

# Former fire chief sees no change in village after 25 years

## N. Tarrytown plays host to 98th Volunteer Firemen's convention

By Karen Benora

Robert Wade Sr. peered through a window of Sleepy Hollow High School on Thursday and gave a simple shrug.

"The village really doesn't look much different than it did in 1962," he said. That was the last time Wade visited North Tarrytown, when the village hosted the 73rd convention of the Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association.

Wade, formerly chief of the Saugerties Fire Department, is a collector of commemorative pins from past state and county conventions, a hobby he displays proudly on his red vest. With about 100 pins representing more than 25 years of gatherings, Wade shines when he talks.

His entire collection includes about \$500 worth of pins, but they don't all fit on one vest, Wade said.



Robert Wade, former chief of the Saugerties Fire Department, collects commemorative pins from past state and county conventions.

"I used to collect maps. I still have about 400 of them stored on a shelf in my basement."

Wade opted for the \$2 pins because they were "small and a novelty."

He said he had been offered \$175 for one of his pins — a green, blue and gold one from Lake Placid with a picture of a pyramid on it.

"I wouldn't sell it to anyone," he said.

As Wade spoke, the convention delegates rose for a memorial service to honor their fallen members. A bell sounded for each of the 20 men who had died in the past year, most of them in the line of duty.

That point was not lost on officials, who offered proclamations honoring the volunteers for their unwavering dedication to preserving life and property.

"The tremendous interest that you take in your communities is a spirit that really is America and that you've kept alive all these

years," said County Executive Andrew P. O'Rourke.

"We are very, very proud and very, very grateful to you for everything you have done."

The convention, which also marks the 100th anniversary of two North Tarrytown fire companies — Rescue Hose Company 1 and Union Hose Engine Company 2 — continues today with the election of officers.

A Mardi Gras parade on Beekman Avenue will begin at 7 p.m., followed by a free concert by the 42-piece U.S. Marine Corps Band at the Winfield Morris School.

A formal drum parade begins at 2 p.m. Saturday, with representatives from 110 fire company units and the world-famous Buellweiser Clevelander horns following a route from the General Motors Corp. parking lot to Route 9 and Beekman Avenue. An estimated 25,000 spectators are expected.

## Pyramid scam has claimed hundreds

By Shalom Anapol

Westchester residents should beware of an illegal "get rich quick" scheme that already has claimed hundreds of victims in the county, the Westchester County District Attorney's office said Thursday.

From Harrison to Lewisboro, residents have been phoning local police agencies to say they have lost up to \$2,500 each in the scam during recent weeks, said Tony Berk, an assistant district attorney. He said authorities did not know exactly how many people had been victimized or how much money had been lost.

Berk said it appears the people who started the profiteering ring have left the county with thousands of dollars in profits. But the ring is being kept going in part by victims who are trying to attract new members to pay off debts to angry friends bilked by the original promoters, he added.

Several dozen victims have told authorities they were invited to "community meetings" where the unidentified ringleaders told them that by engaging \$1,200, they could make 800 percent profit in commission. To make the profit, they had to deliver up to 10 new members willing to pay the same price, he said.

In some cases, potential members were told the rule is legal, but mostly the participants were made to believe their chances of getting caught were slim, Berk said.

"Rumors are flying thick and fast about people making \$10,000 or more all over the county and throughout the state but it's all lies," Berk added. "The pyramid is already falling apart."

The rule is modeled after the classic pyramid scheme, where the lure of big money leads people to widen the ring. As soon as new members fail to deliver their quotas, the amount of cash available to repay old members stops and the pyramid crumbles.

Roughly one of every 64 participants stands a chance of making back their investment, Berk said.

The district attorney's office has reported receiving calls about the ring from Harrison, Eastchester, Lewisboro, Chappaqua, White Plains, Mount Vernon, Bedford and Mount Kisco, Berk said he was told of one meeting at Chappaqua where 100 residents were given the sales pitch.

Under state law, someone who enlists 10 or more members could be charged with taking part in a scheme to defraud, punishable by up to four years in prison. Those who enrolled less than 10 people could be charged with engaging in a pyramid scheme, a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail.

But Berk said any victims who supplied information that led to prosecution of the ringleaders would not be charged.

## 'Son of Sam' book author hopes police will reopen case

Says Berkowitz didn't act alone

By Will David

NEW YORK — Survivors and relatives of the victims of the so-called "Son of Sam" attacks may experience sorrowful memories today, when a new book about the yearlong reign of terror by the "44-caliber killer" goes on sale.

The 1976-77 attacks left six young people dead and seven wounded.

The author of "The Ultimate Evil," freelance investigative reporter Maury Terry, said he is hoping that new information disclosed in his book — which contends that David Berkowitz was not the lone gunman — will lead police to reinvestigate the case.

Ten years after the attacks, which terrorized the New York metropolitan area, Terry writes that Berkowitz, the confessed killer, was part of a nationwide satanic network that committed murders, sold and used drugs and guns and was involved in pornography.

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