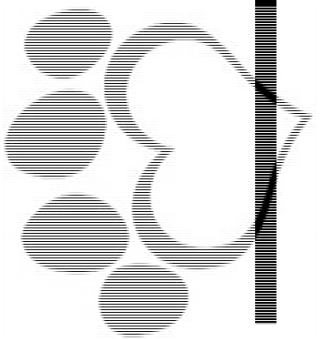




FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK DOG PARK

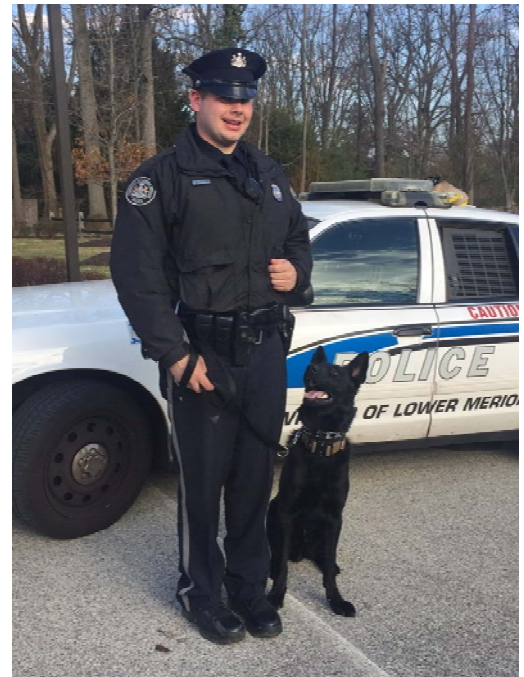
## Paw Prints



### Our Fourth Annual Meeting

On Sunday, February 26, 2017, we held our Fourth Annual Meeting at Beth David's beautiful and welcoming facility, with 28 people in attendance. Ellen Briggs introduced the current Steering Committee (**Ellen Reese, Karen Hinckley, Karen Garbeil and Elaine Stern**) and thanked **Jill Cooper** for arranging the meeting space and doing the great event posters. Ellen reported on park news from 2016. **Ellen Reese** presented her annual Treasurer's Report. (The substance of all these presentations is provided in the remaining articles in this newsletter.) Next, **Michelle Detwiler**, President of the Penn Valley Civic Association, presented information on the planned development of the current meadow directly across the street from the West Mill Creek parking lot. We were then treated to a marvelous K9 demonstration. **Officer Patton** demonstrated the talents of his K9 partner **Fearghas**, a young German Shepherd trained in tracking, bomb sniffing, and apprehension of suspects. **Officer Wasson**, whose K9 partner, **Bosco**, is currently enjoying retirement, served as "bad guy" and also as a missing person in the demo, and both officers shared fascinating information about the

origins, training and usefulness of our multi-talented Lower Merion Police K9 unit. Officer Patton and Fearghas were a wonderful team and it was easy to see that they enjoyed working together! We all felt fortunate that our Lower Merion police have such an effective K9 unit, and of course as dog lovers we were thrilled to see Fearghas in action. After the demo, we enjoyed some pleasant conversation and some really stellar homemade cookies, fruit, and cheese thanks to our Events Chairman, **Elaine Stern**.



### 2016 in Review

**Wildlife Garden.** Our first project, begun three years ago, was the creation of the wildlife garden in the fenced area adjacent to the parking lot. In 2016, we continued maintenance and planting of this area. Our watering team kept the garden going during the severe drought, and additional volunteers kept after the weeds, cut back overgrown sedge, and did some more planting.

**Invasive Plant Control.** For the first time, we expanded our ecological efforts to the main park and held three work days centered on removal of the invasive plant Japanese Knotweed. Knotweed crowds out many beneficial plants and is extraordinarily difficult to control. We succeeded in cutting and removing 700 pounds of knotweed from the park!

*Continued following page.*



Michelle Detwiler, Paula Burns, Ellen Briggs, Linda Pitt and Pinkie Hamilton taking a garden workday break



*2016 in Review, continued from previous page.*

### **Park Safety Projects in 2016**

With the occurrence of a number of incidents—both near misses and actual injuries—involving dogs running into the parking lot or across the creek and onto Old Gulph Road, we directed our efforts to the creation of a gate between the park and parking lot, and a fence across the creek to help keep our dogs off of Old Gulph Road. We advocated with the Township for the parking lot gate, which they kindly installed for us early in 2016. The fence across the creek was a more challenging problem, because the land is owned by our neighbor, a private tennis club. We contacted The Courts, and after some discussion received their gracious permission to construct the fence. This fence was paid for by your donations, so thank you 2016 contributors for this improvement in safety for all our dogs!



### **More Park Improvements**

2016 also saw a nice long list of additional improvements:

- Completion of additional trail improvements to lessen the mud problem.
- A handsome new kiosk – please check it out for important park news!
- Lovely wooden trash corrals constructed for us as an Eagle Scout project.
- A gorgeous new “Welcome to West Mill Creek Park” sign which was designed and built through a jobs training program at the Montgomery County prison system
- Unscented poop bags! Due to member complaints about the powerful chemical smell of the scented poop bags supplied in the bag stations, we asked for a blissful future of unscented poop bags. We are happy to report that once the old ones are used up, all future bags will be chemical-free. All of these improvements were accomplished with the help of our wonderful **Lower Merion Department of Parks & Recreation**. Thanks **Donna Heller**, Director, and **Dave Deangelis**, Parks Supervisor, for your unfailing positive attitude in the face of our many requests!!







Kiosk as you enter the park.



Trash corrals courtesy of the Boy Scouts.



Welcome sign at entrance.

## Events of 2016

We held four great events.

- First up was our Annual Meeting featuring Dr. Michelle Harris of Pets First Veterinary Center who gave an informative talk on emergency veterinary medicine.
- Our second event was a lovely holiday lunch at the Merion Cricket Club sponsored by member **Eileen Rosenau**.
- Next was our traditional Santa Paws event, where Santa Paws visited our park and posed for pictures with our dogs. Thanks to the generosity of the participants we raised over \$400 for the Pennsylvania S.P.C.A.
- Finally, we held our Active Members Thank You Party honoring all those members who either volunteered or made a donation in 2016. It was lots of fun getting a chance to talk not only to our dog park regulars, but also their spouses/significant others. A friendly and fun group of people!



## REMINDER!

Our supplemental bag containers are emptied quickly – so please remember to bring extra plastic grocery bags to the park and help us re-stock. Remember, re-use is better than recycle. For more information log onto our website:  
[friendsofwestmillcreekpark.org](http://friendsofwestmillcreekpark.org)

## Proposed Real Estate Development

At the Annual Meeting, **Michelle Detwiler** discussed the proposed development of 6 Old Gulph Road. Mill Creek currently runs through this beautiful meadow and lightly wooded area situated directly across Old Gulph Road from our parking lot. She spoke about the long history of protection of this area and the likely negative impacts that the proposed development would pose from an ecological, aesthetic, and historical point of view.

If you would like to send a letter to our Planning Commission about the proposed development, send your comments to **Jillian Pulleo Dierks** at [jpuleo@lowermerion.org](mailto:jpuleo@lowermerion.org), and include a reference to 6 Old Gulph Road, Gladwyne, SD# 3757, Ward 5 in the subject line of your letter or email.

The current status with the Township Building and Planning Commission: “a preliminary proposal to subdivide the 5.4-acre lot into two lots. New single family detached homes are proposed on Lots 1 & 2 and a 3.8-acre preservation area is also proposed.” For more information and ongoing updates, just ask Jillian to add you to the Township email list for this proposal. This way, you will be advised on an ongoing basis of the status of the proposal including any Building & Planning meetings at which you can voice your concerns.

## Volunteer Spotlight

Altogether 22 people contributed 92 hours at our work days. Thanks go to:

**Judy Argon; Julian, Susan and Paul Brenman; Ellen and Stephen Briggs; Paula Burns; Chris Bushnell; Daniel Cohen; Michelle Detwiler; Mary Field; Pinkie Hamilton; Bobby Harmelin; Karen Hinckley; Hazel Murphy; Linda Pitt; Ellen Reese; Elaine Stern; and Mark Wassmansdorf.**

In addition, freelancer members **Rich Cutshall** and **Craig Oliner** spent uncounted hours clearing trails and removing debris. Rich even made us our Knotweed Penitentiary, where cut knotweed may be stored without danger of re-rooting itself into the park lands.

Our volunteers should be especially proud because Friends of West Mill Creek Park was awarded a **Go for the Green Award** by the Lower Merion Environmental Advisory Council our work to improve the environment. (Michelle Detwiler secretly nominated us for this award so it came as a very happy surprise!)





**FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING 2016 SUPPORTERS:**

FOUR PAWS (\$150 or more)

**Fran Bryan, Marsha Perelman, Ellen Reese & Gary Stein, Ellen Briggs**

THREE PAWS (\$100-\$149)

**Judith and Yair Argon, Duncan Busser, Scott & Kristin Edwards, Robert & Randie Harmelin, Nora & Barry Kramer, Susan Lichtman, Selina Luger, Jay & Marya Margolis, Karl & Dori Middleman, Hazel Murphy, Craig Oliner, David Preefer & Karen Zimmerman, Eileen Rosenau, Leslie & Neil Stone**

TWO PAWS (\$50-\$99)

**Judy & Art Axelrod, Jill Cooper, Karen & Joan Garbeil, Jon Goodman, Pinkie & Rick Hamilton, Stacey & Sergio Sauchuk, Kay Sude, Jill Sussman, Rick & Karen Wilson**

ONE PAW (up to \$49)

**Linda Dorey-Stein, John Newhall, Tessa Lamont Siegel, Cary Sellers, Helene Feinberg Walker & Kent Walker****Members Survey and Feedback**

To help us in planning future events and projects, we would love to have feedback from YOU, our members. Please fill out the Member Survey form included in this mailing—we need and welcome your ideas! And of course, feel free to communicate with any member of the Steering Committee in person at the Park, by email, or through the website if you have questions, comments, or concerns at any time.

## Plans for 2017

As you know, our group's mission is environmental as well as promoting the safety and convenience of park users. We are very excited about our newest plan, which if successful will promote both aspects of our mission at once. We will be planting small trees, shrubs, sedges, and perennials in low lying muddy areas in order to reduce unwelcome mud, and also improve park ecology for the benefit of pollinators, birds, and other wildlife (not deer though). These are very tough planting conditions so we expect there will be a bit of trial and error, but we are very hopeful that this ongoing project will make our park more beautiful, less muddy, and improve its ecological health. Trees and plants provide many environmental benefits including filtering pollutants, moderating temperatures, and providing food and habitat for wildlife.

Of course, we will continue work on the Wildlife Garden and also continue our anti-Knotweed campaign which will involve cutting and removing the knotweed in early June, which according to research is

the most effective time to go after it.

We hope that lots of volunteers will help us out with these projects in 2017!

## 2017 Donations

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK PARK AS A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER!**

**SEE ENCLOSED FORM FOR DETAILS.**



<b>Treasurer's Report January 1, 2017</b>	
<u>Beginning Balance</u> (1.1.16)	3264.86
Revenue Collected	3355.38
Donations	2437.00
Refund Kiosk supplies	48.38
Park Lunch	870.00
Expenses	
Annual Meeting	( 308.13)
Kiosk Supplies	( 48.38)
Printing/Mailing	( 166.17)
Gate Hardware	( 4.22)
Respite Garden	( 531.60)
Courts Fence	(1895.06)
Events	(1271.22)
Total Expenses	(4224.78)
<u>Balance Forward</u> 1.1.17	2395.46
*FWMC Checking	1187.63
*FWMC LMT Escrow Acct	1207.83

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Reese, Treasurer



## Organizational Supporters in 2016—thanks to:

- **Beth David Reform Congregation** for the use of their lovely facilities for our membership meetings
- **Jamie Markizon** and **Strategic Websites** who have provided us with internet hosting services for our website.
- **Ricklin's Hardware** for in-kind donation to our Knotweed removal workdays
- **Giant Supermarket** in Wynnewood for the doughnuts at our Santa Paws event.
- **Donna Heller, Dave Deangelis**, and the work crews of Lower **Merion Dept of Parks and Recreation** for their constant help and support.