



www.Westnorwalk.org

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# West Norwalk Assoc. - Autumn Newsletter

West Norwalk Association

## Letter from the Board

Dear West Norwalk Residents,

The West Norwalk Association would like to wish all our residents, both new and old, a very warm welcome.

The Association was formed in 1947 with the mission to foster and preserve the residential character and quality of life in our Neighborhood. Thanks to many involved and caring residents, the association has been able to fulfill its pledge over the past 69 years even as the city of Norwalk has grown in leaps and bounds.

When we talk to our fellow neighbors about the association, we frequently get asked "what does the association do?"

As board members, we represent West Norwalk at the CNNA (Coalition Of Norwalk Neighborhoods), we are involved with the local political parties, we sit on the boards of the McMahon PTSO and the Senators Success Fund, we have members on both The Ponus and the McMahon School Governance Council as well as the Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee and we attend monthly Oak Hills Park board meetings.

Although there have not been many quality of life issues this year, we have been busy.

This Spring we conducted our annual spring cleanup, resulting in over 60 bags of trash being collected.

We were informed from a concerned resident, that the Norwalk Community College had plans to build a bridge across Richards Ave. We, along with CT. State Rep. Fred Wilms, met with the president to express our concerns. We were assured by Dr. Levinson that the bridge would not be built. You can read more in his letter in the newsletter.

In an effort to connect our neighborhood we held our first cocktail party/ social at the Oak Hills restaurant. It was a great success with over 75 of our residents attending. We plan on having a few of these events a year. Please watch for emails, or check our website for future announcements.

Some of our board members, along with other concerned citizens, have been working with Mayor Harry Rilling to form the "Five Mile River Action Group" The pur-



October 2016

### Board Members

- Anthony Carrano: President
- Ken D'Arinzo: Vice-President
- Brian Forschino: Treasurer
- Isabelle Hargrove: Member
- Kristin Clemens: Member
- Robert Notley: Member
- Ted Stepanoff: Member

### Let's Get Connected !



Unfortunately we are only able to send out one newsletter a year. It costs over \$1,200 per mailing and we cannot afford to send more.

We maintain a website [www.westnorwalk.org](http://www.westnorwalk.org) that contains events, contacts, bylaws, photographs, and upcoming events.

Like us on FaceBook at **West Norwalk Association**. We maintain our page and are continually updating it with pertinent information. It is also a great place to post any messages you may have that you want other West Norwalk Residents to see ie: lost animals, tag sales, wild animal sightings, items for sale, or even yard sales.

Email us at [Board@westnorwalk.org](mailto:Board@westnorwalk.org) and ask to be put on our mailing list. We have begun to send informational emails and quarterly newsletters to our fellow residents.

This year we had notifications about our meetings, our cleanup, our holiday party, our social, Five Mile River updates and informational emails from the Norwalk Police Department. .

If you believe we have your email, and you have not received any from us, please send us an updated email.

### McMahon Senior Receives WNA Scholarship



For the fifth year, the West Norwalk Association presented a scholarship to an exemplary West Norwalk high school student who demonstrates character and a community-oriented mindset.

Community service, academic excellence and all-around persistence in every endeavor are what set Sraavani Akarapuh apart. When

Sraavani was not dedicating her time to acing a difficult course load at McMahon, she divided her time between volunteer jobs at the Norwalk Library, Norwalk Grassroots Tennis program and a community service organization called BuildOn.

"It's a tremendous honor to be recognized by my community," said Sraavani. "It only makes me want to give back to my community even more."

Sraavani will use the \$1,000 scholarship towards her tuition while she attends the University of Pennsylvania.

If you wish to make a donation to the WNA scholarship, please contact Isabelle Hargrove at [ihargrove@westnorwalk.org](mailto:ihargrove@westnorwalk.org) or 203-856-5238. Applications for the 2017 scholarship will be accepted next April 2017. Please encourage all West Norwalk high school seniors to apply.

### Holiday Party

Friday December 9th  
7PM to 10PM  
Dolce Center

All West Norwalk residents are cordially invited to attend our annual Holiday Party to celebrate the holiday season with our neighbors. We will provide a selection of delicious appetizers, desserts, and a cash bar. It is the signature event of our association and is set in the festive atmosphere of the lovely Dolce Center.

In order to continue having this party at the Dolce Center, as there was last year, there will be a charge of \$10 per person for the party. Children under 10 will be admitted free.

So come out and meet your neighbors for a wonderful local night out!



Please join us at the Oak Hill Restaurant on the Green for the West Norwalk Association Annual Meeting. Come on out and meet your board members as well your neighbors. We have also invited all the local candidates to speak briefly and answer a few questions. There will also be a cash bar with drink specials as well as a \$4.00 appetizer menu. Restaurant open at 6:30 and closes at 10pm..

**Date: Thursday, October 27th**

**Time: 7-9 PM**

# Our Town

## Notes From The Common Council By: Tom Livingston and John Igneri

West Norwalk is in Common Council District E and is represented by Tom Livingston and John Igneri. The following is an abbreviated version of information provided by Tom and John that can be found on the WNA website.

### Norwalk Road Paving Program

The Department of Public Works has established a road paving program to systematically identify and address streets most in need of work. A list of the streets that have been identified as needing some level of repair, either in whole or in part, through 2019 can be found under "Road Paving Program" on the City's website at [www.norwalkct.org](http://www.norwalkct.org).

### DPW "Click & Request"

The Department of Public Works has an app that allows residents to report quality of life issues, such as litter, potholes and drainage problems quickly and easily. The "Click & Request" app establishes an electronic record of reports and sends the request to the appropriate City department for resolution. The app is available under "Click & Request" on the City's website. The City still has customer service representatives available at 854-3200.

### Norwalk Development Update

Work has been proceeding behind the scenes on the SoNo Collection, the new 700,000 square foot mall to be built by General Growth Properties on West Avenue. Architectural and engineering plans are largely complete and construction is expected to commence this fall, with the mall opening slated for Spring 2019.

The Walk Bridge Program to replace the deteriorating railroad bridge over the Norwalk River continues to move ahead. The new bridge is being designed to have two independent movable spans and withstand extreme weather events, including storm surges and high winds. The replacement of the bridge also requires extensive work around the site. Construction on the bridge itself is anticipated to start in early 2017. More information on the Program can be found at [www.walkbridgect.com](http://www.walkbridgect.com).

### Boards and Commissions

There are more than 40 boards and commissions in the City. These boards and commissions are essential to the operation of our city, and the City is continually looking for members of the community to volunteer their time and energy on these bodies. If you are interested or just want more information, please let Tom or John know.

## Norwalk Community College By Dr David L. Levinson - President

Hello West Norwalk neighbors! As we began a new academic year on August 29<sup>th</sup>, I want to update you about the College.

Over the summer we hosted a number of initiatives that benefit Norwalk residents. For example, we celebrated 51 Norwalk Early College Academy (NECA) freshman and sophomores who completed college level courses this summer. This coming year represents the third year of the Academy, which openly-enrolls students from throughout the school district, and represents the first Connecticut replication of the Pathways to Technology (P-Tech) High School in Brooklyn, NY. Each student receives an IBM mentor, an internship during their junior year, and potential employment opportunities. Students have the opportunity to complete an Applied Associate's Degree in either Mobile Computing or Software Engineering as they complete their high school degree. Housed at Norwalk High, approximately 250 students will be enrolled this fall.

During the coming academic year we are expecting to break ground on two projects: a Student Commons on our West campus and renovation of our Pepsico Theater on our East Campus. We would like to attend a future Association meeting where we can discuss these projects in more detail.

As you are aware, in response to your concern we decided not to construct a bridge connecting our East and West campuses. However, safety of our students crossing Richards Avenue remains a major concern. I look forward to working with you to improve safety at this busy intersection.

Most of all, we want to be good neighbors. Please let me know of any concerns that you have by emailing me at [president@norwalk.edu](mailto:president@norwalk.edu)

## Oak Hills Chairman's Report By Ernie DesRochers

Following are some highlights from the Chairman's report, being that we have limited space we are not able to include the entire report. In order to view the report in its entirety, including a hole by hole description of improvements, please check out our website.

As a West Norwalk neighbor we are pleased to provide you with this update on the happenings at Oak Hills Park. Here are some stats and thoughts on our just finished fiscal year, which we wanted to share with you:

Total rounds for our FYE were 41,349 up 8.53% from the 38,106 rounds we achieved in FYE 2015. This is the first time Oak Hills had over 40,000 in rounds played since FYE 2010. The national round average for a municipal golf course is about 33,000 rounds.

Course Utilization is almost 63% which is a 14% increase in three short years. 60% is considered good by industry standards.

Based on our long term round seasonality index and assuming no bad weather we should have over 41,000 revenue rounds for the calendar year – which is an 8.2% increase over 2015. Nationally rounds are up 3.3% for public golf courses.

Total Revenue for the year is up over \$110,000 to over \$1,680,100. This was our third best year ever.

Many initiatives were started and expanded this year. These include implementation of a capital improvement program for many of our physical assets not covered by our grant, and expansion of our web based reservations and marketing system and social media.

Over the past three years the Oak Hills Park Authority has been working hard on many fronts to improve course operations, improve physical conditions, and expand offerings for our members and guests and the community at large. That is reflected in our improved operations.

I am pleased to report that these changes will accelerate over the next few months. For example Oak Hills Park is the second municipal golf course in Connecticut to offer Golf Boards for use by our members. Those were introduced in early August. We will also have new "smart" golf carts beginning next spring featuring the latest in GPS technology.

## OHPNAC By Elsa Obuchowski

Visitors to Oak Hills Park will soon see a landscaping renovation under way. It will begin with "shovels in the ground" in the fall and come to fruition in the springtime. The golf course and tennis facility will be upgraded, and in addition two areas located east of the restaurant parking lot—the "old rose garden" (renamed the Fountain Garden) and the "old chipping green" (renamed the Great Lawn)—will be rebuilt as part of the State Bond Commission grant approved for Oak Hills Park. In both of these areas, invasives will be removed and grass lawns installed. The Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee has collaborated with the landscape architects retained by the Oak Hills Park Authority to develop a planting plan that eventually, we hope, will be an ecologically sound mix of garden and meadow trees, shrubs, and ground covers that include native, drought-tolerant, disease-resistant, pollinator, and other sustainable plant species with varied heights, shapes, colors, and bloom times.

This transformation from what is now a field of weeds will make the Fountain Garden and Great Lawn accessible for events, gatherings, and general public enjoyment. These two gardens will add to the appeal of the existing Oak Hills woodland nature trail, which extends for about half a mile down the hill from the restaurant [parking lot](#) and was beautifully reconditioned in June 2014 as part of an Eagle Scout project. The trail is a "hidden gem" for bird-watchers, hikers, and nature enthusiasts, and the Oak Hills Park Nature Advisory Committee hopes to make it more informative by adding tree identification plaques and other interpretive signs. We also hope to partner with educational, artistic, cultural, and other organizations and members of the community to host events for all ages highlighting the beauty of Oak Hills Park.

# Our Schools

## Fox Run Elementary By James Martinez Principal

There were many programs in operation this summer. The Summer Literacy Academy, Parks and Recreation, CAMP ELLI (Early Literacy Learning Initiative) - Stepping Stones Museum, and ESY (Extended School Year) were also among the various programs that were in operation. Additionally, our custodial staff worked around these programs tirelessly polishing up the school and making it look brand new for opening day.



We are entering the third year of the Connecticut K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK3LI). This study, funded by the CT State Dep. of Education, is working in schools to develop a comprehensive school-wide reading plan and to build internal expertise and capacity. In addition, students at risk for reading difficulties have been identified and provided with small group intervention. Literacy How is on the management team and providing professional development and coaching.

The state now requires schools to have a School Governance Council (SGC). The SGC is comprised of parent, teacher, and community leader representatives. I am looking to fill a couple of seats that remain vacant on the council. If you would like to nominate someone or yourself, please email me at [martinezj@norwalkps.org](mailto:martinezj@norwalkps.org) as soon as possible.

Finally, it has been brought to my attention that members of the West Norwalk Community have expressed concerns about our pick-up procedure at the end of the school day. The pick-up procedure changed last year in the interest of safety being our number one priority for our entire school community. However, I do understand that different safety concerns are being raised and/or presenting themselves. In light of it still being early in the school year, I am confident that very soon we will be back to completing this procedure with 15 minutes or less each day around the same time just as we did last year. In the interim, please feel free to contact me directly with questions, concerns, or suggestions anytime at 203-899-2860.

## Ponus Ridge Middle School By Dr Damon Lewis Principal

Hello West Norwalk families!!! The staff at Ponus Ridge got off to an amazing start as we featured a "school within a school" format. Our grade 6 classes are in a block format schedule in which they are in Language Arts, and Math for 90 minutes daily. This lends itself to Extended Learning Time (ETL), and more Opportunities to Learn (OTL). The students operate on a 4 block day (a total of 8 periods). The grade 6 staff members were exposed to Professional Development this past summer, and the PD will continue throughout the year.



The grade 7 and 8 students and staff members operate on an 8 period day. The grade 7 and 8 students also have a built in Enrichment/Exploratory class in which students are exposed to topics/area of study that aren't normally taught in a typical school day. Some of the enrichment activities (taught by PRMS staff include STEM activities, Engineering, School Newspaper, and Stock Market activities). The enrichment activities have to align with our School Vision of "preparing students to be College and Career Ready in a globally competitive society". Our Motto is "EVERY DAY COUNTS!"

PRMS has implemented Tier II academic interventions to provide students with additional reinforcement and practice in Reading and Math. These additional supports will give students the opportunity to learn the "growth" mindset so the skills learned will transfer to all academic classes. PRMS will also host "Walkthrough Wednesdays" beginning in October. Walkthrough Wednesdays gives families the opportunity to walk with an administrator throughout the building for an hour and discuss PRMS, block scheduling, and a myriad of other things.

## Brien McMahon High School By Suzanne Koroshetz Principal

Brien McMahon High School faculty, staff, and students sprang into action on August 31<sup>st</sup> when students reported back to school. All of our varied goals for the year are connected to our core value statement: Brien McMahon High School will prepare all students for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by fostering intellectual curiosity and inspiring our students to become responsible, ethical, and imaginative members of the global society. If we accomplish this, every student at BMHS will graduate on time, college- and career-ready. Here are some of the initiatives we are working on this year to support this important mission:



This school year features our first extended block schedule. Students go to four 90-minute classes each day. On A Day there are classes 1 through 4, and on B Day there are classes 5 through 8. Teachers at BMHS have been engaged in professional development that focuses on student-centered learning, engagement, authentic assessments, and agency. These elements are essential to powerful lessons and critical to the extended learning period. Student and teacher feedback on the switch have been extremely positive, with many saying that the new schedule provides more time to delve deeply into content. With only four classes a day, students can prepare more thoroughly for each class, and with less transitions between periods, the pace of the day is less frenetic and more productive.

We are waiting for our report on the May 2016 New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges (NEASC) visit. NEASC is the organization that gives deserving New England high schools and colleges accreditation. They have exacting standards that schools are required to meet. Informal feedback from the visiting committee was positive and we will share the report on our website as soon as it is available.

BMHS is in the final stages of important planning to be named an International Baccalaureate (IB) school. IB World Schools share a common philosophy—commitment to high quality, challenging, international education, which BMHS believes is important for our students. The last steps in the application process will be completed this December and we hope to be able to share exciting news in the new year. The process has been thorough and the teachers and administrators who have participated in the planning and professional development are eager to bring this beneficial initiative to our students.

Please visit BMHS's beautiful campus for any and all of our many events this year. Our annual Celebration of Sound, hosted by our talented marching band took place on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, and all fall sports teams were in action by mid-September. Our website [bmhs.norwalkps.org](http://bmhs.norwalkps.org) is new and improved—please check it often to see what is happening at our special school.