

Highlighting Dobbs Ferry and its history

the Ferryman

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Good eats: the families behind the restaurants

Beginning in the 1920s, the inviting aromas of garlic and tomato sauce began drifting along the streets of our village as Italian restaurants took root and flourished.

Hearty plates of pasta formed the backbone of most menus. Later on, pizza, inexpensive to prepare, yet endlessly adaptable, rose in popularity alongside steak, seafood and other crowd-pleasing fare.

These establishments were more than restaurants. They were where people gathered after work, to have a drink, a bite, and even bowl a game.

Over time, as generations changed and family interest waned, these once-familiar establishments were sold to new proprietors that resulted in name and culinary changes, while others quietly closed their doors.

The distinctive signs that once announced their presence have all but disappeared. Today, only one, Sam's Restaurant, remains under its original name, though no longer in family hands, serving as a living reminder of a vibrant chapter in the village's culinary and cultural history.

*Jimmie tends bar**Jimmie's on Main Street*

Jimmié's Bar and Grill

Jimmié's was more than a place to eat—it was a gathering place where friendships were forged, stories were shared, and generations felt at home.

Vincent "Jimmié" Mastroianni was born in 1898 in Isola Liri, Italy. In 1914, he

immigrated to the United States with his father and settled in Dobbs Ferry in search of work. Jimmié and his dad traveled to Chicago to find permanent work but only found seasonal employment. They decided to return to Dobbs Ferry, where Jimmié remained. His father returned to Italy in 1918.

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In 1922, Jimmie opened Jimmie's Spaghetti House on Main Street, located where Sam's restaurant is today. He married Antoinette "Anne" DeFranza of Yonkers in 1925. The couple had two sons, Louis and Thomas. Jimmie rented two apartments above the restaurant, one for his family and another for an ever-changing rotation of Italian immigrant men. Their stay included a hearty meal prepared by Jimmie.

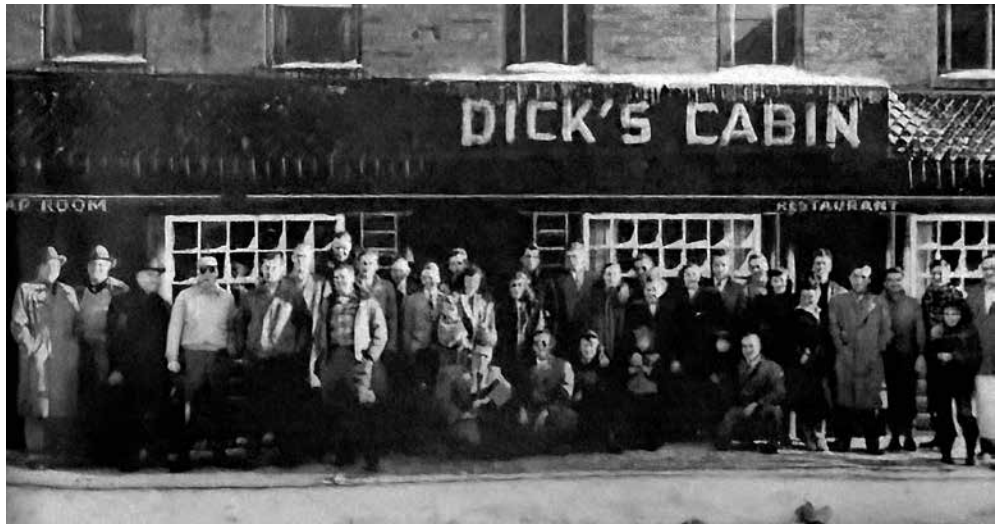
In 1928, the family moved south to 56 Main Street. Jimmie opened a butcher shop at that location. During Prohibition, homemade wines and liquors were discreetly sold from the back of the shop. Following the repeal of Prohibition, Jimmie received a liquor license in 1934 and Jimmie's Bar and Grille opened for business.

Anne worked in the kitchen, while Jimmie tended bar and served food. Early fare included pickled pig's feet and eggs, and sausage available at the bar. Over time, the menu expanded to include spaghetti and meatballs, stews, sausage and peppers, and steak dinners. The restaurant became a gathering place for local residents and workers.

Early in 1943, 17-year-old Louis left high school to join the U.S. Marine Corps. In November of that year Jimmie died unexpectedly from a heart attack. His son Louis was killed in action at the Battle of Iwo Jima in 1945.

After Jimmie's death, Anne considered selling the business. Anne's brother Larry DeFranza convinced her not to sell. He recognized the strong postwar economic potential for the business as servicemen returned home from the war. Larry, his wife Connie, and their son Tom moved in with Anne and helped with the business. Everyone pitched in to help run the restaurant, doing the cooking, serving, and clean up. As the business grew, more extended family members came to work at Jimmie's. Anne later married Tom DeRosa, an old family friend, who also joined the business as bartender.

Lunch became the mainstay of the restaurant's business. Over time dinners,



Locals pose outside Dick's Cabin

including signature dishes of veal parmesan and shrimp scampi among other culinary delights, made Jimmies an evening dining destination. The quaint dining room was always bustling with patrons.

Jimmie's closed its doors in 1990.

Endless Trail Bikeworkx now occupies the site of the former restaurant.

Dick's Cabin

For more than 50 years, Dick's Cabin was a dining experience at 92 Main Street, where hearty steak dinners, welcoming faces, and village lore came together beside a roaring stone fireplace.

Richard "Dick" Cavellero was born in Italy in 1902. He came to the United States with his parents when he was eight and settled in New Jersey. Dick moved to Dobbs Ferry in 1933. Soon after he arrived, he opened Dick's Cabin. He and his wife Madge, a native of New Jersey, were married at Our Lady of Pompeii Church in 1935. The couple had two sons, Richard and Arthur.

Dick and Madge ran the restaurant with warmth and style: Dick always in a classic sports jacket. Their sons helped carry on the family tradition — making Dick's Cabin a true multigenerational institution.

The rich wood-paneled interior and stone fireplace offered the perfect setting for everything from cocktail conversations to intimate dinners. Dick's was known for its classic steakhouse fare and equally memorable cocktails.

One of Dick's cocktail creations was a cure for hiccups. Frederic A. Birmingham, editor of Esquire magazine, was witness to Dick preparing the concoction for a bar patron one night, noting its quick results. Birmingham would dub it the Dobbs Drink and include the recipe in the Esquire Drink Book – 1956. If you need one, just get a chilled glass of white crème de menthe over crushed ice, add a generous dash of Angostura Bitters and a shot of Fernet Blanca, a dark Italian liqueur.

In the 1940s and '50s, members of the New York Giants baseball team rented homes in the village during the season and made Dick's Cabin a favorite stop after games. Local recollections place stars like Whitey Lockman, Alvin Dark, and Dusty Rhodes among frequent patrons, drawn by the welcoming vibe and great steaks.

The restaurant's charm wasn't lost on the local theater crowd either. On nearby Cedar Street stood the Pickwick Theater which in the 1960s was a spot for live performances. Actors such as Mickey Rooney, Hal Holbrook, and Dana Andrews who performed at the theater, as well as play goers were known to stop in Dick's for cocktails and late dinners.

Dick's Cabin closed in 1979. A series of restaurants have been located at 92 Main Street since then. In 1980, the Swiss Cabin opened at the location for a short time, followed by La Foresta and Mimosa restaurants. In 2011, Harper's opened, the restaurant that occupies the spot today.

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Sam's Italian Restaurant

Sam's Restaurant, a long-standing fixture on Main Street, is named for its founder, Salverio "Sam" Ciancio, and had more than three decades of Ciancio family ownership. Located at 128 Main Street, the restaurant has played a continuous role in the village's commercial and social life.

Sam was born in 1908 in Rome, New York. As a young child, he traveled with his father to Italy, where they lived for several years before returning to the United States. Sam spent much of his boyhood in Dobbs Ferry, living on Ashford Avenue.

Sam's first venture into business ownership was a bar located at 24 Main Street, also believed to have been named Sam's. In 1952, Sam purchased the building at 128 Main Street, which housed four separate storefronts. Above the stores were eight apartments. This building would become the permanent home of Sam's Restaurant.

Sam married Marion Macrino, who was born in Italy, in the early 1930s. The couple would have four children, Frank, Dominic, Lucy, and Marie. Sam died in 1970 at the age of 62. After his death, Marion remained closely connected to the restaurant until her passing in 1998.

Originally, the restaurant occupied only the two middle storefronts. It operated primarily as a take-out pizza business with



President & Mrs. Nixon's campaign motorcade passing Sam's, 1972

a small dining area, offering traditional Italian dishes. According to family accounts, a small pizza sold for \$1.00, and a large pizza for \$1.50.

Over time, the restaurant expanded to occupy the entire ground floor of the building. The south corner became the main dining room, while a larger kitchen was added toward the north end, closer to Cedar Street. This expansion reflected the growing popularity of the restaurant and its increasing role as a neighborhood gathering place.

Following Sam's death, ownership and daily operation of the restaurant passed to the Ciancio children, all of whom had worked in the business for many years. The three older siblings—Frank, Dominic, and Lucy assumed leadership of the restaurant. Marie also remained closely connected to the



Sam Ciancio

family and the business.

The bright and open dining areas imparted a friendly, family vibe. The fare ran the gamut from pizza to classic Italian dishes. The constant flow of regular customers was a testament to the welcoming feeling Sam's had. Locals, out of towners, and especially families have patronized the establishment for generations.

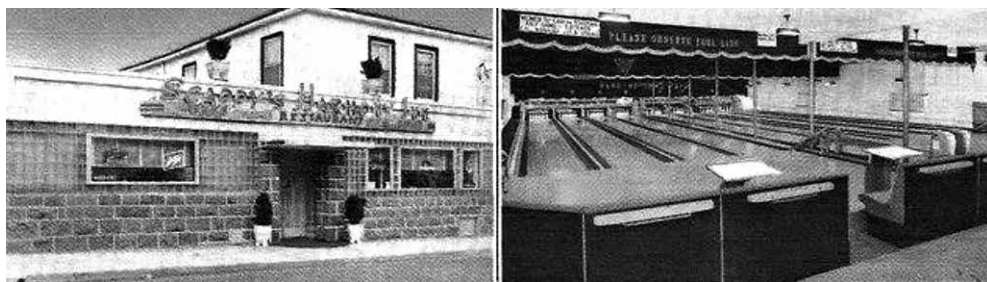
In 1985, Sam's Restaurant was sold to Maurice Giliberti, who had grown up in Dobbs Ferry and worked at the establishment since his teens. Maurice has ensured that Sam's is still the same welcoming place to visit that it has always been.

Scappy's Harmony Inn

For much of the 20th century, Scappy's Harmony Inn stood as one of Dobbs Ferry's most beloved social centers—a place where food, friendship, and community blended as naturally as its name suggested.

Christoph "Chris" Scaperrotta, a native

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SCAPPY'S HARMONY INN — DOBBS FERRY, N. Y.



Postcard showing all that Scappy's had to offer

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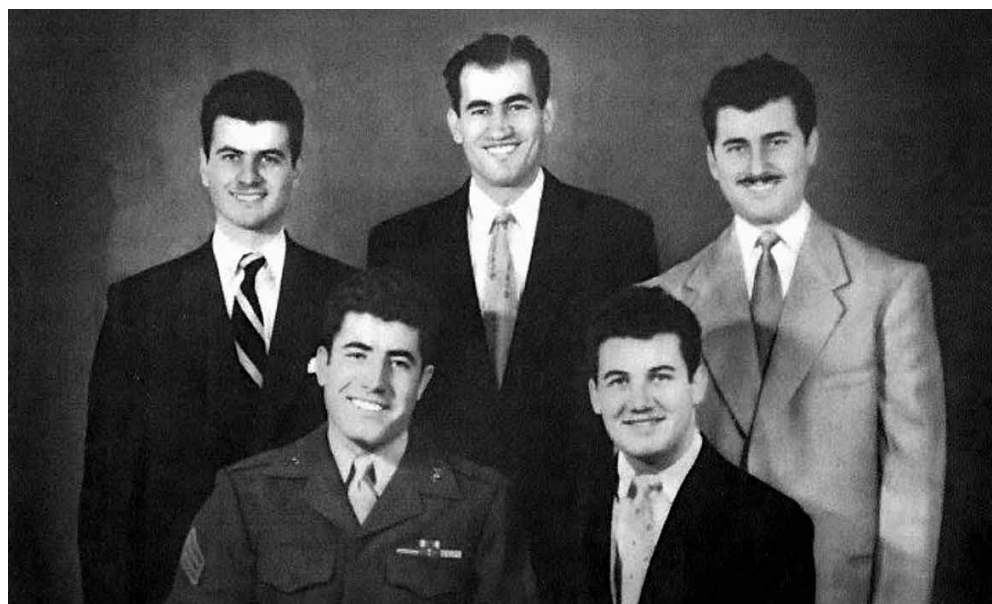
of Ariano Irpino, Italy, arrived in Dobbs Ferry in 1921 while on his honeymoon with his wife Anna (Nanine). They had come to visit his parents, Dominick and Agata Scaperrotta, who had immigrated to the village in 1918.

By trade, Chris was a machinist and auto mechanic, but he was equally known as a people person—outgoing, warm, and deeply comfortable bringing others together. That led to his decision to enter the restaurant business. His earliest ventures included the Main Street Grill at 28 Main Street, followed by another Main Street establishment, Grandy's, where Anna did the cooking.

In 1939, Chris purchased the Pfeil Restaurant at 207 Ashford Avenue and named it Scappy's Harmony Inn. The Harmony Inn was more than a restaurant. It featured a bar, two dining rooms, and two bowling alleys. A remodeling in the 1950s enhanced the business and installed additional bowling alleys.

Family was at the heart of the business. Chris and Anna had nine sons, five of whom survived and help run the restaurant—Edward, Christopher, Dominick, Robert, and John. The family lived above the bar, a common arrangement for businesses of the era. From an early age, the boys worked alongside their parents, learning every aspect of the operation: setting bowling pins, washing dishes, cooking, and eventually tending bar when they came of age.

Food was central to the popularity of Scappy's. Friday nights were especially known for pizzas, which drew steady crowds.



The Scappy brothers

Hearty dinners, including a signature chicken dish, and simple Italian desserts kept families returning week after week.

Bowling leagues were many—men's, women's, mixed, and children's leagues, including popular Saturday youth bowling. The alleys progressed from employing manual pinsetters to state-of-the-art pin setting machines.

The Harmony Inn also became the site of countless social and civic events, including weddings, baby showers, church functions, and gatherings of organizations from Dobbs Ferry and neighboring villages. These events were well documented in the framed pictures that lined the hall that stretched from the entrance to the bowling alley.

After 60 years of ownership, the Scaperrotta family sold the business in 2000. The building was demolished and replaced by

townhouses. Scappy's was a place where generations gathered, celebrated milestones, and shared everyday moments. Today the Scappy legacy lives on as Christoph's grandson Chris owns Scaperrotta's deli on lower Main Street.

Paparella's Restaurant

Paparella's Restaurant was a more recent part of Dobbs Ferry's culinary history. Nicola "Nick" Paparella was born in Ruvo di Puglia in the Apulia region of Italy and came to the United States in 1923. He married Catherine Riccardi in 1929 in Dobbs Ferry. Together they had three children, Angelo, Christopher, and Annette. Nick and his sons established Paparella Construction Company, which operated for many years in Westchester County. The company became well known locally and was responsible for several significant projects, including the construction of a shopping mall on Southfield Avenue in Dobbs Ferry in 1969.

As part of that development, the Paparella's sought to create an anchor business for the mall, occupying the largest space in the building's north corner. They decided to open a family-owned eatery, which became Paparella's Restaurant. The venture reflected both the family's entrepreneurial spirit and their desire to establish a gathering place rooted in Italian culinary tradition. Alongside traditional Italian dishes, the dessert menu featured a specialty Italian cheesecake that became exceptionally well



Paparella's anchored the Southfield Ave. mall

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The Rosalind Gardens story

When Rosalind Gardens opened its doors in 1927, it was more than just Dobbs Ferry's first large apartment building—it was a bold statement about modern living, community, and compassion. Built at a cost of \$400,000 by developer Harry Z. Suchin, the five-story structure quickly became one of the village's most admired residential landmarks. The building at 269 Broadway was named for Harry's young daughter, Rosalind.

The building

Rosalind Gardens was constructed on land originally developed in 1840 by Samuel Kellogg, Dobbs Ferry's first full-time Presbyterian minister. Kellogg used the earlier estate as a school.

Set back 100 feet from the street, Rosalind Gardens was designed to feel both grand and welcoming. The building contained 54 apartments and featured amenities rarely seen in suburban apartment houses of the era. Every living room included a fireplace, and each apartment was equipped with electric refrigerators. Interiors were decorated by John Wanamaker's of New York City, lending the building a level of sophistication usually associated with Manhattan residences. Harry and his family lived on the first floor of the building.



Rosalind Gardens

The building boasted a self-service elevator, several maids' rooms, and garage accommodations for up to 100 automobiles located in the rear basement. Two rear terraces were later added, expanding outdoor space for residents.

In the basement, tenants enjoyed a private gymnasium complete with lockers and showers. A large ballroom, also located in the basement, served as the social heart of

the building. The ballroom included two ping-pong tables and a piano that residents were free to use. Over the years fundraisers, community gatherings, and political party victory dances were held there.

Recreation extended outdoors as well. Harry installed a tennis court on top of the garage roof, with a badminton court alongside of it. A children's playground was also added.

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remembered by patrons.

Paparella's interior was modern and contemporary for its time, reflecting late-1960s design sensibilities and distinguishing it from more traditional Italian restaurants in the area. The restaurant quickly became a part of the local dining scene.

The Paparella family sold the restaurant in the 1970s to the Rina family, which named their establishment Casa Rina. In 1992, the restaurant became Scaramella's which operated until January of this year. This spring, a new establishment, Rosie Bella's Italian Kitchen, is expected to open on the site.



Inside of Paparella's



Alvin Suchin



Harry and Evelyn being honored



Rosalind Suchin Kassan

The Rosalind...

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One of Rosalind Gardens' most celebrated features was its landscaping. The grounds originally included 28 rose beds planted with 28 different varieties of roses. During the summer months, more than 4,000 blooms filled the area with color and the air with fragrance. Over time, both the number of rose beds and the varieties increased.

The "best" landlord

Harry was born on February 28, 1894, in a rural town near Prague in what was then Czechoslovakia. He arrived in New York City in 1911 and learned English by attending night school.

Harry worked his way up through a variety of jobs, including grocery clerk, vegetable truck driver, and packing-house worker, and would become a real estate developer. Harry married Evelyn Roth in Yonkers in 1919. Evelyn, born in New York City, was raised and educated in Yonkers. After living in Hastings, the family moved to Dobbs Ferry. The couple had four children, Alvin, Miles, Rosalind, and Jerome.

While Rosalind Gardens brought Harry plenty of esteem, it was not the building alone that earned him widespread recognition—it was the way he treated his tenants.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, when many landlords resorted to evictions, Harry refused to put anyone out. Tenants who could not pay rent were allowed to stay.

There were no formal leases, and rents were never raised. Tenants were asked however, to provide one month's notice if they planned to move. Harry believed that the tenants were always right.

Harry's approach earned him remarkable acclaim. For many years, he was honored as the "Best Landlord in the State." Each February on or near Harry's birthday, the tenants of Rosalind Gardens hosted a large dinner dance to show their appreciation. Between 200 and 250 guests would attend, including state and local officials. During these events, Harry received gifts as tokens of gratitude for his kindness.

The *Dobbs Ferry Register* frequently ran front-page stories about the annual celebrations held in his honor, and *The New York Times* reported on the events as well. In 1940, *The New Yorker* magazine featured Harry in its "Talk of the Town" column. He was even featured in *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* under the title "The World's Best Landlord."

Entertainment was an important part of these events. Vaudeville-style performances were common. One year, Harry's son Alvin produced a play he had written titled *The Uninvited Guest*.

Harry believed strongly in fostering a sense of belonging. He regularly hosted parties, including July 4th celebrations that would often follow tennis matches held on the rooftop court. At Christmas, he personally delivered champagne to every apartment in the building.

As one account aptly summarized,

"Harry erected a building—but he made a community."

The Suchins

Harry and Evelyn were both active in civic affairs. They both served on the Republican Committee of Westchester with Evelyn succeeding him as committee person. Evelyn was active in the Dobbs Ferry League of Women Voters, the Greenburgh Hebrew Center, and the American Legion Auxiliary. Evelyn passed away in 1976, Harry in 1978.

Alvin graduated from Yale University and Harvard Law School. He served as Dobbs Ferry Judge, Greenburgh Town Councilman, and New York State Assemblyman. Miles, a Yale graduate, received his law degree from New York Law School, became an Executive District Attorney in White Plains. Jerome graduated from Syracuse University and Albany Law School. He served on the enforcement unit of the Security and Exchange Commission and as an administrative law judge in New York City. Rosalind graduated from Highland Manor Junior College in Tarrytown. She married Robert Kassan at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. They would have two children.

In December 1993, a fire broke out in a fifth-floor apartment of Rosalind Gardens. The blaze damaged several apartments, destroyed the entire roof, and forced the evacuation of all tenants. The extent of the damage required a complete renovation of the building. Although there were no fatalities, residents were unable to return to the building for a long period.

Curling, Dobbs Ferry's best kept secret

Dobbs Ferry is a sports enthusiast's delight with its plethora of venues for both participants and spectators alike. The village has football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts, baseball diamonds, tracks and hiking paths, swimming pools, bike trails, and even a curling rink.

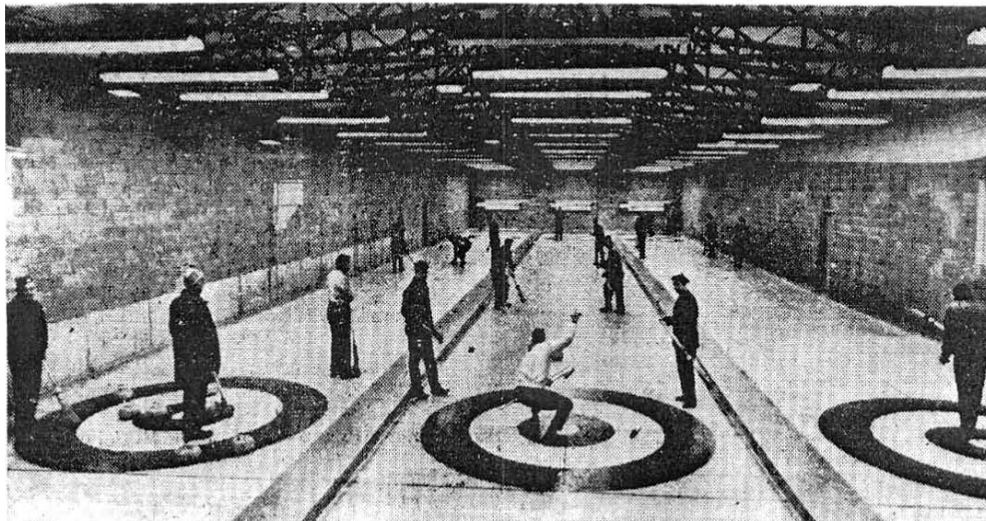
Located on property belonging to the Ardsley Country Club, tucked in between the driving range and the maintenance building, is the Ardsley Curling Club. Although the property and the Country Club are associated with Irvington, the curling facility itself is located in Dobbs Ferry. One of Westchester County's enduring sporting institutions, the club now has a legacy that has reached the Olympic stage.

Curling can be traced back to Scotland in the 1500s. Arriving in America in the 1800s, the sport is played on ice. A 42-pound granite stone is "delivered" (pushed or shot) down an ice "sheet" (an individual playing area similar to a mini hockey rink.) Players use brooms to sweep the ice in front of the stone. This affects the speed and direction of the stone and guides it into the scoring area. Players don't wear skates but rather special curling shoes, where one shoe has a sole for sliding on the ice, and the other has a sole for gripping the ice.

The Ardsley Curling Club was founded in 1932 by a group of enthusiasts. The organizers approached the Ardsley Raquet and Swimming Club (present day Ardsley Country Club which was then located in Ardsley-on-Hudson) about forming a curling section. They were informed that Ardsley was not interested in fostering additional sports. Undeterred, the curlers pressed ahead and formed a club with thirty-two members.

For its first 34 years, the Ardsley Curling Club did not have its own rink. Instead, the club rented ice privileges from St. Andrew's Curling Club in Hastings, one of the oldest clubs in Westchester. St. Andrew's had built an indoor curling site the year before. Initially, Ardsley rented two sheets from the club on Tuesday evenings, and

Ardsley Curling Club Dedicates Its New \$135,000, Three-Ice Rink



Ardsley Curling Rink Opens

it added a Wednesday evening as the club membership increased.

Members of Ardsley were always looking for a way to secure a rink of their own. A key opportunity emerged when in 1966 the Ardsley Country Club decided to leave its clubhouse and purchase the former Frank Gould Estate in Irvington. Members of the curling club approached the Board of Governors about the possibility of building a facility for them on the property. Negotiations between the entities resulted in approval for the construction of a dedicated curling rink on country club property.

Ground for the new building was broken on June 11, 1966. The new 50' x 190' building would cost \$135,000.00 and contain three sheets and a "warm" lounge area behind glass for spectators. The first stone was "delivered" by Barton Eddison, a charter member of the club, on December 26, 1966. A formal dedication ceremony took place on January 28, 1967. The facility was designed by Edward Wallace of Darien CT.

With the opening of its own rink, Ardsley introduced new types of memberships, including mixed, ladies, youth, and teenage categories. Membership in the club has grown to 180 today. The club also began hosting bonspiels (curling tournaments) at its own rink. The annual Ardsley Bonspiel



Danny Casper, Ardsley member and Olympic curler

has become a longstanding tradition over the years.

Nearly a century after its founding, the Ardsley Curling Club has achieved international recognition. Twenty-four-year-old club member Danny Casper, originally from Briarcliff Manor, has been selected to represent the United States as skip (captain) of the U.S. Men's Curling Team at the 2026 Winter Olympic Games in Milano Cortina, Italy. His achievement stands as a testament to the club's enduring commitment to the sport and its ability to nurture excellence across generations.



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America celebrates

On July 4, 2026, our nation celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Throughout the year federal, state, regional and local events will take place.

Checkout these websites for lists of events: America250.org, ILoveNY.com, RW250.org



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What Dobbs restaurant's cocktail for curing hiccups is featured in Esquire's Drink Book, 1956?
Answer on page 2.

Sources:

Restaurants: Ancestry.com; Edwards Dowdle Funeral Home website; Herald Statesman; New York Times; Esquire Drink Book, 1956; Tom's Recipe Collection and Memories of Jimmie's Restaurant; Dobbs Ferry Register
Thank you to Annette Paparella, Frank Ciancio, Carl Sturmer, Peter Mastroianni, Albert Muscari, Cookie Belarge, and Lorraine Gardner.
Suchin: Dobbs Ferry Register, New York Times, Herald Statesman, The New Yorker, Ancestry.com
Curling: The History of the Ardsley Curling Club, The New York Historical Society

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