

# Down Memory Lane

*By Vin Bellew*

## HOW LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD STARTED...

The Eastchester Little League started small and played its games on the old Wilmont Field in northern Eastchester, opposite Lord and Taylor.

But, they spread their wings and needed a larger field of their own.

John Iacofano, the daddy of Little League, came to our recreation office in Town, which at that time was in the old Wilmont School. He wanted a field of their own and was it possible?

At that time, there was a piece of property on Garth Road and Harney which was owned by the Town and was reserved for recreational purposes. The area was covered with giant stones which had been dumped there when the Town was excavating Garth Road for sewers and drains. It was nothing but an acre of stones.

We went to Supervisor O'Rourke with an idea. If we could get Lawrence Labriola to clear the area of the stone and then level off the field for a playing area, the Little League could have their ball park.

Supervisor O'Rourke agreed.

So, for about a year, Lawrence Labriola had his compressors on the field breaking the giant stones down to size and hauling them away.

When all the stone was gone, he drained and leveled the whole area.

It didn't cost the Town one cent and the Little League had their ball field. Labriola got paid in stone.

John Iacofano and his crew went to work and built the best Little League Park in the area.

There were some people who

thought that this piece of property was too valuable a piece of real estate to make into a ball park.

Supervisor O'Rourke pointed out that this heavily densed area with apartments needed some green space and the Little League would make use of it. He further added, "I know this piece of property is worth a lot of money, but not half as much as our children."

At that time, the Recreation Commission was very wise and gave the Little League a permit to play on the field. The Recreation Commission had jurisdiction over the field and could give it to others for recreational purposes, which it did.

Also at that time, a resident brought a court action against the use of the field by the Little League only. It was thrown out of court when the Recreation Commission showed the field had been used by other organizations.

Today, the Eastchester Little League is an important part of our community. It provides activities for our boys and girls. The beautiful part of Little League are the volunteer services given by the parents of these boys and girls. When a child runs the cycle of Little League, with the parents cooperating, another child and parents take over. The list is a long and proud one. But the list must be headed by John Iacofano, Frank O'Rourke and Lawrence Labriola. The three of them are gone, but the Little League, in its history, should remember.

Just a little bit of history.