

## Letter to Westport

First Night 2010 is now a memory, but for many who volunteered and to those that attended, it is a fond memory of a community coming together to celebrate the beginning of a new decade with smiles and optimism.

There are so many people to thank because producing an event in seven venues with twenty two performers is an overwhelming endeavor. So here goes.

First Night is run by volunteers, people unselfishly giving their time for our community. Every venue is overseen by site managers whose responsibilities are enormous to ensure that the attendees are safe, the entertainers are set up, the other volunteers are organized and if an emergency does crop up, they are prepared to handle it. Thank you to Doug & Linda Johnston, Audrey Sparre, Kim Mathias, Patty Kondub, Rob Hauck, Ginger Ewing and Susan Gold.

Traditionally the Weston Kiwanis sends volunteers to man a venue and this year was no different – so thank you Reed Ameden for coordinating your volunteers- they were terrific as usual.

Again, our teen volunteers are amazing. Thanks to Builders Beyond Borders for helping set up the event. Because of their assistance, we were able to prepare for the event without a hitch. Craig Skinner deserves kudos for coordinating the Builders. Craig's sense of community and passion for volunteering was evident as he helped us where needed. Thanks so much. This year the Staples Interact Club volunteered at various venues and their help was much appreciated.

Three people deserve special thanks. Ann Marie Flynn is our volunteer extraordinaire - her enthusiasm and energy to help is amazing. George Underhill helped with our fundraising campaign and was instrumental in raising much needed revenues. Freda Welsh was an invaluable resource for entertainment ideas and an incredible source of encouragement throughout the planning.

The Westport Weston Family Y was our headquarters for the event and also featured many of our entertainers – so it was a hub of activity. Thanks to David Cohen for his help and a special thank you to Patti Cavallero who helps us not only on the day of the event, but the day after, the dreaded clean up day.

Although the event ended at 9 pm, Toquet Hall remained open until 11:30 so the teens could enjoy the Battle of the Bands. Thanks to Marilyn Smith who work tirelessly to find the bands and coordinate and oversee this venue.

Now for Miggs. Miggs Burroughs has designed 15 of the First Night buttons and this year's design was again fabulous. He is also responsible for the First Night website design which has gotten rave reviews. There could not be a First Night without Miggs who helped meet all of our deadlines with dedication and enthusiasm. Hats off to you!

This was a challenging year for First Night 2010 and the First Night Board deserves a very special thank you. Allen Bomes, our Treasurer, expanded his role to help wherever he was needed. Ed Fitzgerald broadened our technology presence and launched us into cyberspace. Bill Meyer handled the overwhelming job of recruiting and assigning volunteers as well as liaison to town agencies to solicit their help – he was incredible. Frank Rac was everywhere, helping with fundraising, handling venues including managing the sound set up, and handling many of the last minute details. Suzanne Adams did her usual great job of managing the button sales.

First Night depends on contributions from the community businesses, organizations and individuals. And this year our sponsors deserve a huge thank you because without their financial support, First Night would have had to close its doors. Thanks to Bigelow Tea, Downtown Merchants Association, The Human Services Council, The Masonic Lodge, Tauck Foundation, TD Bank, Webster Bank, Westport Patch, Westport Young Women's League.

The Westport Minuteman deserves another thank you for the exceptional job in producing our program guide and the print advertisements that appeared in the paper.

Thanks to the Town of Westport for hosting the event and welcoming people into our community to join in the fun.

This year we attempted to document the event, so please visit our website [www.firstnightww.com](http://www.firstnightww.com). And it is never too late to make a donation. We will start our First Night 2011 plans shortly and we need all the help you can give.

Barbara Pearson-Rac

Board President