



Linda B. Condrillo for The Westfield Leader and The Times
UNDER WRAPS...In February, *The Leader/Times* met with Westfield's Jesse Hershkowitz. The aspiring rap artist, known as "Urbalist," disclosed his battle with non-Hodgkins lymphoma in his newest release, "Cancerous Flow: Lyrical Journal." Above, Mr. Hershkowitz reveals a mediport, which was surgically implanted under his skin to prevent repeated sticking with needles and accommodate the amount of chemotherapy necessary to treat his cancer.



Christie Storms for The Westfield Leader and The Times
HEART AND SOUL.....This year marked the release of "Findings," a contemporary-jazz CD created by saxophonist Benny Reid. Above, the former Westfield resident performs songs from the album, inspired by the memory of his sister, at *The Crossroads* in Garwood.



Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times
PARIS IN SPRINGTIME...During Westfield High School's performance of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*, secretaries sing "Paris Original."

Year In Photos

January Through April

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A&E Year In Review

Part 1 of 3 Jan. - April

Late 06/ January 07

The New Year began with a bang, as the Westfield Symphony Orchestra presented "American Songbook," filling the air with sounds of old, familiar musical numbers from Broadway shows of the last 40 years.

Hits included Gershwin's "How Long Has This Been Going On?" and "All the Things You Are," a duet by soprano Marguerite Millbanks and tenor David Gagnon.

~ Susan M. Dougherty

January

Washington Elementary School performed its annual show, in which parents, teachers and staff combine talents to raise money for the school.

This year's original show, *Stick to the Status Quo*, encompassed songs and themes - from musicals like *Grease*, *Hairspray*, *Wicked* and "High School Musical" - that dealt with stereotypes from two distinctly different social groups. The twist here was the second act trial of the teen hero.

The tradition of staging a parent-driven show began at Grant School in February 1948, when a small-scale talent show was produced in an effort to encourage attendance at PTA meetings.

~ Susan M. Dougherty

February

In February, *The Leader/Times* sat down with Westfield's Jesse Hershkowitz, 26, who spoke about healing from cancer via hip-hop. The aspiring artist known as "Urbalist" had his plight immortalized in his newest release, "Cancerous Flow: Lyrical Journal."

He spoke to the newspaper from his parents' home in Westfield, where he had been recuperating since summer 2006 after being diagnosed with non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Mr. Hershkowitz said, "When I write and record, I forget about everything else - including the fact that I have cancer. Making the album was a way for me to 'fast forward' this time in my life."

~ Linda B. Condrillo

March

In March, local saxophonist Benny Reid spoke to the newspaper about his first contemporary-jazz CD. The 26-year-old former Westfield resident released "Findings," an uplifting work that Mr. Reid has worked on for more than a decade, determined to have his departed sister live on through his music.

"She has been the guiding and driving force in my life," Mr. Reid said of his sister, Alina Siegel, who died suddenly after brief illness at age 14.

"I didn't know how much talent I'd have or how good I'd be, but I always knew I'd do something for her, make it happen...and this is the dream coming true."

Mr. Reid began playing saxophone in second grade and told the newspa-

per he believes he expresses himself best through music.
~ Christie Storms

Also in March, Westfield High School's (WHS) drama and music departments put on quite a show with *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*.

With music and lyrics by Frank Loesser, this winner of seven Tony Awards and a 1962 Pulitzer Prize is the zany story of a window washer's meteoric rise to chairman of the board of the World Wide Wicket Company.

Thanks to director Darlene White, vocal coach Sharon Reynolds and musical director Eric Johnston, and the countless behind the scenes stars, the show, like a good business venture, was a success.

In Scotch Plains, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School's Repertory Theatre production of *Once Upon a Mattress*, the Hans Christian Anderson tale of "The Princess and the Pea" took a performance that is normally superstar-driven and turned it into an ensemble effort because of the efforts of the supporting stars.

Under the baton of Musical Director John Brzozowski and Orchestra Director Durand Thomas, the music - vocal and instrumental - was first-rate.

~ Susan M. Dougherty

April

In April, *The Leader/Times* sat down with Raymond Wojcik, the baton wielder and WHS's director of instrumental music for more than a decade.

Outside of Mr. Wojcik's coaching and rehearsing, 2007 marked the release of his debut album, "Akin to Fire," on Albany Records. Recorded with the Moravian Philharmonic (Czech Republic) and the Rzeszow Philharmonic Orchestra (Poland), the album contains original compositions premiered between 2001 and 2005.

The title "Akin to Fire" comes from the last line of Jeanne Fitzgerald's poem "Elemental" - to Wojcik, it represents "that part of us that is the most elemental, the closest to our true nature."

Later in the month, his "In the Valley of the Shadow," premiered during "Ars Vitalis: The New Jersey New Music Forum" at the Wilkins Theatre for the Performing Arts at Kean University.

~ Victoria McCabe

April also marked a landmark day for Paper Mill Playhouse in Millburn, as white letters on protesters' crimson shirts screamed "Save Paper Mill Playhouse" - the theme of an hour-and-a-quarter rally.

Politicians and Broadway performers came out in force to support the financially flagging theater that announced in early April that it would

19 CONTINUED: YEAR IN REVIEW

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Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times
ALL TOGETHER NOW...At the conclusion of the Westfield Symphony Orchestra's "The American Songbook" on New Year's Eve 2006, Maestro David Wroe invited the audience to sing "Auld Lang Syne" with Milla Ilieva, David Gagnon, Marguerite Willbanks and Marcus DeLoach.



Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader and The Times
SAVE THE DATE...Former Governors Brendan Byrne, left, and Richard Codey, center, along with Assemblyman Jon Bramnick of Westfield gather in the Paper Mill Playhouse courtyard before the rally to save the theater from closing its doors.

Gary Kehler
October 7, 1931 - December 7, 2007

GETTING AN EDGE...*The Westfield Leader* and *The Times* reviewed "The Coaching Edge," learning about the strategies of the Hall of Fame coach and reliving the legend's legacy.

Photo Courtesy of The Kehler Family

'Coaching Edge' Relives Exciting Times for WHS Sports

By MARYLOU MORANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD - Not every high-school football coach gets a book written about him. But then again, Gary Kehler - the former Westfield High School (WHS) football coach who died last week on December 9 - had quite a story to tell.

During his 22-year career in Westfield, Coach Kehler guided the Blue Devils through nine undefeated seasons. He also steered the WHS team through a 48-game winning streak.

Written by Tom DeNigris and Westfield resident Lee Hale, "The Coaching Edge: The Gary Kehler Story" chronicles these and many other accomplishments during Coach Kehler's career. The book provides a unique

glimpse inside the head of a brilliant strategist who had a "plan" for winning that encompassed "character phases...physical phases...and mental approaches."

Coach Kehler also taught his players the value of good football instincts. "Our system, defensively and offensively, relies on quickness and the execution of fundamentals," the authors quote Coach Kehler as saying. It was this winning attitude that caused a rival football coach to call WHS "the Notre Dame of New Jersey high-school football."

A stickler for detail, Coach Kehler was fond of making up lists for his players, all of which can be found in "The Coaching Edge."

19 CONTINUED: KEHLER BOOK

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