



Secaucus Monthly

Feb

2019

A look at the Community, including upcoming events, important notices, meetings, and more.



COUNCIL MEMBERS, FIRE CHIEFS AND PROBATIONARY POLICE OFFICERS SWORN IN

The Council Chamber in Town Hall was packed at the Town Council meeting on January 7th. Many residents and family members were present to support those being sworn in or taking the oath of office.

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FEBRUARY HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Municipal offices will be closed:

Tuesday February 12
Monday February 18

Newsletter Submissions

Do you have any photos taken in our
Town to share?

Send articles and photos to Pia
Valentin: pvalentin@secaucus.net
for consideration.

The Mayor's Corner



If you haven't visited the Town Museum yet, I invite you drop in soon. It's a fascinating place with information, displays and artifacts that are waiting to be explored. I have met several residents who are surprised to learn that Secaucus was known for more than pig farms. Orchids and celery were also an important part of the Town's produce. Among the many things on display are articles from the 1960s on Jean Caliguire, an artist who worked on Felix the Cat animations. And a display with pictures of military servicemen after whom several streets, including Blondel Drive, Gillis Place, Lanza Lane and Reidel Court are named.

The Museum also has all back issues of Secaucus Home News, the local newspaper that covered everything Secaucus. I know many residents go to the Museum to look up the newspaper from the time they

were growing up in town—it's quite a joy travelling down memory lane with friends! My favorite part of the Museum is the section dedicated to Mayor Paul Amico, including a desk, voter lists and other items from his office.

I thank the amazing team of John Bueckner, Tommy Schwarz, Scott Schaffer, Anna Schwarz, George Broemmer and Charlene Hallman, who dedicate their time to acquire, store, organize, prepare and display items at the Museum. You must see it to believe all the history on display. The Museum is located at 150 Plaza Center. For hours and more information, visit secaucusnj.gov/residents/townmuseum.

- Mayor Mike Gonnelli

Collection of Unused Medicine: New Record Set

When the Medicine Disposal Box was emptied for the final time in 2018, the last bag weighed, and the total tallied, a new town record had been set. 703 lbs. of expired or unused medication had been collected for proper disposal, nearly five times the amount of the previous year.

"Bringing medications to the Drop Box is so important. It keeps them from being used improperly, stolen or sold, and it keeps the water supply from being contaminated," said Dave Bratton, Secaucus Coalition Coordinator. "Many thanks to the residents of Secaucus and the Secaucus Police Department for making this such a success."

The Secaucus Coalition has worked with local pharmacies and even produced a 30-second commercial that aired in the local movie theaters, as well as online, to raise awareness. Since 2015, Secaucus residents have delivered more than half a ton of expired or unused medication for proper disposal.

For more information about the Secaucus Coalition, or the prescription drug Drop Box, visit www.secaucuscoalition.org.

Family Fitness Day

Mark your calendars! The annual Family Fitness Fun Day will take place on Sunday, February 10th at the Secaucus Recreation Center on Koelle Blvd. The event begins at 1:00 p.m. and includes guided fitness activities to keep both adults and children active in the winter months, healthy recipes for dishes that take 15 minutes or less, DIY personal and home cleaning products, giveaways from local fitness establishments and more! Please join us for the fun-filled event.

Reorganization Meeting



After Mayor Mike Gonnelli gave a welcome address, First Ward Councilman John Gerbasio, Second Ward Councilman James Clancy and Third Ward Councilwoman Orietta Tringali were sworn in. This was followed by an oath of office administered to Fire Chief Carl Leppin, Deputy Fire Chief Joseph Schoendorf, and Battalion Chief Fred Schneider. Lastly, three new probationary Police Officers, Philip Caruso, Justin Pardo and Angelo Aligo were sworn in and are heading to the police academy. With these new officers, the Police Department is at the highest levels ever.

Senior Spotlight: Bingo Callers Wally, Joe and Charlie

Bingo balls are loaded, the boards are all lined up, and seniors are seated. The anticipation in the room rises. Everyone waits for the person who runs the show: The Bingo Caller. There are three Bingo sessions scheduled at the Senior Center in Town with a different caller for each session. They have their own style, but what connects them all is the reason why they want to call Bingo every week.

Walter Lebenz is the Monday afternoon Bingo caller. "Why do you want to write about me?" he says with a laugh. Wally retired after 50 years in the steam shipping industry. "The ladies have something fun to do for a couple of hours and I really like being a part of it." Wally arrives well before the game starts and loves talking to everyone gathered there.

Joseph Mitchell calls Bingo on Friday afternoons. He says he experienced a culture shock when he moved from Houston to the Northeast 10 years ago, "however, Secaucus is nice. It's clean, safe and they really take care of seniors." Joey loves to volunteer and stay involved in the community, which is how he got involved with Senior Bingo. "I really enjoy doing it because it makes people smile and it matters a lot to them."

The monthly Evening Bingo is called by a face familiar in town--Charlie Makarski. This bingo caller was the 2009 Senior Citizen of the Year, Hudson County Citizen of the Year and former President of the Secaucus Little League. He was also involved in organizing the vacation trips for the Golden Age Club and remains active through the town's bowling and bocce leagues. Despite all of his activities, Charlie loves calling Bingo at the Senior Center. "I love doing it, I love being around people and staying active. If I make a mistake, I just laugh it away," he smiles.

For Wally, Joe and Charlie, it's more than just announcing numbers. The smiles BINGO brings and the connections among the participants is what makes them calling Bingo again and again.



A Thought, a Box, and 1000 Lbs. Donation

It started with a simple idea shared on Facebook by Ann Miller, Parent Mentor at Hygiene Project, a local volunteer organization. That post got a large group of students motivated. Every day in the month of December, volunteers added a food item to a box they set aside earlier in the month. At the end of the month, they brought their donation box to the Hygiene Project center. Food items collected were donated to the Food Pantry at the January 7th Town Hall Meeting. "We coordinated this as our ongoing Students Change Hunger program that was initiated by the Community Food Bank of New Jersey. We donated 1015 lbs. of food. We are so thankful to everyone who generously donated," said Cathy Wolf, director of Hygiene Project.



Flood Control Measures Underway

The Town of Secaucus is committed to implementing, maintaining and upgrading flood control measures. Two major projects are currently underway: A pipe running along the rear yards of homes on Grace Avenue, beginning at the Born Street pump station, is being excavated and fully replaced. The pipe was deteriorated and collapsed. This project is funded by NJDOT and will help to alleviate flooding on Maple Street, Born Street, Grace Avenue and Hagan Place.

The Town is also in discussion with numerous private commercial property owners to ensure that all catch basins, ditches and pipes are clean and functional. The catch basin which the Golden Avenue pump station directly discharges into has been cleaned out by the commercial property owner. The Town continues to pursue other commercial property owners to ensure they are properly maintaining any portions of the drainage system that is on their property. The Mayor and Council will continue to focus on identifying and implementing additional flood control measures, as this remains a top priority.

Skating for a Cause



The Secaucus School District, along with the Mayor and Council, organized a Skating for St. Jude's Research Hospital event on Saturday, January 12th. The two sessions, one for elementary school students and the other for middle/high school students, saw robust participation. "I am so happy we started the year with such a successful event. We raised about \$1,500.00 and it wouldn't be possible without the support of our community, Mayor, Town Council, the School District, and everyone at the Ice Rink. I thank everyone who participated." said Anna Falco, Volunteer Coordinator for St. Jude Hospital. In 2017-18, Secaucus led the State for funds raised for St. Jude, raising about \$63,000 for the cause.

Upcoming Library Events

CPR Training

You never know when you may need to perform CPR. You could be a parent, grandparent, babysitter, or bystander and be presented with a situation that requires you to take action. Whether this is your first exposure to CPR or if you have had CPR training in the past and you would like to refresh your skills, this class is for you. Please join us on Friday, February 22nd, at 6:30 pm in the 2nd Floor Panasonic Room. Kristin Hyman, representative of Hudson Regional Hospital, will instruct you in CPR methods that could help you save a life.

Taste the Flavors of African Food

In honor of Black History Month, join us for "The Flavors & History of African Food," with Meriterese Racanelli, MS R&D, Food Scientist/Nutritionist at Goya and My Plate. Learn and snack as Meriterese takes you on a historical journey of food and how African cultures have influenced what we eat around the world and in the United States. Some topics will include: Soul Food, French Creole, Caribbean cuisine, and many more foods that we have come to know and love.

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