

# A WARM WELCOME TO THE SEASON

It would have appeared to anyone passing on the sidewalks dressed with holiday cheer that the Borough of Wood-Ridge mirrored a Norman Rockwell painting November 30th, as families gathered for the annual tree lighting.

The generosity of residents was as impressive as the turnout, with hundreds bringing toys to donate to the Tomorrow's Children Toy Fund Drive.

Councilman and Event Chairman Joseph DiMarco gathered dolls, board games, Transformers and other action figures in the gazebo of the recently renovated Veteran's Park. As the pile got higher and higher, Santa Claus came riding in with bells and whistles on a Borough firetruck.

"We appreciate all of the groups that made this event special for Wood-Ridge," remarked DiMarco after the event. "From the Wood-Ridge High School band and choir who performed, to the local merchants who donated hot cider and refreshments, to the volunteers who served them, at this moment, our Borough truly embodied the spirit of the season that people look forward to this time of year."

Every year, the Wood-Ridge tree creeps closer to Rockefeller splendor, adorned in bright lights and gaining by inches thanks to the careful pruning and watering of the Borough Department of Public Works. It can be seen lit each night through the end of the holiday season from Valley Boulevard.



(Above) Santa takes requests in the Veterans Park gazebo; (below) Wood-Ridge Councilman Joseph DiMarco, who chaired the tree lighting, with Councilmen Dominick Azzolini, Ed Marino, Mayor Paul Sarlo, Ezio Altamura, and Tom Gonnella.



## BRINGING NEW LIFE TO AN OLD CORNER

Planning Board Liaison and Councilman Ed Marino recently reported the successful demolition of the former Valero Station at the corner of Valley Boulevard and Wood-Ridge Avenue. Marino said the tanks at the site have been removed, along with litter and debris that was making the functionless lot an eyesore for neighbors and local merchants. The property owner is actively marketing the site to community banks, and construction of a new bank is slated to begin once a banking tenant is secured.

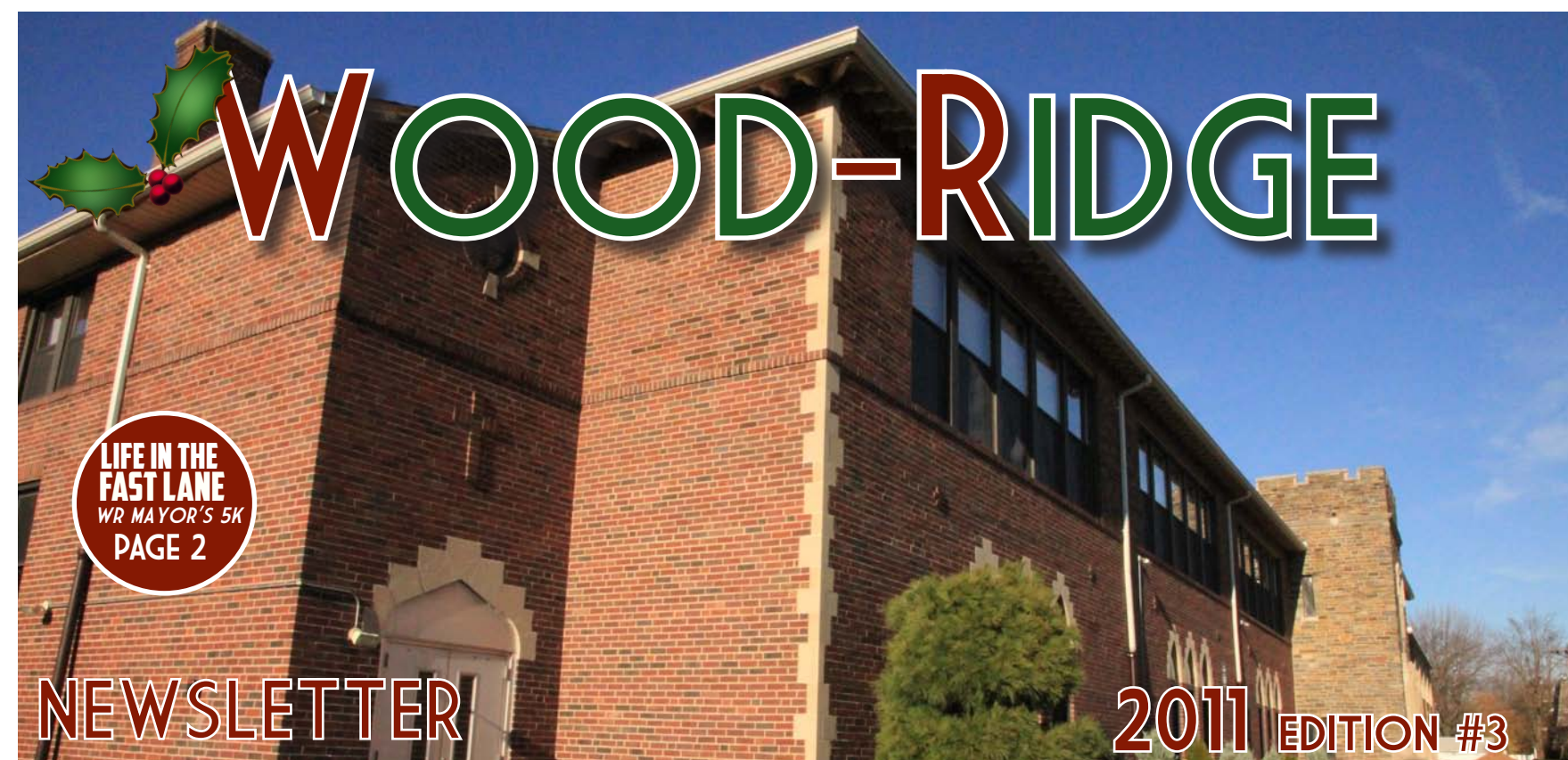
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85 Humboldt Street  
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

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WOOD-RIDGE, NJ 07075

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### FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Welcome to the latest edition of the Wood-Ridge Borough Newsletter and the last for the 2011 calendar year.

In this issue, we fondly recap some moments Borough residents came together this fall, not only for fun at the Annual Tree Lighting, but for the good causes of fighting Cystic Fibrosis and children's cancer at the Mayor's 5K Run.

It is this sense of togetherness - residents who attend town events, neighbors who look over their fences and get to know one another - that has long made Wood-Ridge a standout place to live among the communities in southern Bergen County.

We persevere as this united community, through sad remembrances like the 10th Anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks and the 60th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor, as well as through severe weather events such as Hurricane Irene and the October snowstorm.

And together, we have some exciting prospects on the horizon, from a new bank potentially rising on Valley Boulevard to a completely renovated school at the former site of Assumption School that will house our 4th through 6th graders and free up space at the Borough's current school buildings.

Overall, 2011 has been a good year, but there are even greater things ahead for 2012. I hope you enjoy this edition and join me in looking forward to the new year!

Very truly yours,

Paul A. Sarlo  
Mayor

## ASSUMPTION SCHOOL PURCHASE ON TRACK

RENOVATED SCHOOL TO OPEN SEPT. 2013

The Borough of Wood-Ridge is on track to purchase Assumption School from Assumption Parish early in 2012, with comprehensive plans underway for renovations which will transform the facility into the Wood-Ridge Intermediate School by September 2013.

"We are excited about this opportunity to expand our educational infrastructure, while also keeping a property with both strategic and sentimental value to our town vital," said Mayor Paul Sarlo. "The acquisition of Assumption School will reduce class sizes and allow us to renovate a pre-existing structure for a fraction of what it would cost to construct a new building."

According to Sarlo, the Borough will ensure that the former Assumption School's use and enjoyment remains reserved for Wood-Ridge students through its acquisition of the property.

"If Assumption became a charter school, we would have children attending from outside communities, which would



cost our Borough taxpayers millions of dollars," Sarlo added.

The Borough has commissioned Board of Education architect DiCara Rubino to draft plans for the renovation of the building into a state-of-the-art school and multi-purpose community center.

"The use of the School Board architect is yet another example of the cooperation that keeps our relationship with the School Board strong," said Council President and School Board Liaison Dominick Azzolini.

Addressing some of the proposed community functions of the building, Azzolini added,

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# SCHOOL

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“Another great feature about Assumption is something we’ve all enjoyed for years – the central location of the school will allow for Wood-Ridge to use it for recreation, community group meetings, pancake breakfasts and other events.”

Plans for the Wood-Ridge Intermediate School currently include the installation of an elevator, ADA compliant ramps and bathrooms, new windows, floors, roofing, lighting, air conditioning and upgrades to the heating and electrical systems.

Upon completion, the Wood-Ridge Intermediate School will house grades 4 through 6, freeing up space for program development and expansion at both Doyle School and the Wood-Ridge High School / Middle School.

The purchase price of \$2.8 million is being funded by Somerset Development, the redeveloper currently constructing a mixed-use addition to the community on the western side of town, at the site of the remediated Curtiss Wright plant.

## Weathering the storms *WR responds to Hurricane Irene and the October Snowstorm*

The fall packed a double-punch with freak storms ripping through the Borough and much of the Northeast region. Hurricane Irene climbed its way up the coast with record rainfalls and crippling winds. It refused to spare Wood-Ridge in its warpath, downing about 50 trees and flooding roads east of Route 17.

“At one point during Irene, the Wood-Ridge Volunteer Fire Department had to evacuate some residents from their homes,” noted Councilman and Fire Commissioner Tom Gonnella. “We are grateful for their efforts, and thankful for our luck in comparison with so many other communities. Although the deep water created issues for the firefighters, and for the DPW dealing with fallen trees and an overwhelmed sewer system, we were very fortunate overall.”

Halloween weekend brought a second unusual weather event as more than half a foot of wet snow fell on the Borough, weighing down or snapping limbs off of another 125 trees and cancelling Haunted Hill House, a haunted walk-thru event that had been planned since its success at Bianchi House Park last year.

According to Police Liaison and Councilwoman Catherine Cassidy, the Borough’s youngsters were admirably responsive to a reverse 9-1-1 request asking them to stay in on the traditional “Mischief Night” of October 30th.

“Thanks to the cooperation of Wood-Ridge residents, we had a safe night that allowed the Borough to clean up and respond to the storm,” Cassidy said. “At the time children usually run around, there were still limbs dangling and downed power lines in the street posing danger. The response of our community gave the police and DPW the space they needed to do their jobs and keep us all safe.”

Following the storms, Councilman and DPW Liaison Ezio Altamura reported that the Borough had accomplished impressive feats of pruning, maintenance, and removal of broken tree limbs.

Though it suffered a late start, leaf collection was restored to a normal schedule for December. And the Borough of Wood-Ridge stands prepared, Altamura affirmed, to face whatever surprises mother nature comes up with next.



A Wood-Ridge tree brought down by winter’s early blast in October.

## HONORING VETERANS AND VICTIMS AT TWO SOLEMN MEMORIALS

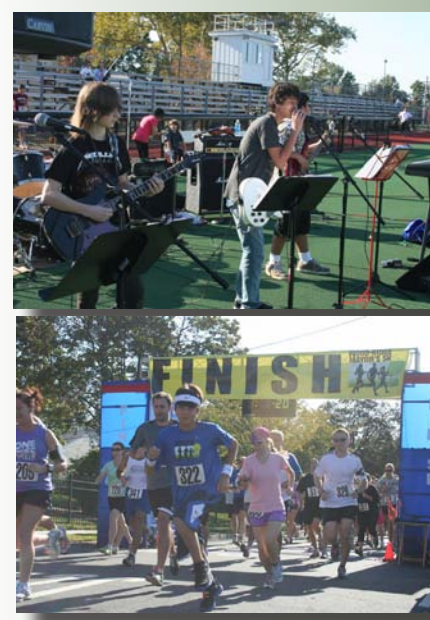


The Borough came together twice this fall to remember Americans who fell protecting the country’s freedom and senselessly in the attacks of 9/11.

This September 11th marked the 10th Anniversary of the terror attacks on the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and the hijacking of United 93 over Pennsylvania. Less than ten miles away from the target of one of the attacks, residents joined together in a solemn memorial at Veterans Park.

On November 11th, the Borough came together again to remember those who gave their lives in service to freedom.

“As much as we celebrate throughout the year, we also acknowledge those who sacrificed to maintain our way of life and our freedom,” said Memorial Committee Chairman and Councilman Thomas Gonnella. “It is for these Americans that we continue to gather, and always, to remember.”



## Mayor’s 5K: A great success

Whether charging ahead of the pack after months of training, or taking a more leisurely jog with a baby carriage in front, more than 500 runners of different ages and skill levels participated at this year’s Mayor’s 5K run on October 9th. They shared a desire to keep healthy, and to participate in a charitable event that raised more than \$10,000 for the dual causes of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and the Tomorrow’s Children’s Fund. TCF marked a new addition as charitable partner this year, said Councilman and Event Chairman Ed Marino. “The organization was founded by parents to help families cope financially and emotionally with children living with cancer and serious blood disorders,” Marino explained. “For the past two years, Wood-Ridge has been able to use an event focused on fitness to raise money for those most vulnerable members of our society hindered by tragic disease. This has become a great source of pride and goodwill in our community, in addition to a good time.” Runners and supporters gathered on Donna Ricker Field an hour before the start of the race. The race took off from the roads around Wood-Ridge High School, proceeding in a wide loop to the Hasbrouck Heights border before returning to the starting line.

## homefield advantage

Wood-Ridge hosted the Annual Meadowlands Junior Football League Superbowl for the Pee Wee, Junior and Senior divisions at Donna Ricker Field on November 20th. The Blue Devils participated at the senior level, coming up short with a final score of 27-25 against the North Arlington Vikings. Ultimately, the Blue Devils finished Second Place in the league. This was Wood-Ridge’s first time hosting the competition on its new field, which was completely renovated in 2009 with all-new turf, a rubber track, snack stand and field house.