



AIR TRAFFIC (May 3)...The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposed changes to air-traffic patterns in the area for landings and departures at Newark Airport. Pictured above is the web of flights, rearranged to pass over the region from traffic surrounding the New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia hub. See goleader.com/features to download detailed FAA reports.

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voters in a candidates' forum at the district's administration offices.
Voters in Scotch Plains and Fanwood approved the school budget, passed the bond to turf the athletic fields, re-elected Rob O'Connor, who was unopposed for the Fanwood seat, and elected Nancy Bauer and Jane Costello to open seats representing Scotch Plains on the board of education.

The \$64.5-million school budget passed by a vote of 2,513 to 1,651. Voters approved the \$2-million turf-bond referendum, 2,114 to 2,052.

Charlie Brown's Steakhouse officials planned a groundbreaking for a new restaurant on North Avenue in Scotch Plains after the zoning board of adjustment approved revised plans for a new 6,744-square-foot restaurant to replace the steakhouse building that was destroyed by fire.

The township council adopted, by a 4-1 vote, a \$23.3-million municipal budget that would be financed in part by a five-point, or 3.6 percent, increase in municipal property taxes.

Fanwood

Two-dozen residents attended a Fanwood Republican Club-sponsored meeting to hear a discussion of the upcoming \$2-million school-bond referendum seeking funds to upgrade Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district fields from grass to artificial turf.

Borough Mayor Colleen Mahr, a Democrat, officially filed to run for a second, four-year term. She was to have faced opposition from Patricia Lindsey, the wife of former councilman Chester Lindsey. In the race for two seats on the borough council, Democratic incumbents Katherine Mitchell and Joseph Higgins faced opposition from Republicans Anthony Parenti, who replaced Janek Anthony Skutnick after he dropped out, and Joel Stroz. Democrats held a 6-0 majority on the council.

Area

A nor'easter dumped up to nine inches of rain, causing widespread street and residential flooding locally.

Sporadic shutdowns were reported on Route 22 between Springfield and Scotch Plains. In addition, a major stormwater-pipe break occurred in Rahway and Routes 1 and 9, shutting down Hazelwood Avenue and Main Street. Some 80 Union County public-works employees were on the job, along with emergency services and the county department of emergency management.

Westfield Fire Chief Dan Kelly said the department responded to more than 157 storm-related calls during the nor'easter. Most were for flooding conditions, natural gas leaks, electrical conditions and downed power lines.

Nation

On April 16, 33 people were killed on the campus of Virginia Tech in the deadliest shooting rampage in American history, according to the *New York Times*. Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks, a Virginia Tech graduate, feeling for the victims and their families, said he "wear[s] Virginia Tech on [his] sleeve."

MAY

Westfield

School Interim Principal Dennis Fyffe's decision to invoke his right to prior review of "Blue Devil News" ("BDN") television shows on TV-36 sparked a censorship debate between student journalists, teachers and school and town officials. Mr. Fyffe's decision to review each program before student journalists submitted it to the local-access channel came after a commentary segment in a "BDN"

broadcast triggered concerns from Westfield Mayor Andrew Skibitsky and school administrators, multiple sources confirmed.

Superintendent of Schools William Foley said, "We are teaching students to be journalists, and they must meet certain standards."

Mr. Fyffe said those standards include "accurate facts, tone and use of the English language."

Westfield's Jerome Feder, chairman of the Union County Aircraft Noise Advisory Board, addressed the town council about the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) proposed methods of controlling noise at Newark Liberty International Airport, ultimately recommending the town state its dissatisfaction with the process of "fanning." Under the plan, the airport would "fan" aircrafts to the west immediately after departures from Newark.

"That's pretty onerous," Mr. Feder said. "Especially onerous for Elizabeth."

Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) representatives visited the town council to give an update on what court-ordered mandates mean for the Rahway facility and how the changes would affect Westfield's annual assessment - what Finance Policy Committee Chairman Peter Echausse had repeatedly described as the "800-pound gorilla."

The board of education announced that Westfield resident Eileen Cambria would begin her new appointment as Franklin Elementary School principal on September 1. The board also announced the appointment of Robert Gardella as assistant principal at Wilson School.

The Westfield Historical Society updated the council on its goal to raise \$800,000 to restore the four-acre Reeve House property at 314 Mountain Avenue, saying it had completed more than 80 percent of its goal. The council and the historical society reached an agreement to restore the Reeve House and add a "carriage-type" structure to it that would provide a home for the society's resources and archives.

Garwood

The borough council passed a resolution lowering the BOE budget by \$88,111 by reducing salaries, administrative costs, supplies and special-education transportation, among other measures.

After voters defeated, by a 292 to 176 count, the original \$5.9-million tax levy in April, the BOE budget went to the council for deliberation. After reductions, the tax levy became \$5.84 million.

BOE President Adele Lewis made a motion to appoint Lincoln School Principal Teresa Quigley acting superintendent, with Superintendent of Schools William Murphy hospitalized due to a medical condition.

Mountainside

Administrators from the Berkeley Heights (BH) school district presented to the borough's BOE a new rotating class schedule to be implemented at Governor Livingston High School (GLHS) in September. The eight-period "Rotating Drop" schedule re-

places the current seven-period day.

The borough council adopted its \$10-million municipal budget and passed some final amendments based on a previous calculation error. The increase per household, based on an average home assessed at \$159,000, was originally anticipated to be \$153. That increase will now be \$170, or 10 tax points, officials said.

BOE Vice President MaryBeth Schaumburg announced that negotiations with the Mountainside Education Association (MEA) had reached a stalemate. The two sides brought in a mediator to try and reach an agreement.

Scotch Plains

A judge upheld the township zoning board of adjustment's denial of an application by Cumberland Farms to expand and upgrade the Gulf gasoline station it owns on Route 22.

Work on replacing the Charlie Brown's Steakhouse in Scotch Plains began. Ray Chmiel, a vice president with Charlie Brown's, said the company still expected to meet its Labor Day-opening target.

Fanwood

A suspended Fanwood police officer pleaded guilty to two counts of harassment by offensive touching and agreed to resign from the borough's police force.

The borough celebrated the opening of the newly rebuilt LaGrande Park baseball fields on May 5. Borough officials dedicated the larger of the two fields in memory of Dorris Terry, a longtime resident of Fanwood and former member of the recreation commission who passed away in February.

Mayor Colleen Mahr and the borough council approved an amendment to the local land-use ordinance pertaining to the prevention of "oversized houses on undersized lots, more commonly known as 'McMansions.'"

The collapse of a three-story concrete wall from the Station Mews redevelopment project injured two workers at a South Avenue machine shop on May 15. Three people were trapped inside the shop at the time of the collapse. Mayor Mahr and other officials said the cause was unknown and was under investigation. Fanwood Police Chief Donald Domanoski speculated that wind was likely a factor in the collapse.

Following the collapse, the borough issued a stop-work order on all construction work on The Station Mews redevelopment project pending an investigation.

Area

Local residents and representatives attended a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) hearing at the Sheraton Hotel in Newark. During the hearing, agency officials discussed proposed changes in both takeoff and landing patterns being considered in an attempt to reduce delays, increase capacity and mitigate noise at Newark Liberty International Airport.

The Union County freeholders adopted a \$414.4-million budget that called for taxes to be increased in 18 of the 21 municipalities as part of a \$238.6-million tax levy. County taxes would jump 5.27 percent, or \$11.6 million - about \$66 per household countywide, according to county officials.

JUNE

Westfield

The Westfield Recreation Commission announced it would request that the town council look at a \$3-million project budget proposal for renovations to the Memorial Pool.

The proposal includes alterations to the large pool that would add more steps, allow it to be used for swim meets, create a ramp for handicap accessibility and add a jet pool by pushing the pool out towards the bathrooms. Renovations to the kiddie pool would include misters in the form of palm trees and other designs, as well as a shaded seating area for parents with toddlers.

The town council conducted a public hearing on and unanimously passed its \$2.7-million capital budget, while two council members voted against a measure that would increase yearly attorney rates.

Various road improvements constituted just less than half of the budget, at \$1.3 million. Public-works equipment accounted for just shy of 8 percent of the budget, at \$206,000, with police department expenses totaling just under \$145,000.

The council also set salaries for certain employees of the police, fire and public-works departments, in addition to non-union employees.

Authorities continued to probe an early morning break-in at the Coach store in Westfield, in which more than \$5,000 worth of merchandise was taken. According to Captain Clifford Auchtung of the Westfield Police Department, police responded to a burglar alarm at 3:20 a.m. and found someone had

smashed out a rear window at the store, located on the 200 block of East Broad Street.

The board of education voted unanimously to appoint Margaret Dolan as the new superintendent of schools, effective September 1. The assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction and programs, Ms. Dolan had worked in the district since 1996. She served as assistant superintendent of human resources for four years and as the principal of Franklin Elementary School for five years.

In her 29 years as an educator, Ms. Dolan has worked with the New Jersey Department of Education as a school-improvement coordinator. She earned her doctorate in educational administration from Rutgers University. Ms. Dolan was chosen from 49 applicants, seven of whom interviewed with the board, in the district's search for a new superintendent. The board had hired the national search from Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates to assist in the selection process. Ms. Dolan became the first woman to hold the position in district history.

"Our process was extremely thorough, concluding after a four-month intensive effort. We chose the best candidate for the job," said board president Ginny Leiz.

During its board of directors meeting, the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) dealt with issues ranging from disputes over facade renovation grants to teenagers congregating outside of the local Starbucks.

Although the former issue went unsettled for the time being, the DWC solved the latter by recommending that an additional police officer be stationed on the corner outside Starbucks on Central Avenue during weekends. Another discussed solution called for an audio system that would play "highly classical music" with the intention of driving away the young crowd. The board put this idea on hold.

"The sheer amount of teenagers on Friday and Saturday nights makes it difficult for crowd control," said Sherry Cronin, executive director of the DWC.

The board of education approved first-reading changes to the district's policy regarding the review procedures of school-sponsored publications. This policy examination followed Westfield High School interim principal Dennis Fyffe's decision in April to invoke the right of prior review of all material used in "Blue Devil News," after a student's controversial commentary regarding the town council.

"The new policy allows for review in two ways. One, the faculty adviser may have a concern about certain content. Two, the principal may raise concern about an issue on his own," Superintendent of Schools William Foley said.

Garwood

The borough's board of education met for a goal-setting meeting that lasted four hours. Ray Pinney, advocacy coordinator with the New Jersey School Boards Association, assisted the BOE members with implementing goals and concepts that can be used throughout the school year.

"This BOE is dealing with a unique situation. Superintendent [William] Murphy is out on medical [leave] until further notice, so you have Principal Teresa Quigley as acting superintendent. Also, Garwood is a small town with big issues that need to be resolved," Mr. Pinney said.

Mountainside

Nearly 100 people crowded the Beechwood School media center for the BOE's June 12 meeting, during which the board handed out multiple special awards.

The borough received a shock when John Regenthal, 56, of Kenilworth, a fixture at a Mountainside 7-11 convenience store since 1985, died suddenly of heart failure.

At its June 19 regular session, the borough council approved an ordinance to prohibit any person under legal age from knowingly possessing or consuming an alcoholic beverage on private property.

Regarding an ongoing issue, council president Keith Turner said at a council work session that even if a parent gives permission for a child to drink alcohol, he or she must be present. Following a November 2006 party bust in which a borough resident was arrested and charged with making his home available to people under the age of 21 to consume alcoholic beverages and providing alcohol to minors, Mountainside discussed strengthening its present law. At the time of the incident, Mountainside's law only applied to underage drinking on public property.

Scotch Plains

Neal LeStrange, an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for township council in 2006, filed a lawsuit against Republican Mayor Martin Marks and former township police chief Thomas O'Brien, charging they defamed him during the 2006 campaign when they "created a false impression" that Mr. LeStrange was a racist and an anti-Semite.

Mayor Martin Marks said he would pay for his own legal representation.

POLICE BLOTTER

The police blotter will be postponed until next week's issue. Until then, we offer a few words left in a note by two of the blotter's most infamous *Shawshank Redemption*-

style jailbreakers: "Thank you Officer... for the tools needed. You're a real pal. Happy holidays." Wishing you all the same (except maybe that "tools needed" part).



SILVER-SCREEN WIT (June 14)...Movie writer Ira Lewis of Westfield entertains a packed audience at the Northside Trattoria during the screening of *Chinese Coffee*, a film he wrote, starring and directed by Al Pacino.



BOOM! (June 28)...Officers from the Union County Emergency Response Team enter a building after the door was removed from its hinges with an explosive charge. The demonstration was part of the Top Gun training being given to police officers and prosecutors from around the state at the Stamler Police Academy in Scotch Plains.

Fanwood

At the first public hearing on the proposed Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, Stanley Slachetka of T&M Associates told the board it had multiple issues to consider, starting with the number of properties in the historic district.

Mr. Slachetka said the board must decide which properties to include. Also, he said, the board must decide whether to include 13 homes classified as historically significant that lay outside the historic district.

Area

The state, county and municipal primary elections in Union County state legislative districts 20, 21 and 22 produced expected results on party lines. Voter turnout was 13.54 percent, according to the Union County clerk, in part because of so many races featuring unchallenged candidates.

Also, in a continued story, the robbery dubbed the "Mad Hatter" extended

his disappearing act with his 17th robbery, which occurred in Montclair. While he hit more than eight banks in Union County, including ones in Springfield and Union, the Mad Hatter had yet to strike Westfield, Scotch Plains or Fanwood.

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved a new five-year contract, which called for a 14-percent hike in salaries over the length of the contract, for the county's 59 assistant prosecutors. The agreement is retroactive to January 1, 2006.

"We had a very hard-fought negotiation," said Juan Fernandez, the assistant prosecutors' attorney during negotiations. He said county officials were concerned that taxpayers could not afford the contract package sought by the assistant prosecutors.

Beth Budnick, Paul Peyton and Victoria McCabe compiled this report.



DOGGIN' DOWN (May 3)...Lew Porziazko, center, won the Windmill hot-dog-eating contest at Sunday's Spring Fling street fair. He became eligible to enter the next Windmill event for \$1,000, winner-take-all, in Lake Como on August 11.

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