



OPEN FOR BUSINESS...Eager students, some accompanied by their parents, scurried to the doors of Tamaques Elementary School, left, and Edison Intermediate School, right, to usher in the first official day of school for the 2003-2004 academic year in Westfield.



Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

WF Council Hears Update On Lighted Turf Field Proposal

By LAUREN S. PASS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

At Tuesday night's Westfield Town Council conference session, Recreation Commission Chairman Keith Hertell presented an update on the proposed lighted artificial turf field and received the council's permission to continue researching the project.

The commission is proposing that the field be built on a portion of the land at the Conservation Center on Lamberts Mill Road.

Mr. Hertell said, "The initial wetlands delineation survey reveals there is enough room for both the operations of the DPW (Department of Public Works) activities and a lighted artificial turf field." He also stressed the need for an additional field in town.

Mr. Hertell has already arranged a meeting with the Scotch Plains residents who border the site on Thursday, September 18, to discuss issues of traffic, noise, lights and smell.

Mr. Hertell said that he will ask the Westfield Board of Education for \$400,000 to assist in financing the field and in exchange they will have set time on the field.

He met with school board member Kimberly Rhodes and held preliminary discussions with Board Secretary/Business Administrator Robert

Berman and Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Foley.

Maps were also shown for the issue of wetlands, which take up a portion of the property.

According to Recreation Department Director Bruce Kaufmann, some of the wetlands can be filled in.

Mr. Hertell stated that the commission is still waiting to find out how far back into the "swell" the Department of Environmental Protection will allow them to fill.

Town Administrator James Gildea stated that once the wetlands delineation is complete the area where the field, stands and parking area will be staked out so that it can be determined how much impact there will be on the current DPW operation.

Mayor McDermott expressed concerns about the odor as well as traffic.

Mr. Hertell stated that the odor will be encapsulated under the field and parking lot.

Town Engineer Kenneth Marsh stated that, in the summer, grass being dropped off can start to smell quickly.

Fourth Ward Democrat Councilman Larry Goldman suggested that if the town is going to partner with the school board, the field at Kehler Stadium should be looked at as it is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Safety, Health Concerns Top Reasons Why Officials Chose to Delay Opening of WHS

By ED COONEY

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Due to safety concerns and construction delays, Westfield High School (WHS) will open on Monday, September 8, instead of Wednesday, September 3, as originally planned.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Foley toured the building on Thursday, August 28, with WHS Principal Dr. Robert Petix, Board of Education Business Administrator and Board Secretary Robert Berman, and members of the school board.

After assessing the school's condition and finding safety conditions to be unsatisfactory, Dr. Foley decided to delay the school's opening.

Chief among the safety concerns

is the presence of high amounts of dust in the air due to the summer-long construction. Dust levels in WHS are high enough that inhaling it could pose a health risk to both students and staff.

In addition, furniture that had to be removed from classrooms being renovated is still in the hallways. The furniture would hinder movement through the school, keeping students and teachers from getting to their designated classrooms on time. The furniture will be moved out of the hallways as soon as construction on the classrooms is complete.

Along with the safety concerns, construction on some of the classrooms continues to wrap up. While major construction is complete, a

number of the floors have to be re-leveled, and clocks in the classrooms need to be restored to functionality.

The WHS renovation plan called for 12 classrooms to be renovated and converted into 14 classrooms. In addition, new classrooms would be added on. Ten of the classrooms to be renovated were science classrooms, each of which had its own gas and water lines for lab work. These lines needed to be capped off, and the other lab equipment in the classrooms needed to be demolished.

Mr. Berman said, "There were a number of field changes in the demolitions that led to delays."

The science rooms, along with two art rooms, are being converted into three art rooms, seven regular class-

rooms, and four small group instructional rooms.

WHS underwent its fire inspection on Wednesday, August 27. The fire inspector found that dust from construction had covered some of the school's smoke detectors, posing a possible fire hazard.

"The fire inspector returned this week, and the dust had been cleared away from the smoke detectors," said Mr. Berman. WHS passed fire inspection.

A new elevator being installed by the instrumental music room arrived this week. Its installation should be complete "by the beginning of October," said Mr. Berman.

Penalties for delays appear in the contracts the school district signed with various companies involved in the renovations at WHS. Liquidated damages may be assessed based on how far construction continues past the August 25 deadline.

Secretary Berman stated, "We'll work with our attorneys to see what milestones were not met and proceed from there."

The possibility of construction delays was addressed by the Board of Education as early as January of this year. When the 2003-2004 school calendar was presented for consideration on January 14, it contained a back-up plan in case WHS opened on September 8 instead of September 5.

Class will be in session at the high school on February 17 and June 21.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Deerfield Principal to Leave in Oct.; Opening Date Pending for Beechwood

By BETSEY BURGDORF

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Mountainside Board of Education held a special meeting on August 28 to discuss progress at Beechwood School and the resignation of Deerfield School Principal M. Priscilla Church effective Friday, October 3.

Mrs. Church has been in the district approximately 18 months. Her resignation comes in the wake of Chief School Administrator Dr. Gerard Schaller's resignation, effective June 2004.

Deerfield School has seen three new principals in the last five years, causing concern in many parents as to why Mountainside cannot keep top administrators.

Board member Ray Haggard said he feels that many administrators use Mountainside as a "stepping stone" for their careers, and often leave the district in search of advancement.

Newly-appointed Board member Pat Knodel offended many parents in the audience by suggesting that the women in Mountainside need to "start having more babies to increase the population" in order to attract quality administrators.

Dr. Schaller stated that he was "taken back by Mrs. Church's resignation" and feels like he has "lost his right arm." He also said that he and Mrs. Church had a "wonderful educational partnership" and feels she is moving to a district where there is more room for advancement.

Mrs. Church has been offered a position as principal in the Fort Lee school district.

The board will form a search committee to fill the principal position as quickly as possible.

Vice President Sally Rivieccio stated that, in looking for candidates, they "have always looked for the person who has more to offer the district right off the bat" rather than the candidate who might "hang around longer but doesn't have as much to offer initially."

The board hopes to have the position filled by the time Mrs. Church's resignation becomes effective in October.

Dr. Schaller reported that Beechwood School is dry and the moisture responsible for the mold has been removed from the facility. An environmental inspection of the mold will be conducted to determine

if the spores were completely eliminated. The inspection will take approximately seven to 10 days so that cultures can be examined.

Once it has been determined that mold spores no longer exist in the school, sheetrock can be hung, and the remaining concrete work can be completed.

Other progress has been made on the ductwork. Roof repair is ongoing, but it has been sealed and the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Sub-Surface Problems Impede Completion of Prospect St. Paving

By LAUREN S. PASS

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Before conducting regular business, Tuesday evening's conference session of the Westfield Town Council began with a moment of silence for former Town Attorney Charles Brandt, whom Mayor Gregory McDermott referred to as "Mr. Westfield."

Turning to council issues, Westfield Fire Chief John Castellano told the council that the Westfield emergency services and the county will be running a hazardous materials and weapons of mass destruction drill on Saturday.

The chief stressed that it is only a drill, and did not want people to be concerned when they see the activity at the Westfield train station.

In other business, Town Engineer Kenneth Marsh reported that the work being done on Prospect Street would not be completed in time for the start of the school year. He stated that there were "bad sections in the sub-surface" and that they will have to be

"dug out and paved."

Next week, the council will have a resolution before them to award a contract in the amount of \$103,634 for the renovations to the women's bathroom at Memorial Pool.

The council will also see resolutions to approve the demolition of a detached garage at 128 Ferris Place and a single-family home at 517 Clifton Street.

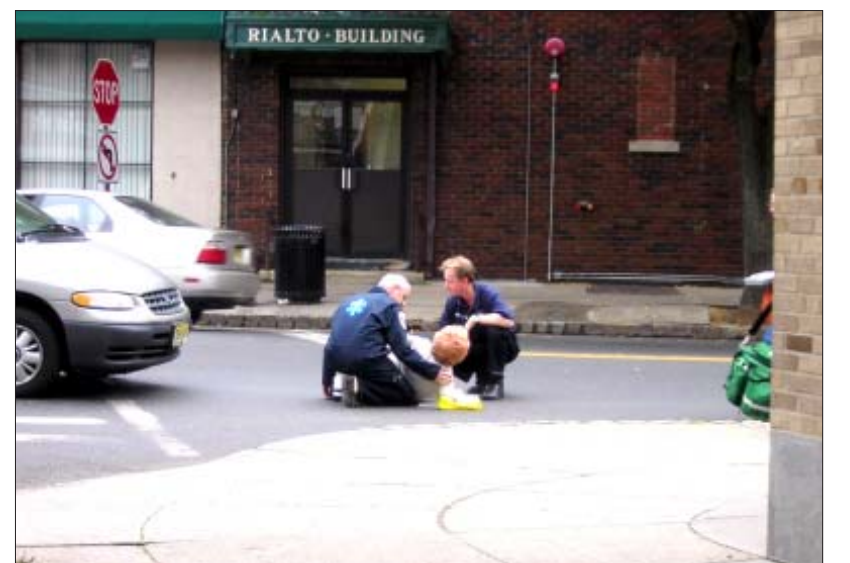
According to Mr. Marsh, neither lot is sub-dividable. The garage is owned by the Westfield "Y" and Mr. Marsh stated that the property is 38 feet wide.

Mr. Marsh also informed the council that he has received updated plans for the reconstruction of the South Avenue traffic circle. He suggested that the Transportation, Parking and Traffic (TPT) Committee meet to go over them.

He also received five options from the county regarding the installation of a traffic light at the intersections of East Broad Street, Mountain and Central Avenues. They will also be reviewed by TPT and comments will be sent back to the county.

Once again, the town will execute an agreement with Scotch Plains for leaf pick-up and disposal. Mr. Marsh stated that the leaves from the north side of Westfield are brought to the Scotch Plains conservation center and the leaves from the south side of Scotch Plains are brought to the Westfield conservation center.

He said that the agreement would



DOWNTOWN ACCIDENT...On Friday a pedestrian was struck by a minivan at the corner of Central Avenue and East Broad Street. Members of the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad are seen tending to the woman who was struck.

Lauren S. Pass for The Westfield Leader



Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

UP, UP, UP...Westfield firefighters Aldo Tammaro, Harry Keen, and Brian Dunlap demonstrate an air bag system that is used to lift objects to retrieve pinned victims. This photograph is a prelude to an upcoming story on all of the fire department's extrication equipment.

Office Traffic Light Reinstalled on S. Ave.

The traffic light facing the driveway of the office building located at 600 South Avenue, West was re-installed last week after having been removed by the state.

The State Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over Route 28, and had removed the light as it was "unauthorized."

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Obituary	8	Real Estate	15-16
Editorial	4-5	Education	9	A&E	17-18
Community ...	6-7	Sports	11-14		

Extraordinary Aid Shortfall Pondered By SP-F School Bd.

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

SCOTCH PLAINS -- Scotch Plains-Fanwood School Business Administrator Anthony Del Sordi gave a construction update on the district's facilities during a joint business and regular meeting of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education on August 28.

Mr. Del Sordi said that the board expected a smooth opening after great efforts were made to bring construction projects to a close.

The overpass and elevator at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) were still in the process of being finished and sign-offs on the work were expected within two weeks. Use of adjacent classrooms would not be delayed.

The parking lots were being readied and the fences will be removed by the start of school in order to make additional parking available. New parking lines will be drawn to gain more spaces, and 28 additional spaces will be made available at Evergreen Park on Westfield Avenue.

The board will assess the number of spaces sometime during the opening week of school to make a determination regarding the adequacy of parking, once the lines were in place, he said.

The windows at McGinn Elementary School would be under construction for another two months. Contractors were instructed to complete two classrooms per day in order to avoid disruption to the teachers and students.

Due to heavy construction throughout the state, all construction projects have been delayed, Mr. Del Sordi explained. Engineers will also be looking into putting air conditioning into the high school auditorium, which was previously considered.

Board members commented that this would allow more programs during the summer months, in the auditorium. Design plans for Park Middle School windows were underway and were expected to go out to bid by December or January, Mr. Del Sordi reported.

Punch list items on all of the schools were in the process of being completed and inspected.

The high school fields were sodded again. However, due to the unusually wet spring, the planting of grass was late and has not yet rooted. For this reason, some of the fields will not be usable until the spring.

Renovations to the high school gym, nurse's office and music rooms will be planned later this year and were already budgeted items.

There was major flooding the week of August 18, causing the upper fields to drain heavily into the lower fields. Westfield Road was backed up with water and water was spurting out of the manholes, Mr. Del Sordi said. The backup caused water to enter into the high school guidance area. The district filed a claim and expects most of the damage to be covered by insurance, Mr. Del Sordi reported.

In response to inquiries by residents, Mr. Del Sordi explained that the SPFHS roof has been renovated or replaced in sections, with some areas replaced in 1993 and other areas replaced in 2000. Due to the building being so large, the roof replacement is done in sections. The warranties for some sections are still in effect, while warranties for other areas have expired, he said.

The locker rooms at Terrill Middle School have been renovated and sections of the ceiling have been replaced so that the ceilings do not leak anymore. Several other problems have been encountered with workmanship at Terrill, and contractors will repair these problems during non-school hours, including replacing flooring and repainting.

The completion of repaving of Westfield Avenue in front of SPFHS is expected before the start of school, weather permitting, Mr. Del Sordi relayed. Other sections of Westfield Avenue will be repaved in the next few weeks.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol Choye, told the board that she has been very busy reviewing hundreds of resumes and applications in order to fill many positions open in the district.

The principals of both Terrill and Park Middle Schools have moved on. Terrill Principal John Foulks retired, while Park Principal Rocco Collucci has taken a position in Rahway.

The new Principal and Assistant Principal at Park Middle will be Lisa

Rebimbas and Kevin Halloway, respectively, while the new Principal at Terrill will be Ned Baubles and the new Assistant Principal will be Michael Klimko.

Dr. Margaret Hayes, Director of Personnel, said that the district held a three-day orientation for 40 new teachers, hired over the summer. They were given information on the district's policies, procedures and practices, as well as lesson planning assistance from the supervisors of their respective departments.

Workshops were also held for administrators and supervisors, as well as the new secretaries, to go over procedures and documentation.

Dr. Choye reported that more stringent efforts were being implemented to insure consistency of data recording between schools, as well as a stricter enforcement of residency requirements.

The total enrollment for the new school year was close to the enrollment figure at the end of the year. Exact numbers would not be calculated or announced until after school began, to get a more accurate count, Dr. Choye said. The numbers would be assessed after the first week, in order to calculate staff allocations, with aides possibly added to larger classrooms.

During the public portion of the meeting, Scotch Plains resident Myrna Gordon asked the board to think ahead to the negotiating process regarding medical benefits for teachers. She said that the board should take into account the economy, taxes and what other districts and corporations have been doing to cut costs.

Mrs. Gordon suggested that teachers should have to either contribute more to their benefits packages or be put into cost-saving HMOs.

Board member Thomas Russo agreed with Mrs. Gordon that medical benefits have become very costly and assured her that the board was doing all that it could to negotiate cost reductions.

Mrs. Gordon also asked the board why letters endorsing the budget were sent out on district stationery. She said that politics should not be endorsed by board members.

Board member Edward Saridaki said those letters were mailed out by the Parent-Teacher Association and not sent on official, district letterhead paper.

Mrs. Gordon also said that she was appalled by the way students were permitted to dress and that the board should consider enforcing a stricter dress code. She said that most parents would favor a dress code, as inappropriate dress was a discipline problem and a distraction.

Mr. Russo responded that the district had a dress code, but that the Supreme Court has ruled that some restrictions were a violation of students' rights and that styles change with the times.

Mrs. Gordon retorted that some public schools have adopted uniforms, despite Supreme Court rulings.

"I am sure Dr. Heisey will do whatever he can to enforce the dress code, but uniforms are not going to happen here," Mr. Russo replied.

A total of \$3.5 million for out of district, special education placements was approved by the board. Board members asked why the out of district placements sometimes fluctuated by as much as \$30,000 for the same disability classification.

District Director of Special Services Thomas Beese explained that each placement varied in the types of services and programs offered at different schools, and that there were different degrees of disability within each classification.

Each placement and the services given were individualized to each student's unique needs, he said.

Board member Trip Whitehouse asked why the district couldn't hire its own special education teachers to provide services when the costs for several students under one classification totaled more than one special education teacher's salary.

Mr. Beese explained that this was being done in a few areas, such as special education for autism, being taught in the district.

However, he said that there were other costs involved other than just teachers' salaries for some students, such as therapeutic and psychological or evaluation services, which the district could not provide. Some schools have in-house, special assessment teams and other incidental

types of therapies, which would not be cost effective for the district to provide.

"That is being done whenever possible," Mr. Beese said. "We have developed programs, but we also have to consider whether we can follow through on these special education programs from Kindergarten through grade 12 for special needs students."

Mr. Beese also reported on the new Resolve Community Counseling Center program that will be implemented in the district. Resolve provides students with crisis intervention and prevention counseling from licensed therapists. The new program will feature more frequent prevention and intervention programs, and more time spent with each student. The idea is to attempt to forestall the necessity of "crisis" intervention by providing services in a prevention mode, Mr. Beese reported. The Resolve program will cost the district \$70,000 for the year.

Mr. Saradaki reported that the additional, "Extraordinary Aid" from the state, in the amount of \$241,681, must be applied to reducing taxes for the 2004 year, according to the state's budgetary language.

However, this extraordinary aid was initially promised by the state to cover the tuition for special education students, which exceeds \$40,000 per student. Therefore, the tax benefits of this money, spread over the entire, taxpaying population, will be offset by the district's need to recoup the money from taxpayers in order to cover the cost of these mandated services, thereby eliminating any actual tax relief.

"This kind of shell game is exactly what McGreevey is famous for," Mr. Saradaki remarked. "We ought to have a recall election of our own."

Extraordinary aid included separate funds for various Title programs, including a \$2 check to cover Title II, Part D from the state.

Mr. Saradaki also reported that the budgetary committee will discuss the budget at its September meeting. He said that to compensate for the shortfall of aid from the state, the district would have to tighten its belts or ask the taxpayers to make up the difference.

Principal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

building is free of leaks. Lights have been installed in the classrooms.

Dr. Schaller commented on how "colorful and bright" the classrooms are. He stated that he is "anxiously waiting to cut the ribbon and enter the facility...it will be beautiful."

No date was given as to when the building will be ready for occupancy.

Dr. Schaller has also been in touch with two production companies to discuss taping the school board meetings and special events at the schools. He will have more information as to when taping will occur when a decision has been made as to which company they will use.

WHS Opening

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Should there be unused snow days, WHS will be in session on April 12 instead of June 21.

Immediately after Superintendent Foley made his decision, notification of parents, guardians, and students began. Letters to every parent or guardian of a WHS student were dropped off at the post office on the afternoon of August 28.

Those who signed up for the WHS e-mail list were notified of the school's delayed opening almost instantly. In addition, Superintendent Foley e-mailed all of his e-mail subscribers. The announcement was placed at the top of the town's website, www.westfieldnj.com. A recording was placed on the school district's phone line, and local newspapers, as well as Channel 36, were notified.

The schedule for the rest of the school district remains the same, as the remainder of Westfield's schools opened yesterday.

"We'll definitely be ready to open on Monday," said Mr. Berman.

Check Us Out on the Web:
www.goleader.com!



A LOT OF PAINT... The south side of the four story building on Elm Street was painted on Sunday. It took 30 gallons of paint and two days to paint the one side of the building according to painter Thomas Anastasiou.

Westfield Council Hears Update On Lighted Turf Field Proposal

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"underutilized."

According to Mr. Hertell, Dr. Foley suggested the field behind Edison Intermediate School for the project.

Mr. Kaufmann added that, because the track is at Kehler Stadium, lacrosse could not be played at the same time as the High School Federation bans the duel use.

The council ultimately granted permission for the commission to continue with their work on the project. However, the commission will continue its research through monies donated by the Westfield Soccer Association.

Some council members also expressed disappointment that the Conservation Center was the only site available for the town.

Fourth Ward Democrat Councilwoman Susan Jacobson expressed concern that money has been solicited from user groups and that there is a "sense of anticipation that this will happen" when the council has not yet committed the funding.

She stated that if the council decides to undertake the currently pro-

posed parking projects, there could be tighter fiscal restraints for other projects.

Mr. Hertell will ask the town for \$1.1 million for the field in next year's capital budget requests.

A traffic study on the proposal will be forthcoming in the next couple of weeks.

Paving

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Westfield High School.

Councilman Betancourt will contact Republican State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. and Republican Assemblymen Jon Brannick and Eric Muñoz, M.D. to discuss moving forward on the matter.

The council then went into closed session to discuss the Cranford Detention Basin agreement, the May Company letter agreement and the Delta Environment Access agreement.

The council will meet in public session on Tuesday, September 9, at 8 p.m.

Scotch Plains Officials, Business Owners Eye Redevelopment Ideas

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

SCOTCH PLAINS -- There have been some discussions in Scotch Plains' downtown business community about options, besides a Special Improvement District (SID), that could help inject new vitality into the central business district, although township government officials are keen on continuing to seriously examine the establishment of a SID.

Councilwoman Nancy Malool told the Township Council at its conference meeting on Tuesday night that business owners have been discussing whether the business district might qualify as an "Area in Need of Redevelopment," a state designation included in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law.

Such a designation would allow downtown redevelopment to be handled differently than a SID, with different options available to township officials.

Township Attorney Douglas Hansen felt that downtown Scotch Plains would not qualify, but Councilwoman Malool said members of the Towne Center Task Force, an advisory group of local businesspeople and town officials, believed the decision should ultimately be made by the local Planning Board.

Township Manager Thomas Atkins pointed out that moving away from the SID option and toward the other alternative would mean a redevelopment process that could take years to complete.

Mayor Martin Marks, while saying that no option should be completely ruled out, urged Mrs. Malool to press downtown businesspeople to stay on the present course and give serious consideration to the SID alternative.

In other matters, Mr. Atkins told the council that the road repaving work on West Broad Street was completed last week,

but that completion of the roadwork on Westfield Road is still several days away.

In an effort to ease the situations in front of Brunner Elementary School and Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, given the start of the school year, the section of Westfield Road from Westfield Avenue to Homestead Terrace was resurfaced last week.

The remaining stretch of road is expected to be completed this week and next week, weather permitting. There is still other work to be done on the Fanwood side of Westfield Road, Mr. Atkins emphasized.

Township finance officials will be looking into the potential benefits of the township endorsing a discount prescription drug plan for residents lacking insurance.

Several dozen New Jersey communities participate in Garden State Pharmacy Owners Providers Services Corp. (GSPOPS) in which residents pay \$20 annually to take part in a discount prescription program.

No nearby towns do so, but Clark is considering it. At Tuesday night's meeting, two council members, Frank Rossi and Paulette Coronato, expressed some skepticism about the program, wondering if it was necessary for the local government to give its endorsement.

In addition, Mr. Atkins said the communications system at the firehouse on the south side of Scotch Plains is being examined, with the intent being to upgrade it so that problems with radio communications and transmissions can be eliminated.

Noting that the present antenna system is several decades old, Mr. Atkins told the council that a consulting engineer has been looking at possible upgrades and met this week with township officials. It is expected that recommendations will be forthcoming in the near future.

WESTFIELD VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD BLOTTER

Statistics for Weeks Ending July 12 to August 23, 2003

Nature of Call:	First Call:	Second Call:	Third Call:
Abd Injury Head/Neck Injury	21	5	
Airway Obstruction	3	1	
Allergic Reaction	3		
Behavioral Disorder	14	2	
Bleeding/Hemorrhage	19	1	1
Cardiac Arrest	2	1	
Cardiac Related	26	2	
Chest Injury		1	
Diabetic Related (potential)	6	1	
Fire Call	1		
Gastro-Intestinal Distress	14	2	
General Illness	5		
Lift Assist	3	1	
Other Injury	13	6	
Respiratory Distress	30		1
Seizure	3	3	
Shock/Trauma	1		
Spinal Injury	3	2	
Substance Abuse (potential)	4		
Suspected Fracture	6	1	
Syncope	14	1	
Unconscious	18	1	
Other	7		
TOTAL	7	1	1
	223	32	3

Paramedics	92 (first call); 8 (second call); 0 (third call)	=100
Fire Dept. Assisted	1 (first call); 0 (second call); 0 (third call)	= 1
Genesis Eldercare	27 (first call); 4 (second call); 0 (third call)	= 31
Senior Citizen Complex	11 (first call); 2 (second call); 1 (third call)	= 14
Sunrise Assisted Living	13 (first call); 1 (second call); 0 (third call)	= 14
Out-of-Town Mutual Aid	15 (first call); 1 (second call); 0 (third call)	= 16
Non-Emergency Calls	2 (first call); 0 (second call); 0 (third call)	= 2
Total Calls: 258		



LEARNING NEW SKILLS... This summer, the Apple Computer consultant oriented Westfield turn-key teachers in the use of the new Macintosh operating system. Turn-key teachers will disseminate instruction on using the new operating system to all district Macintosh users throughout the summer and fall.

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Colby College in Maine Welcomes Engel of WF

WESTFIELD -- Westfield resident Gregory Engel enrolled at Colby College in Waterville, Me. this fall.

Before classes began, he participated in a weeklong orientation, which included an introduction to the college's academic program and student life, as well as a four-day orientation trip.

From August 27 to 30, Gregory

participated in a backpacking trip on one of the sections of the Appalachian Trail in the Surplus and Elephant Mountain region of Maine's western mountains.

Gregory made the trip with a dozen other students, including two other pupils who were trip leaders.

A graduate of Westfield High School, he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Laurence Engel of Westfield.