

# Mark Lender, Revolutionary War Historian, Speaks to Westfield Historical Society

By DEBORAH MADISON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — "The Revolutionary War Battle of the Westfields, Reconsidered" was the topic of historian Dr. Mark E. Lender at the 31st annual dinner of the Westfield Historical Society on May 31 at Echo Lake Country Club in Westfield. Dr. Lender is one of the foremost

major battles in this area, numerous smaller battles and skirmishes spanning from Quibbletown (Piscataway) to Westfield forced Cornwallis to retreat and prevented the British from accomplishing their goal of advancing across New Jersey to Philadelphia by land. Cornwallis' troops were forced to retreat to Perth Amboy to make the trip to Philadelphia by sea,

plausibility of the meeting and why the Generals treated Aunt Betty with respect and consideration.

According to Dr. Lender, there was a code of morality during the War that both sides agreed to, which predicated that soldiers would be non-confrontational with civilians. The British Generals held themselves to the highest standards of morality and considered it unethical to take her bread by force.

Dr. Lender has a doctoral degree in history from Rutgers University and was a professor there for eight years. He is in his 18th year as an Administrator at Kean University and is currently Associate Dean of the Nathan Weiss School of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Lender has published numerous books and articles on the subject of the Revolutionary War, as well as on alcoholism and prohibition. He is a consultant and has received numerous grants and awards in his two academic specialties.

Preceding the lecture, two awards were presented by the Historical Society to individuals who have made significant contributions to Westfield.

Nancy Priest, a past President of the Westfield Symphony Orchestra, was awarded the Trustee's Award for notable contributions to Westfield's heritage. Mrs. Priest, nicknamed "The Queen of Mindowaskin Park" was honored with a plaque for her significant contributions to renovating the park.

The President's Award was presented to the Historical Society's current President, Don Mokrauer for his extraordinary work in recruiting volunteers as well as his own dedication to the Society as a member for the past 16 years.

The purpose of the Westfield Historical Society is to further the recording, preserving and encouraging community interest in the heritage of Westfield.

New members are welcome to contact the Society by calling Bob Miller at (908) 233-6360.



Debbie Madison for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD HISTORIC SOCIETY GREETINGS...During the Westfield Historical Society's recent annual dinner former President Bob Miller, left, shakes hands with current President Don Mokrauer.

historians of the Revolutionary War in New Jersey.

Dr. Lender recounted the period of the Revolutionary War from the summer 1777, when General George Washington's troops were positioned in the Watchung Mountains, looking down at the British troops of General Cornwallis advancing into The Westfields of Elizabeth.

As the British advanced from the south, they attempted to draw Washington's troops out of the mountains onto a more even battlefield.

The British did not realize that Washington was holding the Mountains with only a few Colonial troops numbering 1,800 soldiers, while the British troops numbered about 5,000 men.

Because of General Washington's decision to hold his position, the British were wary of advancing across New Jersey. Although there were no

around Chesapeake Bay, losing precious time.

According to Dr. Lender, this delay afforded the Colonial Army enough time to regroup and amass a sizable defense, which eventually led to the defeat of the British army. He concluded that the Battle of the Westfields, also called the Battle of the Short Hills, was a significant, deciding factor in the outcome of the Revolutionary War.

New Jersey is also noted for having had the most number of battles of any of the states during the Revolutionary War, he added.

Dr. Lender also recounted the meeting of General's Cornwallis and Howe with Aunt Betty Frazee in Westfield, when she told the generals that she would only give them her freshly baked bread under duress and protest. Dr. Lender explained the



ROCK ON...Christina Marcus, left, and Angela Parisi join fellow members of the Westfield Y Leader's Club for a recent, 12-hour rocking chair marathon to raise money for the Thailand Save-A-Child Project, as well as for their club. The Save-A-Child Project seeks to protect young girls in Thailand from sexual exploitation through scholarships and parental training programs.

## Westfield Y 'Rockers' Raise Funds for Thailand Project

WESTFIELD — Approximately 15 teens from the Leader's Club at the Westfield Y recently held a "Rock-A-Thon" at the Clark Street facility to raise money for the Thailand Save-A-Child Project, as well as their own club.

"The kids came up with the idea themselves," said Teen Director Catherine Panico. "It was a rocking chair marathon, where the kids had to keep rocking for 12 hours in the lobby and find sponsors to support their efforts."

According to Mrs. Panico, some youngsters took shifts while others "rocked" straight through the event, which raised over \$800. "It will definitely be an annual event," she stated. "It was successful (and) we had a good turnout."

The Save-A-Child Project is aimed at protecting the lives of girls in Thailand who are at risk of exploitation from sex trade brokers who offer poor families large sums of money in exchange for their daughters.

Money raised from the project will go towards scholarships for the children and parental training programs which promote economic self-sufficiency. There is also a fund to provide savings and shelter for counseling and legal services.

The Y Leader's Club, which has been in existence for over 30 years, focuses on volunteerism and leadership training opportunities for area teenagers.

## Scotch Plains Library To Hold Registration For Reading Club

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Public Library, located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, has announced that registration for its Summer Reading Club began on Tuesday, June 20, and will continue through Friday, August 4.

Open to children age 3 through fifth grade who read or are read to, this year's program is entitled "Book a Trip through Time." It will feature books and related activities.

There will be a party in August for all club members.

Story Time sign-up for the series starting in July also began on June 20 and will continue until all classes are filled. It is open to Scotch Plains library card holders only.

For further information, please call the Children's Department at (908) 322-5007 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

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