

*the*

# Grapevine



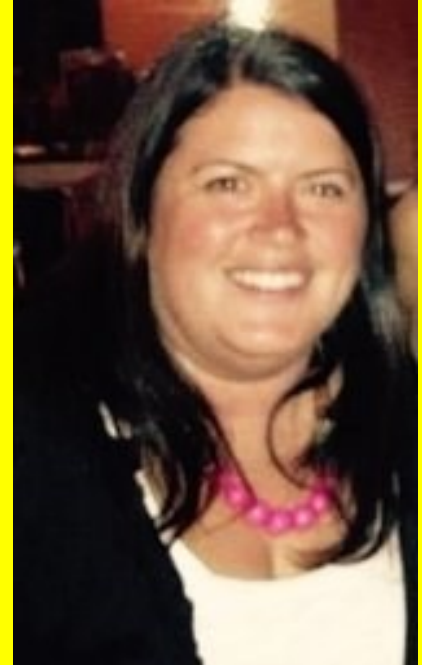
*June*  
*2023*  
*Edition*



**WRAPS**  
LIFE ENHANCEMENT THROUGH RECREATION AND PARKS  
**WESTCHESTER RECREATION  
AND PARK SOCIETY, INC.**  
P.O. Box 152 • Valhalla, New York 10595

# Presidents Letter

As the summer approaches most people begin to think of vacations, oceans and BBQs. Here in the Parks and Recreation Field, we think about chlorine levels in pools, weather forecasts and buddy checks. With our busiest time of year approaching I am happy we were able to see each other at the Awards & Scholarship Luncheon on June 9<sup>th</sup> in Rye. It was great to honor those in our field who work so hard with the recognition they deserve. Congratulations to all of our winners and retirees. Thank you to the Awards & Scholarship Committee for a wonderful afternoon!



Please be sure to have your Summer Program participate in the “Camps Care” Initiative. When speaking with the local Food Bank in Tuckahoe, the Director let me know that they depend on this food drive each year as people tend to donate less to food banks in the Summer. People assume there is not a need for food donations since it is warmer out. There is actually a bigger need for food donations in the Summer as children are not in school and not guaranteed to receive a lunch on a daily basis. Please be sure to help out your local community with this initiative. Thank you, Bob K, for spearheading this each year.

We are looking for difference municipalities to host WRAPS meetings for the 2023-2024 year. If you are interested in hosting and have a venue available that holds between 40-70 participants please reach out to Erin Mantz [emantz@ryeny.gov](mailto:emantz@ryeny.gov) with your availability.

When things get hectic this summer, remember “Keep your face always toward the sunshine- and shadows will fall behind you”- Walt Whitman. Good Luck with the upcoming busy season and know we can always turn to each other whenever we need something.

-Sally Veltidi

## Community Spotlight— White Plains Recreation

White Plains, the county seat of Westchester County, New York since 1757, came into being in 1683. Men from nearby Rye, New York purchased 4,435 acres of land from the Weckquaeskeck Indians. They dubbed their purchase “White Plains”, translating the Indian “Quarropas” or white marshes or plains. Eighteen settlers were granted a patent to White Plains from King George II in 1721. At that time, homes, churches and businesses had already sprung up along the “Village Street”, now Broadway.

White Plains Recreation & Parks was created by local law that was ratified by the voters of White Plains on November 5, 1940. The Mission of the Recreation & Parks Department is to enhance the quality of life by providing recreational opportunities through safe, well-organized and affordable programs and facilities; and to maintain a comprehensive network of parks, trails and open spaces that promote the mental, physical and social well-being of our residents.

The City of White Plains Recreation & Parks Department has 21 Parks/Facilities including a Community Center, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, a Greenway, and Specialty Parks that include Baldwin Farms Community Gardens and Bryant-Mamaroneck Park which houses our StoryWalk reading trail. The City of White Plains Recreation & Parks Department also runs a seasonal outdoor Ice Rink, two neighborhood pool facilities as well as two dog parks. The Recreation & Parks Department offers a variety of programs from preschool aged to active older adults. Two times a year the Department publishes a 50 page brochure for Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter programs and events within the City of White Plains.

Some highlights in White plains include over 100 cherry trees planted through out various parks in the City, but most notably Turnure Park (pictured below). The City also host an annual New Year’s Eve Ball Drop in Downtown White Plains (pictured below), attracting thousands of people each year. Reniassance Plaza is located in the City’s downtown and has four fountains choreographed to music and in the wintertime it turns in a beautiful winter wonderland (pictured below).



NYE Ball Drop  
Downtown White Plains



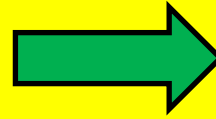
Cherry Trees  
Turnure Park



Holiday Tree Lighting  
Renaissance Plaza



## Out with the OLD, In with the NEW!



Flyers, letterheads, binder, stickers...you name it. Anything to do with WRAPS dons the green and white Westchester County outlined logo we've become so familiar with over the years. This logo has been used by WRAPS for over 35 years!

Now, with a new fundraising idea proposed by Matt Arone to the WRAPS Executive Board that will bring WRAPS apparel to our membership, we believe it is time to give our logo a face-lift! And who better to help design our new logo than our members who make WRAPS the successful organization that is it today?

We're asking that anyone who has a new and creative idea to submit their designs to the WRAPS board for consideration. To sweeten the pot and get those creative juices flowing, anyone who submits a design will receive a free item with the newly designed logo!

Submission are due to Kim ([kobrien@bedfordny.gov](mailto:kobrien@bedfordny.gov)) or Brittany ([bneider@mynewcastle.org](mailto:bneider@mynewcastle.org)) by Friday, July 14<sup>th</sup>!

## WRAPS Winning Big at 2023 NYSRPS Awards Ceremony!

**WRAPS members were honored at the NYSRPS Awards & Recognition Dinner during the annual state conference in Monticello, NY this past April.**

Recently retired Pound Ridge Superintendent **David Goldberg** was awarded the **DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**. This is the most prestigious award that NYSRPS offers. To receive the Distinguished Service Award, the winner had to be an individual who has made significant contributions, over a period of 10 years or more, to NYSRPS and their local regional partner/affiliate.

**Ricky DiRago**, Recreation Attendant from Rye was awarded the **YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD**. The Young Professional Award is presented to a current parks and recreation professional who exhibits the attributes of an emerging leader, as displayed through their initiative, innovation, and contributions to the park and recreation field. Winners have a record of career advancement, be engaged in professional and/or community organizations, and demonstrate outstanding service to their agency. The must have less than five years-experience in the field of parks and recreation.

SUNY-Cortland Junior **Samantha Arone** received the 2023 New York State Recreation and Park Society "Friends" Scholarship. The Friends of NYSRPS offers an annual scholarship opportunity of \$1,000 for a student pursuing a career in the parks, recreation or historic preservation industry. Samantha received the scholarship in recognition of her exemplary academic record, leadership skills, co-curricular and out-of-school activities, professional affiliations and involvement in the field of recreation.

**Westchester County PRC** received two awards: 'Special Event Award' for their Lasdon Park & Arboretum Hundred Acres Wood Exhibit and 'Program of Merit Award' for Lasdon Park and Arboretum Dinosaur Garden.





# Outstanding Coach of the Year—North America

-By Serena Norr, Digital Editor of Westchester Family

## Meet Joe Bellini: Outstanding Coach of the Year – North America

Joe Bellini, Westchester-based Special Olympics coach at North East Special Recreation, was recently named ‘Outstanding Coach of the Year – North America.’ This incredible honor is a testament to Joe’s work over the past 29 years where he has worked with thousands of athletes and his teams have competed at every level of competition, including two World Games! Read on to learn more about Joe, his coaching style, and the upcoming NY Special Olympics Spring Games.



### **Westchester Family. How did you get into Special Olympics coaching?**

**Joe Bellini:** I began working at North East Special Recreation as a recreation therapist in 1994 and part of my responsibilities was a Special Olympics training program. It was awesome and I was hooked. We now train 75 athletes in various sports. (Floor hockey, basketball, softball, track and field and bowling).

### **Westchester Family: What is your approach to working with Special Olympic athletes?**

**Joe Bellini:** My approach has changed over the course of 29 years. At first, I was just there to have fun and make sure that everyone was engaged. Then I was blown away by the level of ability some of our athletes had. They could do a lot more than we were asking. Now, I try to get the most out of all our athletes. We push them to do better, but our expectations are realistic. Our motto is “good athletes, better people.”



### **Westchester Family: Congrats on being named the Coach of the Year – North America! Tell us more about that honor?**

**Joe Bellini:** It is given to an active certified Special Olympics coach who has met several criteria, particularly having made a significant impact on the local Special Olympics program, the community, and most importantly the athletes. There are more than 135,000 coaches in the North American region. (US, Canada, and the Caribbean). I was nominated for Special Olympics NYS coach of the year in 2021 and won. This made me eligible for 2022 North America coach of the year. I had no idea these awards existed and still can’t believe it. It is humbling

to be recognized for something you truly love to do.

### **Westchester Family: Tell us more about North East Special Recreation.**

**Joe Bellini:** North East is a community based therapeutic recreation agency. We provide recreational opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities. We serve 12 towns in the North East portion of Westchester County. We offer programming throughout the year and have a variety of experiences including Special Olympics training, bowling, day trips into the community, Saturday children’s programs and weekend overnight vacation programs. We also have a 6-week summer day camp in Briarcliff Manor and so much more. We encourage our participants to socialize in a safe environment that will allow them to get the most out of the opportunities we offer.

Continued next page.....

# Outstanding Coach of the Year—North America

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**Westchester Family:** We are excited to learn more about the NY Special Olympics Spring Games on April 22nd. What people can expect?

**Joe Bellini:** It is a track and Field meet that takes place on the campus of the USMA in West Point. There are hundreds of coaches and athletes from the Hudson Valley Region of NYS. From opening ceremonies to the awards presentation, it consistently gives you chills as you watch athletes give their best efforts while they compete in the events they have been training for and smile wide as they receive their medals or ribbons. The best part of the day is seeing the way everyone works together to make the event successful. Athletes compare results, cheer each other on and catch up with old friends. Volunteers give their time to make the day so much fun for the athletes. And to top it off, families are there to encourage their athletes to do their best and have fun. Everyone is included, no one is left out. It is what Special Olympics is all about



**Westchester Family:** Anything else to add?

**Joe Bellini:** I truly love being a special Olympics coach. I have been blessed to work with an amazing group of athletes and coaches in an incredible organization. I met my wife while coaching Special Olympics and she taught me so much about how to work with athletes with ID. I had the opportunity to travel to Japan and China for World Games. I have coached some athletes from young kids to grown adults that still compete to this day. To say it is rewarding is an understatement. It is life changing and I hope I can do it for a lot longer.




*Congratulations!*



Westchester Recreation and Parks Society

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# Bits ~ N ~ Pieces

Congratulations to **Ken Sherman** on their promotion to Director of Recreation & Conservation for the Town of Cortlandt!

Congratulations to **Lesley Popkin** on their promotion to Deputy Director of Recreation & Conservation for the Town of Cortlandt!

Congratulations to **Amanda Farina** on their new position as Recreation Supervisor for Bedford Recreation!

Congratulations to **Joan Hernandez** on their new position as Recreation Supervisor for Westchester County Parks!

Congratulations to **Kevin Blanden** on their new position as Recreation Supervisor/Pool Manager for Scarsdale Recreation!

Congratulations to **Jamie Corradina** on their promotion to Senior Recreation Leader for Eastchester Recreation!

Congratulations to **Michael Portnoy** on their promotion to Recreation Leader for Lewisboro Recreation!

Congratulations to **Allie Cirrincione** on their new position as Recreation Leader for Tarrytown Recreation!

Congratulations to **Michael Gould** on their new position as Recreation Assistant for Yorktown Recreation!

Congratulations to **Dom Monopoli** on their promotion to Foreman for Yorktown Recreation!

Congratulations to **Andrew Cerrato** on their promotion to Assistant Foreman for Yorktown Recreation!

After a 33 year career as a dedicated professional in the field, Director of Programs and Services for Westchester County Parks, Joe Lemischak retired at the end of May. Joe Lem started his career in the Town of New Castle (11 years) before joining the PRC family (22 years). A few of his accomplishments along the way include; WRAPS President (2010 – 2012), Co-Chair of the 2004 State Conference and Director of the New York Empire State Game which was held in Westchester in 2007. We all wish Joe the best in his well-deserved retirement.



# Rec Professionals Need Vacations Too!



Elaine Donnelly (Recreation Supervisor) Mt. Pleasant and husband Kevin Donnelly (retired) Westchester County PRC recently traveled to Ireland with two of their children, Sean and Kailey. The group that they traveled with was organized by Eileen Loehner (retired) Oceanside Parks & Rec, California.

# Have a Great Camp Season!

## Summer Camp Counselor



What my friends think I do.



What my Mom thinks I do.



What my Boss thinks I do.



What Society thinks I do.



What I think I do.



What I actually do.



# GUESS THE WRAPS ATHLETE!

*Answers on last page*

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# WRAPS Representing at the 2023 NYRPS Conference -Monticello, NY





## **JOIN a Committee and watch WRAPS flourish.**

WRAPS is a society that succeeds when its members share their ideas, knowledge and time. With the new WRAPS membership year starting in September it is your chance to get involved and take an active role in the society, there are many committee in need of membership involvement and one might be a perfect fit for you. .

Please review the committees and if you are interested in getting involved, please reach out to the WRAPS secretary Kim O'Brien to get your name added to the list. The committee commitment is for two years and will start in September. The President will speak with all members interested to insure the commitment and fit is right. Not all committees have openings but put your name out there so the board has opportunities to get you involved.

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>GOALS</b>
<b>Program, Education &amp; Training</b>	Help the Vice President of WRAPS provide training & educational opportunities for membership. Support the monthly meeting and find speakers, timely topics and seek CEU opportunities for the membership. Assist with check in and 50/50 raffles at the meetings
<b>Membership/Recruitment</b>	Assist the Treasurer with membership and help increase membership on all levels
<b>Parks</b>	Provide 2-3 relevant seminar/workshops to increase interest of parks personnel
<b>Conferences –Downstate / NYSRPS conference</b>	Work with the past president to help plan and work on local and state conference needs. Find speakers, moderators and commercial partners to increase the attendance and insure all affiliates are involved
<b>Recreation Professionals</b>	Provide 2-3 meetings of interest to all recreation professionals to share information and ideas
<b>Camp Section</b>	Act as a liaison to & provide input to Westchester County Health Department on concerns of municipal camps & input & planning of annual workshop; maintain cooperative working relationship
<b>Senior/Aging</b>	Provide 2-3 meetings of interest to recreation professionals working with this population to share information and ideas
<b>Awards &amp; Scholarships</b>	Work on the overall Awards and Scholarship luncheon, by being involved with all aspects including brochure development, encourage applicants & entries in all categories for awards and presenting at the luncheon
<b>Personnel Standards</b>	Work with County Civil Service to address department concerns; active lists; test administration time lines; job classification
<b>Nominations/Elections</b>	Solicit nominations & conduct elections in a timely manner. January – March is election season

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<b>Summer Auditions</b>	Bring the arts to the members. Help develop an Entertainers Showcase where our Entertainers showcase their programs to the professional members. Help provide a variety of entertainment to choose from; increase participant and vendor involvement
<b>Career Development</b>	What do you do? Re-activate career development thru involvement with local HS's & colleges thru publicity; career fairs; use of student interns; provide info at conferences
<b>Health &amp; Safety</b>	Help provide the membership with avenues to receive staff training, development and certification with Red Cross training and beyond
<b>Public Relations: WRAPS Website Grapevine; Facebook Page</b>	Get the word out and share. Promote WRAPS thru various media/social media outlets such as the WRAPS website, Facebook page & Grapevine to broaden our exposure to all
<b>Events Committee (Socials/Fundraising)</b>	Let's get together. Members will help provide 2-4 fundraising/social events that can be enjoyed by & benefit to a variety of people/causes
<b>IDEA Committee</b>	Help increase the diversity in the field of recreation and parks and what we offer to our residents. This committee will help with increasing awareness of diverse opportunities and insure members all are

**Interested in one or more committees?**

**Reach out to Kim O'Brien: [kobrien@bedfordny.gov](mailto:kobrien@bedfordny.gov)**



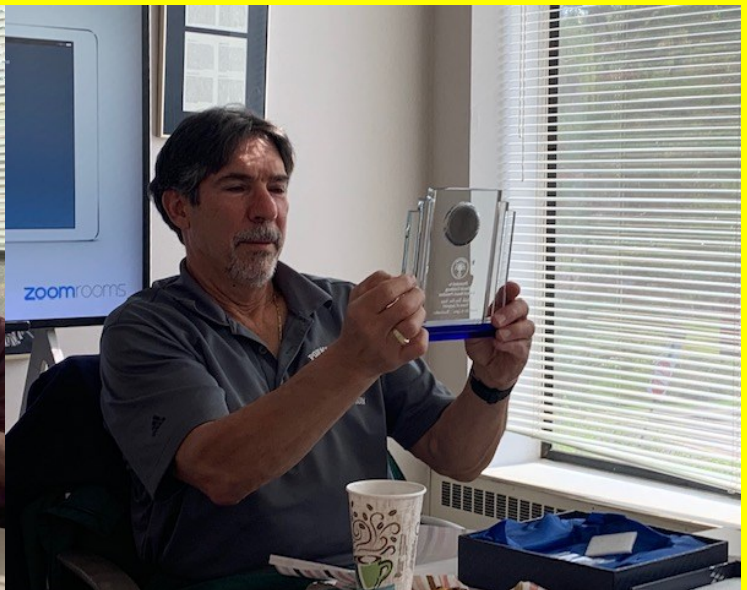


# David Goldberg's Retirement Celebrations

## -Pound Ridge Town Park & North East Special Recreation Meeting



Dave Goldberg retired after 18 years with Pound Ridge Recreation Department! Dave, who holds “Music and Making people happy” nearest to his heart, is proud of how recreation opportunities in Pound Ridge expanded during his tenure, including concerts in the pool, movies in the park, fishing day, a 5k road race, adult volleyball and open mic nights. Dave also served for over a decade as President of Northeast Westchester Special Recreation. Dave will be missed not only in Pound Ridge but also within WRAPS with his amazing leadership! **Editors Note:** Dave has been instrumental in my development as a recreation professional and as a person. I will miss seeing him around but will remain friends and always look to his leadership (Thank you from Kyle)!





# 2023 Awards & Scholarship Winners

-Shenorock Shore Club—Rye, NY

## Professional Service Awards

**15 Years:** Erin Mantz

**20 Years:** Sandy Korkatzis, Angela Portanova,  
Angela Thornton

**25 Years:** Mark Duncan, Manny Morales, Robin Pell

**35 Years:** Sue Snyder

**40 Years:** Sia Tofano

## Lifetime Membership Recipients

David Goldberg, Joseph Lemischak, John Palmiotto,  
Sally Rogol

## Dr. Sal Prezioso Fellowship Award

Marissa Lieto, Town of Yorktown



## Public Service Award - Individual

Paul Kwame Johnson, Town of Greenburgh



## Voluntary Service Award - Organization

Town of Mamaroneck Fire Department



## E. Mario Cribari Voluntary Service Award - Individual

Ian Fairclough & Tommy McDonough, Town of Eastchester



## Irwin "Red" Klein Commercial Recreation Award

Carpet Trends, City of Rye



# 2023 Awards & Scholarship Winners

....Continued

## Staff Associate Awards

Sophie Diamond, City of Rye



AND

Scott Madalon, Village of Irvington



## Matt Dolan Innovative Program Award & Award Grant



Lasdon Dinosaur Garden, WCPRC

## VolRuth M. and Bill Lederer Fellowship

Pillows, Pajamas & Pancakes Party, South East Consortium



AND

Special Olympics "Floor Ball Team", North East Westchester Special Recreation

## Austin Welch Pierre Award

Ryan Coyne, City of Rye



## Henry B Funking Youth Award

Jenna DeGrazia, SUNY New Paltz



# 2023 Awards & Scholarship Winners

.....Continued

## Joseph E. Curtis Achievement Award

Matthew Trainor, North Castle



## Peter J. Mayers Award For Merit

David Goldberg, Pound Ridge



## Outgoing Board Members

Jennifer Guisti, North Castle

Bob Kaczmarek, Scarsdale



## New Board Members

Kathy Laoutaris, Rye Brook &

Austin Cunney, South East Consortium



**More photos can be found on our Facebook page and WRAPS Website. Thank you to Frank Bernabei for the amazing photos once again!**



# WRAPS VENDOR & ENTERTAINER MEMBERS

More listed at [wrapsny.com](http://wrapsny.com)



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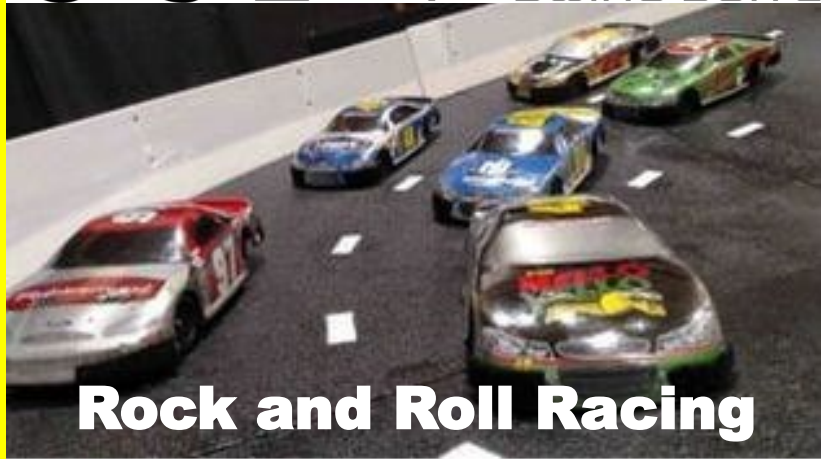
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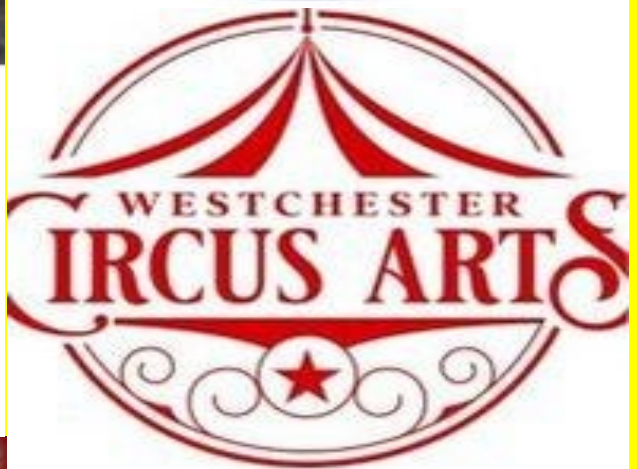
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# JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES

## To Reach the Executive Board

Sally Veltidi, President	771-3313
Erin Mantz, VP	967-2535
Kim O'Brien, Secretary	864-3716
Vicky Laoutaris, Treasurer	381-7865
Dave Goldberg, Past President	764-3987

### Members-at-Large

Beth Bricker	422-1339
Bill Camarra	771-3342
Austin Cunney	698-5232
Kathy Laoutaris	939-3235
Liz Linsalato	742-2380
Brittany Neider	238-6391

## WRAPS WEBSITE

Since you are reading the Grapevine on the WRAPS website, why not explore the entire site! Check out our Vendor and Entertainer Members, our social/events page and our NEW Employment page! Have any idea for the website? Email Kyle Thornton at [kthornton@mountkisco.ny.gov](mailto:kthornton@mountkisco.ny.gov)



<https://www.facebook.com/WRAPSNY/?fref=ts>

**Copy and paste the above address for our WRAPS Facebook Page! Be sure to like the page to keep up to date on what's happening within WRAPS.**

### CALL FOR GRAPEVINE ARTICLES!

The next issue of the Grapevine is scheduled to be posted online in November 2023!

Anyone interested in submitting materials must do so by **Thursday, November 2, 2023**

#### E-mail Information to:

Kyle Thornton ~ Mount Kisco Rec  
[kthornton@mountkisco.ny.gov](mailto:kthornton@mountkisco.ny.gov)

### ANSWERS FROM PAGE 10:

1. Jamie Bucci (New Castle)
2. Gerry Byrne (Greenburgh)
3. Matt Arone (Sleepy Hollow)
4. Lauren O'Connor (New Rochelle)
5. Brian Gray (Scarsdale)
- 6 & 7. Kathy Laoutaris (Rye Brook) AND Trish Lacy (Ardsley)