



**WESTFIELD
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION,
INC.**

WESTFIELD NEWS

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ART HIGGINS & ED DYPA TO BE GUEST SPEAKERS AT WRA'S JANUARY 26TH QUARTERLY MEETING STARTING AT 7 P.M., FELLOWSHIP HALL, 3rd CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Every year you dutifully pay your Westfield Fire Tax but how much do you really know about our Westfield Fire Department? For instance, in addition to responding to fire and medical emergencies are other services rendered? On Monday, January 26th, at our WRA Quarterly meeting, Westfield Fire Marshall, Art Higgins, and Fire-fighter and WRA member Ed Dypa will provide answers to these and other questions such as:



- With the city's lowest fire tax rate, how is our Westfield Fire Department, which serves Middletown's most populated residential and industrial area, able to do it so efficiently, plus buy the latest in fire engines and emergency equipment?
- What was the reason for the recent meeting of the three fire districts –South Fire, Central and Westfield? Was it another attempt to merge the three departments?

If the three fire districts merged, our Westfield fire tax would undoubtedly increase significantly while taxes for South and Central Fire Districts would likely go down or remain steady. Further, there is the possibility that there would be less local knowledge of the area, which could significantly affect the quality of a response in an emergency. _____ (continued, page 3)

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CONGRATULATIONS TO A GREAT MAN

WRA member Adolph "Artie" Schiemann earned deserved recognition this month. On Monday, January 5th, Mayor Giuliano and the Common Council awarded Artie a citation in appreciation for his service to the country in World War II, for his life long dedication to farming, and his recent assurance that his 34 acre farm on Bradley Street in Westfield will forever remain open space. He did the latter by selling the development rights to the city at far below the appraised value of the land for development.

One highlight of this special occasion, to Artie's total surprise and delight, was that he received the city honor on his 90th birthday! Thank you, Artie, and may you enjoy many, many, more Happy Birthdays.



WESTFIELD SCHOOLS

Westfield parents have been complaining about the overcrowded classrooms at Lawrence, Spencer, and especially Moody schools. Good schools are one of the most critical parts of our neighborhood, not only because they give our children the best chance of success, but also because the quality of the schools has a huge impact on the value of our properties. In addition, the school budget is by far the largest cost to the city, and thus has a big impact on property taxes. To be proactive, your WRA Executive Committee has named a WRA Standing Committee to monitor the activities of the Board of Education. WRA executive Committee members Jen Mahr and Sandi Foster, and WRA member-at-large Richard Lawson have all agreed to serve on this committee. All have children in Moody School and are aware of the conditions.

Before the Board of Education Meeting on Tuesday, January 13th, the WRA sent a detailed letter to Michael Frechette, Superintendent of Schools, with copies to all Board of Ed members, Mayor Giuliano, Planning Director William Warner, and Moody PTA co-presidents Michele Lentini and Susan Courchesne expressing our concerns and our suggestions. Mr. Frechette has said that the teachers contract states that the "optimum" size of classes in grades K&1 is

22; in grades 2 and up the number is 25. Moody has up to 26 students in the upper classes. Snow and Bielefield Schools have no classes with more than 18 pupils.

Talk of school redistricting to alleviate the overcrowding in some schools has resulted in the Board of Education hiring Jeter, Cook & Jepson to do a feasibility study for the entire district. But Moody's need for a resolution to the overcrowding is NOW for the 2008-2009 school year. WRA's letter included support of Susan Courchesne's proposal to cap Moody's enrollment, effective immediately, for the rest of the school year with no fill-in of vacancies if a student moves from Moody.

At the Board of Ed meeting on January 13th, the School Board began to discuss the budget for the next year. No decisions have been made. Discussion will continue throughout the winter and into the spring, at all of the School Board meetings.

Westfield Fire (continued):

On Monday evening, January 5th, the Common Council approved Resolution 12-13 to add a Fire Services Cost Committee to Chapter 23 of the Middletown Code of Ordinances to establish a committee to assess all current and future costs. Two members from each of the three fire districts will serve on the Committee. Central's two members will also be Common Council members. Why? This appears to be only a fact-finding, not legislative committee so there should be no conflict of interest. But isn't the possibility there? We need to hear from our speak-



ers what exactly this new committee will mean to us in Westfield.

With questions like these needing answers, as Westfield taxpayers, this is a WRA quarterly meeting no one really can afford to miss. You will also learn some home winter safety tips. Our speakers are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. following a short WRA Business meeting starting at 7 p.m. and refreshments. Remember the date, January 26th, and place: the Fellowship Hall of 3rd Congregational Church on Miner Street.

WESTLAKE PARK

We reported last year about the open space area on Westlake Drive that has fallen into disrepair since the bankruptcy of Westlake Association (a condominium-owners group). Residents of Westlake Drive area are now trying to get the City of Middletown involved in upgrading this defunct Westlake Park where the new city bike trail goes around. The tennis, softball and basketball courts are no longer usable for the local citizens. Also all of the picnic areas and the gazebo that used to be on one of the two islands have deteriorated and are unusable.



Many local citizens have donated their time and money to keep a walking trail with bridges that connect the islands and went over the brooks that feed the park and the Mattabeset River. This has always allowed people to walk around the defunct park for exercise, fish, feed the lovely swans, geese and ducks as well take canoes and boats. In January of this year a huge tree fell on one of the bridges and the trail is no longer capable of providing access.

The degradation of this community asset has lowered the property value of surrounding properties, especially in Trolley Crossing, and limits recreational activities for the residents who live in the Condominium and Apartment associations near the Westlake area. About thirteen percent of Middletown's population lives in the Westlake area, and these thousands of Middletown tax payers are concerned. There is a Petition for residents to sign asking the city to upgrade this land into a park. 268 signatures have been dropped off at the city. Many of the associations off of Westlake are now participating in getting their residents to sign this petition.

WILL HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

In anticipation of President-elect Obama's proposal to federally fund all states' shovel-ready projects to create millions of new jobs nationwide, Governor M. Jodi Rell is accepting shovel-ready lists from all cities and towns in CT. On December 29th, Mayor Sebastial Giuliano submitted this, Middletown's list. All of these projects have received the necessary environmental permits:

Coginchaug River Protection Project and Palmer Field Parking Lot Reconstruction: Bid opens January 7, 2009 (25 jobs, \$500,000).

Wilcox Road Bridge Construction: Bid opening early February, 2009 (40 jobs, \$1,000,000)

Reconstruction of Industrial Park Road/Westlake Drive/Westfield Street/Nejako Drive: Bid opening in March, 2009 (75 jobs, \$2,500,000).

Mellilli Plaza Parking Lot Reconstruction: To be bid in March, 2009 with construction to be completed by April, 2009 (30 jobs, \$500,000).

Water Service and Water Line Installation for Westfield Area of Middletown: Design complete in Spring, 2009 (40 jobs, \$3,300,000).

North End Homeownership and Health Re-

newal Project: Awaiting funding. First phase is home ownership (100 jobs, \$4,000,000), second phase is Community Health Renewal construction (100 jobs, \$6,000,000).

Bartholomew Road Pump Station: Spring, 2009 (20 jobs (\$1,100,000).

Multiple Function Storage Facility (Public Safety – Fire, Police, Emergency Management): February, 2009 (20 jobs, \$1,500,000).

The total cost total is \$20,400,000.

Early in his administration, president Dwight D. Eisenhower, to keep the country from falling into another deep depression took a great risk and signed the \$25 billion Federal-Aid Highway Act to build 42,000 miles of interstate highway to create jobs for thousands of unemployed workers. Although the final cost of the construction far exceeded the \$25 billion, the risk paid off. The economy was turned around and the country's standard of living rose. President-elect Obama is taking the same huge risk with his shovel ready proposal. Let us hope that history repeats itself.

DID YOU MISS IT?

WRA's October 2008 Meet The Candidates Night was anything but humdrum. Candidates for all of the local elections, including two of the candidates for the U.S. Congress, Rosa DeLauro and Ralph Ferrucci, and all the candidates for state offices participated in the event. The candidates' comments sparked a good natured rivalry that turned the balance of the evening into a party-like atmosphere. It was a warm, vibrant, neighborhood gathering and attendees got to personally know the people seeking our votes.

THE ARMY TRAINING CENTER AND BYSIEWICZ INDUSTRIAL PARK

In early November the Army Corps of Engineers announced that they would not be pursuing the existing Mile Lane site as a possibility for their new training facility. This leaves 3 sites still under consideration, all within less than one-half mile of each other in Westfield. The original Westfield site, Boardman Lane, is one of them, as are the Bysiewicz Industrial Park on Middle Street, and Cucia Park on Smith Street. The army is intensively investigating the environmental, archaeological, economic, traffic, and other issues relating to each of those three sites.

In November, we learned that a private company was considering purchase of up to 3 lots in the Bysiewicz Industrial Park. This purchase would eliminate the Bysiewicz property from consideration from the army. To help make this happen, the Common Council in December approved a resolution granting tax relief to the owner of the land, providing that he sold lots to this company. Last week we learned that the company considering the land is the Norpaco Gourmet Foods

company. Norpaco makes bottled hot peppers stuffed with salami and provolone, as well as many other gourmet Italian specialty foods. They are currently a \$13.8 million company with 100 full-time employees based in New Britain, but they would like to expand to a larger building with the potential for 140 employees. They would pay \$80,000 in taxes to Middletown annually. As always, you can count on the WRA to examine any plans for new construction, to ensure that all applicable Inland Wetlands and Zoning regulations are followed.

If Norpak does purchase lots in the Bysiewicz Industrial Park, the Army would be left with only two choices for their training facility, Cucia Park and Boardman Lane. They are expected to announce their preferred site in March. The WRA executive committee will closely monitor the army's activity and keep members informed.

go to www.WRAMiddletown.org/newslinks.html for full coverage

WHAT A CITY SNAFU!

In 1993 Middletown's Planning & Zoning Commission granted a Special Exception Permit with conditions to Mr. John Kolman allowing him to accept only city leaves and grass clippings for composting. One of the conditions was that the Public Works Department would monitor groundwater in the area on a regular basis. In the ensuing 15 years, Public Works did NOT make a single groundwater test. Concern has been raised that Mr. Kolman has turned a leaf composting operation into a solid waste facility, possibly generating hazardous waste water run-off. In addition to leaves, he has been accepting potentially contaminated road sweeping from the town of Berlin, in clear violation of his special use permit and the regulations of the State Department of Environmental Protection. But that's not all! The City of Middletown itself has taken road sweepings to the Kolman Farm. The Public Works Department has been actively involved in the violation of the permit granted by Planning and Zoning.

At the January Common Council meeting, Bill Russo, head of Public Works, could not provide any

information about this regular testing and whether it had been done. Instead, Water and Sewer director Guy Russo has tested the water in adjacent to the Higby Reservoir and health inspector Sal Nesci has tested the water from a nearby homeowner's well. Unfortunately, the well water test, was done on water coming out of a tap, water that could have been filtered or have masked contaminants.

So egregious is the present situation that after over an hour of trying to get all the facts so that they could determine what they should do about the infractions, infuriated council members scheduled a workshop in March to make that determination. In the meantime they asked, and Mayor Giuliano agreed, that he would ask all responsible city departments to take measures to get the operation back to the status allowed in the Special Exception Permit. On January 6th and 7th, three different cease and desist orders were served to Mr. Kolman, requiring him to remove all solid waste, to stop accepting any new leaves and grass, and to remove the Berlin town street sweepings by May at the latest.

NO CHANGE HERE!

While the price of merchandise, food, health care, and everything continues to rise, one thing that hasn't changed is the cost of WRA's service to the city and Westfield residents. For less than 3 cents per day, per person, per year, members are assured of the same active, proven, property protection enjoyed for over 27 years. For a couple living at the same address, the price is a mere 4 cents per day. Currently, with over 150 members strong, WRA can continue to offer the price because WRA is a not for profit, all volunteer, organization with no paid officials.

With industrially developable land in Middletown nearly depleted, the area along I-91 in Westfield is still a prime area for companies seeking a location. As a WRA member you know that you can count on WRA to closely monitor all development proposals and act to keep residential life in Westfield all that we have come to enjoy. Past developers have learned and prospective future ones soon learn, that Westfield Residents Association (WRA) is an organization that means what it stands for: rational development.

WRA's strength is in the size of its membership, its successful past history, and its earned ability to call and get help from national, state, and local officials when needed. This, and our organization's effectiveness, was highlighted this past Fall when, in regard to their proposal to build a huge training center in Westfield, an official with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said, in essence, that never before, anywhere, have they had to contend with the kind of situation that they are encountering here in Middletown.

If we are going to make WRA's future a continued proud history, your, and everyone's membership is vital. Take a look. Is there a red spot on the mailing label on this newsletter? If so, we hope that it was only due to the hustle and bustle of the holidays that you have forgotten to pay your 2008-2009 WRA dues. Please assure us that we can continue to count on you by sending in your membership renewal today.

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**WESTFIELD
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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: _____

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