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THE PALISADES NEWSLETTER

May 2000 • Number 170

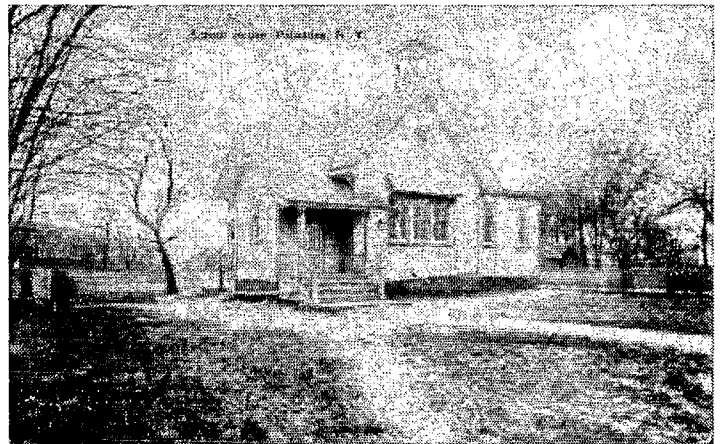
What's Under the Stone?

When you drive by the Palisades Community Center, you see a large stone near the spruce tree. Did you ever wonder why this stone was placed in this particular spot? This stone has a very important purpose. It lends its great weight and size to cover and protect buried treasure.

On July 4th 1976, when our country celebrated its Bicentennial birthday, we in Palisades also celebrated. We had a parade, square dance, lots of food and a program at the flagpole on 9W, where a time capsule was buried and left to be opened in the year 2076.

The same year, 1976, was also the year of the closing of our beloved Palisades School. We planted a spruce tree, which now stands in front of the Community Center, and dedicated it to all the children who attended the Palisades School.

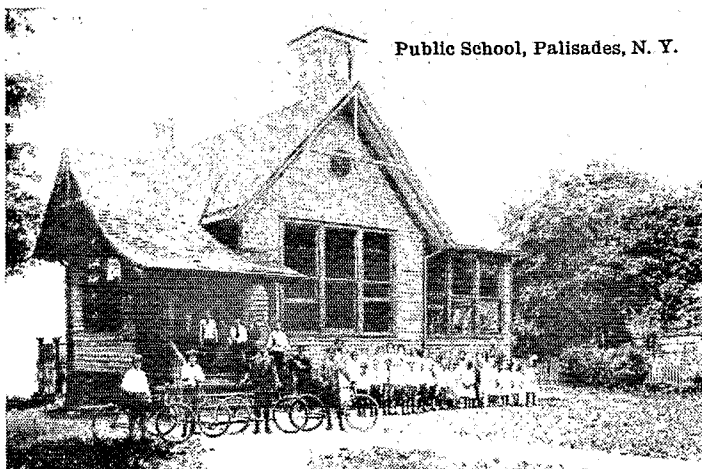
At that time, the student body consisted of Kindergarten through third grade. The students lovingly did artwork, poetry, and stories and showed many of their talents and collections. The P.T.A. arranged for all of these items to be placed in a time capsule and buried next to the spruce tree in front of the Palisades Community Center. The stone was placed on top of this site and after proper ceremo-



The Palisades Public School (The Palisades Community Center) as it appeared in 1874, the year it was built.

nies, it was decided that the capsule would be opened on July 4th, 2000. We wait in anticipation of this forthcoming event.

Irene Frederick



The Palisades Public School in 1917.

Find Out July 4th at 3 PM When We Unearth the Buried Treasures!



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

by William Shakespeare



The Children's Shakespeare Theatre's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream—April 8 and 9 at the Palisades Presbyterian Church, and again on May 20 at the South Orangetown Middle School — was (if one has to pick just a single word) exhilarating. From the opening dialogue to the final round dance, these young players gave the old playwright all they had.

Under Diana Green's tireless and enthusiastic direction, the cast of twenty-seven kids (and one dog) moved smoothly through the quick-changing scenes, from court to town to enchanted forest and back again. The different groups among the dramatic personae were nicely differentiated; each had its own style and pace. As the royals, Joey Cavanagh (Theseus) and Perri Gerard-Little (Hippolyta) were elegant and duly ceremonious; the mistress of their revels (Ashley Morales) was courtliness itself. The hapless lovers — Travis Tacon (Lysander), Spencer Martin (Demetrius), Caroline Iosso (Hermia) and Emma Fernberger (Helena) — handled their successive predicaments with a lively blend

of longing and exasperation. In the fairy kingdom, the land of flowers and music, all the inhabitants had a characteristic grace and poise. Here Elisabeth Polk-Bauman (Titania) was in command and Anna Barishnikov, Daphne Fernberger, Sofia Barishnikov, Lily Plotkin, May Adzema-Herold, Hayden Panettiere,

Sophia Signorelli, Maya Rose Tacon and Sophia Owen in attendance. The mechanicals — naturally — got all the laughs. Noah Walsh (Quince), Bree Polk-Bauman (Bottom), Peter Barishnikov (Flute), Elisabeth Umbrino (Snout), Aidan Walsh (Starveling) and Dakota Green (Snug) played their parts with great exuberance. And Savannah Green, as Puck, the sprite with fingers in the mischief of both worlds, performed with a verve all her own.

A Midsummer Night's Dream, perhaps more than any other of Shakespeare's plays, lives by its language. The words spin the spell, whether they are the lyrical fantasies of fairyland

or the boisterous utterances of the everyday world. In this production, the language was given its due. Despite



Three fairies: Lily Plotkin, Anna Baryshnikov, and Hayden Panettiere



The Cast on Stage

Top of Page Left: Bottom is Bree Polk-Bauman
Top of Page Right: Quince is Noah Walsh

the archaisms and the occasional florid flourishes of the text, the players delivered their lines with fluency and conviction.

Costumes ran the gamut from the formal velvets of the court to the shimmering gauzes of fairyland. Of the sets, the forest with its gnarly trees was particularly effective. Make-up, hair-design, musical accompaniment, dances, lighting — all contributed to the evening's delight.

The original Palisades children's Shakespeare theatre group, led by Jean Brock, presented six plays over the five years of its existence. Diana Green's hope for the present group is that it will continue for many years to come, enriching all our lives through art, literature and community. May it indeed be so. And congratulations to all involved in this splendid debut production.

Caroline Tapley



**In the
alternate cast,
these roles were
reversed.**

Top: May Adzema-Herold being made up by Traci Garrison.

Middle Left: Mary Polk-Bauman as a Fairy.

Center: Puck is Savannah Green.

Middle Right: Hermia is Caroline Iosso and Helena is Emma Fernberger.

Bottom: Hippolyta is Perri Gerard-Little and Titania is Elisabeth Polk-Bauman.*



Palisades Free Library

Tel: 359-0136 Fax: 359-6124 www.rcls.org/pal/ E-mail: pal@rcls.org

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Library Hours

Monday-Thursday 1:00-9:00
 Friday 1:00-5:00
 Saturday 11:00-5:00
 Sunday 1:00-5:00

• Closed •

Monday, May 29 Memorial Day
 All Sundays from
 June 18 through September 10th
 Tuesday, July 4

Some Interesting 1999 Statistics

Library holdings	20,656
Items circulated	18,256
Visits by patrons	12,942
Registered patrons	1,252
Reference questions answered	12,435

Good News

The Palisades Free Library has been recognized as an Advanced Electronic Doorway Library, according to the criteria established in "Doorways to Information in the 21st Century," the third statewide library technology plan (1998).

Help for Hearing-impaired

The Library Association of Rockland County and Bell Atlantic will make available four Text Telephone (TTY) Devices that can be borrowed through county libraries, beginning in April. The TTY is a keyboard-like device that a deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired person can use to communicate over the telephone instead of speaking.

This loan program will benefit hearing-impaired households who already own a TTY that is being repaired, or who wish to try out TTY before making a commitment to purchase this equipment.

New! Receive Reserve and Overdue Notices via E-Mail

You will receive faster notification of materials you have on reserve and are alerted earlier that overdue fines are mounting. Click on "Notices via e-mail" to register.

Internet Training

The library is offering free non-technical orientation sessions on how to use the internet. Basic familiarity with computers is required. Please register at the library or call 359-0136.

Reminder: The last preschool story hour of the spring semester will take place on Wednesday, June 21st.

Search Me

The library has two computer catalogs: one in the children's room and one on the first floor in the nonfiction area. They are quite easy to use. The staff will happily show you the basics when you visit us.

You should know that you can access this catalog through the internet on your home computer. Using the Palisades Home Page at <http://www.rcls.org/pal/> you can search the holdings of all the public libraries in the Ramapo Catskill Library System, access over one million magazine and newspaper articles free, and find answers to your health and business questions. You may also reserve books from home. Just place the holds using your library card and we'll call you when the books are ready to be picked up here.

Children's News for Summer

The summer reading program for children begins on Monday, June 26th. There will be a read-to-me program for children who do not yet read as well as a program for those who do. Reading over the summer is a fun way for children to keep up their skills.

Stop in to get materials to begin with and take out some books! Receive the schedule for related activities.

Continued on page 5

Bubblemania

On June 28th we will be sponsoring a joint program with other local libraries in a local school. Entitled "Bubblemania," it features a performer who is truly a magician with bubbles. Children will see and learn things they never dreamed of or would have thought impossible. Watch the library in June for tickets.

New Adult Non Fiction

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Bradley, J. | <i>Flag of Our Fathers</i> |
| Bryson, B. | <i>In a Sunburned Country</i> |
| Friedan, B. | <i>Life So Far</i> |
| James, P. D. | <i>Time to be in Earnest</i> |
| Kozol, J. | <i>Ordinary Resurrections</i> |
| McMurtry, L. | <i>Roads</i> |
| Philbrick, N. | <i>In the Heart of the Sea</i> |
| Schrady, N. | <i>Sacred Roads*</i> |
| Seagrave, S. | <i>The Yamato Dynasty</i> |
| Wills, G. | <i>Papal Sins</i> |

*Henry M. Schrady has just donated this book, the story of a year-long pilgrimage made by his brother Nicholas, spanning, on foot, an area from India to Santiago de Compostello, by way of Bosnia.

New Adult Fiction

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Bellow, Saul | <i>Ravelstein</i> |
| Constantine, K. C. | <i>Grievance</i> |
| Deaver, Jeffery | <i>The Empty Chair</i> |
| Fast, Howard | <i>Greenwich</i> |
| Gadol, Peter | <i>Light at Dusk</i> |
| Grimes, Martha | <i>Train Now Departing</i> |
| Hoffman, Alice | <i>The River King</i> |
| Hunter, Stephen | <i>Hot Springs</i> |
| Morris, Mary M. | <i>Fiona Range</i> |
| Ondaatje, Michael | <i>April's Ghost</i> |
| Puzo, Mario | <i>Omerta</i> |
| Roth, Philip | <i>The Human Stain</i> |
| Theroux, Paul | <i>Fresh Air Fiend</i> |
| Trollope, Johanna | <i>Marrying the Mistress</i> |

Dogfight Above the Hudson

Each summer and fall, I observe ospreys here in Palisades catching fish from the Hudson outside my house that overlooks the river. I rarely sight ospreys in this area early in the spring, but a few weeks ago, I saw one hunting for fish just south of Palisades, while I was hiking in the park along the cliffs.

In a cawing cacophony the crows lift off from their perch on the top limbs of a tall half-dead Palisades Park red oak, its delicate spring catkins a soft silvery green in the early spring morning. They fly east and intercept an osprey hovering above the Hudson River and the Palisades Cliffs, its eyes watching the gray waters for any sign of fish. The osprey, having just migrated from perhaps as far away as Argentina or Chile, was apparently not at all concerned about the approaching crows.



Now crows, like all birds in the family Corvidae including ravens, jays and magpies, are considered to be some of the smartest birds blessed with the largest avian brain in proportion to their overall size. (And recently, biologists believe that some birds, such as parrots, crows and hawks may even have a small ability to reason.)

The Principal's

Office

A Conversation with Christopher Onorato, South Orangetown Middle School

It has been only eight months since Chris Onorato, the new principal of the South Orangetown Middle School (SOMS), moved into his office, and he is settling into his role. I had heard that he welcomes parents and the community to talk with him, and to express their concerns. It is with this invitation in mind that I recently sat down with him to discuss his (nearly) first year on the job, and his vision for the future.

Mr. Onorato comes to our District after spending ten years as a middle school principal in Fort Lee, New Jersey. His professional background reflects a variety of experiences in education, among these as teacher of social studies and family life education for grades seven through twelve, high school athletic director, and a principal of a summer school program for kindergarten through the twelfth grade. When asked, however, he readily confesses that the population he most enjoys working with are middle school-aged students.

This principal articulated a number of goals for SOMS. Most immediately, Mr. Onorato identified the importance of ensuring that the curriculum objectives of all Middle School teachers be aimed at helping students either meet or exceed the learning standards promulgated by the New York State Department of Education. This goal responds to twin realities that are looming in the near future. First, the state will be rating middle schools throughout the state based on their standardized exam scores. Second, two more assessments — social studies and science and technology — will be added to the English-language arts and math examinations already given during the eighth grade. This expansion of the content-based testing program is expected to occur within the next two years. Mr. Onorato stressed, however, that he is working with instructional

staff towards developing an understanding of the degree of success necessary to exceed the state standards. He was quick to add that last year SOMS ranked in the top 15% of all 8th grades in New York State in their language arts and math assessment scores.

Another critical goal is to help his students, poised as they are in the sometimes difficult period between childhood and adolescence, to have an awareness of the potential pitfalls that can characterize the pre-adolescent years. This knowledge, he hopes, will help to prevent these students from "falling into these pits." To this end, Mr. Onorato has instituted a number of social skills programs that address these potentially problematic developmental areas.

What about problems and challenges? I specifically wanted to hear more about the cafeteria controversy, a topic with which anyone with access to a 6th, 7th or 8th grader is familiar. In brief, as a response to students failing to clean up their garbage after finishing lunch, the SOMS administration established a new policy that fixed students' seating assignments at the lunch tables. A seating chart was con-

structed using seating selected by the students. This policy produced a sizable reaction, and became a point of contention for many. On the one hand, the goal of school administration was to promote accountability, by having students assume responsibility for cleaning up after themselves. On the other side, many students as well as parents bristled at what they considered to be forced seating arrangements, arguing that their only free time during the school day was being unfairly circumscribed. According to Mr. Onorato, who didn't fully anticipate the reaction that this policy change would engender, the original problem is well on its way to a solution. A student cafeteria committee, appointed after the policy, has been instrumental in ensuring that the cafeteria remain clean. Although required seating is still in effect; students are also free to move about and socialize after they have eaten.

This cafeteria controversy illustrates a broader challenge that Mr. Onorato faces as SOMS principal — the need to learn about and understand the range of parent opinions in our district, and to phase in some policy changes. Since he first began his job, he has come to recognize that there is a broad continuum of thinking in the South Orangetown community — a range that he values while, at the same time he is striving to understand. In what was now a recurring theme in our conversation, Mr. Onorato expressed his desire to be able to incorporate community opinion to inform his own policy and decisions.

Mr. Onorato was very clear about the major accomplishments of his relatively brief tenure. There is a decided uplift in the tone of the school, and students are increasingly behaving in ways that reflect the District's mission

of respect and responsibility. This is responsibility with control, however. Mr. Onorato has emphasized to his staff the need to educate students about the code of conduct, believing that in comporting themselves as good school citizens, they will produce positive consequences. He points to the pride that prevails in the middle school. As an example of this enhanced pride, fully 80% of the students across all grades participated in the activities

during the recent "Spirit Week." There has also been increased attendance at school dances during the year.

Our conversation ultimately led back to where we began. What does Mr. Onorato conceive to be his role as principal of the Middle School? There was no hesitation in his answer: "To be the chief role model for everyone in this school." He includes not only students, but instructional staff, support staff, and parents as well. He

hopes that by treating those around him with respect, respect will be cultivated in return. To help him be responsive to our children's needs, he reextended his invitation to the community to call, write, or drop into his office, to discuss any issue or concern. I am sure that those of us who live in Palisades won't disappoint him.

Ellen Chayet Kidd

SCHOOL NEWS

South Orangetown Central School District Budget and Board of Education

Monday, May 8: Public Hearing on the Budget at 7:30 PM at South Orangetown Middle School

•Tuesday, May 9: Meet the Candidates for Board of Education at 8:00 PM at South Orangetown Middle School

•Tuesday, May 16: Annual Budget Vote and Board of Education Election.

Palisadians vote at the Tappan Zee Elementary School between the hours of 7:00 AM and 9:00 PM. All are encouraged to come out to vote!

SOCES PTA ECO-FEST 2000

•On Saturday, June 3rd, SOCES PTA will be honoring the great planet earth with an environmental festival.

•From 10:00 AM-11:30 AM, parents and children can participate in one of many eco-activities planned in our communities.

•From 1:00 PM-4:00 PM all are invited to come celebrate at our ECO-FEST 2000 (place to be announced). Educational booths by local environmental groups, Eco-Health displays, recycled art fun, contests, games, student demonstrations and exhibits, Steve Deatz Drummers and Dancers, Story teller Lorene Jayson and more.....

If you are an environmental advocate, expert or professional, we would love your involvement. For questions, call Suzanne Barclay, at 359-3258.

Artists in Our Midst

Many of the parents in our community are professionals, or extremely talented, in the field of performing and visual arts. On Sunday, June 11, SOCES PTA is planning an Art Spectacular for children, called Artists in our Midst, at the South Orangetown Middle School.

We want to expose our children to the talents of this marvelous community that we live in and give them an opportunity to learn all the possible ways that they can express themselves in the arts.

•1:00-2:00: One hour workshops for children on a variety of visual and performing arts.

•2:00-3:00: Art show displaying the visual arts

•3:00-4:00: Show performed by musicians, singers, actors, and other performing artists.

If you would like to participate in any way, as an organizer, artist, or performer, please call Carol Plotkin at 398-1231.

SOCES PTA Best Bet Performances

•May 5th at 7:00 PM, Hudson Vagabond Puppet Theater: Beatrix Potter: Jemima Puddle-Duck and The Story of a Fierce Bad Rabbit at the South Orangetown Middle School. Ticket

prices for The Hudson Vagabond Puppets are \$3 children/adults. Available at the performance. For information, call Carol Plotkin at 398-1231.

•May 20th at 7:00 PM: Palisades Children's Shakespeare Theater: A Midsummer Night's Dream. In case you missed the performances in April at the Palisades Presbyterian Church, don't miss this repeat performance at the South Orangetown Middle School. Tickets for A Midsummer Night's Dream are \$3 children/adults. Available at the performance. For information, call Diana Green at 365-9709.

Project SCORE

(South Orangetown Children on the Road to Excellence)

Joining the six other districts in Rockland County, South Orangetown will now have a Family Resource Center beginning September 2000. A \$45,000 grant from the State Education Department, which will be used as start-up moneys, was secured through the efforts of Senator Thomas Morahan. For further information, call Superintendent Gress at 680-1050.

•May 23rd at 7:30 PM SOCES PTA will sponsor a Creating a Culture of Non-Violence symposium to discuss violence in schools. A panel presentation will be followed by a question and answer period. All elementary school parents are encouraged to attend. For information, call Carol Plotkin at 398-1231.

All the Way to Timbuktu

Yes, it's real. There is a place called Timbuktu and it is not just an imaginary figment at the end of an exclamatory statement. What child has not muttered at some time that he, or she, was "going all the way to Timbuktu!" What adult has not dismissed it as "some far away place," not knowing quite sure where it actually was, if it did exist at all.

It does exist and grown up people do go there and an occasional child with them. Situated between the southern edge of the Sahara Desert and the great bend of the Niger River, Timbuktu is the best known and the most remote city in Mali, the crown jewel of West Africa. Nine centuries old, it abounds with legends of wealth and power, culture and learning, conquest and intrigue. Due to the writings of Leo Africanus, a sixteenth century African who had been there and who spoke of the plentitude of gold, wealth and learning, Europeans pictured it as Eldorado and Eden enveloped in a mysterious dust cloud in the desert. Rewards were offered to adventurers who could find their way there and back alive. The first European to do so was in 1828 and he found Timbuktu deep in decline. There's no gold in those dunes, he reported when returning home, and you can get there from here, but it's damn hard to do so. Disbelief was his reward. The European had believed in the legend of Timbuktu for so long that he and she refused to believe this disappointing news. The legend of the far away place of wealth and gold per-

sisted, then gradually dissolved in time, to just far away Timbuktu.

It is far away and it's still damn hard to get there and other than charter aircraft there is no reliable, direct route for pilgrims to take to Timbuktu. There are ways more interesting than others; one such is through Ouagadougou, entry port to Burkino Faso, and trekking northward for four days into Mali and the Dogon lowlands in Bandiagara. The Dogon, a tribal nation of 250,000 people, are rich in history, tradition and mystery, with a culture of ancestor worship, animist cosmology with astrological inclusions and unique architectural skills. They also have talents in both the

decorative and abstract arts, the latter reportedly an inspiration to Pablo Picasso.

Dogon villages are perched atop a broad expanse of cliff and escarpment and our interested pilgrims undertook a three-hour climb upward. The reward was a myriad assortment of villages with cone shaped buildings with whimsically constructed thatched roofs, pillared dwellings carved into the hillside, an insane asylum in one of those pillared dwellings replete with animal skins and religious sculptures and a circumcision cave festooned with graphically illustrated symbols. Decorative carvings, prized today by western art collectors, are everywhere.

Our pilgrims were fortunate enough to enter a village during the completion of a mourning period when the Dogon mask dance occurs. The Awa, the mask cult of several dozen adult males adorned with masks, some fifteen feet high, of animals, religious symbols and elements of nature, wove its way through the village to a pounding syncopation of drums in celebration of both death and life.

After spending five days with the Dogon, then returning to sea level and moving westward to Mopti, a commercial town on the River Niger, our intrepid pilgrims boarded a pinasse, a forty foot, thatched roof canoe powered by a forty horse power outboard motor and began a three day journey to Korioume, the gate city to Timbuktu, twelve miles distant. The river, Africa's



Dogon Art



Dogon Mask Dancers

third greatest, teems with the great fish captain. Here and there, a hippo peers from the water and on the banks, Bozo and Songhai villages, white and clay buildings centered by the ubiquitous mosque, (for this is a largely Moslem country), are alive with activity and children and overseeing mothers swarm to the river's edge when the pinasse pulls ashore for a visit.

It is a curious time for the adults and a happy one for the children as they take the pilgrims' hands and scratch the white skin with their little black fingers and laugh hysterically when the white doesn't come off.

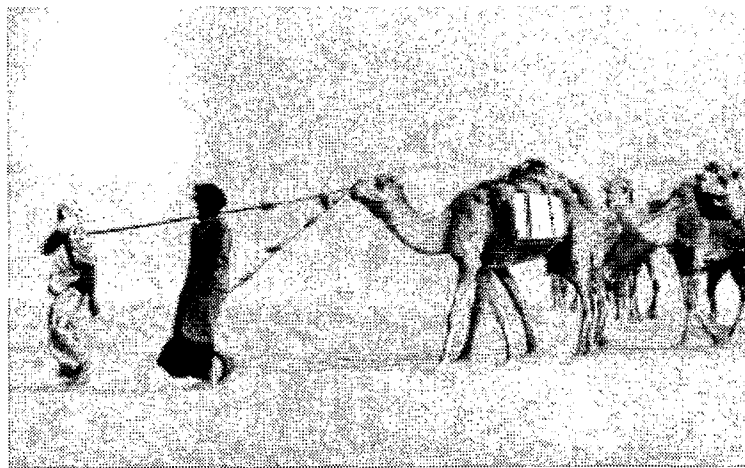
Nighttime, the pilgrims sleep as guests in one of the villages, then move on, Timbuktu always ahead. Then one morning it is there.

The wind governs Timbuktu as it does the Sahara. Sand is everywhere. Pilgrims entering from the south see Timbuktu as the end of the world. The desolation of the desert is ever present in the sand-strewn streets, and the ever-decomposing clay buildings. But it is a town that has lived with the

desert and survived and even thrived in spite of it and because of it.

But some of its past still lives. It is still a terminus of a camel caravan route across the Sahara that brings salt from the mines of Taoudenni four hundred miles in the desert and Tuaregs, the sword and knife-wielding romanticized nomads of the desert, still swagger through the area wielding sword and knife. The culture of the past lives as well at the Ahmed Baba center for Historical Research, a repository of seventeen thousand ancient books and documents undergoing translation from Arabic to French, the national language of Mali, to English, for placement on the internet. Yes, the past is moving into the future for there is now one computer in Timbuktu.

North of the city lies the Sahara, an area larger than the contiguous United States and through it come visitors from the north: cameleers with their caravans from Taoudenni, nomads from their wanderings, pilgrims on



Camels in the Sahara

their explorations. In January, Harmattan, the hot dry wind of the winter months has its way with them. Our pilgrims returning to Timbuktu see a horizon of three hundred and sixty



The Great Mosque of Timbuktu

degrees, a vast ring of desolation in which Harmattan hurls sand and dust upward, the perimeters becoming a circular translucent veil of grayish purple rising toward the pale blue sky. Overhead the noontime sun is ablaze.

By two o'clock it is a lunar-like globe, having slipped behind the veil leaving the pilgrims in a land of total desolation.

To the pilgrims returning from the desert, Timbuktu is the beginning of the world. The greenery of trees and shrubs, the strain of a flute, the smiles and talk of people, the movement of a car or truck greets them with the color

and music and life of civilization.

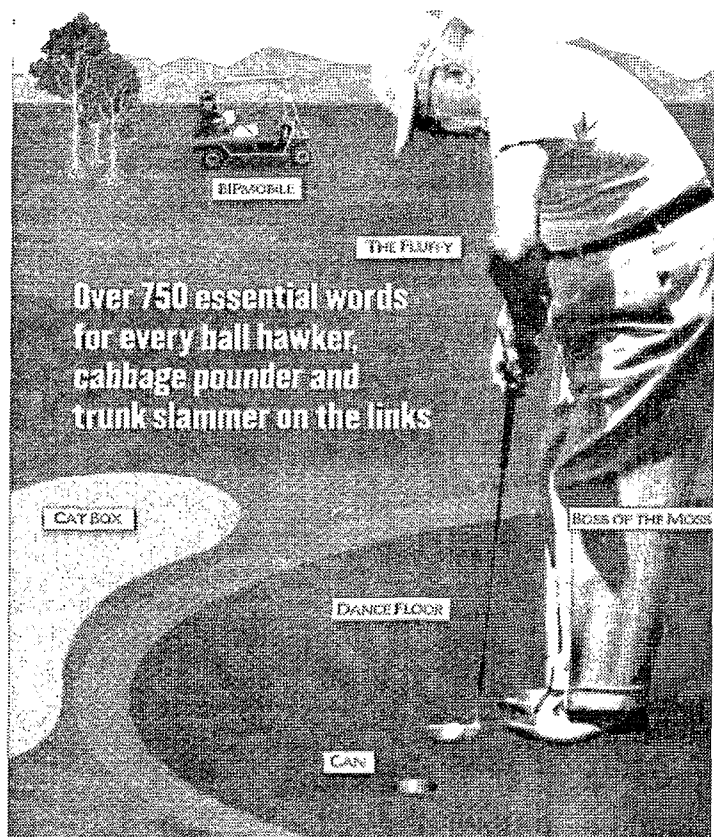
It is a long way to Timbuktu from any direction but if one is not a cameleer in the salt business or a native of Timbuktu why would one go there? The question put to one pilgrim brought him to a pause, "Well, when I was a kid, I used to say that when I grew up, I was going to go all the way to Timbuktu. Well, here I am."

Don Bracken

Let the Big Dog Eat!

A Dictionary of the Secret Language of Golf

Hubert Pedroli & Mary Tiegreen



A Book Review by Milbry Polk

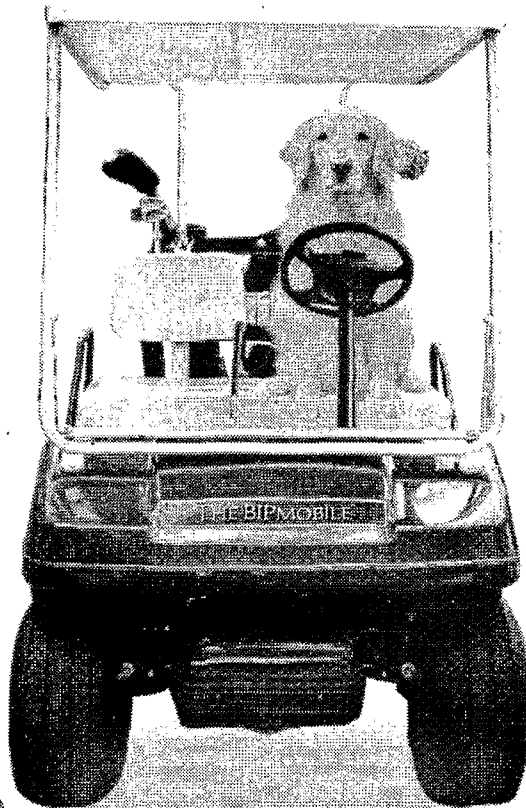
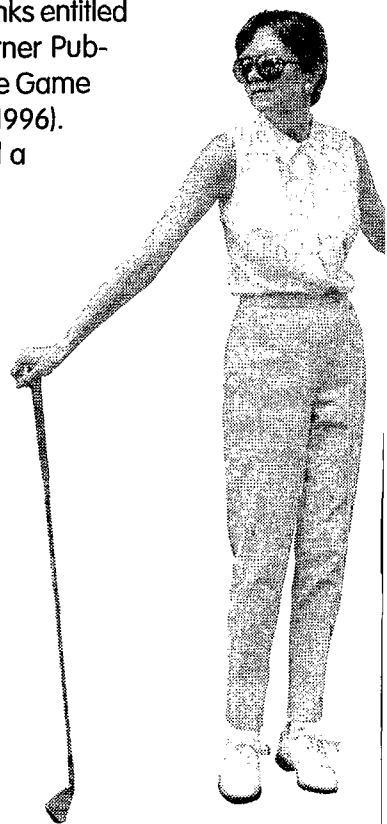
Let the Big Dog Eat! A Dictionary of the Secret Language of Golf. by Hubert Pedroli and Mary Tiegreen. (New York: William Morrow, 2000) ISBN0-06-019703-x \$18.00.

This latest tour de force by the dynamic Palisades couple, Mary Tiegreen and Hubert Pedroli, will certainly become a golf classic. LET THE BIG DOG EAT, a delightful and witty book, has been long awaited by golfing aficionados. Big Dog will be immensely useful for those looking for short cuts to break into the game and instantly become "one of the guys." It will also be a great boon to more seasoned but perhaps less well versed players who are silently struggling to decipher the seemingly innocuous lingo bandied about on the links by those more in the know. And Big Dog will become dog-eared by countless players creating their own unique zingers on the links.

Like anthropologists compiling the lexicon of a indigenous tribe, Tiegreen and Pedroli have spent countless hours on dozens of courses around America discretely wired with complex recording devices to compile this fascinating oeuvre, four years in the making. Tiegreen and Pedroli are no novices

in the world of golf literature. Previously they published a pocket guide to the links entitled The American Golfers Guide (Turner Publishing, 1991) and A Passion for the Game of Golf (Andrews and McNeel, 1996). Hubert has also recently finished a novelistic golfing memoir which we look forward to reviewing in the near future.

Tiegreen, a noted illustrator and designer, has literally dozens if not hundreds of books, ad campaigns, and record covers to her name. She has filled the pages of Big Dog with drawings of golfing scenarios such as "dimple-heads on the par-2 course," "A Duffer caught in the act of drive-by shooting," "Dr. Snodmeister's girlish put," "Leon hits a Linda Rondstadt," and everyone's favorite "Dolly Parton." She has also to our great delight featured local luminaries such as Joe Hyde whose head, (stuck on a famous although unnamed body), graces the cover. Bernie Doyle, infamous member of the PIGS (Palisades International Golf Society) noted sagely, "anything with Joe Hyde on the cover is thera-



peutic." Other local heads also grace the bodies of golfing heroes although this review will not name them - it is up to you to discover certain neighbors in the act of foot mashing or other such nefarious activities.

Everyone who has ever hit an elephant's ass and made it onto the fluffy will certainly want to know how the loopers rate you. Consulting the accompanying box is only the beginning. Are you a turf spanker, a buckshot billy or wallbanger? Quick buy the book and poke yourself into the runway.



Palisades Presbyterian Church

UPCOMING SPRING EVENTS

Sunday May 7 at 4:00 PM: Donald Samick from Lamb Studios will give an hour long presentation on the history of stained glass.

Sunday, May 21 at 7:00 PM: Michael Shapiro will give a talk on the history of pipe organs. He will play some material on the organ in the sanctuary to demonstrate how the organ works.

Monday May 29: The annual Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast will take place at the Palisades Presbyterian Church between 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM on May 29. The men of the church will prepare a breakfast of hot pancakes and sausage, juice and coffee. All proceeds to benefit the church. Come before or after the parade!

Saturday June 10: The annual Strawberry Festival will be held rain or shine at the Palisades Presbyterian Church between 2:00 and 6:00 PM. Strawberry shortcake is the main event, and other strawberry related items will be for sale. Pocket person, balloons, games for kids, fresh flower sale, fun for everyone.

REGULAR WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Services at 9:00 and 11:00 AM (Child-care provided at the 11:00 service)

Healing Services, led by the Rev. Lee Hancock, will be held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 PM

Sunday School is as follows: Ages 3-6: Sundays at 10:00 AM Grades 2-5: Wednesdays, 4-6:00 PM Grades 6-12: Sundays, 6-7:30 PM

OTHER REGULAR PROGRAMS

Tae Kwon Do: Mondays & Thursdays from 5-6:00 PM, Care Givers and kids: Wednesdays at 10:00 AM, Bible Study: Wednesdays at Noon, Morning meditation: Fridays at 6:30 AM (follows the Lectionary), Daisy Troop : First and third Wed. of each month at 1:30 PM

The Mission Committee's collection of food for those in Rockland County in need is an ongoing event. If you would like to donate non perishable food items please bring them to the church and we will get it to People to People in West Nyack.

Please check with church to verify events and times. The office phone number is 359-3147. Church office hours are 9 AM to 1 PM on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

An Old Palisades Garden Gets a New Lease on Life

The gardens at Niederhurst had their beginnings a hundred and twenty six years ago in 1874. That was the year that Winthrop Sargent Gilman, a businessman who had always dreamed of being an architect, finished work on a summer home for his family high on the cliffs above the Hudson River. The site was a difficult one that required blasting the solid rock of the Palisades to make a cellar, and at first the house was surrounded by heaps of quarried rocks and the greatest disorder. Over the ensuing decades, this upheaval was gradually transformed into a network of breathtakingly beautiful gardens and terraces by Mr. Gilman's cousin Tom, his wife, and his daughter, Anna Gilman Hill (See upper left photo of Anna and her husband Robert).

Mrs. Hill left a charming record of her garden at Niederhurst in her book *Forty Years of Gardening* published in 1937. "I wish I could make you see my river on one of these clear, bell-like autumn days, when the water is a still and motionless silver gray, the reflections of the buildings on the opposite shore making long pink strokes down the canvas..." she writes, and the beauty of the setting comes through to us as clearly now as it did sixty years ago.

The focus points in 1937 were the Shady Garden (See birdbath upper right), perched at the crest of the cliff and dominated by an ancient, multi-trunked oak tree, the Hidden Garden (See upper center photo), fashioned from the heap of stones falling away from the base of the house, and the lawn stretching north from the house to the Shady Garden. The Shady Garden features a pergola (See second row left) of columns built according to dimensions sketched out by Mrs. Gilman from a synthesis of Greek and Egyptian models, a small kidney-shaped pool in front, curving beds that follow the huge stone wall across the north end that was built mainly by Cousin Tom (Photo bottom right), and a stone tool house with an arched doorway capped by an "eyebrow" shaped roofline.

The huge oak was lost several years ago, and Niederhurst's current owner, Andy Norman, has been working on rebuilding the beds to manage in their new, sunny environment. Hey Hoe Garden Design took over the task this past fall, starting with peonies and irises found elsewhere on the property that are most likely descendents of Anna Hill's own plants, and mixing them in with new flowers that will emphasize blues and lavenders.

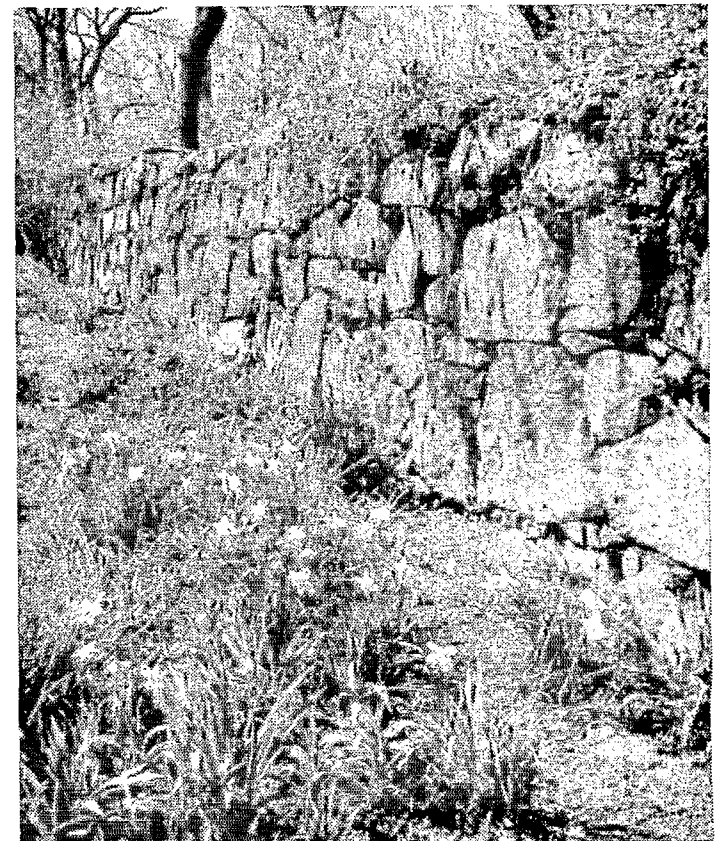
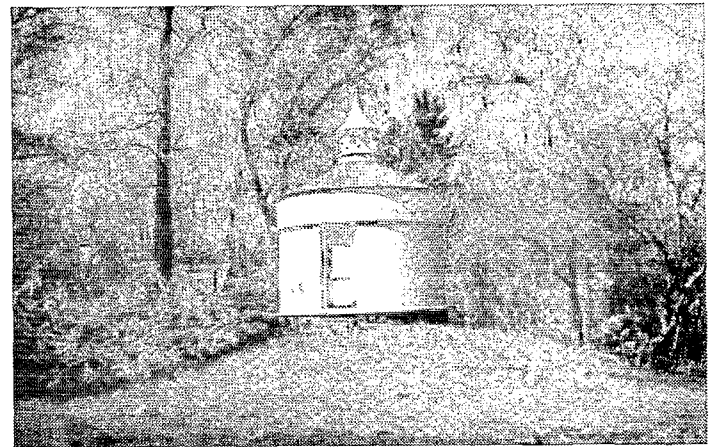
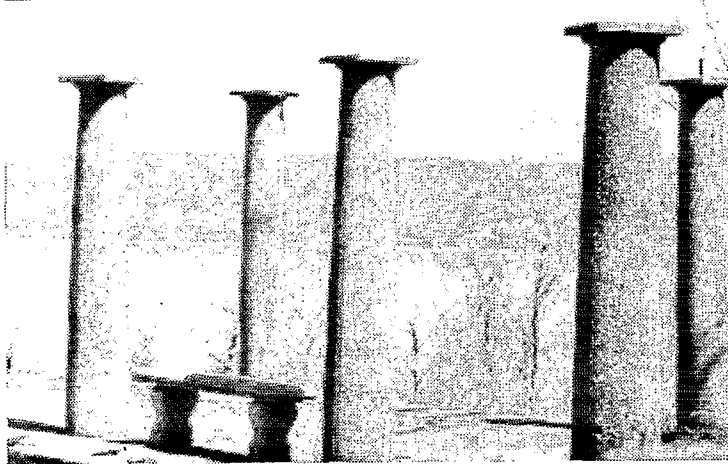
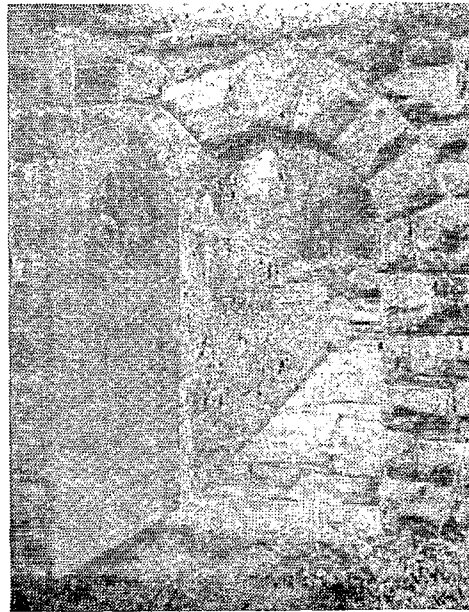
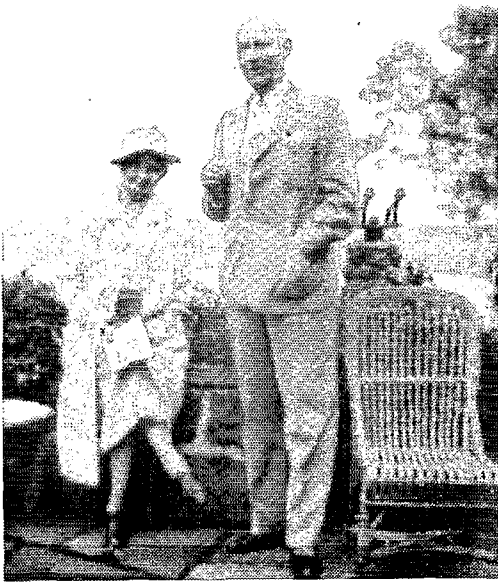
The Hidden Garden is, today, still the lair of the surviving irises thought to be from Mrs. Hill's extensive collection. The Siberians are only just recovering from several warm winters in a row, which did not suit their preference for a robust winter sleep, and they look a bit thin. The rest can be seen coming up vigorously in beautiful fans of perfectly flat green foliage, promising a wonderful show later in the spring.

The lawn has changed the most since the 1930s (Second row left). The ornamental trees

have grown up tremendously, so that you can no longer see across to the ancient weeping beech that graces the lawn near the entrance drive. One of the ornamentals, a twisted fern-leaved maple about five or six feet high, is quite a rare specimen; during the 1960s a particular plant dealer became notorious for driving up unannounced year after year and offering the Twitchells, who lived in Niederhurst at the time, \$10,000, an astounding sum at the time, if he could dig it up and take it away. Fortunately they resisted the temptation, and it still sits there today like an ancient Japanese sculpture.

As spring breathes new life into the plantings around the old house, one can see that they are a living legacy to a singular gardening vision from Palisades' past. Over the years, caring owners who have always appreciated their rare beauty have done a wonderful job preserving the unique magic of these gardens.

Greta Nettleton



Dogfight...

Continued From page 5

Perhaps the crows' annoyances might cause the osprey to drop its catch and a free meal will be had. But that's highly unlikely as ospreys' feet have miniature spicules, which acts like a natural velcro, providing a non-slip surface for gripping and maintaining slippery prey. Ospreys are also the only raptors capable of completely reversing their front talons, which also aid in the successful capture of its unctuous prey. Hovering more than 100 feet above the river, once an osprey spots a fish it will rapidly descend, diving straight down and feet first into the water. When it emerges, and clears the water, the osprey first ruffles its feathers (like a dog fresh out of water) to shake off all excess water and eliminate weight. Secondly, the osprey will turn its talons to rearrange the wriggling fish to face forward in order to decrease drag, thus making fish and bird more aerodynamically efficient. They hardly ever drop their catch, even when being pursued by pesky crows. And they are certainly faster and stronger than crows. Like many other birds of prey, the female is larger than the male. The female osprey can have a wingspan of nearly six feet and the male's wingspan can reach four-and-a half feet, certainly dwarfing that of the badgering crows. I've never observed a crow misappropriating prey from an osprey, although in Alaska I did watch bald eagles successfully steal fish from an osprey.

The ancient Greeks believed that ospreys were portents of violent storms and angry seas (unlike the kingfishers, which the Greeks claimed were responsible for calm weather). And years ago (before the Weather Channel) American fishermen would observe ospreys in flight as a weather predictor. The bird's high soaring flight was considered an ominous sign of approaching severe weather.

Ospreys are fairly ubiquitous birds, occurring globally, and the species is the only member of its family. During the 1950s through the 1970s the osprey population, like those of the peregrine falcon and bald eagle, crashed precipitously because of DDT (which caused thinning egg shells), habitat loss and human predation. Their recovery is due to a number of circumstances, including the elimination of DDT in the US and other countries and the building of nesting poles and platforms throughout the country (a project worthy of consideration in Tallman State Park). And although ospreys are rather shy, they love to add human garbage to their nests. Everything from doormats to boots to hula hoops have been found in their nests.

Anyhow, I'm fairly certain that these marauding crows must have observed, sometime during their lives, ospreys diving for fish, and eating nothing else but fish. But perhaps these crows were unfamiliar with ospreys or didn't want to give such an ominous creature the chance of suddenly changing a million years of eating habits. However, the crows probably just wanted to have a little fun and gang up on a bird stronger than they; or maybe they just didn't want the osprey to nest nearby.

At first, our osprey hovering above the Hudson pays little attention to these intruders, and continues to hunt above the Hudson, keenly watching the river for fish. As the crows approach, the osprey begins to glide in a lazy circular pattern, slowly gaining altitude with the aid of a thermal. But the black crows have become quite persistent, pecking at the osprey's wings and body. Annoyed, the black and white osprey picks up speed, flapping and gliding, flapping and gliding, while maintaining the circular pattern. The crows outmaneuver the osprey, screaming and pecking at the raptor. The birds are engaged in a mid-air dogfight. However, the osprey doesn't fight back. Instead, it quickly reverses direction and flies south, rapidly beating its wings and speeding across the river toward northern Manhattan's Inwood Hill Park (nine miles south), with the raucous crows right behind, not losing ground.

Osprey and crows become specks, vanishing into Manhattan's only natural park. Putting down my binoculars, I gaze down the Hudson River at the Palisades Cliffs. These cliffs, at least visually, remain virtually unchanged since the Half-Moon first sailed up this river. Obviously the area has changed: wolves, bears, and wild cats vanished with the local Indians and a highway skirts the top of the cliffs. But other animals have returned with the osprey after years of absence, including peregrine falcons and bald eagles and even a coyote was spotted last year in Manhattan. Other fauna are not so lucky, such as the eastern blue bird (New York State's official bird) which has declined by more than ninety percent of its population since the early 1900s.

I am still gazing down the river, standing on the cliffs which are displaying the first delicate signs of spring; the trees are just beginning to show their buds and underfoot the delicate trout lilies and Dutchman's Breeches are in bloom. I feel as if I am surrounded by all the primordial mysteries of nature. It is absurd to call Palisades Park wilderness. Almost as absurd as watching an osprey fleeing crows in a flight to safety toward north Manhattan, undoubtedly the most densely populated island in the world. However, one person's absurdity is another bird's reality...

David Gottlieb

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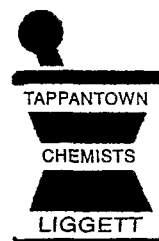
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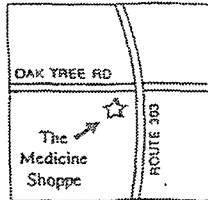
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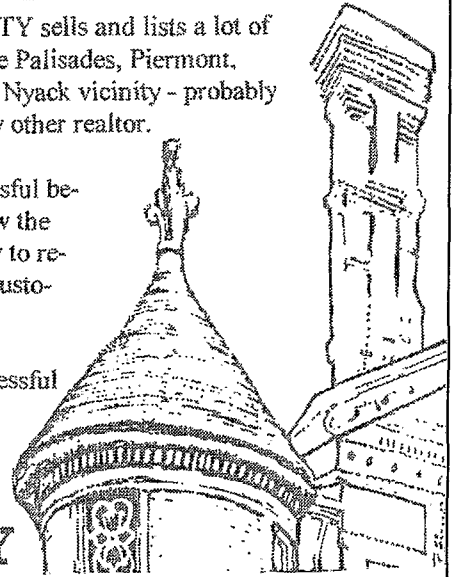
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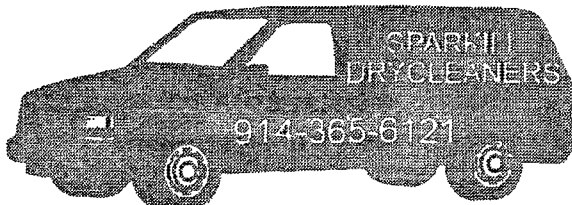
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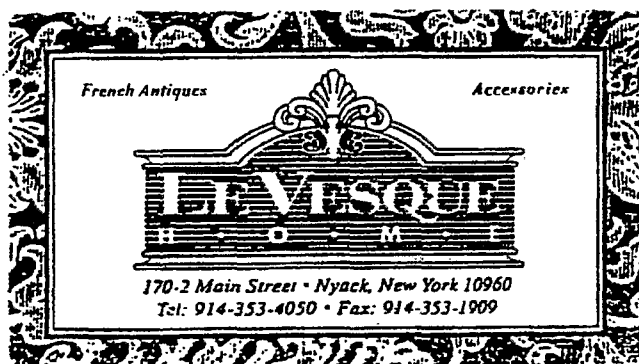
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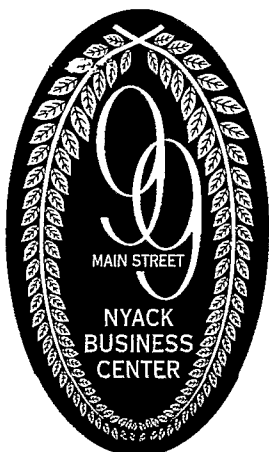
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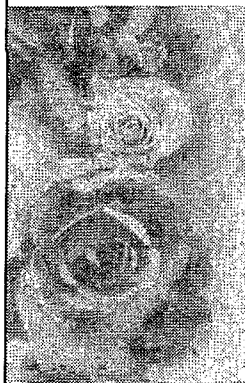
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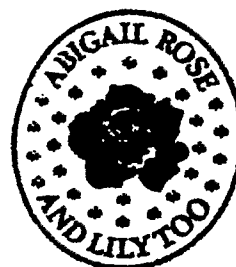
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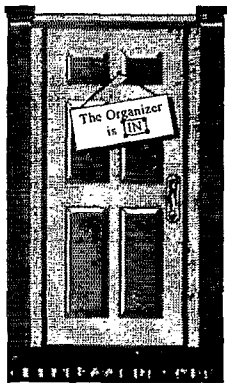


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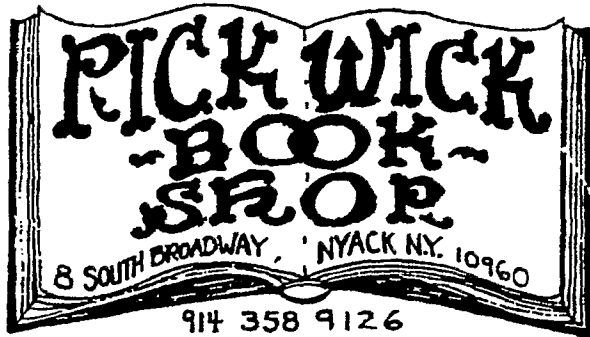


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THE PALISADES NEWSLETTER

May 2000 • Number 170

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Page-Design by John Converse
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Announcement

Kristen Marino will be graduating from Tappan Zee High School on June 22, 2000. She plans to attend Dominican College and major in education. Kristen has lived in Palisades all her life and began her education at the Palisades Pre-School Program run by the South Orangetown School District.

Contributions

We are grateful for a contribution from Irene Frederick.

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Baseball Season Begins

Parents and players gathered at the American Legion field on Rte. 340 on Saturday, April 8, for the opening day ceremony of the Palisades/Sparkill Baseball League. Joe Checchi, president of the league, led the ceremony, introducing the coaches and players. Among the improvements to the field this year are batting cages, a score board, and a speaker system. The cages were purchased with donations and Coca Cola provided the score board. Palisadian Bob Griffen donated the speaker system.



The Orioles: Megan Curran, Adam Muro, Kyle Curran, Joey Maniscalco, James Moloney — Top Row: Luke Vermandel, Anthony Cally, and Patrick Gibney

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