



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.

Vogel Bus Overturns On Raritan Rd. in Clark

By MICHAEL JOSEPH POLLACK
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

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 Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

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

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

Westfield BOE Discusses Tech Budget of \$2-Mil.

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

WESTFIELD—Westfield Board of Education continued the weekly budget meetings, with technology on Tuesday night's agenda. The main focus was replacing computers that are at the end of their lease.

The proposed technology budget for 2008-2009 is \$1.94 million, an amount 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 fixed desktop computers in classrooms rather than providing laptop computers to each individual, which officials said is the more costly approach. Teachers would use a desktop computer that is in the classroom. When not in a class, they would use a computer 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 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 as the budget may not allow it. Many computer leases need to be renewed 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 back ups should a computer break down.

Some of the classroom computer upgrades in the intermediate schools, Edison and Roosevelt, are for the added

Lincoln School Project Update Provided

WESTFIELD—Westfield Public Schools Business Administrator, Robert Berman reported, "The demolition process is going smoothly, and our renovation project is right on schedule, at the early childhood center at Westfield's Lincoln School." "The general contractor, plumber and electrician are involved in the interior demolition and are on site," Mr. Berman said.

Extensive interior demolition is taking place inside the circa-1920s school building to transform it into a modern facility for kindergarten and pre-school children. The project, part of a \$10-million bonded construction effort that also includes work at Roosevelt and Edison Intermediate schools, is scheduled for completion by the end of July.



CHUTES AND LADDERS...Not a giant water slide, the early childhood center at Westfield's Lincoln School undergoes extensive interior demolition and construction debris disposal last week.

Fanwood Recreation Budget Review

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maintaining the position would not be prudent.

"I could delegate some duties to an assistant," Mr. Budiansky said. "Given our budget constraints, I don't think it's a wise move."

The Fanwood Borough Council will discuss the budget in February. For now, the borough will gauge where cuts can be made to combat rising costs.

The commission also discussed expanding its summer camp program from six to eight weeks. With the popularity of the current program, commission members felt there was a need to accommodate additional campers. The commission would raise rates for the program from \$20 to \$35 per week to meet additional staffing needs for the expanded program.

"People wanted us to expand to eight weeks," Commission Chairwoman Pamela Sayles said. "There was such an overwhelming response, we're happy that we'd get more kids."

Sherry Ryan, owner of My Little Dance Studio in Fanwood, also presented a plan to the commission to

partner with the borough for a dance themed summer camp and after-school program. She said the studio has similar arrangements with Westfield and Scotch Plains.

Details are still to be worked out, but Ms. Ryan's studio would likely provide both the venue and staff for the camp while Fanwood would promote the program in exchange for a fee.

"We're opening the door to a new experience," commission member Rob Degnan said. "I think it's a good thing."

Additionally, the commission addressed its staffing needs for the upcoming year. Presently there are three vacancies on the all-volunteer commission, which is made up of 11 members (seven members and four alternates.) John Quinones, a local resident whose children are involved in sports, has expressed interest in joining the commission, officials said.

"We're still looking for volunteers," Ms. Sayles said. "It's a fun commission to be on. We're really trying to get some people."

Mountainside BOE Presents Preliminary 2008-09 Budget

By MARIA WOEHR
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

MOUNTAINSIDE—The Mountainside Board of Education on Tuesday presented a preliminary version of the 2008-2009 school budget at a level of roughly \$14-15 million, with increases over current year expenditures.

The budget calls for four additional staff members to support state average class sizes. These positions include two language arts teachers, a special education teacher and a teacher assistant. The total number of employees would rise to 120.

With the four additional staff positions, the employee budget would be \$6,676,104, an increase of \$423,588 over the current year. This includes substitutes, summer school, athletic stipends and co-curricular stipends.

Other additions to the budget include \$37,000 in tuition reimbursement, \$23,000 in staff training and \$14,000 in curriculum writing. "We had employees take advantage of 181 workshops last year," Board President John Perrin said.

Increases in special education also are included in the proposed budget. One hundred and four students receive special education, and with tuition, transportation, out-of-district placement and services, the total for special education is projected to be \$3.1 million.

"Twenty-two percent of our annual budget is spent on special education, so with that and salaries, we are already at \$9 million in our budget," Mr. Perrin said.

The BOE is proposing funding additional initiatives such as an extra bus for K-8, an enhanced robotics program in the middle school, athletic busses, classroom guided reading libraries in grades K-5, a five-

year uniform replacement for girls and boys volleyball, curriculum mapping, field trips, a writers and reading workshop and mathematics and science curriculum improvements.

"We are always looking to enhance the curriculum for our students," Mr. Perrin stated.

At next month's meeting, the BOE will present the financial breakdown of the budget to the public. The public will vote on the budget on Tuesday, April 15.

"Obviously, this all depends on what the taxpayers want. This is just a preliminary breakdown, so things can be changed," Mr. Perrin said.

Also at the meeting Tuesday night, the BOE started the New Jersey School Boards Association NJQSAC evaluation, which is required of all school boards. The BOE read the code of ethics aloud and took an evaluation. The BOE is required to do self-evaluations and a superintendent evaluation.

"You must score 80 percent or higher on the evaluation," said Nancy DiBartolo of the New Jersey School Boards Association.

Seventh grader James Patterson was recognized at the meeting for having won the National Geographic Society Geography Bee for the second time.

The BOE announced that the renovations to the Deerfield School playground are complete and that all of the equipment has been installed three months ahead of schedule.

The PTA is raising money to fund benches for the playground, and parents are raising money to create a brick sidewalk from the park to the school. The PTA fashion show will take place on Thursday, March 13, and the Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, February 2.

Borough Council Looking At Going Green For 2008

By KATHY MARQUES
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

GARWOOD—Borough councilman Walter Tucker at Tuesday night's meeting asked Mayor Dennis McCarthy and fellow council members 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."

Councilman Tucker thanked Ann Guerriero, who served on the board of health from 1980 to 2007, for her many years of service to borough residents. "We (the council) should look into acknowledging people that do so much work for our town," said Mr. Tucker. "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 that did the initial work on the field over 50 years ago. We can't forget those that 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 recre-

ational amenities.

Councilman Napolitano told *The Times* 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.

Elizabeth Org's Receive \$1.3 Mil. in Grants

ELIZABETH—New Jersey Community Affairs Commissioner Joseph Doria, State Senator Raymond Lesniak, Assemblymen Neil Cohen and Joseph Cryan (LD-20, Union), and Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage delivered \$1,302,394 in grants to organizations that serve low-income and homeless people in Elizabeth.

Mr. Lesniak said, "No family should go homeless or without heat in these winter months. With an economic slow-down on the horizon, it's especially important that we look out for the welfare of our neighbors."

Proceed, Inc., headed by Theresa Soto Vega, is a non-profit organization that provides social services to people in need throughout Elizabeth. The organization received a grant of \$320,000 to assist low-income households with the rising costs of home heating and cooling.

The Coalition to House the Homeless received a \$100,000 shelter support grant to renovate the coalition's transitional house, which provides temporary housing to working homeless families.

Covenant House received \$424,300, which will be used to restore a transitional living program for 12 homeless young mothers and their children.

The YMCA received a grant in the amount of \$458,094 to construct the Madison Transitional Housing complex to provide temporary housing to families in need.

In all, \$1.3 million was presented to provide heating and cooling assistance and transitional housing.



ICE TIME...Members of the WHS Hockey Team hold the annual SKATE-A-THON at the Union Sports Arena Sunday, January 19. About 150 participants enjoy open skating and taking shots on the goalies. The fundraising event supports the WHS Team.



POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Monday, January 14, Remigiusz Toronczak, 31, of New Brunswick was arrested at South and Central Avenues on a Piscataway motor vehicle warrant. He was released after posting \$750 bail.

Tuesday, January 15, a resident of the 1500 block of Boulevard reported a burglary to her home. It was undetermined what was missing. Entry was gained through an open basement door.

Tuesday, January 15, Robert Carter, 51, of Westfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Crossway Place on an outstanding motor vehicle warrant from Union. He was released after posting \$120 bail.

Wednesday, January 16, Jasmine Rios, 19, of Atlantic City was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Windsor and Ripley Avenues on an outstanding Newark warrant for a municipal offense. She was released after posting \$120 bail.

Thursday, January 17, Kia N. Ayers, 20, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding traffic warrant from Watchung after a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Cacciola Place. She was unable to post the \$1,000 bail and was turned over to Watchung police.

Friday, January 18, Mahari Tyndale, 31, of Plainfield and Jeffrey Spector, 28, of Scotch Plains were arrested and charged with possession of cocaine after a motor vehicle stop at South and Central Avenues. Both men were released on their own recognizance after being served with summonses.

Mountainside

Tuesday, January 15, Jeremiah A. Carter, 25, of Newark was arrested at the Essex County jail and charged with an outstanding Mountainside warrant in the amount of \$800. He was transported to the Union County jail pending a court date, police said.

Thursday, January 17, a resident of Darby Lane reported that someone knocked over her mailbox, valued at \$500.

Thursday, January 17, an assistant manager of a Route 22 storage facility reported that an individual who rents a storage unit from the facility had set up residence in the unit. According to police, a ladder was placed in the rear of the unit so the individual could gain access without using the padlocked entrance.

Located in the unit were a bed, coffee maker, water cooler, laptop and a television, which are powered by an extension cord that was run to a nearby outlet, police said. Entrance to the unit is gained during normal operating hours and the individual remains in the unit after the facility is closed, authorities said.

Monday, January 21, a Route 22 restaurant reported that two patrons left the establishment without paying the bill. According to police, the suspects attempted to pay with a credit card that was declined, at which time they fled the restaurant.

The first suspect was described as a black male with shoulder-length dreadlocks, wearing a white jacket and black pants. The second suspect was described as a black female with long black hair, wearing a long black coat and a black and white dress, police said. According to police, the suspects fled in a small, white, four-door vehicle with front-end damage and a partial plate identification of KZ-31.



GOING TO THE SOUTH SIDE...Last week, the Westfield council endorsed "phase 1" 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 included enhancing the corridor's appearance and encouraging traffic-calming. Below, Mr. Statile provided *The Leader* with a sample detail of the new sidewalk's streetscape.

Scotch Plains

Friday, January 18, Aaron Quade, 22, of Hammonsport, N.Y. was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop.

Sunday, January 20, Jeffrey Anness, 19, of Fanwood was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana after a motor vehicle stop.

Sunday, January 20, a Route 22 gas station employee reported the theft of \$5 worth of gas after the operator of a vehicle left the pump without paying.

Fanwood

Tuesday, January 15, Michael W. Mason, 45, of Staten Island, N.Y. was arrested on an outstanding Jersey City warrant after a motor vehicle stop at the 200 block of South Avenue.

Tuesday, January 15, Kelvin M. Cabrera-Zapata, 29, of Elizabeth was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue on an outstanding warrant out of Carteret. He was released after posting bail.

Johany Lazu-Feliciano, 30, of Hoboken, a passenger in the vehicle, also was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS). According to police, he was transported to the Union County jail, where he is being held on \$12,500 bail.

Thursday, January 17, Cynthia A. Dotoli, 46, of Lavallette was arrested on a Union County Sheriff's Department no-bail warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue. She was processed and transported to the Union County jail, police said.

Friday, January 18, Michael S. Haskell, 34, of Bridgewater was arrested on an outstanding Somerville warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue.

Friday, January 18, two 17-year-old juveniles from Fanwood were arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue and charged with possession of marijuana. Both individuals were processed and released to their parents pending a court date in Elizabeth.

Friday, January 18, sometime between 5:45 and 7 p.m., someone smashed the rear window of a Westfield resident's motor vehicle while it was parked at a South Avenue restaurant and removed a satellite radio valued at \$200.

While authorities were searching the area, they noticed another vehicle was ransacked. After locating the owner of the vehicle in the restaurant, it was determined that a pair of \$200 sunglasses was removed from the unlocked vehicle, police said.

Saturday, January 19, a South Avenue restaurant reported that a patron of the restaurant left the establishment without paying his bill. According to police, the suspect has been identified as a Scotch Plains resident and charges are pending.

A King Street resident reported that sometime between Monday, January 21, at 5 p.m. and Tuesday, January 22, at 6 a.m., someone entered his two unlocked motor vehicles while they were parked in the driveway and rummaged through them. According to police, nothing is reported missing at this time.

Erratum

The date for a forum of Republican Seventh District Congressional candidates was incorrect as published in last week's *Peyton's Peek* at the Week column. The correct date is Thursday, January 24 (today). The forum will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Gran Centurions, 440 Madison Hill Road, Clark.