

*the*

# Grapevine



*March  
2022  
Edition*



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

# WRAPS Presidents Message—by Dave Goldberg

I hope everyone's planning for the up-coming spring and summer season is going smoothly. I want you to close your eyes and picture what your life was like professionally in 2019. Now open them and it would seem that we are getting back to that picture. The old saying was, party like it is 1999, the new saying is party like it is 2019, what's 20 years, give or take?



Two dates of importance: April 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>, the annual New York State Recreation and Parks Society conference, held this year in Saratoga Springs NY. If you have not been to these conferences, there is a lot of great information and networking that goes on. To register or get more information go to:

<https://newyorkstater recreation and parks society.wildapricot.org/SAVE-THE-DATE!-Saratoga-2022!> (Link also found on WRAPS website).

The other date of importance is the Westchester County Board of Health mandatory camp meeting. This year, as in the last 2 years, it will be a zoom meeting, info on date and content to follow soon.

Keep planning great programs for the residents that we serve and remember to take a little time for yourself.

In the meantime;

Stay healthy and safe.

David Goldberg

WRAPS President

# I am the recreation professional

Joe Arduino - Tarrytown Superintendent

## I am the recreation professional:

When I started my working career, all my closest friends gave me the best descriptions of what my new job tasks' were going to be:

- The title I carry will not matter: folks will simply know me as the rec. person.
- I am initially tagged to be the new entry level “pied piper” of all rec. activities” going forward: a face to a name, a career to a community.
- This rec. opportunity provides me a chance to coordinate competitive adult athletic leagues, spear-head age appropriate recreational programming, coordinate large public events and be a voice of high standard of community morale as per recreation activities. All True.
- I will be exciting and imploring the masses 24 hrs.-7 days to come out and partake in our activities especially during special holidays’ encouraging and pushing out menu’s of programs & parks information, promoting all our services to everyone I can reach and trying to get that regular visitor [base rec. customer] to be a routine attendee to all our activities which covers the calendar year.
- As I work over the years’ you will see me on most all weekends doing my thing [**weekend warrior**]. I will be a staple employee representing the community of which I am dedicated. You’ll also be very disappointed in me one day when I have to cancel a program for weather related issues. Oh well...
- I will be the arbiter of fairness, but remember to possibly allow that life-long residents access to a program even though they’re one week late for registration. Hmm...

Continued Next Page.....

# I am the recreation professional - Continued

Joe Arduino - Tarrytown Recreation Supervisor

## Quotables!

- As youth baseball coaches may say “Could you please let us play today on the field”, we will not ruin the fields, I have two make-ups games already! And b.t.w. it stopped raining...
- I like your staff shirts. Do you have a shirt for me w/your dept. name on it?
- Are you hiring? I could really use a job, and I also know someone who would be really great for you, they can help you.
- “You know I found a spelling/ grammatical error in the brochure guide of activities, just thought you should know”.
- “The rec. facility wasn’t open on time, the gate was locked at the park, it delayed our practice? Can you extend it for me”?
- “I know programs just like the one you’re running, & you can do more”
- “I don’t understand why you set-up your softball play-offs schedule like that.”
- “I met your staff at the event, they need to be nicer.”
- “Please don’t put that one official on my games anymore! We’ll forfeit the game next time if you do”.
- “Could you find room on my roster for one more player who called me, he’s no ringer!!”
- “I just ran a road race last week, and they had twice as many runners registered than you had today”.
- This park is great, but you need more trash receptacles in it!!”

Recreation & Parks services is one of the most rewarding professions anyone can find, and NO you don’t become independently wealthy after working many, many years, but you are blessed to be around community-minded people every day who actually do rely on your guidance, professionalism and wisdom to get them through the tough times of their lives.

Joe Arduino

Recreation Supervisor

# Past Presidents Luncheon

JP Doyle's Restaurant - Sleepy Hollow



# Annual WRAPS Holiday Party

## Crabtree's KittleHouse



# GROWING THE IDEA

## The IDEA Committee

### Growing the IDEA

In order for an IDEA to grow it must be nurtured and cultivated. Just as we cultivate the environment of our garden by removing weeds and loosening the soil to optimize the retention and penetration of air, water and nutrients we must do the same for our minds in order to experience sustained growth that will bear fruit.

The WRAPS - Inclusion, Diversity and Equity for All Committee, "IDEA" has worked for 1 year to cultivate and plant the seeds to improve the environment for which we all work. Since our first meeting on March 19, 2021 the committee has achieved the following:

Established a Mission Statement: To promote and foster inclusion, diversity and equity for all within our profession and our communities.

#### Developed four(4) primary Goals:

- ◆ Advocate for establishing safe, supportive and open-minded environment for the exchange of thoughts and ideas within the WRAPS community.
- ◆ Promote the growth and development of underrepresented populations in our field.
- ◆ Develop and influence professional development and training within the areas of IDEA for local programming and conferences.
- ◆ Actively promote the creation of productive work environments within our field.

The committee has garnered strong support from both the WRAPS Executive Board and the New York State Park and Recreation Society (NYSPRS). To date the committees outreach efforts has resulted in an increase of 12 new members to the rosters of both organizations.

The committee has also successfully begun developing relationships with Recreation Department Administrators at both Lehman College and SUNY Cortlandt in an effort to connect with students and grow our profession.

#### Other highlights of the past year, have included

- ◆ April 2021 – participated in discussion on DEI initiatives around NYS with Yolanda Bostic Williams, Special Assistant for Legislative & Community Affairs at NYS Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation and Kendra Hayle – Area Coordinator, City of Rochester- Department of Recreation and Youth Services
- ◆ May 2021 - Participation in a NRPA sponsored DEI Roundtable discussion via Zoom in May 2021 at the invite of NYSPRS
- ◆ August 2021 - Presentation to the WRAPS Executive Board
- ◆ September 2021 – Presentation at the WRAPS BBQ Luncheon
- ◆ November 2021 – “What’s the Big IDEA” presentation at the Downstate Recreation Conference

The IDEA Committee looks forward to another year of tremendous growth in 2022. Expect to see us continue supporting our goals and bring valuable resources and information to our members. We would like to thank the WRAPS Executive Board and the membership for its continued support!

The IDEA committee members are: Wayne Bass, Beth Bricker, Fran Croughan, Jene Davis, Andre Early, Sylvia Gadson, Jennifer Giusti, Dontae Harris, Lauren O’Connor, Joseph Simoncini, Vladamir Valcourt, Darren Valdes.

# AC Pool & Spa Show



**Above:** Lesley Popkin (Cortlandt Manor Recreation), Sally Veltidi (Eastchester Recreation), Gosia Marsich & George Papademetriou (Lake Isle Eastchester)

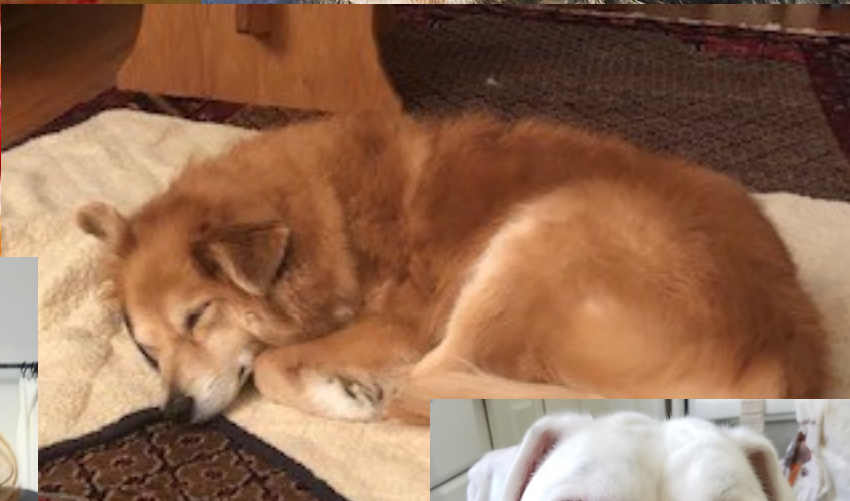


**Above:** Sally Veltidi (Eastchester Recreation), Doug Scott & Jon Petruzzelli (Mount Pleasant Recreation) & Lesley Popkin (Cortlandt Manor Recreation),



# Sleepy Hollows "Smooches for Pooches" Event

Allison DePaolo



**Sleepy Hollow Recreation asked residents to email a photo of their furry friend and in return all participants received special Valentine's Day treats!**

# Hudson Valley athletes take home gold at Special Olympics

Nancy Bellini

North East Westchester Special Recreation headed to Syracuse to participate in the Special Olympics State Winter Games in Floor Hockey.

While at opening ceremonies on Friday night we were all thrilled to hear that our very own head coach, Joe Bellini, received the NYS Coach of the year award!!

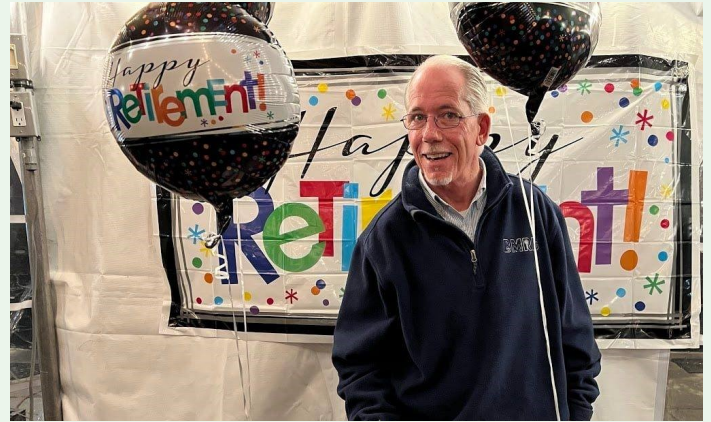
We all know what an outstanding coach Joe has been for North East for the past 25 years, we were so happy that he also got recognized by the State for his many years of dedication and hard work with our athletes.

The weekend just kept getting better. On Saturday, our Floor Hockey team played hard and won a GOLD medal! The coaches, Joe, Nancy and Kim could not have been more proud of how well they played and truly worked as a team to bring home that Gold medal.



## Bits ~ N ~ Pieces

Congratulations to Melisa Trail on their new position as Recreation Leader at the City of White Plains Recreation Department! Melisa will focus on aquatics programs, youth soccer, basketball instruction, Noon Day concerts and the White Plains Outdoor Arts Festival.



Congratulations to Greg Kroohs on their new position as Sr. Recreation Leader at the Town of Cortlandt Recreation Department! Greg comes from Putnam Valley Parks & Recreation.

Briarcliff Recreation's fearless leader has retired! We are sad to see him leave but happy for him as he starts the next chapter in his life. We will certainly miss his infinite wisdom, sense of humor, and dedication to the Village. We all wish him a very happy, healthy and long retirement! Now is Henry's time to recreate!

Anita Hecker has retired from the Yorktown Parks & Recreation Department after over 22 years of service. She will be moving to South Carolina to enjoy her retirement. Yorktown Recreation wishes her well in her future endeavors!



Congratulations to Nicole (Bedford Rec) & Trevor Caviola on the birth of their twins. Daughter Cailyn Rose 5 lbs 3 oz. and 19 inches long and son Ryder Joseph 4 lbs. 3 oz. and 18 inches long were born on December 31, 2021. They join big sister Reagan.



# Recreation Education at Lehman College

By Jacob Eubank, Ed.D. and Sally Veltidi, CPRP

The past two years have been an interesting time at Lehman College and we are now entering our third year of the pandemic. Much has changed from the sudden move to 100% virtual learning back in March 2020. Last Fall 2021 was the college's first attempt at bringing students back to campus, asking programs to offer their courses in a "hybrid" format, which is defined in various ways depending on who you ask. This Spring 2022, we moved even closer to pre-pandemic course offerings with the goal of at least 70% of our courses as "in-person." Along with randomized testing and vaccine mandates, getting students, and faculty, back in the classroom has presented its challenges in both teaching high quality, recreation-based courses and getting students the field experience they need through fieldwork and internships.

The field of parks and recreation has also changed quite a bit over the past two years. Changes in the industry mean that we need to change in how we prepare students for entry, or promotion. We currently offer a Bachelor's of Science in Recreation Education that we are re-developing to be more focused on recreation management (i.e., management of youth services, outdoor recreation and sustainability, facility management, budget/finance, and human resources) to better prepare our students entering the parks and recreation field. Our Master's of Science in Recreation Education also includes a Recreation and Park Administration option to prepare individuals for supervisory and administrative roles in various sectors. In the graduate program curriculum, students dive even deeper into their existing knowledge on research methods, program planning, and administrative processes which has benefitted many alumni who have gone through our program.

Here is what some WRAPS Alumni have to say about their experience at Lehman:

## **Lesley Popkin, Recreation Supervisor II, Town of Cortlandt Manor**

*When I made the decision to pursue a Master's Degree it was in the pursuit of increased earning potential. It didn't take long for me to realize that the most valuable thing I would take away from my experience studying at Lehman was not the salary increase. The real benefit was in the connections I was making with other professionals. I was learning from professors who had successful careers and were able to provide real world knowledge, and I was studying beside other professionals who were becoming industry leaders. 20+ years later these people are not just a vital part of my professional network, they are also my friends.*

## **SandyMary Korkatzis, Superintendent of Recreation, City of Norwalk**

*Lehman was actually the fourth college I attended at the tail end of my degree. I was young entering into college at age 17 and didn't realize that there was an actual degree in the field of recreation. Today, with over twenty years under my belt, I spend a great deal of time talking to our seasonal staff about the field of recreation and parks. To keep our field vibrant with young professionals and talent we need to communicate what it is we do. I am now a part of a department that is a division in DPW. It was even more important to communicate internally how valuable this department is to its residents.*

Continues on next page....

### **SandyMary Korkatzis, Continues-**

*I do not regret making recreation my minor. I have learned not to be hard on myself for not having a degree in Recreation. The ability to market programs and events has had an extraordinary value in itself. My art degree opened me up and makes me a great problem solver. My art background has allowed me to brand and build up departments almost entirely from scratch. I still do a lot of things in house but I also send flyers out to a graphic designer to save time.*

*The greatest thing I value from Lehman is that they encouraged me to complete my Bachelor's Degree in Art specializing in graphic design. The recreation classes gave me the history and insight of the field. The degree allowed me to sit for the CPRP certification which allowed me to sit for the Superintendent exam.*

*Each department needs different tools in their tool box! We should not all have the same strengths. We all have our recreation story and journey. I am proud to be a Lehman College graduate with a minor in Recreation.*

### **Erin Mantz, Assistant Superintendent, City of Rye**

*Attending Lehman for my Master's Degree was a wonderful, valuable and worthwhile experience. It was a local and affordable way for me to get a recreation degree which helped me qualify for more civil service exams, receive the education needed to deepen my experience in the recreation field and become a more valuable candidate when searching for a job. I was able to obtain my degree part-time while working full-time which was super convenient and time saving. By attending Lehman, I was able to experience different types of recreation (therapeutic, public- local vs state municipal level, private management- Disney/cruise ship) which helped me realize which form of recreation I wanted to be most apart of now and in the future.*

### **Angela Thornton, Recreation Supervisor, Village of Irvington**

*When I started the graduate program at Lehman, I was a brand-new Recreation Professional. The value of being in class with fellow current municipal Recreation Professionals cannot be measured. It was more than information from text books, it was lively discussions of first-hand stories and experiences from my classmates. It was real knowledge that could be put into practice in both my career and in life. I often think of Dr. Kuntsler encouraging everyone, especially Recreation Professionals, to take long and imaginative vacations. A reminder that those who provide the space for others to enjoy leisure, must be intentional about recreating ourselves.*



**Above:** Angela with her sister Liz Linsalato (Mount Pleasant Recreation) and Angela's daughter Bailey at Liz's Lehman Graduation.

### **Sally Veltidi, Superintendent of Parks and Recreation, Town of Eastchester and Adjunct Lecturer, CUNY Lehman**

*3 years as a student and 15 semesters teaching at Lehman, I can not say enough about the program that Lehman has to offer and what it has done for me. From working with other Recreation professionals on group projects during my time as a Graduate Student to helping students learn to love Research has been some of the high points in my career! I am very excited to see what the future holds for the department and would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to participate to do so*

*64<sup>th</sup>* ANNUAL  
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NOMINATION PACKET

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS  
April 1, 2022

See WRAPS Website for more information and to  
download the nomination packet.



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**Liz Linsalato** 742-2380  
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## 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)



# Find us on Facebook

<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 June 2022!

Anyone interested in submitting materials must do so by **Wednesday, May 25 2022**

#### E-mail Information to:

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