



**THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER
FOR THE BOROUGH OF
WATCHUNG
FALL/WINTER
ISSUE 2020-02**

FROM YOUR MAYOR

Greetings Watchung Residents,

Thank you all for the continued work to safeguard all of our residents during this pandemic. Since the March Declaration of Emergency, we have come a long way. Borough Hall is open with safeguards. All Borough operations are fully staffed and working to assist our residents, businesses and visitors. We have reopened all parks and parking areas. Our restaurants in Watchung have opened with outdoor dining and our churches have reopened with State mandated safeguards. Our schools are planning for the new school year opening with new safety and education plans. I strongly encourage all residents to join in our volunteer efforts to support our schools, program and educators to continue to educate our children in a safe and healthy environment. To ensure that our teachers and children are all safe, we need assistance from resident volunteers to help with the added protocols and plans. Please reach out to our school Superintendent and Principals to volunteer.

I appointed an Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity to investigate complaints of racism and to review Borough Department policies, procedures and operations including Public Safety to ensure that they protect the rights of minorities and are not biased towards a select segment of the population. The Ad Hoc Committee members are Council President Wendy Robinson, Councilmember Ron Jubin and Councilmember Pietro Martino. We scheduled 5 district wide meetings to afford all members of our community the opportunity to be heard and voice their comments, concerns and recommendations. The Ad Hoc Committee will use the information to develop an action plan with recommendations and solutions addressing inclusion, diversity and equality in all aspects of the Borough of Watchung. The objective is to make Watchung an even more welcoming, inclusive and safe community for all who live, work, and visit here regardless of their national origin, color, race, creed, religion, age, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status or political opinion.

Due to the limited amount of people who can attend meetings at Borough Hall, we have continued our meetings on a virtual platform to allow all residents and others to participate in our meetings from any location.

Our Recreation Committee activities are still not operative due to COVID 19 restrictions. We are eager for continued progress towards providing activities and events that bring our residents together and celebrate the great Borough of Watchung. I have been meeting with residents one on one at the Mayor's Office Hours the second Tuesday of each month at Borough Hall. I look forward to sharing ideas and welcome the input and experienced help from both the residents and employees.

We are all anxiously awaiting the NJ Library Grant awards that should occur in October 2020 and the planning for the new Watchung library building. In addition to the Library activities, the new Library Facility will contain space for the Arts Center activities and programs, technology programs, crafts and other community activities and meeting space. The existing Library is open and I would encourage all residents to utilize the many resources we have within our Library. Our Library is truly a great amenity for residents in our Borough.

Unfortunately, due to COVID 19 the many activities that typically occur at the Watchung Arts Center need to be changed or cancelled. I am fully committed to helping and working with the Arts Center to develop additional programs to involve more residents from the community all within the new safety restrictions. I ask for all of our gifted and talented residents to volunteer and provide assistance and work in collaboration with our Arts Center in providing diverse programs for all. The Arts Center has a wide reaching reputation of bringing great talent and entertainment to Watchung.

Our volunteers and businesses completed the installation of the walkway, personalized brick pavers and plantings at the 9-11 Memorial. Please visit the site as we remember on September 11 each year our friends, family members and first responders whose lives were lost. We continually remember the families and relatives and seek to provide comfort, healing and a hand of friendship and love for all.

The Borough applied for a new NJ Department of Transportation Grant to assist in resurfacing of additional roads in the Borough. I met with Somerset County Officials who informed me that the County will soon be making safety improvements to Hillcrest Road from Route 78 to High Oaks Drive.

I appointed an Ad Hoc Committee comprised of Council President Wendy Robinson, Councilmember Ron Jubin and Councilmember Pietro Martino to meet jointly with three members of the Board of Education on a regular basis to increase collaboration and shared services and assistance between the Borough and Schools and foster residents involvement and volunteerism.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of our essential workers, first responders, volunteers and residents who have been so generous in helping in so many ways during the pandemic. The community truly has come together to help one another and all of those in need.

Please reach out with your ideas and interests to serve and volunteer within our community. If we all work together for the common good, our community will be greatly enriched.

I thank you for the privilege and opportunity to serve as your Mayor and look forward to resuming many more activities and projects as we enter the Fall and Winter.

God Bless You All,



Keith S. Balla, Mayor



HEROES NEEDED!



The Watchung Fire Department is a 100% volunteer organization which is constantly in need of new members.

Beginning at 16 years old, Watchung residents can join our Junior Firefighter program which allows them to respond to emergencies under the guidance of experienced firefighters as well as learn about the fire service and gain valuable knowledge and life skills. Our Active Firefighters and Associate Members are over 18 years of age, come from the Borough of Watchung and neighboring communities. Active Firefighters attend basic Firefighter training as well as other training courses all paid for by the Department. Associate Members assist with non-firefighting activities such as Membership Recruitment and Retention, Fund Raising and other administrative duties.

We also offer an incentive plan as well as numerous other benefits to our Volunteer Firefighters. Most importantly, the ability to become a hero that helps their neighbors in a time of need.

If you or someone you know has a desire to be a hero in our community, please visit our website at www.watchungfd.org, follow us on Facebook @WatchungFD, call us at 908-756-6288, email watchungfire@watchungnj.gov, or pick up information at the lower level of Borough Hall!

2020 has been a big year for the Watchung Fire Department. So far, through a generous grant from the John Taylor Babbitt Foundation, we have received 5 Automated External Defibrillators which enabled us to equip every piece of apparatus with an AED as well as install an on-site AED in Fire Headquarters. We also took delivery of a 2020 E-ONE custom Rescue Pumper which replaced our Rescue Truck as well as Engine 4. This new piece of fire apparatus will enable us to be more efficient in our responses to emergencies and has the capability to carry more equipment in one vehicle than ever before!

As always, we appreciate the support from our community in Watchung. Without your generous contributions and the dedication of our volunteers, YOUR Fire Department could not continue to provide these invaluable lifesaving services.



Fall 2020 Traffic and Beautification



The Traffic and Beautification Commission had its first live meeting on a beautiful day in June to discuss future plans to beautify our Borough of Watchung. We were able to keep a safe distance at the Mobus Pavilion outside in the fresh air wearing our masks. Nothing like meeting mask to mask!

Thanks to Charlie Gunther and the Department of Public Works, our flowers on the Watchung Circle and throughout town were planted in time for Spring. The flowers are a welcomed sight as we drive around the circle, pass the medians on Somerset Street and catch a glimpse of them as we go by Spratford Park.

Topics of discussion centered around keeping the plantings consistent in type and color. Committee members will help water the plants around Brough Hall and the bottom of Hillcrest. When needed, they will assist in dead heading the marigolds as time goes by.

The plan is to replace the dead oak trees on the medians. The conversation included planting grass under the cherry trees to take care of the weeds. Mulch will be placed around the trees to protect them from weed whackers or mowers. Trees that are established should be ok without water bags and those that are newly planted will have them put on.

The Blue Star Memorial will be refreshed. Included in the plan is a bed of mulch to replace the white stones that surround the current ground cover and an area for planting annuals. The DPW will help beautify this commemorative location.

In June, the Garden club of Watchung donated a Heritage River Birch to be a Tree of Remembrance to all who have passed on. It was planted on the east side of Best Lake. The tree will have a light at the base to shine up the tree and to light that area of the lake during the dark winter months. The DPW did a wonderful job planting the tree.

There are plans to beautify the front and side of Borough Hall with plantings in the Fall. Under discussion is a plan to enhance the area between the gas station and Spratford park. The fence will need painting or replacing. There will also need to be a barrier to keep the autos out of sight as you take a right down Somerset Street.

Traffic and Beautification is hoping to have Operation Pride this Fall. It will be fun to be outside in the fresh air with all our volunteers helping to keep Watchung beautiful.

Thank you to all the committee members who care about beautifying our town. Their input is invaluable and well appreciated. Many thanks go out to the Department of Public Works for their cooperation and hard work!

Phyllis Juetter, Chair
Traffic and Beautification



Healthy Lawns Clean Water

Healthy Lawns = Healthy Waterways

Stormwater runoff from suburban lawns treated with synthetic fertilizer and pesticides can have a negative impact on our waterways and lakes. Residents who are looking to help improve our local environment and provide for a safe lawn for their family and pets may wish to consider using an organic approach to lawn care. An organic lawn care approach utilizes the principles of nature and eliminates synthetic fertilizer and harmful pesticides. Below is a summary of several Best Practices to manage your lawn organically:

Test The Soil - Start with a soil test to identify the need for amendments such as lime. Rutgers Cooperative Extension can test the soil and provide a profile that will serve as the framework for an organic approach. Soil testing information can be found here: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs797/>.

Over-seed - Thick turf will out-compete weeds. Apply seed and aerate the soil in the early fall and use a diverse mix of seed types to strengthen the turf's resistance to disease.

Feed The Turf - Leaving grass clippings on the lawn will recycle nutrients and add organic matter back to the turf which will decrease the need for additional fertilizer inputs. In addition, replacing synthetic fertilizer with organic fertilizer (look for the Organic Materials Review Institute "OMRI" certification on the label) will improve soil health and reduce watering needs.

Feed The Soil - Adding compost and liquid "compost tea" to the lawn will improve the overall soil health and help prevent common pests.

Mow High - Cut grass with a sharp blade to a height above three inches. Taller grass will prevent weeds from germinating and will reduce watering needs by allowing the soil to retain more moisture.

Water Only As Needed - Too much water makes lawns vulnerable to disease. No more than one inch a week, including rainfall, should be needed.

Weed Control - Corn gluten, applied during spring, limits weeds from germinating. For spot weed control on sidewalks and driveways, try a vinegar, water, and liquid soap mixture or another OMRI labeled weed control product.

Decrease Your Turf Area - Reducing the turf area of your lawn and increasing flower beds or creating a meadow area will reduce runoff and improve pollinator and wildlife habitat.

Add A Rain Garden - A rain garden is a shallow area filled with native plants that receives stormwater from an impervious area such as a roof or driveway. The stormwater is absorbed by the plants in the rain garden, reducing the amount of stormwater pollution that enters our waterways and helping to minimize local flooding. Lastly, rain gardens also provide much-needed beneficial habitat for birds and pollinators.

If you prefer to use a lawn care professional, the Rutgers Organic Landcare program offers a list of Organic Landcare professionals who have successfully completed a forty-hour certificate course here: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/organiclandcare/find-a-landscaper/>. Residents can find additional resources on Organic Landcare Care here: <https://nofa.organiclandcare.net/> and here: <https://www.jerseyyards.org/>.

"Green" tips from your Watchung Environmental Commission

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

111 Greenbrook Road

732-968-5151 (Phone)

Green Brook, NJ 08812

732-968-5331 (Fax)

Kevin G. Sumner, Health Officer/Director

ksumner@middlebrookhealth.org (E-mail)

Newsletter Articles from the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

COVID-19 RESPONSE

SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes COVID-19. It is also the virus that has significantly disrupted all our lives since March. For example, the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission staff has worked every day since March 8, including weekends and holidays, to protect our communities and keep them informed. Unfortunately, this condition is likely to continue for some time to come, so it is critical that we ALL work together to make our communities as healthy and safe as possible. See below for some important actions that need to be taken.

What The Health Department Is Doing:

- Investigating all positive cases of COVID-19 to educate the patient on avoiding others and identify contacts.
- Communicating with contacts the need to stay quarantined for 14 days.
- Educating the community about prevention actions.
- Reporting current information about COVID-19 conditions in the community.
- Staying informed about regularly changing science and guidance.
- Collaborating with schools as they prepare to reopen in the fall.
- Reviewing reopening plans and providing science based guidance.
- Responding to complaints and questions.
- Working with community partners to assure consistent responses.

What The Public Should Be Doing:

- Stay home if you are sick
- Avoid contact with others
- Follow the guidance provided
- **Practice the Three “W’s”:**
 - ◆ **Wear** a Face Covering
 - ◆ **Wash** Your Hands
 - ◆ **Watch** Your Distance
- Assist in public health investigations, contact tracing, and control efforts:
 - ◆ If contacted by the Health Department please cooperate.
 - ◆ Know that all information collected is Confidential.
 - ◆ No personal information is distributed.
 - ◆ Your information about contacts helps us control the spread.
 - ◆ Your information about contacts helps us help others.

FLU SHOTS ARE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT THIS YEAR

As the fall approaches and we continue to struggle with the presence of COVID-19 the importance of being vaccinated against the flu is higher than ever. The flu vaccine reduces the incidence of illness in the community. If we are able to reduce the incidence of flu through vaccination we will be better able to identify the presence of COVID-19 and slow or stop it's spread.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone over 6 months of age get a flu vaccine each year, but it is especially important that certain people get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications.

For example, the following groups are at particular risk:

- Pregnant women
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - ◆ Health care workers
 - ◆ Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - ◆ Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children less than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)



Protect yourself and protect your loved ones! Get a flu shot!

You can learn more at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

FREE RABIES CLINICS

Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission hopes to offer rabies clinics in the fall in order to assure availability of free rabies vaccines for our cat and dog owners. However, due to the uncertainty around COVID-19, other potential needs of the community, and the capacity of the health department to deliver on those needs, we are not able to definitively schedule them at this time. We hope to be able to offer one or more clinics in November and/or December. Residents are asked to call the Health Commission at [732-968-5151](tel:732-968-5151) in October to confirm the dates, times, and locations. At the clinics all cats must be held in a carrier and all dogs must be leashed.

RABIES

Rabies is caused by a virus that can infect both people and animals. It is virtually always fatal. While the majority of rabies cases in the state have been in wild animals such as raccoons, skunks and foxes, cats are also a relatively common victim of rabies. These cases can pose a significant threat to unvaccinated domestic animals, which can contract the virus from wild animals and transmit the infection to humans.

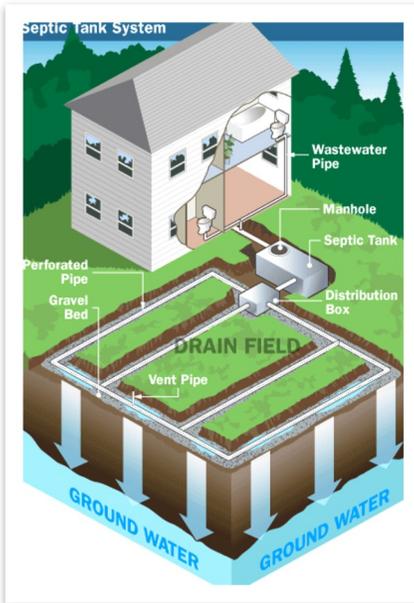
In addition, residents are reminded to take these rabies prevention measures:

- Immediately report a bite from a wild or domestic animal to the health department (*so post-exposure treatment can begin immediately if needed*).
- Immediately report any wild animal showing signs of unusual behavior.
- Be sure all family pets and agricultural animals are up to date on their rabies vaccinations.
- Animal-proof your home and yard.
- Do not feed or handle wild animals.
- Avoid contact with stray animals or pets other than your own.
- Try to prevent your pets from coming into contact with wild animals.
- Screen off vents to attics and other areas that could provide shelter.
- Call the health department if you find a bat in your home.
- License your pets!



SEPTIC CARE

COVID-19 has forced many, if not most of us to spend much more time at home. In addition, many of us



have had the pleasure of having our children return to home as a result of school closures, job changes, or other factors. This means that those of us whose homes are served by on-site sewage disposal systems (septic systems) need to understand that they are getting much more use than normal. If you have not had your septic tank pumped in the last few years, the health department strongly encourages you to have it pumped now. As a general rule, you should pump your septic tank every three years, but every household is different and depending upon your use and the age of your system, you may need to pump your tank more or less frequently. The bottom line is you need to regularly pump and maintain your septic system to avoid problems and very costly repairs.

See this [septic guide](https://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/pdf/septicmn.pdf) - <https://www.nj.gov/dep/dwq/pdf/septicmn.pdf> for more detailed information about your septic system and its care.

STAGNANT WATER & INSECT CONTROL

The presence of stagnant water, even in very small amounts may result in breeding conditions for mosquito larvae. Mosquitoes are linked with diseases such as West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).

Below are steps you can take to prevent mosquito breeding on your property:

1. Make sure there are no items in your back yard (like garbage can lids, buckets, baby pools, recycling, plant holders, etc.) which can accumulate water.
2. Remove all tires without rims or any other garbage that can store water (jars, cans etc.).
3. Remove accumulating leaves from drainage swales or drainage areas on your property.
4. Change water in birdbaths, fountains, and troughs weekly.
5. Aerate ornamental pools, or stock them with fish.
6. Clean gutters so water does not pool.
7. Make sure stored boats are not accumulating water. Store small boats upside down.



By using these simple control measures you can help reduce the population of mosquitoes around your home, lessen the chance of disease, and will enjoy the outdoors more!

RAIN BARREL ATTENUATION FOR FLOODING AND EROSION CONTROL

One way to reduce runoff and erosion is to capture it with rain barrels. A rain barrel is any type of container used to catch water flowing from a downspout. Rain barrels reduce the amount of stormwater runoff by collecting roof runoff and storing the rainwater for future use. A typical house with a roof area of 2,400 square feet and four downspouts will fill two 55-gallon rain barrels placed under each downspout for every 3 inches of rainfall.

The captured water can be used as an alternative to tap water for watering lawns and gardens. By diverting a portion of the runoff into barrels, the peak volume and velocity of stormwater runoff reaching streams, rivers and lakes will be reduced and can contribute to reducing flooding and soil erosion.

Rain barrels can be fancy or simple, but the basic structure is to have a barrel at the end of a downspout. The barrel has a spigot or hose that you can use to water your garden or yard. Several home improvement stores now sell rain barrels and can be purchased at a cost between \$70-\$300.



FEATURES TO CONSIDER WHEN BUYING OR MAKING A RAIN BARREL

Removable lid or opening—for cleaning inside the barrel

Filter—to keep out debris and mosquitoes

1.5 inch diameter overflow—attach sump-pump hose and direct to a second rain barrel or to an appropriate site away from the foundation (*Note: 3/4-inch garden hose overflow is often used, but will not accommodate heavy rain events.*)



Optional spigot—for filling watering cans

Spigot—for garden hose attachment

Image from IPTC Photo Metadata

In the winter, rain barrels will need to be disconnected so that they don't freeze and crack. To winterize your rain barrel:

- Disconnect the downspout from the rain barrel and re-connect a downspout extension to the main downspout to funnel water away from the foundation of the house.
- Empty the rain barrel.
- Flip the rain barrel upside-down and store it outside, or, if you have room, move the rain barrel into a garage or basement.

From the Engineering Department

HAVE YOU
PLANNED
AHEAD?



Prepare Your Health

It's been said that your health is your most important asset. Do all you can to prepare and protect it from a natural disaster, disease outbreak, or other emergency.

Despite the many reasons and motivations to prepare for an emergency, many people are underprepared to protect the health of their families from the direct and indirect effects of an emergency on the public health and healthcare systems.

Prepare Your Health encourages personal health preparedness for public health emergencies with practical advice on how to get ready and build resilience.

Prepare Your Health is organized into three categories: **Take Action, Plan Ahead and Create Community.**

Share what you've learned with family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and social media followers to help build more resilient communities.

Don't wait for a disaster to happen, take the initiative to prepare. Use the time before and between events wisely to improve your ability and create the wherewithal (e.g., the supplies, the skills, and the self-confidence) to maintain and protect your family's health in response to a public health emergency.

Public health emergencies and major disasters can have widespread and long-lasting impacts on supplies, services, and the public health and healthcare systems. When access to and the availability of resources is limited, it is important to have the personal needs, prescriptions, paperwork, power sources, and practical skills you need to respond.



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PLAN AHEAD:

STAY HEALTHY

Know how to stay healthy, and when and where to find medical assistance.

STAY CONNECTED

Discuss ways to communicate with family, friends and caregivers.

STAY CALM

Practice ways to stay calm, cool, and collected in an emergency.

STAY INFORMED

Find sources of reliable health and emergency information.

TAKE ACTION:

PERSONAL NEEDS

Gather food, water, & medical supplies to last at least 72 hours.

POWER SOURCES

Prepare for power outages with backup power sources.

PRESCRIPTIONS

Prepare your prescription medications for an emergency.

PRACTICAL SKILLS

Learn life-saving skills, such as CPR, to use until help arrives.



PERSONAL HEALTH RESILIENCE

A person's "resilience" is their ability to bounce back from a difficult or life-changing event like the diagnosis of chronic disease or the impacts of a natural disaster. People that are a part of their communities are better able to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity when they make healthy choices, like the decision to prepare for emergencies.

When enough healthy, socially connected and prepared people come together, they form a community that is often better able to withstand, manage and recover from disasters.



CREATE COMMUNITY:

Team up with neighbors to help build community health resilience.

Please complete the 2020 Census today. For more information, please visit

<https://my2020census.gov/>.



BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

Office of Fire Prevention

Christopher Czuba, Fire Official

October is Fire Prevention Month

In 1925 President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the first National Fire Prevention Week. The week commemorates the Great Chicago fire, which began on October 8, 1871, and did most of its damage on October 9. Since then, it's been observed every year during the week of October 9.

The 2020 Fire Prevention Week Theme is “Serve Up Fire Safety in The Kitchen!”

The Watchung Fire Prevention Bureau is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) - the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years - to promote this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, **“Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!”** The campaign works to educate everyone about simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe.

According to NFPA, cooking is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the United States. Almost half (44%) of reported home fires started in the kitchen. Two-thirds (66%) of home cooking fires start with the ignition of food or other cooking materials.

The Fire Prevention Bureau encourages all residents to embrace the 2020 Fire Prevention Week theme and wants to share safety tips to keep you from having a cooking fire.

- Never leave cooking food unattended. Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling or broiling. If you must leave, even for a short time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you're cooking. Your mobile phone is a good option for a timer.
- You must be alert when cooking. You won't be alert if you are sleepy, have taken medicine or drugs, or consumed alcohol that makes you drowsy.
- Always keep an oven mitt and pan lid nearby when you're cooking. If a small grease fire starts, slide the lid over the pan to smother the flame. Turn off the burner and leave the pan covered until it is completely cool.
- Have a “kid-free zone” of at least 3 feet around the stove and areas where hot food or drink is prepared or carried.
- Immediately Dial-911 in the event of a fire.

Free Smoke Alarm!!

The Fire Prevention Bureau has partnered with Kidde, WABC Operation 7 Save-A-Life Program and the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety to distribute a limited number of 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms to residents in need.

- The smoke alarms may be picked up from the Fire Prevention office during normal business hours.
- The name, address and phone number of the resident receiving the smoke alarm is required.
- One smoke alarm per resident please.
- **Remember to test your smoke alarms monthly, enjoy the Fall Season and Be Fire Safe!**

Since the death of George Floyd in May 2020, there has been a resounding call for police reform. I can't imagine the leadership of any police agency throughout our great Nation who is opposed to improving the services that we provide each and every day, but a lot of what has been called for already exists here in New Jersey including Watchung.

When those who were calling for police reform were pressed for details, "police training" was a recurring theme. While we can all benefit from more training, much of the training that has been called for is already required in New Jersey. Each year police officers throughout New Jersey are required to undergo mandatory training on a variety of subjects. Training for some of the more critical areas like use of force, pursuit driving, and firearms qualifications are required twice per year.

In addition to some of the mandatory training listed above, in 2017 the NJ Attorney General's Office implemented a Community Law Enforcement Affirmative Relations (or CLEAR) training program. Because New Jersey is such a diverse state, this training is designed to help officers understand the many different cultures that we serve. The focus of this training is to bring cultural awareness to our officers for a variety of different backgrounds. Whether it's the African American community, the Jewish community, the Muslim community, the LGBTQ community, people with special needs, etc. these programs already exist, and the training is mandatory and ongoing.

I believe there is always room for improvement and there is no exception for police work. I also believe that what happened to George Floyd was wrong, and that any officer who uses excessive force should lose their job and be punished to the fullest extent of the law. The rare and despicable actions of the few are giving all of us who do the job the right way a bad reputation, but that does not mean that the entire system is broken. According to the current Use of Force Policy issued by the NJ Attorney General "law enforcement officers should exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to the use of force. It is the policy of the state of New Jersey that law enforcement officers will use only that force which is objectively reasonable and necessary". Additionally, "every law enforcement officer is expected and required to take appropriate action in any situation where that officer is clearly convinced that another officer is using force in violation of state law". This language comes directly from the NJ Attorney General's Use of Force Policy and in my opinion it covers what happened to George Floyd. The policy exists, the policy is clear, and all New Jersey law enforcement officers have been trained on it. Any officer who does not abide by it should be dealt with swiftly.

Most of the training that we receive is either mandated by the NJ Attorney General, or it is required of us as an accredited police agency. Being accredited means that we operate by a set of standards that are widely considered to be the best practices in law enforcement. We became accredited in 2013, we were re-accredited in 2016, and we were also re-accredited again in 2019. The accreditation assessment process takes place once every three years. During each assessment we are required to provide proofs for each of the 111 standards we must meet for each of the three years during that assessment period. Those proofs include verification of all the training that each officer must go through each year.

There are minimum standards required of every police officer in New Jersey by the NJ Attorney General. As an accredited agency the Watchung Police Department goes above and beyond those minimum standards. By no means are we perfect or above critique and improvement. In spite of what has been widely reported about systemic problems in policing, our residents, their guests, and anyone who visits Watchung can rest assured that blanket statements made about law enforcement problems around the country don't apply to men and women of the Watchung Police Department.

Please feel free to email or call me with your questions or comments at jcina@watchungpd.com or (908) 756-3663 ext. 117.

Joseph R. Cina, Police Chief



Behind the Lights and Sirens



Since responding to their first call on December 31, 1950, the Watchung Rescue Squad has welcomed members from all different backgrounds. Whether students or engineers, doctors or nurses, residents or nonresidents, most members choose to volunteer because of a desire to give back to the community and help people in need.

Meet Katrina Dumapit, a Watchung resident, recent graduate of Rutgers University, and the current 2nd Lieutenant of the Watchung Rescue Squad. Seven years ago, Katrina joined the Rescue Squad because of an interest in helping others and a mission to experience medicine first hand. Starting as a high school cadet member, Katrina explains how she found her sense of passion and commitment. “The Rescue Squad has grown to be a significant part of who I am and I consider the other members to be like a second family. I have experienced significant growth since joining the Rescue Squad because of the great leadership opportunities available to me within the organization”. Katrina has held various committee chair positions, nominated as Vice President, and now as 2nd Lieutenant where she gets the opportunity, as training officer, to share her EMS knowledge and experience with new members.



The Watchung Rescue Squad has endured almost 70 years of emergency response thanks to the countless volunteers who have committed their time to helping others, and the consistent support from local residents. As described by Captain Jeiner Betancourt-Quintanilla, “the amount of gratitude I have received from the people who I have helped makes this one of the most rewarding things I do on a consistent basis”.

Join Katrina and the other volunteers at the Watchung Rescue Squad by helping your community and becoming a part of something bigger than yourself.

Visit our website at watchungems.org to learn more.

FROM THE CONSTRUCTION AND ZONING DEPARTMENTS

FOR ALL SWIMMING POOL APPLICATIONS

Zoning approval is **required** prior to a Building permit and a Land Disturbance permit. A full-size copy of the survey is required (not reduced) with the pool location marked. All swimming pools that can hold 24" of water or more, are required to have a pool compliant fence, with a self-latching self-locking gate. For more information, please contact the Building & Zoning Departments at (908) 756-6093.

RESIDENTIAL HOUSE NUMBERING

In order to help Emergency Services respond to calls, we urge **all residents** to have house numbers displayed which are easily readable from the street and not less than 4" in height. Since we have many homes setback from the street, it is a good practice to clearly number both the home and mailboxes.

RECYCLING

All recycling receptacles should be put out on the street for no more than 24 hours.

****IMPORTANT VOTING INFORMATION****

GENERAL ELECTION DAY

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD

POLLS OPEN 6:00 AM TO 8:00 PM

OCTOBER 13TH LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION

VOTING DISTRICT LOCATION(S)*

*AS PER EXECUTIVE ORDER #144, THE PRIMARY ELECTION WAS MAINLY VOTE-BY-MAIL AND ONLY 1 VOTING LOCATION WAS OPEN. AT THE TIME OF THIS PUBLICATION, WE ARE STILL AWAITING STATE GUIDANCE.

ANY UPDATES WILL BE POSTED ON THE BOROUGH'S WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES.

YOU MAY SUBSCRIBE TO RECEIVE ALERTS ON THE BOROUGH'S HOMEPAGE BY CLICKING ON THIS ICON:

[HTTP://WWW.WATCHUNGNJ.GOV/](http://www.watchungnj.gov/)



OR



@watchungnj

VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS, VOTE BY MAIL FORMS, AND CHANGE IN PARTY FORMS ARE ALL AVAILABLE AT BOROUGH HALL, OR ON OUR WEBSITE: [HTTPS://WATCHUNGNJ.GOV/CLERK/VOTER-ELECTIONS.HTML](https://watchungnj.gov/clerk/voter-elections.html) OR VISIT THE STATE AT: [HTTPS://NJ.GOV/STATE/ELECTIONS/VOTE-BY-MAIL.SHTML](https://nj.gov/state/elections/vote-by-mail.shtml)

FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT



The 2020 Leaf Pickup will commence on November 2, 2020 and continue throughout the fall season. All leaves must be in **BIODEGRADABLE PAPER BAGS** and placed on the grass area close to the road. **NO PLASTIC BAGS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR PICKUP.** Pickups will not be scheduled for any specific time or location.

Leaf pickup is limited to high density areas located within the following areas: Brookdale, Stirling and Hillcrest Roads North to Evergreen Lane; Mountain Blvd from Washington Drive to Rock Ave.; Johnston Drive to the water tower including Upper Drive and Johnston Drive Extension.

All residents are urged to utilize their leaves as compost; however, should any resident in a rural area desire pickup of leaves in **BIODEGRADABLE PAPER BAGS ONLY**, call the office of Public Works at 908-756-0080, ext. 214. Due to the State's New Stormwater Regulations, the Borough now has an ordinance prohibiting placement of leaves in the street.

Winter is just around the corner! The Public Works Department works hard to maintain public streets, thoroughfares and right-of-way's clear for safe passage of vehicular traffic during and following periods of snowfall. Public Works would like to remind residents that placement or shoveling of snow, ice, or slush on to Borough streets is prohibited! (Ordinance OR:14/05).

Parking on Borough roads when roads are covered with snow is also prohibited! (Ordinance OR:11/05). It is imperative that roads are clear of parked vehicles to allow for access by emergency vehicles and snow plows.



The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area and trains them in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, which allows them to focus on more complex tasks. Through CERT, the capabilities to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters is built and enhanced.

The CERT Basic Course training includes:

- ◆ **Disaster Preparedness:** Addresses hazards specific to the community. Materials cover actions that participants and their families take before, during and after a disaster as well as an overview of CERT and local laws governing volunteers.
- ◆ **Fire Suppression:** Covers fire chemistry, hazardous materials, fire hazards and fire suppression strategies. However, the thrust of this session is the safe use of fire extinguishers, controlling utilities and extinguishing a small fire.
- ◆ **Medical Operations Part I:** Participants practice diagnosing and treating airway obstruction, bleeding and shock by using simple triage and rapid treatment techniques.
- ◆ **Medical Operations Part II:** Covers evaluating patients by doing a head to toe assessment, establishing a medical treatment area and performing basic first aid.
- ◆ **Light Search and Rescue Operations:** Participants learn about search and rescue planning, size-up, search techniques, rescue techniques and rescuer safety.
- ◆ **Psychology and Team Organization:** Covers signs and symptoms that might be experienced by the disaster victim and workers, and addresses CERT organization and management.
- ◆ **Course Review and Disaster Simulation:** Participants review and practice the skills that they have learned during the previous six sessions in a disaster activity.

CERT training is offered twice a year to Somerset County residents at Somerset Count Training Academy, Hillsborough, New Jersey.

For further information, please email Watchung CERT at watchungcert@watchungnj.gov

CULTIVATING A POLLINATING LAWN AND GARDEN: SAVE THE DANDELIONS AND CLOVERS!

Happiness is cultivating a pollinating lawn and garden! In return for your endeavor, enjoy sightings of local wildlife as frequent visitors to your yard. Pollinators and other beneficial insects thrive on good nectar and pollen sources found in native perennial flowers, shrubs and trees. Dandelions and white and red clover are also excellent sources.

Dandelions flower April to June and are considered a vital early spring nectar source which provides carbohydrates for energy for pollinators. 93 species of insects, including bumblebees, honeybees, butterflies and hoverflies, collect nectar from dandelion flowers. The pollen of dandelions is a powerful immune system booster, especially for honeybees, which have been experiencing catastrophic decline since 2006. This phenomenon, referred to as “colony collapse disorder”, is believed to be mostly due to a class of insecticides called neonicotinoids that are neurotoxins and affect bees’ ability to find their way home.

Seeds and foliage of dandelions are eaten by at least 33 species of wildlife, including sparrows, American goldfinch, indigo buntings, turkeys, chipmunks, rabbits and white-tailed deer. The larvae of 13 species of butterflies and moths eat the leaves. Ruby throated hummingbirds weave dandelion seeds into their nests.

Clovers are amazing perennial ground covers that provide an excellent source of nectar and pollen for bees and other pollinators. Clovers are nitrogen fixing, which keep lawns green, and are sweetly scented, protect soil from erosion, and suppress weeds. Other pollinator-friendly sources of nectar or pollen is sunflower, sedum, lavender, mints, lemon balm, poppies, lantana, and sage.



Selective herbicides used to kill broadleaf plants like dandelions and clover are classified as having moderate toxicity to birds and small mammals, slightly toxic to fish and aquatic vertebrates like dragonflies. They carry warning labels, “may cause cancer in humans.” 2,4-D is an ingredient found in numerous herbicides and was once an ingredient of Agent Orange, extensively used to defoliate jungles during the Vietnam War. Vietnam Vets have suffered a high incidence of death from cancer resulting from exposure, and birth defects in their children.

As a community, let’s CELEBRATE dandelions, clovers, and pollinator-friendly flowers, shrubs and trees by helping them flourish in our lawns, gardens and landscaped beds, municipal properties, athletic fields, and open spaces. By supporting safe, diverse habitats for pollinators and local ecosystems, the well-being of our Earth is honored and we protect our own food supply, which requires pollination.

*“There is something of the marvelous
in all things in nature”*
- Aristotle

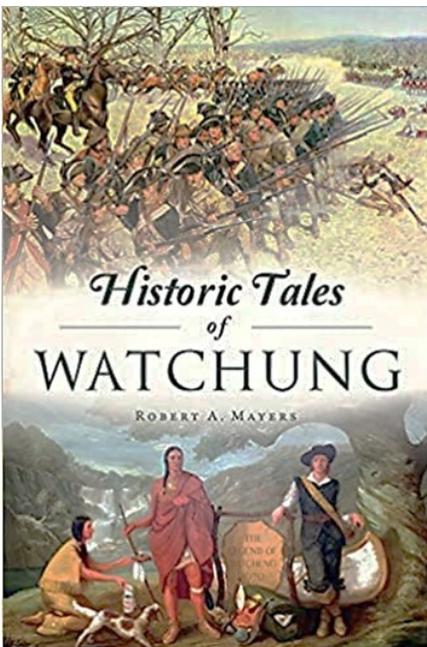
Written by:
Pammy Lewis, Rutgers Certified Environmental Steward,
Class of 2013 Watchung, New Jersey

Hello Neighbors,

It's gratifying for me to report some good news during these troubled times of the pandemic. Watchung has a new book! Robert Mayers, a prominent author, historian and longtime resident of Watchung has written *Historic Tales of Watchung*. It will be released in September, 2020. Signed copies will be available at the Texier House Museum in Watchung when it reopens. A video preview can be viewed on Watchung Historic Committee's Facebook page and website: www.revolutionarydetective.com.

Bob Mayers book begins with our Borough's first residents – the native Americans and spans four centuries. It tells of Indian legends, colonial days, it's place at the crossroads of the Revolutionary War, the town's industries, businesses, old homes and misfortunes and it's notable residents.

This book is truly a Watchung creation. The main sources are oral accounts of local people with a special interest and knowledge of our town's tumultuous past. Source documents researched are from the archives of the Historical Committee at the Texier House and the Watchung Public Library. The Watchung Writer's Group critiqued all the contents of the book.



Bob Mayers arrived in Watchung over 50 years ago with his family. With his wife Norma, they built their dream house high on a hill overlooking the valley below. Here, over the centuries, all the tales that are depicted in his book have unfolded. Living close to our many historic places he has personally witnessed many of the more recent events he describes. He values most, the many friends and neighbors and members of the Watchung Historical Committee who are local history "witnesses".

"These people, with special knowledge of the town's past are the caretakers of Watchung's history. They provided special insights and information that cannot be found in previously recorded history. Some are descendants of original settlers with ancestors are buried in local cemeteries. I salute their eagerness to share treasured and often previously uncovered details, their reverence for old places and their passion to preserve Watchung's history for future generations. They are the people who keep the spirit of this borough alive and carry the torch of knowledge of it's past".

Bob Mayers comments "My research efforts centered around The Texier House Museum maintained by the Watchung Historic Committee. It's one of the finest museums of local history in New Jersey with an impressive collection of hundreds of artifacts, photos, works of art and manuscripts. Watchung's Public Library provided a plump scrapbook with an unusual number of original materials and press clippings".

Mayers, a professional author and historian, has written several books about the Revolutionary War that sell worldwide. These works are based on his on-site exploration and the discovery of original documents and oral accounts. He reports that most people he met while preparing this book were enthralled by Watchung's fascinating past, but regret that during their school days they tuned out the town's history as distant and dull. We must find ways to tell our young people about the astonishing events that happened here.

Warmly,

Amber Murad, Chair
Historical Committee of Watchung

Watchung's Fascinating History

Ice Cutting On The Lake



Author and historian Robert Mayers has lived in Watchung with his family for over 50 years. His newest book, *Historic Tales of Watchung*, will be released in September. All earnings from local sales of the book will be donated to the Watchung Historical Committee or other community group sponsors. Referenced sources are oral accounts of residents, documents researched are from the archives of the Historical Committee at the Texier House and the Watchung Public library. This is the first book in over 20 years that has been written about the Borough.

The book begins with the story of Native Americans, the Borough's first residents and covers the next four centuries. Our town was at the crossroads of the Revolutionary War. Valley Road, our main thoroughfare served as an important conduit for Washington's army. After the Battle of the Short Hills fought in June 1777, in Edison, Scotch Plains and Plainfield, the battered Americans retreated through the gap in the Watchung Mountains at Bonnie Burn Road to get protection behind the first ridge. Wagons filled with wounded and dying soldiers struggling up the long winding hill where past where until recently what was the site of the Colorado Café. For many years after, this road was known as "Bloody Gap". The men then trudged down Valley Road through Watchung and continued down Mountain Boulevard in Warren to reach the main camp at Middlebrook, now Bridgewater.

Four years later, on August 27, 1781 large and important part of the American Continental Army hurried down Valley Road through Watchung. Thousands of troops escorted the supply and artillery column of The American Army through the town. They were on the way to Yorktown, Virginia to win the final decisive battle of the War for Independence. The army needed a safe route and was protected behind the first ridge. The farm families of Watchung lined Valley Road and people came from many miles around to see the long enthralling parade. Many of them had never been further than the nearest town. Witnessing the march was a stirring once in a lifetime experience for these patriotic people. After the Revolutionary War, Watchung was known as Green Valley and then Washingtonville. Watchung and Warren Township formed one town from 1806 to 1872, when Watchung became part of North Plainfield. It was incorporated as a borough in 1926. At the time it was a village of about 800 people.

Passing Up Bloody Gap (Bonnie Burn Road) after battle.



To discover more fascinating Watchung history, copies will be available this September.

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908-561-0117
(Closed Saturdays during July and August)

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908-647-4800

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