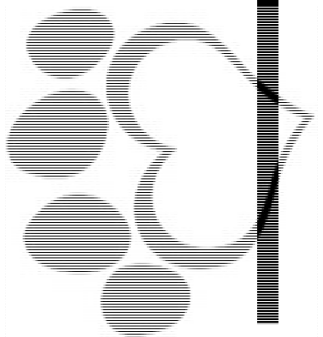




FRIENDS OF WEST MILL CREEK DOG PARK

Paw Prints



Our Fifth Annual Meeting

At our Fifth Annual Meeting, **Ellen Briggs**, our President, reported on events and accomplishments of 2017 and plans for 2018 (content is reported in the rest of this newsletter.) She also awarded Greenie Awards to **Dolly Brenman** and **Brownie and Baxter Middleman**, three Park dogs who selflessly allowed their people to spend countless hours creating our first ever West Mill Creek Park Calendar. In addition, **Karl and Dori Middleman** and **Julian and Susan Brenman** received Shining Star certificates of thanks for their service, and Dori also received a special floral tribute for going above and beyond the call of duty in creating the calendar. (See Calendar article below for more details.) Finally, **Tom Brightman**, Land Stewardship Manager for Longwood Gardens, gave an inspiring and educational talk on the ecology of West Mill Creek Park. After the program we enjoyed terrific homemade refreshments (thanks, Judy!) and conversation with our fellow WMC Parkers.



2017 in Review

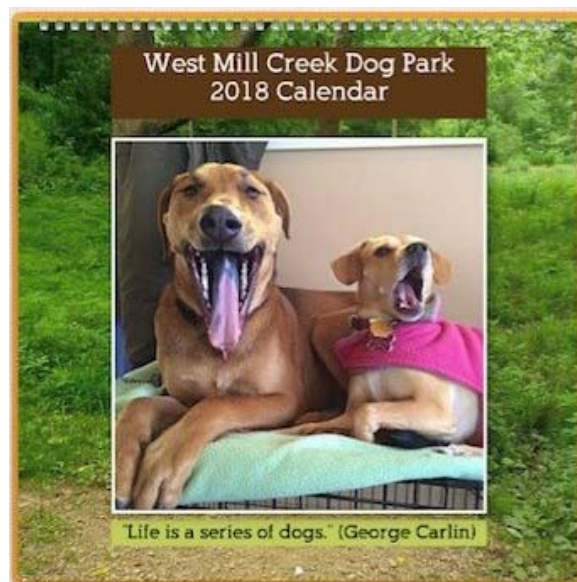
Friends of West Mill Creek Park Leadership Update

Our current Steering Committee is composed of **Ellen Briggs** (President), **Ellen Reese** (Treasurer), **Karen Hinckley** (Secretary), **Karen Garbeil** (Membership Chair) and **Judy Argon**, who is the new Chair of the Events Committee. We have also created a new position, Com-

munications Maven, to formalize the valuable ongoing contribution of **Jill Cooper** to our group. Jill uses her computer graphics/design skills to help us make professional looking posters, brochures, and newsletters. She will also be helping us with other communications related tasks.

Friends of WMC Park Calendar

Perhaps our most exciting new effort this year was our fabulous 2018 Friends of West Mill Creek Park Calendar. As a fundraiser for the park, member Calendar Editors **Karl and Dori Middleman**, along with photography mavens **Julian and Susan Brenman**, created a beautiful calendar that features over 90 member dogs. The calendars proved to be immensely popular. We sold 125 calendars for net proceeds of over \$1,100. The whole calendar team worked very hard to produce this calendar, but we have been advised that the lion's share of the credit goes to editor-in-chief **Dori Middleman** who spent countless hours on layout, double checking details, finding appropriate dog-related quotations, and bending over backwards to accommodate late entries. Many, many thanks to Dori and the whole calendar team.



De-Burr the Burdock Day

A wonderful thing about our Friends of WMC members -- they will stop to help in an unannounced work day if they happen to be passing by. During the Fall, some of us decided to remove the burrs from the large patch of burdock in the park before they fell to the ground, so they wouldn't get tangled into our dogs' coats. Our dedicated team of ad hoc volunteers filled five large paper grocery shopping bags with the burrs, which were then composted and NEVER had to be combed out of your dog's fur. Thanks **Christel Urmenyhaz, Tessa Lamont Siegel**, and everyone else who pitched in!



Beware of the Dodder

This year we took action against a new invasive plant—dodder. This is a parasitic plant that engulfs other perennial plants in the park. It looks like orange spaghetti as it nears maturity. It then kills its host plant and sheds thousands of tiny seeds onto the ground. Most of the dodder to date has been found along the path to "The Deep" (the stream access point at the far end of the park). **The dodder must be carefully bagged and put into the trash to avoid further spread. If you see this invasive next summer, please let someone on the Steering Committee know and we will work on removal.**

Beware of the Dodder cont.

Because dodder cannot parasitize native grasses, we also sowed the seeds of a grass known as River Oats (a/k/a *Chasmanthium latifolium*) along the path where the dodder was growing. If the River Oats grow, they should reduce the spread of this parasite because the seeds will find fewer plants they can eat after they sprout. Once again, we owe thanks to those members who joined in our efforts as they passed by. Love that team spirit -- Thanks

Thanks to Our Volunteers



In 2017, our volunteers once again surpassed expectation. During the year, we held **10 formal pre-announced work days**. Our work included:

- Wildlife and Respite Garden maintenance
- Control of Japanese Knotweed, an invasive plant that threatens the park's ecological health
- Planting new native shrubs in the low lying areas of the park in an effort to reduce mud

Seventeen of our members participated in these work days. Including additional help from several young people fulfilling community service requirements, we logged a total of **134 volunteer work hours** for the year! Thanks a million to member volunteers **Judy and Yair Argon, Ellen Briggs, Paula Burns, David and Tal Coren, Rich Cutshall, Michelle Detwiler, Pinkie Hamilton, Karen Hinckley, Tessa Lamont Siegel, June Lauer, Max Perelman,**

Linda Pitt, Ellen Reese, Cary Sellers, and Elaine Stern for all their hard work. We also had a number of non-official work days so our actual volunteer work hours probably total around **160**.



New Sitting Stones

In response to member feedback from last year's survey, we revisited several local quarries and found two new sitting-friendly boulders which, with the help of our great Lower Merion Parks & Rec crew, were installed at The Deep in the summer. Many people have commented on how nice the boulders look and that it is great to have somewhere to sit down and enjoy watching the dogs play. We will be looking for some additional boulders—turns out that stones of the appropriate size and shape are not so easy to find!



Additional Safety Fencing

Early this year, at our request, the Township extended the split rail fencing at the far end of the park by Mill Creek Road to guide dogs away from Mill Creek Road. We are confident that this addition has improved the safety of our dogs.

Shout Out to Lower Merion Township Department of Parks and Recreation

As always, we are deeply grateful to **Donna Heller, Director; Dave DeAngelis, Parks Supervisor; and all of the guys on the crew.** Every year since our group was formed in October of 2013, Parks and Rec cheerfully and willingly provides help beyond expectation. For instance, this year at our request they extended the park fencing to increase dog safety, installed our new sitting stones at the Deep, and for our Fall planting day they volunteered to prepare the soil, dig the planting holes in very rocky soil, and provide and apply good quality mulch. We are lucky to live in Lower Merion.



PARKS RECREATION

Our Contributors

Heartfelt thanks to all of our generous contributors! Your contributions paid for the new sitting stones at The Deep, and many new plants and shrubs for our Park. We couldn't do it without you. . .

FOUR PAWS (\$150 or more)



Anne & Matt Hamilton, Bobby & Randie Harmelin, Jay & Marya Margolis, Marsha Perelman, Ellen Reese & Gary Stein, Peter & Ellen Briggs

THREE PAWS (\$100-\$149)



Anonymous, Judith & Yair Argon, Brenman Family, Karen Hinckley, Michael & Selina Hoessly, Sharon McGinley, Hazel Murphy, Shelly Phillips, Maria Pollack, David Preefer & Karen Zimmerman, Eileen Rosenau, Karl & Dori Middleman, Kay Sude

TWO PAWS (\$50-\$99)



Judy & Art Axelrod, John & Barbara Barr, Mary & Iain Black, John Cassimitis, Glenn & Jennifer Cooper, Michelle Detwiler & Lars Pace, Linda Fairstone, Karen & Joan Garbeil, Susan Lichtman, Joan Logue, Karyn Lush, Marilyn Steiner, Helen Feinberg Walker & Kent Walker, Sherri & Lewis Wexler, Rick & Karen Wilson, The Yody Family

ONE PAW (up to \$49)



Janice Asher, Amy Cohen & TomWaniewski, Lee Dante, Mary Field, Martha Lombardo, John Newhall, Christel Urmenyhaz, Flaura Winston



Plans for 2018/Survey Forms

Please take a moment to fill out the Survey Form included in this newsletter. To finalize our plans for 2018, we need your input! We use your thoughts as a source of new ideas and also to prioritize existing projects based on your concerns. And, we always post a report on the survey results on our website so you can see what is on your fellow dog parkers' minds.

Santa Paws at the Park

On December 18, 2017, Santa Paws made the annual visit to our park. Santa posed for pictures with all the good dogs who visited. Dog owners enjoyed homemade hot chocolate and wonderful cupcakes donated by the **Giant** supermarket in Wynnewood, while each pooch got a Milk Bone. This event is a fundraiser for the Pennsylvania S.P.C.A., and donations showed that our members were all in the holiday spirit—we raised \$555 for local dogs in need! The Jewish Exponent, intrigued by the fact that at our dog park, Santa is not only Jewish but female as well, did a story on our event. We think of this as multi-cultural America at its finest! Thanks to one and all who made this fundraiser a success.



reminder

If you haven't already gotten your 2018 Off Leash Permit from Lower Merion Township, please do so! (Remember the Off Leash Permit is NOT the same thing as your Montgomery County dog license—it is a special permit that allows you to legally let your dog off leash at Rolling Hill and West Mill Creek Parks. This permitting program has several benefits for us as dog owners, but one of the most important is to show the Township our strong support for the off leash dog park program. Directions and information can be found by googling "Lower Merion Township off leash dog program."