



WESTFIELD
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION,
INC.

WESTFIELD NEWS

Est. 1981

Edition #26, Volume 3

April, 2009

MIDDLETOWN TO BE THE PROTO- TYPE! HEAR ALL ABOUT IT:

WRA QUARTERLY MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL OF
3RD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
BUSINESS MEETING; 7 P.M.;
GUEST SPEAKER 7:30 P.M.
(Refreshments will be served.)

There is a new program being promoted in Connecticut with many benefits, one that seemingly will cost residents nothing to enjoy. The program is called Walk CT and spearheading the statewide effort is Leslie Lewis, now CT Walk Director at CT Forest and Parks Association (CFPA) on Route 66 in Middlefield.

Leslie Lewis will speak at our meeting on April 27. Previous to joining Connecticut Forest and Park Asso-

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CUCIA PARK FOR ARMY TRAINING FACILITY

On the afternoon of Monday, April 13th, the United States Army Corps of Engineers announced in a press release that they had selected Cucia Park as the preferred site for a military training facility to be used by the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard. This decision comes after nearly a year of considering various sites in Westfield, and almost two year after beginning their search process in Middletown.

Ten months ago, on June 10th, the Corps of Engineers asserted that they would build the base on an 88 acre farm on Boardman Lane. On June 24th, the Corps presented their plans for the base to the WRA executive committee. One of the things they told us was that the decision was final and would not be altered by public opposition.

Monday's decision to choose Cucia Park is the result of

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**Westfield Residents
Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 373
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Mail to:

Spring Lawn Care

Tasks to Consider Before the Mowing Season

By David Beaulieu, About.com

Spring Lawn Care Tip #1: Raking

Raking to remove thatch will be your first task of spring lawn care. Thatch is the reason why I recommend that, when you rake leaves in the fall, you make the effort to rake deeply. Don't just skim the surface, so as to remove the leaves. A deep raking will remove thatch, too, allowing you to kill two birds with one stone. Even if you followed this advice in fall, I still recommend a spring raking: it will remove grass blades that died over the winter -- dead blades that are just waiting to become thatch! As you survey your lawn in spring, see if there are any matted patches, in which the grass blades are all stuck together. This can be caused by a disease known as "snow mold." New grass may have difficulty penetrating these matted patches. But a light raking will be sufficient to solve this problem.

Spring Lawn Care Tip #2: Check for Compaction

If your lawn is subjected to high levels of traffic year after year, it may eventually start to show signs of decline. In such cases, your lawn is probably suffering from compaction. For instance, the presence of moss plants signals compaction (among other things). Lawn aeration is the remedy for compaction. Lawn aerators can be rented at your local rental center.

Spring Lawn Care Tip #3: Liming

Besides compaction, the presence of moss plants also signals acidity. Grass likes a neutral soil pH. You can solve this problem by liming your soil. But don't expect a quick fix: the effects of liming are slow to take place.

Spring Lawn Care Tip #4: Overseeding

Is your lawn riddled with bare patches due to dog spots, heavy traffic or neglect? If so, you may need to apply grass seed to fill in those bare patches. This solution is known as "overseeding lawns." Apply a slow-release nitrogen fertilizer when you overseed. Five weeks after the grass germinates, apply a quick-release nitrogen fertilizer. However, spring isn't the very best time for overseeding lawns. Fall is the preferred time, when the new grass won't have to compete with crabgrass which is killed off by autumn frosts. So postpone overseeding until fall, if possible.

Spring Lawn Care Tip #5: Fertilizing

Lawns can be fertilized organically by using compost and mulching mowers. But for those who prefer chemical fertilizers, Scotts provides a lawn fertilizing schedule. Many experts, however, recommend a lighter feeding in spring and a heavier one in fall for cool-season grasses. Too much fertilizer in spring can lead to disease and weed problems.

Spring Grass Care Tip #6: Applying Preemergent Herbicides

If you know that you have a problem with the annual weed, crabgrass, then fertilization in spring should go hand in hand with the application of preemergent herbicides. Applying preemergent herbicides should be done sometime between the time the local forsythia bushes stop blooming and the time the local lilac bushes begin blooming. As their name suggests, preemergent herbicides address weed control not "after the fact," but before their seedlings can even emerge. Preemergent herbicides accomplish this by forming something of a "shield" that inhibits seed germination. Don't undertake the core aeration task after applying preemergent herbicides: to do so would be to "puncture" this shield, thereby decreasing its effectiveness.

Overseeding is incompatible with the application of most preemergent herbicides. While it's still possible to overseed in spring, it's simply easier to do so in fall. There will be no competition from crabgrass then, because the fall frosts kill off crabgrass. If you must overseed in the spring, look for a product called, "Tupersan." Unlike other preemergent herbicides, Tupersan will not damage germinating lawn grass seed.

Spring Grass Care Tip #7: Applying Postemergent Herbicides -- Or Pulling Weeds

Keep an eye out for the emergence of the perennial weed, dandelion during the spring season, unless you find the presence of their cheerful yellow flowers in your lawn desirable. At the very least, you'll want to snap off their flower stems before they produce seed. If you're more ambitious, you can dig them out by the roots. Spraying dandelion weeds with postemergent herbicides is more effective in fall than in spring. If you do choose to spray, select an herbicide for broadleaf weeds.

LESLIE LEWIS TO SPEAK AT WRA MEETING: WALK THE WALK

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ciation in 2007, for 29 years Leslie Lewis was employed by the CT Dept. of Environmental Protection. She worked on such projects as the implementation of the Bottle Bill, preparation of municipal guides on recycling and household hazardous waste management, and the department's Environmental/2000 plan. In addition, from 1997 through 2007, she served as DEP's Trails and Greenways Coordinator; responsible for grants, state-wide trail planning and technical assistance. Appointed by Governor Rell to the CT Greenways Council, Leslie also serves on the DOT's Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee and Safe Routes To School Committee.

Walk CT is a holistic approach to improve the health of residents by promoting walking and other opportunities on trails, sidewalks and pathways. The Walk CT Committee will accept public suggestions for walk

areas in their area. This is especially important for us in Westfield.

With Aetna scheduled to leave our area, at that time, that fitness trail there may no longer be available to walkers. Some people do not use it now because the trees and brush shield them from view and they fear personal safety. The same applies to the Nature Trail at Smith Park, and, weekdays, when residents along the Bike Path in Westfield are at work. One of the fun features of Walk CT is to create small walk groups of residents to inspire people that find walking alone is boring.

If Middletown is to be a prototype for other cities and towns lets be sure that Westfield will be a part of it. Come and learn more about the program at our Quarterly Meeting: Monday, April 27, 7:00PM, 3rd Congregational Church.

MAYOR DISCUSSES CITY BUDGET IN WESTFIELD

Mayor Sebastian Giuliano came to Westfield on March 19th to discuss the budget with residents, in a meeting hosted by WRA. The mayor outlined the process by which the city determines its budget, recent events which have led to a large deficit for this year, and his proposals for balancing the budget.

The city is required by state law to balance its budget every fiscal year. This year there is a big reduction in revenue compared to last year, because last year the Common Council included as revenue money from the sale of a city-owned building (Remington Rand), and because the State has cut by \$1.7 million the amount of money to be provided to Middletown as payments in lieu of taxes on property which does not pay property tax.

Mayor Giuliano delivered his proposed budget to Common Council on April 1st, as is required by law. His budget proposal has lowered expenditures in comparison to last year, a result of concessions from the municipal unions (largely unpaid furloughs), and redu-

tions in some services. However, despite having lowered expenditures, his budget proposes a 1 mil tax increase, a result of the lowered revenues.

Common Council is currently working on the budget. They will be holding a series of budget hearings in April that are open to the public but will not have a public hearing: April 14th, April 15th, April 20th, and April 21st, all will be at 6PM in Council Chambers. On April 28th at 7PM there will be a public hearing on the budget in Council Chambers.

The Army base to be built in Westfield could possibly play a role in the budget this year. Councilman Serra has indicated that if the army buys Cucia Park for its training facility, the Council would consider using some of the proceeds to help balance the budget. The WRA will continue to monitor how our government proceeds with budgetary and other decisions that impact Westfield.

A BIG TURNOUT NEEDED

If you attended WRA's January Quarterly Meeting, you heard WRA member and Westfield fire fighter Ed Dypa and Westfield Fire Marshall Art Higgins tell us why we in Westfield pay the city's lowest fire tax rate. And, in the January WRA newsletter, we reported that the Common Council approved a Resolution to add a Fire Services Cost Committee to Chapter 23 of Middletown's Code of Ordinances to establish a committee to assess all current and future costs. Because the subject cropped up again just recently, the merger of the three fire districts—Central, South Fire and Westfield—by Resolution the subject is NOT within the purview of the cost assessment committee. But what is the committee suggests higher payment for some items or service? Will Westfield be impacted ? Having our Westfield 2009-2010 fire budget already in place would seem like a deterrent.

Plan to be part of a needed big turnout for the **Westfield Fire Commission Meeting on Tuesday, May 12th at 8 p.m.** in the Community Room of the Westfield Fire House in support of the Commission's proposed 2009-2010 fire budget. The word is that the new budget is the same, or just fractionally higher, than the present 2008. A big turnout will also serve another purpose. It will subliminally illustrate our taxpayer appreciation for the fire department's fast and efficient emergency service and the Fire Commission's frugal planning that keeps our tax rate the lowest in the city. It will also indicate that an overwhelming, united, opposition can be expected, if, in the future, another suggested three district merger were to surface.

ALSO COMING UP

All on Saturday April 25th:

- 1.If you have loads of old personal papers of any kind that you would like to get rid of safely, don't miss the SHRED EVENT sponsored by the Middletown Public Works Dept & Recycling Division and PROshred company of CT. It is open to all residents and businesses and will take place from 9 a.m. to noon in the Municipal Parking Lot next to City Hall on DeKoven Drive. You may bring up to six boxes of paper to be shredded ON SITE.
- 2.For outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy a challenge, LETTERBOXING, a fun hunt and find game, is for you. It starts at 1 p.m. on the Daniels-Schwarzkops property on Old Johnson Road in Middletown. There is NO FEE to participate and the instructions and rules are easy. For more information, visit Middletown's Dept. of Planning & Conservation and Development web site www.middletownplanning.com and click on Conservation Commission.
- 3.Enjoy an all-you-can-eat, complete Pot Roast Dinner in the Fellowship Hall of Third Congregational Church, 9e Miner Street in Westfield. Serving time is 5 to 7 p.m. The price is \$9.00 for adults; \$4.50 for children under 10 years of age. Take out orders will be available.

Saturday May 2nd

The Westfield Fire Department will hold its annual family-style Chicken Barbecue. All foods are homemade. Take outs will be available.

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS SELECTS CUCIA PARK AS “PREFERRED SITE” FOR ARMY TRAINING FACILITY

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many months of intensive effort by many of Westfield’s residents. We involved our local, state, and federal elected officials to help us convey our deep concerns over the Boardman Lane site to the army.

Most of these officials joined us in pressuring the Army to reconsider their site selection. State senator Paul Doyle and State representative Ray Kalinowski were particularly helpful in this effort. Other officials, including Federal representative Rosa DeLauro, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz, Mayor Giuliano, and the Common Council also supported our efforts.

This pressure caused the Army to begin a new site selection process in August. Mayor Giuliano appointed two WRA executive committee members, vice-chair Stephen Devoto, and chair Arline Rich, to a six-member advisory panel that worked with the Army to pick a new site.

Cucia Park is a little-used park that the City has had insufficient funds to maintain properly. It is bordered on three sides by developed industrial land, and on the fourth by Interstate 91. The Mayor’s panel suggested Cucia Park as a site for the facility. The sale of Cucia

was endorsed by the Common Council.

The army will soon release a draft Environmental Assessment for Cucia Park. This will open a 30 day period of public comments on the suitability of Cucia Park for the facility. The environmental assessment will be available on-line, and the WRA will help to ensure that it is publicized and that all residents have an opportunity for their comments to be included in the final report.

As plans for a military training facility in Cucia Park move forward, it will be very important to make sure that what is built is suitable for the site and the neighborhood. The WRA will continue to monitor and engage with the Army during the design and construction of the facility.

In addition, the WRA will work with the city to ensure that the sale of city-owned open space is offset by the purchase of new open space with the funds from the proceeds of that sale.

If you have suggestions or concerns relating to this new facility, please share them with an executive committee member and these will be relayed to the city and the Corps of Engineers.

SPEND A LITTLE, IMPROVE AND SAVE A LOT

Compost bins, now on sale, are a great way to make your lawn and garden lush without chemicals by turning your yard and kitchen waste into “black gold” that will improve your soil and feed your plants. Made from 51 percent recycled plastic, the barrels cost \$53.50 each and hold 11 cubic feet. Check them out at www.gardengourmet.com.

Rain barrels are also on sale and are the guilt free way to water your garden. Collect rain water off of your roof and save it for dry spells. With various ways to keep mosquitoes from laying eggs, the barrels are safe. Check them out at www.greatamericanrainBarrel.com.

Both the compost bins and the rain barrels must be ordered by May 20th and picked up on June 6th, 9-11 a.m. at the Middletown Water & Sewer Dept. on 82 Berlin Street. For more information, call the Dept. at 343-8085.



IT'S NOT TOO LATE ...

to pay your Westfield Residents Association dues. Are you one of the people who have not renewed their membership for 2008-2009? A red mark on the mailing label of this newsletter means that you have not. We hope that this was just an oversight. As you know, it's the size of our WRA membership that makes a positive difference when we speak to an issue at any city meeting. We hope we can count on your continued support. Please use the renewal application below.

2009 Officers

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Vice Chair
Stephen Devoto

Secretary
Carolann D'Eon

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Committee Members
Ann Loffredo
Cathy Branch Stebbins
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**WESTFIELD
RESIDENTS
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**Address:
P.O. Box 373
Middletown, CT 06457**

WRA MEMBERSHIP FORM 2008—2009

Please Circle One: NEW RENEWAL DONATION

Make checks made payable to **WRA**. Mail to: Treasurer, Westfield Residents Association, Inc., P.O. Box 373, Middletown, CT 06457.

Name(s): _____ E-mails: _____

Address: _____ ___ \$10.00 per person

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