

newsletter

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Lost passport in Paris connects med student to '49 Berkeley alumna and Ardsley H.S. Graduate

By YASMIN ANWAR, UC BERKELEY

Betty Werther made a beeline for Paris after graduating from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1949 and embarked on a life of travel, romance and adventure. Somewhere along the road, she lost her passport.

More than 60 years later, a young Portuguese medical student is heading to Paris to return the tattered, 1950-issued passport to Werther. Last summer while studying there, Nuno Fonseca found the passport at a flea market, then embarked on an eight-month search for its rightful owner, enlisting help from residents of Werther's hometown of Ardsley, New York.

"Mission accomplished!" Fonseca, 23, wrote in an email last week to those who helped him locate Werther, née Hatfield, now an 85-year-old American expatriate living in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower.

"I was wondering what had happened to that

passport. I wouldn't have thrown it out. It was my first passport. It was important to me," said Werther by phone from her home in Paris.

Since 1950, Werther's travels have taken her to Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Israel, Turkey, China, Mexico, Costa Rica, Algeria, Berlin and Zagreb, among other places. It was the exotic array of visa stamps – as well as the bizarre coincidence that Werther had lived in the same student housing complex in Paris where he was staying – that motivated Fonseca to buy the vintage passport at Charley Stadium flea market.

"I knew I had to have the passport of someone who, 60 years before me, took the adventure of going to Paris and lived at the same address" on Boulevard Jourdan, said Fonseca, who is finishing up his final year of medical school at the University of Porto, Portugal. "And, of course, I wanted the thrill of finding the passport's rightful owner."



Elizabeth Hatfield (bottom row, third from right) and her A.H.S. graduating class, 1945

Lost passport in Paris CONTINUED

But Google search engines only took Fonseca so far, though they did turn up Werther's hometown as well as her alma mater, UC Berkeley, where her grandfather was a former dean of commerce. So he emailed Ardsley Village Manager George Calvi, who put him in touch with members of the Ardsley Historical Society.

Among them was Frank Jazzo, who remembered some of the Hatfield family history: "Her mother's family ran a bakery and confectionery on Elm Street in Ardsley for many years in the early 1900s," Jazzo recalled. But most had no clue as to where in the world Werther now lived.

The big breakthrough came last week, when Fonseca received a Paris address from Werther's former schoolmate Beatrice Caporale, 84. Next, Fonseca emailed Philippe Rochefort, who facilitates Franco-American relations in Paris. Rochefort noted that Betty Werther was a "well-regarded member of the U.S. community in Paris" and located her in the Paris phone directory.

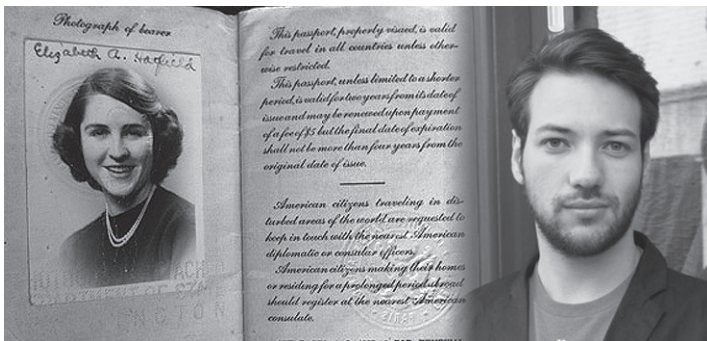
When Fonseca called the number, he felt nervous. But the worldly Werther took the call in stride, and was impressed to hear how he had tracked her down with only her maiden name, Hatfield, to start with.

"Anyone with this much perseverance and initiative will be an incredible doctor. Who knows what diseases he will be able to cure?" Werther said.

Both Werther and Fonseca look forward to meeting.

"Through the stamped pages of her passport, I picture a strong-minded, brave and sophisticated woman whom I would very much like to meet," Fonseca said.

The granddaughter of the late Henry Rand Hatfield, dean of UC Berkeley's School of Commerce from 1916-1920, Elizabeth Ann Hatfield was born in Ardsley in 1927, the only child of Louise and Robert Hatfield. Her father died the year she was born, and her mother taught first grade.



Nuno Fonseca tracked down Betty Werther's 1950-issued passport which turned up at a flea market in Paris

Her summers spent with her grandparents in the Berkeley hills widened her horizons and led her to enroll at UC Berkeley in 1945. Among other campus organizations, she joined the Mortar Board national honor society of college seniors; the Prytanean Society, a collegiate women's honorary society; and the Treble Clef Society, a women's choral group whose audiences included U.N. delegations and members of the U.S Armed Services.

In 1949, at age 22, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science and headed straight for Paris with her close friend Harriet, crossing the Atlantic on an ocean liner. They disembarked in Ports-

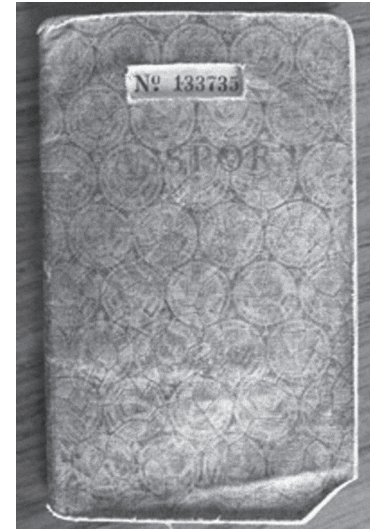
mouth and toured war-ravaged England before ferrying across the channel to France.

"Life was pretty dreary and difficult ... and yet we could feel a kind of post-war euphoria; the killing and Nazi occupation were over. Everything seemed possible," Werther said in a 2005 interview with the magazine *France on Your Own*.

Later, in line at the cafeteria at the Cité Universitaire Internationale de Paris, where she was staying, she said she struck up a conversation with Algerian-born medical student Gilbert Azancot, whom she later married.

But first, she had to satisfy her wanderlust. With a Swedish girlfriend she met while taking classes at the Sorbonne, she hitchhiked through Fascist dictator Franco's Spain and beyond.

"She travelled all over Europe and the Middle East, a very audacious route, even today," Fonseca said.



Werther's passport was filled with visa stamps for exotic places

In 1953, Werther returned to New York to earn a master's degree in political science at Columbia University, and wrote a thesis on "The French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon." She married Azancot, who was doing a residency in New York City. A year later, they took a road trip to California and back, then headed to Paris to make a home.

After stints teaching English, she was hired by the International Herald Tribune in Paris to manage its archives. From there, she moved to TIME magazine, covering politics, arts and entertainment. She interviewed such luminaries as Salvador Dali, Yves Saint Laurent, Jackie Gleason, Shirley McLaine, Rod Steiger and Sophia Loren. Around that time, her marriage to Azancot ended, and in 1963 she married Maurice Werther, considered the French equivalent of American TV journalist Mike Wallace.

After leaving TIME in 1971, Werther landed a job with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and worked on such topics as bio-diversity, illiteracy and women's issues. Throughout Werther's travels, career and two marriages – she has two children and four grandchildren – Paris remains her home base. She blames her first and second husbands, both of whom have since died, for keeping her in Paris.

"The men in my life have been very good," she said.

Fonseca shares her affinity for Paris. When he stumbled upon Werther's passport, he was studying there at Diderot University. This summer, he will do an internship in Paris at the Pierre et Marie Curie University.

"I find that Paris is an incredible city where anything can happen when you expect it the least," he wrote in an email seeking Werther's current address from UC Berkeley. "And here I am, writing to Berkeley about a passport. I recognize one would expect a student application, not a detective story."

"It's an unbelievable story," Werther agreed.

Ardsley's Memorial Parade

By **THERESA DISTEFANO**

Each year in celebration of Memorial Day honoring our brave veterans, a colorful parade marches down Ashford Avenue led by Ardsley's proud veterans belonging to Ardsley's American Legion Post #458. So, as usual, this year Ardsley had its Memorial Day Parade.

On a very hot, sunny day, a group of Ardsley veterans in uniforms marched on foot down Ashford Avenue led by a full color guard holding the American Flag and the Ardsley American Legion Post #458 Flag. The veterans on foot marched in cadence called by Steven Wittenberg, the Commander of Ardsley's American Legion Post #458.

Following the marching veterans, other proud veterans followed in a variety of colorful vintage cars manned by volunteer chauffeurs. They were waving America flags and were waving to the crowds of people who had lined the sidewalks of Ashford Avenue in anticipation of viewing the upcoming parade. Later, after the parade passed them by, these viewers joined the parade at its tail end and followed the parade to its final destination, Pascone Park.

The parade was escorted by Ardsley's fire engines and volunteer Fire Department; Ardsley's Ambulance and Volunteer Ambulance Corp.; Ardsley's girl scout and boy scout troops; Ardsley town officials including: Ardsley Deputy Mayor, some members of Ardsley's Board of Trustees; and officials of Ardsley's religious institutions. And, of course, the parade marched to the beat of patriotic music.

Cheers were heard as the whole parade continued down Ashford Avenue which was decorated with American flags hung on various poles along the way to the parade's final destination. This year the parade entered Francis J. McCormack Street that led into the newly dedicated Louis Pascone Park. The parade found its way to Veterans Way, and finally came to a halt close-by the original Ardsley's American Legion Post #458's building which is next door to the snack bar and in front of Ardsley's 1941-1945 Roll of Honor listing all those who served in World War II. Here the veterans found a canvas canopied seating area where they all rested. When everyone was seated and the parade followers found viewing spots, the Memorial Day Ceremonies began. While everyone stood at attention, members of the Ardsley High School Select Chorus led the singing of The National Anthem. Then, led by Ardsley's Girl Scouts and Brownies, The Pledge of Alliance was recited.

During the ceremony, speeches were made by local public officials

and by the parade's guest speaker, Two Star Major General, Evo Riguzzi. All speeches gave much, much thanks to the veterans for the much appreciated service and sacrifices they made when they were called to defend our country. At one point, in the spirit of Memorial Day, all were asked to remember the veterans who served our country, came home to lead productive lives and who are no longer with us. This reminder was then followed by a roll call of the names of those veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for our country. These names included, 2 WW I veterans, 14 WW II veterans and 1 Vietnam veteran as well as a World Trade Center hero. This was followed by a rifle salute and the sounding of taps played by trumpeter, Mr. Bob Piluso.



Veterans of Ardsley's American Legion Post #458 (Courtesy of Allison Wittenberg)

The audience was reminded that Memorial Day and every day should remind all that the military is made up of less than 1% of the American population. All were asked to keep in mind that while our military is doing the job to keep us free, all should go about our daily lives trying to keep in mind and think about these men and women who are protecting our freedom.

The final words of the ceremony asked the crowd to speak to all the veterans because by doing so, they would be experiencing the best American History Class they ever had or will ever have. The crowd was also reminded that, **IF YOU CAN READ, THANK A TEACHER, IF YOU ARE READING IN ENGLISH, THANK A VETERAN.**

Finally, as always, after Ardsley proudly remembered its veterans, all those who did attend the ceremony were offered some old-fashioned hot dogs and drinks.



Veterans of Ardsley's American Legion Post #458 marching in the 2012 Memorial Day Parade (Courtesy of Allison Wittenberg)

Ardsley's Pow Wow Council Tree

By **THERESA DISTEFANO**

In 1968 the construction for the much needed Ardsley Middle School was scheduled to begin. Unfortunately, an immense, magnificent 450 years old white oak tree which stood well over 80 feet tall, with a trunk 20 feet around and with a branch span of 130 feet was located in a hollow area of the construction site. Because of its location, it was scheduled to be cut down.

However, before the saws touched the tree's bark, dismayed local environmentalists' voices were heard in an appeal to save such a beautiful tree. Also, in addition to its environmental value, the tree was claimed to be a Pow Wow Council Tree that probably belonged to the local Weckquaesgeek Indians who long ago had a large camp site in the area. To support this belief, Indian artifacts were found in the rich soil surrounding the tree. These artifacts probably belonged to the Weckquaesgeek Indians and other visiting Indian tribes who had gathered under the old tree for pow wows. Pow wows were held under such magnificent trees because the Indians believed that the Indian Great Spirit hovered over such trees giving authority to decisions that were made there.

With the above histories and concerns in mind, a Save the Tree Committee was formed and a petition with over 500 names was signed in an attempt to save the tree. In addition, local residents headed by Samuel Thatcher and Nixon de Tarnowsky and championed by Mrs. Sally Nomer and Mrs. Louise Guisti actively attended school board meetings with words of protest after they learned that the tree was to be cut down in August 1968 right before the construction of the new Middle School was to begin. During this time, Save The Pow Wow Council Tree posters were displayed all over the village.

So, with the concerns of local environmentalists and historians who believed the beautiful old tree was indeed a Pow Wow Council Tree, the Ardsley Board of Education was then approached with pleas to revise the construction plans for the new Middle School in order to save the beautiful White Oak Pow Wow Council Tree.

The Ardsley Board of Education graciously received the petition and listened to the pleas with open ears and hearts. During this time of protest, all were informed that the original construction plans did indeed reflect saving the tree. However, upon further investigation into the costs of construction and before construction was just about ready to be put into action, too much rock was found in the area surrounding the Pow Wow Council. As a result, in order to save the tree it would have cost many thousands of dollars in rock excavation and it would have delayed the construction of the much-needed school.

Other attempts were made to save the tree. One way was to ask the government to declare the tree as an Historical Landmark and telegrams were sent to Stuart Uddal, who was at the time Secretary of Interior in Washington, D.C. and Dr. James Allen, who was at that time State Commissioner of Education in Albany, New York State. No answers were received. Another idea was to move the tree. This would require time to accumulate money to hire someone to do the move. When this idea was investigated, it was believed that the tree would not have survived such a move. Then it was suggested that the construction site be altered in order to save the tree. The architect claimed that this change would have cost an additional \$30,000.00 to \$40,000.00 in blasting fees and this would have delayed the construction of the much-needed school.

Time was running out. Plans for the new school had taken well over five years to come to fruition. Also, monies needed to carry out such ideas were not had. Champions of saving the tree protested that if given time, the monies would have been raised.

Unfortunately, time had run out. The tree was scheduled to be taken down. One of the very last thoughts was for the long grasses around the tree to be cut down making room for a peaceful demonstration consisting of baby carriages, mothers and other tree protectors who would circle the tree in hopes of saving it.

When all efforts to save the Pow Wow Council Tree eventually seemed to have come to an end, the Board of Education suggested that, when the tree was indeed cut down, a Pow Wow Room would have been made in the new Middle School in which cross sections of the tree would have been displayed, benches and chairs would have been made from the tree's branches, and parts of the tree would have been used in the school's wood shop. Sadly, this never occurred because, when the tree was cut down, its core was badly decayed.

Sadly, on December 8, 1968 Ardsley's Indian Pow Wow Council Tree felt the cruel power of the chain saws tearing into its old graceful branches that eventually crashed down to the tree's surrounding fertile soil. Then the tree felt the roaring bulldozer tearing and pushing its huge trunk down to meet its fallen branches. In what seemed a sort of protest, hundreds of buzzing honeybees came out from the tree's core along with tons of delicious honey. In the end, the beautiful tree found itself in a muddy hollow along with a mass of delicious honey.

Ard'sley's Indian Pow Wow Council Tree that had lived while the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock; the United States expanded from the Atlantic Coast to the Pacific Coast; the Revolutionary War freed the colonies; the Declaration of Independence was signed; the Civil War freed the slaves; WWI, WWII were fought to keep America free; and a man landed on the moon;— was dead.

Ironically, human hands destroyed this magnificent, massive beautiful tree that was held in such respect by American Indians and had survived many hurricanes, snowfalls, floods and the hot sun for 450 years. The only peace of mind that can be found is that the tree gave way so that many Ardsley children would have a place as they prepared for their futures.



Ard'sley's 450-year-old white oak Pow Wow Council Tree

Help Find A Lost WWII War Memorial

By **THERESA DISTEFANO**

On November 11, 1954, the Ardsley High School Park was dedicated at the Ashford Avenue School. The planning and funding for this memorial park and monument was a project of the Ardsley High School Honor Society.

The entire student body from Kindergarten to the Senior Class was in attendance for the somber and elaborate ceremony. The school band played an opening selection followed by a welcoming speech delivered by Honor Society President, David Purdy. The Ardsley American Legion Post conducted the flag raising ceremony accompanied by the 7th Grade Honor Guard. Trumpeters Glenn Koors and Kenneth Yocis played taps.

Miss Helen Robbie, the Honor Society advisor, related the history of the park and Principal, Arthur W. Silliman spoke about the significance of the occasion. Honor Society Secretary, Elizabeth Waldeman, then read the names of the fourteen Ardsley servicemen who gave their lives in World War II.

The Honor Guard unveiled the beautiful bronze plaque mounted on a tall concrete base. Mr. Mitchell C. Vincent led the assembly in singing the Star Spangled Banner followed by a closing band selection.



At the dedication of the Ashford Avenue Memorial Park, 1954

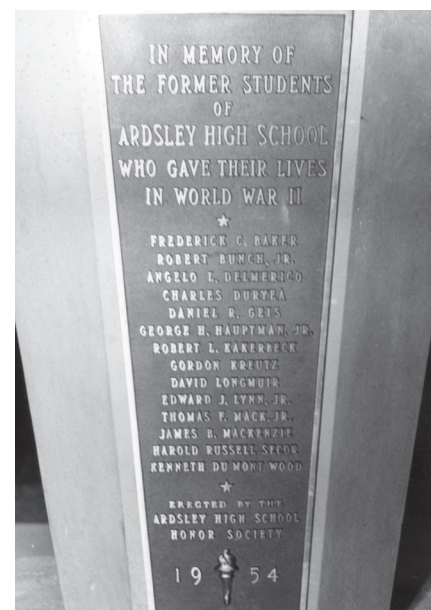
For many years following the dedication the, 7th Grade Honor Guard would raise and lower the American flag at this site. During good weather classes were instructed in history and patriotism while assembled in a semi-circle around the monument. (by Fred and Patricia Arona –Ardsley, N.Y. The War Years: 1941 – 1945)

This monument was located behind the Ashford Avenue School that now houses the Ashford Avenue Condominiums. The monument is no longer there. Much time has passed and no one seems to know where it went. So, if any one remembers where it can be found or what exactly happened to it, please let us know.

In the meantime, it has been suggested that a new monument be made. Perhaps a committee could be assembled to collect funds for such a new monument and to make arrangements to have one made. Please contact us if anyone is interested.

**List of 14 young men
who dedicated their lives
for their country in WW
II found on Ashford Park
Memorial:**

**Howard R. Secor
George H. Hauptman, Jr.
Daniel R. Geis
David W. Longmuir
Angelo L. Delmerico
Edward J. Lynn, Jr.
Robert L. Kakerbeck
Fred C. Baker
James B. Mackenzie
Kenneth D. Wood
George B. Kreutz
Charles E. Duryea
Robert E. Bunch, Jr.
Thomas F. Mack, Jr.**



Village of Ardsley Honors Beverly Levine

On Saturday, September 15 in the gazebo in Pascone Park a memorial gathering was held honoring Ardsley Trustee Beverly Levine. This gathering followed a memorial service held at Edwards-Dowdle Funeral Home in Dobbs Ferry. At both gatherings many voices were heard recalling their most treasured memories of Beverly Levine honoring her memory.

The Ardsley Historical Society will greatly miss Beverly Levine who was one of the original founders of the Ardsley Historical Society and thereafter served as its President, Vice President, as a member of its Board of Trustees and was active in maintaining its archives. Beverly was also elected Ardsley Historian.

Over the years, Beverly was extremely active in serving Ardsley. During these years she was on Ardsley's Board of Trustees for six years; she was President of the Ardsley Public Library Board of Trustees; she had been President of Ardsley Community Nursery School, a four term President of the Ardsley PTA and an Ardsley School Board member. Beverly also served the Town of Greenburgh while she served on the Southern Westchester BOCES board.

While serving Ardsley over the years, Beverly was a loving wife to her husband Joe, who passed away in 1994; a loving mother to her children, Sue, Rich, and Mike; and a loving grandmother to her four grandchildren, Brian, Rachel, Emily and Daniel.

Over the years Beverly was a true activist who used her voice to champion all those whose voices could not be heard. She was known as one who always got the job done and was fearless in doing so.

Along with all of Ardsley, the Ardsley Historical Society will greatly miss Beverly Levine.



