

# Editorial

## Volunteers Are Best Of American Spirit

The concept of volunteering is very largely unique to the American mindset and seems to stem in part from our conception of ourselves as an independent people. Alma Powell, wife of retired U. S. Army General and former Secretary of State Colin Powell once related a story of how at one post overseas where her husband had been stationed, she and several other wives of American military men started a nursery school, to the surprise of the locals—the government did that, they said. That a group of determined individuals could come together and together in some measure take control of their own destiny was a totally alien concept.

Volunteering also lets some of the finest elements in ourselves and our society emerge.

Nicholas Pekearo, a 28-year-old bookstore clerk and aspiring writer, and Yevgeniy (Eugene) Marshalik, a 19-year-old student at New York University, walked a beat in Greenwich Village as auxiliary police officers in the Sixth Precinct. And besides their both wearing the uniform of New York City Auxiliary Police Officers, both shared a desire to give back to the city they felt had given so much to them. Pekearo, one source said,

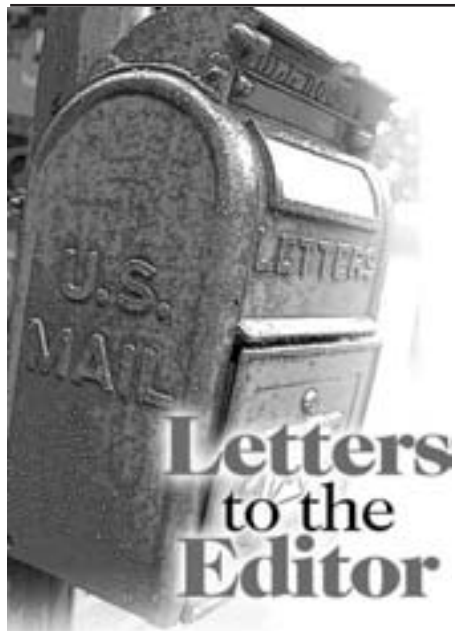
had seen his Village neighborhood through an era when crime seemed to be out of control and now in a time of relative ease, wanted to help others. Marshalik came to New York City from Russia with his family as a child of six. A star of the debating team at Stuyvesant H.S. and a good student at NYU, he sought to serve the people of New York City by becoming a prosecutor with the Manhattan District Attorney's office. Like Pekearo, he saw joining the Auxiliary Police as a way to give back—to repay a city and a society that, he felt, had given him the opportunity to be the best that he could be.

As is the case with most things in this life, volunteering is a noble calling, but carries a price. Volunteers, whatever it is that they volunteer for, are not paid for the time and effort they expend. Volunteering can cost in other ways as well. Pekearo and Marshalik were walking a beat in Greenwich Village last Thursday night when they were gunned down by one David Garvin, who had just shot a waiter-bartender at a Village restaurant. Garvin put 15 slugs in Woodside resident Alfredo Romero's back and then executed the two Auxiliary Police as they shadowed him and kept regular officers informed of the

situation. Despite the fact that Pekearo was wearing a bulletproof vest—one that he had paid for—Garvin still put three bullets in his torso. Garvin executed Marshalik with a single shot to the head.

Auxiliary officers carry only radios and batons. They are not required to put themselves in harm's way. The spirit of volunteerism in both men, however, led Marshalik and Pekearo to put themselves at risk. Their actions may well have prevented more deaths: their forcing Garvin to concentrate on them kept the crazed gunman from seeking other innocent victims.

Pekearo and Marshalik exemplified the highest traditions of the American volunteer spirit. It was only fitting that both were buried with high police honors. May the earth rest lightly on their generous and compassionate hearts. And may the spirit of volunteerism that ran so strong in each of them continue to grow and flourish. It is what makes us as Americans unique in the world and what will continue to make us a great nation, despite the psychopaths and evildoers within and without. As long as the American volunteer ethos prevails, so, too, will the forces of good will.



### Ask, Then Build

A copy of the following letter was received by the Gazette.

Dear Parks Commissioners:

The construction of the Korean War Memorial in Kissena Park should not be at the expense of killing or seriously damaging trees, especially those with historical significance.

In a very real sense, you would be allowing the destruction of one historical monument for the construction of another.

Let's face it, the so-called "time constraints" cited in other correspondence as an excuse for negligence are actually "budgetary constraints". Such constraints and such negligence are unacceptable.

However, if this is your modus operandi, then perhaps the location of this monument needs to be reconsidered. Flushing is blessed with parkland, and there are sever-

al sites where the memorial could be placed with far less ecological damage and also where it would enjoy greater accessibility and visibility.

Why not ask the community and listen to the people?

Sincerely,

Richard Jannaccio, president  
West Flushing Civic Association

### Parks Dept. Harms Trees

To The Editor:

The historic grove in Kissena Park is being attacked, not by beetles, vandals or picnickers, but by our own Parks Department. Over a hundred years ago, Samuel Parsons gathered specimens from all over the world to create an outstanding landscape that is irreplaceable. The preparation of the mall for the Korean War Memorial is taking place next to this grove and the Parks Department has not made sufficient efforts to protect the trees.

Beverly McDermott, president of Kissena Park Civic [Association], and I have been involved from the beginning in the preparation of this memorial and we were proud to support our vets, but we have begged Parks to be mindful of these trees. We have the support and advice of a licensed arborist in our civic association in contending that the present operations are damaging the root zone of the grove and have seen every day another mistake by the contractor.

"Mistakes were made" is the motto of the day echoed by Parks. As a daily user of the park, I see an environmental tragedy unfolding from a few careless actions. When the lake was redone a few years ago, a section of London plane [trees] was damaged. Parks does not learn and will not listen. [City]

Commissioner [Adrian] Benepe and [Queens] Commissioner [Dorothy] Lewandowski are risking our natural heritage by their stubborn disregard of proper conservation.

The history and beauty of the grove should preserve the gift of the original nurserymen of Flushing who gave many varieties of trees to this country, particularly those of Asian origin, such as the Japanese Maple and the Golden Larch. It is time for the present residents of Queens to raise their voices in protest to those in the Parks Department who are not worthy keepers of this heritage.

Sincerely yours,

Sally E. Kahn  
Flushing

### Vets Deserve Better

To The Editor:

At a recent public meeting held by Congressman Gregory Meeks to discuss federal services provided to our veterans, I was once again reminded about the failings of some of our elected officials to assist these patriots who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

It is most painful to hear of our veterans' pleas for better housing and health care when we hear officials report surpluses in our state budget. There were harrowing accounts from many of the daily hardships caused by hefty healthcare costs and inadequate housing. It is hard to accept that the brave who have served our country by putting their lives on the line are now forced to live in shelters. Their pleas are for our elected officials to pay attention to these problems.

An appeal is hereby also made to Mayor [Michael Bloomberg] to fulfill his promise and remove the undignified circumstances

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