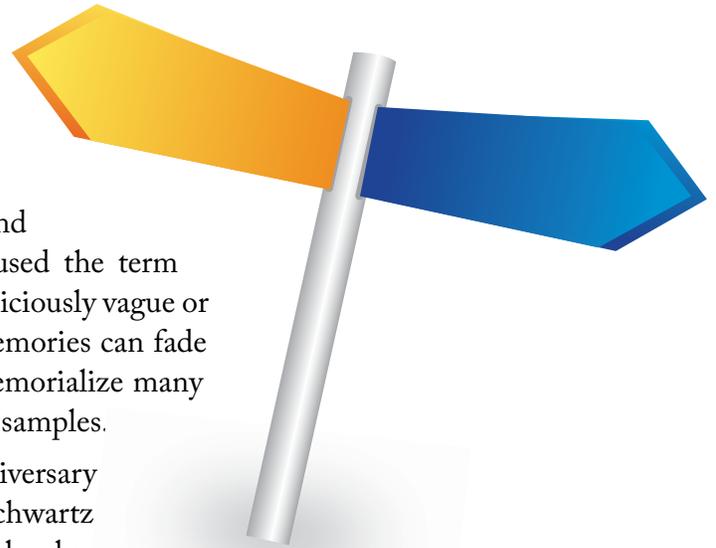
During these early days Bea’s best friends were Rose Perillo, June Brinkerhoff, Carol Denike, and Jean McGregor Glus. Bea’s parents had no problem with her working outside the home or traveling into New York City for work. In fact, many local girls did the same. Often, Bea and her girlfriends would meet for lunch at the Horn & Hardart Automat, an ancestor of today’s fast food franchises. As Bea recalls “We used the Old Put railroad (now Westchester County’s linear park). Carol Denike would always run ahead to save seats for all the other girls in their group. Heaven help the intruder who attempted to take one of those seats.” On occasion she stayed in NYC after work for dinner but had to catch the last train out at 11:00 pm. Curiously, though she was allowed to work in Manhattan, her mother did not approve of Bea hanging out at a local establishment like Pascone’s Chocolateria though her brothers were allowed. It was no surprise the boys had more liberty. As Bea puts it, “My parents had old Italian ways. No dates were allowed at the time either, and no reasons were ever given.”

In her free time Bea recalls walking to Saturday matinees at Dobbs Ferry’s Trans-Lux Embassy Theater (later the Pickwick Theater) on Cedar Street never once dreaming of taking a bus for the 1.5 mile trip. She also recalls the old sporting rivalries between Ardsley and Dobbs Ferry. Unlike many of her contemporaries

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ORIGINS OF STREET AND PLACE NAMES IN ARDSLEY

While still Village Manager from time to time a new resident or potential house buyer would ask me, “How did that street get such an unusual name?” After nearly 25 years on the job, I often knew the origin, but many times, frankly, I was stumped and had to contact former Mayors, Village Historians, and various old-timers to secure a reasonable answer. I used the term “reasonable” because sometimes the responses were suspiciously vague or ambiguous. Assuredly no malice was intended, but memories can fade with time. Thankfully some have taken the time to memorialize many of the place names in books and essays. Here are a few samples.



In preparation for his article in the “Ardsley 100th Anniversary Journal” that was released in 1996, the Hon. Walter Schwartz Justice wrote about two of his colleagues on the bench who just happened to have a park and a street, respectively, named after them.

McDOWELL PARK

“B. Wilbur McDowell served for 41 years as Ardsley’s justice, beginning at a time when the municipal building and court were located in the Barnett or Johnson Building on a site where the Thruway now stands. When the building was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1914, the village moved into what had become in 1912 an abandoned school building. Judge McDowell retired from village government in 1953 at the age of 73 to seek the office of Receiver of Taxes for the Town of Greenburgh, a position he held until 1961, when he finally retired, after 49 years in elective office. The judge passed away in 1964. McDowell Park was named in his honor in 1976.”

McCORMACK DRIVE

“By the time Francis J. McCormack was appointed judge in 1953, he had already held all the other elective positions in the village: School Board Trustee, Village Trustee, and Mayor. Judge McCormack, like his predecessor was a kindly gentleman, who was not trained in the law and had no law degree, but brought to the courtroom business experience, insight, and compassion.” Judge McCormack served as Village Justice for 21 years until 1974. He retired at age 80 and died in 1983.” McCormack Drive, the main access to the Middle School, was named in his honor.

During my years working for the Village of Scarsdale I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Scarsdale Village Historian Richard M. Lederer, Jr who published in 1978 a very interesting tome known as “The Place Names of Westchester County, New York.” To a twenty-three year old he was an odd looking but lovable curmudgeon often sporting large bowties and tweed jackets and who had a predilection for thick stews and goulashes at the Scarsdale Diner, yet he told me the most interesting stories about the community. Several of the references in his book were attributed to locations in Ardsley.

BEACON HILL

“Tradition says that a beacon was lit on Washington Hill if the British were sighted during the Revolutionary War. The Homeland Company used the name for its 1929 development around Beacon Hill Road.” The name has absolutely no connection with the site of the state house of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in Boston.

RIGGSVILLE

“In 1872 E. Riggs had 284 acres at Alexander Hamilton and Saw Mill River Roads.”

SAW MILL RIVER

“This is an English translation of the Dutch *Die Zaag Kill* named for Adriaen Van Der Donck’s saw mill near its mouth. The head of the river is in Chappaqua, flows through Pleasantville, Hawthorne, Valhalla, Greenburgh, Elmsford, Hastings, Ardsley, and Yonkers where it empties into the Hudson River.” Curiously, Lederer later in the book makes a second reference to that water of body as Yonkers Kill as recorded in a 1682 deed to the Philipse family.

SPRAIN BROOK

“The name appears in the Greenburgh town records as early as 1743 but no satisfying reason for the name can be found. Some contend it was a corruption of the Indian *Armonperabin*. A “spraing” is the glittering stripe in a tartan. In Dutch, *sprankel* is “to sparkle.” To “sprain” is to sow seeds by hand; could the grass around Grassy Sprain have been hand sown? None of these derivations satisfies me.”

Your newsletter editor takes credit for suggesting two street names during his tenure as Village Manager.

JORDAN LANE

The name has nothing to do with the Middle Eastern nation nor the basketball icon who played with the Chicago Bulls. It was suggested to the developer to honor the memory of Mrs. Jordan, a centenarian, who resided on the property for many years before it was subdivided in the 1990s. Longtime residents may recall the flock of sheep that used to graze peacefully on the meadow in the foreground with the small home set way back in the distance.

LOUIS PASCONE LANE

Having repeatedly dodged developer, Conrad Roncati's original intent to name the road after me, I finally convinced him to honor the memory of our more deserving late Highway Foreman Louis M. Pascone who served the Village Highway Department in various capacities from 1947 until his death in 2010. Residents may recall Ashford Park was renamed in his honor back in 2011.

PRESIDENTIAL STREETS

Those of us who paid attention in elementary school history class have probably figured out already that **Lincoln Avenue** honors our 16th president Abraham Lincoln; **Taft Lane** honors our 27th president William Howard Taft (who actually had lunch in Ardsley with local resident Adolph Lewisohn in 1912); and that **McKinley Place** honors our 25th president

William McKinley; but does anyone recall that our 31st president, Herbert Hoover, was also honored with a road in Ardsley? Very few no doubt because the road doesn't exist anymore. In fact, it never existed at all except on

paper. When looking at old maps one will note the presence of a so-called paper street known as **Hoover Road** roughly corresponding with the current jug-handle at the current intersection of Ashford Avenue and McCormack Drive.

The name was quietly and perhaps ignobly erased from the maps when the intersection was re-worked to create a proper access to the new Middle School. Is it possible the party politics of the day played a role? It's anyone's guess.

The intersection of Ashford Avenue and Saw Mill River Road formerly known as Ardsley Square was renamed **Addyman Square** in memory of Frank Addyman who was President of Ardsley from 1923 to 1927, and then Mayor from 1931 through 1934 when he died in office at the untimely age of 50. According to editor Mary Lichtenberg in the Winter 2009-2010 newsletter, Addyman was a judge for the American Kennel Association, founded American Legion Post #458, operated the Ardsley Lumber Company, volunteered as president of the Ardsley Hose Company, and was vice president of the First National Bank of Ardsley at the time of his death. Oddly, the name change for the square has never resonated with the people who operate the Bee Line Bus System because despite multiple protests the name Ardsley Square continues to appear on the Route 6 schedule in lieu of Addyman.

Pocost Park on the corner of Ashford Avenue and American Legion Drive was named after Michael Pocost, yet another Mayor who died in office in 1991. Unlike Addyman who served

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BEA CAPORALE

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she did not fall under the spell of Frank Sinatra and become a bobbysoxer. Perry Como was more her passion, as was the singing artistry of Doris Day. She was an avid reader citing 1951's "From Here to Eternity" as one of her favorite novels. "All my activities centered around Ardsley," said Bea. "I collected tin cans for the war effort, an era of gas and food rationing." After the war she purchased her first car, a red and white Chevrolet, from Blasberg Motors in Dobbs Ferry.

Bea has lived in the same house at 603 Saw Mill River Road her entire life. She is active with Ardsley's Senior Citizen group, and is a devoted parishioner of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. These days she fills her time knitting afghans, throws, and lap robes for the VA hospital in Montrose. Despite the changes in the community over the years, Bea assures me she is satisfied with life in Ardsley sharing "I take life one day at a time." -- George F. Calvi, Editor

[Bea Caporale was interviewed at the Ardsley Public Library on July 6, 2018. She recently celebrated her 90th birthday, and continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the Ardsley Historical Society.]

ORIGINS *continued from page 7*

a combined seven years as the head of Ardsley's government, tragically Pocost barely served nine months.

Speaking of **American Legion Drive** no doubt it was named after the American Legion Post 458 that used to occupy the large red brick now abandoned building north of the library. Prior to being renamed, it was called Aqueduct Road recognizing the Croton Aqueduct "blow off" chamber that is buried many feet below.

The words **Saw Mill, Ashford,** and **Ardsley** are intertwined in local history. In the "Ardsley 100th Anniversary Journal," Patty and the late Fred Arone provided a historical sketch derived from their earlier publication "Pictures of the Past, Ardsley, New York." In their book, the couple mentioned that "**Saw Mill Corners** was the first name used to identify the present day Ardsley area." They further stated that "sometime before 1850 the name **Ashford** came into common use," and offered two plausible theories as to the name's origin. The first belief is "that a large ash tree stood near the banks of the Saw Mill River where the road crossed or 'forded' the river." Thus, the geographic reference became Ash Ford, and in time Ashford. The Arones cite an old Ardsley history written in 1903 that "claimed that the stump of the ash tree could still be seen." According to the Arones, the second theory revolved around the arrival of Captain John King and his wife, Eliza Ann Dobbs King in 1841. Captain King was a prominent citizen most likely because of his establishment of a very successful pickle "factory" directly behind the present day location of O.L.P.H. Roman Catholic Church. King's ancestral home was in Ashford, England, and it is rumored that owing to his prominence he may have prevailed upon the citizens to rename the community Ashford.

Further along in their historical sketch, the Arones reported that "by 1883, the residents of Ashford had tired of their dependence on the distant Dobbs Ferry Post Office, and an application was made to obtain a post office" of their own. They were quickly disappointed by postal officials upon learning that the name Ashford was already in use in western New York State. As luck would have it, "a familiar personage at the local depot, Cyrus W. Field of Atlantic Cable fame, interceded . . . and offered to use his [considerable] influence to prod the [federal] government in establishing a [local] post office." In exchange he asked the local populace if they would accept the name of **Ardsley** which happened to be "the name of his nearby Field estate and the name of his family home in England. The people readily agreed to the name change," the community received its post office, and, as they say, the rest is history.

KING STREET

This very narrow street that ends in a cul-de-sac, and is often blocked by traffic on busy Ashford Avenue, of course, was named to honor the memory of Captain John King.

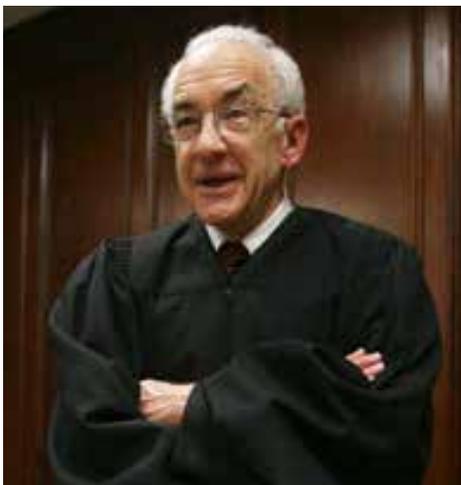
REVOLUTIONARY WAR STREETS

Our community is sprinkled with many references to the American Revolution: Concord Road, Revere Road, Flintlock Lane, Major Appleby's Way, Revolutionary Road, Alexander Hamilton Road; Captain Honeywell, Beacon Hill, Rochambeau, to name a few. In subsequent issues we will explore who or what these names refer to, and more. – George F. Calvi, Editor

MY FIFTY YEARS IN ARDSLEY & THE PEOPLE I MET ALONG THE WAY

A Travelogue by retired Village Justice and former Village Historian Walter Schwartz

I was working part-time in a supermarket in Queens in 1961 while attending law school, and a customer put a package of frozen corn niblets on the counter in front of me. I was familiar with Birds Eye and Green Giant, but this was a brand I hadn't noticed before: "Ardsley Frozen Corn Niblets." I picked it up, paused for a moment, rang up the price, collected the money, and moved on to the next customer, but it must have formed a lasting impression upon me.



Five summers later, I now had my law degree, was married to a Yonkers girl named Harriet, and visiting my dear sister, Carole Lempert, who lived in a School District of the same name as that brand of frozen corn, when my wife and I stopped outside a Liggett drugstore in the center of town. As she got out of the car, a police officer named Dick Geraghty walked over to her and politely asked, "Are you from out of town?" Startled, she replied inquisitively, "no?" "Well," he explained, "there's an ordinance here in the Village of Ardsley that prohibits women wearing shorts above the knees, but since you probably didn't know about it, I won't give you a ticket." That was our first brush with local law.

We had a second, greater brush in 1968 shortly after we bought our first home in Ardsley, a 6-room Huntley ranch on Overlook Road for \$30,000, which my sister found for us. One morning, I left the house for work in the City and I was surprised to find a parking ticket on the windshield of our car parked right in front of the house. I looked up and down the block but there were no signs prohibiting parking. I phoned the police who advised me that because overnight parking warnings were posted at each entrance to the Village, under the law this was sufficient notice. But Harriet, already ever the teacher, insisted that was unfair, if not unconstitutional, and that she, and not I, would appear in court and fight the ticket because the car was registered in her name. And so, I got my insight into local justice—albeit from the back row of the courtroom, with a vow to keep my mouth shut—while my wife argued that ignorance of the law was indeed a good defense before Judge Francis J. McCormack, a polite elderly gentleman attired in a business suit,

who I later learned never attended law school or practiced law, but had once served as mayor of Ardsley. After listening to her carefully and ascertaining that we had lived in the Village only four months at the time of the parking ticket, he announced, not unsympathetically, that she was guilty, but the two-dollar fine would be waived. Looking back nearly half a century later, this may have been our "Welcome Wagon to Ardsley."

Not long after finding our way into Village Court, we decided to attend

something called a Candidates' Coffee. The strictly local elections in those days were held in mid-March so there would presumably be no coattail effect, which always seemed to make a lot of sense to me, except that the candidates for mayor, trustee or judge ran on national party labels, which has always bothered me. The coffee was held at the home of Dr. Gerald Weinberger, a considerate man who has now lived in Ardsley for over 60 years, and there were a lot of people present. When opportunity knocked, I approached the mayor, named Bud Powell, and introduced myself as a new resident. He asked where I lived, which was right around the corner, and when I answered, "Overlook Road," it struck me as odd that he did not seem to know where that was. Walking home with Harriet, I said that if I ever ran for local office, I'd make sure I knew the location of every street in the entire Village. But first, there were babies and sheetrock and earning a living to occupy us.

A few months later in 1969, we were visiting neighbors one night when the baby sitter called to say that our baby, Debra, (now 50 years of age), had a rash on her face. We rushed home, called Dr. Leonard Berger—doctors in those bygone days actually made house calls—and were advised that a prescription was needed, but as it was already nearly midnight, all the pharmacies were closed. He suggested I telephone the local police who, in turn, suggested I telephone Doc Charles Engleman, the longtime local pharmacist, whom we did not know. Desperately, I woke up Doc Engleman, who told me he would put on his pants and asked me to pick him up in ten minutes, which I, of course, did. We drove to his store in the center of what I later learned was Addyman Square where this

helpful gentle man opened his pharmacy, walked to the back, and mixed together the prescription to cure our baby's rash.

After the birth of our second child, Laura, I felt I needed to do my part as an involved member of the community, so I started attending and speaking up at village and school board meetings, writing letters to the editor of the local press, and addressing issues of concern. In the fall of 1973, there was a packed audience at the high school to hear a giant developer's attempt to build a hotel and conference center on the idyllic sheep pasture that was part of the renowned Water Wheel property, and I stood up in the middle of the auditorium to voice my reasons against the project, even though the site was not in my own back yard.

In the spring of 1974, when I got up to answer my doorbell, there on my front porch was a distinguished looking man, about twenty years my senior, asking if I would consider voting for him to serve as Ardsley's Village Justice. He introduced himself as August, or Gus, Maron, said he was married with six children and was a patent attorney and a Republican. I voted for him in 1974 and after he was elected, we became friends, respectful of one another, and would often chat on the mini-bus on the way to the train station.

In 1974, I became Chair of the newly formed Ardsley Conservation Advisory Commission, and in November of that year, I organized a presentation before the Village Board advocating newspaper recycling. After hearing several of our members for well more than an hour, the Board shot down our proposal to our great dissatisfaction. Driving home from the Dobbs Ferry station the next night, which was two days before Thanksgiving, it struck me that I didn't want to be sitting on my rocking chair forty years later, saying, "Back there when I had the time, energy and initiative, I sat back and did nothing." So, I decided at that very moment to run for Village Trustee, as an Independent, based on the theme, "The highest ideals in good government."

*"The highest ideals
in good government."*

On March 18, 1975, after campaigning door-to-door for 3 ½ months, up and down the hills of Ardsley, in the bitter cold of winter, I received the grand total of 680

votes, enough to finish second among four candidates, and win a position on the Board, to the dismay of the Democratic majority. When the final results were tabulated, a diminutive lady named Mary Kamens, congratulated and welcomed me, an Independent, as a member of Village government like no one else ever did. Mary was already the Village Clerk and continued in that role for 40 years until technology and the 19 steep steps up to the second floor of the old Municipal Building, and down again, ended her tenure. Mary was the epitome of the tireless, dedicated worker who made anyone who had business with government feel welcomed.

One of the best things that happened to me in my fifty years in Ardsley and my forty years in local government was that I was seated on the end of the table, next to Dick Fontana, the lone Republican. He was a very honest man without vanity or elevated ego, and I learned from him. Twenty-five years later, Dick, who came to serve six years as Mayor, thanks in part to a gasoline scandal I helped expose in 1977, passed away. I was deeply honored when his family asked me to deliver a eulogy at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Ardsley. A couple of years later, the Fontana family prevailed upon me to accept the "ARDSLEY" license plate which had been on Dick's car from the time we were Trustees together, and I accepted their request with as much grace as I could muster. Every time I am asked about that license plate, I am reminded of the honesty and kindness of Dick Fontana.

In late 1974, I was a contented commuter on the Hudson line from Ardsley-on-Hudson, the quaint hamlet inside Irvington, until a handful of its residents pressured the Irvington Board to restrict non-resident commuter parking to six hours, hardly enough time to travel back and forth and do a full day's work in the City. A group of us, led by Bob Levine, a progressive attorney who lived on Eastern Drive, refused to buckle down, fought the parking tickets we received, enlisted the New York Civil Liberties Union, and contacted the New York Times, which sent a cub reporter, Linda Greenhouse, who later covered the U.S. Supreme Court, up to the Irvington Village Court to report on the case. Months later, we came away with a pyrrhic victory, a tough lesson in civics and a different train station. I came away with a concept of how government should, but did not always serve the cause of justice, or non-residents, and more importantly, a wonderful friend and loyal ally who later became the best assistant Village Justice I could possibly ever have.

Shortly after I was elected to the Village Board, I chaired an Ecology Day program at the new Middle School. One of the helpful participants was a kind-hearted person named Richard Ciofalo, who ran the AV program at the high school. He mentioned the name of Arthur Silliman, the former longtime head of the Ardsley school system and an environmentalist, who had a collection of old slides of Ardsley. Those slides began my interest in local history. My further exploration resulted from a casual conversation I had with Donald Hoy, the respected Village Building Inspector and local plumber who knew his hometown inside and outside. He referred to “the Lewisohn estate, where the high school now stood,” and that name struck me for its connection to the renowned Stadium on the campus of my alma mater, City College of New York. Don directed me to John Canning, Jr., who once owned the land that became the Greenburgh Town Park and still resided on the property. My long conversation in John Canning’s parlor became the impetus for a 30-year quest into the life and philanthropy of Adolph Lewisohn and his 356-acre Ardsley estate.

I voted for Judge Maron again in 1978, however I didn’t vote for him in March 1982 because by then I had made up my mind to run for Village Justice. Having served for one year as prosecutor in Ardsley traffic court, I felt that the Village needed a somewhat more “firm hand on justice.” Still an Independent, I quickly realized that in a three-way race which included a Democratic candidate, the odds of my defeating the incumbent were either slim or none, but with the aid of Mort David, who later became mayor of Ardsley, Sally Nomer, and a couple others, I was able to secure the Democratic endorsement. Campaigning again door-to-door, as I did in Ardsley for a total of eight winters, I was victorious and sworn in as Ardsley Village Justice on April 5, 1982, for the first of nine terms.

I distinctly recall meeting Mort David early in 1975 when I was campaigning outside his house on Bramblebrook Road and he was shoveling snow. We must have found much in common because we chatted for fifteen minutes. In 1989, it was my great pleasure to install him as Mayor, and although he served only one term, he has remained actively involved in the Ardsley community nearly as long as I had.

I doubt if Bing Crosby was thinking of Sally Nomer when he sang the lyrics to that song which opens with the words, “I love those dear hearts and gentle people,” but I must have been thinking about Sally when those words popped into my head as I wrote this essay. There was no dearer or gentler person I knew in Ardsley than

this soft-spoken Quaker lady who lived on Huntley Drive around the corner from us, served as a Village Trustee, never had a harsh word for anybody, and was the leader of the local Senior Citizens. Fortunately, for Sally, she never strived to become mayor, and fortunately for me, I never did either, because it wasn’t in our DNA.

Altogether, there were ten Ardsley mayors during my long tenure as Village Justice, but the one person who I think might have made the best mayor of all lost the election in her only attempt to win the office, back in 1984. Getting to know Lydia Dallas well from campaigning with her and Mort David on the same ticket in 1986, I formed the impression that Lydia, more than anyone else I knew, had the leadership ability, the intelligence, the fortitude, the confidence and the sense of compassion and fairness that seemed most suitable and needed for the office.

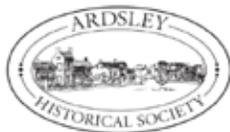
I have mentioned only a few of the people I met along the way during my fifty years in Ardsley, who had a positive effect upon whatever I may have accomplished here in the Village. Of course, I value most the love, encouragement and assistance of Harriet, however I did not include her among my all-stars both for fear of being accused of nepotism and because, technically, we met four years before we found our first home and soon after became ensconced in the Ardsley community.

Clearly the best personnel decision the Village made in all my years here was in selecting a quiet, well-mannered, unassuming, churchgoing resident by the name of Patricia Basini, as its Court Clerk, beginning in 1976. I first worked with Pat during 1979 when I became Village Prosecutor, and then in Court for 34 years until she retired in 2016 after 40 years in the demanding role of Court Clerk. I will always be indebted to Pat for her work ethic, loyalty, sense of justice and companionship.

About twenty years ago, a book came out with the title, “It Takes a Village.” Long before that book was written, I had already learned that every individual’s life may be shaped by the community in which he or she lives, and, also, that a community can be influenced and affected by those persons who make a real effort to make a difference. Yes, “I loved those dear hearts and gentle people who lived in my home town ,

Because those dear hearts and gentle people would never ever let me down.”

[The above travelogue was presented by Walter Schwartz at the April 29, 2018 Sunday afternoon program brought to you by the Ardsley Historical Society. – GFC]



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