

# *Port Washington Youth Activities*

## PYA SPORTS HALL OF FAME

### CHRIS AVAZIS



Starting his day as early as 6AM, you will often find Chris Avazis alternating between his responsibilities as president and founder of Arena Sport and Graphics on Main Street in Port Washington, and at Lions Field as the lynchpin of the PYA Field Committee. He is the latest in a long line of PYA HOF honorees that have grown up in Port Washington, attended its schools, played PYA sports, settled back in town to raise a family, and given his time and efforts back to the organization.

Football (4 years) and lacrosse (5 years) were his favorite PYA activities growing up. He also played basketball and soccer in his formative years, but focused on his 2 main sports at Schreiber High School. He played 2 years of varsity football under Dan Biro, but excelled on the lacrosse team playing all 4 years on the varsity for Ken Case. He was All-League in both sports during his senior year, and as defensive captain for the football Vikings, received the Coach's Award for his all-around effort and skill. He led the lacrosse team to the league championship in his senior year as well. All during high school, PYA volunteer involvement was in his blood even then. As a student, he refereed PYA midget football games, and also worked in the old snack bar at Lions Field.

Moving on to C.W. Post College, Chris parlayed his love of and skill in lacrosse into a year on the varsity team with the Pioneers. After college, he was a member of Harvey Cohen's (PYA HOF '91) North Hempstead Lacrosse Club for 5 years, and served as the club's general manager for 6 years after his playing days ended. He subsequently helped organize and co-founded the Arena Graphics Lacrosse Club. Chris also managed to find time to be a volunteer assistant coach for Schreiber's lacrosse team from 1986 to 1996, and coached the school's summer and winter league teams from 1988 to 1998. Two of those teams won the Nassau County championship in 1990 and 1995. Both he and his brother Steve have used these player relationships to organize the combined PYA/Schreiber High School Alumni Lacrosse Game for more than 15 years.

As Chris established his local business, he returned to his PYA roots once again and helped spearhead the Developmental Lacrosse program, which introduces the sport to children ages 5 to 7. He has run this program as either coach or commissioner for 12 years. He has also been a coach in PYA's field hockey, girls' lacrosse, and girls' basketball programs for the last 3 years as his young daughters have taken up those sports.

This dedication was recognized by the PYA Board in 1997 when Chris was voted in as a Director. He dove right in from day one and offered to serve on the Field Committee, which he now co-Chairs. While he has also put significant time in with the Dinner Dance, Nominating, and Hall of Fame Committees, it is that service on the Field Committee of which he is most proud, and believes to be his most effective contribution.

Chris was there in December of 1999 when the board put forth the most ambitious project in its 44 year history to redevelop Lions Field into today's "Field of Dreams". That committee oversaw all aspects of construction from the bid process, to contracting, to scheduling the individual phases, up to completion. As de facto project manager, Chris was in the middle of it all.

Chris' community involvement does not stop with PYA. In 2004, he joined the local Lions Club, won the organization's "Rookie of the Year" award, and followed that up with its "Lion of the Year" award in 2005.

He feels the most gratifying aspect of his involvement in PYA is seeing the gradual development of the kids in our programs -- not just as athletes, but as individuals whose lives develop and to which PYA contributes in a positive way. His greatest satisfaction comes from his family; his wife Maddalena, and his 3 daughters – Julianne, 8, Lily, 7, and Grace, 5 and the parental thrill to coach all 3 girls in PYA sports.