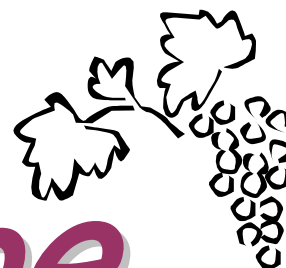




WESTCHESTER RECREATION
AND PARK SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. Box 152 • Valhalla, New York 10595

MARCH
2017



the Grapevine

President's Message

By: Matt Arone

As I write this message, I can look out my window and see piles of snow on the ground as the temperature hits the 60 degree range. That being said, I'm not sure if your department is booking a group ski trip or taking the cover off your municipal pool. Either way, I hope you all survived the winter season and are prepping for another exciting spring season. Hire your camp staff, order your new tennis nets and go find a set of bases for your ballfields. With March comes Spring!

I had the honor to represent our society last month at the Municipal Administrators Association luncheon and meeting in Elmsford. I was invited to speak on the initiatives and benefits of both recreation and our society. I must say I was a bit nervous speaking to so many respected officials, most of them our very own bosses. But the audience was very attentive and most seemed to be interested as I promoted WRAPS and our profession. I was fortunate enough to have a few of our members in the crowd for support. Matt Trainor from North Castle, Brian Gray from Scarsdale and both Daryl Sudlow and Bill Heidepriem from Bedford were in attendance.

I was able to explain to the administrators how our society is made up of over 270 members including municipal positions, parks workers, senior citizen staff, students, therapeutic rec employees, boards/commissions, vendors, entertainers, county employees and Life members. I think you would all appreciate that our membership numbers dropped by 40 members back in 2013, but we have been able to bounce back to a strong 274 to date. That tells me that many municipalities have decided to continue supporting us by assisting with our membership dues. Selfishly, I'd also like to think we were able to get our numbers back up in part because the society offers so

much. And that became more apparent as my presentation progressed.

The responsibilities of our 11 person executive board keep us quite busy. From organizing our monthly educational sessions to managing our web site and Facebook page, we have our hands full. WRAPS helps organize the NYSRPS Downstate Conference each November and is frequently relied upon to chip in during the annual state conference as well. We put together an entertainment audition and a vendor luncheon so all our members have an opportunity to see firsthand what some of the most updated products and services are available. We also host the mandatory summer camp workshop with the health department and put together random recreation professional meetings a few times per year when important topics come up.

I had the chance to plug our annual awards and scholarship luncheon and was able to inform the group that we have 17 awards, scholarships and fellowships available. As I explained the criteria of some of these awards, I implored to the group to work with their own recreation staff and nominate their facilities, programs and employees so their municipalities can be properly recognized.

Our fundraising efforts were discussed. I was able to explain that we fundraise in order to provide financial scholarships for rec professionals and students. We also fundraise so we can host educational workshops and sponsor certification courses. I was proud to inform the administrators about our WRAPS Camps Care About Hunger Food Drive and the financial contribution we were able to forward to Newtown, CT to help build a memorial playground after the 2012 Sandy Hook tragedies.

How we all network as professionals impressed my audience. They were happy to know we frequently communicate via e-mail whether we are asking advice, looking for departmental policy information or trying to find the best prices on bulk chlorine for our municipal swimming pools.

I concluded my presentation that day the same way I'd like to conclude this message to all of you; that our recreation departments get overlooked and underestimated sometimes by our local governments, especially in comparison to some of the services other departments provide. But we rec professionals take great pride in what we do. Individuals move into our respective communities asking about how good the school districts are and how strong the recreational programming is. Local real estate agencies are always contacting us asking for copies of our program brochures. Prospective homeowners don't ask realtors what time garbage pickup is. They want to know if the neighborhood has safe parks and good summer camps. We are the lead agencies that provide programs for children, senior citizens and people with disabilities. We might not always be viewed as a vital service, but everybody has to remember how much we really do mean to our residents and how important we are to our local government. I truly believe that recreation and parks is the face of each community we all represent and hope we continue to get the support from our boards and commissions. Because we deserve it.

"Be so good, they can't ignore you."—Steve Martin



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Gingerbread House Contest

By: Sally Veltidi

In the summer of 2016 a young resident wrote me a letter inquiring about having a Town wide Gingerbread House Decorating Contest. After communicating with her several times, we set up a meeting to discuss the potential event.

This young lady came in prepared with note cards that included questions as well as her thoughts and ideas on how the contest could be made possible. We had a meeting and decided that this would be a wonderful event for the residents of the Town of Eastchester. She did have one major request: that Mr. Santa Claus himself was available! So luckily I was able to make a call to the North Pole in the off season to reserve the date well in advance.

Fast forward to a Sunday in December at Eastchester Town Hall; with over 50 participants, made up of 4 year olds to 6th graders in teams or individuals, as well as an additional 50 parents and family members, this young resident's vision became a reality. The morning was filled with decorating, smiles and even a visit from Santa himself! Contest participants brought toys to donate to Toys for Toys in memory of a local resident that lost her battle with Breast Cancer earlier in 2016.

The Town of Eastchester has Miss Bailey Shaw to thank for their newest (very successful) Holiday Event. I know that her parents Angela Thornton, Recreation Supervisor of the Village of Irvington and Kyle Thornton, Assistant Superintendent of the Town of Yorktown are very proud of Bailey, as they should be.



Saving Rec Basketball *By Angela Thornton*

With the growth of travel and AAU programs, Recreation Departments are faced with the challenge of making community programs appealing while remaining true to our recreation philosophy. Programs are trying to stay afloat with changing participation numbers due to some of the stronger kids leaving for these elite programs making it difficult to keep in house leagues going for the recreation level players in our communities.



Photo: Irvington Rec Girls take on Dobbs Ferry Rec Girls at the Dows Lane Gym in Irvington.

The Irvington Recreation Department and Dobbs Ferry Recreation Department has partnered for many years for girls' basketball at both the 3rd & 4th grade and 5th & 6th grade levels. We added a few games with the 5th & 6th grade boys teams as well, including Scarsdale Assistant Superintendent Matt Arone's son, Luke's team. This year, Rye Recreation joined the fun at the 5th & 6th grade girls level. These collaborative efforts provide a more enriching experience for the young players providing the opportunity to see different competition. In some cases, the privileged to play other communities at the younger level is one reserved for those who play at the Annual Westchester County Recreation Basketball Tournament. Having these interleague games as part of the regular season brings this fun experience to all of our recreation level players.



Photo: Irvington Rec Girls take on Rye Rec Girls at the Gina Maher Gym in Irvington.

Thank you Mike Dominici from Dobbs Ferry Recreation and Greg Bean from Rye Recreation for your collaborative efforts in making this is a season of fun, memories, and basketball for the girls in our communities. And thank you WRAPS for providing enjoyable opportunities for networking between departments making collaborative experiences like this possible.



Photo: Irvington Rec Girls take on Rye Rec Girls at the Gina Maher Gym in Irvington.



DATES TO REMEMBER!

April 18th
2017 Camp Workshop
Westchester County Center

April 27th
Recreation Professionals Meeting
Briarcliff Library – 10am

Past-Presidents Lunch



Pictured Above: 2016 Past-President's Luncheon which was held in December at Casa Rina in Thornwood, NY.



Pictured Above: Dave Goldberg, Superintendent of Recreation for Pound Ridge, enjoying great conversations at the Past-Presidents Lunch.

WRAPS Luncheons and Meetings



Pictured Above: The January Luncheon, held at Conant Hall in Pound Ridge, was well attended by many WRAPS Members to listen to the County Health Department discuss new Camp Regulations. Special thanks to Dave Goldberg for hosting the luncheon!



Pictured Above: WRAPS President Matt Arone was the guest speaker at the Municipal Administrators Association Lunch Meeting in Elmsford on February 15th. His speech included reporting on the initiatives and benefits of WRAPS and Recreation as a whole.

WRAPS Vendor's Lunch

On February 8th, WRAPS held its annual Vendor's Lunch at the Westchester County Center for our Vendor and Entertainers to showcase their products to our membership. All of those who attended had a great time playing around and learning about all of those great products that are out there. WRAPS is committed to help support those who support us. Always reach out to our Vendor and Entertainer Members when planning an event or when you need that next great product for your community! Below are some photos from the event. More photos can be seen on our website.



Bits ~N~ Pieces

Congratulations to **Ike Kuzio** on his new position as Superintendent of Recreation at Town of New Castle Recreation Department.

Congratulations to **Kendra Garrison** on her new position as Superintendent of Recreation at the Village of Dobbs Ferry Recreation Department.

Congratulations to **Matt Nordt** on his new position as Superintendent of Recreation at the Village of Hastings Recreation Department.

Congratulations to **Joseph Carcione** on his new position as Assistant General Manager at Lake Isle Country Club.

Snow Much Fun!

Pictures from North Salem Receptions "Learn to Ski/Snowboard" group at Thunder Ridge. They were able to squeeze in their lessons despite of an uncooperative cold weather season!



Guess the WRAPS Member!

Think you know your fellow Wraps Members? How well do you know your Executive Board? Match them up and see how you do! Answers on last page.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Matt Arone | 7. Bob Kaczmarek |
| 2. Brian Gray | 8. Ike Kuzio |
| 3. Sandy Korkatzis | 9. Kim O'Brien |
| 4. Erin Mantz | 10. Kyle Thornton |
| 5. Daryl Sudlow | 11. Sally Veltidi |
| 6. Dave Goldberg | |

- This WRAPS Member can wiggle/shake their eyes.
- This WRAPS Member made their stage debut this past summer as Miss Lynch in a production of Grease.
- This WRAPS Member once owned a business called "All Burnt Out Crafts".
- This WRAPS Member once wrapped Jimmy Key's (former Yankee Pitcher) knee and helped him off the court when he hurt it playing in an adult Basketball League Game.
- This WRAPS Member is a closet Barry Manilow fan and has attended 8 of his concerts in person.
- This WRAPS Member may not have been one of the actual torch bearers, but was selected along with 3 other friends to participate & run in the Olympic Torch Relay along with the Olympic Torch Bearer in their community.
- This WRAPS Member has over 1000 different Tino Martinez Baseball Cards and Collectables.
- This WRAPS Member was the New England Champion in the 100 Yard Freestyle and graduated college with 4 Swimming School Records.
- This WRAPS Member received their Black Belt in Karate after 6 years of training and is currently working towards their second black belt.
- This WRAPS Members first car was a Toyota Corolla Wagon.
- This WRAPS Member was riding a bike through a park in Amsterdam and crashed into a man walking on stilts.

Condolences

Our condolences to the family of John W. Zificsak, retired Recreation Supervisor with the Town of Mt. Pleasant who passed away on February 5. John worked for the Town of Mt. Pleasant for 35 years, retiring in 2003. John ran the Mt. Pleasant Senior Program as well as the Adult Softball League for many years along with numerous other programs and events. John's kind heart, despite the tough "play by the rules" exterior, will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with John's family.

Happy Retirement

By: *Frances DiMase, MSW*



After more than 35 years in the field of Recreation, Robert O. Snyder retired on Dec. 21, 2016 from the position of Superintendent of Recreation and Parks for the Town of New Castle. A well-deserved celebration of his long career was held at Travelers' Rest on Jan. 12, 2017. More than 75 family, friends and colleagues attended to celebrate his success. His dedication to the Recreation profession was noted by those who paid tribute to him on that special evening. A highlight of his career was the beautification of Gedney Park and the creation of the 911 Memorial. This very meaningful Memorial was greatly appreciated by the community of New Castle and all who have visited this special site. Its beauty and simplicity make it the perfect place for contemplation and remembrance.

Now Bob deserves time to relax and play. However, in spite of the valiant efforts of Donna Esperito and Marilyn Glasser at the party, we never did learn what the 'O' stands for. Bob, will you ever tell us?? Happy Retirement!

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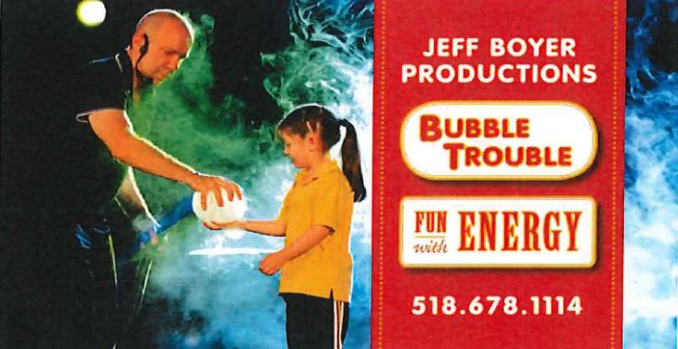
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Brian Gray, Vice President	722-1191
Sandy Korkatzis, Secretary	777-7784
Erin Mantz, Treasurer	245-4650
Daryl Sudlow, Past President	864-3715

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Bob Kaczmarek	693-8985
Ike Kuzio	967-2535
Kim O'Brien	864-3716
Kyle Thornton	245-4650
Sally Veltidi	771-3313



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***Guess the WRAPS Member!
Answer Key!***

1.e, 2.h, 3.i, 4.j, 5.f, 6.a, 7.c, 8.d, 9.k, 10.g, 11.b

How did you do? Did you guess them all correctly?
If you guessed them all correctly then the WRAPS
Executive Board would like to speak to you about
the upcoming Lottery Numbers!

Want to be part of "Guess the WRAPS Member"?
Submit your fun fact and you might make it into the
next issue!



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The next issue of the Grapevine is scheduled to be
printed in June 2017!

Anyone interested in submitting materials must do
so by **Wednesday, May 31, 2017**

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