

## Mayor's Column

May 22, 2017

Last week was National Police Appreciation Week and the Village Hall staff surprised our officers with a special breakfast in their honor. Many of the Officers had just returned from the Bronxville School's Third Annual Read Aloud. This is a terrific program which pairs community leaders with a class and we read books chosen by the faculty followed by wonderful discussion. Our current force of officers is very young and anxious to be a part of the fabric of our community. As a result of an experimental schedule agreed upon by the Village Trustees and our PBA, our officers are now on steady shifts as opposed to weekly rotations. The goal is to have residents see the same officers and get to know each other better. As an added safety benefit, the officers will be able to memorialize habits and better spot out of the ordinary activity. The introduction of videos, cameras, scanners and license plate readers has truly revolutionized policing as responses can now be instantaneous. We are currently in the process of installing cameras at major arteries and entries to the Village. But bottom line, nothing replaces the eyes and ears of intelligent, caring officers and the Village is fortunate – and blessed to have 21 of them.

As spring is in full bloom and more villagers heading outdoors, we are asked questions specific to the season. The following is a sample of the most frequently asked of late:

Why do the parking enforcement officers watch drivers cross double yellow lines or engage in other driving infractions and do nothing about it?

The Parking Enforcement Officers or PEOs are not police officers, nor even peace officers and are only authorized and trained to issue parking tickets. New York State Vehicle and Traffic Laws can only be enforced by trained police officers. Traffic stops are actually the most dangerous duty of a police officer because stops often lead to more serious charges such as stolen car cases or outstanding criminal warrants, and a PEO has none of the training needed to handle these situations.

Why don't the police patrol the school field?

The school field is private property and is analogous to one's own backyard. If the police drive by and see suspicious activity while passing the school or any residential property, they can enter the property and investigate. However, they cannot come on the property uninvited for no reason. The responsibility for peace and order rests with the property owner and the school, like Concordia College and Lawrence Hospital, must supply security if deemed necessary.

Why is there a school crossing guard at Masterton Road and not near the library or at the intersection of Midland Avenue and Pondfield Road?

The Village adheres to federally promulgated safety standards recognized by the State and Federal Highway Administration to guide us in all areas of traffic and pedestrian safety.

Crossing guards should only be placed at an intersection that has a high volume of children; is a significant distance from the nearest intersection controlled by a traffic light; and the route the children would have to take to reach that traffic light intersection is without proper sidewalks such as the condition along Crows Nest Road. Hence, the need for a guard at Masterton Road.

Crossing guards are never to be placed at an intersection controlled by a traffic light due to the dangerous confusion that can be caused when a driver sees perhaps a green light but then a guard waving a child across the intersection. The dualing authorities make for a potentially dangerous situation.

Why don't we think of having speed bumps or humps, rumble strips or rough roads placed throughout the Village to reduce speed?

Again, we follow State and Federal standards on the use of any traffic calming devices. Before any speed hump or bump is installed, a traffic engineering study must be undertaken to determine both its necessity and proper location with verifiable data on traffic volume, speeds and accident rates. Incorrectly installed bumps have opened municipalities to significant liability. For example, a bump too close to a curve in a road does not provide adequate warning to the unfamiliar driver and can result in increased accidents at that location.

Even after it is determined a speed bump would be helpful, a series of signs must be placed in both directions and the bump and the road markings leading up to it must be brightly painted. Speed bumps that you see without this signage and paint are incorrectly installed, thus exposing a municipality to additional liability.

As for rumble strips or roughing of the road, there is no study that has proven they are an effective traffic calming device. Also the noise made by the autos crossing these rough spots is extremely loud and incessant to neighboring dwellings.

Can construction projects be operating on the weekends in the Village?

If the particular activity required a building permit from the Village, the terms of the permit allow work to be done from 8AM to 6PM on weekdays only. If the activity is one that a permit was not required, for example painting a house, work can be done on weekends. However, even work acceptable to do on weekends must respect the Village's noise ordinance and not create an undue disturbance. Villagers can call the police department with any noise concerns.

I look forward to seeing you all on Monday for our Memorial Day Parade and salute to Veterans.