

WF Chamber of Commerce Appoints Executive Director

WESTFIELD - Allison O'Hara has been appointed as the new Executive Director of The Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

As Executive Director, Ms. O'Hara will work with over 350 chamber members comprised of retail, service, non-profits and professional businesses. She will survey the concerns of the members and initiate programs supporting the business environment in the Westfield area.

Ms. O'Hara comes to the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce with a strong background in retailing, management, promotions and communications. She served as marketing manager at Random House and Scholastic, Inc., coordinating retail and trade promotions for distinguished children's books, videos and CD-ROM products including *Dr. Seuss, I Spy*, and *Arthur*. She developed unique retail promotions through advertisements, sales collateral, direct mail and online features. Her responsibilities included consumer research.

Ms. O'Hara was the store manager for B. Dalton, Bookseller at the Short Hills Mall.

"My retail experience will provide a meaningful connection to our chamber members as I look forward to personally meeting them. The Westfield business community has a lot to offer in quality, value, variety, service and convenience and I shall enjoy taking that message to the public," said Ms. O'Hara.

"Families come to the Westfield area with the expectation of a community feeling and they won't be disappointed as they come to patron-

ize the wide range of retail and professional services available in their hometown," she added.

Ms. O'Hara earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature at Drew University, Madison and holds a Master of Arts degree from Columbia University, New York in Instructional Technology and Media in Education.

A resident of Garwood, she has been involved with many community organizations, having served as Chairman of the Outreach Board of the First Congregational Church of Westfield. This summer she arranged and attended a work camp service project for the teen members in New Hampshire. Ms. O'Hara personally maintains a strong interest in fundraising for non-profit organizations.

Ms. O'Hara will work closely with the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. Warren Rorden, longtime Chamber member echoed the sentiments of the board in extending Allison O'Hara a warm welcome. He reminisced about the role the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce has played at critical times in its fifty-year history in maintaining a strong business community for Westfield.

"We have always been there when called upon to protect the economic viability of a community downtown. The watershed event was the defeat of an expansive shopping center on our border from outside interests in the 1960's," said Rorden, chairman of "Stop The Mall" at the time.

Anyone seeking to meet with the new Executive Director is invited to call the Chamber office at (908) 233-3021 for an appointment.



Allison O'Hara



YE OLD SCHOOLHOUSE...Pictured above is the Willow Grove School built in 1780, in Scotch Plains. It served both Scotch-Plains and Westfield Students until 1872.

Sen. Suliga Urges County To Purchase S. Plains Land

SCOTCH PLAINS - State Senator Joseph Suliga (D-22) recently urged the Union County Board of Freeholders to acquire 23 acres in Scotch Plains as part of the County's Open Space Trust Fund Program. In a letter to Freeholder Alexander Mirabella, Senator Suliga said the proposal, "offers a remarkable opportunity to preserve open space and farmland which is at risk for development."

Senator Suliga's efforts concern property owned by the Sevell family on Cooper Road in Scotch Plains. The senator noted that the property is currently zoned for residential development, but there is a desire of the owners to have the property placed in the trust fund.

"As the co-chairman of the Senate Environmental Committee, I have an

appreciation of the desire to preserve open space in our state. Over development and congestion are major problems which drain municipal services, and ultimately lessens the quality of life," Sen. Suliga said.

Sen. Suliga added that the preservation of the Scotch Plains parcel would be a "legacy to future generations. We know that once an open space opportunity is lost, it is done so permanently."

Senator Suliga praised the County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. "The fact is that over the past two years, over eighty acres have already been preserved under the program. The inclusion of this new tract will expand county parkland by 100 acres," he concluded.

Candidate Campaign Release - FW Council FW Candidate Demands Safe Routes To School

As another school year starts, the safety of our children who walk to school needs to be addressed. Fanwood has a joint school district with Scotch Plains and currently there are no schools actually within Fanwood's boundary. However, a number of schools on our borders are within walking distance and Fanwood children walk to these schools. Many of these routes could be improved and made safer for our walkers. One example is the route to McGinn School. Currently the crosswalk across Martine Avenue is substandard and needs to be improved to be a high visibility crosswalk. This crosswalk should have pedestrian warning

and location signs, in addition to the crossing guard currently posted at that location. NJDOT has grant money set aside specifically to help communities make Safe Routes to Schools. Why are we not taking advantage of this grant money? The Democratic Team of Mahr, Molenaar and Dolce will provide the kind of professional experience and leadership that will actively pursue grant money to improve our community. It's time to improve all of Fanwood. Its time to put Fanwood First!

Jack Molenaar
Democrat for Fanwood Borough Council

Governor McGreevey to Visit Westfield HS on September 9

WESTFIELD - Governor James McGreevey will tour Westfield High School (WHS) on Tuesday, September 9, at noon.

As a gubernatorial candidate, the governor had visited WHS on July 11, 2001 to show his support for the School Facilities Financing Act and the aid it was to provide to school districts.

During the visit, Westfield Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Foley emphasized the benefit that the state's

construction funding was bringing to Westfield taxpayers and students. The state agreed to fund \$1.5 million of the planned improvements and additions to WHS.

The addition to WHS, a 55,000-square-foot science wing, is now ready and several renovations to the school's original building are being completed.

On September 9, Governor McGreevey will return to WHS where, just a little more than two years ago, he saw the blueprints displayed for the construction project.

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A Glimpse Back in Time At Westfield and SP Schools

By ELAINE VUONO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

It may be time to go back to school, but there are bound to be some children who wish that the summer would never end. So if they start to grumble when that early alarm goes off, it might help to remind them that compared to the schools of yesteryear, today's schools are not so bad after all.

Marion Nicholl Rawson, a local historian, who was born on Union Avenue in Scotch Plains in 1878, writes of her school memories in her book, "Under the Blue Hills." Ms. Rawson recalls that at age seven, she dressed for her first day of school, complete with button up-high black shoes, black cotton stockings and a white apron tied at her shoulders with a blue ribbon. Older girls - of fifteen to twenty - would wear long dresses, with a bustle and a "tightly laced waist" - their long hair tied in a knot at the back of the neck.

She recalls the classroom rules, in which waving one finger in the air meant "Please, a drink," for a drink of water from the tin dipper at the front of the class, while two fingers signified "Out please" for a run outside to the "privy."

According to Ms. Rawson, discipline was harsher than in our politically-correct world, with mouths washed out with soap for "telling stories" and having to write the word "whispering" three hundred times for talking too much. The "ferule", a flat stick or ruler, was also used for many years, to dole out punishment for more serious offenses.

The New England Primer, which dates back to the 17th century, may have been used in our schools. Long before the principle of separation of church and state was invoked, the reader taught both the alphabet and the protestant beliefs of the day. The alphabet was taught with rhymed couplets like, "The Idle Fool/Is Whipt at School."

A *Grammatical Institute of the English Language* was written by Noah Webster (of Dictionary fame) in 1783, and taught spelling, reading and pronunciation, but was better known as the "Blue Backed Speller," due to the color of its back cover.

The first school in Scotch Plains was built in 1768, near the Village Green, on land deeded by William Darby of the Scotch Plains Baptist

Church. The tuition per pupil was \$1.87 and a half, which was due every three months. (It was not until 1871 that the legislature would declare public schools free.) The small two-story building, later referred to as "The Academy," was used until 1851. In 1875, it was moved to a location on Stout Avenue, but succumbed to fire in 1969.

The next schoolhouse, also served as the second Scotch Plains Baptist Church, which had been built in 1816. The two-story building was moved to its current location on Grand Street in 1871, where it served many students, including Ms. Rawson, until the late 1800's. The building is still in use by the Scotch-Plains Fanwood YMCA.

This first "modern" school, School One, was built in 1890 on Park Avenue, reportedly after much resistance from the old timers in the community. The School closed in 1974 and fell victim to fire in 1984.

On the south side of town, a school was constructed in 1780 on Radley Road. The two-room schoolhouse was moved several times but finally relocated to the Willow Grove section. It served students from both Scotch Plains and Westfield until 1872, but was condemned in 1878 and subsequently razed.

Another school on the south side was the "Jackson School Academy" located on the corner of Terrill Road and Cushing Road, which operated from 1814 through the mid-1850's.

While the Baptists were largely responsible for the Scotch Plains schools, it was the Presbyterians who built the first log schoolhouse in Westfield, around 1750, on the Coe farm, south of East Broad Street and east of Central Avenue. The former schoolmaster, Andrew H. Clark, reportedly said that the building was square, with windows on each side and was "strong enough to resist attack from the Indians."

The next school was built on Mountain Avenue, near East Broad Street, but burned down in 1816. It was later replaced by a two-story brick academy, which was used as a school, the town hall and for prayer meetings. In 1870, the Prospect Street School was built and the (old) Lincoln School was built on the Boulevard in 1890, but neither remains standing. McKinley School, which was built in 1909, is the oldest school still in operation.

Boating Course Offered By Watchung Sail, Power Sqn.

SCOTCH PLAINS - Beginning on Monday, September 29 at 7:15 p.m., the Squadron Boating Course will be offered at the Scotch Plains Fanwood Adult School, 667 Westfield Road in Scotch Plains.

This course includes seven nights of instruction by expert lecturers, as well as in small classroom groups, followed by an exam. This course meets the requirements of the State of New Jersey for a required boating safety certificate, and is open to adults

and teenagers of 13 years or older when accompanied by an adult (up to age 16).

Registration can be made on Monday, September 22 or Wednesday September 24 at SPFHs, starting at 7:15 p.m. The fee is \$60 and it includes all course material, as well as the adult school registration. Instruction is provided for free by the volunteers of the squadron.

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