

# WAKEFIELD AREA NEWS

*Compiled by the Wakefield Taxpayers & Civic League*

**By Mary V. Lauro**

## Reality check

Every so often, but at least once a year, we like to remind our readers and our members that we are not a knitting club, a lonely hearts club or, for that matter, a political club. According to our papers of incorporation and our constitution we have one purpose only and that is to maintain the characteristics and integrity of Wakefield. Everything we do is aimed in that direction. We are not big on window dressing and posturing.

At the same time our Constitution recognizes that we share the district and the

city with a number of other organizations whose purposes for their communities are similar to ours. We are bound to assist them whenever our goals intersect.

As examples of our work and to inform newcomers, we list, in haphazard order, some of our accomplishments in the last quarter century.

Moving OTB on 241<sup>st</sup> St. and White Plains Road just two blocks away took 10 years. Never mind that OTB no longer exists. No one knew that at the time.

Newcomers don't know how famous E. 241<sup>st</sup> St. and

White Plains Road was for druggies and prostitutes throughout the city. It operated 24/7. Across the street from the old OTB location is the Wakefield Motor Inn which still harbors all sorts of illegal activity and all of White Plains Road is still infested with drugs, but that particular location is no longer the mecca for 24 hour illegal activity. The modern OTB facility which replaced the shameful storefront added class to E. 241<sup>st</sup> St. Drug activity did not follow it. In this endeavor we received no assistance from our elected officials. Some

actually fought against us. CB 12 was between grudgingly helpful and openly hostile. We persisted and we won.

It took many years also to get City Planning to change the rules regarding able to have the law changed so that motels cannot be built in C2 commercial zones such as White Plains Road. We had four of them at the time. In so doing, we not only helped Wakefield, but the entire city of New York! Here, too, the operation received little assistance from our elected reps and CB 12 except for the late Joe Williams who was chair of CB 12 Land Use committee at the time. In fact, Borough

President, at that time, Fernando Ferrer tried to stop us from succeeding. When we refused to follow his orders he began to disseminate inaccurate information in newspapers to justify his position.

We won that one, but we lost another motel issue because of another Borough President's interference and the perfidy of CB 12. This was regarding rezoning Boston Road so as to stop the proliferation of hot sheet motels.

On Cranford Avenue there is senior housing. That is for what it was intended by a state agency. But in the still of night, the provider decided to switch to an AIDS/

HIV center. CB 12 said there was nothing it could do about it. We thought it wrong. We made calls to Albany. He hit pay dirt. The provider lost his contract with the state. Another provider built the Senior Housing.

By the way, the sneaky provider who wanted to foist an HIV/AIDS center in Wakefield has connection to Praxis who plans to build one on White Plains Road. CB 12 and our elected officials have done nothing to stop that one either. Some even support the move.

We will continue next week because we have another purpose besides trumping our horn.