

THE VOICE OF WESTERLEIGH

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERLEIGH IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

P.O. Box 140-043 Staten Island, NY 10314 www.wisonline.org

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WILLIAM SCHORKOPF MEMORIAL PATRIOTIC SUNDAY

SUNDAY, JUNE 24, 2007, 2 P.M.

WESTERLEIGH PARK

CONCERT WITH

THE SOUTH SHORE BAND

James DeFrancesco, Conductor

Free Birch Beer

**Bring folding chairs
and blankets**

SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING 2007

Recently elected state assemblyman Matthew Titone, along with the Society's newly elected officials were the featured guests at the Society's Annual Meeting held May 16.

Matthew Titone, who won a special election to replace the late John Lavelle, shared the spotlight with the Society's slate of directors, who were introduced by vice president Rick Wexler. The new directors are: Tom DiGuilio, Joe Ficara, Lou Motola, Mark Otten, Dan Rieu, Rick Wexler and Betty Winsch.

President Michael Morrell, who announced that the Society's membership now stands at 600, introduced Titone, the night's guest speaker, who now represents the 61st Assembly District in Albany. Titone, a life-long Staten Islander, graduated from St. John's University School of Law. The assemblyman explained that he meets monthly with the borough's other Albany officials while serving on a number of committees, including the Judiciary, Banking, Transportation, Social Services, Environmental, Conservation and Tourism panels.

Titone explained that one of his goals is to place more emphasis on the Points of Interest on Staten Island, so visitors will spend more time here after riding on the Staten Island Ferry. Perhaps of greater importance, Titone said, is that every Staten Island Assembly member is sitting on the Transportation Committee, and they all are trying to establish a unified transportation plan for Staten Island for the next 5-10 years.

Titone also explained that since the Island is the only borough without a municipal hospital, he and the other representatives are trying to establish a means for our private hospitals to be financially compensated for this lack of service.

In other business, President Morrell



officially reported that the Department of City planning has decided to deny our community the downzoning it requested, from R3X to R2. This rejection has already resulted in the construction of four new two-family homes on the former location of 707 Jewett Ave., and the removal of the large trees on the property of 682 Jewett Ave. in preparation for construction of four more two-family homes. And while the Growth Management Task Force and the Society will continue to pursue the downzoning issue, the Office of the Mayor is looking into a plan to have development issues decided on an individual borough basis rather than those plans coming from City Hall. Finally, President Morrell reported that Department of Buildings approvals are now available on line.

A check in the amount of \$1,400 was presented to PS 30 PTA Co-Presidents Diane



Jankowski and Patricia Quirk for the school's annual bookfair. Also on hand from the school was Principal Denise Spina, who expressed her gratitude for our contribution and announced that PS 30 is planning a landscape beautification plan on the school grounds. The school is looking for community volunteers to help in this effort.

In other news, the annual patriotic concert in Westerleigh Park this year will take place Sunday June 24. The concert, which will now be known as the William Schorkopf Memorial Concert in honor of the Society's long-standing former president, will begin at 2 p.m. There also will be two Starlight Concerts this summer, both sponsored by the Office of The Borough President. The first one will be "Jukebox Heroes" on Thursday July 12 at 8 p.m. The second will be "These Three Tenors" on Thursday Aug. 16 at 8 p.m.

Victoria Barrack Memorial Westerleigh Walk

"Putting Faces to the Voice of Westerleigh" was the theme of the annual Barrack Memorial Westerleigh Walk, held May 19.

As the group casually enjoyed refreshments in the great hall of Immanuel Union Church, Director Sharon Heule introduced the event with excerpts from Mrs. Edwin Markham's reflections on a child's education at PS 30 and read several spring Haiku poems from her own booklet, "A Matter of Propinquity." A table of research material was on display for browsing.

President Mike Morrell brought the group up to date on this year's computer project of scanning all past newsletters, from 1963 to present, to make them accessible on our website. He demonstrated how individuals can search names and faces now stored in the Society's data bank by bringing up

images of such familiar names as Funk, Vanderbilt, Barrack, Winsch, Keiber, and Boole. It will be an ongoing credit to our neighborhood ancestors to keep adding to this project – and their voices.

Because of the inclement weather, Director Charles Curiazza guided the group through a virtual tour/talk of the route he so carefully laid out for commentary and historic reference. Many interesting questions and comments were fielded that fed into his presentation, including several findings by Director Mark Anderson regarding data on the great granddaughter of Reverend Charles Kingsley and several complete works of writers connected to the Deems Literary Society of yesteryear.

Plaques of a commemorative "thank you" from Mrs. Markham's archive on Ralph Waldo Emerson quotes were distributed to Directors Curiazza and Anderson, as well as Dan Rieu,

Evelyn Otten MacDonald, Richard Cirbus and President Morrell for their loyal professional input to these annual historic walks across the years.

Write to Read

Remember a few years ago when libraries were open only four days a week? Volunteers, who helped put together a letter writing campaign to the City Council, had a great deal to do with getting the increased budget to have the libraries open five days a week as they are now.

Just last year, more than 3,000 letters were generated. Those letters, combined with contacting our public officials by library staff and volunteers, were a great influence in changing the formulas used by the city and state to budget funds to the libraries.

One notable change was for the state to finally use the Year 2000 Census population figures, rather than the Year 1990 Census figures, in its annual budget allocation calculations. The growth of the population on Staten Island from 1990 to 2000, which we are all too well aware of, had previously been totally ignored.

The library is now conducting a letter writing campaign to have the library's budget funded sufficiently enough to have all the branches open at least six days a week. Volunteers and library staff, are now manning desks in all the branches and have sample letters and other materials. Visit your branch and write a letter.

Do you have young children? Go to "TumbleBook" at <http://kids.nypl.org>. "Story Books" and then "View Online" for a wonderful experience with your child. There are many more choices. No library card needed.

Do you need Information? GoTo <http://www.nypl.org/databases/> and you will find a host of non-sponsored, ad-free, unbiased databases. A library card or a driver's license is needed. Some of the databases, due to license restrictions, are only available from the computers in the library. Computers are available in every branch. Oops. Check to see if your branch is open that day. Did you exercise your "Write to Read?"

Borough President's Starlight Concerts

Borough President James Molinaro will host two of the always popular Starlight Concerts in Westerleigh Park this summer.

The first, on Thursday, July 12, will feature the Jukebox Heroes. The second, on Thursday, Aug. 16 will star the Denmark Duo and These Three

Tenors.

The concerts begin at 8 p.m. and all are urged to bring folding chairs and blankets for the evening. There are no rain dates for these concerts.

Further information can be obtained from Mrs. Joanne Nuzzo at the borough president's office at 718-816-2133

MIGHT HAVE COST HUMAN LIVES.

A Staten Island Motorman Amused Himself and Caused a Collision.

PORT RICHMOND, S. I., Aug. 13.—There was a rear-end collision on the electric railroad that runs to Prohibition Park this afternoon. The train was crowded with passengers. The cars were wrecked and travel was blocked. No one was seriously injured.

Three thousand people attended the afternoon meeting in the Park Auditorium to listen to a sermon by the Rev. Frank De Witt Talmage. When the meeting was dismissed, two motor cars, each with another car attached, were dispatched from the park to Port Richmond. The first train was in charge of regular employes, while an extra man, a lad not more than eighteen years old, had charge of the second motor car. The cars were so crowded that many persons were clinging to straps.

When the leading cars stopped to discharge passengers, the lad in charge of the motor of the second train amused himself by dashing up at full speed and bringing the cars to a stop a few feet from the leading train. Then he would laugh at the terror of the passengers. Finally, the leading cars stopped at the foot of a hill. The boy found his brakes were not holding the cars.

When the trains were but a few yards apart, the boy rang for the brakes to be applied to the attached car. It was too late, and the trains crashed together with such force that the passengers were thrown from their seats. Fortunately those on the rear of the first train realized their danger in time to escape. The cars were so crowded that the passengers inside could not be thrown down.

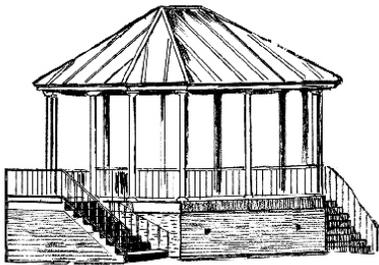
The boy who had caused the accident stood at his brake, but did not attempt to reverse the motor. He was pinned in by the wrecked dashboard, but was unhurt. In a minute he was surrounded by a crowd of excited and angry passengers, who threatened to administer a well-deserved thrashing, but did not.

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Membership Cards and Dues Payment

There has been some confusion since the last newsletter on dues payment and the sending out of 2007 Membership Cards.

A brief explanation is in order. All members who paid their dues for this year were mailed Membership Cards for 2007. It is our understanding that some of these cards were not delivered by the post office. You can check if you are current in dues by looking at the code in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label. If the letter "P" appears as the first letter, then you are current. No additional dues are necessary even if you have not received a Membership Card. If the letters "N" or "O" appear, then you are in arrears and you can remit your dues payment using the coupon to the right.

Westerleigh Improvement Society, Inc. Officers:

President... **Mike Morrell**
Vice President... **Rick Wexler**
Treasurer... **Joe Ficara**
Secretary... **Evelyn Otten MacDonald**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll me as a member of

Westerleigh Improvement Society Inc.

P.O. Box 140-043, Staten Island NY 10314

Annual Dues:

Regular Membership \$10 Associate Membership \$20

Membership # (3 digit number from upper left of mailing label)

Name

Address

Phone# (optional)

email (optional)