



RACE TO THE FINISH...Area residents compete in the annual Fourth of July Cranford Canoe Club races. A group of canoers, Saturday morning, challenges the rapids in a heat on the Rahway River to the finish line under the Springfield Avenue Bridge.

Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader

## Westfield Receives AAA Rating; Mayoral Candidates Spar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tor, who is making one of the highest salaries in the town, say, 'I'm going to give back two days?' If the mayor is leading the town, why didn't he [approach non-union employees] and ask them to give back before he went to the unions, not the other way around...it's ass-backwards."

He used the board of education as an example, saying that before it asked those governed in a collective bargaining agreement to give back, non-union personnel made concessions.

In the past, Mayor Skibitsky has told the press that he would "be more than happy to speak with Mr. Brennan" during Saturday morning office hours.

Mr. Brennan said Tuesday night that such a remark is "the height of arrogance. It's making a mockery of what should be a fair and honest discussion; he's ducking me," the challenger said.

Reached by telephone after the meeting, Tuesday night, Mayor Skibitsky said he was not going to turn the council meeting into a "debate" and would not allow Mr. Brennan to make a "mockery" of such meetings.

"He can come and see me on Saturday morning during my office hours if he so chooses," Mayor Skibitsky said.

The mayor also said that the public is "happy with how [he and the council] manage the town's finances."

"I have not received one e-mail from the community, and no one spoke at the budget-adoption meeting, including my opponent," the mayor said.

"For the last seven years, I have worked hard for the town as a public servant," the mayor said. "[Mr. Brennan] hasn't even voted in the past five board of education elections, but now that he's a candidate, he's so involved in town affairs? Come on."

The mayor said it was "ironic" that on a night in which the town announced that Standard and Poor's had assigned Westfield its highest rating, AAA, for creditworthiness, he is attacked for how the town keeps its fiscal house in order.

"It's not serendipity that this happened. It's hard work," the mayor

said of garnering S & P's rating.

The mayor also said whether he attends specific budget meetings or not is of no consequence because key committee and management personnel understand the direction in which he wishes to move the town.

"I am the CEO of the town. I set the agenda," the mayor said. "My daily schedule is packed because I'm discussing our goals and strategies at length with [Finance Policy Chairman Sal] Caruana, [Town Administrator Jim] Gildea and all committee chairpersons...The key is results, and the results have been very positive; the town is efficiently run, and S & P agrees."

When approached after the meeting, Mr. Caruana responded to one of Mr. Brennan's remarks, concerning asking non-union personnel to make the same sacrifice as the unionized employees.

"They (non-union members) took a hit in 2009," Mr. Caruana said. "They received only a 2 percent increase, which is modest compared to the increases we are obligated to pay to employees under collective bargaining agreements. They (non-union employees) are making a small sacrifice. In the past, we felt morally obligated to offer pay increases in line with their [unionized] employees."

Mr. Caruana said to ask non-unionized members to make a "further sacrifice" is "to ask them to accept a disproportionate share of the sacrifices needed in such a crisis...We have a moral obligation to treat these members like unionized employees, unlike other communities that are simply spreading the pain around because they can."

Mr. Brennan, discussing the issue after Tuesday's meeting, asked "how about the town's moral obligation to the taxpayers? Which is higher - your moral obligation to the people you employ or the taxpayers? I know where I am. I'm for the taxpayers...You have to be the stewards of the taxpayers' dollars."

Mr. Brennan said the top town employees are paid well and do a good job, but he is just asking them to "take a haircut like everyone else is doing these days."

## Westfield Planning Board

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Currently, a one-and-a-half-story Cape-Cod-style single-family home is left vacant on the lot.

Mr. Petersen's architect, Carol Hewitt of Westfield, showed plans to raise the roof to add a full second story and extend the front porch area and the bedroom, thereby creating a 313-square-foot addition to the right of the property. She said the gable would remain.

The new roof of the addition would be made of asphalt; the front face of the building would be brick and the siding made of vinyl.

She proposed a six-foot by six-foot lift for handicap access and one handicapped parking space in the rear of the lot out of a total of five, where nine parking spaces are required according to the town ordinance.

Mr. Foerst voted to deny the application due to the insufficient parking. He was the sole member to vote no. "I

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INDEPENDENCE ADDRESS...Westfield Councilman Tom Bigosinski addresses the crowd on Thursday, July 2, at Mindowaskin Park in Westfield during the annual Band Concert and celebration of our nation's independence.

Greg Ryan for The Westfield Leader



## POLICE BLOTTER

### Westfield

Saturday, June 27, Edward Pshybysheski, 56, of Kearny was arrested after a motor vehicle accident on Central Avenue and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) and careless driving. No injuries were reported as a result of the accident. He was held until a responsible individual could be contacted.

Sunday, June 28, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation at Central and Lenox Avenues, Yolanda Gonzalez, 22, of Jersey City was arrested on an outstanding Jersey City warrant for \$99. Gonzalez was processed and released after posting bail.

Sunday, June 28, Wilder Pereira, 29, of Rahway was arrested on Mountain Avenue after a motor vehicle accident on North Avenue, East. Pereira, charged with DWI, leaving the scene of an accident, failure to report an accident and careless driving, was issued summonses. No injuries were reported.

Monday, June 29, Thomas Rosky, 40, of Rahway was arrested in the area of 600 West South Avenue and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Rosky was the front-seat passenger in a motor vehicle that was stopped because he was not wearing his seatbelt. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and issued summonses for the charges.

Wednesday, July 1, a homeowner on the 100 block of Wyoming Street reported that his residence was burglarized and a laptop computer was removed from the premises. Entry was forcibly gained through the front door. No one was at home when the incident occurred and there are no suspects at this time.

Wednesday, July 1, Kunwar Baba, 25, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding Clark traffic warrant in the amount of \$500. Baba was released after satisfying the bail amount.

Wednesday, July 1, Marcel J. Moyano, 25, of Westfield was arrested after he responded to Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding Point Pleasant criminal warrant. He was released after posting \$275 bail.

Friday, July 3, David Fuentes, 33, of Jersey City was arrested on an outstanding Jersey City traffic warrant during a motor vehicle stop on the 600 block of West North Avenue. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting \$200 bail.

Saturday, July 4, Lori A. Martino, 43, of Westfield was arrested on multiple warrants during a motor vehicle stop at North Avenue, West, and Tuttle Parkway. The warrants included a Watchung traffic warrant for \$500 and two Plainfield warrants, one a traffic warrant for \$125 and the other a criminal warrant for \$125. She was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released on bail.

Sunday, July 5, Collins K. Kusi, 18, of Roselle was arrested at the Woodbridge Police Department on three outstanding traffic warrants, one from Westfield for \$289, one from Bedminster for \$180 and one from Roselle for \$158. Kusi was held on default of bail pending transport to the Union County jail.

Monday, July 6, Tyrone Miller, II, 39, of Elizabeth was arrested following a motor vehicle stop at North Avenue and Clark Street on an outstanding Woodbridge criminal warrant for \$1,833. He was released after posting bail.

### Scotch Plains

Saturday, June 27, James Hunter, 38, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Saturday, June 27, Mark Paczkowski, 50, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with DWI after a motor vehicle stop at which time the officer smelled the odor of alcohol. Paczkowski was processed and released.

Sunday, June 28, Juan Ayala, 29, of Elizabeth was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Monday, June 29, Samantha Cianci, 18, of Edison was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct after police responded to a disturbance on Rahway Road. According to police, Cianci was observed yelling obscenities at the occupants of a house and refused to follow a police officer's request for her to leave the area. She was transported to headquarters where she was processed and released.

Monday, June 29, a patron of a Route 22 business reported that someone entered her purse and removed her wallet, which contained several credit cards and cash.

Tuesday, June 30, Jormean Brannon, 24, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Tuesday, June 30, a resident of Hetfield Avenue reported that someone did approximately \$175 worth of damage to her lawn by driving a vehicle on it.

Wednesday, July 1, a business on Route 22 reported that someone caused approximately \$100 worth of damage to a display that was outside of the business.

Wednesday, July 1, Patrick Minott, 24, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with resisting arrest after an officer responded to a report of a disturbance on Country Club Lane and observed him arguing with another person. According to police, Minott was asked to leave the area and he refused and continued to argue and then ran from the officer. Minott was placed under arrest and transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released, authorities said.

Friday, July 3, Ralph Tuhl, 68, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with simple assault after an officer responded to a fight in progress on Martine Avenue. According to police, upon arriving at the scene the officer observed the victim on the ground with several marks on him and Tuhl leaving the scene.

After questioning him, the suspect admitted to striking the victim because of an earlier incident of road rage in which Tuhl felt the victim had cut off his

vehicle, police said. The victim refused treatment for the injuries he received to his hands and arms. The suspect was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released, authorities reported.

Friday, July 3, Raymond Sennit, 44, of North Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) after a motor vehicle stop during which the officer smelled the odor of alcohol. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released.

Friday, July 3, Finley Cidone, 25, of East Orange was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Saturday, July 4, Rosa Collins, 42, of Newark was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. She was processed and released.

### Mountainside

Thursday, June 25, Craig M. Simon, 39, of Plainfield was arrested and charged for driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop. He was also charged with an outstanding warrant out of Plainfield in the amount of \$500.

Thursday, June 25, Benedict Hycenth, 67, of Newark was arrested at the Newark Police Department for an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$1,096.

Wednesday, July 1, a resident of Mary Ellen Lane reported that his neighbor had made threats against him over a pile of rocks that was left between the adjoining properties after the victim had work done on his property.

Wednesday, July 1, Salvador Rivera-Santos, 33, of North Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on outstanding warrants out of Mountainside in the amount of \$250 and Plainfield in the amount of \$250. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed and released.

Friday, July 3, a resident of Garrett Road reported that someone entered his unlocked motor vehicle while it was parked in the street and removed his digital camera valued at \$450.

Friday, July 3, Rodney Halm, 40, of South Orange was arrested for allegedly driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop. He was issued a summons and released at the scene.

Friday, July 3, Lamont Counts, 42, of Irvington was arrested on outstanding warrants from multiple towns totaling \$3,340 after he was detained by the New Jersey Department of Fish and Wildlife. He was transported to police headquarters where he was processed.

Friday, July 3, an officer responded to a theater on Route 22 on a report of an argument between two patrons which started when one patron bumped the back of the other patron's seat. According to police, words were exchanged and then a slight altercation followed. Both parties were advised of the complaint process before they left the scene.

Sunday, July 5, Jaoa Dzidzikashuli, 25, of Reisterstown, Md. was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for allegedly driving with a suspended license.

Sunday, July 5, a resident came into police headquarters to report that while she was walking near her home a small red vehicle sped by. According to police, she yelled to the driver to slow down, at which time the driver yelled a threat back at her.

### Fanwood

Sunday, June 28, Khashari Slaughter, 23, of Fanwood was arrested and charged with simple assault after police were called to a dispute on Roosevelt Avenue. She was processed and released.

Sunday, June 28, Preston Lynn, 53, of Carteret was arrested for multiple outstanding warrants out of Springfield, Union and Carteret after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. He was processed and released.

Monday, June 29, Jaquelin L. Pollard, 45, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant out of New Brunswick after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. After further investigation, she was also charged with hindering apprehension for providing police with false identification after giving police a fraudulent New Jersey driver's license. She was processed and turned over to the Union County jail.

Tuesday, June 30, Maria Vasquez, 60, of Corona, N.Y. was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue on an outstanding warrant out of Tenafly. She was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, July 2, Rodney M. Maughn, 51, of Westfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Martine Avenue on an outstanding Plainfield warrant. He was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, July 2, Michael E. Jackson, 37, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Paterson warrant after a field investigation on Martine Avenue. He was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, July 2, Phyllis E. Ifeanyi, 49, of Far Rockaway, N.Y. was arrested after a field investigation on Martine Avenue on outstanding warrants out of Linden, Scotch Plains and Cranford. He was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, July 2, Michel Sidalise, 50, of Roselle was arrested on an outstanding Scotch Plains warrant after a field investigation on Martine Avenue. She was processed and released after posting bail.

Thursday, July 2, a resident of Scotch Plains reported that while eating at a restaurant on Martine Avenue sometime between 1 and 2 p.m., her purse was stolen from her table after she forgot it. When she returned, it was missing.

Friday, July 3, Jimmie Benjamin, 50, of Plainfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road on an outstanding Lacey Township warrant. Jimmie M. Benjamin, Jr., 35, of Plainfield, who was a passenger in the vehicle, was arrested on an outstanding Union Township warrant. Both were processed and released after posting bail.

Sunday, July 5, John J. Tarleton, 35, of Scotch Plains was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on the 200 block of South Avenue on an outstanding Westfield warrant. He was processed and released after posting bail.



Jeff Gruman for The Westfield Leader

GET YOUR BURGER HERE...The staff of Cheeburger, Cheeburger on North Avenue greets customers earlier this week. The restaurant reopened under new ownership after being closed for almost a year.

## Union County to Scale Down Plan for Improved Dog Park

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

ELIZABETH — The county is working on a scaled-down version of an improved dog park at Echo Lake Park in Westfield/Mountainside. Last Thursday night, the county rescinded a \$600,000 contract with Falcon Ridge Construction in Watchung following opposition received from county residents regarding the proposed cost.

"What happened is we had a plan, and now we are changing that plan," said Freeholder Dan Sullivan, filling in as chairman in place of Freeholder Al Mirabella, who was absent. "So a new plan will come up that has requirements that we come up with suggestions that we are getting from everyone else as to how we move forward, and based on that, we come up with bid specs and a number that we think is appropriate for that bid."

County Manager George Devaney said the new plan would not be as comprehensive as the previous proposal but would be done within the current county budget. He said the county is looking to replace the fence as well as add a path, port-a-johns and a canopy.

Al Faella, director of the department of parks and community renewal, said he has met with five members of the public "to discuss what we can do immediately," including new fencing, more regular maintenance and moving an on-site dumpster to provide for more parking spaces. He said the county has put out a revised bid specification for replacing the existing fence.

Bob Harris of Cranford said the facility only needs a new fence, "some decent seating" and a few additional parking spaces.

Springfield resident Peter Stapleton said two county officials told him that the county would be reducing the size of the dog park by "between 30 and 50 percent."

"I'll tell you this, I will find that out," said Mr. Sullivan.

Mr. Stapleton, one of the members of the group that met with Mr. Faella, said the proposal his group submitted for the new dog park "does not decrease the size; everything is just basic and simple."

He also asked the board the amount of the amended budget for the dog park.

County Counsel Robert Barry said the county would not release the budget "because we would already be establishing for any bidder what we're prepared to expect."

Tina Renna of Cranford, president of the Union County Watchdog Association, said of all the meetings she has attended, this was the first time she has heard a group ask for a fund-

ing reduction "for something that was going to benefit them."

"That's so commendable," she said.

Mrs. Renna also spoke about the settlement of a lawsuit she filed against the county. Her grievance was concerning a document she requested and was denied because she did not file an official Union County Open Public Records Act (OPRA) form. Earlier this month, Mr. Barry said the case cost the county \$28,000 in legal fees.

"This lawsuit is costing (the county) less than \$30,000...and that's less than one freeholder's salary. It's certainly a very small percentage of the money that you're spending on public information department salaries and jobs," Mrs. Renna said.

"This is \$28,000 so that you do not have to complete a form," Mr. Sullivan responded. "I frankly don't see what the problem is in doing that (filling out an OPRA form.)" He called the expenditure, which he voted against, "\$28,000 down the drain."

Delia Collins of Clark questioned the county's approval of an \$800,000 upgrade to the county's weapons range in Springfield.

County Engineer Tim Mettlen said the county is replacing the existing facility, which he said is in "very, very poor condition and basically out in the open."

"The new range will be state of the art, with reflectors to create safety at the end of the firing range. There will be a very small building at the front with some restrooms and a staging place," he said. "There will be an open structure over the top of the range and side walls on the range to confine the bullets to the range."

The board's next agenda meeting will be Thursday, July 9, in Elizabeth with the Thursday, July 30, public session to be held at the Union County Arts Center in Rahway.

## County Golf

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

records she saw showed Oak Ridge "made \$30,000" in 2008 and that seasonal positions "really didn't cost that much money."

"It really doesn't add up," she said. Kathy Torby of Clark asked about the approval of 24 additional parking spaces at Galloping Hill at a cost of \$108,150 for a new contract of \$1.6 million with J.A. Alexander, Inc. of Bloomfield. The company was hired to install the driving range at the course.

Mr. Devaney said the additional spaces are for handicapped use at the driving range. He said "it made sense to do it now rather than later."

## Cranford Bridge Closing

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he said. "It's going to hurt them [families] as well."

Cranford's Recreation and Parks Director Stephen Robertazzi said the proprietor of the canoe club pays the township a seasonal fee, which was already paid up front. "I think he's going to be OK," he said of the business manager.

Marbro, Inc. of Montclair, the contractor awarded the \$2.3-million county contract, is planning to replace the bridge, reinforce it with concrete footings, walls, decks and sidewalks, as well as having steel support beams. Decoratively, the sidewalk parapet walls, abutments and wing walls will be finished in stone veneer masonry, similar to the bridge northwest along Springfield Avenue near Hampton Road. The sidewalk

will have an ornamental railing.

"I'm sorry to see the existing bridge go because it adds character to that area of town, but I recognize the need for improvements in regards to the width and capacity of the bridge," said Kinney Clark, member of the Cranford historic preservation advisory board and long-time resident of Cranford. He said he hopes that the architectural design is "sympathetic to the historic character of Cranford."

The design of the bridge prior to its current structure was that of a truss bridge, he said.

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HEATING UP THE 4TH...Rich Sudol and Brian Munroe of Cranford win a heat during the annual Fourth of July Cranford Canoe Club canoe races Saturday morning. This year was their first time participating in the race.

Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader