



BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG



Mayor Jubin

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER



SOMERSET COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Residents,

I am so excited to announce that we will be upgrading the existing library facility! The Pratt family house, originally purchased by the Boro in 1973, was opened in 1976. The house is positioned in a bucolic location overlooking the Best Lake waterfalls. The challenge we faced was how do we upgrade a facility for the 21st century? How can we stay within the same structure and upgrade the library while creating new meeting space for our residents – something that's never been available. I realized this challenge required a comprehensive approach and formed an ad hoc committee with Council President Christine Ead, Councilman Curt Dahl, and our Business Administrator Jim Damato. We then assembled a team that included expert architects, engineers, library professionals with clear goals: upgrade the entire building to be energy efficient and ADA compliant within an open footprint, allowing for use flexibility that will adapt to our needs over time. Many, many hours were spent preparing draft plans, holding meetings with our professionals, that ultimately produced a dual-use structure maintaining the charm and aesthetics befitting of the larger Watchung Circle. The new building will include: additions for a full-service elevator connecting each floor improving access for visitors with physical disabilities and parents with small children alike. The larger addition to the rear of the building will accommodate meetings up to 75 people for both the main floor and lower children's levels. The design incorporates the ability to have both shared events with the library and the capacity to close off the library and use the meeting areas independent of the library. This allows the use of this area at times beyond the library operating hours.

My sincerest thanks to my ad hoc team and all our Council members who together shared a vision for taking on this challenge, to our administrative staff and all of those who have fought over the years to keep our library relevant (you know who you are) - we heard you and we acted for all of us.

What can we expect? Imagine with me (if you will) a day when there is a science exhibition for the children on the lower level, seniors are meeting for a health seminar on the main level along with a teen study group and a resident holding a private videoconference – all going on simultaneously! This promises to be way more than a library, more than just a community center – a place for us to connect with one another in a meaningful manner and within an infinite number of ways. This once-in-a-generation opportunity needed a new name as its much, much more than a library, it is a place to gather and share experiences.

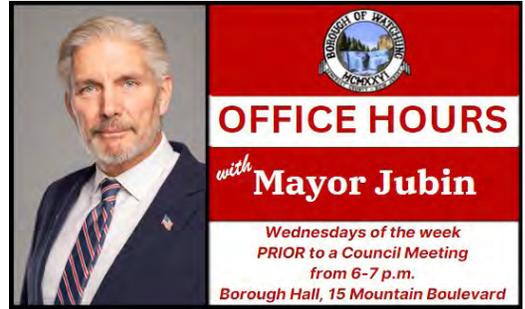
Allow me to introduce you to the new Watchung Community Connection –

Here for each of you today and for tomorrow.

Respectfully,

Ronald Jubin, Ph.D.

Mayor, Watchung Borough



Council's Corner

We come to you in 2024 to celebrate the New Year and recap 2023 which proved to be a great success with a wide array of completed projects and services that came in on budget.

The FEMA Grant dollars continue to work for Watchung as the new Library Bridge and improvements to the Philip's Bridge move forward. The 2023 DOT Road Project is all most complete with final paving by the summer. The 2024 DOT Road Project Grant was awarded and will begin construction on Vail Lane, Wolford Court, and Drift Road by summer 2024.

Repairs to our Borough Buildings and grounds remain a priority as diligent maintenance is a huge step toward the prevention of future repairs.

- Borough Hall: new roof, paint, renovated kitchenette, Cupola lighting and landscape Improvements.
- The Texier House: roof and gutter work, new benches, added storage, and electrical repairs
- The Police Station: roof repairs, kitchen and office upgrades, HVAC cleaning, stair work, and a donated newly paved parking lot
- The Firehouse: roof and internal stair repairs and kitchen improvements
- Mobus Field: newly paved parking lot, cameras installed throughout park
- The Gazebos at The Village Green and on Mountain Blvd. have new roofs generously donated by Penyak Roofing. Remaining renovation work will be completed this spring.

These are just a few of the projects that we saw this past year. With 2024 in full swing, we continue to search for grant opportunities and partnerships that will further assist all on the Council in their efforts to deliver the best services, and safety for all who reside in Watchung. Stay tuned as work on sidewalks, opening Camp Endeavor, Mobus Field added activities, grant funded storm water improvements, new signs, spring plantings, lake maintenance options, and community events come to the wonderful Borough of Watchung. There is always more to do, and we are working collectively to get things done while remaining fiscally responsible.

It is our honor and privilege to serve this community while we work toward a better, stronger and united Watchung.

Christine B. Ead, Council President



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WATCHUNG POLICE DEPARTMENT

Introducing the Watchung Police Department School Resource Officer Program

In August of 2023, the Watchung Police Department deployed our first ever School Resource Officer to work in both Bayberry and Valley View Schools. As we find ourselves already half-way through the school year, I would like to share with our community some of the goals and benefits of this new partnership between the Police Department and the Watchung Borough School District.

In New Jersey, a School Resource Officer (SRO) is a sworn member of the local police department that is specially trained and assigned to the school building and grounds. The first SRO program took place in 1982 in the City of Hackensack. By 2004, the New Jersey Association of School Resource Officers (NJASRO) put in place a standardized 40-hour training program for all SROs. The curriculum now includes training in topics such as active shooter, de-escalation, mental health, mentoring, special education, and child trauma.

The primary focus of the SRO is security and safety. Schools are designed to facilitate learning. While there are some physical security enhancements available (like closed circuit video systems and digital locking mechanisms), having a dedicated police officer on site to monitor for security is paramount. A uniformed police officer and a marked police vehicle on the grounds provides a firm visible deterrent. It further provides a direct link between the department and the school as the SRO maintains a police radio at all times. Additionally, the Watchung Police Officer designated to SRO program brings up-to-date police training in all areas of law enforcement to supplement the SRO training they receive.

In addition to providing security, the SRO also provides several other benefits to both the department, the school, and the community. The daily interactions of an SRO increase positive attitudes towards law enforcement in general. It also develops important links to parent groups that can assist in our service to our residents overall. After only a few months, I can already see the strengthening of the alliance between the schools, the police, and our community.

Lastly, our SRO serves as an educator to students, staff, and even parents. Our current SRO, Peter Cuevas, heads the fifth grade D.A.R.E. program. SRO instruction can include giving courses to students on pedestrian, bus, and bicycle safety, stranger danger, and how to handle many types of emergencies.

I am grateful to our Watchung Borough Mayor and Council and the Watchung Board of Education for working quickly and efficiently together, allowing us to put the SRO program in place for the start of this school year. I am further proud of our officers who previously created a strong relationship with the schools which led to a smooth transition for the SRO. I am happy to report that we have received nothing but terrific feedback from our school partners and our community. Finally, I would like to pass along gratitude from SRO Cuevas who was overwhelmed by the warm welcome he initially received and the continuing support of all involved.

Chief Scott Anderle
Watchung Police Department
908-756-3663x117
908-756-1202 Fax

WATCHUNG 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 is proud to announce the purchase of our new command vehicle, purchased at no cost to the taxpayers using the generous donations and fundraising efforts our members have put

forth. This is the second vehicle the department has funded by 100 percent donations and are both currently in service to serve and protect the residents of Watchung. Without your generous contributions and the dedication of our volunteers YOUR Watchung Fire Department could not continue to provide these invaluable lifesaving services to the residents of this great town.



Watchung Municipal Building

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

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Paul Fischer
Paolo Marano
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Robert Gibbs

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Police Department

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Emergency 911
Non - Emergency 908-756-3663

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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 Collector

William Hance 908-756-8333 ext. 223
BHance@watchungnj.gov

Construction Official

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RLacosta@watchungnj.gov

Carolyn Taylor, Zoning Officer/TACO

908-756-0080 ext. 219
CTaylor@watchungnj.gov

Public Works Manager

William McClave
wmcllave@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

Watchung Branch
12 Stirling Road, Watchung, NJ 07069
908-458-8456

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Watchung Hills Regional High School

Grades 9 through 12
108 Stirling Road, Warren, NJ 07059
908-647-4800

Bayberry Elementary School

Kindergarten through 4th Grade
113 Bayberry Lane, Watchung, NJ 07069
908-755-8184

Valley View Middle School

Grades 5 through 8
50 Valleyview, Road, Watchung, NJ 07069
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WATCHUNG RESCUE SQUAD MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



Spotlight on: Life Member Lysandra Plotkin!

Since responding to their first call on December 31st, 1950, the Watchung Rescue Squad has endured over 70 years of emergency response thanks to the countless dedicated volunteers who have committed their time to helping their community.

Meet Lysandra Plotkin. Lysandra grew up in Watchung and attended Bayberry Elementary School, Valley View Middle School and finally was a student at Watchung Hills Regional High School when she joined WRS in 2005. Lysandra joined WRS as a cadet and was immediately eager to take on any roles that were available to her. She instantly loved the community feeling of the rescue squad and wanted to be as involved as possible. Lysandra quickly became an EMT and Cadet Corporal, a leadership role within her cadet class. She helped oversee the activities and trainings for cadets, as well as held her peers accountable for meeting their yearly requirements. After graduating from WHRHS, Lysandra attended Hofstra University for her undergraduate studies but continued riding for the squad as a full EMT on many weekends and her breaks from school.

After graduating with her undergraduate degree, Lysandra took a break from school and became Vice President at WRS. While in this position, she oversaw committee operations and overall continued to help the squad run smoothly. Shortly after, she became President and continued to ride her weekly shifts as an EMT while also covering wherever needed. Lysandra then took a break from riding while she attended Dental School at Midwestern University of Arizona where she earned her Doctor of Dental Medicine. In 2020, Lysandra moved back home and came back to her Squad family by serving as President. Lysandra has remained a member of the Executive Board and is now a Life Member after serving her community for almost 20 years.



Thanks to members like Lysandra, the Watchung Rescue Squad continues to serve the Watchung community 7 days a week, free of charge.

This could be you!

We are looking for eager individuals 18+ to join our squad! No experience is necessary.

We offer:

- Free training
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Have Questions?

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Fight the Bite – Mosquito-borne Disease Prevention



As summer approaches, mosquito prevention and control are essential for reducing the risk of mosquito-borne disease. Mosquitoes can spread germs through bites, which have the potential to cause illness. In New Jersey, the most common mosquito-borne diseases people can get are West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Read more at cdc.gov/mosquitoes.

Here are some effective ways to protect yourself from mosquitoes:

- **Remove standing water** – Mosquitos breed in stagnant water. Eliminate any standing water around your home, such as flowerpots, buckets, or clogged gutters. Regularly empty and clean water containers to prevent mosquito larvae from developing.
- **Maintain your outdoor area** – try to keep your yard well-maintained by trimming bushes, mowing the lawn regularly, and removing debris where mosquitoes may hide or rest.
- **Install screens** – ensure windows, doors, and other openings in your homes have intact screens to prevent mosquitoes from entering.
- **Use mosquito repellent** – [apply an EPA-approved mosquito repellent](#) on exposed skin and clothing. Follow the instructions on the label for proper application.
- **Wear protective clothing** – reduce exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, socks, and closed-toe shoes. Remember that mosquitoes are most active during dawn and dusk.
- **Know before you go** – If you are traveling outside New Jersey to an area with mosquito-borne diseases, take steps to prevent the spread of disease. Read more at cdc.gov/travel
- **Know the symptoms** – Mild symptoms include fever, chills, headache, joint pain, body aches, or rashes. If you develop any symptoms of a mosquito-borne illness, visit your healthcare provider.

If you have mosquitoes outside your home, spraying insecticide may reduce the number of mosquitoes and your chances of being bitten by an infected mosquito. If you are interested in hiring a pest control professional to treat your home, the National Pest Management Association offers tips on finding a pest management professional, www.pestworld.org/pest-control-help/.

Follow the Middle-Brook Regional Health Commission on Social Media!



ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

5 Steps to a Beautiful and Eco-Friendly Yard

1. Shrink your lawn and add more native plants. Plant native trees, shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers, especially keystone species that support the most creatures. Spring is a great time for planting! Find the best native plants to help birds and pollinators where you live at nativeplantfinder.nwf.org. Google the brochure “Going Native: A Guide to Landscaping With Native Plants in Northern New Jersey” to find what will work best in your yard.

2. Replace invasive plants with natives. You may be surprised how many invasives are planted in residential landscapes—Barberry, Butterfly Bush, Burning Bush, English Ivy, Pachysandra, and Chinese Silver Grass are just a few. Plants like these are harmful because they escape into natural areas and outcompete natives. See NJ Invasive Species Strike Team’s “Do Not Plant” list, and the Native Plant Society of NJ’s Guide to Replacing Invasive Plants With Natives.

3. Keep fallen leaves on your property. They provide critical habitat for butterflies, bees, fireflies, and other beneficial insects, and give them a place to live over the winter. Birds find protein-rich food (insects, nuts, and seeds). Fallen leaves are the best mulch to protect the roots of your trees and plants, nourish your soil, and absorb rainfall.

4. Protect pets and pollinators: Don’t use pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides) or synthetic fertilizers. Yard chemicals destroy the microbial health of the soil and are harmful to insects and wildlife as well as pets and humans (especially children). Keep grass clippings on your lawn for natural fertilizer, and welcome violets (which are native, and New Jersey’s state flower!).



5. Water less. If you choose the right native plants for the natural soil moisture conditions in your yard, you won’t have to water these plants once they get established (typically a year after planting), except perhaps during a drought. A rain barrel is an easy way to capture rainwater for any supplementary watering needed.

****Where to Buy Native Plants:** The Great Swamp Watershed Association’s annual native plant sale offers an excellent selection and great prices. Order early, before plants sell out. Other favorite sources for mail order include Toadshade Wildflower Farm in Frenchtown, Wild Ridge Plants in Pohatcong Township, Pinelands Direct, The Pollen Nation, Izel Native Plants, and Bowman’s Hill Wildflower Preserve Nursery in New Hope, PA. Locally, The Farm at Green Village and Great Swamp

Greenhouses in Gillette carry some native plants.

Seeking River-Friendly Residents

The Environmental Commission (EC) is looking for River-Friendly residents. Are you managing your property in an eco-friendly manner to help preserve our streams and lakes? You may be eligible for a River-Friendly Resident Certification from the Watershed Institute and Raritan Headwaters. To find out if you qualify take the survey @ <https://www.njriverfriendly.org/resident>

Wildlife Enhancement Eagle Scout Project Completed

Watchung resident Joshua Cheng recently completed his Eagle Scout project, sponsored by the EC. Joshua built and installed a total of six Blue Bird/Tree Swallow boxes located at Mobus Park, Phillips Field, and Best Lake. We look forward to observing and enjoying the activity in the bird boxes for many years to come. Many thanks to Joshua for his hard work and dedication to enhancing wildlife habitat in the Borough. The EC is interested in working with Scout and community groups on environmental projects in the future. If you are interested in working with the EC on an environmental project, please email us at environmental@watchungnj.gov



Styrofoam Recycling

Reminder to residents that Watchung continues to offer convenient Styrofoam recycling at the Department of Public Works Garage, 880 Somerset St., next to the police station. The recycling bin is located behind the DPW building and is accessible Monday to Friday during DPW business hours. Only white, clean, breakable Styrofoam can be recycled with all tape, stickers, and writing removed.



THINK GREEN, Watchung, and have a great spring and summer!

Submitted by the Watchung Environmental Commission

Rachel Funcheon, Chair

Doug Speeney, Vice-Chair

RECREATION COMMISSION



COMMUNITY PICNIC – May 18th (Rain Date: May 19th) Noon – 3:00pm (Mobus Field)

MAYOR’S REGATTA – June 22nd (Rain Date: June 23rd) 9:30am – 11:00am (Best Lake)

ITALIAN FEAST – June 22nd (Rain Date: June 23rd) 2:00pm – 8:00pm

4TH OF JULY PATRIOT WALK – July 4th – 11:00am (Mobus Field & Watchung Lake Walking Path)

MOVIE IN THE PARK – September 13th (Phillip’s Field) 6:00pm – 9:00pm

FISHING DERBY – September 28th (Watchung Lake- Stirling Rd.) 9:00am – 12:00pm

HARVEST FESTIVAL – October 5th (Rain date: October 6th) 1:00pm – 4:00pm (Mobus Field)

PLEASE CHECK THE BOROUGH’S WEBSITE FOR EVENT INFORMATION: WWW.WATCHUNGNJ.GOV

Honor our Heroes!

Memorial Day Ceremony – May 27th (Mon. 9:30am @ The War Memorial)

9/11 Ceremony – September 11th (Mon. @ 5:30pm On the Village Green)

Veterans Day Ceremony – November 11th (Sat. 9:30am @ The War Memorial)



TRAFFIC AND BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

Welcome, Spring 2024!

The Traffic and Beautification Commission, along with the DPW happily decorated Watchung this Fall and Winter. Our Watchung Circle was brightly lit with two large snowmen welcoming everyone at the "Happy Holidays" sign in front of Borough Hall. The Fire Department, Texier House and the Art Center all added light and greenery to the holidays. Spratford Park and Somerset Street were brightly decorated and welcomed folks to Watchung.

To continue making our town bright during the winter darkness, candles will be lit in the windows of Texier House, Town Hall and the Arts Center. We plan to have a "Hill of Hearts" at Town Hall for Valentine's Day that means, "We Love You Watchung!" Plans are in the works for a "Field of Flags" to honor our Vets for Memorial Day.

Once again, the Scarecrow Stroll was well received with individuals, families and town groups joining the fun. People marveled at the creations made and took many pictures as they strolled along the walk of Scarecrows.

Operation Pride will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2024 with a rain date on Sunday, April 28. We meet behind the Texier House at 9:00 am. T-shirts, grippers, gloves, water, and treats will be distributed. We had an outstanding showing of townspeople, students, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and the Knights of Columbus. They removed debris along the roads, by the lakes, around our schools and by the Watchung Library. Join these wonderful volunteers who take Pride in their town!

May planting will fast approach and Traffic and Beautification has already planned on where and what flowers to plant to make Watchung beautiful. Everyone is welcome to assist in planting at the triangles, around the Tree of Lights, at Borough Hall, Spratford Park, DPW, the Bottom of Hillcrest Rd. Watchung Rock sign, and the Police Station. Weather permitting, we will plant the week after Mother's Day. Stay tuned!

Thank you all!

Phyllis Juetter, T & B Chair

COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) PROGRAM

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.

Free CERT training is offered to Somerset County residents at the Somerset County Training Academy, Hillsborough, NJ. For further information, please email Watchung CERT at: watchungcert@watchungnj.gov

NJ REGISTER READY—SPECIAL NEEDS REGISTRY

NJ Register Ready was created to help people with disabilities in times of emergency. NJ residents with special needs are encouraged to add their personal information to this special needs registry. The information provided will be shared with emergency response agencies so that responders will be better equipped to serve registrants in the event of an emergency or evacuation in their area. No one else will have access to the information.

To keep this registry current, registrants are required to update their registration information each year.

Need help registering? Dial 2-1-1 and a representative will assist you in the registration process.





YY Beauty Spa

28 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07069

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Teen Facial (30 min) - \$45

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Mon-Fri 9:30am-7:30pm

Sat 9:00am-6:00pm

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WATCHUNG LIBRARY

Home Borrowing

<https://sclsnj.org/homeborrowing/>

Can't get to the library? SCLSNJ Home Borrowing Library Services may be able to help.

Home Borrowing is for all customers facing a health, mobility, transportation, vision, disability, or other incapacity that prevents them from visiting the library, regardless of age.

Home Borrowing can be used as long as needed, on a short term, long term, or permanent basis. Rolling an ankle, welcoming a new baby, or no longer driving are all equally welcome.

Home Borrowing is more than Library by Mail! Our staff can help you (or your designated friends and family) select material, troubleshoot Libby and other apps, and connect you with other library resources.

If you are facing a barrier to getting to the Library lasting longer than 2 weeks, contact the Home Borrowing Office at homeborrowing@sclibnj.org, or call (908) 458-4938.

Mango Languages

The Mango Languages library subscription prepares learners for realistic conversations and communication in over 70 world languages and now offers American Sign Language. It is available on desktop and mobile devices with an SCLSNJ library card. For more information contact the library or visit [SCLSNJ.org](https://sclsnj.org)



Watchung Library Program Highlights:

Scan QR code to locate SCLSNJ program calendar and filter by location, age group or event type.

STEAM: Solar Eclipse Viewer

(entering grades K-5)

Tuesday, March 26

4:30pm - 5:15pm

College Essay Writing: Start with a Hook

(grades 9 -12)

Tuesday, April 02

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Passport Services

Wednesday, April 24

4:00-7:00 p.m.

Schedule at <https://sclsnj.org/passports/>

Create a Kokedama Ball

(Adults)

Presented by Taylor Brosseau

Thursday, May 02

6:30-7:30 p.m

STEAM: Magnets

(grades K-5)

Tuesday, May 21

4:30-5:15 p.m.

Stuffed Animal Sleepover

(grades K-5)

Friday, May 31

4:15-4:45 p.m.

Read to a Therapy Dog

(grades K-4)

Tuesday, April 09 and Tuesday,

May 14

4:30-5:30 p.m.

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WATCHUNG HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Hello Neighbors,

Greetings from the Watchung Historical Committee!

The Historical Committee invites all Watchung residents to visit the Watchung Texier House Museum at the center of the Watchung Circle. Join us every first and third Sundays of each month from 2pm to 4pm with additional openings for special holidays and events. Be sure to check the Borough website for announcements, availability, programming, and special guests!

We are always working on new additions and improvements to the Texier House Museum. We are currently planning a new display which would include a timeline of the different names of the land that is now known as Watchung today. We hope to parallel this timeline with major world events that took place at the same time. Stay tuned for more details! We also continue to add additional text to the photos we have throughout the museum so that visitors can further connect to the photos and displays on the walls.

The committee is always grateful for community donations. We would like to extend our appreciation to Jim and Andrea Stout for the donation of an Antique Fluting Iron, Denise Story for the donation of a Bobby Thompson commemorative plate, and the Acosta Family for the donation of a bench from the German Camp that was once located north of Ridge Road. We are constantly reminded that the Texier House Museum is a community museum which continues to benefit from the hard work of residents, volunteers, and historical committee members alike.

We continue to work hard building our historical website that will be an online repository for the digital items we have collected over the years including tours of the museum, video interviews, links to related articles, and photos. Please feel free to check out the website (which is a work in progress) at www.watchunghistory.org! We welcome donations of photos that we can add! We are also planning to host a community day where residents and volunteers alike can help us to scan and archive photos and artifacts, we have in support of building this website and the museum.

We want to remind everyone that in 2026, Watchung will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary! Our committee continues talks about this milestone and what events will be celebrated. Ideas for this celebration can be shared with the Historical Committee and Mayor as we move forward and draw nearer to this milestone in Watchung's history.

The Historical Committee of Watchung is grateful for public input, donations, and patronage. To learn more about how you can help the Watchung Texier House Museum, and to volunteer please email us at historic@watchungnj.gov.



The Red Barn, located behind the current Watchung Library is one of the last remaining prominent horse stables in town. While the structure itself is dated and not readily maintained, it was once home to a horse named Question Mark. Question Mark was owned by the Pratts, the same family that built and managed the Valley Shop which later became known as the Valley Furniture Shop.

Harlan Pratt began building a new home for his family in January of 1951, which would later become the future Watchung library. One of the signature features of the home included a fireplace mantel and adjacent paneling that predated the revolutionary war. Harlan purchased the mantel and paneling from a residence that was located in Heights Town, NJ. The construction of the home, now the library, was completed by Labor Day of 1951 and had the original address of 30 Valley Road.



The Watchung Sears store opened in November of 1965 and replaced a smaller hard-line Sears store at the corner of Front and Grove Street in Plainfield, NJ. The new store offered more than 5 times the selling area. It is estimated the new full-line Watchung Sears store welcomed 40 to 50 thousand shoppers for its Saturday grand opening, an unusual day for a store to open to the public.

Best Lake was originally known as Wilson's Pond and it was owned and constructed by John Wilson. John Wilson eventually sold the lake to the Nischwitz Family who kept the name Wilson's Pond. It wasn't until the property and lake were sold to Alfred "Fred" Best that it became known as Best Lake. While the family owned the property, the town engineer was doing a survey of the surrounding area and asked Mr. Best what the official name of the lake was on his property. So the story goes, Fred Best could not recall the name "Wilson's Pond" at the time but proceeded to tell the engineer his first and last name. The engineer wrote down "Best Lake" and this is the name the lake has been called ever since.



For nearly 45 years Troop 32 supported itself by conducting 4 paper drives a year, typically one each season, collecting and recycling newspapers and magazines from local residents. The paper drives first began in 1942 after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor to support the war effort. The papers were either picked up from residents' homes by scouts and their fathers or dropped off to trucks provided by different vendors. Trucks were located behind Valley View School and the abandoned Watchung swim club parking lot, now the Watchung Village Green.

Camp Endeavor was first founded in 1911 by the Union County Fresh Air Committee. It was a summer camp for children who would spend 10 days for each encampment. There were four, ten-day encampments between the months of July and August. Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Lounsbury served as directors of the camp for 54 years until their retirement in December of 1964. The camp itself was located in the vicinity of Sequoia Drive and Johnston Drive.



FROM THE DESK OF THE BOROUGH CLERK

Tuesday, June 4 is Primary Election Day. Polls open 6am to 8pm
May 29 – June 2 Early Voting Period



ON PRIMARY OR GENERAL ELECTION DAYS YOU CAN VOTE
AT YOUR DESIGNATED LOCATION



POLLING LOCATIONS

- **Districts 1 and 4:** Fireman's Exempt Hall, 31 Mountain Boulevard
- **District 3:** Bayberry School, 113 Bayberry Lane
- **District 2 and 5:** Wilson Memorial Union Church, 7 Valley Road

PLEASE CHECK BOROUGH'S WEBSITE FOR ELECTION INFORMATION: www.watchungnj.gov

Attention Cat Owners!

Don't forget to renew your CAT LICENSE – it's The LAW!



Deadline to register is
May 31, 2024!

Scan here to register
your cat online



Or download/print the application,
bring or mail with payment to:
Borough of Watchung Clerks Office
Cat Licensing
15 Mountain Boulevard
Watchung, NJ 07069

**STAY UP-TO-DATE ON WHAT'S
HAPPENING IN THE BOROUGH!**

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.WATCHUNG.NJ.GOV

Discover a wealth of information on:

- Mayor and Council
- Elections
- Departments, Boards and Commissions
- News and Announcements
- Upcoming Events
- Alerts Regarding Street Closures, Outages etc.
- Public Health Notices
- Online Payments - Taxes and Sewer Bills
- Online Pet Registration
- Forms and Applications
- Mayor Wellness Campaign
Health Tips *and much more!*

WEBSITE CONTENT IS PERIODICALLY
UPDATED SO MAKE SURE TO
CHECK IT OUT!



SCAN ME



Rental Property Update

LANDLORDS in the Borough of Watchung
must register their rental property.

All registrations are due by the end of September of each year.

Fees

- \$150 Annual registration and inspection fee
- \$50 Per unit, change in tenant/occupancy
- \$50 Per unit, re-inspection fee
- \$50 Failure to be present and/or provide access at requested inspection time (15 min grace period)
- \$50 Petitioned inspection fee (when filed by occupant)

For complete details and to download the **PROPERTY REGISTRATION FORM**,
please visit: www.watchungnj.gov and go to the **CLERK** page.



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Spring/Summer 2024



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