

BOROUGH OF

WATCHUNG

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER - SPRING/SUMMER 2025



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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Residents,

Hello to all my fellow Watchungers! I cannot believe we are ¼ way through the 21st century. I vividly remember moving to Watchung, Fall of 1994. “Back in the day” you were not moved in until you had your phone connected and your new number. Excitedly you would call friends and family to share in your joy of a new-found independence, and an immediate community connection deemed by the first 3 digits of your phone number (mine was 753). Well, things have changed a lot in the past 30 years, I mean immensely. Landlines have become vestigial communication tools that similarly to VCR and eight-track tapes now relocated to our memories and trivia questions. As the saying goes, the only constant is change.

The ability to communicate instantaneously to anyone around the world from anywhere has created a sense of connectivity for sure, but it is not the same as personal interactions. A warm smile, a hug from family or friends is irreplaceable. Our Borough has so many opportunities for these personal connections and I want to encourage all of you to take a technology break to experience each other and what Watchung has to offer. Our lakes, parks and events are all for you and continually we strive to develop and improve these for you, the residents.

You are probably wondering why is the Mayor being so philosophically introspective? Well, perhaps it is because we are rapidly approaching the Centennial of Watchung (May 2026) and the semiquincentennial of our great Nation on July 4, 2026. We have such a rich history in Watchung with many amazing residents living here for generations or just a few years. Did you know kids used to sleigh ride down Hillcrest Road in the winter and swim in Watchung lake in the summer?!? No kidding. So, in preparation of celebrating these anniversaries I want to encourage all of you to go through your pictures and videos, whether in print or online and be prepared to share your own “Watchung Stories” with us. I am working with the Historical Committee and anyone else who wants to help bring our memories to life for 2026. Similarly, we live in the present, so let us power down the devices and venture outside to create our own memories. Have you visited the Texier House, tried pickleball or Bocce ball at Mobus Field yet? Or visited our Farmers Market? How about joining me for a walk around Watchung lake every Monday in the warmer months when the days are long? On last year's walks, the wildlife we saw included a beaver, herons, and bald eagles which are always more impressive when seen in person. Stay connected to all Boro matters by signing up for emails on our website and visit our social media pages so you may plan ahead for these exciting activities.

Our in-person connectivity as residents at Borough picnics, school plays, sporting, scouting, religious and other events are truly our rich shared history that we should pause, reflect, and cherish together. Let us collectively get our Watchung Stories prepared and teach those who will be here in the future, just how wonderful it is to live and love here as a Watchunger!

See you out there soon I hope,

Ronald Jubin, Ph.D.
Mayor, Watchung Borough



Mayor Jubin



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TAX OFFICE Friendly Reminder . . . Taxes are due quarterly on: February 1st, May 1st, August 1st, and November 1st

- Please remember that Sewer Bills are due in July and are typically NOT paid by your mortgage company.
- Any accounts delinquent as of December 2024 including Special Assessments will be included in our Tax Sale this fall.
- Balances can be viewed and paid online at www.watchungnj.gov.
- Please note that if you use Bill Pay through your bank, it may take a week or more for the Tax Office to receive the payment. Even though your bank account shows the money being withdrawn on the date that you initiate the bill pay, the bank prints and mails a check to the Borough which delays the process. For this reason, we recommend using the payment process provided on our website or dropping a check off at Borough Hall. If you leave a payment in the drop box outside of the Tax Office, the payment will be credited to your account the next business day.



Thank you.



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15 Mountain Boulevard, Watchung, New Jersey 07069

Phone: 908-756-0080 • Fax: 908-757-7027

www.watchungnj.gov

Mayor Ronald Jubin, Ph.D.

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Christine B. Ead, Council President
Curt S. Dahl, Paul Fischer, Paolo Marano,
Sonia Abi-Habib, Robert Gibbs

Administration

James Damato, Administrator
908-756-0080
JDamato@watchungnj.gov

Borough Clerk

Edith Gil 908-756-0080 ext. 213
EGil@watchungnj.gov

CFO/Tax Collector

William Hance 908-756-0080 ext. 216
BHance@watchungnj.gov

Engineering Office

Mostafa Razzaghmanesh 908-756-0091 ext. 225
engineer@watchungnj.gov

Watchung Fire Official

Thomas McNulty 908-756-0091 ext. 235
fireofficial@watchungnj.gov

Police Department

Chief Scott Anderle 908-756-3663

Emergency 911

Non - Emergency 908-756-3663

Fire Department

Chief Albert DeSandolo 908-756-0080 Ext. 250

Volunteer 908-585-1272

Emergency 911

Non - Emergency 908-756-0091

Emergency Management

Carolyn Solon 908-756-0080 ext. 239

CSolon@watchungnj.gov

Municipal Court (N. Plainfield)

263 Somerset Street, N. Plainfield, NJ 07060

Court Administrator, Jodi Mack 908-769-2265

Tax Assessor

Ed Kerwin 908-756-8333 ext. 224

ekerwin@watchungnj.gov

Tax Clerk

Kathy Vilarino 908-756-8333 ext. 223

taxclerk@watchungnj.gov

Construction Official

Robert Lacosta 908-756-0080 ext. 228

RLacosta@watchungnj.gov

Carolyn Taylor, Zoning Officer/TACO

908-756-0080 ext. 219

CTaylor@watchungnj.gov

Public Works Manager

William McClave

wmcclave@watchungnj.gov

908-756-0080 ext. 214

Watchung Arts Center

For information call 908-753-0190

18 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069

(Closed Saturdays during July and Aug.)

SC Public Library - Watchung Branch

Temporary Location

20 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069

908-458-8456

Watchung Seniors

Tony Perrucci: 908-963-1748

Mary Osborne: 908-625-8959

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Watchung Hills Regional High School

Grades 9 through 12

108 Stirling Road, Warren, NJ 07059

908-647-4800

Valley View Middle School

Grades 5 through 8

50 Valleyview, Road, Watchung, NJ 07069

908-755-4422

Bayberry Elementary School

Kindergarten through 4th Grade

113 Bayberry Lane, Watchung, NJ 07069

908-755-8184

Sunday Morning Worship
10:00 AM
or online at
wilsonmemorialchurch.org

Wilson Memorial Church
7 Valley Road, Watchung
on the corner of Valley Rd. & Hillcrest Rd.
908-755-5020
All Are Welcome! All Belong!

CALENDAR
April 13 Palm Sunday 10 AM Worship
April 17 Maundy Thursday 6:30 PM
April 20 Easter Sunday 10 AM Worship
May 2 Cabaret Night 7:00-9:30 PM
June 7 Community Flea Market 9 AM-2 PM

Wilson Memorial is a vibrant, interdenominational, community-focused church.
We aspire to be the Light on the Hill, reflecting God's love and sharing the message of Christ.

SPRING/SUMMER EVENTS

APR
5

EASTER EGG HUNT

11:00am - 12:30pm Phillips Field



APR
26

OPERATION PRIDE

9:00am - 12:00pm Texier House Museum



MAY
17

COMMUNITY PICNIC

12:00pm - 3:00pm



MAY
26

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

9:30am



JUN
3

FARMERS MARKET OPENING DAY

3:00pm - 7:00pm Best Lake Parking Lot



JUN
21

BLOCK PARTY

12:00pm - 6:00pm



JUL
4

JULY 4TH PATRIOT WALK

11:00am - 12:00pm



For details on the events and more, please visit www.watchungnj.gov



NJ LOCAL GOVERNMENT 2025 WEEK



JOIN US FOR

COFFEE WITH MAYOR & COUNCIL

AT

POURTUGA

APRIL 9TH
5PM TO 6PM



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Watchung Rescue Squad Celebrating 75 Years of Service!



Celebrating 75 years of the Watchung Rescue Squad (WRS) is an incredible achievement. Established in 1950, WRS has grown to be an organization filled with highly trained professionals and equipped with life saving medical equipment. Over the decades, WRS has been successfully providing rapid response and pre-hospital care during various events, ranging from accidents and natural disasters to medical emergencies. This milestone anniversary not only honors our current EMTs, drivers, probationary members and cadets but also ALL of those members who have come before us. As we celebrate this significant achievement, we are reminded of the importance of continuous support of the Watchung Rescue Squad to ensure it can meet the demands of the future and continue to safeguard the Borough of Watchung and surrounding communities!

Quality EMS Care

Since being established in 1950, the Watchung Rescue Squad has aimed to always provide the best possible emergency care. We are on 7 nights a week from 6PM until 6AM! Our services are free of cost to our community as we are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization! Our members are constantly sharpening their skills. After joining our membership, our members enroll in a very challenging course to obtain their EMT Certification. We have mandatory drills every month where members freshen up their knowledge and skills. Our members also perform trainings every shift with their individual crews.

Community Outreach

Our members are constantly engaging with the community. We strive to be present at borough and school events! We pride ourselves in organizing our Tree of Lights event every year where we interact with many members of the community! We are also working on providing education to the community through CPR/AED classes and different presentations throughout the year!



This could be you!

We are looking for eager individuals 16+ to join our squad! No experience is necessary.

We offer:

- Free Training
- Free Uniforms
- Flexible schedules
- An opportunity to make a difference!

Want to apply or have questions?

Contact us via our website, phone or social media!

908-755-1297

www.watchungems.org



Watchung Rescue Squad



@watchungems.org

MEET OUR NEW BOROUGH PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

My name is Mostafa Razzaghamanesh. I have been appointed as the Borough Engineer in early January 2025. I was an assistant Borough Engineer for the last three years in the Borough of Watchung. I am a Professional Engineer (PE) in the states of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. I am also a Professional Planner (PP), a Certified Municipal Engineer (CME) in the state of New Jersey, and a National Certified Floodplain Manager (CFM) in the US.



I am in the Borough Engineering Office between 8:00 am to 4:00 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In my daily work, I do land disturbance permit application review, talk with the Watchung residents, and help them with their municipal-related questions and issues. I also do site inspections of drywells, foundations, and as-built.

Additionally, I work on various projects with the support of my company, Remington and Vernick Engineers Inc. We do designs and inspections of roads, mill and pave, drainage and flood control, sidewalk improvement, stream stabilization, bridges, parks, and recreational projects, to mention some.

Overall, keeping the Borough of Watchung's infrastructure safe is my primary goal!

FROM THE DESK OF THE BOROUGH CLERK



Dear Watchung Community:

I am pleased to take this opportunity to highlight the important services provided by my office and the dedicated employees who work to serve you. Many of our employees carry the same values and while I certainly don't mean to discredit others, I wish to highlight those in my office that are often "behind the scenes" and work hard for Watchung. At events I'm often asked: What does the Clerk's office do? So, I thought it best to use this space to highlight some of our services and the individuals who contribute.

IMPORTANT DATES

May: Cat licenses are to be renewed. Late fees apply in June.

June 10th is Primary Election Day. Polls open 6am to 8pm.

September: Rental property registrations are due!

My office serves as the bridge between residents and the municipality, helping to ensure transparency, and access to important public information. Among core responsibilities are maintaining official town records, administering elections, processing vital records, issuing certain licenses, and assisting in the preparation and distribution of meeting agendas and minutes. We have a new agenda software (Civic Clerk) being released and I invite you to visit our website to learn more about it. We all support our Mayor and Council and the Borough Administrator & you can always learn much more from our website too.

I have especially heard in the last 2-3 years just how much my office has changed. Allow me to highlight the members of my office, whose professionalism and commitment are central to the high level of service our residents receive. Their hard work is instrumental in making our borough a responsive community. We may not always have the answer, or the answer you wish to hear, but I assure you that we always seek to address the concerns of those that come to our office.

If you have been to any of Watchung's events in the last year, you might have seen Damaris in action. She is our current Board of Health Secretary and is the borough's Recreation Coordinator.

Yes, she is the one to bring together the Mayor & Council's vision and direction to life and helps coordinate our volunteers and the many intricate details that go into having large events. Next is Colleen, dubbed by our residents as having "the sweetest voice" she is the ever-friendly first face you will see when you stop at our office. Colleen is our Registrar and a crucial part of our office. She is often the one behind our social media and email blasts. If you've applied for any licensing in my office (or OPRAs!), you might have run into Regina, my Deputy Clerk. She has been with Watchung for 5+ years and is the bubbly one constantly reminding us the importance of exercise and staying healthy! Finally, we have Brittany, who has been here with us a short time, but has quickly gained our respect for her quick ability to know Watchung's processes and has helped support various roles. She will often be that first friendly voice you hear when you call our main number and as of late, the new face behind our social media reels and posts.

My own tasks are many and varied and I certainly could not do it all alone and maintain the level of service we have now. I joined Watchung in June of 2020 and while some technological advances took place when I came onboard and I got the ball rolling on some areas, there is strength in union and having a team means that together everyone achieves more. We do not monitor our social media pages for comments so I highly encourage you to reach out to us whenever you have questions or need assistance with any municipal matters. We are always ready to provide you with the support and information you need. If you haven't already, please sign up for our emails. It is the BEST way to find out information directly from us!



Damaris Quiñones-Gray

Colleen Lange

Regina DeLeonibus

Brittany Statuto

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New Star of Blue Star

Watchung *ShopRite* Coming Spring 2025



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- **Basic Facial (60 min) \$59**
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- **Hot Stone Massage (1 hr) \$69**
- **Swedish Massage (1/2 hr) \$39**

- **Ultrasonic Lift Facial (60 min) \$69**
- **Oxygen Facial (60 min) \$89**
- **Microdermabrasion Skin Peel Facial (60 min) \$100**
- **Deep Pore Detox Facial (60 min) \$110**
- **Teen Facial (30 min) \$45**

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As we say goodbye to 2024 and welcome spring 2025 we would like to take a moment to say Thank You to the residents, committees, volunteers, first responders, and the Borough staff for all the support and hard work this past year.

The community shared in wonderful events for the winter season of 2024. The "Veteran's Day Remembrance" took place in November to recognize the courage and dedication of all who have served in the armed forces. Residents came out to show their gratitude and the Borough included a "pinning ceremony" placing a pin on all Veterans in attendance. The "Peace Throughout The World, Lantern Launch" brought family and friends together to write messages of hope and unity on lanterns that were

launched on the beautiful Watchung Lake at night. There was a big turnout for the annual "Tree Of Lights" tree lighting ceremony with fireworks, music, food, hot chocolate, and the Watchung Police Department's famous chili.

The neighborhood looked amazing with displays of faith on the Village Green, lights, and decorations throughout that brought cheer and holiday spirit to all. It is events and shared moments together that remind us of the goodness that is Watchung.

As the Council begins the work for 2025, the focus remains on public safety, the continued necessary improvements to infrastructure, new recreation projects, environmental initiatives, and events that bring value and joy to the residents. The PSE&G gas line replacement once completed will move to the paving phase in spring/summer. Additional DOT Road paving and parking lot work will be addressed. There is much more, but the most exciting project is the next phase of the "Watchung Community Connection" and Library that is moving into the bid stages with groundbreaking to follow.

The work we do is done with careful review and research into all available funding outside of taxpayer dollars. The recent partnership with Bruno Associates, a grant-writing firm is all-ready moving forward with grand submissions to help with numerous 2025 projects. We continue our focus on keeping the Borough tax (Flat) and using creative shared service agreements and outside funding to make Watchung the best community to live in.

It is our honor and privilege to serve the residents of Watchung. We look forward to the wonderful projects and events to come and we appreciate the confidence that you have placed in us.



MIDDLE-BROOK REGIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission

111 Greenbrook Road, Green Brook, NJ 08812, Kevin G. Sumner, Health Officer/Director

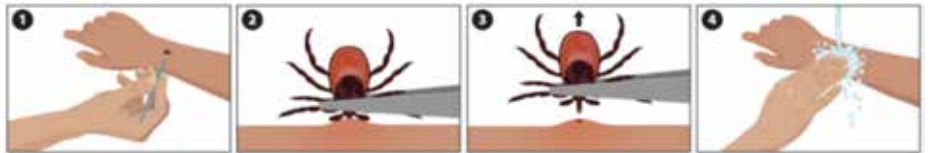
732-968-5151 x 1 | 732-968-5331 (fax) | mbrhc@middlebrookhealth.org (e-mail) | www.middlebrookhealth.org

FIGHT THE BITE

Ticks spread germs through the process of feeding. Ticks feed on mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. This is not an event you want your body to host! Ticks can transmit pathogens that cause illness when they attach to their feeding source.

Ticks are a pest all year-round, but they are most active during warmer months of the year (April-September). Those most at risk of tick bites are those who spend a lot of time outdoors. Whether that is enjoying your backyard, taking a walk in a park, or camping in wooded environments - be prepared to encounter ticks!

If you find an attached tick, follow these steps:



1. Use clean, fine-tipped tweezers.
2. Grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
3. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. If this happens, remove the mouth-parts with tweezers. If you cannot remove the mouth easily with tweezers, leave it alone and let the skin heal.
4. After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

How to safely dispose of a live tick:

- Put it in alcohol;
- Place it in a sealed bag/ container;
- Wrap it tightly in tape; or
- Flush it down the toilet
- X** Never crush a tick with your fingers

If you get a tick bite and develop symptoms within a few weeks, **visit your healthcare provider.**

The most common symptoms of tick-related illness include fever/ chills, fatigue, nausea, headache, muscle pain, and rash.

For more information, visit: [cdc.gov/ticks](https://www.cdc.gov/ticks).

GREEN TEAM

The Green Team was established by the Borough Council to promote efforts to ensure Watchung is a sustainable community. Sustainable policies and practices seek the long-term viability of the Borough by saving tax dollars, conserving energy, reducing the community's carbon footprint and natural resource consumption, and providing for the health and safety of residents.

Members of the team review and recommend eco-friendly, cost-efficient projects designed to improve municipal operations. The team includes residents, and a variety of Borough officials, including representatives of the Environmental Commission and Finance Department. The team works directly with other Borough organizations and seeks public-private partnerships.

The Green Team page on the Borough Website (Home>Boards>Green Team) contains information to assist Borough residents in pursuit of improved sustainability, including grants that may be available.

Join the Team!

The Green Team needs more volunteers who can help us expand the team's sustainability efforts, assist with upcoming events, and help improve our community. Any resident, whether a community-minded individual or someone with expertise specific to the projects before us, is welcome to apply. If interested, please contact Bill Hance at bhance@watchungnj.gov for additional information.



SUSTAINABLE JERSEY CERTIFICATION

Sustainable Jersey is an organization that supports and certifies municipalities in the state that are seeking to become more sustainable. This past fall Watchung gained recertification, exceeding prior efforts, the borough achieved Silver status, having documented 32 activities across 12 categories. Certification does provide bragging rights, but more importantly, it opens additional grant opportunities and the process itself, with or without certification, ensures the Borough is following a set of best practices that will ensure we remain a viable community well into the future.

At the time of writing this article (January 2025), the Green Team is actively working on two grants and working towards the application of two more. In addition, last year we were able to identify programs that brought in additional funds through rebates. These efforts will bring thousands of dollars into the community, with more opportunities in the future.

Food security is one of the categories in Sustainable Jersey certification. The Green Team, with the strong support of the Mayor and Council, has been providing borough residents with easy access to fresh produce at the weekly Farmers Market for the past four years. We have begun planning for the 2025 market season and look forward to resuming the community activity in the spring. The market is located at the Best Lake parking lot from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm every Tuesday from June through October.

In addition to food vendors, frequent live music, special events and activities have created a lively community space in which you can enjoy the weather and meet fellow residents while shopping for goods from local small businesses.



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Attorneys at Law | 15 Mountain Boulevard, Warren, New Jersey 07059

Phone: (908) 757-7800 Fax: (908) 757-8039 Web: www.NewJerseyLaw.net

WATCHUNG HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Hello Neighbors,

Greetings from the Watchung Historical Committee!

THE COUNTDOWN IS ON TO WATCHUNG'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2026!

The Watchung Historical Committee is hard at work preparing for this milestone, and there have been ongoing discussions with the Borough on how to celebrate this milestone. We'd love for you to get involved! Here's how you can join the excitement:

Celebrate with Custom Watchung T-Shirts!

Show your Watchung pride with our Anniversary T-shirts! Choose from three unique designs featuring iconic landmarks including the Texier House, Wilson Memorial Church, and the Watchung Arts Center.

- **Cost:** \$15
- **Sizes:** Youth M & Adult S, M, L, XL, XXL
- **Where to Buy:** Borough Hall, Texier Museum Open House events, or the Community Picnic.

GET CREATIVE! Customize your shirt with fabric markers available at the Texier House or purchase your own.

3 T-Shirt Designs to Choose From!



Preserving and Archiving Watchung's History

Our committee, alongside dedicated outside volunteers and residents, have been working behind the scenes categorizing and digitizing hundreds of historical photos, articles, and documents at the Texier House Museum. We hope to share these treasures in time with the public and feature some newly discovered photos and information in museum displays at the Texier House and on www.watchunghistory.org. A big thank you to everyone helping with this monumental task—your contributions make history come alive!

Watchung's Trivia

As you walk around Watchung Lake, be on the lookout for a series of new trivia questions related to Watchung's history on the digital sign outside of Borough Hall! We encourage you to participate with friends and family in this activity and hope you can learn some fun history about this amazing Borough. This will be regularly updated through 2026 for all to enjoy!

Exciting Museum & Website Updates

- **Eagle Scout Project:** Thomas Schaefer is creating an incredible display highlighting Watchung's earliest industries, from farming and quarries to distilleries and blacksmithing. We anticipate this project to be completed in late spring and we plan to hold a special event to showcase this display. Thank you to all those involved in helping to make this a reality!
- **Artifact Photography:** We're photographing prominent artifacts throughout the Texier House Museum to share online and to help with preservation efforts.
- **YouTube Channel:** Don't miss our growing collection of Watchung history videos, now integrated into our website. Be sure to check out the different playlists created which include original content created by the Watchung Historical Committee as well as links to videos from others!
- **Ornament Program:** Resident Laurie Wood, owner of Woody Signs and Designs, has supported the Historical Committee for many years through the sale of a Watchung themed ornament. This ornament program, which began in 2019, typically showcases a building or

NEW JERSEY'S MOVE OVER LAW

Have you ever seen someone driving behind you with a flashing blue light? Do you know what that blue light means?

In New Jersey, a blue light on a vehicle indicates that a volunteer firefighter or EMT is responding to a 911 call in their personal vehicle. These individuals are on their way to the fire station, rescue team, or first responders to provide the manpower needed for emergency apparatus to respond to an incident.

If you see a passenger car with a flashing blue light, treat it like any other emergency vehicle. The driver is requesting the right of way. This is not just a courtesy light. When it is safe to do so, pull over to the right and come to a complete stop to allow them to pass safely. This action is required by law under NJ Statute No. 39:4-92.

Many people are unaware of the significance of flashing blue lights, but for first responders every second counts. By giving way, you are helping us help you. You never know—we could be responding to an emergency involving your friend or loved one.

Have you ever seen an emergency vehicle with flashing red and blue or amber lights on the side of the highway? Do you know what to do when passing them?

New Jersey's Move Over Law

The law applies to police, fire, and EMS vehicles, as well as tow trucks and other highway safety vehicles.

What does the law require?

- Drivers must move over one lane if it's safe
- If it's not safe to move over, drivers must slow down below the speed limit
- Drivers must be prepared to stop if necessary

What are the penalties?

- The default fine is \$100
- The penalty can be up to \$500 if the violation results in bodily harm
- Violators may also receive two motor vehicle points



landmark in Watchung. Each ornament is different, and custom made. Keep an eye out for future ornament sales around the holidays!

Visit the Texier House Museum

Located at the heart of the Watchung Circle, the Museum is open the first and third Sundays of each month. Check www.watchunghistory.org or the Borough website for updates, special guests, and events.

Want to volunteer or learn more about the 100th Anniversary? Email us at historic@watchungnj.gov or visit our webpage to find volunteering opportunities and support our mission.

Have historical photos or artifacts? Contribute to the Museum's collection and help preserve Watchung's legacy!

Together, let's make Watchung's 100th Anniversary unforgettable!

The Watchung Historical Committee



Watchung has been called, variously Browsetown & Washingtonville. It was once part of Basking Ridge, Warren, North Plainfield, and Greenbrook Township before being incorporated as the Borough of Watchung in 1926. Early industries were focused on its natural resources: farming, copper mines, trapping and processing animal furs. The village had businesses like a cider mill, grain mill, and blacksmith to support residents.



The bridge to the original Pratt residence, now the current library, was only one of three bridges that Harlan Pratt built on the original family property known as Schaffer's Farm. A low concrete bridge was constructed in 1958 to better service the workshop and showroom behind the Valley Furniture Shop, and a raised pedestrian bridge known as "The

Footbridge" was constructed just a year later. "The Footbridge" was built to allow customers to walk with ease between the Valley Furniture Shop building and the newly constructed parking lot just north of the building.

One of the most iconic symbols associated with the Fireman's Exempt Hall is the large steel locomotive wheel in the front of the property that was obtained in 1911. It was originally used as a fire alarm by being hit with a sledgehammer alerting other firemen in town of an emergency. Leontine

Texier, who lived across the street from the Exempt Hall at the Texier House first rang it during borough emergencies. It was a longtime tradition in town that each Memorial Day, it would be rung in memory of those fireman who passed away.

Many long-time residents of Watchung recall the Washington House Hotel and Restaurant. The Washington House was built in 1738 and had been previously known as the Washington Haus, David Stewart's Tavern (1806) as well as Demler's Hotel (1861). The owners of the hotel included Hugo Maul, David Stewart, George Demler, and George Mauro. David Stewart and George Demler are buried at Gods Acre Cemetery, right next to Water and Wine. The Washington House served as a meeting place for local dignitaries who helped to establish Warren Township in 1806 (Watchung was part of Warren Township at that time), the Watchung Chemical Engine Company (Est. 1910), and the Borough of Watchung (Est. 1926).

While never confirmed, there were always rumors surrounding the restaurant that George Washington stopped there during the Revolutionary War. The 224-year-old structure (though renovated several times) burned down in October of 1962.



TRAFFIC AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION *Phyllis Juetter – Chair*

AAH SPRING! Watchung welcomes the warm sunshine and soft breezes of Springtime. Once again we will be doing our May planting with flowers all around the circle and Somerset Street. With the assistance of the DPW, new shrubs will be added and damaged trees will be replaced. We look forward to the blooming of cherry trees along Somerset Street, a sure sign of Spring.

We on the committee hope you all enjoyed the snowflakes and banners that brightened the dark nights and added color to the day along Somerset Street. Once again the trees at Spratford Park were brightly lit with a warm welcome to town. Watchung circle was cozy and bright with our two snowmen in front of Borough Hall and the Happy Holidays sign made by our own Arthur Wright head of the DPW. The lit candles in the windows of Texier Museum were a warm addition to the decorations on the circle. The brightly lit trees on each side of our American flag lit up the darkness at Best Lake. The wreaths and bells twinkled along the fence on the Town Square.

T&B will continue the Hill of Hearts for Valentine's Day at Borough

Hall telling our residents, especially the children, how much they are cared about. The townsfolk commented appreciatively upon seeing these decorations.

Once again, T&B will sponsor Operation Pride. This event will take place on April 26, rain date April 27, behind the Texier Museum. Come as individuals, families, or with a group of friends and neighbors. Come to keep Watchung beautiful! The Knights of Columbus, Scout Troops, students and residents have been loyal supporters. We applaud these volunteers who each year show up to do their part and to take pride in their community.

In September T&B will once again sponsor the Scarecrow Stroll on the Town Square. Start thinking of your scarecrow which will be displayed on a fence post for all to see. Friends and neighbors enjoy strolling along the walkway, stopping to take pictures of these remarkable creations.

T&B welcomes all who would like to join or donate some time to our committee.

WATCHUNG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Improving Officer Safety with Jiu Jitsu: Watchung Police Defensive Tactics Training

By Chief Scott Anderle, Watchung Police Department

Starting in 2025, the New Jersey Police Training Commission (PTC) has required all police officers in the state to complete at least four hours of Jiu Jitsu-based defensive tactics training each year. This new rule is meant to make officers safer and better at handling tough situations. The Watchung Police Department, however, has been ahead of the game, offering this training to our members for over two years already.

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) is different from many other martial arts because officers can practice the techniques at full effort without a high risk of injury. It focuses on using leverage and control, much like wrestling, to handle physical encounters safely. This makes it especially useful for police work. BJJ allows officers to gain confidence and develop the ability to de-escalate situations effectively without resorting to excessive force. Practicing these techniques regularly builds muscle memory, ensuring officers are prepared to respond calmly and effectively in high-stress scenarios.

The Watchung Police Department is fortunate to have several officers with experience in wrestling and Jiu Jitsu. One of them is our Defensive Tactics Instructor, School Resource Officer (SRO) Mike Dolinski. SRO Dolinski is a Black Belt in Jiu Jitsu, a rank that typically requires more than 10 years of regular training to achieve. His expertise not only benefits our training program but also serves as an inspiration to his fellow officers, showing the value of commitment and consistent practice. SRO Dolinski's dual role as a School Resource Officer also brings this expertise into our schools, where he fosters safety and builds positive relationships with students and staff.

To further improve our training, the Watchung Police Department

is exploring ways to upgrade our training area with better mats and equipment. These enhancements will create a safer environment for officers to practice and train more frequently, allowing us to exceed the state's four-hour requirement. Regular practice under the guidance of our skilled instructors ensures that our officers remain prepared to handle a wide range of situations effectively and safely.

Some studies have shown that training in Jiu Jitsu can lower injury rates for both officers and the people they encounter. It has also been found to reduce the need for higher levels of force during physical confrontations. Departments that implement consistent BJJ training report fewer incidents of injury, decreased workers' compensation claims, and improved outcomes in use-of-force situations. These findings highlight the importance of incorporating effective defensive tactics training into law enforcement.

Jiu Jitsu training not only benefits officer safety but also strengthens trust between the police and the community. When officers are better equipped to manage situations without unnecessary force, it fosters a sense of fairness and respect. Additionally, the physical and mental discipline developed through Jiu Jitsu supports overall officer wellness, which is essential for maintaining a healthy and effective police force.

The Watchung Police Department remains committed to continuous improvement and excellence. By investing in advanced training and resources, we aim to enhance the skills, safety, and confidence of our officers while ensuring the well-being of our community. With initiatives like our defensive tactics training program, we are setting a high standard for law enforcement preparedness and community service.

WATCHUNG VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Watchung Fire Department is a 100% volunteer organization that 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 old and come from 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. The Borough also offers an incentive plan as well as numerous other benefits to our Volunteer Firefighters, most importantly, the ability to be one of the heroes who 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) 756-0080 x250 or (908) 585-1272, or email at recruitment@watchungfd.org, or pick up information at Borough Hall! As always, we appreciate the support from our community in Watchung.

The Watchung Fire Department has been working diligently to investigate replacement options and various funding sources for much needed replacement apparatus to update our aging fleet. We are hoping to place a much needed and long overdue order in 2025 for a new frontline fire engine to replace our 1996 Pierce pumper. This piece of equipment would take an estimated three years from time of acquisition to be built and delivered and would play a critical role in ongoing efforts to modernize the firefighting capabilities of the department and help to greatly improve the fire protection to the borough residence and its visitors.





WATCHUNG LIBRARY

While the Watchung Library at 12 Stirling Road is being renovated, we were still able to offer a vibrant summer reading program to Watchung kids, keeping them reading, learning and engaged in their community. Not only did our kiddos joyously participate in the summer reading challenge, but they attended many great programs both at the temporary location at 20 Stirling Rd. and at the Wilson Memorial Church which has graciously hosted many of our larger program offerings as well as our weekly Writers Group and monthly Book Discussions.

HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE PROGRAMS YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THIS SPRING!

Gale Presents: Peterson's Test and Career Prep

Gale Peterson's is a test and career preparation platform that offers free online practice tests for high school such as Advanced Placement tests and High School Equivalency exams, college prep tests such as the SAT, ACT, and CLEP and grad school exams including, but not limited to the GRE, LSAT MCAT and more. Additionally, vocational test prep for cosmetology, hospitality, journeyman, real estate and other trades are also available. In addition, you can search for schools, explore careers and government and non-government jobs.

Learning With SCLSNJ Online

SCLSNJ offers many online products to help enhance learning for all ages. To access these tools go to <https://sclsnj.org/databases/>. SCLSNJ cardholders will be able to access an alphabetical list of the library's online resources from the comfort of home.

Brainfuse HelpNow

Brainfuse HelpNow is a unique tutoring, homework help, and studying suite designed to assist patrons of all ages succeed. Live online tutoring, expert online writing assistance, live and static skills building, flashcards, games, tests and study plans are just a few of the services available via this platform.

LIBRARY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

FOR ADULTS:

Wine Charms

Saturday, April 19 • 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Make a set of wine charms.

Passport Services

Wednesday, May 07 • 2:00 - 5:30 p.m.
SCLSNJ is an officially-designated passport application acceptance facility with passport processing hours set for your convenience. By appointment only. Schedule at <https://sclsnj.org/passports/>.

Wine Glass Painting

Presented by Lynn Schwartz

Thursday, May 08 • 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Participants will hand paint their own one-of-a-kind spring themed wine glass.

Plant Help Desk

Presented by Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Wednesday, May 28 • 11:00 a.m. - noon

Bring your plant questions to your library! A Rutgers Master Gardener will answer them for you. This is a walk-in program.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS:

Paint and Snack: Sun and Moon

(grades K-5)

Tuesday, April 08 • 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Discover how to paint step-by-step using watercolors. Pre-packaged snacks and drinks will be served.

Read to a Therapy Dog

(entering grades K-4)

Tuesday, April 15 • 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Practice your reading skills by reading a story to a certified therapy dog. Registration is required by visiting the Youth Services desk or calling 908-458-8455. Registration begins March 25.

Music with Miss Donna

(ages birth - 5 years and caregivers)

Monday, April 28 • 10:30 - 11:00 a.m.

Wilson Memorial Church

Take time to bond with your children while making music in this interactive session. Enjoy music, fingerplays, and playing instruments.

STEAM: Snap Circuits

(grades K-5)

Tuesday, April 29 • 4:30 - 5:15 p.m.

Discover circuitry using Snap Circuit kits.

Wildlife Show

(all ages)

Tuesday, May 06 • 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Wilson Memorial Church

Discover the thrill of wildlife! A professional handler will showcase incredible animals with exciting feeding demonstrations and hands-on interaction.

Paint and Snack: Dandelion

(grades K-5)

Tuesday, May 13 • 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Discover how to paint step-by-step using watercolors. Pre-packaged snacks and drinks will be served.



For more information regarding library programs please visit the library program page at sclsnj.libnet.info/events

PUBLIC WORKS



BULK WASTE COLLECTION

Bulk waste collection organized by the Borough of Watchung, typically runs during the first 2 weeks in June. Please sign up for Borough Communications to participate this year!

The Borough will send out alerts via email and social media closer to collection date with sign up directions.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

THE BENEFITS OF TREES: CREATING A WORLD OF GOOD BEYOND YOUR OWN BACKYARD

The trees on your property provide many benefits for you personally and for Watchung as a whole. There are a variety of reasons those trees may have been planted in the first place – perhaps for more shade, or to lower energy costs, or to improve the view out the window. Whatever the reason, the trees in your yard are an important part of the tree canopy in the Borough and they are providing vital layers of “good” for everyone in the area. The following are some of the significant benefits trees provide:

- **Increased shade:** The canopy that your trees provide helps lower the temperature by as much as 10 degrees Fahrenheit. The shade provided reduces ground moisture evaporation, which keeps the soil and surrounding environment cooler, further reducing water loss and helping conserve soil moisture.
- **Cleaner air:** The leaves filter pollutants in the air, which helps improve the quality of the air we breathe. Clean air is beneficial for human respiratory health.
- **Stormwater management:** A mature tree can capture 1000 gallons of rainwater a year! The roots absorb excess water, reducing the intensity of floods and preventing soil from washing away.

- **Wildlife Habitat:** Trees provide food, shelter, and places to raise their young for a vast range of wildlife, such as pollinators, birds, and mammals. A single oak tree can provide support for over 500 species of moths, butterflies, and other insects.




- **Local Aesthetics and Community Well-Being:** Trees enhance our quality of life and contribute to the creation of more livable outdoor spaces. The presence of trees improves overall mental health and helps promote physical activity, which benefits all residents.


This list of some of the amazing things that trees are doing for Watchung and its residents is provided by the Arbor Day Foundation. The Environmental Commission encourages everyone to value your trees, along with the other trees in town, as vitally important resources that add up to a better quality of life for everyone. For more information on caring for and planting trees, please visit arborday.org/treecare

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

NJ Register Ready helps people with disabilities to register their special needs with their municipal office of emergency management. NJ residents with special needs are encouraged to complete the online registration annually. This information is used by emergency planners for their disaster preparedness planning. This way when a disaster occurs, the municipality can be properly prepared to meet the needs of their residents. If they don't know in advance the needs of their residents with disabilities, they will not be able to adequately prepare.



The first step in emergency preparedness for individuals who may need assistance in a disaster.




Who Should Register?

Permanent and seasonal NJ residents with DAFN who may need help evacuating, sheltering in place or at a public shelter, or requiring emergency assistance should register. Individuals with a temporary disability, such as a high-risk pregnancy or other serious medical condition, should register.

How Can I Register?

- Go to: www.registerready.nj.gov
- Telephone 2-1-1 (within NJ), or 877-652-1148 toll free (TTY/ TDD and translation services available)
- Contact your County Office of Emergency Management
- Contact your local Center for Independent Living



For More Information

What is Register Ready?

Register Ready is a free, secure, voluntary database designed to help emergency managers and first responders plan for and support people with disabilities and access and functional needs (DAFN).

You (or someone on your behalf) are encouraged to register if you have a physical, developmental, cognitive, or behavioral impairment.

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Watchung Borough would like to thank the businesses that appear in this newsletter and to recognize them each as supporters and cornerstones of our community. For it is with their contributions that this newsletter has been produced at no charge to our residents. The Borough would like to further request that citizens, in response, patronize these businesses first when given a choice as these businesses are saving each citizen tax dollars.



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