



Gazebo Gazette

The Newsletter of the Larchmont Historical Society

May-June

2003

Larchmonters and Terrytoons

By Barbara S. Brazill

How many of us are aware that Mamaroneck and Larchmont had a significant place in the creation of the film industry? D.W. Griffith released *Birth of a Nation* in 1915. About the Civil War and Reconstruction, it was made in Hollywood, but to be free of industry control, Griffith moved his production company to Mamaroneck. The era of sound films arrived in 1930. In 1931, he produced *The Struggle* in Mamaroneck, a film that reflected his own drinking problems and opposition to Prohibition. It was his first and only sound and music picture. The music was written by my father, Philip A. Scheib, who met Paul Terry, an artist, at that time. A year later, they produced their first animated cartoon with sound and music.

My father began his career as a student for four years at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, majoring in violin and composing. He returned to the U.S. from Germany before World War I, and conducted *The Chocolate Soldier* on tour. Then he was chosen by Thomas A. Edison to go on a three-year cross-country trip to promote Edison's newest invention, the phonograph. My father and an opera singer would give concerts and demonstrate how closely the phonograph resembled live music.



From left: Paul Terry, Terrytoons artist; Dan Seymour, of *We the People* (TV show); and Phil Scheib, Terrytoons musician.

After that, silent movies began using orchestras to make music to follow the action. My father became musical director for a chain of New York City movie houses, and he gave violin concerts before or after the movie. He was also the first to hold sing-alongs with projected slide cards before a movie. He also conducted orchestras for musical comedy, vaudeville, and light opera.

When he joined Terrytoons, he had a new challenge: synchronizing music and sound effects with the action on the screen. He often found it easier to write original scores than secure the use of other writers' music. The story department at Terrytoons included two other Larchmonters, Tommy Morrison and Mannie Davis. After they had written a script, my father would

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Annual Meeting: Sunday, June 22, 3 pm
at the Horseshoe Harbor Yacht Club

President's Message

by Fred Baron

As another year concludes for the LHS, it is a natural time to look back at what we have done and forward to what we have in store for next year.

It has been a successful year for the Society, though also one of transition and preparation. Much of the Board's attention has been directed inward, analyzing and evaluating what the Society does and how we go about doing it. We have looked critically at our membership base, fund-raising, publications, programs, and committees. In light of this self-analysis, we are prepared to make some small changes in order to increase the effectiveness and presence of the Society.

Among the changes we will be instituting are:

*Cultivating a larger base in the local business community by instituting a special business membership program.

*Paying considerable attention and committing resources to our Web site to make it a formidable resource for local history.

*Making regular contributions about local history to *The Times*, the weekly Friday supplement in the Gannett newspaper.

*Reducing the number of Society-sponsored programs, but making them provide greater insight into all aspects of local history. Among the proposed programs are annual walking tours in spring and fall. Of course, the wildly popular Spring House Tour will continue.

*Stepping up our production of publications relating to the history of Larchmont.

*Establishing committees that will enable interested members of the Society become involved in its work without having to join its Board of Trustees.

Finally, the Historical Society hopes to follow up on its involvement in the Manor Inn discussions by pressing both the Village of Larchmont and the Town of Mamaroneck to adopt historic preservation ordinances. We will be studying model ordinances from other towns and villages to try to draft a law that might work for our Village and Town.

As this year has been largely one of planning, next year looks to be one of action. I am extremely excited at the prospect of seeing the ideas we have been discussing put into practice.

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The Larchmont Historical Society was founded in 1980 and chartered in 1981 as a not-for-profit educational corporation by the New York State Board of Regents to discover, preserve, and disseminate information concerning the natural, social, and civic history of Larchmont, and to promote the preservation of local historical sites and structures. The Society maintains an archives in the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 W. Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck; publishes a monthly newsletter; offers regular programs; conducts tours for school children and adults; and offers outreach lectures to other community groups.

The newsletter is published to provide news of the Society and occasional articles of related interest. Opinions expressed are those of their authors; publication should not be construed as endorsement by the Society.

The Archives are located in Suite 301 of the Mamaroneck Town Center, 740 W. Boston Post Road, Mamaroneck. 10543.

Regular hours are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-2. Appointments on other days, including Saturdays, may be arranged. Please call 381-2239 for more information or to make an appointment.

Archivist: Diane Holland

Home page: <members.savvy.net/lhs>

House Tour 2003

Once again, this year's House Tour was "the best ever"--the weather was wonderful, the houses charming, and a good time was had by all. Many thanks to all who made this a special day, and to our sponsors:

Houses: Burbank Whittemore, Caldwell Banker, Julia B. Fee, Weichert Realtors, and Houlihan Lawrence.

Reception: Citigroup Private Banking and Citigroup.

Larchmonsters in the Movies, continued from page 1

work out the metric scheme, timing the music with a stop watch. He then orchestrated the music and played and conducted it at a studio in New York City. At the same time, the sound effects were created, and then the track was brought back to Terry's New Rochelle studio [in the top four floors of the Schiff--now the Kaufman--Building, and later in the old Knights of Columbus building at 38 Center Avenue] and dubbed with the movie.

My father often auditioned many people to find the right voices for the dialogue. Among those he cast were

Dick Van Dyke, Johnathan Winters, and Carl Reiner, early in their careers.

Around 10,000 drawings were needed for a seven-minute cartoon. A large staff of animators, tracers, camera operators and background painters was required. Conrad Rozenski, another Larchmonter, was part of the artistic team.

Terry gave up his artistic work and turned to running the business. He lived in Larchmont during his entire career, occupying three different houses in the Village. [Two of the houses were at 115 Beach Avenue and at 40 Ocean Avenue.]

Today, technology has taken over, and cartoons can be made by computer. However, the early Terrytoon cartoons are still

being shown on television in the U.S. and many foreign countries. The most popular are the later characters, Heckle and Jeckle, the talking crows, and Mighty Mouse. Cholly Horse, Farmer Alfalfa, and Kiko the Kangaroo, the earliest characters, are also shown.

Those of us who remember weekends before television can recall that for better or worse, Saturday afternoons were not spent on the soccer field. We were given a quarter to go to movies, which included a double feature, a newsreel, and a cartoon. Adults attended the same show at night. Cartoons were not just for children!



The Larchmont Historical Society
proudly announces the publication of
House Calls Vol. 2:
The LHS House Tours 1994-2003

This 123-page softcover book contains the historical and architectural text from the annual handbooks of the Society's house tours from 1994 to 2003, representing 56 remarkable dwellings and other structures. It contains a photo of each building and four indices and is available from the Archives for \$20 a copy. Also, *House Calls Vol. 1 (1981-1993)* is back in print and is available on the same terms.

But Is It History?

The following is one in a series of local myths written by the late Phil Reisman and first published here in 1989. We will republish one of the myths each month.

Trees. No one knows how many stately trees of various species have been pointed out to visitors as "the very one" that inspired Joyce Kilmer to write his famous poem, "Trees." Or how

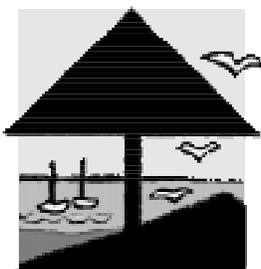
many houses have been falsely identified as the very one the poet lived in when he wrote it.

In actual fact, he wrote the poem in Mahwah, New Jersey, in 1913, before he moved to our village to a house still standing on Grove Avenue. From there he enlisted to fight in the First World War, and he never returned.

Nominations

The Nominating Committee (Fred Baron, Anne Camella, Antoinette Sarfaty, and Judy Spikes) have presented, and the Board of Trustees have approved, the following candidates for trustee, to be voted on at the Annual Meeting on June 22, 3pm at the Horseshoe Harbor Yacht Club: Ned Benton, Mary McGahan, Jane Nishimura, and Dee vanEyck. Additional nominations may be made by following the procedure in the By-laws.

**Larchmont Historical Society
P.O. Box 742
Larchmont NY 10538**



Membership Form

Please enroll me as a member of the Larchmont Historical Society. My tax-deductible dues for one year are enclosed. Membership year ends June 30,2004.

New Renewal

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$15.
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$25.
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior or student	\$ 5.
<input type="checkbox"/> Institutional or Business	\$25.
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$50.
<input type="checkbox"/> Life (individual only)	\$150.

Make checks payable and mail to:

Larchmont Historical Society
Box 742
Larchmont NY10538

I would like to serve on the following committee:

<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Publications
<input type="checkbox"/> House Tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Historic Sites
<input type="checkbox"/> Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Costumes
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