

# CROSS ROADS

NEWS FROM THE VALLEY OF "THE PONDS"

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THE BOROUGH OF OAKLAND



## FALL MAYOR'S MESSAGE

As I write this message, I reflect upon the first two years of my administration. At the half-way point of my first term. I pause and ask you, the resident, "How am I doing?"

If you see me throughout town, stop and talk with me. Call me on the telephone. If I am unable to talk with you, leave a message and I will return your call. Email your concerns to me at [mayorschwager@oakland-nj.org](mailto:mayorschwager@oakland-nj.org) I will respond.

Visit me at Borough Hall during my regular open office hours before council meetings on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of each month. I arrive at Borough Hall by 5:30 p.m. and stay there until 7:15 when it is time to go to the council meeting.

Come to our council meetings and express your opinions. I may not have the answers when you ask, but I will certainly find the answer and get back to you in a reasonable time.

In addition to all that I have strived to accomplish, I have made a concerted effort to open our local government. I am approachable and interested in your concerns.

So you are probably wondering what to expect during the second half of my first term. Sewers? Completed Library Construction? Affordable Senior Housing? Historic Van Allen House we can be proud of?

Outstanding passive recreation park with a great lawn for concerts? Beautification of the Ramapo River? Stayed tuned!

NJ Monthly magazine just named Oakland as the #1 town in New Jersey to raise a young family. The magazine only confirmed what we already know-----Oakland is a great town.



OAKLAND MAYOR  
LINDA H. SCHWAGER

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Mayor's Message
- Oakland Police Department
- Oakland Public Library
- Oakland Recreation
- Oakland Building Department
- **Spotlight**—RBARI

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## BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTION



The General Election will be held on Tuesday November 5, 2013. Polls will be open from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. The last day to register to vote for the General Election will be Tuesday, October 15th, 2013.

The Borough Clerk's office will be open that day until 9:00 pm for voter registration. If you cannot vote in person, you can vote by mail. Applications are available in the Borough Clerk's office. The applications must be filed with the Bergen County Clerk's office no later than Tuesday, October 29th in order to have time to get the ballot.

## THE OAKLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Oakland Police Department wants to remind drivers that it is very important to obey the posted speed limit and pay close attention to their surroundings at all times.

Within a school zone, it is especially important to be alert, drive carefully, and follow the directions of the crossing guards.



When approaching an intersection where a crossing guard is in the crosswalk with a Stop Sign raised, motorists may not cross or turn into that crosswalk until the crossing guard has

completely left the crosswalk.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR PARENTS, MOTORISTS, AND CHILDREN

- You should expect delays near schools. Know your route, start early, and drive the posted speed limit.
- Motorists not involved in dropping off or picking up students should consider adjusting their route or schedule in order to avoid arrival and dismissal traffic in front of schools.
- Park only in lawful areas. Parking within 25 feet of a crosswalk is against the law and can obstruct visibility for both pedestrians and motorists.
- Unload school children onto the sidewalk or right side of the vehicle. Unloading school children into a traffic lane

could put a child in harms way.

- Instruct children to remain alert and look left, right, and then left again before crossing the street. All pedestrians should not use cell phones to talk or text, nor wear headphones when crossing.

## SWIFT 911

The Borough of Oakland has recently acquired an emergency notification system that will contact residents and businesses with matters of importance.

Although most phone numbers are currently in the system, due to communication technology some phone numbers are not.



To add or modify your contact information in this system, please go to the Borough of Oakland website at [www.oakland-nj.org](http://www.oakland-nj.org) and click on the SWIFT 911 link.

Please provide your contact information for the manner in which you request to be contacted; this could be via phone, e-mail or text message, and then click the submit button.

You may add, modify or remove your information from this system at any time.



## OAKLAND PUBLIC EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Public Events Committee has some exciting activities and events planned for the fall and winter seasons. Mark your calendars and enjoy the festivities this committee has in store for you.

**Annual HALLOWEEN Parade**—Saturday, October 26th Gathering at 9:30 AM in front of Valley Middle School and begin parading at 10:00 AM. All children and their parents are welcome to participate. We will end this traditional celebration with some craft activities and refreshments for the children. Costumes are preferred. You won't want to miss this fun event where some very special guests will be on hand.

**Annual Christmas Tree and Menorah Lighting Ceremony**—This holiday season, Sunday, December 1st, 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM, the Public Events Committee is expanding the traditional Christmas tree and Menorah lighting to include an indoor holiday show and refreshments. Stay tuned for details as they are currently busy making preparations.



Visit our Facebook page for up to the minute information on these and all of our special public events.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Oakland-Public-Events-Committee/422216124499094>

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN RECREATION?

The Recreation Commission has been teaming up with other groups in Oakland to enhance and upgrade the recreation complex and communications with residents.

Most recently in a joint effort with the Shade Tree Commission, four more shade trees were planted at the complex. These trees were planted alongside the Danny Hughes playground. In no time these trees will offer nice shade to children and parents alike as they enjoy their afternoons in the park. This makes 37 trees the Shade Tree and Recreation Commissions have planted in the last two years on the recreation complex grounds.

The Oakland Father's Club and Recreation Commission are working together to bring a new scoreboard to the Joey Gaul Field. This field is a favorite amongst softball players as the first base side enjoys a wall of trees which offers shade the spectators. The two groups have been working hard raising funds, collecting donations and picking just the right scoreboard type that will be a fitting tribute to the field's namesake.

Finally the Sports Association of Oakland is helping the Recreation Commission stream line their communications with the public. Information about sign-ups, field closings and other recreation infor-

mation can now be on your computer or cell phone in real-time. All you have to do is "Like" the Sports Association of Oakland on Facebook and you can find out all the information without having to "wait for the flyer to come home" or hear about it word of mouth. You can be connected instantly through the SAO's Facebook page and never miss a thing.



As always keep an eye on the recreation website at [www.OaklandRec.org](http://www.OaklandRec.org).







## THE COUNTDOWN TO OAKLAND'S NEW 40 ACRE PARK



***"we are getting close to  
opening the park!"***

It's been 26 years in the making and 21 months in the planning but we are getting close to opening the park up to the public. Thanks to work by the Boy Scouts walking trails, a river walk and a large parking area appears to be close at hand. This fall the scouts have been working closely with the park committee designing trails that are environmentally sensitive, people safe and open to the public. Everyone's fingers are crossed that this spring a borough wide rebirth will exist just off Doty Road.

If you haven't heard already, the name of the park is up for a vote. With so many thoughts and so many choices we figured "let the people decide". The full election will take place at the end of the year and will encompass online as well as offline voting. All the information about the election as well as everything else park related can be found at

## SPOTLIGHT OF THE MONTH ~ RBARI RAMAPO-BERGEN ANIMAL REFUGE, INC. THE JOYS AND HEARTBREAK OF ANIMAL RESCUE

Working in animal rescue can be extremely rewarding. At times, however, it can be exhausting and heartbreaking. The Ramapo-Bergen Animal Refuge (RBARI) is Bergen County's leading no-kill animal shelter, where its employees and volunteers work tirelessly to provide love and affection to every animal that passes through its doors. The facility houses cats and dogs and although space is limited, whenever a spot does open up, its dedicated employees work diligently to find another animal to fill that spot, so we are always at capacity. The staff is constantly fielding calls from other rescues and shelters, with pleas to take one of their cats or dogs. Some of our dedicated staff also drive to local pounds to pull animals. This shows their extreme level of commitment to our mission of providing sanctuary while finding permanent, loving homes for the animals.



RBARI's Canine Outreach Coordinator Stephanie recently pulled a dog from a local pound in horrible condition. Cupid was emaciated and covered in thick mats down to his skin. His mats were encased with feces and his nails were completely curled. One of his eyes was almost sealed shut from the matting and the other was irritated from an untreated condition that left him blind. This kind of abuse and neglect probably took months or maybe even years. Despite his tremendous pain, Cupid was extremely sweet. He allowed Stephanie to pick him up out of the cage and was so good for his grooming, as if he knew that our groomer, Linda was trying to help him. His microchip traced to a shelter in NC. The staff learned that he was possibly 15 years old and had been adopted to someone in NJ, but that person had since moved. As soon as he was bathed and shaved down, he came to life. His exam was surprisingly good considering his age. We were optimistic he would be able to get adopted and enjoy some quality time to make up for his suffering. Sadly, less than a week after he came to us, he began having seizures. He was rushed to the vet but it was clear nothing could be done to save him. The vet was unsure exactly what caused it. However, Cupid had more love and attention in his week at RBARI than he probably had in a long time. His story had a sad ending, but we still consider it a success that this wonderful sweet dog knew love even if only for a short time.

His story emphasizes the importance of our stringent adoption screening process. Although there are no guarantees, we work diligently to ensure that the animals we adopt out will not end up like Cupid. His situation was extreme, but it is unfortunately the reality when working in animal rescue. There are hundreds of wonderful and heartwarming stories that were made at RBARI, but until there are no cruel or heartbreaking ones, our mission must continue.

***"The greatness of a nation and its moral  
progress can be judged by the way its ani-  
mals are treated." –Mahatma Gandhi***

## OAKLAND STRIKERS



If you drive through the Borough on a fall or spring weekend, you may notice local children of all ages playing soccer at either the Recreation Fields, Wells Field, or at one of the elementary schools. What you may not know though, is that Oakland is also home to the Oakland Strikers, a local non-profit adult soccer club. The Club was founded over twenty-five years ago, and has traditionally fielded adult men's teams, both in the competitive open age, and the over-30 divisions of the North Jersey Soccer League, and the over-40 division of the USLNL.

In 2009, however, Mike Miner and Kathy O'Neil, saw a need to promote soccer in a friendly setting and allow many local adults to play as well. On the initiative of Mike and Kathy, the Club established an adult, co-ed recreation league which began in the summer of 2009. What started out as a summer league has now blossomed into a summer, fall, and winter league that runs from June - April. Summer league games are held at 6:30pm at Wells field Mon-Weds nights. Fall league games are held at 9pm at the Oakland Main Rec field on Mon and Tues. Indoor league starts early Dec, and will be on Weds nights at Ultimate Sports from 8-11pm. The co-ed league is open to players of all skill levels that live or work in Oakland, and are over the age of 19. Each season we register approximately 90 players and divide up into 6 teams. Over the last few years, we've registered over 200 players.

The interest generated by the co-ed league has spread to the competitive teams, and the Club has started discussions about forming a women's team and over-50 men's team. For more information about the co-ed league, or the competitive teams, the Club can be found online at [www.oaklandstrikers.com](http://www.oaklandstrikers.com). Please also take a minute and create a profile on our site, and you will be alerted when the next online registration opens up.

## OAKLAND FINANCE DEPARTMENT

This fall Oakland residents will be able to view their tax bills as well as their water and sewer bills on-line from the Borough website.

With one click from a link on the Borough website residents are now able to view their current tax bills as well as their bills and payments for the prior three years. Those residents with water or sewer accounts will also be able to view a three-year history of their bills and payments.

The Oakland Finance Department is currently working with our software vendor and bank to also allow credit card or direct withdrawal payments for tax and utility bills. Another link to a separate website will process your payment from your credit or debit card for a small fee. This convenience fee is charged by the vendor and not the Borough and would be included with your tax or utility payment.

Another option to pay your tax and utility bills automatically will be through a direct withdrawal from your checking account – sometimes called “e-check.” This popular feature would be performed automatically by the Borough at no cost to you.

These two features are still undergoing exhaustive quality assurance testing. This is being done to assure Oakland residents that their transactions will be conducted in an absolutely safe and secure environment. The on-line payment process will not be rolled out until Borough officials are completely satisfied with the integrity of the system. Much more information on this exciting program will be available at the conclusion of our testing and pilot sessions.

The convenience of being able to view your tax and water / sewer billing history will be available by the end of the month. Residents can rest assured that tax and utility bills will continue to be mailed even after the on-line payment feature is rolled out. Call us for more information or with any questions you have.



**"Oakland residents can now view their tax bills as well as their water and sewer bills on-line." James A. Mangin , CFO**

## CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE

In recent months the Borough has undertaken several capital improvement projects to maintain and improve our infrastructure. Under this year's Road Improvement Program we milled and resurfaced more than a mile of roadway. The roads that were completed are the following:

River Road  
Hillside Avenue  
Lakeshore Drive  
(Navajo Way to Lenape Lane)  
Judith Lane  
Wenonah Avenue  
Hobart Place  
Muller Road



The improvements made to River Road and Hillside Avenue are being paid for with funding through the Community Development Block Grant program.

Over the summer we also constructed 2,700 linear feet of new curbs and sidewalks to enhance pedestrian safety in the vicinity of our schools. The new sidewalks were installed on Dogwood Drive between Hickory Drive and Page Drive and on Monhe-

gan Avenue between Oneida Avenue and Chicasaw Drive. Lastly, the Borough also performed work on its water main system. Five hundred linear feet of water main was replaced on Lehigh Way and more than 1,000 linear feet was installed on West Oakland Ave. to improve the reliability of our system.

Other Capital Improvement Projects due for completion before the end of the year include:

Department of Public Works Building Renovation  
Water Distribution System Telemetry upgrade  
Walnut Street Water Booster Pump Station Rehabilitation  
Recreation Complex Backstop Replacements (50% of the cost being covered by a Bergen County Park Improvement Grant)  
Completion of the Stewart's Woods Park Development Project (50% of the cost being covered by a Bergen County Park Improvement Grant)  
Fire Co. #3 Roof Replacement



## FROM THE BOARD OF HEALTH...

**What should you do to prepare yourself for the flu season?** "CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. Getting the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available each year is always a good idea, and the protection you get from vaccination will last throughout the flu season.

In addition, you can take everyday preventive steps like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. If you are sick with flu, stay home from work or school to prevent spreading influenza to others."

For further information about the flu, go to the CDC's website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2013-2014.htm>

**Protect your cats and dogs from rabies at the Oakland Free Rabies Clinic** being held Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, from 1 PM to 3 PM. Cats and dogs that have not been previously vaccinated and those WITHOUT written proof of prior vaccination will receive a vaccination good for one year. Cats and dogs WITH written proof of prior vaccination will receive a vaccination good for three years. Dogs must be on a leash and cats must be in a carrier.



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George Washington and his officers stayed at the Van Allen House on July 14, 1777, on their way north to join more of their forces near West Point, when the troops and supply wagons got bogged down on the muddy trail that was the Ramapo Valley Road of those days. The troops camped down along the Valley Road. Washington wrote two letters addressed from the Van Allen House, of which we have copies at the House. History has recorded that General Washington led his troops up and down the 'Valley Road' on other occasions also, and stayed at other Old Dutch Houses in Mahwah, Wayne and Ho-Ho-Kus as well as Morristown. In honor of General Washington's visit in Oakland (The Ponds), we make a point of celebrating his birthday here each year.

EXCERPT COURTESY OF THE OAKLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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