



**IN GOOD COMPANY...** Frank Isoldi is a hit with the ladies recently at the Westfield GOP cocktail party in the Ward Mansion. Pictured, left to right, are: Westfield Chamber of Commerce Director Naomi McEllynn, Jayne Bernstein and Mr. Isoldi.

## Westfield Municipal Budget

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Unlike other communities, filing a hardship waiver with the state is not a possibility for Westfield, officials said.

While cautioning that the committee is in "the seventh inning" of budget talks, and that nothing is final, Mr. Caruana said the difficulty on the appropriation side of the budget would have "dire implications for the capital side of our budget."

Earlier in the month, Second Ward Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan attended the New Jersey League of Municipalities state budget briefing on the Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Act (CMPTRA). She said town representatives at the briefing voiced their concerns over how cuts in municipal aid "will negatively impact their towns."

She said the general theme was the same — "frustration over the fact that towns are being forced to propose budgets with little to no municipal aid left to assist in bare-bones budgets. We are to [skimp] where there is no room to do so without cutting services or reducing headcount."

After budget discussion on Tuesday, Ms. Neylan said the town is being "penalized" for its fiscal prudence.

Reached after the meeting, Mr. Caruana said the town would have to "reexamine" its fee structure, identify new sources of revenue, turn to more "user-based" revenue streams and cut expenses.

He said instead of the state being forced to scale back, the current system is "forcing municipal governments to downsize."

Repeating a quote from his latest budget memo to the newspaper, he said, "The physician has to heal himself."

Under Fourth Ward Councilman Jim Foerst's Code Review and Town Property Committee report, he said the comment period on the Land Use Task Force's findings had expired, and the report "stands as is." A straw poll of council members moved to advance the six ordinance changes the task force had recommended when addressing the issue of over-development.

Mr. Foerst also reported on a Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) presentation, delivered recently by Joe Doria, commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs. COAH's "third round rules," being discussed presently, change how a community's affordable-housing obligation is calculated. Mr. Foerst said the council's current practice of providing one affordable-housing unit for every eight new residential units would be roughly "50 percent under" the new rules, which would mandate a ratio closer to one affordable unit for every four new ones.

He said COAH has "gone so far" as to take the "grass strip" down the Garden State Parkway and calculate that into what it considers to be "developable property" when computing towns' affordable obligations.

Mr. Foerst said, "Basically, if you were to figure out what our (Westfield's) COAH obligation is, [you would] put your house on the market tomorrow because you're not going to want to live here any longer if this thing goes through." He later added, "It's pretty dreary... We all know COAH is horrible, in terms of its application. Certainly, it's a noble cause."

Under Mr. Ciarocca's Public Safety, Transportation and Parking Committee report, he said "consensuses" had

been reached on two traffic hot spots discussed last year.

He said the stop sign at the intersection of Summit Avenue and Summit Court would be switched in order to stop traffic on Summit Avenue before turning, instead of vice versa. The area will also be home to a "neighborhood roundabout," which serves as a traffic-calming device, at the corner of Summit Court and Arthur Place. The town has also requested a traffic light at the intersection of Lamberts Mill Road and Rahway Avenue, next to St. Helen's Church and Houlihan Field.

Also, two areas of Boulevard will be addressed. A four-way stop sign will be placed at Boulevard and Park Avenue, and turns will be restricted at the corner of Boulevard and South Avenue. Cars will only be able to make right-hand turns onto South Avenue from Boulevard. Also, cars exiting the train station will be prohibited from traveling straight onto Boulevard or turning left. All traffic must flow westbound on South Avenue.

## Fire Dept. Responds To Fire on Boynton

By BENJAMIN CORBIN  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — An occupant of a Westfield senior housing facility was transported to a hospital after a fire at the building Tuesday night.

Westfield Fire Department personnel were dispatched to the facility, located at 1129 Boynton Avenue, at 7:40 p.m. after the fire was reported.

Reached Tuesday morning, Fire Chief Dan Kelly said the fire was "accidental in nature."

The fire department also received a central station alarm, caused by the sprinkler system going off at the facility.

Firefighters arrived to find a smoke condition on the second and third floors of the East wing of the building.

The sprinkler system had contained the fire to the one "room of origin," and firefighters ventilated the second and third floors to remove the smoke from the building.

One occupant was transported to Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in Rahway for "precautionary reasons."

The Westfield Red Cross relocated a second occupant, whose apartment was directly under the "room of origin" and sustained water damage, to a local hotel.

Also, some residents were moved to multi-purpose rooms on the first floor. Chief Kelly said, "The sprinkler system proved it was a true life-saving mechanism."

Michael Pollack contributed to the report.

## Garwood Ed.

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The board is also continuing its search for a new superintendent. With the term of acting superintendent Teresa Quigley set to expire on May 15, a new or interim replacement must be named by that date. Ms. Lewis said that the board is reviewing applications and expects to name a new superintendent over the course of the next month.

The Garwood Board of Education will hold a budget meeting this evening, Thursday, March 20, at the Washington School starting at 7:30 p.m.

## Small-Town Mergers

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"We've been sharing with Scotch Plains. We've been sharing with Westfield. It's not new to us."

"It's (merging) a joke. There's no savings in it for Mountainside. All we would do is lose our identity and get higher taxes," Mayor Vigilanti said.

Garwood Mayor McCarthy said small towns already are fiscally conservative.

"If anyone runs a tight ship, it's the small municipalities," Mayor McCarthy said. "Because of our size, it forces us to be careful with how we spend and budget our money. I think they are going after the wrong people."

Donna Dolce, a Fanwood councilwoman, said that mergers do not necessarily reduce costs. "Even if we were to merge, I sincerely doubt there would be a reduction in personnel but, rather, a reallocation of human resources that would now be in demand," she said.

Fred Tomkins, Fanwood's chief financial officer, said that the borough's budget is flat as far as appropriations are concerned, but the levy is up 29 percent because of revenue loss.

"We've cut everything we could without cutting services," he said. Garwood Council President Kathleen Villaggio said the borough needs to wait and see what happens with the Governor's final budget, which isn't due until June 30.

As New Jersey League of Municipalities Executive Director William Dressel said in an interview last week, everything will be done to restore the funding to municipalities.

"What would Fanwood receive in return for merging with Scotch Plains?" Fanwood resident Rosemarie McCallion asked. "Trenton will promise savings, but given their track record, it probably won't happen. Fanwood would end up losing its unique identity for very little gain."

## MS to Delay Introduction Of Municipal Budget

By EBONY MCQUEEN  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — During Tuesday night's council meeting, borough officials passed a resolution for a late introduction of their 2008 municipal budget, which has yet to be introduced.

"I don't know when the final numbers will be in. It should be ready by April, but it can go into May or June," Mayor Robert Vigilanti said.

The borough will have to reduce certain expenses by 5 percent. Expenses such as gas, electric and planning board expenses will have to increase, officials said. The borough is appointing Philip Caton, a member of the Clarke Caton Hintz firm, as the borough's planning consultant.

"If we cut into our surplus it's going to come back to bite us," Mayor Vigilanti said.

The estimate the borough has so far is with the reduction of state aid. "At over \$700,000, we can't meet our cap," Mayor Vigilanti said.

Last year's municipal budget was \$10 million, of which \$5.8 million was raised through local property taxes, representing a 9.4 percent increase over 2006 in taxes and a 5.3 percent hike in overall spending.

According to Mayor Vigilanti, the borough will not gain a lot of revenue via income for 2008. "This is going to be a very tight year," he said.

In other business, Union County Watchdog Association President Tina Renna asked officials to start obtaining tapes of the Union County freeholder meetings to air on Mountainside's Channel 35.

The Union County Watchdog Association is a non-profit organization that monitors the activity of county government. In 2006, they began purchasing tapes of the freeholder meet-

ings to broadcast on their website.

"In 2006, the county spent \$110,000 on new equipment," Ms. Renna said. "The county said they needed the money to start broadcasting their freeholder meetings."

According to Ms. Renna, the county never aired the meetings.

"Through the Open Public Records Act (OPRA), if you ask them for the tapes, they should provide them," Ms. Renna said.

"When people get upset about politics, they don't think about the county," Ms. Renna said. "We have to hold all government accountable."

In other council business, the bid for the borough's 2005 Crown Victoria surplus police vehicle was awarded to Grace Quality Used Cars, Inc. of Morrisville, Pa.

In October, the borough sold the tax sales certificate for the property known as 1530 Long Meadow Drive, to Phoenix Funding, Inc. for \$20,891. A month later, the borough received a letter from attorney Allen Gorski, advising the borough that the property owner, Vaughn Morris, had filed for chapter 13 bankruptcy that September.

Officials said the borough did not receive notice of the bankruptcy filing, nor was the borough listed as a creditor on the bankruptcy petition for the unpaid 2006 property taxes.

As a result, the borough will have to refund Phoenix Funding, Inc. for the purchase of the certificate, officials said.

Four ordinances were heard on second reading, including the ordinance to appropriate \$175,000 for the resurfacing of Blazo Terrace and Iris Drive and the appropriation of \$55,000 to enhance the toddler playground equipment at Deerfield Elementary School, with \$30,000 to be reimbursed from a county grant.

## MS BOE Candidates

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Ms. Jakositz said the key issues are special education and salaries. "The salary increase in the administration has been astronomical over the last three years," she said.

She also said she is not an activist on the state's pressure to merge towns.

Ms. Williams, her husband, Craig, and two children, Caitlyn, a ninth grader, and Connor, a fifth grader, have lived on Knollwood Road for the past five years. She home-schooled her children until four years ago, when she put them both in Mountainside's public school system.

Ms. Williams was raised in Portland, Ore. and is originally from Syracuse, N.Y. She attended the University of Oregon, Portland State and Miracosta College in San Diego, Calif. She studied early elementary education and worked in a pre-school in San Diego.

She said issues in the campaign are having the BOE pass a budget that is "fiscally responsible," that the teachers, the board and the schools maintain

good relationships, and continuing the improvement of student test scores, which she said has progressed over the last three years.

Ms. Williams said it would not be in the best interest of Mountainside to consolidate education resources with nearby towns. She said the borough has low taxes, good test scores and high property values.

She said a merger might lead to the cutting of the CSA position and may also require adding an overseer position to the budget. She said she does not "see it saving any money in the long run."

Ms. Williams said Mountainside is "a great town. The people are great, the town is great, everybody knows everybody, and it has a family feel to it that is good for the children." If elected to the BOE, she said she would come "without any agenda, [would] listen, learn, see things as a whole and not be quick to judge."

All three candidates will be presented to the public at the next Mountainside BOE meeting on Tuesday, March 25.

## Youths Are Charged In Graffiti Incidents

GARWOOD — Garwood police have confirmed that two male juveniles were charged this week in connection with the defacing of a borough Little League field during October. Additionally, one of the youths allegedly was involved in a similar incident in Westfield in December, authorities said.

The juveniles, ages 15 and 16, are both Cranford residents. Investigating Officer Captain Leonard DiStefano charged the pair with criminal mischief for allegedly defacing the Little League field on the 100 block of Myrtle Avenue with graffiti.

On October 31, the Garwood Little League field house, dugouts, pavilion picnic area and playground equipment were heavily vandalized with graffiti in the form of spray paint. The investigation concluded with the arrest of the two suspects, who were released to their parents pending Family Court appearances.

The 15-year-old also allegedly was involved in an incident at a business on the 100 block of North Avenue in Westfield, in which the building facade was defaced with graffiti. He was referred to Family Court.

According to authorities, the 15-year-old youth admitted to tagging the property on North Avenue, acting alone. The other juvenile was not involved, authorities said.



**FIRE WAS FAST ON ITS FEET...** A fire on Monday destroyed a shoe store behind Cranford Corner on Centennial Avenue in Cranford. The Elizabeth and Westfield fire departments came to assist Cranford's fire department at the scene, while Plainfield's fire department covered Cranford Township during the blaze.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Westfield

Thursday, March 6, following a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Virginia Street, Veron Thornhill, 38, of North Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Watchung traffic warrant, with bail of \$1,000, and an outstanding Jersey City criminal warrant, with bail of \$2,500. She was released after posting bail.

Friday, March 7, James O'Donnell, 38, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) at Lamberts Mill and Willow Grove Roads. He also was charged with refusing to provide breath samples. O'Donnell was released on his own recognizance to a responsible individual.

Thursday, March 13, Taufeeq Muhammad, 27, of East Orange was arrested on an outstanding Newark criminal warrant after a motor vehicle stop at Central and Myrtle Avenues. He was released after posting \$350 bail.

Friday, March 14, William Risberg, Jr., 54, of Westfield was arrested and charged with DWI after a motor vehicle stop at Clark Street and Cowperthwaite Place. He was released on his own recognizance to a responsible individual.

Friday, March 14, Alice Mathaei, 41, of Westfield was arrested and charged with DWI after a motor vehicle stop at Benson Place and Coolidge Street. She was released on her own recognizance to a responsible individual.

Saturday, March 15, while investigating a disturbance at Clover Street and Summit Avenue, police arrested James Schoenkecht, Jr., 20, of Mountainside on a charge of DWI and traffic warrants out of Springfield and Mountainside, with bail amounts of \$1,000 and \$120, respectively. He posted bail on both warrants and was released to a responsible individual.

Saturday, March 15, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation, Luis Guzman, 24, of Elizabeth was arrested at East Broad and Elmer Streets on charges of possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. He was released after being issued four summonses.

Saturday, March 15, while investigating a suspicious motor vehicle, police arrested Jonathan Sheflin, 18, of Westfield and charged him with possession of a controlled dangerous substance (codeine) on the 700 block of Norman Place. He was issued a summons and released.

Saturday, March 15, Anthony D. Burton, 42, of Scotch Plains was arrested after a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Pearl Street on outstanding traffic warrants from Union and Newark, with bail amounts of \$80 and \$125, respectively. He posted bail on the Union warrant and was released on his own recognizance on the Newark warrant.

Sunday, March 16, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation at Ross Place and South Avenue, West, Diane Scott, 43, of Linden was arrested and charged with DWI. She was processed and released to a responsible individual.

Sunday, March 16, Tyler Greenfield, 19, of Westfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Central and North Avenues and charged with DWI. He was released to a responsible individual.

Sunday, March 16, Joseph McClintock, 30, of Scotch Plains was arrested on the 1100 block of South Avenue, West, on a Newark traffic warrant. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting \$112 bail.

### Scotch Plains

Saturday, March 15, a resident of Valley Road reported that someone spray-painted the side of his house.

Saturday, March 15, Suburrah Goldston, 20, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. She was transported to police headquarters where she was processed and released after posting bail, police said.

Saturday, March 15, a resident of Cooper Road reported that someone obtained his credit card number and made unauthorized purchases worth approximately \$300.

Sunday, March 16, a patron of an area golf course reported that someone removed his golf clubs, valued at \$2,000, from the parking lot when he went to get his motor vehicle.

Sunday, March 16, Tiffany Bowen, 31, and Jabbar Figs, 35, both of Plainfield, were arrested for allegedly shoplifting approximately \$300 worth of medicine from a Park Avenue store. According to police, both were transported to police headquarters where they were processed and released after posting bail.

Sunday, March 16, Jason Wright, 24,

of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop for a violation. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released after posting bail, authorities said.

Sunday, March 16, David Butler, 47, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released after posting bail, police said.

### Mountainside

Tuesday, March 11, a Route 22 automobile dealership told authorities that several customers had reported items having been taken from their vehicles while inside the dealership. According to police, the approximate value of the items taken is \$600.

Tuesday, March 11, a resident of Saddlebrook Road reported that someone threw eggs at her driveway, hitting her motor vehicle. According to police, a similar incident occurred a month ago but was not reported.

Wednesday, March 12, Jasper McIntosh, 37, of Plainfield was picked up at the Bridgewater Police Department and transported to police headquarters where he was charged with an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$165.

Thursday, March 13, Ali Muhaammad, 41, of Irvington was picked up at the Union Police Department and transported to police headquarters where he was charged with an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$576.

Friday, March 14, David Hyslip, 18, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of under 50 grams of suspected marijuana. According to police, he was processed and released.

Friday, March 14, Brandon West, 19, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. According to police, West fled the scene of an earlier attempt by officers to stop his vehicle and was later apprehended by Westfield police after Mountainside police put out an alert to stop and hold the vehicle.

Sunday, March 16, a patron at a Route 22 theater reported that when he returned to his motor vehicle, someone had damaged the driver side door lock and all four windows were down.

Sunday, March 16, Paul Kyser, 41, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) after officers observed him making an unsafe lane change and pulled over his vehicle. According to police, Kyser also was observed refusing to move right and stop for an emergency vehicle.

### Fanwood

Thursday, March 13, Felicia S. McQueen-Brown, 39, of Scotch Plains was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road on an outstanding Piscataway warrant. According to police, she was processed and turned over to the Piscataway Police Department.

Thursday, March 13, Albert Everett, Jr., 63, of South Plainfield was arrested on a South Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, March 13, Gaston Celi, 25, of North Plainfield was arrested on an Elizabeth warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Friday, March 14, a Westfield resident reported that someone removed his wallet from his motor vehicle while it was parked on South Avenue between the hours of noon and 3 p.m.

Sunday, March 16, Pamela S. Dunn, 53, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. According to police, she was processed and released after posting bail.

Sunday, March 16, an employee of a South Avenue business reported that someone removed her purse from her locked motor vehicle between the hours of 5:30 and 6:30 a.m.

Monday, March 17, Decarlo L. Johnson, 22, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding Woodbridge warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Monday, March 17, Taimir J. Hanks, 20, of Linden was arrested on an outstanding Westfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on La Grande Avenue. According to police, he was processed and released after posting bail.

Monday, March 17, Jenna Leo, 39, of Edison was arrested and charged with one count of possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS) and possession of drug paraphernalia after a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue. According to police, she is being held in lieu of \$11,000 bail.

## THE LAW FIRM OF DUGHI & HEWIT, P.C.

WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND SINCERE APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE DIVORCE SEMINAR THIS PAST WEEK AT THE WESTWOOD IN GARWOOD, NEW JERSEY.

MARIO C. GURRIERI, ESQ., RICHARD OUTHWAITE, ESQ. AND KRISTIN M. CAPALBO, ESQ. WERE WELL RECEIVED BY THOSE WHO ATTENDED.

THE SEMINAR PROVED TO BE BOTH INFORMATIVE AND MOTIVATING TO THOSE IN NEED OF LEGAL ADVICE.

AS A RESULT OF THE APPRECIATED INTEREST, ADDITIONAL DIVORCE SEMINARS WILL BE SCHEDULED IN THE FUTURE. ALL DATES WILL BE NOTICED IN THIS PUBLICATION.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING OR WISH TO SCHEDULE A PRIVATE CONSULTATION, PLEASE CALL (908) 272-0200