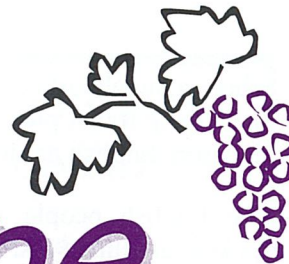




WESTCHESTER RECREATION
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FEBRUARY
2002



the

Grapevine

LAND OF THE REDCOATS

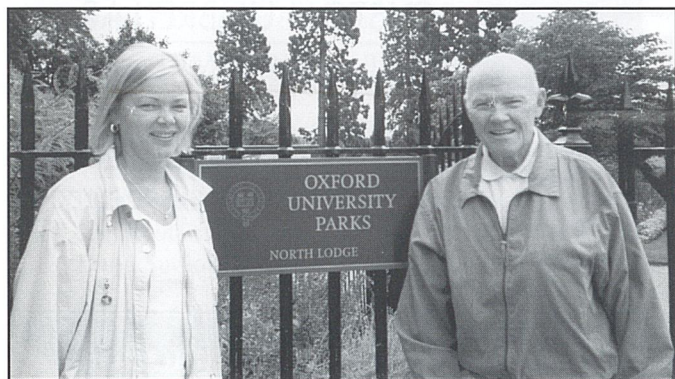
by Joe Curtis – 9/23/01

Nine days before the September 11th World Trade Center horror, I spent a week, one week, in England. It changed my professional parks and recreation philosophy substantially.

It was a frantic week, short on planning & preparations. The results, however, were exciting to me. I had never been to the United Kingdom before.

My daughter, Marie, and her husband, Paul, a British subject, live in England. They have been urging me to visit them during the past three years to study English parks and playgrounds. I have been "yes"ing them, but procrastinating. What could I possibly learn now from the Brits after a 40-year career in the field? Arrogant? Yes. Cocky? Presumptuous? Yes, yes, yes. I plead guilty to all of them.

I finally said, "OK, when?" Within days, air tickets were in my hand. Armed with Frommer's Guide to the United Kingdom, I was off for Jolly Old England, landing at Gatwick Airport, near London on August 26, 2001. I stayed at their little house in the tiny village of Shillingford.



Joe Curtis with daughter Marie Bint at Oxford

The next seven days were exhilarating but exhausting. Marie and Paul took time off from work and scheduled every day, Monday through Saturday, 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., and several evenings. Each day we raced about within a vast circle of English terrain with a radius of about 50 miles, London at its center. They were enthusiastic hosts.

Paul permitted no dawdling. We would zoom to a park in early morning, buy tickets and run in. Forty minutes and two guided tours later, we'd rush out, jump into his car and speed 20 miles to a special museum. Lunches were gobbled en route and interviews with on-site staff were limited to 5-10 minutes each before we exited. We made countless road trips across the gorgeous English countryside in every direction of the compass. I complained frequently to Paul and Marie that the pace was unprofessionally frenetic, and I reminded them that they were hosting a geezer, long of tooth and short of hair. Paul's stereotypical reply, "Sorry, Joe, we'll slow down for you."; and then he would ratchet up the pace a few notches.

Places and things visited were dizzying: Wimbledon; the Henley Regatta site on the Isis River; Winston Churchill's bedroom of birth in stately Blenheim Palace and his final resting place in Woodstock; Buckingham Palace with "The Change"; Parliament; Tower of London; "Speaker's Corner" in London's Hyde Park; Oxford with its scores of colleges and universities, including Bill Clinton's dormitory room; the "EYE," an immense new ferris wheel in front of Parliament buildings on the Thames; the ancient city of Bath which was the farthest point west for the Roman invasion and occupation of the British Isles 2000 years ago; the legendary Thames River and its many small, medieval bridges; Trafalgar and Piccadilly, St. Paul's Cathedral and Windsor Castle; Harrods Department Store and so many more. We visited tennis centers in parks, cricket "pitches," bowling greens, football fields, rowing lakes,

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arboreta, neighborhood parks and playgrounds, bicycling and hiking trails, picnic sites, band shells and scores of signature English gardens.

The English people were a delight. Low key, soft-spoken, articulate and friendly, they made me feel I was a personal guest in their country. Net effect on me: reality and humility, plus mental confusion. There is so much about basic theory and philosophy of international parks, playgrounds and urban leisure sites that is new to me. I have always felt that we Americans were in the van of the parks and recreation movement, and that foreign professionals should come here to be enlightened. Truth to tell, we can learn much from the style of our professional brothers and sisters abroad.

Countryside: Much of England is countryside: lovely rolling hills, moors and meadows. Carefully placed trees, shrubs and stone fences give the illusion of endless plains and open space in all directions.

Gigantic arenas, domes, stadia, natatoriums, auto raceways, sports centers, etc. -- I saw none of these though I'm sure a few exist. Prevailing impression was small, tidy, informal, natural, in everything I saw of parks and recreation. Groves of trees, sheltered walkways, vegetable and flower gardens abounded, at least to my eye. The endless English countryside was everywhere, much of it seemingly empty, except for tiny villages, an occasional farmhouse and barn, and herds of sheep and cattle. The pleasant bucolic smell of open country and farmland was enjoyable. Everything was meticulously manicured, but in a natural, casual manner. Signage: I've always promoted large, sturdy, colorful,

brightly painted signs on our park and recreation facilities. Not so in England. Small, low, tasteful signs in cool colors prevailed. Even the internationally famous Hyde Park and "Speakers' Corner" in London was faintly identified. Many sites were marked by no signs at all. My jaw dropped. Road signs are similarly small, low to the ground, and almost apologetically muted. Exceptions are their few larger, heavily trafficked superhighways, nicknamed "autobahns." Most roads have no speed limits.

Bottom Line

I came away from my too-brief scanning of English parks and recreation areas chastened. Long-held ideas and opinions were rudely shaken up for me, not by some aggressive British image promoter, but by my own eyes, ears and nose.

WRAPS members are among the best trained and most effective parks and recreation professionals in the world. Even we, however, must open our minds, travel to other cultures, and view sympathetically the way those other recreators relate to their constituencies, and deliver their services.

We have many fine recreation departments and programs here in Westchester. One, however, stands out for its homespun, people-related programs, philosophies and services. It was mindful of the many small English villages I visited. That is the town/village of Harrison led by two outstanding superintendents, Bernie Guagnini and Ron Belmont. It could be a model for us all. Congratulations!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Sally Rogol

The Olympic games have just completed in Salt Lake City, Utah, but the significance and underlying theme of the Olympics is worth remembering as we start anew - spring is just around the corner.

The Olympic creed was first declared in 1896 by the founder of the modern Olympic games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin. A quote from that creed is worth noting: "The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well."

The Olympic flame has now been extinguished and the athletes have returned home. But these athletes continue to send a message which is an important one for all. As we look to our spring programs, and in particular youth sports programs, we should take every opportunity to convey to each young athlete and adult coach what is really important. And that is, in youth sports the primary emphasis should be on PARTICIPATION and not so much winning. The focus should be on having fun, making new friends and emphasizing teamwork. Encourage everyone, regardless of ability, to challenge themselves & continue to improve their skills each day.

Have a wonderful spring; warmer weather is just around the corner.

TO REACH THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Sally Rogol, President	967-2535
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Jill Fisher, Secretary	381-7865
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Tom Hroncich	939-2354
Sylvia Kalil	232-8441
Joe Stout	864-7004
Daryl Sudlow	742-2363

COUNTY PRC CALLS FOR "PITCH-IN" VOLUNTEERS

Civic-minded individuals and groups from every community in Westchester are encouraged to join with thousands of like-minded people who will take part in the eighth annual "Pitch In for Parks" on Sunday, April 21, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at all county parks, pathways, and nature preserves.

"Pitch In for Parks" is open to groups and individuals who have a favorite County park where they like to hike, swim, picnic or just relax and would like to join this unique opportunity to help preserve, protect and spruce-up the environment. By "pitching in," participants take an active role in the stewardship of the Westchester County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, which encompasses more than 40 parks and recreational facilities on 16,000 acres of county parkland.

During this annual spring parks clean-up, volunteers can work on graffiti removal, trail clearing and pruning, flower bed preparation, debris removal, staining and painting, and sweeping and cleaning. Whether volunteers have a specific skill or specialty, or would like to channel their efforts wherever the need is greatest, there will be many ways to take part. Volunteers can "Pitch In" for an hour or two or spend the entire day.

In past years, "Pitch In for Parks" has drawn more than 3,500 people who have worked an estimated 12,000 hours and removed more than 55,000 pounds of garbage and debris, cleared 27,000 linear feet of trails, and performed general clean-ups at a variety of county park locations throughout Westchester.

In addition to the free raffles, each participant in the clean-up effort will receive valuable discount coupons redeemable at county park facilities this summer.

Participants should dress appropriately for work. Work gloves are recommended.

For more information or to sign up for a project, call the Westchester County Parks Department at (914) 864-7133. General information about Westchester County Parks is available on the World Wide Web at www.westchestergov.com.

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BITS & PIECES

Best Wishes are extended to Yorktown Recreation's **Brian Slavin** who is retiring after 31+ years of service. Your staff says . . . enjoy your well-earned new lifestyle, relax and have some fun !

Warm Retirement Wishes are also extended to Commissioner **Joe Davidson** of the City of White Plains. Congratulations on an astounding career spanning 47 years !

Congratulations are also in order, and extended to the following members on the occasion of their recent appointments . . .

Michelle Antosca has been appointed as the new Assistant Superintendent for the Town of Eastchester. Michelle assumes her new position after serving several years as the Town's Recreation Supervisor .

Dawn Mahoney has transferred from the Town of Cortlandt Youth Division to her new position with the Office of the Aging Division. She can be reached at her new office at 528-1572.

and from the "What Ever Happened to . . ." Department, we are happy to report that:

Eileen Lohner Turk is still doing well in sunny California. She is an Area Manager with the San Diego Park & Recreation Department – currently working in the Rancho Penasquitos/Scripps Ranch Area (20 miles NE of Dan Diego). She oversees 16 parks – 200 acres. You can reach Eileen at the3turks@aol.com.

Stacy Demar is alive and well at Chelsea Piers in NYC. She is currently the Assistant General Manager at the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers and you can reach her at (212) 336-6074 or e-mail her at demars@chelseapiers.com.

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DATES TO REMEMBER !

February 27

Annual Vendors Luncheon

March 7 & 14

WRAPS Summer Entertainment Auditions

March 20

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting: Topic TBA

April 4

Blythedale Children's Carnival & Pizza Party

April 24

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting: Topic TBA

May 2

Annual Health Department Summer Camp Seminar

May 15

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting: Topic TBA

June 7

44th Annual Awards and Scholarship Luncheon

TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE...
CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR SOCIETY!

WRAPS welcomes & encourages all members to actively participate in our professional society. Volunteering for committee work within the society is a great way to meet other members, make contacts, and strengthen the supportive network of Recreation & Parks professionals in Westchester County. Everyone has something to contribute!

To find out how you can get involved, call current WRAPS President Sally Rogol at Rye Recreation, or any other member of the current Executive Board.

If everyone does a little, we all gain a lot!

ANNOUNCING...
WRAPS' 2002 SUMMER
ENTERTAINMENT AUDITIONS

The 2002 Entertainment Audition program has been scheduled to take place on two consecutive Thursdays, March 7th & 14th. Both sessions will be conducted at the Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry between 9:00 am and 2:30 pm. We hope that you can join us to help select this season's "Top 12" professional performers.

A direct mailing for this program has already been distributed to all WRAPS members, and interested persons are asked to call Auditions Chairperson, Maryrose Mullen, at 864-7057 to reserve a space. It is important to know if you will be attending, as arrangements for proper accommodations need to be made. If you haven't RSVPed yet, call today!

CALL FOR GRAPEVINE ARTICLES!

The next issue of the Grapevine is scheduled to be printed and distributed by June 2002.

Anyone interested in submitting materials must do so by Friday, April 19, 2002.

Mail, Fax or E-mail Information to:

Henry Jamin – Briarcliff Manor Recreation Dept.
48 Macy Road ~ Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510
Fax: 941-1467 E-mail: BMRDWork@cs.com

9th Annual
CHILDREN'S CARNIVAL
& PIZZA PARTY
at
BLYTHEDALE
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL!



Let's make this year's carnival another memorable event! Mark your calendar and join us for some fun on Thursday, April 4th, from 3:30 to 5:30 pm. Volunteers are needed to set-up and decorate at 1:30 pm; others can supervise games, be a costume character, serve food, and help clean up. Donations for decorations (no balloons), costume characters, and carnival games are needed and being accepted!

Committee members can be contacted at the numbers below to confirm your participation!
Call & Volunteer Today!

Jill Fisher 381-7865 Annette Hroncich 864-7064
Joe Stout 864-7004 Thomas Hroncich 939-2354

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

City of Peekskill

RECREATION LEADER

Salary Range: \$36,000 - \$44,000

Interested? Send Resume & Cover Letter to:

Peekskill Parks & Recreation
840 Main Street
Peekskill, NY 10566

CALL FOR GRAPEVINE EDITOR!

The WRAPS Executive Committee is seeking a volunteer to take on the role of Grapevine Editor for the next 2 program years.

Anyone interested should contact
Sally Rogol at 967-2535,
Suzanne Busby at 722-1160
or
Henry Jamin at 941-6560

ARSENIC & CHROMIUM

Questions and Answers

by Jeff Reed, Vice President-Playground Medic

Lately there has been a brewing controversy concerning the substances arsenic and chromium; two substances commonly found in wood preservatives. Wooden playground structures are commonly treated with wood preservatives that contain these substances. It is a debated topic, as to whether or not children are in danger by being subjected to these substances. The following are some commonly asked questions.

What are Arsenic and Chromium?

Arsenic and Chromium are scientifically known as chromated copper arsenates (CCA), which are commonly found in wood preservatives. These wood preservatives protect wood from rotting, fungus, molds, termites and other pests.

Why are they considered dangerous?

Until recently, it was a common practice to use wood preservatives that contain CCA's on wooden playground equipment. State and federal health officials have recently determined that these chemicals are dangerous and high levels of CCA's can cause cancer. The EPA is currently researching what is considered safe levels of arsenics, and will determine what will be the continued use of CCA's.

What is the danger to children using the playgrounds treated with Arsenic and Chromium?

Health officials have found that the maximum acceptable level of CCA's in wood preservatives is .08 parts per million. This simply means that children would have to be exposed to very high levels of CCA's to be at risk for cancer. The area of more concern is that CCA's used in wood are easily leached out of the wood into the ground where arsenics are already commonly and naturally found. This is an area of concern that again the EPA is researching.

How can I tell if my playground equipment contains chromated copper arsenates?

A small sample of the wood and soil is gathered and given to a laboratory to determine the levels of CCA's.

What should I do if my equipment has been found to contain chromium and arsenic?

Although research is still inconclusive, to be safe playground owners and operators should begin investigating replacement of the equipment. Purchasing metal playground equipment will insure that there will be no CCA's.

For more information, details, or help with testing, you can reach Playground Medic at (914)-741-2228

ANNOUNCING... A NEW INTERGENERATIONAL FACILITY COMING TO MT. KISCO !

It's happening this spring!

Family Service of Westchester, Inc. and the Mt. Kisco Day Care Center join together in the formation of an intergenerational, "shared site" program on Radio Circle in Mt. Kisco. Under the same roof, in a home-like environment, senior adults and children ages 3 months to 10 years old will build caring, supportive relationships.

Most importantly, we'll have lots of fun exchanging secrets about how to live a good life, for as long as possible!

Interested in more information?

Call 914-241-0770.

A NEW CLASS OF "V.I.P." ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS TO GRADUATE IN MARCH

VIPs to help students learn about the environment

More than one dozen men and women who took part in the county's Volunteers in the Parks Environmental Educators course that began last fall will soon be ready to share their newly acquired knowledge for the environment with county schoolchildren during field trips to Marshlands Conservancy in Rye and Cranberry Lake Preserve in North White Plains, two of the county's most popular and ecologically diverse nature preserves.

Now in its 18th year, the Volunteers in the Parks Environmental Educators program enables the County Parks Department to extend its outreach to Westchester's schoolchildren, offering field trips and pre-trip presentations in preparation for a visit to the preserve. This year's VIP educators will come away from their training with the understanding and techniques they need to guide groups through the various habitats at the preserves and to foster the children's knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment.

Schools in your area are encouraged to take advantage of the V.I.P. program; anyone interested in a class trip should contact Penny Berman, Coordinator of Volunteers, at (914) 864-7023. Additionally, anyone interested in becoming a V.I.P. Environmental Educators course can contact Ms. Berman for details.

General information about Westchester County parks, nature preserves and volunteer opportunities is available on the World Wide Web at www.westchestergov.com.

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIP

by Annette Hroncich

Attention WRAPS Members! Please start giving some thought to nominees for our 2002 Awards & Scholarship program. Packets will be distributed to all Society members later this winter and members may submit nominations for any, or all, of our award categories. In addition, nominations will be accepted from non-members for the Public Service, Voluntary Service, Youth and PIERRE awards.

The categories are as follows:

Public Service Awards (Organizations/Individual)
Voluntary Service Awards (Organizations/Individual)
Staff Associate Award
Youth Sports Coach Award
Henry B. Funking Youth Award
Irving "Red" Klein Commercial Recreation Award
Professional Service Award
Life Membership Award
Ruth M. Lederer Fellowship
Matt Dolan Innovative Program & Award Grant

As always, we would like to have a full slate of award winners to honor, so please also consider submitting nominations for the following important, and prestigious awards:

Joseph E. Curtis Achievement Award. - The nominee must be a member of WRAPS and during the year preceding her/his nomination she/he will have completed a major service to the society or a major accomplishment in the field of recreation, parks or conservation administration, program supervision, leadership or facility development.

The Austin Welch Pierre Award - The purpose and function of the award is to acclaim and recognize not only those in the recreation, parks,

conservation and allied professions but also those who interpret to the public a general excellence of effort in the recreation and parks field. The nominee for this award should have completed in the year prior to the selection a piece of outstanding creative work -or- have demonstrated leadership of excellence that had an impact on recreation and parks participation, not merely county or statewide but regionally, nationally and internationally. The recipient can be either a layperson recreator, a professional or an organization in the recreation, parks or conservation fields or an allied field such as the Arts, Architecture, Education & Professional Training, City Planning & Management, Literature & Public News Media, Legislation & Political Science, Research, Public Finance and Philanthropy & Social Work.

Peter J. Mayers Award for Merit - The nominee for this award must be an individual who has provided meritorious service as a professional to the field of community recreation, parks, conservation and outstanding accomplishments in the field of public recreation, parks or conservation administration for at least ten years. The nominee must be a current member of WRAPS.

Please give serious thought to these awards and submit deserving nominees to the committee!

New York State Recreation & Park Society ~ REGION 1 REPORT ~

by Rich Rose

The affiliates within Region 1 of the State Society all actively participated in the planning and implementation of the Annual Downstate Recreation Conference, held on November 14, 2001 at the Westchester County Center, and attended by over 300 persons. We were particularly excited this year because we welcomed the NYSRPS as a full partner in the conference. NYSRPS Executive Director, Gia Lento, and her staff were very helpful in the planning of this event, which is conducted as both an educational opportunity and a fundraiser for the sponsoring groups. In other news, Region 1 also provided sites in the Hudson Valley and Long Island for the one-day Special Events seminar sponsored by NYSRPS.

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FIRST WEEK CELEBRATION ***Rye Pilots new National Program***

Rye Recreation was one of 29 communities across the country asked to pilot a new national program (rolling out in 2003) called "Come out and Play America, First Week Celebration".

What is First Week?? 1st Week is a community-wide celebration and open house that provides options and opportunities for people to try new things, make new friends, rekindle relationships with neighbors, spend "quality time" with family, reduce stress, and boost overall quality of life for everybody – individuals, families, friends, work groups, neighborhoods, and the entire community.

Why have First Week?? The beginning of each new calendar year is always a time of new beginnings. People vow to give up bad habits and take up new more positive ones. They make promises to self and one another to make this coming year a more positive and rewarding one. 1st Week provides a variety of "get started, get going, start living" alternatives as a number of community organizations offer "Take A Taste", a short and concise taste of what programs and services they offer.

Some requirements of participation in 1st week were:

- Programs, activities, and options are free to the community or charge fees that cover direct supplies, materials, etc.
- 3 or more other community other providers (public, nonprofit, private) agree to become part of the celebration by offering some type of 1st Week option, i.e. library, police, fire, school, health department, Y's, churches, everybody!
- Secure 3 or more local sponsors for some kind of support for the celebration; Could be food, publicity, staff, etc.

Rye Recreation partnered with the Rye Nature Center, Rye Free Reading Room & Rye YMCA to provide 17 different activities throughout the week. Recreation programs consisted of FREE Aerobics & Yoga Classes, Family Games Night and Ice Cream Social; She's Got Game & Who's the Man Basketball tournament; Family Skating; Indoor Soccer Clinics; Indoor Baseball Clinics and a Mad Science Show. The Rye YMCA sponsored a FREE Community Gym, Community Swim and Community Spin programs. The Nature Center offered a Family Scavenger Hunt, Nature games for Grades 3-5, "Birds of Prey" demonstration and a morning of Natural Beauty (make home made soap & powder). The Rye Library presented "Laugh with Lucy", an I Love Lucy

presentation by a resident and a special addition of their Friday Fun Club.

Local sponsors included Toys R US, Longford's Ice Cream, a variety of current program instructors, Rye Country Day School, Mad Science of Westchester and local businesses.

It was a GREAT experience partnering with other organizations in the community and GREAT fun offering some different programs in the community.

For further "Come out and Play America" info., contact Wendy Rubin at wrubin@cs.com / 860-267-7247 or Ellen Sullivan at Ellenosull@aol.com / 860-633-3652. For more information on Rye's program, contact Sally Rogol at srogol@ci.rye.ny.us / 914-967-2535.



CARNIVAL on the WATER ***Village of Mamaroneck Recreation Department***

Each year thousands of people visit beautiful Harbor Island Park in Mamaroneck and enjoy, clean family entertainment at affordable prices at the Annual Spring Carnival.

There are Rides for all ages and live music on select nights and a "new addition" the Italian Food booth. Visit the fresh fried vegetable stand or have a homemade cinnamon bun.

Take advantage of family ride specials on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Carnival dates are Wednesday, March 27 through Saturday, April 13, 2002. The carnival is open 2-9 p.m. weekdays and 2-10 p.m. weekends in this 44-acre park on the water.

For further information, please call the Village of Mamaroneck Recreation Department 777-7784.