NEW YEAR RINGS IN PUBLIC SERVICE MILESTONES

(Above left) Wood-Ridge children lead the Pledge of Allegiance; The Wood Ridge Borough Council: Council President Dominick Azzolini, Councilmen Joseph DiMarco and Thomas Gonnella, Mayor Paul Sarlo, Councilwoman Catherine Cassidy, Councilmen Ezio Altamura and Ed Marino. (Above right) Mayor Sarlo publicly aknowledges Councilman Gonnella, who is the longest serving councilman in Borough history.

The Borough held its annual Reorganization Meeting on January 1, 2012 with the swearing in of Mayor Paul Sarlo, Councilman Thomas Gonnella, and Council President Dominick Azzolini following their reelection in the fall.

The ceremony began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Borough children. In attendance at the ceremony were Congressman Steve Rothman, Assemblyman Gary Schaer, Assemblywoman Marlene Caride, and Bergen County Clerk John Hogan.

The guests offered their congratulations to Mayor Sarlo, who is Wood-Ridge's longest-serving Mayor as he begins his fourth term this year, and to Councilman Tom Gonnella, who is Wood-Ridge's longest-serving council member as he starts his fifth term.

A CALL TO KEEP WOOD-RIDGE BEAUTIFUL

The Borough has announced its annual Downtown Cleanup Day for June 3, 2012. Last year more than 100 residents participated as individuals or in groups. Volunteers are provided with gloves, brooms, bags, and t-shirts - all you have to bring is a desire to work side-by-side with your neighbors in keeping Wood-Ridge green and attractive! The event will run from 1-4 p.m. The WR Civic Center will serve as base of operations throughout the day. Residents with paper to shred are also invited to the Civic Center, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, please contact event founder and Councilman Ezio Altamura at (201) 939-0202.

– KEEP WOOD-RIDGE BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE

Borough of Wood-Ridge
85 Humboldt Street
Wood-Ridge, NJ 07075

POSTAL PATRON
WOOD-RIDGE, NJ 07075

PRSRT STD
U.S.
POSTAGE
PAID
RUTHERFORD, NJ
PERMIT #1714

WOOD-RIDGE NEWSLETTER

2012 EDITION #1

FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Wood-Ridge Borough Newsletter* and the first of 2012. In this edition, we highlight the civic and athletic accomplishments of the young residents of Wood-Ridge, as well as the long-term contributions of residents in various public service, educational, and local environmental efforts.

At the same time, we preview upcoming opportunities for residents of all ages to get involved, whether by lending a hand at the Annual Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful Day, joining a club, or attending the Memorial Day Parade in honor of our veterans.

We look ahead to a steady pace of continued improvements in the months to come. Our comprehensive roadway enhancement plan will see repavings on the eastern side of town this spring, as well as curb and sidewalk upgrades and ADA accessibility at several locations throughout the Borough.

Construction at Wesmont Station is progressing, with the first two buildings scheduled to be completed this June. And our architect is preparing to go out to bid on the former Assumption School, which will be known as the Wood-Ridge Intermediate School when it reopens in September 2013

Underpinning these forward strides are the solid financial planning of our Finance Committee, which forecasts a 2012 budget that comes in, once again, well below the state caps for taxes and appropriations.

We look forward to sharing this news and information with you, and as always, please do not hesitate to contact this governing body with any questions.

Very truly yours,

Paul A. Sarlo
Mayor

FINANCE COMMITTEE BRINGS 2011 TO A SUCCESSFUL CLOSE

FORECASTS CONTINUED STRONG PERFORMANCE IN 2012

The Finance Committee, consisting of Councilmen Dominick Azzolini, Ed Marino and Joseph DiMarco, presented a year-end report at the close of 2011 which highlighted the Borough's strong financial position.

"The Borough of Wood-Ridge experienced another strong year of financial performance as a result of conservative fiscal management and aggressive cost cutting," noted Azzolini, the Committee Chairman. "Once again, Wood-Ridge is well under both the tax levy cap and the appropriations cap mandated by the state."

Azzolini detailed the various cost saving measures utilized by the Borough, including previous employee downsizing and reductions to employee benefits and insurance. The Borough also recognized savings of $100,000 per year by combining the bids for garbage and recycling into one contract, and was able to absorb emergency cleanup and response costs associated with 2011's deep winter, a snowstorm on Halloween, and Hurricane Irene. In 2011, the Borough continued to improve its balance sheet by increasing cash flow for the 5th straight year, not using any short-term borrowing for the 4th straight year, increasing fund balance for the 4th straight year, and ending with a surplus for the 3rd year in a row. The Borough also retired over $800,000 in debt, maintained its AA credit rating, and received a score of 94% on the Annual New Jersey Department of Community Affairs "Best Practices Checklist."

Now working on the 2012 municipal budget, the committee reported preliminary numbers that comes in below the state appropriations cap once again by nearly $213,000 and below the tax levy cap by nearly $221,651.

Overall, an increase of 1.98% is anticipated, due primarily to rising insurance costs and sewerage processing fees from the Bergen County Utilities Authority.

BRIEFS

CELEBRATED: Councilwoman Catherine Cassidy and volunteers serve pasta to seniors at the Mayor's Annual Dinner in December.

More inside...

WR MEMORIAL FOUNDATION HONORS FIVE DISTINGUISHED RESIDENTS

The Wood-Ridge Memorial Foundation honored five outstanding community members at its annual Foundation Dinner Dance March 24. As in previous years, the proceeds of the dinner were dedicated to providing college scholarships to graduating seniors from Wood-Ridge.

This year's honorees were:

Robert Talamini, who has served the Wood-Ridge community as a member of the Board of Education for 16 years, as its president for 14 years, and as a member of the Lions Club, where he received a Melvin Jones Fellowship Award, the highest attainable honor.

Ezio Altamura, who has been reelected to the Borough Council 4 times, serving as president, liaison to the Department of Public Works and Recreation Commission, and who has founded community initiatives including the Keep Wood-Ridge Beautiful Program and Fall Fire Engine Rides for Children. He is also active with Recreation Track & Field and Soccer.

Debra Pagliocca, a kindergarten teacher at Catherine E. Doyle School who has taught in the Wood-Ridge School system for 31 years. She has been involved with many school and community activities during her years in Wood-Ridge, including coordinating talent shows at the school, working with the cheerleaders, serving as an officer in the PTA, and teaching CCD.

Arlene DePalma, who has been teaching for 34 years. Arlene was a member of the Borough's Centennial Committee as well as the Assumption Church 75th Anniversary Committee. She taught CCD for Assumption Parish, was a Cub Scout Den Mother, and served on a multitude of school committees.

The final honoree was the late **John Bischoff**, who impacted the lives of many students before a tragic accident took his life last June.

JOIN WR SENIOR CLUBS

The Wood-Ridge Contemporary Club, a senior citizens social group, invites new members to join on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at the Senior Center for events, games and entertainment.

The 60+ Club meets the first and third Thursday of each month at the Senior Center. The first Thursday is a business meeting and the third Thursday is a social meeting. Any senior who would like to learn more or join in is welcome.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE BOARD OF HEALTH

In response to recent concerns from residents, the Borough reminds all dog owners to remain responsible for properly curbing their pets. As stated in the Borough ordinances, no person walking their dog shall allow it to soil any public property, common thoroughfare, sidewalk, play area, park, school property or private yard or driveway without the consent of the owner. These restrictions do not apply to the portion of the street in between curb lines, though all pet waste in this area must be removed and properly discarded by those walking their pets. Help keep Wood-Ridge clean as we welcome back the spring season, and all throughout the year.

BRIEFS

RELOCATED:
The Archdiocese of Newark and the Borough are finalizing the sale contract for the former Assumption School building and anticipate completing the sale this May. In preparation for the building's conversion to the Wood-Ridge Intermediate School, the statue of Our Lady and the Ten Commandments have been relocated to the front of the Father Hayes Center on 2nd Street.

STUDENT LEADERS:
Students from Wood-Ridge High School served as members of the governing body and Borough officials at the Annual Youth Day March 20. WRHS student Carlo Autino oversees the Council Meeting, standing in under the guidance of Mayor Paul Sarlo .

HOOP DREAMS REALIZED BY BLUE DEVIL ATHLETES

Congratulations to Senior Lady Blue Devil **Nicole Fleck** on breaking the 2,000 point mark this season, and setting Wood-Ridge High School's all-time record for scoring. Nicole is also the 7th All-Time Female Scorer in Bergen County history, and was named Athlete of the Week by *The Record* newspaper.

Two Wood-Ridge Blue Devil Basketball junior guards joined senior Vinny O'Beirne in passing the 1,000 point mark this season, setting records for themselves and the school.

Mike Gibney scored his 1,000th basket in January on rival Hasbrouck Height's home court. Mike set the All-Time Record at WRHS for points in a season, with 648 total points.

Gary Whritenour soon reached the same milestone, and set the All-Time Record in Bergen County history for 3-point field goals in a single season with 127, and in a career with 320.

The Varsity Blue Devils were undefeated in league play this year, with a final record of 27-3-0.

The JV squad also went undefeated.

Photos by Karyn Ochiuzzo
(From top) Nicole Fleck celebrates reaching 2,000 points post-game with her parents; Junior guard Mike Gibney has his game face on; the Varsity Blue Devils gather around junior Gary Whritenour after he hits the 1,000 mark.

IN PROGRESS:
Building and Grounds Liaison and Councilman Joseph DiMarco reports that renovations to the Civic Center and Senior Center are on schedule and are expected to be completed by May. Renovations include new conference, activity and community spaces for the enjoyment of senior citizens, civic groups, and recreation programs. This is the first major renovation to the Civic Center and the Senior Center since their initial construction.

MARCHING TO REMEMBER

The May 28, 2012 Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade will begin inside the Senior Center at 10 a.m., followed by a wreath-laying at the Veterans Walk of Freedom. Groups will then step from the curb promptly at 11:30 a.m. for the annual parade. This year's route will begin at the corner of Hackensack Street and Highland Avenues and head north on Hackensack Street, making a left on Innes Road and proceeding west to Valley Boulevard. The parade will continue on Valley Boulevard South, stopping at the newly-renovated Veterans Park. Festivities at the park will include hot dogs and ice cream, strolling musicians, and participation from local merchants and civic organizations.

PAVING THE WAY FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF IMPROVEMENTS

Work continues this spring on enhancements to road, sidewalk and drainage infrastructure throughout the Borough.

Storm sewer catch basins have been installed on Union Avenue. Union Avenue, Floral Lane, 11th Street and sections of Main and North Avenues will be paved later in the year.

On the eastern side of town, new curbs and sidewalks will be installed on Wood-Ridge Street, Madison Street, Hill Street and Andersen Avenue in preparation for the repaving of those roads.

Americans with Disabilities Act curb cuts will be installed along Hillcrest Avenue, from North Avenue to Sussex Road, with all-new sidewalks and trees to adorn this stretch, according to Councilman and Community Development Liaison Joseph DiMarco. A $60,000 Bergen County Community Development Fund grant will fund the ADA upgrades.

The Borough engineer is currently designing the next phase of road paving for 2013, which will include 1st Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, Main Avenue from 4th Street to Hackensack Street, Berger Street, Oak Street, Union Street, and Andersen Avenue from Berger to Concord Streets.