

## Say Yes to the Y

I am writing to express my support of the move of the Westport Weston YMCA to the Mahackeno location. My wife, Joanne, and children, Lilly, 8, and Drew, 5, are frequent users of the Y, and look forward to the new facilities. In recent months I have been playing basketball at the Y on weekends, having been warmly invited into a regular group that plays pick-up games on Saturdays. My experience at the Y here in Westport has stirred wonderful memories of my days as a youth at a YMCA in Westfield, Mass. We would be devastated if the Y were to be lost to the community.

We live on North Avenue, between Coleytown and Lyons Plains. The new location of the Y would in fact be more convenient for us. However, we would support the move of the Y to any location in town that would

accommodate the facilities. We understand that there are really no other viable alternatives.

Much seems to be made about concerns regarding the traffic pattern the move of the Y will create. I honestly do not see that as a problem given the proposed location off of Routes 33 and 15, two roads that are already quite busy. We recently moved from Partrick Road in order to be on a quieter street. Interestingly, I recently saw a letter from the young couple who bought our old house — they wrote protesting the move, in part on the grounds that it will increase traffic on Partrick (the other main argument was that there are places to put the new Y that would have less of an environmental impact, but no such location was identified). However, as the couple acknowledged (“There is already plenty of cut-through traffic on Partrick Road and I have almost been hit by speeding cars on several occasions while collecting my mail ...”) they already live on a busy street. The truth is that every part of our town already has some major roads with heavy traffic — that is the reality of living in a town of 25,000-plus residents. Perhaps if and when the couple on Partrick has children they will appreciate the proximity of the Y since their children in any event will not be out playing on Partrick Road, 33 or 15. There are quiet little side streets out behind Partrick (like Partrick Lane) that I doubt very much will have any increased traffic as a result of the new Y.

We now live just a quarter of a mile from Coleytown Elementary and Middle Schools, and less than half a mile from Temple Israel and the Unitarian Church. Each of those facilities creates significant traffic at various times during the week. It is not uncommon for us to be caught in

that traffic, but it is a small inconvenience to endure in exchange for having those wonderful facilities in our community. If we spend another two or three minutes in traffic each day, I suspect we will survive, and might even be better off for it if we can slow our lives down a bit!

I suppose any significant event like this will generate debate in the community, which is of course healthy. However, the “no Mahackeno in my back yard” mentality is unfortunate. When we moved into our new house on North Avenue we had some trees removed on our property in order to create a playing area for our children. After the tree company finished we noticed that they may have gone too far and removed some trees from our neighbors’ lot. We immediately wrote a letter to our neighbors (who were away), an elderly couple who have lived in their house on Fraser Lane for over 30 years. We apologized for the apparent mistake, and promised we would replant and build an appropriate buffer between the two lots. Bracing for the worst, we awaited their reply. To our pleasant surprise, we received back a kind hand written note urging us not to worry. They wrote, “of course you want to improve your property and we trust you will do the right thing with the property line.” That is the neighborly spirit we need to adopt with the move of the Y!

**A.J. WEIDHAAS**  
WESTPORT

## Much More Than A Fitness Club

It’s disappointing and disturbing to hear opponents of the Mahackeno Y project describe the Y as a mere “commercial fitness club,” when it

**WESTPORT NEWS**

*Editor* **Will Rowlands**  
*Managing Editor* **Ashley Vayese**  
*EASE Editor* **Carol King**  
*Sports Editor* **Eliot Schickler**  
*Associate Editor* **Don Casciato**  
*Chief Photographer* **Cathy Zuraw**

**Reporters:** Michael G. Juliano  
**Contributing Columnists:** Hank Herman, Woody Klein, Judith Marks-White, Carol Rindel, Dan Woog  
**Editorial Cartoonist:** Dick Hodgins  
**Contributing Correspondent:** Frank Luongo

**WESTPORT NEWS**  
 15 Myrtle Ave., Office 1A, Westport, CT 06880  
 Phone: (203) 226-6311  
 Editorial Fax Line: (203) 454-2765

**General Manager** Michelle R. McAbee  
**Production Manager** Patty Omonte  
**Circulation Director** John K. Trutt

**A BROOKS COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER**  
 542 Westport Ave.  
 Norwalk, CT 06851  
 (203) 849-1600

**MediaNews Group**