

# THE VOICE OF WESTERLEIGH

NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERLEIGH IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 140-043 Staten Island, NY 10314 [www.wisonline.org](http://www.wisonline.org)

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## WESTERLEIGH IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2007**

**IMMANUEL UNION CHURCH  
693 JEWETT AVENUE  
8 PM**

**GUEST SPEAKER:  
Assemblyman  
Matthew Titone, 61 A.D.**

**Reports from Officers will  
made and  
Election of Directors will  
be held**

**BRING YOUR NEIGHBORS  
REFRESHMENTS  
WILL BE SERVED**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our unusual winter, initially very mild and then becoming frigid, seemed to mirror the latest tragedy to the Westerleigh community. Like the calm before the storm, it almost seemed in the early days of January that we would have a spring-like winter. But then normal temperatures set in and by February we were once again in winter's bleak grip.

It was during the early part of February, during a very cold week, that many of us were greatly disturbed by the loss of 682 Jewett Ave. Something very much part of Westerleigh from its inception was destroyed. As of this writing the land where the house once stood is empty. Only the evergreen trees and the flagpole remain as a mute testament to the house that was there from the late 19th century. Some of us, including our elected representatives, gathered at the site of the house to protest and mourn its loss. All of us are hopeful that something will arise from this event and that Westerleigh will be protected from further demolitions.

Much has been written and said about the rights of property owners and what can and cannot be done with private property. But has anyone wondered about the rights of the residents who moved to Westerleigh? They bought homes here because the community reflected what they enjoyed and desired. And now that community is changing before their very eyes. Should they not have a voice in deciding what kind of housing Westerleigh should have?

Judging from the response to the Membership Renewal that was started in late January it is gratifying to know that so many support the Society's efforts to preserve our community. Please be assured that we will do our best to represent you.

# The Loss of 682 Jewett Avenue



Early on the morning of Feb. 8, 2007, a part of Westerleigh's history was lost forever. The home at 682 Jewett Ave. -- the earliest house built in Prohibition Park -- was demolished.

The house's original owners were the Rev. William Boole and his wife Ella, both early leaders in the Temperance movement. They lived for many years in that corner house while authoring many articles on the evils on alcohol and offering their home as the initial site for what was to become Immanuel Union Church.

Following the denial of an application for evaluation to the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the new owner completed the demolition. The Westerleigh community was shocked and outraged that the Boole house could not be saved. But what was almost

as troubling were the plans for the property following demolition: the construction of four two family homes, which is currently permitted under the present zoning code.

The Westerleigh Improvement Society realized the impact such zoning would have on our community and more than two years ago initiated an application to rezone Westerleigh to R2, which would allow only one-family homes on larger plots. The Department of City Planning has ruled that the current zoning is "appropriate."

The Society, together with our elected representatives, will continue to push for a rezoning to limit housing density to single-family homes. For more information on how to contact our elected officials and the Department of City Planning, please visit our website [www.wisonline.org](http://www.wisonline.org).

# Barrack Memorial Walk

The Annual Barrack Memorial Walk is scheduled for Saturday, May 19. This year's walk will begin at the Immanuel Union Church with a brief presentation and continue with a walking tour through parts of Westerleigh. The program will begin at 12:30 p.m.

The walk is held each year in memory of longtime director and Society historian Victoria Barrack. Vicky was the author of a book on Westerleigh's past "Westerleigh: Today and Yesterday."

## William Schorkopf Memorial Patriotic Sunday

The annual concert in Westerleigh Park, which is held each June between Flag Day and Independence Day, has been renamed the William Schorkopf Memorial Patriotic Sunday. The new name honors the late president of the Westerleigh Improvement Society who passed away in December of last year.

The decision was made by the Board of Directors, who wanted to pay tribute to the man who served as president of the Society for 30 years beginning with its reorganization in the 1960s.

This year's concert has been scheduled for Sunday, June 24. It will feature a performance by the South Shore Ban

## This and That...

- Work on the Ingram Avenue project should resume shortly. Final configuration and resurfacing will be completed as soon as the weather permits.
- 11 Woodbridge Place has been sold to a buyer who intends to restore the house. The public administrator, Gary Gotlin, is handling

the sale, which is subject to the approval of the courts.

- Jewett Avenue is on the DOT resurfacing list for 2007 and the work is scheduled to be completed sometime after July 1.
- The Society is monitoring construction activity in several Westerleigh locations. If you believe something is being built without proper permits or in violation of the zoning resolution, please contact the Society or call 311.

## PROHIBITION PARK NO MORE.

**The Residents Vote to Change the Name to Westleigh—Indignant Opposition.**

By a decisive vote residents of Prohibition Park, S. I., decided on Saturday night to call their town hereafter Westleigh. H. C. Horton presided at the meeting, which was held in the Park Hotel, and was largely attended.

The announced reason for the change is that it has been discovered that the name "Prohibition" repels intending land purchasers, who look upon it as being of political significance. The opponents of the change were led by the Rev. C. L. Haskell, the former President of the Park Association; J. W. Scott, A. R. Heath, Zenas W. Bliss, and the Rev. J. C. Fernald. They declared that the meeting had no right to change the name, that such action would create a scandal, and that it was a "copperhead" trick, introduced for its effect in the campaign; that it would cause a serious split in the Prohibition Party and would cause rejoicing among the saloonkeepers and other enemies of prohibition, and that many who owned property in the park were not present and any act, therefore, which might be taken would be illegal.

A vote was forced upon the question and resulted in an overwhelming majority in favor of the change. After the vote Mr. Haskell, trembling with indignation, denounced the result, declaring that it would cost the Prohibition Party 50,000 votes.

Application will be made to have the Post Office designation changed to Westleigh.

The opponents of the change of name declare that they will take legal proceedings to prevent its consummation, if possible, and will call a meeting next Saturday night for the purpose of rescinding the vote taken.

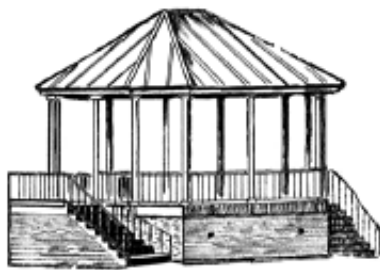
Reprinted from The New York Times,  
September 11, 1897.

Please note the misspelling of Westerleigh.

Westerleigh Improvement Society, Inc.  
P.O.Box 140-043  
Staten Island, NY 10314

www.wisonline.org

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## Dues Renewals proceed at tremendous pace

The mailing of membership renewals in January was followed by a phenomenal response by the membership. More than 550 members replied in the first month following the mailing.

The Directors are gratified by the quick and overwhelming response of the members. According to Membership Chairman Richard Cirbus, the renewals came at faster pace than ever before. This is no doubt due to the Society's active role in fighting for the preservation of our community through rezoning and historic preservation.

Recently each member who renewed was mailed a new membership card which can be displayed proudly. If there is any issue regarding membership, please do not hesitate to contact us by email or regular letter to our post office box.



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) .....