



# THE VOICE OF WESTERLEIGH

Newsletter of the Westerleigh Improvement Society, Inc.

PO Box 140-043, Staten Island, NY 10314

[www.wisonline.org](http://www.wisonline.org)

## APRIL 2016

Serving the Westerleigh community for 123 years

Vol. 52 No. 2

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### VICTORIA BARRACK MEMORIAL WALK

#### “A Taste of Spring in Westerleigh”

Saturday, April 23, 2016

Begins 10 AM, from Immanuel Union Church

*(For more information see page 2)*

### WESTERLEIGH

### IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

### ANNUAL MEETING

Guest Speaker

NYC District 50 Council Member

**STEVEN MATTEO**



And Featuring

An aerial video of Westerleigh

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 8 PM**

Immanuel Union Church

693 Jewett Avenue

~ Everyone Welcome ~

Refreshments Will Be Served

### MONTHLY MEETINGS

TUESDAY, MAY 3

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

Please note: Patriotic Sunday in June has been cancelled due to construction in Westerleigh Park.



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The short, dark days of winter are behind us and the warmer, longer days of spring have arrived. The forecasters say we had a “warm” winter. Those of us who had to brave the 30-inch snowfall and days of subfreezing temperatures know better. However, many residents have now started to replant and rejuvenate their lawns and gardens and the Westerleigh Little Guys and Gals started their season on April 9.

Mark Anderson and Sharon Heule, two of our directors, will be holding the Victoria Barrack Memorial Walk on Saturday, April 23, which is free and open to all. More about the Walk in this issue.

For those that are interested in Westerleigh's beginnings, we have been featuring Westerleigh Talks before our monthly meetings. Join us for these presentations about the history of our community. Check [www.wisonline.org](http://www.wisonline.org) for dates and times.

On May 18 please join us for the Society's Annual Meeting. Our featured speaker will be NYC Council Member Steven Matteo. Steven is a Westerleigh native, attended PS 30 and Port Richmond High School. He is also a coach for the Westerleigh Little Guys and Gals. As our representative on the City Council he will discuss issues important to Westerleigh and Staten Island. Please try to attend this important meeting.

Please contact the Society if there is an issue we can assist you in resolving.

## THE ANNUAL VICTORIA BARRACK MEMORIAL WALK

Join directors Mark Anderson and Sharon Huele Saturday, April 23 at 10 AM for a walk highlighting Westerleigh's past and present.

This year's walk, free and open to all, will focus on the porches of College Avenue. Mark, our acknowledged Westerleigh historian, will lead the tour, with planning by Sharon, who has played a key



roll in establishing and developing the walk over the years. At each porch, the group will sample a different fruit juice recipe from Mrs. Ella Boole's 1928 book, "Give Prohibition Its Chance." One of the most famous residents of

National Prohibition Park, Ella Boole lived at the corner of Jewett and Maine Avenues. She was the World President of the Women's Christian Temperance Union during national prohibition.

The walk concludes at Immanuel Union with refreshments and a slide show of participants' photos, taken along the walk. ☺

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### SOCIETY MEMBERS ARE #1

Thank you! Thank you! Since our membership renewal drive began February 1 more than 500 members of the Westerleigh Im-

provement Society have sent in their renewals. That is an outstanding testament to your support of our civic association. We are deeply grateful for your prompt response to our annual drive. Very few civic groups can claim to represent a

community as the Westerleigh Improvement Society does year in and year out. We are supported by your membership and that gives us more influence with our elected officials and the agencies with which we deal. ☺

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### PAVE BABY PAVE!

This is the mantra of Borough President Jim Oddo who is getting the city to aggressively repave the roads that we all have seen deteriorate in recent years. In Westerleigh, the Society requested to have as many streets resurfaced as possible. This year several main roads in our community will be repaved by the DOT some even at night.

Scheduled from April to June are:

- Jewett Avenue (from College Avenue to Victory Boulevard)
- Crystal Avenue (Forest Avenue to Watchogue Road)
- Collfield Avenue (College Avenue to Willowbrook Road)
- Livermore Avenue (Forest Avenue to Martin Avenue)

We will keep you informed as more streets are scheduled. ☺



*Jewett Avenue resurfacing*

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### WARDWELL AVENUE STORM & SEWER PROJECT

Beginning in the spring of 2017 the Department of Design and Construction will commence construction of the long-awaited storm and sanitary sewer project for several Westerleigh streets – Markham and Dakota Places and Wardwell, Fisk, Waters, Deems and Leonard Avenues will have their sanitary sewers replaced

and upgraded. In addition, storm sewers will be constructed to relieve severe flooding on Markham Place, Wardwell, Waters, Fisk and Leonard Avenues.

Construction of this type is at best inconvenient and at worst very disruptive as the project passes each home. Parking will be restricted and traffic diverted. But the ulti-

mate goal will be the improvement of a century-old infrastructure.

The Society was able to press for this project over the past several years with the help of our elected officials. As the date for construction approaches we will provide as much information as we can to prepare for the project. ☺

# MY PERSONAL ODYSSEY WITH THE USPS

By Lou Bergonzi

This may come as a shock to young people... who think all communication is through texts, tweets, Instagram and Snapchat ... but there are those of us who still send letters through the Postal Service. And we actually look forward to each day's mail delivery.

I happen to be one of them. Although in the spirit of full disclosure, I like it less when bills arrive.

So it bothered me a year ago when for reasons known only to the Postal Service, our mail delivery – along with a large section of Westerleigh – went from mid-morning to late afternoon.

And it bothered me even more when late afternoon turned into early, then late evening. When our carrier began to show up during the dead of winter around 7 p.m. with a lamp on his hat, I went from being angry to feeling sorry for him. See, he's a very nice guy, and I don't blame him for my situation.

When I called the Manor Road office to complain, I was told that the routes were changed, and hey, someone's got to be last, right?

Then, around February, we got a call from a cousin in Pennsylvania asking if we moved, because the Christmas card we sent her had just been returned, with a sticker saying we had moved and left no forwarding address. It happened again a few weeks later, when a friend told me a letter he sent me had been returned to him with the

same sticker. Then a credit card company sent me a notice about a missing payment; when I inquired, I was informed that the bill had been returned to them – again with the same sticker.

So I went up to the Manor Road office in person to see what was going on.

When I showed a supervisor one of the stickers, he told me it wasn't their fault. All mail, he said, coming to and from Staten Island is now processed in Brooklyn (the Postal Service says it saves them about \$900,000 a year). That explains why when you mail a letter here, it sometimes takes a week to wind up across the street. It's Brooklyn's problem, he said. Maybe their machines were dirty, he said. He promised to check into it.

When I visited the post office again (they didn't call me back, saying they said they lost my number), they said Brooklyn didn't know anything about it, there was nothing to be done. I was furious; obviously without knowing what was causing this, I couldn't be assured the problem would ever be solved.

So we filed a complaint with the national Postal Service and were assigned a complaint number. After a week or so, I got a call from a very nice woman – where she works I never did find out. She apologized for the problems, and said she had checked into the situation but could offer no explanation and couldn't

with any certainty say the problem was solved.

A call to Congressman Dan Donovan's office offered some hope. Pat Ryan, his communications director, said they had received three similar late service complaints in the past month, and vowed to check into the situation. When he called back, he said the Postal Service blamed the later deliveries on "recent adjustments to the delivery routes at the New Dorp Station Post Office" – neither of us could understand what that had to do with the deliveries out of Manor Road – and that because of the switch, our carrier now begins his route at approximately 1:30 p.m. Again, there was no explanation for why some of my mail is being returned to the sender.

I've since found out that I'm not alone with my complaints. Many people I've spoken with in Westerleigh have similar stories. We don't get adequate explanations or solutions to our problems.

Interestingly, the price of a stamp went down 2 cents on April 10, the first time in nearly 97 years that the rate dropped. It now costs 47 cents. The reduction is part of a pre-arranged deal with Congress enacted in 2014. Personally, I would gladly pay the extra 2 cents if it meant getting ALL my mail, bills included, at a reasonable time. But given my recent experiences, I'm not going to hold my breath. ☺

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

PRSR STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit #99  
Staten Island, N.Y.



## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Borough Hall: 718-816-2000

120th Precinct: 718-876-8500

121th Precinct: 718-697-8700

U.S. Congressman Dan Donovan:  
718-351-1062

NYS Senator Andrew Lanza:  
718-984-4073

NYS Assemblyman Michael Cusick:  
718-370-1384

NYS Assemblyman Matthew  
Titone: 718-442-9932

NYC 49th Council Member Debi  
Rose: 718-556-7370

NYC 50th Council Member Steven  
Matteo: 718-980-1017

Public School 30: 718-442-0462

Community Board 1: 718-981-6900

## Westerleigh Improvement Society, Inc

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Lou Bergonzi



## WIS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### ANNUAL DUES:

Resident Membership \$10 \_\_\_\_ Associate Membership \$20 \_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE # (OPTIONAL): \_\_\_\_\_

IF RENEWING: MEMBERSHIP # \_\_\_\_\_

(the number on the upper left of mailing label)

Please mail this form with your check made payable to the Westerleigh Improvement Society, P.O. Box 140-043, Staten Island, NY 10314