

MAYOR MARVIN'S COLUMN

As I walked in our wonderful Memorial Day parade, I was struck by how truly beautiful our Village is on so many levels. I realized that the key to what makes it so special is the volunteer effort of our citizens.

Even the parade itself could not have occurred without the assistance and generosity of Villagers. Donald Gray made sure the Model A Club came to our parade and the owners from Topps Bakery offered to add a little fun with their float. The young Boy Scout who played taps came all the way down from Wappinger Falls with his mom just to perform for us. Dale Walker lends her beautiful voice to us every year evoking thoughts of our veterans past and present with her words. And the High School students in the Sha Capella group give up their morning to share the anthem with us.

As we followed along the parade route, every beautiful plant and flower I saw was a donation from one of our three garden groups – Boulder Ledge, The Working Gardeners and the Bronxville Beautification Council. They not only collect funds and donate themselves but on any given day you can see Mary Rose Nihlen or Neely Bower pulling weeds in our public spaces. Bronxville Beautification Council President, George McKinnis, was responsible for galvanizing his group to undertake the beautiful re-landscaping of the fountain area. The proceeds from the Beautification Council's Garden Tour this coming Saturday, will go right back into additional Village beautification projects. Thanks go to Cindy Tether for organizing this year's event.

Thanks to residents such as the Vittorinis, Fords, Murphys and Castillos, a park was literally created out of marshland, resulting in our Nature Preserve complete with a beautiful butterfly garden.

Our garden groups and the gentlemen from the Public Works Department have developed a very effective public/private partnership with our DPW workers assisting in planting, transplanting and watering much of the donated plants and trees.

On a smaller level, but nonetheless beautiful, individual families have taken it upon themselves to create beautiful pockets of our Village. Every day as I walk to work, my day is brightened by the resplendent triangle planted by Paige and Art Nagle. Liza Near and Peg Cady are doing the same at the triangle at the intersection of Summit and Tanglewylde. The joy brought to

those who pass by is so appreciated. The residents of Kensington Terrace are also working with the Village to spruce up the area near the parking lots.

In addition to beautification, residents quietly and unobtrusively help out in many other areas of Village operation. Florence and George Kooluris and Robert Rabsey are great friends to our entire police department and the Village newsletter would have never happened without the able assistance of Maryanne Maher.

Many of you might not know that former Mayor Bill Murphy works everyday managing our parking operations as a volunteer staffer and many of the improvements and clean up efforts at Scout Field are underwritten by the Murphy Foundation.

Over sixty residents volunteer their time and talent to serve on Village committees. They are some of the most accomplished, busiest residents, yet they lend their professional skills willingly. Many like Anna Longobardo, Richard Szypula, Bill Primps and Don Henderson have served for decades. Eloise Morgan volunteers her time as Village Historian and is a repository of information for many other organizations. Vito Lucchese, Jim Kroulis, Emily Papageorge and Maureen Curran have been our eyes and ears on the west side lending invaluable help in dealing with the MTA.

The residents who volunteered to serve on the Library Board, chaired this year by Vicki Manley and followed by Sean Abbott, and the Friends of the Library Board lead by Fern Watters have truly stepped up with innovative ways to operate the library and/or raise money to partner with the Village as we weather the current economic storm. Everyone handled the funding diminution with innovation and grace.

And given the topic, the Board of Assessment Review is probably our “bravest” committee. Bob Shearer, Chris Eldridge, Lisa Connors, John Hill and Steve Howard are to be commended for being probably the most well informed and educated committee on this subject in the County.

When I asked John Hill to help, he simply said, “What is it you want me to do, Mary?”

My favorite volunteer story is that of Sally Peters who is so diligent cleaning trash off the hillside near Crows Nest and Library Lane that we are getting her an official DPW shirt and making her an honorary member of the crew.

I know that for every Villager I have mentioned there are legions more that work quietly behind the scenes to improve our Village and deserve our thanks.

Please know we are so grateful for the unsung efforts of so many residents. Your help is particularly important in this economic climate when funding is scarce and staffing low. So please consider offering your name up to help many of the volunteer organizations that flourish in Bronxville, or if that is not your cup of tea, just help out in any way you can. It really does take a Village.