

November 2022 Edition

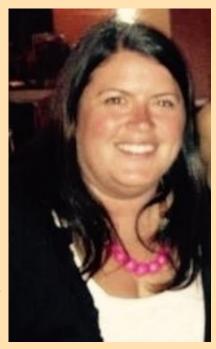




Presidents Letter

What a busy time in WRAPS! Between ending a summer of being back to "normal", all of the job openings, some potential changes in pool codes and the newly formed WRAPS Fantasy Football League, there is something for everyone!

Thank you to New Rochelle Parks and Recreation for hosting our Welcome Back BBQ. It was a beautiful day to gather in Joe Curtis Five Islands Park. Thank you to Greenburgh Parks & Recreation for hosting the October WRAPS meeting on Pickle ball. What a helpful afternoon learning about the countries #1 growing sport. Thank you to Rye Recreation for hosting the November WRAPS meeting with the DOH and to the DOH for attending to help us with Summer 2023 Camp and Pool



as we know it is never too early to start to plan! Thank you to Erin Mantz our Vice President for planning the luncheons, I know she has many more informative and fun topics planned for 2023.

Be sure to save the date for the Holiday Luncheon which will be Wednesday, December 14th at Crabtree Kittle House. Please RSVP to Liz in Mt. Pleasant by December 9th. Not only will you get to celebrate the Holidays with your colleagues, you don't want to miss Kevin Cook's Lancer Bottle presentation.

There is still time to get your box for the Thanksgiving NY Giants vs. Dallas Cowboys Fundraiser. Please be sure to contact Matt Arone in Sleepy Hollow to secure your spot. Even if you are not a football fan (Go Cowboys), you can still participate.

I look forward to seeing you all in December at the Holiday Luncheon. On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to wish you a very happy and healthy Holiday Season and start to 2023.

-Sally Veltidi

Community Spotlight - "All roads lead to Mount Pleasant" Doug Scott, Superintendent of Recreation

In early October of 2021, I was sitting outside at a Starbucks in Chappaqua with my coworker on our break when I got a phone call.

A few short weeks later I found myself at a new job just down the road in Mount Pleasant! It was a big change, but a welcome one.

About a week before my first day of work, I attended the Department's Fall Foliage Festival at Broadway field in Hawthorne. The event was great. There were vendors selling food and drinks, a farmer's market, and some good live music. It was nice because I was able to meet the staff and see the great event they put together. I remember going up and speaking with the Town Supervisor at the event. He asked me how my drive into town was. I told him it wasn't too bad and that there were a lot of different ways I get here. He then told me that "All roads lead to Mount Pleasant".

All roads really do lead to Mount Pleasant. The Town is located right smack in the Middle of Westchester County with a population of about 44,000 people. The

hamlets of Valhalla, Hawthorne, Pocantico Hills, and Thornwood are part of the Town. Also, the Villages of Pleasantville and portions of Sleepy Hollow and Briarcliff Manor lie within the Town too. Some of these places have their own Recreation Departments which is where things start to get complicated. For programs and pool passes we not only have resident rates, but village rates and non-resident fees too. I think Angela, our Senior Office Assistant is the only person in the entire world who understands how it all works.

Mount Pleasant is home to some local landmarks. The "Gates of Heaven Cemetery" is located in the Hawthorne section of town. It is a beautiful property that is worth visiting. The Recreation Department has offered Cemetery Tours in the past as one of our programs. Many famous people, including Babe Ruth, and the longtime New York Giants Owner Wellington Mara are buried here. If you visit Babe Ruth's grave you will likely find some letters kids have written to him and some baseballs and bats laid out. The Kensico Dam is also a fun spot to go for a walk (although this is a County Park) it is located right down the street from Mount Pleasant Town Hall.

Our Recreation and Parks Department is large. We have 18 full time staff and around 200 seasonal employees. During the summer of 2022 we had over 1000 kids in our summer camps and over 4000 pool memberships.

Our pool complex includes a main pool, dive pool, kiddie pool, and a water slide pool, as well as a concession stand and a pool house. The pool complex operates from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend. It is a long season but we break it up with a couple fun events like our Adult Splash Bash, DJ Parties and some live bands. We almost didn't open on time this season (picture to the left)

because of a broken pipe about 10 feet underground. Thankfully our Parks crew had the equipment and knowledge to handle the repair in house.





Continued next page....

Community Spotlight - "All roads lead to Mount Pleasant" Continued from last page

A good spot to visit in town is Carroll Park. The Park is located on Kensico Road in the Thornwood section of Town. In May of this year, we had the grand reopening of the park after some major renovations. A new retaining wall was added along with a fishing pier, wooden fence, and a spraying fountain in the middle of the pond that even lights up at night. The park has a playground, baseball field, and a bandstand area where we hold our summer concert series. Over this past winter it was fun to watch the

progress of all the construction in the park. Each week new parts of the project were completed and new trees and plants were planted. In the spring drive by the park to see the newly planted Cherry Trees.

If you attended the 2022 WRAPS Vendor's Lunch last February, then you visited our Community Center. The Mount Pleasant Community Center is a multi-purpose building which houses programs from senior exercise classes to our adult basketball leagues. The center also is home to the Mount Pleasant Branch Library. Having a full-size gym has been a big benefit for our department. The gym has retractable walls that can create up to 3 different activity areas and we are in the process of adding a scoreboard too. If you stop by the Community Center on a Thursday, you might run into the



"Pleasant Seniors of Mount Pleasant" group. The Recreation and Parks Department hosts the seniors and treats them to some great programming. We offer trips to Broadway shows and we host some great special events like our "Burgers and Bingo" and our upcoming "Friendsgiving Lunch".

Mount Pleasant has a lot of parks and wilderness areas too. The Hardscrabble Wilderness area has several trails that dogs and their humans like to walk around on. The Town recently had to make some changes to the leash laws in the wilderness area and

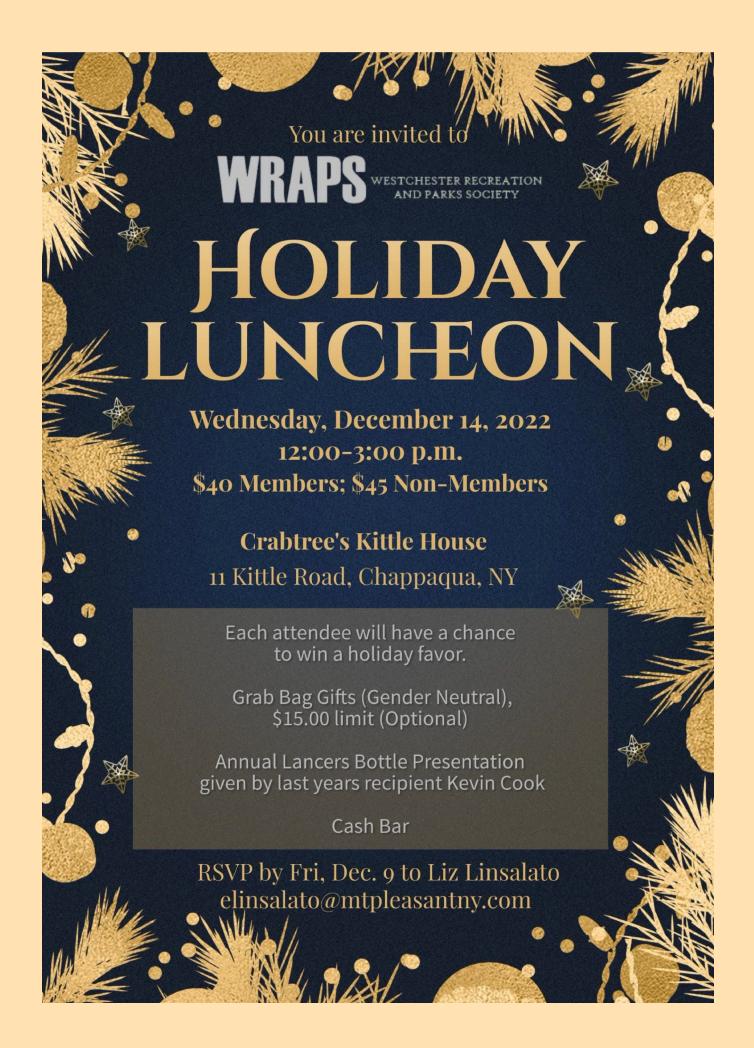


we have come to learn that people love their dogs **almost** as much as they love pickle ball! Speaking of pickle ball, we recently had an Eagle Scout paint 4 courts for us on top of our outdoor basketball courts at Broadway and Stonegate Parks. There are also 14 ball fields in town which makes adult softball a big draw. This year USSSA took over as our umpiring crew. Between our spring and fall seasons we had 51 teams!

With all that said, Mount Pleasant really does have a lot of great facilities and amenities. I could keep going but I think our staff is our biggest asset. I have to give them a shout out for all the hard work it takes in keeping a department like ours going.

Whether it be the Saw Mill, the Sprain Brook, or the Taconic State Parkway:

"All Roads Lead to Mount Pleasant".



Bits ∼ N ∼ Pieces

- -Congratulations to Erin Mantz on their promotion to Superintendent of Recreation at Rye Recreation!
- -Congratulations to Beth Bricker on their new position as Deputy Commissioner for the City of White Plains Recreation Department!
- -Congratulations to Lauren Rosasco on their promotion to Superintendent of Recreation at North Salem Recreation.
- -Congratulations to Karen Kuzio on their promotion to Assistant Superintendent of Recreation at Briarcliff Recreation!
- -Congratulations to Vincent Celetti on their new position as Recreation Supervisor for the City of White Plains Recreation Department.
- -Congratulations to Peter Gelston on their new position as Recreation Supervisor for North Castle Recreation Department.
- -Congratulations to Sarah Cavanaugh on their new position as Recreation Supervisor for Westchester County PRC
- -Congratulations to Melissa Trail on their new position as Recreation Leader at Pound Ridge Recreation Department.
- -Congratulations to Marc Medico on their new position as Recreation Leader at Briarcliff Recreation Department.

- -Congratulations to Samuel Weinstock on their new position as Naturalist at Scarsdale Recreation Department.
- -Congratulations to Hedrick Sy on their new position as Recreation Assistant at Scarsdale Recreation Department.
- -Congratulations to Inga DeNunzio on their new position of Pool Maintenance Worker at Scarsdale Recreation Department.
- -Congratulations to Jonathan Sankat on their new position as Program Supervisor for South East Consortium.
- -Congratulations to Jessie Espinet on their new position as Senior Recreation Therapist for North East Westchester Special Recreation.



Sally Rogol recently announced her retirement after 37 total years at Rye Recreation; 2 years as a Recreation Leader, 5 years as a Senior Recreation Leader, 6 years as a Recreation Supervisor, and 10 years as an Assistant Superintendent and 14 as Superintendent!

HAPPY RETIREMENT YOU WILL BE MISSED!

Bits ~ N ~ Pieces ...continued



Photo above: Erin Mantz holding the 2021 London Olympic games Torch



Photo above: One of Eastchesters 3 camps that participated in Camps Care with some of the food that was collected. The food was donated to ECAP- Eastchester Community Action Partnership in Tuckahoe. ECAP is a huge help to many residents in the Eastchester, Tuckahoe and Bronxville area. We have a wonderful partnership with them especially for the Senior Residents who rely on them for food throughout the year.



Photo above: Campers from Mount Kisco's Camp Iroquois donated food to the Mount Kisco Food Pantry in honor of the Camps Cares Project.



Photo above: Congratulations to Town of Greenburgh Recreation Commissioner Gerry Byrne on his induction into the Ardsley High School Athletic Hall of Fame.



Photo above: In honor of Doug Scotts 1-year anniversary at Mount Pleasant Recreation, his staff dressed up as "Doug" for the day.



Photo above: Shot from NRPA

Gerry Salvo Harrison Sally Veltidi Eastchester

Lesley Popkin Cortlandt Manor

Dennis Schwandtner Young Equipment Solutions

Bits ~ N ~ Pieces ...continued



Photo: On the weekend of October 21 -23, our softball team, the North East Knights, attended the Special Olympics Fall Games in Glens Falls. The team, coached by Joe Bellini, Nancy Bellini and our volunteer, Tom Dumser came in 2nd place in the first division. There were 17 teams at the softball venue and more than 1,200 athletes and coaches at the fall games. In addition, we had 2 athletes, Diana H., and Michael L. that attended the Fall games for unified Bocce. Both Diana and Michal took 2nd place in their bocce tournament. It was a fun filled weekend. Our athletes all played well and were happy to celebrate their victory with a pizza and wings party on Saturday night. Floor Hockey season is next!

-Nancy Bellini, North East Westchester Special Recreation









RYE RECREATION GOING ONs-

Top left - Blitzball Program for Middle Schoolers

Top Middle & left - Halloween window painting on Sunday, October 23rd

Bottom left - Bench in honor of our former tennis instructor who retired after 40 years doing our tennis lessons



Westchester Recreation and Parks Society
Senior Committee

Round Table Discussion and Meet and Greet

This will be the first meeting of the Senior Committee in several years. The committee is beginning the process by inviting all involved with programming for Seniors to attend a rountable discussion to identify the primary area of needs for future presentations. This is also a great way to meet other Recreation Professionals who work with Seniors throughout Westchester County.

Light Refreshments will be served



Tuesday, November 29th 3:00pm-4:30pm Eastchester Community Center 660 White Plains Road Eastchester, NY 10709

RSVP to: Christine Grey at cgrey@mynewcastle.org by Wednesday, November 23rd

If you know anyone who might be interested in attending please have them RSVP to Christine

November WRAPS Luncheon - Rye Recreation



On Monday, November 14th, 2022, WRAPS
Members met for a luncheon at Rye Recreation to start discussions about Pools and Camps. Members of the Westchester County Department of Health spoke to the crowd, answering questions and getting all to start thinking and planning for the 2023 summer season.





The Joys is in the Journey: An observation from an evolving Parks & Recreation Professional The Alabama leg of the "You Make THE Difference" National Grassroots Tour

-Bob Kaczmarek, Assistant Superintendent, Scarsdale Recreation

I am not a "bucket list" kind of guy, but what I recently experienced over an 8-day stretch was nothing short of life changing, in so many ways. I was fortunate enough to be invited to travel across the amazing state of Alabama for the start of the "You Make THE Difference" National Grassroots Tour. The tour is designed to energize and celebrate the "Quality of Life" sector of municipal/community government employees. This effort was primarily devoted to the Parks & Recreation Directors (equivalent to our Commissioners and Superintendents) but open to anyone that is in the audience because the message is transferable across all sectors of our field.

It is the effort being led by Mr. Ian Hill (<u>ihill@ngbn.tv</u>), the keynote speaker for the 2022 NYSRPS Annual Conference in Saratoga. The entire backstory needs a good deal of text to fully appreciate the dynamic at work, but the short of it is that Ian and I connected, and a friendship developed. Ian is on a personal mission to help energize the field because to his core, he believes that what we do saves lives. He has the gift of being able to move people through his message and stories and is dedicated to sharing it with as many people as he can. I could do another article on Ian's current World Record attempt which is to draw attention to the alarming number of suicides in middle aged men, but space would not permit so I have included his website dedicated to the cause. Please take a moment to check out www.seasontosavealife.org.

In collaboration with the Alabama Recreation & Parks Association Executive Director Ms. Natalie Norman (https://www.arpaonline.org), a 5-day tour was crafted that would touch every region in the state. It would require a kickoff meeting with the district directors and State Board members coming together in Orange Beach, Alabama the same morning that Hurricane Ian was visiting Florida just to the east. From there, 8 additional scheduled stops that would conclude in Pelham. What transpired along the way was nothing short of amazing.

Natalie is the epitome of a southern lady with a sharp sense of humor wrapped in faith and humility. She is deeply committed to giving her people everything they need to succeed. Through her efforts, she was able to mobilize more than 400 Parks & Recreation professionals to attend the 2-hour sessions in hopes of energizing her organization and its P & R professionals throughout the state to ultimately benefit the residents of Alabama. To further explain her commitment to Alabama, she, along with a colleague and fantastic guy Steve, lobbied the state for standardized basic safety training for all recreational programs which ultimately became law and were paid for by the state. I am excited to see what she and the amazing state of Alabama do in the coming years.

As you can imagine, the tour comes at a cost which is where sponsorship from the Niche Academy (www.nicheacademy.com/youmakethedifference) and Amilia Technologies (www.amilia.com) signed on. To be part of the experience, Mr. Jared Oates, COO of Niche' Academy, joined the ensemble. A man of deep faith blessed with a level of intelligence and insight, we quickly became friends. To round out the team, Ms. Farrell Buller, Principal Consultant for Amilia, joined us for part of the tour. Farrell's positive attitude and deep dedication to the field and its professionals just added to the depth of the entire experience. Ian thought Farrell and I would make great podcast co-hosts and has helped to start us on our way for which I am and remain extremely grateful.

I was given only one job during each session which was to be accessible to the attendees and make a meaningful connection, in some small way, with the people I met along the way. I will admit that I struggled to process what value I was bringing to the tour and conversely, what value would I attain from this role. The first part of my concern was instantly answered by the interactions I had along the way. The second part wouldn't reveal itself until just recently.

The Joys is in the Journey: An observation from an evolving Parks & Recreation Professional The Alabama leg of the "You Make THE Difference" National Grassroots TourContinued from last page

Over the 8 stops, I had the pleasure and honor to be part of watching hundreds transform in some way right before my eyes. The message and its delivery each time spoken by Ian Hill to reach each person in the audience, many in a very powerful way. I watched a group of Parks & Recreation professionals filled with curiosity and skepticism transform from tentative/passive to energized/hopeful. At every stop I made it a point to seek out that one person that just did not want to be there and talk to them before Ian began the session. Then I would watch as they listened intently and began to relax and participate. By the end they were pumped, and the energy was palpable. There was real change occurring right before my eyes.

One of those meaningful connections for me was with a pair of ladies in the audience who I came to learn worked the front desk at their community center for over a decade together. Being the first person that the community deals with every time they visit or call the facility, it was awe inspiring to see the love and pride they had for their job, their boss and the residents. It reminded me of the staff I am fortunate to work with back in Scarsdale and to make sure to let them know how much their efforts are appreciated.

Traveling through the state, the one constant was their commitment to open space and parks in general. Large or small, new or old, almost every park or open space was clean and well-manicured while being heavily used. I especially enjoyed talking with all the different park professionals I met along the way. The level of dedication they each expressed towards their roles and their community was humbling. It made me appreciate my parks staff even more for the job they do for our department and community.

I was blown away by the level of authentic respect that most everyone in the audience exhibited for their own Director of Parks & Recreation for the City of Montgomery. I witnessed him stand before a large number of his staff and commit to getting to know each of his more than 100 fulltime staff one-on-one to better understand what they do and how he can help. I later learned just how moved he was thinking about some of the personal challenges his staff were facing yet they were some of the most motivated that he felt he needed to do more. I hope to be able to attain such pure respect by my staff and colleagues one day.

I was most affected by a district sports league director who checked every box in the "I would rather be anyplace than here" category which naturally drew me to speak with him and his colleague. Initially it was a challenge just to converse as he clearly was somewhere else, so I moved on. I watched him during the first half of the session so during the break, I stopped by and he was more welcoming yet still guarded. As the second half ended while preparing to hand out t-shirts, he sought me out and we started to talk. He thanked me for taking the time to talk with him for which I explained it was really my pleasure. He began to tell me that he had just finished dealing with some parent-coaches that were involved in fistfights on the field for a 3rd grade game. Once he was done with the session, he must kick a team out of a league because of unregistered players. He stopped for a second, paused and then struggled to explain that all this after having dealt with a shooting in the stands several weeks prior where an innocent bystander who happened to be a mother of one of the players on the field, was shot dead by errant bullet. He was filled with despair entering the session and left with a newfound sense of hope. It touched me to understand that even on my worse day I don't have to deal with those issues.... hopefully ever.

The Joys is in the Journey: An observation from an evolving Parks & Recreation Professional The Alabama leg of the "You Make THE Difference" National Grassroots TourContinued from last page

In every conversation, of which there were many, I was drawn to the similarities we shared while being from opposite sides of the Mason-Dixon line. While our accents differed somewhat, we were all able to speak the same language, appreciate the same "You Can't Make This Up" story or understand how often you are second guessed when closing a field or canceling a game. What was most familiar was how worn out and beaten up most felt after what the world had experienced for the past 20+ months.

What I found to be their most abundant resource is their true sense of community which is present in all that is said and done. Understanding that resources may be limited, they come together and collectively work towards the common goal. Alabama's most valuable resource is its people. To get the full flavor of the south, I witnessed the insanity of the "Tiger Walk" prior to me and 100,000 of my closest friends taking in an Auburn game. It was an experience within an experience with the bonus of an SEC football game (Thank you Natalie). Having attended many professional and some collegiate games in the past, I was ready for some elbows and dirty looks as we made our way out, but the exit was so smooth and orderly within 15 minutes we were back in our car and on the highway back to our hotel. Anyone who has navigated their way out of Yankee Stadium knows you should pack a lunch and plan on being flipped off multiple times. My journey is not over yet!

The biggest take away for me is that in some small way, I can make a difference. So I have committed for the balance of my tenure in the field to help cultivate, develop and support the new and young professional of our field. For me, the valuable resource I have to offer is my experience and knowledge obtained from decades of roaming this earth. Remember that knowledge is power.....get or give some every day!

It wasn't until recently that I realized just how much I had walked away with from this experience. The stories and conversations will stay with me as I progress through my career in hopes to serve as a reminder that I am not alone. I will take comfort in knowing that there is some guy just like me hundreds of miles away that is probably going through the same crap as I. Its equally humbling to know that like Alabama, New York Recreation and Parks Society is also evolving and has so much more to offer. The most exciting part is that my journey is not over!

The tour in Alabama, for me is part of a bigger excursion called "Life" so I pray and hope that there will be similar experiences to have before I am done because, as I opened, "The Joy is in The Journey". The most exciting part is that my journey is not over yet!

-Bob Kaczmarek, Scarsdale Recreation



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CHECK THE WRAPS WEBSITE FOR CURRENT:

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

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WRAPS WEBSITE

Since you are reading the
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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
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Email Kyle Thornton at kthornton@mountkiscony.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 March 2023!

Anyone interested in submitting materials must do so by Wednesday, March 1, 2023

E-mail Information to:

Kyle Thornton ~ Mount Kisco Rec kthornton@mountkiscony.gov

Music by Zev

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