



'WHITE' LAB...The snow last Friday generated a creative spirit in a 13-year-old Westfielder, who modeled this snow sculpture after the family pet, Blitzen.

Courtesy of Kathy Sanders

## Westfield Boy Continues Recovery From Accident

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He wasn't breathing. He was blue," Dr. Streko continued.

The doctor told *The Leader* that when first encountering the boy, he discovered that he had a pulse, but had to first remove a wad of gum, clear his airway and position his jaw.

Shortly thereafter, Dr. Schwartz ran over, and the two doctors tended to him as the police arrived.

"When [things like this] happen, you just go into doctor mode. You just do what you do," Dr. Streko said.

The EMTs then arrived and gave Michael oxygen. Dr. Streko put his hand under the boy's head and knew he had sustained a fractured skull.

"There was blood all over the place," Dr. Streko said. "We just kept him going. We got him on the board, and he became semi-conscious. He started to move and had to be held down. We were just so thankful that he was moaning."

Dr. Streko remained amazed and thankful that everything worked out. "God was with all of us. Every detail worked out. It's unbelievable," he said.

Speaking of the fortuity of the day, Dr. Streko remarked that the tenant who used to live upstairs at 169 Mountain Avenue recently moved out. When the car slammed into the building, the collision caused the gas line to sever. Because the gentleman had moved out, the line remained off.

"If he was still living upstairs, the place would have filled with gas, and we would have blown up," Dr. Streko said.

Also, the dentist's office contains nitrous oxide, which the driver missed by about two feet.

"If she hit it, forget it, it would have been like a rocket going off," he added.

Area doctors have volunteered to let Dr. Streko and his staff use their offices while the wall is repaired.

"It's just material stuff [that was ruined]," Dr. Streko said. "Ultimately, it doesn't matter. I'm just thankful to my staff...I'm not trying to be a hero."

The Fitzhenry family may disagree. Regardless, Michael has made a swift recovery thus far, and his family is thankful.

"I can't believe how quickly he was able to leave the hospital," Mr. Fitzhenry said. "Within four days of a life-threatening accident...it's a

blessing."

Westfield Police Captain Clifford Aucter said the police force has interviewed the driver of the vehicle but has not ascertained the cause of the accident.

"We would presume a blackout, but we don't know," he said. "We're looking into the driver's condition. We're still investigating."

Captain Aucter said statements involving accidents such as this are "detailed" and include particulars such as the amount of sleep a driver had to specifying what, if anything, a person ate that day.

Mayor Andrew Skibitsky, who was out of town during the accident, remained informed through Police Chief John Parizeau.

"Fortunately, [the doctors] were there to assist immediately, as well as the rescue squad," Mayor Skibitsky said. "We kept Michael and his family in our prayers. It could have been a real tragedy."

For Mr. Fitzhenry, he said he was impressed with how the community rallied around his family and Michael.

"It's truly gratifying," he said.

## Good Samaritan Announcement

*Editor's Note: Dr. Streko's dentist office was damaged last week when an automobile careened out of control on Mountain Avenue, struck a pedestrian and crashed into his building. Dr. Streko's quick action helped save the life of the injured pedestrian.*

To my patients of Westfield and the surrounding communities, I regret that due to the recent accident at our location that our office will be closed until the appropriate repairs can be made to the building. We will re-open as soon as possible to again serve the community with the highest quality of care.

We will try to make arrangements to treat our patients at other facilities on a limited basis until our office building can be reoccupied. Please bear with us during these trying times.

Dr. Thomas Streko, DMD  
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## WF Council

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moved.

"We may need their institutional knowledge," Mr. Caruana said. He said the "prior experience" of former residents could be beneficial to the commission.

Third Ward Councilman David Haas said he shared Mr. Bigosinski's concern and has "yet to be convinced that this board would be unable to find the requisite experience in town."

However, he said he would vote affirmatively on the measure because of its importance.

Mr. Haas said the current ordinance "does need revising;" therefore, he said he felt he "had to vote in favor of it."

The vote passed by a 7-1 margin. Fourth Ward Councilman Jim Foerst was not present.

During public comment, Sharon Stockwell of WE CARE (Westfielders Concerned About Responsible Development) read the group's review of the land use taskforce's findings, which focused on the redevelopment of residential homes within the community.

Ms. Stockwell said the group concurred with the taskforce's recommendations on areas such as maximum height, eave height and number of stories.

WE CARE, however, submitted further recommendations, including creating incentives for building detached garages and enhancing work-plan requirements for new construction.

WE CARE also requested that the council's code review and town property committee continue to address issues surrounding the noise ordinance and the property-maintenance code.

Ms. Stockwell said, "WE CARE is encouraged by the positive recommendations that have been made by the taskforce. We do not see this report as the final product; rather, we see it as a solid foundation to build

upon in the future."

Second Ward Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan asked, "What type of organization are you?"

Ms. Stockwell replied that WE CARE is "a non-profit, citizens action group...[which came about] in response to a redevelopment project."

First Ward Councilman Frank Arena recognized the land use taskforce's chairman, William Heinbokel, and questioned the timing and appropriateness of WE CARE's suggestions.

"I find it a little unsettling and upsetting that certain people have [taken the opportunity to] insert themselves into the process," Mr. Arena said.

He again touted the work of Mr. Heinbokel and the taskforce, saying, "I'm not sure if [the WE CARE comments] are fair to them. They did an incredible job."

Ms. Stockwell responded by saying that the group "concurs" with the findings of the taskforce and supports its recommendations. WE CARE's "intent," she said, was to supply "further considerations, not take anything away from the taskforce. We have tried to provide positive, constructive feedback."

Len Berman of Prospect Street defended WE CARE, saying the group also "put an awful lot of effort into what they have done. They have volunteered their time."

Responding to Mr. Arena's comment, Mr. Berman said the group has been "rejected many times" while trying to provide feedback to the council.

Mayor Andrew Skibitsky refuted that claim, saying he has met with the group on numerous occasions, including his Saturday morning hours, to "listen to their suggestions."

The mayor said he cannot use all proposals due to financial or practical reasons, but he "does listen with an open mind."

## Cranford to Review DMC, Restore Historic Flagpole

By TED RITTER  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — At the township committee's regular monthly meeting Tuesday night, Mayor Robert Puhak announced plans to form a panel to review the downtown District Management Corporation (DMC).

Mayor Puhak said the review committee will primarily study the DMC's mission, its initial goals, current needs and future needs four to five years ahead.

"We need to be very, very clear where the DMC is going," said the mayor. "And we want a very clear blueprint that people can refer to about what the DMC is doing and should be doing."

The mayor said, "There's been a lot of confusion over the last few years" about the DMC's role, adding that there is a need to better define "what the township committee expects from the DMC."

Mayor Puhak said Cranford residents interested in serving on the review committee—likely consisting of seven members and two alternates—should respond to Township Clerk Tara Rowley at the municipal building on Springfield Avenue before Monday, March 17. Individuals should provide their name and contact information, as well as their "reason for interest and why they feel they would be an asset" to the panel.

DMC Chairman Paul Lacort suggested that the township committee "stick within the parameters of the original ordinance," which established the DMC.

"Remember, we have a current board and staff that the township committee is supportive of; these are serious people," said Mr. Lacort, adding that the DMC has "brought business to the [downtown's] Special Improvement District and to the whole town."

Mayor Puhak said the township committee is "mindful of the ordinance that started" the DMC.

The mayor said he would like the review committee to begin work in April, and then produce monthly progress reports, with an eye toward making recommendations to the township committee within three months. In addition, he said there would be at least one public forum held and possibly a separate forum for downtown property and business owners.

In other business, the township committee approved a resolution authorizing the appointment of a fundraising committee to help refurbish the Veterans Flagpole.

The flagpole and a plaque, erected in 1918 to honor Cranford's 16 soldiers killed in World War I, stood in front of the post office until 2003.

It had fallen into disrepair over the course of many years and was removed.

Since then, it has been at the township's conservation center, where it continues to deteriorate, according to Mike Henehan of Cranford's Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 335, who spoke at the meeting.

Mr. Henehan said the removal of the flagpole is a "travesty," adding that local veterans groups were not consulted; the flagpole's accompanying plaque is now missing.

Mr. Henehan called for the flagpole to be "put back up in its original form and location," and asked the township committee to "find the money to right this wrong."

"Is this the time to abandon the tradition of honoring our greatest heroes?" he asked.

Mayor Puhak responded that the "township committee is committed to put [the flagpole] back up" as part of the Post Office Plaza project. But while that project is being planned, the mayor said the township could move the flagpole to the VFW post first, before it's ultimately restored.

"We're not blind to the current financial climate," said VFW Post 335 member Jim D'Arcy, noting the cost of the restoration project to be at least \$40,000. "We're just asking for equal treatment," he added, pointing to plans for a fountain and other elements of the Post Office Plaza project.

Mayor Puhak said restoring and replacing the flagpole "is a 2008 objective" and noted that "there has been a list of actions taken" to that end. He said the township is working to get state recognition of the flagpole as a historic monument. If that happens, officials say the township would qualify for county funds to cover half the costs of restoring the flagpole.

Referring to the Post Office Plaza issue, the mayor also said, "All infrastructure design has to take into account the location of the flagpole."

Township Public Affairs Commissioner Martha Garcia said the township committee is "excited about putting that flagpole back where it belongs and making it beautiful as it should be."

Also Tuesday night, the governing body approved a resolution establishing a Charter Study Advisory Committee and an ordinance authorizing an "inter-local agreement" with Garwood to provide "construction code inspection and enforcement services."

Deputy Mayor David Robinson reported that special township budget meetings are ongoing in an effort to develop the next municipal spending plan, which the governing body expects to introduce in April.

Mr. Robinson said the township is facing "\$1.3 million in mandated spending increases," at a time when state aid to municipalities is expected to decrease.



FOLLOWING THE MONEY...New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine presents his budget proposal to the state Legislature in Trenton on Tuesday morning.

Courtesy of Scott Mersereau

## Corzine Proposes \$500 Mil. Cut From 2007 Budget

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

TRENTON — Governor Jon Corzine unveiled a \$32.9-billion state budget, which, he said, cuts spending for only the fourth time since 1951 and eliminates 3,000 state jobs. He said the spending plan is \$500 million below last year's budget.

The Governor said the budget also reduces municipal aid, targeted at towns with populations of 10,000 or less, by \$190 million.

The budget calls for the elimination of the departments of agriculture, commerce and personnel.

"In this budget, government takes the spending hits, not our hard-pressed taxpayers or the most vulnerable [citizens]," the Governor said.

Senate President Richard Codey of West Orange, a Democrat, said, "This year's budget is a crucial step in a serious effort to get our fiscal house in order. Clearly, cuts are essential and paramount to achieving that goal. Every single cut the Governor has proposed will be looked over with a magnifying glass."

Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, Jr. of Westfield, a Republican, said the budget would "undergo a line-by-line examination by the [Legislative] budget committees as the proposed cuts do not go far enough."

Mr. Kean added, "Legislative Republicans have offered over \$3 billion in specific cuts [in previous years] that were ignored by the majority party [Democrats]."

Democratic Assemblyman Louis Greenwald, the assembly budget committee chairman, said, "Unless we restore fiscal sanity in state government now, we are jeopardizing our future ability to invest in the needs of our children, seniors and disabled. It is tough to look constituents with heartfelt requests in the face and say, 'We simply do not have the money,' but that is what we must do to correct New Jersey's finances."

State Senator Nick Scutari (LD-22, Linden) said while he would support the elimination of the three state departments, some of those duties are legally required and would have to be transferred to other departments.

"I have no problem with that," he said, noting that the civil-service section of the personnel department would have to be kept.

While saying "the state has to control spending," Mr. Scutari added

that he is opposed to early-retirement "buyout packages" to those state employees whose jobs will be cut. He said such a procedure, which he referred to as the "backloading of jobs," would only produce short-term solutions for employees while increasing the state's pension debt.

When asked about the Governor's proposed toll hikes as part of his financial restructuring and debt-reduction plan, previously called "monetization," the senator said, "I see it as dead."

The Governor said his budget "does not take into account any financial benefits that would be gained from a monetization proposal."

Mr. Scutari said "that money (raised from New Jersey Turnpike and Garden State Parkway tolls) should stay right where it is," noting plans for expansion of both highways.

Democratic State Senator Barbara Buono, chairman of the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, said, "The time for wasteful spending is over. There has to be accountability for every public dollar before it's spent."

Republican Assembly Budget Officer Joseph Malone added, "After six years of \$11 billion in new spending, we are finally approaching a budget by asking what can we cut instead of where can we add spending. That is a move in the right direction."

## Scotch Hills Golf Memberships Open

SCOTCH PLAINS — Memberships for the 2008 golf season at the Scotch Hills Country Club are now available. An individual need not be a resident of Scotch Plains to join.

Renewing members and new members can fill out a form at [scotchplainsnj.com](http://scotchplainsnj.com) and mail in their registration, register in-person at the recreation department located at town hall or register at the club's pro shop during its pre-season extended hours.

The pro shop, which is located at 820 Jerusalem Road in Scotch Plains, will be open on Thursdays, February 28, March 13 and March 27, from 5 to 8 p.m., as well as on Saturday, March 8, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for golfers who wish to register.

The Scotch Hills Country Club, a nine-hole golf course, is scheduled to open about on Saturday, March 15.

For more information, call the pro shop at (908) 232-9748.

## GW Receives \$375,000 Grant For Guerriero Field Project

By RAYNOR DENITZIO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — Garwood received word on Tuesday that the state's Green Acres program has approved a \$375,000 grant for the borough, pending legislative approval. The funds would go towards the athletic field complex project at James V. Guerriero Memorial Field on Myrtle Avenue.

According to Council President Kathleen Villaggio, the borough has obtained approximately \$640,000 for the project between grants and other funding. The total cost of the project, including renovations to the current facilities and new construction, is around \$2.1 million.

With the new grant money, Ms. Villaggio said the council would re-evaluate the bond which was adopted to help finance the field project. Under the current bond, an average Garwood home assessed at \$100,000 would face a tax impact of approximately \$50.41. However, the borough has received additional funding, both from Green Acres and through other sources, since the bond was enacted.

"It's over \$400,000," said Ms. Villaggio of the additional funding. "It's a considerable reduction."

Garwood's council also voted to adopt two ordinances, which were introduced during the council's last meeting. One ordinance fixed the sewage rate schedule for industrial users. The other ordinance authorized an agreement with Cranford to share building code duties.

Presently, the Township of Cranford handles building department duties for the Borough of Garwood. Under the previous arrangement, Cranford received all of the application and inspection fees for these services. Under the new ordinance, Garwood will receive 20 percent of the fees should they exceed \$125,000. Garwood will also take over certificate of compliance inspections, which were previously handled by Cranford.

The council will hold a workshop meeting on Monday, March 3, at 7 p.m. in the borough hall to discuss the 2008 budget. Although no action will be taken, the public is invited to attend.

## Candidates File For School Board Seats

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

AREA — There will be no challenged elections this year for seats on the boards of education (BOE) in Westfield, Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Garwood. Three persons will vie for two seats on the Mountainside BOE.

In Westfield, incumbents Ann Cary, Alice Hunnicutt and Gary McCready have filed for reelection.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE incumbents Warren McFall and Donald Parisi, representing Scotch Plains on the board, and Sasha Slocum, the Fanwood representative, have filed for reelection.

In Mountainside, PTA President Carolyn Williams, Laura Emblad and Cathy Jakositz filed for two board seats. Incumbents John Perrin and Scot Worswick did not file for reelection. Chief School Administrator Richard O'Malley said.

In Garwood, incumbent Christine Guerriero and former BOE member Linda Koenig have filed for two of three open board seats. Incumbents Gary Maher and Monty Brown did not file for reelection.

A board official said there are three options to fill the remaining seat. One is a write-in candidate, whereby an individual would need at least 10 votes. The second option would be the placement of an advertisement in the newspaper seeking applicants for the open BOE seat, with the candidate to be approved by the full board. The third option would be to have the Union County Superintendent of Schools select a person to fill the seat.

## MS BOE

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the meeting for having entries in a countywide art exhibit. The students were Laura Nicholson and Kyle Morris. Also, Isabel Perrin will be entered in the state level contest along with two other students.

"We really have invested a lot in this program and its great to see the students excel," Mr. O'Malley said.

A new \$10,000 college scholarship program will be offered to Mountainside students from the Watts Foundation. The scholarship is renewable for four years as long as the student maintains a B grade point average.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Scotch Plains

Friday, February 22, a resident of Forest Road reported that someone spray painted her motor vehicle while it was parked in front of her house.

Saturday, February 23, Michael Sweeney, 37, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released, police said.

Saturday, February 23, a resident of Clydesdale Lane reported that someone used his Home Depot credit card without his authorization and purchased \$500 worth of merchandise.

Saturday, February 23, an employee of a Terrill Road restaurant reported that someone removed her purse, which was left on a countertop.

Sunday, February 24, Donald Osbourne, 33, of Union was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. Authorities said he was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released.

Sunday, February 24, a resident of Lake Avenue reported that someone struck her motor vehicle while it was parked in front of her house and then fled the scene.

Monday, February 25, Jennifer Forster, 27, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to authorities, she was transported to police headquarters where she was processed and released.

### Mountainside

The Mountainside Police Department is reporting no arrests for the week.

### Fanwood

No one was available from the Fanwood Police Department to provide the information.

### Westfield

Thursday, February 21, Joseph Duffy, 56, of Springfield was arrested at the Springfield Police Department on outstanding traffic warrants from Westfield and Newark, with bail amounts of \$500 and \$300, respectively. He was held at Westfield police headquarters on default of bail pending a court appearance.

Thursday, February 21, Matthew Mogelesky, 21, of Florham Park was arrested at State Police Troop D Barracks in Newark on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant. He was released after posting \$175 bail.

Friday, February 22, Christopher Yerkes and Brian Kanedannunzio, both 18-year-old Chatham residents, were arrested for allegedly shoplifting a cubic zirconium ring valued at \$70 from a business on the 600 block of North Avenue, West. Both men received a summons. They were released on their own recognizance.

Sunday, February 24, Erica Magaril, 24, of Mountainside was arrested at Prospect Street and Cowperthwaite Place and charged with driving while intoxicated. She was released to a responsible individual.

Sunday, February 24, Julio Cesar Islas Perez, 20, of North Plainfield was arrested at Fanwood police headquarters on a Westfield criminal warrant. He was transported to the Union County jail in lieu of \$1,000 bail.

Sunday, February 24, Gregory Guerrier, 19, of Roselle was arrested at Linden police headquarters on a Westfield motor vehicle warrant with \$839 bail. He was held at the Union County jail in lieu of bail on this warrant and a Cranford traffic warrant with \$338 bail.

See more on the 'Net' at [goleader.com](http://goleader.com)