

Zoning Board OK's Teen's Sign for Emmanuel Cancer

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — William Mascarichi III, a 14-year-old with Boy Scout Troop 72 in Westfield, became one of the youngest, if not the youngest, applicants to appear before the township's Board of Adjustment on March 3 when he presented his case for a use variance to allow him to place a free-standing sign on the lawn in front of the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation building at 1815 Front Street.

The project is part of William's effort to attain Eagle Scout status with the Boy Scouts. He told the board that the Foundation's building is set far back from the street and, without a sign, it is difficult for passing motorists to know where the building is located. Assisted by an attorney Richard Cohen, William told the board his sign would be four feet wide and three feet high and set on three-foot long posts. He also plans to plant flowers underneath the sign, which will be set 11 feet back from the street and stand perpendicular to Front Street.

Westfield TV36 To Air President's Visit

WESTFIELD — Westfield Community Television (TV36) has just announced the schedule for airing President George W. Bush's speech, "Strengthening Social Security for the 21st Century" that took place on March 4 at the Westfield Armory. President Bush's speech will air Mondays and Wednesdays at 9 a.m., 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. and Fridays at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.

For the complete schedule, please view the Community Calendar on WCT-36 or go to their website at www.westfieldtoday.com/WestfieldCommunityTelevision.

Video of President Bush's Visit Available at www.goleader.com

WESTFIELD — A video of President George W. Bush's visit to Westfield is available on the Internet at www.goleader.com. The video was directed and edited by Patrick Connor, videotaped by Bill McMeekan and produced by Horace Corbin.

The Westfield Leader production is a new Internet video series at goleader.com entitled "On The Air." Those interested to be "On The Air" should e-mail press@goleader.com.

William, who had prepared printed materials for the board members as well as a larger display detailing his plans, said he had chosen this project in part due to his own victory over cancer as an infant.

In approving the variance, board members were unanimous in lauding William and his project. He said he was surprised at the amount of time it took for the approval process to come to fruition.

Dr. D. Michael Hart, his scouting advisor, told the board that the paperwork process for the sign's approval had started in October 2004.

The board also approved two applications regarding the installation of swimming pools that required setback variances. John and Lisa Skowronski of 1212 Woodside Road were granted approval to install an aboveground pool. Dominick and Wendy Rotella of 2407 Longfellow Avenue were granted a similar approval for an in-ground pool.

The board, in its resolution of approval, required the Skowronskis to lessen the intensity of lighting on a deck overlooking the pool. A neighbor complained that the spotlight was too bright for drivers and nearby residents.

After a Seneca Road resident expressed concern about possible damage to older trees in the Crestwood section, the board asked the Rotellas to be vigilant when digging for the pool so as not to disturb tree roots.

The board also approved an application by Richard Keri of 15 Traveler Way to install a six-foot fence around a portion of his corner property.

Several board members expressed concern about the proposed fence being situated at the property's edge, next to the curb. Board member Ken Anderson said setting the fence back several feet from the curb would permit pedestrians to step off the street if a car was passing.

Board Chairman James Fawcett said that a fence at the curb "gives the impression that it's an overbuilt area."

A condition of the board's approval was that Mr. Keri put in some small trees or other plantings outside the fence along Rambling Drive in order to "break up" the long piece of fencing.

On Wednesday, March 16, the board will hold a special meeting to finish the hearing on the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA's application to expand its facilities and its parking lot.



TAKING THE OATH...President George W. Bush watches as U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor swears in former Westfielder Michael Chertoff as Secretary of Homeland Security during a ceremony March 3 at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C. On stage with Mr. Chertoff is his wife, Meryl, center, and their two children, Emily and Philip.

Michael Chertoff Sworn In As Homeland Security Chief

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Former Westfield resident Michael Chertoff officially took over as Secretary of Homeland Security in President George W. Bush's administration last week.

With his wife, Meryl, at his side, Mr. Chertoff took the oath of office from U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

President Bush described Mr. Chertoff as "a talented public servant, with an outstanding record of achievement and a deep commitment to the cause of justice."

"Mike has worked tirelessly to make our people safer and our nation more secure. And now he will carry on that vital work as the Secretary of Homeland Security," President Bush said.

"As the 9/11 Commission said in its report, America is safer because of your (Home Land Security employees) efforts, but we are not yet safe. Mike Chertoff knows we cannot afford to become complacent. He understands they (terrorists) continue to pose a great threat to the American people," President Bush said at the March 3 swearing-in ceremony.

The President said under former Secretary Tom Ridge the largest government reorganization in 50 years took place when 180,000 federal employees from 22 government agencies were moved into the Department of Homeland Security.

"He (Mr. Chertoff) knows the nature of the enemy. As head of the criminal division at the Department of Justice, Mike helped trace the September 11 attacks to the al Qaeda network. And it didn't take him very

long to do so," President Bush said. "He understands that the terrorists are brutal and determined, and that to stop them all our agencies must work more closely together using every resource and technological advantage we have."

"Mike is the right person to lead this department in this vital work. He knows that to win the war on terror abroad, we always must remember where it began, here in the homeland. He will be an outstanding Secretary of Homeland Security," President Bush told Mr. Chertoff before handing over the podium to him.

"Since September 11, the job of defending the homeland has become the challenge and the calling of our generation. Under your (President Bush's) steadfast and determined guidance, our country has risen to meet the threat of the age of terror. We have responded in a unified, strategic and comprehensive manner, and as a result, America today is safer, stronger and more secure," said Mr. Chertoff.

Mr. Chertoff said the department's "task now is to advance the exceptional achievements of the first two years of this department, to meet and manage the threats of today, and to prepare to confront the risks of the future. Our mission is no less than this: protect America, while fostering the values of liberty, privacy and opportunity we all hold dear."

Mr. Chertoff most recently served as a United States circuit judge for the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in New Jersey. He also was assistant attorney general under former Attorney General John Ashcroft, a U.S. attorney from New Jersey under President George H.W. Bush and a federal prosecutor.

Mr. Chertoff was a partner in the law firm of Latham & Watkins prior to joining the Bush administration in the Attorney General's office. From 1994 to 1996 he served as Special Counsel for the United States Senate Whitewater Committee.

He graduated magna cum laude from Harvard College in 1975 and magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1978. From 1979 to 1980 he clerked for U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, Jr.

McCarthy to Hold 'Mayor's Saturday'

GARWOOD — Garwood Mayor Dennis J. McCarthy will hold his monthly "Mayor's Saturday" on Saturday, March 12, from 10 to 11:00 a.m. in the municipal building at 403 South Avenue.

Residents are invited to stop by to discuss any concerns they have, or just stop by and say hello and meet the mayor. For more information, call (908) 789-0710.



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Freeholders Set to Approve Funding for Vo-Tech Project

By PAUL PEYTON
Specially Written for The Leader and The Times

ELIZABETH — The Union County freeholder board is expected to adopt an ordinance tonight, March 10, paving the way for the \$20 million expansion of the county's vocational-technical schools in Scotch Plains.

The project will include the addition of a 12,000, square-foot addition featuring a 600-seat cafeteria to the vo-tech high school building, West Hall, and a 23,000 square-foot addition to Baxel Hall which currently houses the school's cafeteria and administrative offices.

West Hall will also house the culinary arts, baking and supermarket retail skills rooms. The school's new allied health and medical science program will be housed at Baxel.

Dr. Thomas Bistocchi told The Westfield Leader and The Times that the new cafeteria will be completed by September 2006 with the space for the allied health program available by November 2006.

The program will be offered in the fall of 2005 with Vo-Tech leasing space on its campus from the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ).

Dr. Bistocchi said that Vo-Tech is working on a partnership with Union County College, Rutgers University and UMDNJ to offer the new allied health and medical science program. The new program is an addition to the school's traditional vo-tech and new information technology program.

In other business, the board is also set to adopt an ordinance to abolish the Department of Operations and Facilities. The functions of the department will be redistributed to other departments. The department is responsible for maintaining the county's offices and facilities, as well as its fleet of vehicles.

The department includes the Divi-

sion of Operations, which entails the Bureaus of Administrative Support, Construction Management and Motor Vehicles, and the Division of Building Services, which includes the Bureaus of General Trades, Stationary Engineers and Telecommunications.

County Manager George Devanney told The Leader and The Times that the Operations and Facilities Department's prior director, Richmond Lapolla, has been reassigned to the director of construction and facilities management with the vo-tech schools.

Mr. Devanney has said the change is being made "for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness."

Under the restructuring, building services will be moved to the parks and recreation department, telecommunications to the economic development department and motor vehicle services to the department of administrative services.

The board will also vote on a resolution authorizing County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi to utilize GSV Productions of Fairfield to create audio tapes of sample election ballots for visually disabled voters. Ms. Rajoppi said the audio tapes are required under the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002. The system was used for the first time in Union County last year.

On another matter, Mr. Devanney said a resolution would be on tonight's ballot urging that the federal government's Community Development Block Grant program be continued. Begun in 1974, the program is one of the oldest administered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Under President George W. Bush's \$2.57 trillion budget, the \$4.7 billion program, which helps provide services including housing for low-income persons, would be cut by 40 percent. The program would also be moved from HUD to the Department of Commerce.

County GOP Calls on Dems To Return Kushner Money

WESTFIELD — The Union County Republican Committee has called upon the Union County Democrats to return a total of \$108,650 in campaign contributions by Charles Kushner and his companies, Quail Ridge Associates and Highview Planning, made to the Union County Democrat Committee.

Mr. Kushner, a real estate developer and major benefactor to Democrats, was sentenced Friday to two years in federal prison for campaign finance violations and retaliating against a witness. Kushner, who got the maximum term, was also fined \$40,000 by U.S. District Judge Jose Linares.

The judge said Mr. Kushner's generosity in giving money to charity and individuals was difficult to reconcile with his "vengeful and hateful" acts.

Mr. Kushner pled guilty in August to 18 charges, including charges that he tampered with a witness in a federal probe, filed false tax returns for

several entities (including Quail Ridge in 2000), and violated campaign finance laws.

"The Union Democrats should return all donations linked to Mr. Kushner and his companies," said Anthony Attanasio, the Union County GOP Executive Director. "He and his companies have contributed to the campaigns of Senator Jon Corzine, the Democrat National Committee, the New Jersey Democrat State Committee and the Union County Democrat Committee."

Mr. Attanasio added, "Now that Mr. Kushner has been sentenced to the maximum term in prison, it's time that the Union County Democrats showed some ethical fiber and return these donations."

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