

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield
Monday, February 11, a resident of South Avenue filed an assault report, stating that a friend of a friend had grabbed her by the arm inside an automobile on the 700 block of South Avenue. The victim was uninjured and no charges were filed.

Monday, February 11, Shannon Johnson, 18, and Trevorlarr Parrish, 19, both of Plainfield, were arrested after a motor vehicle stop on the 600 block of South Avenue and charged with underage possession of alcohol. Each of the individuals was released with a summons.

Monday, February 11, Kathryn Greb, 23, of Elizabeth was arrested at the Union Police Department on two outstanding Westfield traffic warrants. She was released after posting a total of \$186 bail.

Monday, February 11, James Abate, 39, of Westfield was arrested on two outstanding motor vehicle warrants following a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Boulevard. One of the warrants was from Newark, with \$200 bail, and the other was from Clark, with \$150 bail. Abate was released after posting bail.

Tuesday, February 12, Reginald Lewis, 39, of Piscataway was arrested on three outstanding traffic warrants after a motor vehicle stop in Scotch Plains just over the border from Westfield. The warrants were from Newark, West New York and Elizabeth, with bail amounts of \$350, \$289 and \$220, respectively. He was turned over to the Newark Police Department.

Monday, February 18, Ryan Galbraith, 20, of Kenilworth and Matthew Walch, 19, of Cranford were arrested and charged with underage possession of alcohol following a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and West Grove Street. Both were released on their own recognizance with summonses.

Scotch Plains
Wednesday, February 13, a resident of Terrill Road reported that someone threw a rock at his vehicle and broke the windshield while it was parked in front of his house.

Wednesday, February 13, Jason Holland, 24, of Montclair was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on an outstanding warrant. According to police, he was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released.

Thursday, February 14, a resident of Nicholl Avenue reported that someone obtained his credit card information and ordered approximately \$500 worth of items.

Friday, February 15, a resident of Hill Road reported that someone removed a bicycle valued at \$600, which was left unlocked in her front yard.

Saturday, February 16, Prince Njoku, 22, of North Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Roselle Park warrant after a motor vehicle violation.

Saturday, February 16, Willie Davis, 26, of Newark was arrested on an outstanding Federal U.S. Marshall warrant service after he was stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, he was transported to headquarters, where he was processed and released.

Saturday, February 16, Michael Triplet, 26, of Newark was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) when officers smelled a strong odor of alcohol following a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released.

Sunday, February 17, Michael Dong-Kim, 22, of Westfield, was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released after posting bail, police said.

Mountainside
Wednesday, February 13, Lee R. Hale, 57, was picked up from Essex County and arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Mountainside for \$500.

Friday, February 15, LC Barnes, Jr., 23, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving with a suspended license following a motor vehicle stop on Route 22. He was given three summonses and released.

Monday, February 18, Kevin J. Woodbridge, 25, of Union was arrested and charged with driving with a suspended license. Police stopped him on Route 22 for operating a vehicle with tinted windows. He was processed and released.

Fanwood
Thursday, February 14, Maryann Robinson, 45, of Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on the 100 block of South Avenue on an outstanding Plainfield warrant. According to police, she also was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. She was processed and turned over to the Plainfield Police Department, police said.

Thursday, February 14, Abraham B. Moquera, 27, of Plainfield was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Elizabeth and Bound Brook after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Thursday, February 14, Antoine L. Blount, 23, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding Elizabeth warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue.

Saturday, February 16, Stephen C. Rogers, 38, of Fanwood was arrested on an outstanding Scotch Plains warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue.

Saturday, February 16, Leon T. Golding, 40, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia after a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue. According to police, he also was charged with providing officers with false information and receiving stolen property after property reported stolen from Westfield was found on his person.

Monday, February 18, Rafael H. Hernandez, 39, of Elizabeth was arrested on several outstanding Elizabeth warrants and an outstanding Rahway warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue.

Monday, February 18, Christopher R. Acosta, 19, of Colonia was arrested on an outstanding Roselle Park warrant after a motor vehicle stop on the 100 block of South Avenue.

Tuesday, February 19, Joseph H. Marshall, 34, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. He was processed and turned over to the Plainfield Police Department, officials said.

Tuesday, February 19, Brittany N. Endaz, 18, of Mountainside was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS) after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue. According to police, she also was charged with possession of a CDS with intent to distribute. Bail is pending, police said.



READY FOR BUSINESS...The Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association board of directors elected its officers for 2008. Pictured, from left to right, are: **Ray Pardon**, vice-president; **Russell Huegel**, secretary; **Frank DiIollo**, president; and **Steve Hoecke**, treasurer.

State Fiscal Crisis

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the proposal. Toll hikes proposed for the other two highways, the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike, remain a part of the Governor's overall plan.

In addition to quadrupling the tolls, the Governor's plan calls for selling 75 years worth of the future tolls to raise \$38 billion now for debt reduction and new projects. He calls for a spending freeze, \$2.5 billion in unspecified reductions of the budget and no more bonded debt without voter approval. The state has \$32 billion in bonded debt. The Governor also says the state faces an additional unfunded liability of \$80 billion for pension and benefits for public employees and retirees.

The Governor's office announced a list of public officials, community and religious leaders, businesses and citizens who will join the 44 existing members of the Governor's steering committee, who will provide counsel to the Governor as the plan develops.

The press release quoted the Governor as saying, "I am proud to announce that these new additions to the steering committee have come forward to help advance the discussion about the financial emergency facing our state. The financial restructuring and debt reduction initiative will not only pay down state debt, but will also fund transportation projects and infrastructure improvements for generations."

The list of existing and new members to the steering committee can be found on the state's website at nj.gov under restructuring.

The Westfield Leader spoke with several local mayors regarding their position on the Governor's proposal.

Mountainside Mayor Robert Vigilanti expressed his position on the Governor's plan to *The Leader*, stating, "I am totally opposed to it.

I'm not an economist, but it doesn't make sense to borrow and saddle our grandchildren with the debt. I think the government is on the wrong road. Before we raise tolls, let's cut out all the garbage in our system."

"We have to live within our means; I think the state should live within its means. Half of the senate and assemblymen live off the state trough anyway. It's irresponsible. Public officials have unreal benefits," he stated.

Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky said, "We're not attacking the root of the problem. The root of the problem is revenue and spending. I am also concerned about the unintended consequences of raising tolls that high. New Jersey-based businesses will relocate elsewhere to save money. As more companies move out, this will impact revenues. Not a simple equation to assume a toll increase will raise revenue. It's more complex with businesses leaving the state. We must have a climate friendly to businesses. Otherwise, you have a point of diminishing returns, which is hard to quantify."

"The pension system is also unrealistic. It becomes a tool to supplement income and encourages career politicians. Trenton is so beholden to special interests. Look at what we've done in Westfield. In the past few years, we've removed people from the payroll. Why can't the state do that? This is not in the best interest of future generations. I think he'll (the Governor) have a hard time getting it passed," Mayor Skibitsky added.

Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr commended the Governor for taking on the state's budget woes and for making the "unpopular" choice to lower spending.

Mayor Mahr told *The Leader*, "I agree with freezing spending and that's a significant part of the plan, which gets overshadowed. The Governor is proposing over \$2 billion in cuts, which has never been proposed before. That's historic. From attending meetings and speaking with the Governor's office, I think the toll road proposal will be modified."

"The dialogue is still going on. People are focusing on the toll hikes, but there are other components to the plan. When we hear the Governor's state budget address, it will paint a clearer picture. The \$2.5 billion in cuts and freezing will be addressed. This will affect every agency and municipality, and all will feel the pinch. It will be very sobering," Mayor Mahr said.

"The Governor should get some acknowledgment for stepping up and painting this picture, regardless of his solutions. There will most likely be another loud outcry when the \$2.5 billion in cuts are revealed. I agree that more discussion about pension obligations is in order. It's very easy to have a knee-jerk reaction to his proposal, but until we see what the final plan looks like and until he passes a budget, it's only a dialogue right now."

The Governor's proposal and a section for public input can be viewed on nj.gov/governor.

Westfield Town Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mr. Foerst also spoke about the historic preservation commission's makeup. Under the ordinance, at present, there would be nine voting members and two alternates.

Two of the nine voting members would be individuals with experience in building and historic preservation. Both Westfield and non-Westfield residents may fill these two positions.

"We might need to have the expertise of those who are out of town. It's also a huge savings of money," he added, mentioning that this represented a better alternative than paying consultants' fees.

He also reminded the council, "They will serve in a volunteer capacity, and the mayor would have discretion."

Fourth Ward Councilman Tom Bigosinski, who participated from Florida via a conference call, said the committee did a "great job."

However, he remained firm that the commission should be comprised of solely Westfield citizens.

"It's been my experience with the Land Use Taskforce, etc., that it seems like there is no shortage of educated, interested stakeholders in Westfield," Mr. Bigosinski said. "I don't know why we need that provision. I don't see a difficulty in filing boards. I don't think it's a precedent we want to start. I'd like to the provision come out."

Mr. Foerst responded, saying "I understand Tom's concern... [However], there are a lot of professionals who work in town but don't reside in town... I don't think those people should be excluded."

Mr. Bigosinski replied, "Westfield residents are the true stakeholders. We are the ones who want to preserve the characteristics of the town. Some [who do not live in town] might have a financial interest [in the ordinance being constructed in a certain manner]. I say, 'They're welcome to participate, just not in the sense of the board.' I'm suspicious of their motivations."

Mr. Caruana responded, saying he agreed with Mr. Bigosinski. However, he said, "I can think of situations where [utilizing the services of someone outside of Westfield] would be a benefit to the town."

He used the example of people who lived in town and served on various boards, but moved elsewhere and still wanted to serve the community.

"[Not having that person participate] would deprive us of a significant resource," Mr. Caruana added, mentioning the example of former councilman Ken McRitchie, who now resides in Princeton.

"Through his (McRitchie's) hard work, we are designating the corner of Clover Street and Pine Grove Avenue as Arthur C. Retzlaff Corner," Mr. Caruana reminded Mr. Bigosinski.

First Lt. Retzlaff of 141 Clover Street was killed by shrapnel fire in Vietnam on July 10, 1967 and became the town's first victim of the Vietnam conflict. Mr. McRitchie, a contemporary, suggested the idea to the council, which reviewed it on Wednesday.

Mr. Caruana also mentioned Ralph Jones, the "backbone" of the Choral Arts Society, who now lives in Bridgewater.

"To preempt us by ordinance makes it less flexible... Bob Cockren comes to

mind, too [as someone who would be beneficial to Westfield if he moved]," Mr. Caruana added.

Second Ward Councilwoman Vicki Kimmins tried to bring the topic to a close by saying that filling the commission with out-of-town residents "is not the intention of the ordinance."

She said Ms. Thornton informed the Historic Preservation Commission that allowing non-Westfield residents to participate "is a good backup."

She added, "It's a good option to have. [It's not as though] we have names that we are ready to bring back."

Mr. Bigosinski responded, "I worry that we are opening the door for future commissions [to allow this practice]. It needs to be an extraordinary need."

Mr. Foerst reminded Mr. Bigosinski that Town Engineer Ken Marsh serves on the planning board as a voting member and does not live in town.

"Judith Thornton wasn't a resident," he also noted.

Mr. Ciarrocca said he agreed that the use of non-Westfield residents should be "limited." However, he felt it "may benefit the town to give us future flexibility."

When voting on the matter, it passed by a 5-1 majority. Mr. Foerst, Mr. Caruana, Ms. Kimmins, Second Ward Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan and First Ward Councilman Frank Arena voted for the ordinance in its present form to be sent to the planning board and historic preservation commission. Mr. Bigosinski voted against doing so.

Pat Velderman, an alternate member of the historic preservation commission, said he "applauded the efforts" made by Mr. Foerst and the Code Review Committee. He said the amendments "marked a great step forward... It makes procedures more clear."

He did admit that it "does restrict the ability to designate districts [as historic] because of the level of hurdles [including the need to achieve a super majority of approval]. That's the downside. But I understand the conservatism. I'm comfortable with what's stated."

Mr. Velderman told *The Westfield Leader* on Monday that the ordinance, now in its third iteration, "fixes some of the deficiencies and is a major improvement."

Mr. Velderman, who has been engaged in the topic of historic preservation since the mid-1980s, said the first historic preservation review commission began over a "concern that we were losing the character of the town. Many felt there should be an organized process that defines what is historic." He said the ordinance's goal has always been to "preserve the essence of the community."

Robert Newell, chairman of the historic preservation commission, thanked the council last Wednesday for its support. He said the document was "well-crafted and will serve us well... I think it's restrictive, but we can work comfortably with it."

The meeting began with the minimum quorum of members present. At the start of the meeting, Mr. Ciarrocca took his seat at the head of the table, joined by First Ward Councilmen Mr. Caruana and Mr. Arena, as well as Second Ward Councilwomen Ms. Neylan and Ms. Kimmins.

Mountainside Police Address

Parking Woes at Deerfield

By DEBBIE HOFFMAN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE - Responding to parent complaints, the Mountainside Police Department has been patrolling the front parking lot at Deerfield School to crack down on illegally parked cars during the school's 3 p.m. dismissal period.

Corporal Kevin Bettyeman and Patrolman Mike Pasquale have been moving cars along since last Wednesday, when Police Chief James Debbie was made aware of citizen complaints.

"There is nothing like pulling into the lot and having to angle around the cars illegally parked," parent Kim Choma said. "The kids can walk to your car in an appropriate space."

"The kids are running through the cars," Marianne Jennings added. "I'm surprised someone hasn't been hurt."

Many parents complained about the lack of parking in the front parking lot, forcing parents to either illegally park or wait for their children in the lot of Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

"If more teachers used the ample parking spaces in the back of the school, the problem wouldn't be as bad as it is," one parent commented.

Another parent added that the dismissal schedule for both Mountainside schools, Deerfield and Beechwood, adds to the parking woes at Deerfield. "I park in the middle to grab my older child and rush to Beechwood to pick up my younger child," said one mother, who asked not to be identified.

Corp. Bettyeman said that the cars parked down the aisles have also posed a problem for drivers trying to access the handicap parking spaces. Plus, he added, the bottleneck of cars trying to get out just slows everyone down.

In a note to parents, Deerfield Principal Jeanette Baubles said, "Police officials may begin ticketing individuals who routinely park or idle their vehicles in handicapped spots and in between parking rows. With the police here, I can't believe how easy it is to navigate the parking lot. Hopefully they'll keep it up."

O'Malley Leaves Mountainside

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was unclear as to the number of days Mr. O'Malley would work in the district on a part-time basis.

They said the contract only specifies that he would be available to work nights, weekends and holidays at a salary of \$750 per month.

In a prepared statement, Mr. O'Malley told the Matawan-Aberdeen board, "I welcome the opportunity to serve the Matawan-Aberdeen students, staff and entire community. I am very optimistic that the next couple of years are going to be excellent years for this school district."

Matawan-Aberdeen, a K-12 district, has a high school, middle school, four elementary schools and a pre-kindergarten. Mountainside is a K-8 district with two elementary schools. Mountainside teenagers attend Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights.

Mr. O'Malley has worked as the Mountainside CSA for three years and

has 120 days left on his contract. He said he would begin to transition into his new position over the next few months.

"Financially and academically, the district is better off than when I first arrived. The parents and teachers really do a lot of things academically to put the students in the top 5 percent of student achievement and that is what really has moved the district forward," Mr. O'Malley said.

Mr. O'Malley has a bachelor's degree, two master's degrees and a doctorate in education and has conducted post-graduate studies at Harvard University. The Mountainside BOE hired him at \$130,000 per year in March 2005.

Calls to BOE President John Perrin and BOE Vice-President Mary Beth Schaumburg were not returned. *The Leader* was also unable to reach Mountainside PTA co-chairmen Carolyn Williams and Donna Klein.



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