

Mayor's Column
May 24, 2016

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy declared May 15th and the entire week in which it falls National Police Day and Week.

Events are held throughout the Nation, with the largest being in the Washington D.C., area culminating with a candlelight vigil for the fallen which attracts upwards of 40,000 people. Sadly, the news outlets rarely feature it.

Westchester County conducted a beautiful ceremony at the County Center where heroes were honored and the fallen remembered.

Our neighbors in Tuckahoe and Eastchester also have tasteful remembrances around permanent monuments dedicated to their men and women in blue.

Chief Satriale and the Village Board of Trustees think it's time we did the same. Our department is so rich in history and exemplary in behavior. First housed in the building that is now the soccer store, the department went from a staff high of 28 officers to our current force of 21 who more than get the job done.

We also have four living chiefs, Chief Steinmuller, Chief DiVenieri, Chief Downey and our own Chief Chris Satriale who was the Village's first trained designated youth officer and has served the Village for 28 plus years. Lt. Bunyan, our second in command has served the Village for 32 years.

Though seemingly quiet, our Village has had a colorful history.

Some of you may remember when former Chief Steinmuller was a Detective Sergeant back in the 60's. Officer Steinmuller shot and killed a bank robber who came back to rob the First Federal Bank on Pondfield Road a year after his first successful attempt.

On the first try, the felon took \$60,000 and the teller hostage, tossing him out on the Sprain Brook Parkway.

When he reappeared months later, the alert teller recognized him, pressed the silent alarm and Officer Steinmuller responded.

Tapping him on the shoulder he asked him his business and saw him reach for a weapon in his raincoat pocket.

Officer Steinmuller fired expending all six of his bullets. The would-be robber had a fully equipped gun in both his pocket and another strapped to his leg. One can only surmise what could have happened to the many customers and bank staff if the detective had not been so quick.

Bronxville was also center stage on still one of the most publicized “cold cases” of our time, the Tylenol tablet poisoning.

First occurring in 1982 in Chicago where seven people died, the crime of tampering with the “tamperproof” bottles by lacing them with cyanide happened in our own A&P store. One woman died in Yonkers after buying a bottle and several other poisonous bottles were found on the A&P shelves.

Several months ago Detective Sergeant Anderson was responsible for apprehending the person who robbed St. Joseph’s collection. After viewing the video, he remembered the perpetrator’s gait as similar to that of a man who robbed Concordia College two years prior, identified the man and then apprehended him.

And just last week our own Chief was responsible for the apprehension of the criminal who robbed a Park Avenue home about a month ago.

Driving his family back to Bronxville from Pleasantville to patronize our restaurants and never off duty, he noticed a car near him that fit the description of the one sought in the Bronxville theft.

Getting one of his sons to copy down the license plate number he called out, the department instituted surveillance on the driver and made the arrest on Monday morning.

With few variations, the crimes have stayed the same in the Village throughout the years - the number one crime still being theft from unlocked cars - but the age of our officers and the use of technology has changed policing dramatically.

Our officers as a group are young and extremely fit and anxious to be a part of the fabric of this community.

We now have a record seven youth officers who visit all our schools. Officer DiBenedetto coaches our youngsters in lacrosse and Officer Van der Leeuw, a professional bagpiper, plays at the Village events. Just last week six officers read to Bronxville School classes at the Annual Read-Aloud.

As a result of an experimental schedule recently agreed upon by the Village Trustees and our PBA, our officers will now be on steady shifts as opposed to weekly rotations. The goal is to have residents seeing the same officers, getting to know them better and conversely, the officers will be able to memorialize habits and better spot out of the ordinary activity.

We have also partnered with departments in Eastchester, Tuckahoe and Pelham to create a trained Tactical Response Team should any of us need it.

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.