

## WF Partners with Rahway River Association to Enhance Brightwood

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — With a member of the Rahway River Association (RRA) board of trustees in attendance, the Westfield Town Council, Tuesday night, passed a resolution supporting a partnership with RRA that would lead to the improvement and enhancement of Brightwood Park.

During the public-comment portion of the meeting, Dennis Miranda of Vernon, executive director of the RRA, addressed the council. According to the RRA's website, the association seeks to "promote cooperation and coordination between public and private entities to preserve and enhance the river's ecological functions and benefits."

Mr. Miranda told the council that the association received a \$4,000 grant in 2007 to be used to create a restoration-management plan for the Brightwood Park Nature Preserve in Westfield. Now, the association seeks to raise an additional \$14,000 to hire a firm to handle the execution of the plan.

The council later unanimously endorsed the plan and the town's partnership with RRA. Town Administrator Jim Gildea said the resolution outlines the town's support for the association's efforts to receive further funding.

"We are looking forward to working with your organization," he said. "Brightwood Park can only stand to benefit."

During her public works committee report, as she read an ordinance supporting the RRA's venture, Second Ward Councilwoman and Public Works Committee Chairwoman JoAnn Neylan commented on the initiative. She said the plan — which would involve the removal of invasive plant species and the replanting of native vegetation, as well as the development of educational literature — "is consistent with the town's vision of preserving Brightwood Park as a nature preserve."

She further said a recent trail-improvement project accomplished by the town, which utilizes a \$25,000 grant from the National Recreational Trails Program, "is evidence of the town's commitment to improving Brightwood Park."

"We look forward to working together to improve Brightwood Park," she said.

Mr. Miranda thanked the adminis-

trator and the council for their efforts, saying the resolution passed on Tuesday could lead to raising funds from other sources.

In other business, the council introduced on first reading an ordinance that would prohibit parking on the easterly side of North Scotch Plains Avenue between West Broad Street and South Avenue, where sidewalks



Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader  
**FREE AT LAST...**The area celebrates Martin Luther King's holiday on Monday as flowers are placed at the memorial on South Avenue in Westfield.

were recently installed. Councilman Jim Foerst, who represents the ward, said he discussed the plan with residents of the area, and after dialoguing with them, "we clearly see there is an issue and that [a] no-parking [mandate] does need to be put in there."

While acknowledging the area is "split" in terms of people's "desire to have no parking on one side or the

other," ultimately, pedestrian- and traffic-safety concerns led to the decision.

North Scotch Plains Avenue residents Ann Marie and Jerry Infantino, in a letter obtained by *The Westfield Leader* and directed to the governing body, said, "Street parking should be on the same side of the street as the sidewalks. No one is going to park on the opposite side of the sidewalks and then cross the street to utilize (them)."

The Infantinos further wrote, "The only people parking in the street are those during soccer season who do not want to use the half-empty parking lot in the Memorial Field complex. If they were to park opposite the sidewalks, they would not use the sidewalks and still create a traffic hazard."

Mr. Foerst said the town consulted with its police and fire chiefs, as well as its traffic-safety consultant, when arriving at its decision. Mr. Foerst said to protect the 540 people who live on the easterly side, especially in cases when turning from a side street onto North Scotch Plains Avenue, the town "felt it better for them to have an improved line-of-sight so that they could see up and down the street."

"They [chiefs and traffic consultant] felt the hazard of that traffic," Mr. Foerst continued, "was greater than

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## Borough Council Looks At 'Going Green' in 2008

By KATHY MARQUES  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — Borough Councilman Walter Tucker asked Mayor Dennis McCarthy and fellow council members at Tuesday night's council meeting to look into energy conservation. He said, "As leaders, we should look at what direction to take into 'going green' for the environment. This will be good for the planet and also save us money in the long run."

Borough Administrator Christina Ariemma suggested that, during the budget-session talks, the council should "maybe put aside money for energy-efficient resources."

Council President Kathleen Villaggio agreed, stating that this year, the council should get an assessment and see what "we can do and have a plan of action for the future. We should

start moving in that direction."

Mr. Tucker thanked Ann Guerriero, who served on the board of health from 1980 to 2007, for her years of service to borough residents. "We (the council) should look into acknowledging people [who] do so much work for our town," Mr. Tucker said. "The board of health made a resolution for her at their last meeting, and we should also. She served the residents for many, many years, and we wish her luck in the future."

Resident Bruce Paterson asked the council and the newly appointed committee overseeing the \$2.1-million James V. Guerriero Athletic Field Complex project to "honor those [who] did the initial work on the field over 50 years ago. We can't forget those [who] did such great work for so many hours, some for free, now that we are making this new field."

The committee consists of Councilmen Keith Sluka and Stephen Napolitano, Planning Board Chairman Robert Pender, recreation committee and planning-board member Sandro Villaraud, Borough Engineer Donald Guarriello and Ms. Ariemma. The athletic field, located on Myrtle Avenue, will feature synthetic turf, a walking track, soccer/hockey/baseball field and other upgraded recreational amenities.

Councilman Napolitano told *The Westfield Leader* that there is a plaque inside the field house bearing the names of more than 30 of those who worked on the original field house.

The next borough council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 12, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers.

## Vogel Bus Overturns On Raritan Rd. in Clark

By MICHAEL JOSEPH POLLACK  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CLARK — A Vogel school bus heading eastbound, toward Central Avenue, on Raritan Road in Clark overturned Friday as it swerved to avoid a car that crossed over the lanes. Clark Police Sergeant Michael Pollack told *The Westfield Leader*.

The accident took place around 4:45 p.m. at the intersection of Raritan Road and Gibson Boulevard, outside Steak & Ale.

Sgt. Pollack reported that the driver of the westbound vehicle was taken to the hospital and escaped with "minor injuries."

He told *The Leader* that no children were on board the bus at the time, and the bus driver was unharmed. The sergeant said Clark police officials are continuing to investigate what led to the car swerving and are interviewing witnesses.

*Editor's Note: By coincidence, the Clark sergeant and The Westfield Leader reporter share the same name.*



Courtesy of Shannon Terry  
**GIANTS FEVER...**Giants fever has swept Westfield. Annie Harrington, Rollins Terry and Bridget Harrington of Westfield show complete confidence last Sunday that the Giants would beat Green Bay and go on to win Superbowl XLII against the Patriots on Sunday, February 3.

## BOE Discusses \$2-Mil. Tech Budget; Lincoln School Registration Begins

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Board of Education continued its weekly budget meetings Tuesday night, focusing on the technology department.

The proposed technology budget for 2008-2009 is \$1.94 million, equivalent to the current year, according to Business Administrator Robert Berman.

Barbara Mammen, supervisor of instructional technology, and Hal Johnson, chief technology officer, provided details of the proposed technology budget.

The budget deliberations included providing intermediate-school teachers with affixed desktop computers in classrooms rather than providing laptop computers to each individual, which officials said is the more costly approach.

Teachers would use affixed classroom desktop computers. When not in a class, they would use computers available in the library or faculty room. The board agreed to ask the teachers their opinion before making a final decision.

The school-system technology plan calls for the replacement of teachers' laptops, and it assumed they would be replaced with laptops, not classroom desktops. The technology plan also includes going wireless at some time in the future, but board members said they do not plan to implement it this year because the budget may not allow it. Many computer leases need to be renewed this year, and most replacements were postponed last year for budgetary reasons.

Officials said there are about 1,700 computers throughout the Westfield school system. The proposed budget

provides for adding another 400 new computers. Some of the used computers would be utilized at the second-grade level and act as backups should a computer break down.

Some of the classroom computer upgrades in the intermediate schools, Edison and Roosevelt, are for the added technology classes, such as robotics and CAD, which need new computers to run the programs, Ms. Mammen said.

She said Robotics is a new eighth-grade elective. Pre-engineering and manufacturing are also some electives that require multimedia functionality.

Officials said the server computer leases in the district have expired. The cost for three servers at a four-year lease is \$22,700, which includes \$7,100 for the computers, plus additional costs for software and backup systems.

On other matters, the board announced that 37 Westfield High School students were selected as Edward Bloustein Distinguished schol-

ars, awarded to only those students ranking in the top 10 percent of their graduating class at the end of junior year, with combined critical reading and mathematics SAT scores of 1,260 or higher.

Lincoln School kindergarten and pre-school registration will be held from January 23 to 31. Forms are available at westfieldnj12.org/lincoln. The morning kindergarten session is from 9:05 to 11:40 a.m., and the afternoon session is 12:45 to 3:20 p.m. The pre-school morning session is 8:45 to 11:15 a.m., with afternoon sessions from 12:25 to 2:55 p.m. Registration for transitional kindergarten and Leaps and Bounds 1 will be held from 8:45 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.

The board said it might hire a fourth additional teacher in the intermediate school to replace a retired teacher. It is considering hiring two additional elementary teachers next year.

The next board of education meeting on Tuesday, January 29, will focus on the general education budget.



Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader  
**MONEY TALKS...**Westfield Board of Education members discuss the technology portion of the school budget for 2008-2009 at their Tuesday night meeting. The board is holding weekly budget meetings over the next few weeks. Above, Board President Ginny Leiz, center, discusses new computers with Superintendent Margaret Dolan, right.



**CHUTES AND LADDERS...**The early-childhood center at Westfield's Lincoln School undergoes interior demolition and construction debris disposal last week. The chute is placed for safety reasons, according to Westfield Public Schools Business Administrator Robert Berman. Instead of dropping debris from three stories high, with the chance of particles landing in the surrounding neighborhood, the chute forms a protective enclosure for the passage of demolition materials into the dumpsters.

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Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader  
**GOING TO THE SOUTH SIDE...**Last week, the Westfield town council endorsed "phase I" of the Downtown Improvement Plan. Engineer Christopher Statile and Sherry Cronin, executive director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation, presented the final draft of the improvement plan, which focuses on South Avenue between Westfield and Central Avenues (above). Mr. Statile said the goals of the project include enhancing the corridor's appearance and encouraging traffic-calming. Mr. Statile provided *The Leader* with a sample detail of the new sidewalk's streetscape, which appears just below the South Avenue picture.



Michael J. Pollack for The Westfield Leader  
**BUS OVERTURNS...**Above, Clark police and fire officials work Friday to clear Raritan Road of debris before loading a Vogel school bus, which had overturned hours earlier, onto a Sevell's tow truck. The bus, heading toward Central Avenue, overturned as it swerved to avoid a car that crossed over the lanes (inset). Clark police told *The Leader* that no children were on board the bus at the time.