



**TO THE RESCUE...**Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky, right, helps to jump start the Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad's 2008 fund drive by reading a proclamation at the February 25 council meeting that names March as "Westfield Rescue Squad Month." Squad members on hand to receive the proclamation included, from left to right, Vice-President Bob Barrett, Captain Kelly Wanca, Deputy Captain Bob Billson and Treasurer Carol Carson.



**ALL SMILES...**Former Summit Councilwoman Kelly Hatfield beams after defeating Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks at the Union County Republican convention to win the Union County line. Ms. Hatfield is running for the Seventh Congressional District and will appear on the organization line with United States Senate candidate Joe Pennacchio, a state senator from Morris County.

## GOP Convention

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[Democratic] state and that Republicans cannot win in New Jersey." The GOP has not won a U.S. Senate seat in New Jersey since 1972.

He said the GOP needs to give a reason for people to vote for Republicans, tell voters how Democrats

overtax and overspend, and remind voters that "this ain't their father's Democrat Party." He said the Democrat Party, in 1960, "made a sharp left-hand turn and has never looked back."

Mr. Pennacchio said the party must "offer hope" to voters. "New Jerseyans don't like to be told what they can't do and why they can't do it," he said.

Ms. Estabrook told delegates the U.S. Senate race was "all about the economy" and high taxes. "So what are we going to do to change it? Cut [federal] spending. Make the hard decisions," she said. She said the nation's current national debt of \$9.3 trillion is the highest in United States' history.

She called herself a "business-woman who knows how to make budgets, knows how to live within [them] and knows how to cut back when that's necessary."

Rep. Mike Ferguson (R-7th Dist. New Providence), chairman of Ms. Estabrook's election committee, said the candidate is "not a career politician or a career candidate. This year, voters are not looking for the best sound bite. They are looking for someone who is authentic and who can change the status quo in Washington," he said.

The GOP committee also nominated Roselle Park Councilman Michael Yakubo to run for one of three county freeholder seats up for election this year. He said he would work hard for the party, although he admitted winning a freeholder election is "always a hard mountain to climb." The GOP has not won a freeholder election since 1994, and has not held a board seat since 1997.

The GOP executive committee will interview candidates for the remaining two slots on the June ballot.

## WF-Plan Bd.

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Albira Ardrey and Siobhan Davey all testified to safety problems with creating a driveway on the spot along Wychwood Road that the applicant proposed.

Mr. Krause said the area "is unsafe now."

"I don't think this driveway is any worse than what's already there," board member Francis Smith said.

"That driveway is not going to be more unsafe than other driveways in the area," board member Brett Olsen added.

"I agree that there is no safety issue," board member Anthony Attanasio said.

Among the list of additional conditions were that the applicant meet minimal tree removal approved by the tree commission, provide a K-turn turnaround area in the driveway and prune vegetation and landscaping along the surrounding streets.

"They totally ignored the zoning ordinance, which specifically requires by a lot that is rounded, that a tangent be drawn where there is an intersection along the sideline of the streets; they didn't mention it, they ignored it, they're in violation of their own ordinance," Mr. Boyle told *The Westfield Leader* after the meeting commenced.

## MS Council Presents Annual Good Neighbor Award

By EBONY MCQUEEN  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**MOUNTAINSIDE** — Mountainside resident Karen Sforza was presented with the annual Mabel Young Good Neighbor Award at the February 26 borough council meeting. Mrs. Sforza, who has only been a borough resident for 10 years, was nominated by over three dozen families.

"I can think of no other person, and it is really my honor to present this award to Karen Sforza," said Bill Giannone, who presented the award to Mrs. Sforza.

According to Mr. Giannone, Mrs. Sforza is a good neighbor because "she thinks very big with such a full life." As an example, Mr. Giannone described Mrs. Sforza's generous spirit when she held a birthday party for her two sons.

She insisted that the attendees not bring any gifts for her sons, "because they had enough already." Instead, Mrs. Sforza asked that the guests bring a piece of sporting equipment, which was donated to under privileged towns.

Upon receiving her award, Mrs. Sforza thanked the borough, her family and former award recipient Sigrid Patch.

"I want to thank my mentor Sigrid Patch," Mrs. Sforza said.

In other council business, acting mayor William Lane and the council officially designated March as Youth Art Month.

"I endorse the observance of Youth Art Month and encourage the support of quality school art programs for children and youth," Mr. Lane said.

According to Mr. Lane, art education gives students a deeper understanding of multi-cultural values and beliefs.

The borough has entered into a grant agreement in the amount of \$14,231 with the Union County Human Services Department's Division of Planning. The grant requires the borough to match it by \$3,558, which is 25 percent of the grant amount. The agreement will provide educational services for substance abuse prevention.

Council members decided to donate \$300 to the Governor Livingston High School, Berkeley Heights fundraising committee of Project Graduation. The graduating class will hold a drug- and alcohol-free party immediately following graduation. Mountainside's high school students attend Governor Livingston.

The council approved the police committee's appointment of Amy Nigro and Timothy O'Neil to fill the two vacancies for communication officers.

An ordinance to appropriate \$175,000 for the resurfacing of Blazo Terrace and Iris Drive was heard on first reading. The

borough will be reimbursed by a grant awarded by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT).

Another ordinance heard on first reading was an ordinance to appropriate \$55,000 to enhance the toddler playground equipment and purchase sporting equipment at Deerfield School.

If approved on second reading, \$30,000 would be reimbursed to the borough from the Union County Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

The meeting ended with the council going into executive session to discuss a litigation for a building infringement. According to borough attorney John Post, a builder interfered with the borough's 20-foot right-of-way.



**PATRIOT CHAPEAU...**Mountainside Republican Committee Chairman Bill Sanders dons appropriate attire last Saturday in Westfield at the county GOP Convention.

## Salvation Army Seeks Supplies for Troop Kits

**WESTFIELD** — The Salvation Army will provide deployment kits for New Jersey National Guard soldiers being deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Items will be collected in the lobby of the Westfield Memorial Library.

Camouflage bags have been provided for the toiletries, and the Salvation Army asks supporters to help supply the contents via donations of the following items:

Combs, Kleenex pocket packs, nail clippers, playing cards, gum, lip balms, candy, toothbrushes, notepads, disposable razors, pens and moist wipes pocket packs.

Small/travel sizes are needed for the following items: toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo, mouthwash, soap and hand sanitizers.

## State Budget Cuts to Hit Garwood Borough Hard

By RAYNOR DENITZIO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**GARWOOD** — With New Jersey looking for ways to combat rising debt, smaller municipalities are feeling the pinch of the state's budget cuts.

"Everyone heard the speech by the Governor last week and we [small towns] all face uncertainty at this point in time," said Kathleen Villaggio, Garwood Borough Council president and chairwoman of the borough's finance committee.

Faced with \$32 billion in debt, Governor Jon Corzine introduced a proposed budget last week that was \$500 million less than last year's version. One of the areas where Governor Corzine looks to make cuts is in the Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid program. Under the proposed budget, CMPTRA benefits for towns with a population less than 5,000, such as Garwood, would be eliminated.

The Governor's announcement comes at a time when the borough is facing rising costs of its own. Preliminary figures discussed during the council's budget workshop meeting on Monday see taxes rising in Garwood, with a house assessed at \$100,000 facing an additional \$320 in municipal taxes.

"Nobody likes raising taxes," Ms. Villaggio said. "It's disheartening having to sit up here and do this."

According to Ms. Villaggio, the major increases in this year's budget are \$226,000 in pension costs. The borough owes roughly \$166,000 to the Police and Firemen's Retirement System (PFRS) and an additional \$60,000 to the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). Although the borough will continue to pay into the pension programs, this year's payment to the PFRS and next year's payment to the PERS represent the last two large bills for the pension system.

The borough's tax increase could be higher, however, without additional state aid, officials said. In addition to the cuts to CMPTRA (from which Garwood received \$360,472 in 2007), the state's proposed budget would eliminate Municipal Homeland Security Assistance Aid, Municipal Property Tax Assistance Aid and Municipal Efficiency Promotion Aid. Garwood received \$25,000, \$14,242 and \$18,496, respectively, from these programs in 2007. The budget also cuts the state's Extraordinary Aid program and Special Municipal Aid programs by 5 percent over last year.

The proposed \$6,659,907 borough budget does not include the cuts discussed by the governor during his speech last week and Ms. Villaggio is hopeful that the state's budget will be reevaluated.

"Hopefully that [the state's budget] is a working document, as this [Garwood's budget] will probably be," Ms. Villaggio said.

As an incentive in conjunction with the CMPTRA cuts, Governor Corzine proposed \$32 million in funding for municipalities to consolidate services or merge. Ms. Villaggio stated that this method of cost reduction is not likely for Garwood since the borough already shares many services (such as building inspections) and the borough's workforce is already minimal.

"We try to share services," Ms. Villaggio said. "We don't have an exorbitant workforce and the workforce that we do have are very hard working, dedicated individuals."

The borough finance committee will submit the formal budget for discussion at the council's general meeting on March 11. Ms. Villaggio, along with Mayor Dennis McCarthy and the borough's business administrator, Christina Ariemma,

will travel to Trenton today (March 6) for a New Jersey League of Municipalities/Department of Community Affairs briefing about the CMPTRA cuts.

Mayor McCarthy was forced to leave the meeting Monday when his nose began bleeding uncontrollably. First Aid Squad personnel evaluated the mayor and determined that he was fine.

## WF Council

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Mr. Rapuano received a violation for "stockpiling dirt" at one of the properties.

Robert Cocker, Westfield town attorney, suggested that the town hold off on approving the demolitions.

"At the special (planning board) meeting on March 13, if no objectors appear that night, obviously, the likelihood of an appeal goes down dramatically," he said. "So, why don't we just defer it? [After March 13], the council can make a decision based on those facts [presented at the meeting]."

Len Berman of Prospect Street, during public comment, informed the council that he would appear at the March 13 meeting.

"I don't want to delay it," he said. "I would rather have people vote to tear it down and fill it in [with new housing]."

Mr. Berman told *The Westfield Leader* following the meeting that Union County S.W.A.T. used one of the homes for simulated drills. "Problem was, after they would 'S.W.A.T. it,' they didn't fix it."

Addressing the other property, Mr. Berman said, "They (Mr. Rapuano and his company) would periodically go in and smash a couple of windows, tear down some gutters (leaving them hanging), tear off some siding..."

He said the property was not mowed until the town issued a summons. Similarly, a fence was neither erected, nor locked, until the town intervened.

Sharon Stockwell of Nelson Place said "a couple" of other first-ward properties have become "unsightly" after neglect. "I agree with Councilman Foerst that there is beginning to be a pattern in town in which contractors purchase a home, own it and allow it to dilapidate down to the ground," she said.

Bringing up an abandoned Cowperthwaite Place home, she said glass windows have been destroyed, the front porch has rotted and the door to the home has been left open.

Town Administrator Jim Gildea said the town has checked the property, and there are no property-maintenance code violations at the site. He said despite the common ["misperception"], the property-maintenance code deals with public health and safety matters.

Ms. Stockwell suggested holding properties to different standards, based on whether they are occupied or not.

She said in the cases of unoccupied homes, the public begins to truly "see the deterioration of the exterior of a home."

The council said it could consider such a ruling. However, Mayor Skibitsky cautioned that legally, the idea might not pass muster. "You're discriminating against a property owner simply because the property owner doesn't live there," he said.



**OOPS...**Last Saturday afternoon around 1 p.m., a Westfield woman at 115 Roger Avenue errantly drove her vehicle into her garage, causing extensive damage.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Westfield

Tuesday, February 26, Gregory Brown, Jr., 26, of Westfield was arrested at Plainfield police headquarters on two outstanding Westfield warrants. One was a traffic warrant with bail of \$695 and the other was a criminal warrant with bail of \$530. He was held at the Union County jail in lieu of bail pending a court date.

Wednesday, February 27, Danielle Mitchell, 26, of Plainfield was arrested on the 500 block of North Avenue, East, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. She was charged with hindering apprehension for allegedly giving police a false name and with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. Mitchell was released with a summons.

Wednesday, February 27, Randy Maslow, 52, of Delray Beach, Fla. was arrested on a Westfield traffic warrant following a motor vehicle stop at North Avenue and Elmer Street. He was released after posting \$46 bail.

Thursday, February 28, John Thomson, 20, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a traffic warrant from Fanwood. He was released after posting \$500 bail.

Friday, February 29, Elizabeth Bennett, 18, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia following a motor vehicle stop at Harrison Avenue and Maye Street. She was released on her own recognition with summonses.

### Scotch Plains

Thursday, February 28, a resident of Elizabeth Avenue reported that someone threw a rock at his house and broke a window.

Thursday, February 28, Michael Sweeney, 37, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop for a violation.

Thursday, February 28, a resident of Raritan Road reported that someone removed a decoration valued at \$400 from the front of his house.

Thursday, February 28, a student at the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools reported that someone removed her iPod, valued at \$150, from her bookbag.

Saturday, March 1, a manager at a South Avenue gas station reported that someone ordered \$20 worth of gas and fled without paying.

Saturday, March 1, Claude Thurston, 39, of Linden and Jeff Standfield, 37, of Plainfield were arrested and charged with possession of marijuana after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, both were transported to police headquarters, where they were processed and released.

Saturday, March 1, Michael Nwafor, 43, of Bloomfield was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) after a motor vehicle stop, at which time officers smelled a strong odor of alcohol. According to police, Nwafor was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released with a summons.

Saturday, March 1, Salsabil Ali-Akbar, 21, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with DWI after a motor vehicle stop, at which time officers smelled a strong odor of alcohol. Ali-Akbar was transported to police headquarters, where he was processed and released after posting bail.

### Mountainside

Saturday, March 1, a resident of Virginia Avenue reported that someone entered his unlocked motor vehicle while it was parked in his driveway sometime overnight and rummaged through its contents. According to police, the victim reported nothing missing at this time.

Saturday, March 1, a Poplar Avenue resident reported that sometime overnight, someone entered his unlocked motor vehicle while it was parked in his driveway and removed an undisclosed amount of cash. According to police, the victim reported his property was posted with several no trespassing signs.

Saturday, March 1, police responded to a report of illegal dumping in the brook behind Deerfield School and reportedly met with a resident who witnessed a juvenile dumping the garbage.

According to police, the witness also saw the juvenile enter a home near Central Avenue. When police talked to the homeowner, he stated that his 17-year-old son had friends over and had been

hanging out in the basement all night. The homeowner was told that authorities had previously received several reports of loud partying at all hours of the night and juvenile alcohol consumption on his property, police said.

When the homeowner told police he was unable to control the behavior of his son, authorities told him he was responsible for any illegal activity occurring in his home or on his property.

Sunday, March 2, Cleophas A. Thomas, 28, of New York City was arrested and charged with DWI after being involved in a single car motor vehicle accident on Route 22. According to police, he also was charged with refusal to submit to a breathalyzer test.

Monday, March 3, Segundo J. Llumitasis, 41, of Plainfield was arrested for allegedly driving without a license after a motor vehicle stop on Route 22.

### Fanwood

Wednesday, February 20, Robin M. Spann, 25, of South Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Fanwood warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue.

Thursday, February 21, Victor G. Onofrietto, 51, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Bloomfield warrant after a field investigation on Martine Avenue.

Sunday, February 24, Julio C. Islas-Perez, 28, of North Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Westfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue.

Sunday, February 24, Donnell W. Clark, 49, of Westfield was arrested and charged with DWI and refusal to submit to a breathalyzer test. According to police, he was processed and released to a responsible individual.

Sunday, February 24, Rakim J. Pleasant, 21, of Plainfield was arrested on a Scotch Plains warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue.

Monday, February 25, Carl L. Williams, 25, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Bridgewater warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Willow Avenue. According to police, he also was charged with providing officers with false information.

Monday, February 25, Hatchell Griffin, 37, of Rahway was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Rahway after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Monday, February 25, Breonna S. Williams, 21, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on the 100 block of South Avenue.

Monday, February 25, Helene M. Caro, 62, of Watchung was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Union after a motor vehicle stop on the 200 block of South Avenue.

Tuesday, February 26, Darrell L. Watson, 26, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Piscataway after a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Tuesday, February 26, John S. Perez, 21, of Allentown, Pa. was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Piscataway, Plainfield, Montclair and Scotch Plains after a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Thursday, February 28, Narasimha R. Murarisetty, 31, of North Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Peapack-Gladstone warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Westfield Road.

Thursday, February 28, Amirah J. Brack, 21, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Springfield Township warrant after a motor vehicle stop on the 100 block of South Avenue.

Friday, February 29, Cedric A. Smith, 40, of Jersey City was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Hampton, Weehawken and Union after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue.

Saturday, March 1, James T. Taylor, 24, of Piscataway was arrested and charged with DWI and refusal to submit to a breathalyzer test after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. According to police, he was processed and turned over to a responsible individual.

Saturday, March 1, Yating Chang, 49, of Scotch Plains was arrested at Scotch Plains police headquarters on an outstanding Fanwood warrant.

Saturday, March 1, Thomas Gaffney, 23, of Dover was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Denville after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue.



**CONGRATULATIONS...**Fourth Ward Westfield Councilman Jim Foerst, right, congratulates State Senator Joseph Pennacchio (LD-26, Morris Plains), center, who won the Union County Republican Convention on Saturday. Mr. Pennacchio is running for United States Senate.

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