



GOVERNOR IN SCOTCH PLAINS...New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine visited the JCC's Wilf Jewish Community Center in Scotch Plains last Sunday to join in the celebration for the 60th birthday of Israel. Pictured, left to right are: Lou Beckerman of Scotch Plains, a Jewish Federation representative, and Gov. Corzine. Forrest Szuch, front, presented the Governor with a Israel 60th anniversary T-shirt.

Westfield Parking Fines

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Mr. Spector said, "The leadership must step up and become leaders...it's not fair to throw this back on us."

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca responded that the "couldn't imagine a deck at Lord & Taylor would be well received [if people are not utilizing the free parking at South Avenue's train lot]."

Mayor Skibitsky said that the town does listen and worked to repair infrastructure, place new signage, reduce the hours of enforcement and offer 10-minute free parking.

Gregory Wyn-Williams, owner of Baron's Drug Store, said the town's parking arrangement "has already" driven away people.

He asked that the town "not depend solely on raising fines to make ends meet...I'm asking for leniency in enforcement. Please don't drive my customers away."

Third Ward Councilman David Haas, upon listening to all concerns, broke down the problem into three main areas - enforcement, capacity and fines. He then asked Mr. Wyn-Williams which area is of the most concern, to which Mr. Wyn-Williams replied, "enforcement."

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca said enforcement promotes parking turnover, which is needed to spark downtown growth.

He also reminded audience members that meters have a "built-in grace period," designed for people who are running in to a store, such as Baron's, for a quick purchase.

Upon Mr. Ciarrocca's statement, audible groans could be heard from audience members.

Adam Gartenberg, owner of Boogie's Tickets on Elm Street, later called the 10-minute free parking option nothing more than a "tease...it lures you in so you can get a ticket. It's a bait-and-switch."

Mr. Gartenberg announced that he is instituting a new promotion whereby Boogie's will pay the parking tickets of all customers who purchase from the store.

He said customers would rather he FedEx tickets to them than risk getting a ticket from enforcement officers.

"[Parking officers] are like buzzards on a meat wagon," Mr. Gartenberg said parking tickets "are a given - like a geometry proof."

Ted Schlosberg, executive director of the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts, suggested the mayor form a cross-section committee that would delve into the problems faced by business

D.A.R.E. 'Iron Chef' Cook-off Dining

WESTFIELD — The first D.A.R.E. to Dine event to raise money for kids to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs and violence will be held this month.

This event is a cook-off with chefs from local restaurants competing for the title of "top chef." Chefs will be judged on presentation, creativity and taste.

The cook-offs will be Monday, May 12; Monday, May 19 and Monday, June 2. The public is invited. Tickets entitle diners to sample appetizers, entrees and desserts and vote for their favorite chef at the end of the night. Beer, wine, soda and hors d'oeuvres are included. Attendees must be at least 21 years old. Tickets are \$30 per person for one night (May 12 or 19), \$50 per person for the first two nights and \$100 per person for all three nights.

For more information and tickets, contact Naomi McElvyn at (908) 233-3021 or visit the Westfield Chamber of Commerce, located at 173 Elm St., third floor.

Fire Incinerates Box Truck At Westfield Construction Site

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — A box truck doing insulation work at a Westfield construction site caught fire, Tuesday afternoon, April 29, incinerating the vehicle.

The fire started at 5:20 p.m. and was called in to the Westfield Fire Department minutes later. The truck, parked adjacent to the construction site, 757 Norman Place, was carrying insulation materials, tar and waterproofing products, all of which are "extremely flammable," according to Westfield Fire Chief Dan Kelly.

When firefighters arrived, the vehicle was "fully engulfed in flames," and the fire took 15 minutes to extinguish.

A Union County Fire Investigation Taskforce determined that the cause of the fire was "electrical in nature."

One construction worker received minor burns to his arm and was treated by the Westfield Rescue Squad.

As construction workers relocated machinery that was "in the line of fire," the construction site sustained damage. A construction worker, attempting to move a backhoe away from the fire, backed the vehicle into the front of the foundation.



TRUCK BLAZE...A truck at a construction site in Westfield was completely destroyed by fire on Tuesday, April 29.

Cranford Deck Loses Money After First Yr. of Operation

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — It has been over a year since the Township of Cranford opened the municipal garage, at Cranford Crossing, off South Avenue and South Union Avenue, a block from the Cranford train station. Cranford Building Associates, the developer and owner of Cranford Crossing, has reserved 70 of the 310 parking spots in the multi-level garage exclusively for the residents in the Cranford Crossing apartments. That leaves 240 spots open. About 130 of those are earmarked for 12-hour per day, annual permits. The rest are metered parking, including 12-hour metered spaces, charged at a fee of 50 cents per hour.

The township does offer the permit spots to resident and non-resident commuters. A resident pays \$600 per year to park in the garage for a 12-hour per day, annual permit. A non-resident pays \$780 for the same privilege. Comparatively, a non-resident, as well as residents, is charged \$600 to park in the South Avenue lot at the Cranford train station.

In May 2007, the township lowered the garage rates from \$1,000 for non-residents and \$800 for residents. At the same time, they raised the South Avenue lot fee from \$480 to \$600 for residents and non-residents.

Director of Finance, Treasurer and Tax Collector of Cranford Township, Thomas Grady, told *The Westfield Leader* by phone last Friday that the township is losing money on the garage.

"We had to subsidize it to meet debt service expenses. We are not generating enough revenue," Mr. Grady said. "Taxpayers are subsidizing that facility."

"When we first opened the garage, spaces weren't selling. They [the township] know that they can't charge enough to make the expenses for parking in there," Mr. Grady said. "They [the township] knew going in. The first revenue numbers we were projecting would not cover the expenses. You would have to charge \$1,200 per year to cover everything." He later said that is about what Summit charges.

Deputy Mayor/Commissioner of Finance David Robinson said that there are "significant gaps between what they [the administration, headed by Daniel Aschenbach, that passed the resolution in 2001] thought the expenses were, from what the revenue generated from it."

"They were overly optimistic about what revenue would be generated," Mr. Robinson said.

The garage is generating about \$205,000 to \$210,000 in revenue per year, according to Mr. Robinson, and taxpayers are paying approximately \$70,000 per year of the garage's debt service.

CBA is required to pay \$110,000 per year towards the debt service until the end of the 30-year bond issue. In February 2007, CBA did not make their payment due date, and paid three weeks late. Mr. Grady said the company is currently paid up.

The township financed \$7.1 million and another \$700,000 is outstanding that

the township would have to finance eventually, Mr. Grady told *The Leader*. The township put no money down.

The township's portion of the financial responsibility is tax exempt.

The fraction owned by CBA is not tax exempt. \$1,603,000 was borrowed for the apartment dweller spaces. Mr. Grady said that number fully amortized over 30 years equates to \$3,795,000.

He also said it costs about \$25,000 per year, mostly for cleaning, to operate the garage.

Mr. Grady said the garage is monitored with a surveillance system and that the garage is not manned with security personnel.

Most of the garage, which has an elevator, is covered except for part of level five and all of level six (the top level), both levels are allocated to 12-hour, annual permits. Level 2 is also allocated for those permit types.

Sergeant Craig Marino of the Cranford Police Department said, "Very few non-residents park in the garage." He said he did not have an exact number.

He said three rounds of mailings went out to Westfield residents on the Westfield parking permit waiting list.

Kathleen Miller Prunty, director of the downtown management corporation, said other nearby communities also received mailings.

She said she took out some advertisements in the *Cranford Chronicle* and *Suburban News* announcing the spaces, and made post cards, with similar information, available in public places in Cranford. Since the spaces were subsequently "sold-out," she did not choose to advertise in other newspapers, such as *The Leader*, and has no plans to advertise again.

However, Sgt. Marino said that the township does "oversell" permits to make up for paid spaces that are underutilized. He said the permits are sold out and that there are about less than five people on the waiting list now because of the extra 130 or so spots generated from the garage. He said prior to opening of the garage in January 2007, there were about 200 Cranford residents on the waiting list. At the end of June, renewals will come up, and he said there are always people who do not renew.

Initially, there were 100 spots allocated to 12-hour permits, and the township added 30 more later, according to Sgt. Marino. He also said that the township's police chief evaluates if more spots should be opened up for permits "continuously."

On another note, both Mr. Grady and Sgt. Marino said that the township is making more money by replacing the old meters with pay stations because it costs less to operate and because people tend to not stay in the spot for the full length of time they paid for, and another person will take over the same spot and pay anew.

The public can log on to cranford.com/ to download a parking permit application.

Citizens Protest Hospital Closing

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ing for an answer. The Plainfield branch of the People's Organization for Progress (POP), said it handed out thousands of fliers calling on residents to attend the meeting.

"Despite the serious issue that brought us together, it was a wonderful night for Plainfield," said Lawrence Hamm, POP's chairman. He applauded the unity he observed across racial, religious and social lines — all in an effort to, in his words, "save an institution central to Plainfield."

"We got to find a way out of this — the hospital can be saved," he added. "Keep it open to allow people to find a solution."

Some said Solaris was already moving equipment out of the hospital in preparation for the closure and transfer of patients to JFK Medical Center.

"I saw them moving equipment last night after 10 p.m.," said Marvin Palmer of Plainfield.

Plainfield Mayor Sharon Robinson-Briggs spoke of the "tremendous outcry" from the public resulting from the closure plans. She said her office has received more than 2,500 letters on the issue. She called for another public forum, so residents could be heard. She showed a letter, dated April 3, that she had written to Governor Jon Corzine asking for financial assistance to keep the hospital open.

In the letter, she suggested to conduct "an annual forensic audit" of the hospital and called for the establishment of an "advisory health commission," consisting of local legislators, mayors, representatives of hospitals currently on stable ground and community representatives to provide quarterly reports to the state, the hospital's board of directors and Solaris Health Systems on Muhlenberg's finances.

She said she has yet to receive a response from the governor's office but appreciated the support she has

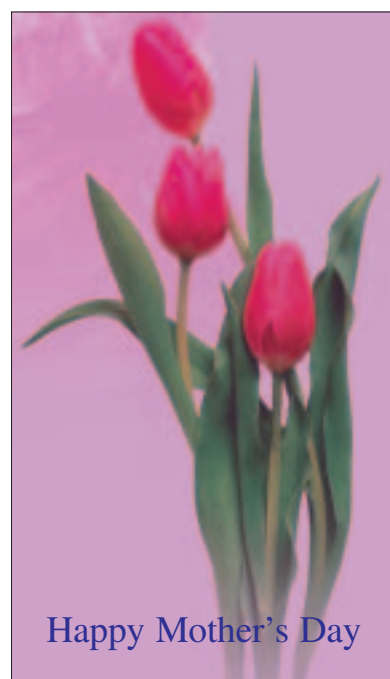
received from local leaders like Mayor Charles Butrico of South Plainfield and Mayor Colleen Maher of Fanwood.

Plainfield resident Olive Lynch has started a group called "Buy Muhlenberg" and said she would like to see the community purchase the hospital in order to keep it open. She says the group has raised over \$95,000 in the last two weeks from private citizens and is developing a report it plans to send to the governor.

Community organizers plan to discuss the status of Muhlenberg at a forum with the Human & Civil Rights Association of New Jersey on Wednesday at the Plainfield Public Library.

There is a rally planned at the statehouse in Trenton today, May 8, and a meeting at the DuCret School of Arts in Plainfield this Monday, May 12.

Next Saturday, May 17, there will be a noontime march and rally in Plainfield.



POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield
Monday, April 28, Merih Yavuz, 22, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a traffic warrant issued by Westfield. He posted \$500 and was released pending a court date.

Monday, April 28, a diamond engagement ring and a diamond tennis bracelet were reported stolen from a bedroom at a residence on the 600 block of Shackamaxon Drive. The total value of the missing jewelry is approximately \$28,200.

Tuesday, April 29, a Middletown resident reported the theft of her red 1997 Honda Civic from a parking lot on the 500 block of Central Avenue, which occurred sometime between April 23 and 28.

Wednesday, April 30, Lawrence Ruzicki, III, 24, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding South Amboy criminal warrant after a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Massachusetts Street. He was released after posting \$266 bail.

Saturday, May 3, after being stopped for motor vehicle violations on Central Avenue, Fernando DeJesus, 27, of Scotch Plains was arrested on outstanding motor vehicle warrants from Woodbridge and Clark, with bail amounts of \$750 and \$500, respectively. DeJesus was released after processing and posting bail.

Sunday, May 4, 12 motor vehicles that were parked on the 200 block of Prospect Street were reported vandalized between the hours of 9 p.m. on May 3 and 9 a.m. on May 4. Someone used a key to damage the paint on each of the vehicles, according to police.

Scotch Plains
Thursday, May 1, a resident of Grand Street reported that a neighbor yelled profanities at her after she parked her car in front of the neighbor's house.

Thursday, May 1, McCloud Bellevue, 31, of Newark was arrested for an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. He was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released, police said.

Friday, May 2, a resident of Jersey City reported that a driver of another vehicle stopped in front of her vehicle at the intersection of Park Avenue and Mountain Avenue. According to police, the driver got out of the car, yelled profanities at her and drove off.

Friday, May 2, a student at Terrill Middle School reported that someone removed her cell phone, valued at \$250, from her locker.

Friday, May 2, Kenroy Campbell, 26, of Newark was arrested for an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. He was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released, police said.

Saturday, May 3, a student at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School reported that someone removed her cell phone, valued at \$400, from her bag in the female locker room.

Saturday, May 3, a gas station attendant at a Route 22 gas station reported that a driver of a vehicle received \$35 worth of gas and then fled without paying.

Mountainside
Tuesday, April 29, Bander Abuatieh, 25, of Brooklyn, N.Y. was arrested for driving with a suspended license after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, he was also charged with outstanding warrants out of Dunellen and North Bergen.

Sunday, May 4, an attendant at a Route

Power Failure Causes Early Dismissal

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — An electrical failure that compromised the safety of students at Westfield High School (WHS) led to an early dismissal, Tuesday.

The Westfield Fire Department (WFD) initially arrived at the school at 7:05 a.m., responding to a power failure. It was determined that circuit breakers had tripped in the school's basement, and shortly thereafter, power was restored.

At 7:40 a.m., during the first period of school, all students and staff had to be evacuated after another alarm was activated.

The WFD responded minutes later, along with Elizabethtown Gas and PSE&G. "We got a report from staff at the school that there was a [gaseous] odor in the building," Fire Chief Dan Kelly said. "We found that a motor had overheated in the utility room on the roof."

Chief Kelly said after the initial power surge, one of the breakers could have failed, causing the motor to overheat.

While students and faculty waited outside, the WFD and utility companies continued to investigate the cause of the alarm. After the school was deemed fit to re-enter, students and staff returned to class at approximately 9 a.m.

At that point, most areas of the building had power, according to community relations official Lorre Korecky.

As the utility company investigated further, at 9:30 a.m., it was determined that the power had to be shut down completely to determine the cause of the electrical problem.

Since the utility company could not immediately predict how soon the power could be restored — and with the halls, bathrooms and some classrooms in the dark — Westfield High School Principal Dennis Fyffe and Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan determined that it was unsafe for students to remain in the building.

22 gas station reported that a driver of a vehicle asked the attendant for cigarettes and then fled without paying the \$6.25. According to police, the attendant was able to retrieve the suspect's license plate number.

Sunday, May 4, an employee at a Route 22 restaurant reported that someone ordered a meal and then fled without paying for it. According to police, the employee was able to find the man in the parking lot, at which time he gave the employee a bankcard and asked the employee to charge the meal to it. The card was declined and the suspect fled before the employee returned with the invalid credit card, police said.

WF-BOE

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position that serves 1,500 kids, a decision she said was "expedient."

"I think the board is going in the wrong direction. We should be adding a second assistant counselor," she said.

She gave the board a packet of information and the BOE said it would consider the presentations.

"Let's not delude ourselves that our children do not need assistance," she said after citing examples of the shootings at Columbine High School and how Westfield is similar socio-economically and racially to Littleton, Colo., and pointing to recent articles about shooter response training in Westfield High School reported in *The Leader*, and also the stabbing in Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

Health Board to Meet On New Health Officer

WESTFIELD — A Joint Meeting of the Boards of Health affiliated with the Westfield Regional Health Department has been scheduled for Thursday, May 15, at 7 p.m., for the purpose of discussion regarding the transition to the new health officer, Megan Cornish, as well as other topics of mutual interest. Ms. Cornish has been serving as the department's public health nursing supervisor.

Ms. Cornish replaces Robert Sherr, who is retiring after many years as of Friday, May 16.

The meeting will be held in the Community Room of the Westfield Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street. The room is located in front of the building on the first floor.

The regional department serves Westfield, Garwood, Fanwood, Mountainside, Roselle Park, Springfield, and Summit.

WF Rec. Dept. Hosts Camp Open House

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Recreation Department is hosting a Summer Camp Open House this Monday, May 12, in the Municipal Building Community Room from 6 to 8 p.m. Those attending can meet camp directors and get summer camp questions answered. The municipal building is located on East Broad Street. For more information, call Traci Kastner at (908) 789-4080.

PTSO Invites Public To Meet New Principal

Editor's Note: Read interview with new principal on page 9.

WESTFIELD — An informal reception will be held on Wednesday, May 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Westfield High School Cafeteria to introduce the school's newly appointed principal, Peter Renwick.

Westfield High School Parent-Teacher-Student Organization President Rose Hughes said, "We want to give parents and the community an opportunity to meet our new principal, who will officially begin his position in Westfield on July 1."

"I served on the selection committee and am so pleased that Peter Renwick has accepted the appointment," she added. "His exuberance is contagious, and I believe that he will bring an era of renewed spirit to the school. I feel comfortable that his transition from Montclair High School to ours will be a smooth one."

Mr. Renwick also is arranging to meet with faculty, staff and students at Westfield High School in the next few weeks.



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