



**FLOWERS OF SPRING...**Members of the Westfield Garden Club gathered April 6 to plant pansies in the eight planters at the corners of Elm and Broad Streets in Westfield. The flowers were donated by David Williams of Williams Nursery and Garden Center. Pictured, left to right, are: Mary Ann Malloy, Jody Melloan, Pat Volini, Chairwoman Joanne Sullebarger, Jennie Williams, Rosemary Shire, Diane Clemson, Nancy Roff and Ann Arkel. Not pictured are: Jane Curtis and Jeanne Sawtelle.

## Ferguson Addresses Rally At Capitol For Med-Lia. Reform

WASHINGTON - Saying that doctors' skyrocketing liability insurance is jeopardizing patient care, Rep. Mike Ferguson (R-7th) last Wednesday addressed thousands of physicians from New Jersey and eight other states who gathered on Capitol Hill to urge passage of medical liability reform legislation that would prevent the excessive jury awards that drive up healthcare costs and encourage frivolous lawsuits.

Doctors from nine states - New Jersey, Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia - participated in the rally. On the west steps of the Capitol, Rep. Ferguson told the physicians that he supports their efforts and will advocate that the legislation wins congressional approval and is signed into law.

"America's doctors, nurses and medical researchers are the best in

the world, but our health care system is broken," Rep. Ferguson said. "In New Jersey, lawsuits and doctors' skyrocketing liability insurance are jeopardizing patient care. If we don't take corrective action now, we will lose many valuable physicians. After all, without insurance doctors can't practice, but high insurance costs are forcing doctors to abandon their practices."

A New Jersey Hospital Association survey shows that 100 percent of New Jersey hospitals saw an increase in liability insurance premiums in 2002, with the average hospital experiencing a 50 percent increase. Liability insurance has increased 203 percent from 1999. Across all specialties, increases by one major New Jersey insurance carrier jumped at least 57 percent - 87 percent for physicians with clean claims from 2001 to 2003.

In previous years, the House has approved medical liability reform legislation, but the bills have stalled in the Senate. The House is again developing reform legislation and is expected to vote on a bill this year.

Rep. Ferguson is Vice Chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health.

## Foundation Awards Kean, CONTACT We Care for Grant

AREA - Senator Thomas Kean, Jr. was recently named by the Amerigroup foundation as the winner of their "Champion for Children" award for the second consecutive year. The foundation, based in Virginia,

is the philanthropic arm of the Amerigroup Corporation, which is a healthcare company that focuses on publicly sponsored programs. Amerigroup recognized Sen. Kean for his advocacy and leadership on children's health issues throughout the state.

### Governor Candidates Set for Mountainside GOP Club Event

MOUNTAINSIDE - The seven Republican gubernatorial candidates running in the Tuesday, June 7 Primary Election have been invited to speak before the Mountainside Republican Club on Wednesday May 4.

The meeting, to be held at the Mountainside Borough Hall, is well subscribed by the candidates and will begin sharply at 7:15 p.m., according to Club President William Sanders.

The event is open to all area residents. The Mountainside Borough Hall is located on Route 22, east at New Providence Road.

### NJ Sierra Club Endorses Bramnick

AREA - Last week, the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club endorsed Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (LD-21) for reelection. The organization said it was important to let the public know of their support due to the assemblyman's leadership in protecting the environment.

The Sierra Club is a national, member-supported environmental organization, which seeks to influence public policy at local, state and national levels through public education and grass-roots political action.

Several laws being sponsored by Sen. Kean include simplifying the enrollment process and expanding eligibility for potential applicants into New Jersey's FamilyCare and Medicaid Programs. Other initiatives include expanding the duties of the Office of the Child Advocate to allow unannounced site visits and review the operation, policies and procedures of facilities serving children and juveniles.

As part of the award, Sen. Kean designated CONTACT We Care to receive a grant from the foundation in his name. CONTACT We Care is a 24-hour crisis hotline based in Westfield that answers calls throughout the state. In 2004, their hotline volunteers answered nearly 10,000 calls, including 250 suicide related calls. "I am very pleased to have been selected two years in a row to receive this distinguished award, stated Sen. Kean. I am also pleased that I was able to share this distinct honor with such a worthy organization in CONTACT We Care and I am looking forward to continuing my work on behalf of our children in all avenues of public policy."

### Cancellation

The Mars Attacks lecture scheduled for Thursday, April 28, at 6:30 p.m. at the Newark Museum's Dreyfuss Planetarium has been canceled. For more information, please call Kevin Conod at (973) 596-6529.



**SPECIAL RECOGNITION...**Dolores Geisow of the Woman's Club of Westfield, left, receives a plaque from Andrea Spencer-Linzie of the YWCA of Eastern Union County on April 9 to recognize the club's contribution to "Project Protect," which provides transitional housing for victims of domestic violence.

## Letter to the Editor

### WF Resident Feels School Budget Is 'Neverland' of Salaries and Benefits

After the Westfield Board of Education (BOE) lost its budget vote, the reality of lifelong residents being school taxed from what they thought would be their retirement homes have now become a flood and soon a tsunami.

If you closely examine the board of education budget as you would a competitive business, you soon realize that it is a "Neverland" of salary and benefit packages only sustainable because of the fear factor of children being held hostage. Yes, the problem goes beyond Westfield to mandates from the same type of unrealistic state and federal dreamers, but Westfield must take into account that tax dollars must serve the good and benefit all its citizens, not starving out some to engorge a single group.

Watching years of give-away labor

contracts you conclude that the BOE is a servant to the Westfield Teachers Association (WTA), leading to this economic disaster.

It is, therefore, not unexpected that on April 22 the news was released that the WTA praised its servant, the BOE, for approving healthcare to same-sex couples to the dismay of the already overburdened taxpayers, who now face the added financial burden of supporting a social behavior alien to what Westfield has always represented to us.

We are not San Francisco, SoHo or Michael Jackson. The threshold of where our children seek to form normal and time-proven social and moral behavior should not give them mixed signals from a mixed up, "Neverland" world.

Warren Victor Westfield

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### Westfield Memorial Library: May 2005 Events

Library CLOSED May 30 for Memorial Day

#### ADULT PROGRAMS

May 3	at 10:00 AM	Computer Class: Know Your Library
May 3	at 7:00 PM	Trumpeter/Flugelhornist Gordon James Performs
May 6	at 1:30 PM	TGIF: Babe: When Baseball Was King
May 10	at 1 & 7 PM	Foreign Film - Goodbye Lenin!
May 10	at 10:00 AM	Computer Class: Puzzled by the Internet I
May 13	at 1:30 PM	TGIF: Senior Resources on the Web
May 17	at 10:00 AM	Computer Class: Puzzled by the Internet II
May 20	at 1:30 PM	TGIF: Remembering Earhart and Lindberg
May 24	at 10:00 AM	Computer Class: Business and Investment Online
May 24	at 7:00 PM	Author: Andrew Lee, <i>Scottsboro, Alabama</i>
May 27	at 1:30 PM	TGIF: Trivoli Fest
May 31	at 10:00 AM	Computer Class: Genealogy Online

#### CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

May 2, 9, 16	at 1:30 PM	Time for Tales (ages 3½ - 5)
May 3 & 4	at 10:30 AM	Little Listeners (ages 2 - 3½)
May 6, 13, 20	at 10:30 AM	Time for Tales (ages 3½ - 5)
May 10, 17, 24, 31	at 9:45 AM	Lapsit (ages 10-23 months)
May 11, 18, 25	at 9:45 AM	Lapsit (ages 10-23 months)

All programs are free to Westfield Memorial Library cardholders. Pre-registration or age restrictions may apply to some programs. Call the library for further information.

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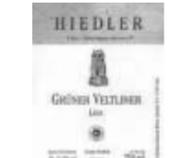
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