

WESTCHESTER RECREATION  
AND PARK SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. Box 152 • Valhalla, New York 10595

the

November  
2006

# Grapevine



## REMEMBERING A FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE

*Thanks to Joe Stout for this tribute.*

Recently and with much sadness, WRAPS lost a long time member after her valiant and courageous battle with cancer. Annette Hroncich has indelibly left her mark on Westchester County and WRAPS through so many people that it is impossible to count them all.

Annette started with Westchester County PRC back in the 80's as a Recreation Supervisor and she truly LOVED organizing and hosting programs especially interacting with the public and staff to make each program perfect. Annette would do everything in her power to make each program unique and took care of every detail herself.

She was probably the most organized person on the face of the earth. Her files are legendary for their level of detail and her notes were always perfect. She was obsessive about quality and always brought her artist's flair to anything she did.

On the other hand, Annette was also one of the zaniest people I had ever met. Annette truly had a zest and wacky way that was at the same time hilarious and endearing. Annette was not someone who ever wanted the spotlight. She was much happier in the background making sure that all was going just right.

There are some things you may not know about Annette – like her fetish for Devil Dogs. She liked them so much that once her co-workers literally filled her office with them! With her office overflowing with Devil Dogs, it took months, but eventually she ate them all!!! Ok, she shared a few. Annette's other passion in life was her art. She was a terrific sculptor who studied in Italy and was even

offered the chance to spend a year there working in a studio and sculpting fulltime.

Annette's real devotion though was to her family, her girls, Francine and Nicki and her four grandchildren and husband Tommy. She loved cooking, holidays and making a fuss. If you ever went to her house, you were like family.

Professionally she will always be remembered for some of PRC's most visible and popular programs, some of which she either started from scratch or resurrected. Our Cheerleading Competition is and will be a living testament to her doggedness in doing something she loved. From the ashes of a bygone program, she and her band of dedicated volunteers built a powerhouse competition that is one of the elite meets on the east coast attracting over 50 teams which participate over three days. In addition she has helped establish an endowment that annually bestows over \$26,000 in scholarships for deserving cheerleaders.

Annette chaired the Awards and Scholarship committee for the past 6 years, during which our awards luncheons have been the most heavily attended in recent history. Once again a tribute to her organization and bugging all of us to recognize deserving honoree's in our communities.

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## *Rye Dedicates New and Renovated Recreation Center*

On April 8, 2006 the Rye Recreation Department and the City of Rye dedicated and opened its new and renovated expanded space during an all day celebration at the Damiano Recreation Center. The celebration was attended by about 500 residents representing user groups, city officials, staff, civic organizations and the general public.

While the over all expansion was reduced in scope during the process, the final completed project met the initial criteria set forth by the Recreation Commission and City Council

- Expand indoor activity space
- Accommodate table seating up to 150
- Provide space where Senior Adults could have priority use
- Enhance handicap access
- Stay within a project budget of \$1.5M

The project included a large room designed for social events holding up to 150 persons, an adjacent Lounge room, indoor elevator and ramps, two new restrooms, new entrance and an exterior patio. The Department is excited about incorporating the new space with existing programs and exploring new lease and rental opportunities for private and public events.

Please feel free to stop by and take a look. The Damiano Recreation Center is pictured below.



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*Brochures should be mailed to NYSRPS  
members in January 2007.*

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## HEALTHY KIDS COME TO WESTCHESTER

~ by Susan Snyder

On September 12, the New Castle Community Center was the site of a "Healthy Kids Leadership Training" session attended by Recreation professionals from Westchester and Long Island, myself included. Those present were trained to be able to pass the training along to the program leaders who work directly with children/teenagers.

The first section of the three-hour program encompassed both emotional health and physical health. Four Tools used to decrease stress and enhance the recreation experience known as RAVE include: Rituals, Affirmations, Visualization, and Energy. Rituals, the "routines that are repeated deliberately each day", help reduce stress by knowing what to expect. Affirmations, the "positive phrases you tell yourself over and over again", help the leader to be more positive and successful and can help children by reducing stress, improving energy, and improving self-esteem. Visualization, or picturing an activity or event, can be used to "problem solve in advance" by anticipating what problems might occur and then picturing oneself successfully completing the task. Energy involves using deep breathing to bring your energy under control to "lower anxiety and increase mental focus".

The second section of the program gave Program Leaders the essential leadership, communication, and conflict resolution skills needed when working with children. One thing to remember is to have a strong presence when working with children from the initial meeting. Next, establish ground rules, and have a plan for preventing and managing discipline problems. Also, be well prepared for the activity and display a positive and enthusiastic demeanor. Finally, a leader should communicate well, expressing oneself clearly, speaking from the "I" point of view.

The third and final section focused on the basic physical fitness needs of children and stressed the need to reduce obesity rates and health risks in our nation's children. Even children at a normal weight

with unhealthy eating and exercise habits have serious health risks as youth and as they age. This section offered exercise choices for those who cannot do what a healthy child could, thus working towards becoming a healthy child. The manual provided numerous games and activities that a program leader could use with children.

Our instructor, Rachel Fisher, traveled from Florida to train us for the morning. Rachel, one of the developers of the "Healthy Kids Leadership Training" program, was a very energetic and enthusiastic leader for the group. While training us in each section, she had us participate in relevant exercises, illustrating how each concept worked for us and could work for children. Each enrollee took home a detailed written manual and a CD to print additional training materials for the front line program leaders in our departments. The program was able to be offered in Westchester as a collaboration of the New York State Recreation & Park Society and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

*(Much of the information for this article was quoted or adapted from the "Park and Recreation Program Leader Training Manual" created by Sports in Mind.)*

## SENIOR CITIZEN PROGRAMMING

You are invited to collaborate, network and share your ideas on senior citizen programs. This section of WRAPS will address the needs and interests of professionals working in this growing field. Bring a copy of your current programs newsletter to share. Lunch can be ordered off the menu.

Upcoming Lunch Gatherings on the following  
Tuesdays from 12:30 – 2:30

<b>Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup></b>	JJ Mannion's 640 McLean Ave., Yonkers
<b>Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup></b>	Location TBA
<b>Tuesday, March 13<sup>th</sup></b>	Location TBA

To register, please contact Sia Tofano at 422-1424



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

~ by Jennifer Fava

Another summer has come and gone. I hope that you all had a successful season providing enjoyment and positive experiences to all of those who participated in your programs and utilized your facilities. Hopefully you also got a chance to enjoy a bit of the warm weather yourself.

As recreation professionals, we are often pleased when summer is over. Fall is our time to get rejuvenated and refocused so that we can get ready to start the process over again in just a few short months.

The Downstate Conference will be taking place November 15<sup>th</sup> at the Westchester County Center. Take this opportunity to get refreshed and learn new things to implement and ways to improve what you already do.

I just want to remind you of some of our upcoming projects. We will be working with Westchester County Department of Civil Service to coordinate job classifications, titles, and job qualifications. We will also be co-hosting a future NYSRPS Annual Conference. Don't hesitate to get involved!

As your new President I look forward to continuing the support and opportunities that our society provides our membership. I wish all of you a happy holiday season and a healthy New Year.

Enjoy!

Jen

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It certainly is a little sadder at PRC these days. You always knew when she was around and her big presence is tough to do without. But what I think will stand out for me the most, after all the laughing and good times, will be the way she faced her final challenge. There was a grace and calm about her. Every time I left her house after a visit, I felt better. She accepted her fate after making the good fight and was at peace with herself and with her god. She was ready. And in her Annette way, it was organized, perfectly planned and with that artist's touch. And of course, her room was full of people, family, friends, co-workers and it was zany, loud and full of love, right up to the end.

In the end it is said that we are measured by the lives we touch and the footprints we leave in people's hearts and memories. The thousands of people Annette touched in so many special ways will forever be her legacy. We at Parks will share our happy stories and those "remember when" moments. We will all always secretly smile when we think about how heaven is now just a little more in ship shape, with the angels having a good laugh and DEVIL DOGS now on the menu.

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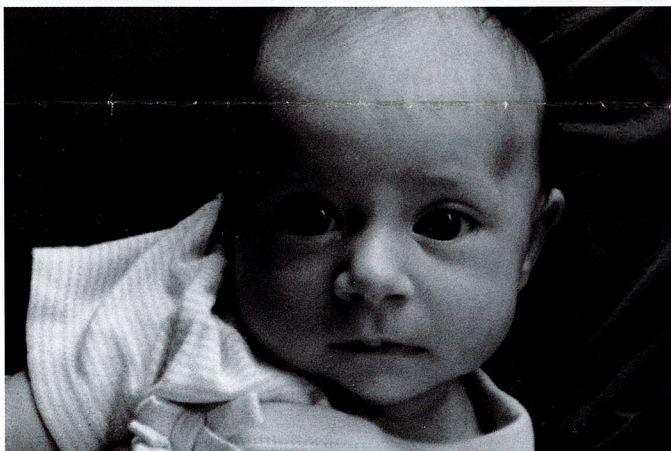
## ***BITS & PIECES***

*Congratulations, welcome, and best wishes . . .*

Congratulations to **Kimberly O'Brien** on her new job as **Recreation Leader for the Town of Bedford Recreation & Parks Department**.

Kimberly has a BS in Special Education from Monmouth University, NJ and a Masters in MPS Education from Manhattanville College. She was formerly a first grade teacher at Transfiguration School in Tarrytown. According to Daryl Sudlow, "Kim is a life long Bedford Hills resident who grew up in our programs - she was a camper and participant and started working with us on a part time basis as a camp counselor when she was a teen-ager. She became the Camp Director of the Bedford Hills day camp & most recently, this past summer, she was our camp coordinator for all six camps. Kim took and passed the Recreation Leader test in February and joined the Bedford Recreation & Parks Department team on a full time basis in August. We are happy to have Kim as part of our team!"

Welcome into the world! Little Sophia Michele Lemerise, daughter of **NYSRPS Executive Director Gia Lemerise**, made her entrance Sunday, July 23 at 3:50 pm (about 8 hours shy of Gia's birthday.) Quite the present! Congratulations and best wishes to the Lemerise family. The cutie is pictured below.



Speaking of babies, **Kevin Cook** of **Rye Recreation** and his wife **Kathy Cook** of **Westchester County PRC** are expecting a baby this upcoming Spring! Congratulations to them both!

The knot has been tied by **Sue Menz**, **Superintendent of Recreation & Parks for the Village of Croton-on-Hudson**, and **Bob Snyder**, **Superintendent of Recreation & Parks for the Town of New Castle**. The happy couple is pictured below. Members of the Croton Recreation & Parks team and the New Castle Recreation and Parks team attended the August wedding. Bob is shown surrounded by the Ladies of New Castle. The Croton crew is with Sue.





## ***DATES TO REMEMBER !***

### **November 15**

Downstate Conference ~ County Center

### **December 1**

Holiday Luncheon  
Crabtree's Kittle House ~ Chappaqua

### **January 17**

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting

### **February 21**

Annual Vendors Luncheon ~ County Center

### **March 21**

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting

### **April 18**

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting

### **April 22 -25**

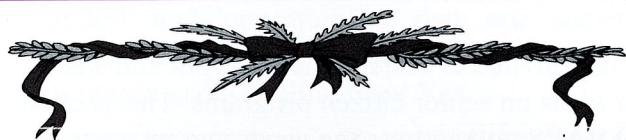
NYSRPS Annual Conference  
Adam's Mark Hotel ~ Buffalo

### **May 16**

Regular WRAPS Luncheon Meeting

### **June 1**

Awards & Scholarships Luncheon



## **WRAPS HOLIDAY PARTY**

Friday, December 1, 2006  
At Crabtree's Kittle House  
11 Kittle Road, Chappaqua  
12 noon to 3:00 PM

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### ***CALL FOR GRAPEVINE ARTICLES!***

The next issue of the Grapevine is scheduled  
to be printed in February 2007.

Anyone interested in submitting materials  
must do so by Monday, January 15, 2007.

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