



# friendsnews

Spring/Summer 2022



## TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL SENIORS

You did it! Survived the COVID pandemic and are now ready to move forward with optimistic enthusiasm... as are all the Board members of The Friends of the Westport Center for Senior Activities. Our

Board has added six new members who are profiled in the Newsletter, which provided me with the theme for my summer 2022 message to all of you: a fresh, new start for the Center, the Friends Board, and all our wonderful seniors to whom we are committed to provide new and uplifting entertainment for months and years to come beginning **RIGHT NOW!**

We kick off our all new once-a-month Thursday "Mocktail Parties" with a rousing Belmont Stakes racing party on June 9. Our Belmont Stakes event is resplendent with flowers, official Belmont mocktails, a ladies-in-big-hats contest and a raffle with prizes for the winners. This get-together will be the start of a new tradition of monthly afternoon socials with entertainment throughout the year. To celebrate our nation's birthday we will be entertained by Westport's legendary Community Band with a rousing patriotic concert on Sunday afternoon June 26. And you can

look forward to the return of our Sunday Music Series in December with an exciting holiday performance by one of your favorite groups from the past.

I want to thank and congratulate all of you for your patience, resilience and adherence to commonsense safety protocols over the past 24 months - you were magnificent! Now it's time to carefully move out from under the cloud of COVID and celebrate with all of us a joyous return to a better kind of normalcy. Your support has been inspirational over the past many months and the Friends are working to repay you all. Have a healthy and joyful summer.

Jack Klinge  
*Friends President*

Now just sit back and visualize the triumphant magic of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy"



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# Letter from Sue

Dear Friends and WCSA Participants:

I'm pleased to report that the Westport Center for Senior Activities (WCSA) has been bustling the past couple of months and it's beginning to feel like the good old days. However, we are still being very careful with COVID and will continue to follow any of the Westport First Selectwoman's and the Town's COVID-19 Emergency Management Team's policies as we continue to navigate through this. Currently, masks are optional at the WCSA. Your personal choice will be respected. Class sizes will still be limited, and social distancing will be encouraged throughout the building. Your health and safety are of utmost importance to us.

I'm excited to report that recently, the Westport Planning and Zoning Commission modified a zoning regulation that will now permit the Parks and Recreation Department as well as the WCSA to organize and schedule activities and programs in the park. Program Manager, Holly Betts states: "This will be a great addition for our programs, and I look forward to scheduling art classes, exercise programs, bird watching, and botany classes just to name a few." We will also continue to utilize our beautiful patio with canopy (thank you, Friends!) as we await the arrival of beautiful, warm, sunny days!

Over the past few months, the Friends have been working hard on planning and scheduling many fun activities and social events for the upcoming months. Please look at the list of upcoming events inside and mark your calendars. Please remember to call and register for events you wish to attend.

Thank you everyone for your kindness, generosity, and support throughout the pandemic. Your resilience and positive attitude will never be forgotten. As we continue to get back to a sense of normalcy, let us not forget those less fortunate, and please, let us pray for peace.

With regards,

*Sue*

Sue Pfister, MSW  
Director, WCSA



## WCSA INSTRUCTORS – SHELLY MOLL AND ALTHEA ERIKSON

By Molly Alger



*The WCSA is blessed with many capable, competent and dedicated instructors for the many classes offered each week at the Center. Here is some interesting information about two of our instructors.*

### SHELLY MOLL FITNESS INSTRUCTOR

Shelly has been an instructor at the WCSA since December of 2018. She currently teaches thirteen fitness classes every week. Shelly was previously the Health and Wellness Director of the Westport/Weston Y where she taught for 27 years. Shelly wanted to be a physical education teacher when she was growing up. Her father opened a fitness club and Shelly worked for him. Then she moved to Connecticut 38 years ago.

Shelly's goals are to make her classes welcoming, make people comfortable and create community. Her aim is to give everyone a total body workout. In teaching seniors, Shelly promises that everyone will benefit from her classes. She has had the experience of seniors initially telling her "what hurt and what they couldn't do." After a few classes, those same seniors waited in line to tell her "what didn't hurt and what they could now do!" One senior gentleman was so appreciative that he kissed her hand after class one day.

### ALTHEA ERIKSON ART INSTRUCTOR

Althea began teaching at the Center in September of 2021. She teaches Abstract Art. Althea has also been teaching for 24 years at Norwalk Community College and in Darien, Wilton and New Canaan. Althea is a graduate of Parsons and Yale and was an architectural designer. When she retired, she started teaching art.

Althea's goal in her classes is for her students to be happy and express creativity for themselves through their original art – and maybe learn something along the way. In teaching seniors, Althea finds many students who say they always wanted to be an artist but were forced into other endeavors in order to make a living. Now some students sell their work, experience personal gratification and declare, "This was always my passion and love."

Althea grew up in Summit, New Jersey. She is an accomplished portrait artist and has done commissioned portraits of many famous people including Dave Brubeck, Diana Ross and Quincy Jones.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

The Friends of the Westport Center for Senior Activities announces their summer quarter events calendar! The primary mission of Friends is to provide programming that does not fit into the operations budget of the WCSA. Below you will find lectures, socials, and Sunday concerts and plays. Space is limited so sign up early!



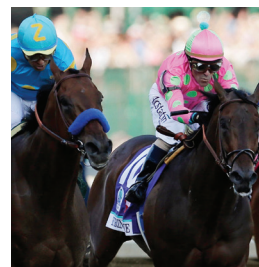
## SUNDAY, JUNE 5 Sunday Music | Joe Utterback

Joe Utterback has been a compelling artist on the American jazz scene for more than fifty years. Joe has performed in Europe and the United States. He has had gigs in the jazz centers of Kansas City, St. Louis, San Francisco, and currently New York City. Light snacks and beverages will be provided. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Time: Doors open at 12:45 PM. Performance is from 1:30 to 2:30 PM.

## THURSDAY, JUNE 9

### Thursday Social | Get Ready for the Belmont Stakes Mocktail Party!

The Friends and the WCSA are sponsoring a pre-race party for the 154th running of the final leg of the triple crown race at Belmont. Dress up and enjoy hors d'oeuvres and live music from Dave Giardina. There will be a hat contest and other fun activities. Dave Giardina is a versatile guitarist, string instrumentalist, and educator. He is an award recipient member of the CT Commission on Culture and Tourism. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Time: 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Cost: \$6.00



## FRIDAY, JUNE 17 Friday with Friends | BitCoin

What is Bitcoin? How do these new cryptocurrencies function? How do you access these new markets? Join Lee Ratner, five-year industry insider, BitCoin trader, and investor, for an educational discussion about these new and often confusing forms of electronic currencies and assets. Lee Ratner has 24+ years of experience as a foreign exchange trader for UBS and Cantor Fitzgerald. Five years ago, he jumped into BitCoin and has been deeply involved in various crypto projects and companies, including trading platform development, sales, and trading. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Time: 1:30 to 2:30 PM.

## SUNDAY, JUNE 26

### Sunday Music | Westport Community Band

The Friends are sponsoring a performance by the Westport Community Band. The band was founded in 1977 and is composed of adult musicians from Fairfield and Westchester Counties. They represent a wide variety of professional backgrounds and bring diverse musical experiences to the group. Beverages and light snacks will be provided. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Time: Doors open at 12:45 pm. The performance begins at 1:30 pm.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

**THURSDAY, JULY 14**

Thursday Social

**Bastille Day BBQ & Entertainment by Heather Hardy**

The Friends and the WCSA are co-sponsoring a summer BBQ with entertainment provided by returning favorite Heather Hardy. Heather is known for her amazing skills on the violin and is a native of Westport who lived in Arizona, where she was inducted into the Arizona Blues Hall of Fame. Her music is influenced by Claude Williams, Gatemouth Brown, Papa John Creach, and Jimi Hendrix. Menu: hamburgers & hotdogs, pomme frites & aioli sauce, coleslaw, watermelon, sable cookie. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Time: 5:30 to 7:00 PM. Cost: \$8.00



**THURSDAY, AUGUST 11**

Thursday Social

**Dinner & Merwin Mountain Band**

Join your fellow seniors for a Mediterranean-themed dinner and the Merwin Mountain Band. Four neighbors plus one came together because they were drawn to the music they all grew up with: Motown, country, rock 'n roll, pop standards, and jazz. Dinner includes grilled chicken with tzatziki sauce, pita bread, rice, citrus slaw, and lemon cake for dessert. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Time: 5:00 to 7:00 PM. Cost: \$8.00



**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18**

Play with Your Food

JIB Productions presents one-act plays followed by a talkback with the professional cast of actors and the director. JIB Productions, Inc. is a premier not-for-profit producer of professional performing and visual arts programs in and around Fairfield County, CT. Pre-registration is required online at [MyActiveCenter.com](http://MyActiveCenter.com) or by calling the WCSA at 203-341-5099. Doors open at 12:45 pm. The performance begins at 1:30 pm. Cost: \$25.00 per ticket. (Includes box lunch)

# Get to know

and welcome the two new custodians at the WCSA

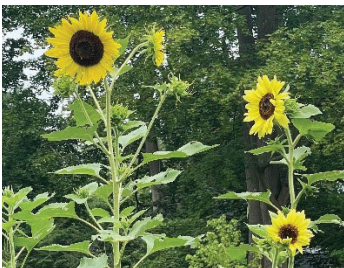


Ben Gorenstein, a Fairfield native joined the staff in September, 2021. Ben works daily from 8:00 am – noon and in the afternoons attends college, studying to become a nurse.

General custodial duties such as setting up and taking down of equipment, vacuuming and cleaning tables are Ben's responsibilities but he most enjoys feeling helpful to and building relationships with seniors. Ben reports that the hardest part of his job has been when the WCSA was closed during the COVID-19 flare this winter. He is very happy to see folks back in house! Outside of work and school, Ben enjoys music, playing the guitar, reading and rock climbing.

Bobby Novack, a South Norwalk resident, joined the staff in December, 2021 and works daily from noon – 4:00 pm. Bobby worked many years for Diageo before they relocated to Manhattan. Bobby keeps the gym and kitchen spotless and thoroughly sanitizes all the doorknobs in an effort to keep us all safe and healthy. Bobby is very happy to be working at the WCSA and enjoys interacting with seniors. Outside of work, Bobby enjoys walking, especially at the beach in warmer weather.

Please make sure to say hi to Ben and Bobbie, who together, work hard to keep our facility clean and safe and are always willing to lend a helping hand!



## Did You Know?



The WCSA has an organic garden and is looking for anyone with a green thumb to help open it up for the upcoming season.

If interested, contact Assistant Program Coordinator, Jason Wilson at 203.341.1066.

You'll reap the rewards!

# Meet our

## New Board Members



### Frances Thomas

Someone recently asked me why I choose to join the Friends of the Senior Center Board and the Events Committee. I thought about it for a while and then I realized that of all the Boards I have served on, most of my duties have been as a Program Chair. It is very much a happy position making people interested, happy and entertained. I am looking forward to my tenure on the Board.

### Joseph Nixon

Grew up on a small coal mining town in Pennsylvania. Graduated from college in 1960 and joined an army reserve unit and served six months active duty. Moved to Westport in 1961. I volunteer with the Boy Scouts, Little League and served on the United Way Board for several years. I'm active with my church, the Westport Rotary and the WCSA!



### Marsha Darmory

Following a twenty-year career in social services, I'm happy to join the board of the Friends. For half of my 32 years as a resident of Westport, I have enjoyed taking courses and attending lectures at the WCSA. Now I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with and meet so many caring, interesting and active members of our wonderful community.

### Sara Valentine

I grew up in Montreal and moved to NYC at the age of 21. I graduated from Sacred Heart University and have an MSW from Fordham University. Having recently retired, I'm enjoying spending time with my children and volunteering at the WCSA. I'm so happy to be a part of this incredible organization.



### Diane Bosch

Following my retirement as a school nurse I took yoga classes at the WCSA. I believe that my career in a helping/caring profession helped me to develop skills that overlap with the mission of the Friends. The WCSA helps me to stay energized, active and focused. My husband and I enjoy volunteering with the home delivered meal program as well as spending time with our children and grandchildren.

### Kristina Stephano

I grew up in a Greek boarding school and then went on to pursue social work and further studies in psychoanalysis. I love the outdoors with horses being the love of my life. Drawing on my knowledge acquired during my professional career, I believe I can be an asset and hope that I bring people together, nurture ideas and inspirations to make the WCSA the best it can be!



# Sunshine Committee News



As part of the many efforts put forth by the Board of the Friends, the Sunshine Committee works closely with the staff to provide cheer and happiness to the Westport senior community.

When active and contributing attendees, as well as community friends of the WCSA, experience personal loss, illness or noteworthy events, the Sunshine Committee sends them appropriate communications.

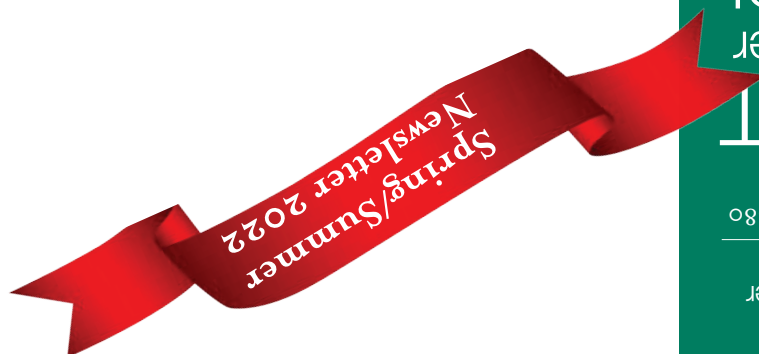
In addition, during the COVID-19 closure, the committee included personal Valentine greetings with every home-delivered lunch on Valentine's Day. These were received with such enthusiasm that the committee committed to doing the same for upcoming holidays.

As a permanent committee of the board, it will continue its work throughout the year. The members Judy Hardy, Kristina Stephano, and Sara Valentine may be contacted at: [seniorcenter@westportct.gov](mailto:seniorcenter@westportct.gov) any time for information or requests.



**SUPPORT**  
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