



CHIRP...The swallows returned to San Juan Capistrano, Calif., on March 19 to read *The Westfield Leader*. Some remained to sing and flit around the beautiful gardens and lily pond at the old mission. They enjoy greeting the visitors like Honey Corbin from Peach Tree City, Ga., shown above.

Union County Freeholders

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on May 25.

As the county continues to move ahead with privatization for operations at Runnells Specialized Hospital, the freeholders on Thursday approved a resolution to procure a vendor to take over dietary, housekeeping and laundry services at the Berkeley Heights hospital. The county is laying off 280 workers, accounting for 10 percent of its workforce, in order to close an estimated \$35-million budget hole.

One-hundred-and-fifty of the layoffs are at Runnells in the departments listed above, as well as in physical, occupational and recreation therapy. The freeholders previously approved a one-year, \$1.9-million contract to Kennett Square, Pa.-based Genesis ElderCare to take over occupational, physical and speech therapy services at Runnells.

During its agenda meeting on Thursday, the board considered items for the June 14 action agenda. Resolutions will be on the agenda June 14 to add Roselle Park and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in Rahway, as well as South Orange in Essex County, to the list of entities to be serviced by the expansion of Union County's 9-1-1 emergency dispatch center in Westfield.

The county will provide dispatch services for Roselle Park's fire and Emergency Medical Basic Life Support Dispatch Services, for two paramedic units at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and for South Orange's EMS. As a result of these shared-service agreements, eight entities will be serviced by the Union County dispatch service. Fanwood, Hillside, Roselle, Scotch Plains and Springfield also have agreements with the county. The new towns joining, including South Orange, were serviced by CenCom out of Overlook Medical Center in Summit. CenCom has said it will close its doors on June 1.

Andrew Moran, the county's public safety director, said that Union County representatives met with South Orange officials on May 16. "They were very impressed with our operation and we spoke to them today [May 17] and they want to go ahead with the shared-service agreement," Mr. Moran told the board.

"The more municipalities we have on it will lower the county's portion in operating the county's dispatch center," Mr. Moran said. Freeholder Chairman Al Mirabella added, "I think it's very good for this county to be taking on some of that dispatching out of necessity for CenCom closing, but (also) to help our municipalities. I think they will realize a savings as well as contribute

to the overall operation in the dispatch area."

The board also considered resolutions to enable the county to proceed with the issuing of \$100 million in bonds as part of the refinancing of \$130 million in short-term bond anticipation notes issued July 1, 2011.

"We are taking advantage of current market conditions to implement our long-term financing plans," Finance Director Bibi Taylor explained to the freeholders.

Human Services Director Frank Guzzo said revenue provided to the county through the state's casino revenue tax has plummeted \$273,000 from last year to \$1,082,533. A resolution will be on the June 14 agenda for the county to enter into a contract with NJ Transit to secure the funding through the Casino Tax Revenue, Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program Grant. The county uses the funds for its Paratransit program.

Mr. Guzzo said he was hopeful that legislation in Trenton to initiate Internet gaming in New Jersey would move forward.

"It is our belief that if that takes effect that will add much needed dollars to those coffers to provide services for Paratransit as well as other senior programs throughout the State of New Jersey," Mr. Guzzo said.

In the meantime, he said the county is "at that tipping point" where the county is "going to have to start making some very, very tough decisions relative to services for individuals that rely on this service, which are the elderly and the disabled."

He said transportation for chemotherapy and medical services trips would likely be continued while socialization and shopping trip transportation might have to be cut.

"We are looking at every option that we can to avoid reducing services at all," Mr. Guzzo said.

On another issue relative to outside funding sources, Ron Zuber, director of the county's Parks and Community Renewal Department, said the county would receive \$5 million through the Community Development Block Grant, \$846,000 for the county's HOME Investment Partnership and \$421,000 for the emergency shelter grant. All three are through the federal government's Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

County Manager Al Faella said the grants are down 16 percent from last year. "So we may be facing similar choices and difficult decisions to make relative to some of our community development programs as well," Mr. Faella said.

Westfield Council

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fund the fire department they would be applauded, and that the council cannot say the town is as safe with six firefighters on duty as opposed to the 10 it used to have.

"Would we be safer if we had one firefighter per household? Absolutely," Councilwoman Neylan responded. But, she said, the problem is the national economy and its trickle down effect to municipalities. "It's not us against you."

First Ward Councilman Frank Arena accused Mr. Blake of having an agenda.

Third Ward Councilman Dave Haas said it was inappropriate for Mr. Arena to discuss anyone's motives. Mr. Haas added that the motives of all the council members are good, but that he feels the finance committee's meetings should be open so that the actual debates on expenditures are public.

"Oh, we have debate; we don't just go in lock step," Councilwoman Neylan retorted. WFD Lieutenant Tim Brennan, who spoke as both a member of the department and a Westfield resident, said the department is "still fast and effective, but no longer fully capable." He said the rescue that was done of a man trapped by fire on Mountain Avenue last year violated several laws and that the department needs more firefighters.

Mayor Skibitsky said if the FMBA was willing to open the contract up for renegotiation, the town could possibly increase the number of firefighters on each shift. Lieutenant Brennan re-

sponded that he could not speak on behalf of the union, but when pressed for his personal opinion by Fourth Ward Councilman Jim Foerst, he said, "to a point, yes."

In other business, the council approved a resolution to formalize the agreement between the town and the Westfield Board of Education to make traffic and parking improvements in the area of Westfield High School (WHS). The board of education approved the same resolution at its May 15 meeting.

The plan includes an expansion of the current WHS parking lot along Rahway Avenue, re-striping of the Armory parking lot to create more spaces, the construction of a pullout for buses on Rahway Avenue, expansion of the parking lot at Edison Intermediate School, new parking restrictions on one side of the street on Dorian Road, Dorian Court, Dorian Place, Shadowlawn Drive and Nottingham Place, as well as the opening of one side of the street parking on Edgar Road.

Resident David Gibson of Dorian Road expressed some concern that he was not notified of this project, and was especially concerned as to the aesthetics of the new parking lot.

Councilwoman Neylan said special attention would be paid to the landscaping of the parking lot. She said residents in her ward had a similar concern when Temple Emanu-El constructed its parking lot, and the landscaping there makes its lot nearly unseen.

Memorial Day Events in Westfield, Mtsd., CF, SP-F

WESTFIELD - Area towns will hold traditional Memorial Day parades on Monday, among them Westfield, Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Cranford, as well as Mountainside, which will hold its first parade to honor fallen veterans.

The annual Westfield Memorial Day Parade will start at 9 a.m. with services at the World War I Veterans Memorial Monument at the North Avenue and East Broad Street Plaza. After opening ceremonies, the parade route will be north on East Broad Street, straight up to Fairview Cemetery, where the Veterans of Foreign Wars will have closing ceremonies.

The Westfield Memorial Day Parade Committee has selected Korean War veteran William Albert Kessinger of Scotch Plains as this year's grand marshal. He currently is commander of Westfield American Legion Martin Wallberg Post No. 3.

Mountainside's first-ever Memorial Day Parade will commence on Monday at noon at the Veterans flagpole monument on Constitution Plaza, between the firehouse on New Providence Road and the Mountainside Public Library. Upon conclusion of the opening ceremony, veterans, scouts, rescue squad, fire department and police personnel, Rotary Club members and community groups will parade toward Deerfield Elementary School. The parade will proceed from Constitution Plaza up to Bridle Path to Wood Valley Road to Central Avenue, ending in Deerfield's parking lot. The parade is expected to end at 1 p.m.

Cranford will hold its parade on Monday beginning at 9 a.m. The parade route runs from Sherman Park, across from the Cranford Methodist Church on Lincoln Avenue, to Memorial Park on Springfield Avenue. The parade will follow Lincoln Avenue south to Walnut Avenue, to North Avenue, to Eastman Street, to Centennial Avenue, to Springfield Av-

enue to Memorial Park.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day observances will kick off with a special free concert by the Westfield Community Band, entitled "A Tribute to Fallen Heroes." It will take place this Sunday, May 27, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the north side of the Fanwood railroad station. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.

Memorial Day observances will begin on Monday, May 28, with a memorial service at 8 a.m. at American Legion Post No. 209 at Park Avenue and Sunset Place in Scotch Plains, followed by a 9 a.m. laying of wreaths at the Fanwood Memorial Library at Tillotson Road and North Avenue. Wreaths will then be presented at the Veterans Monument at Park Avenue and Front Street in Scotch Plains at 10 a.m. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) Chamber Choir, led by Jan Allen, will perform its renditions of "The National Anthem" and "God Bless America" during that ceremony.

The parade will kick off at 10:45 a.m., with Vietnam veteran Robert LaCosta, acting township administrator and long-time zoning officer in Scotch Plains, serving as grand marshal. Led by the color guards of the parade honorees (Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 10122, American Legion Post No. 209 and Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter No. 688), the parade will begin at the Scotch Plains Municipal Building at 430 Park Avenue. It will proceed along Park Avenue, moving down Martine Avenue into the center of Fanwood and end at LaGrande Park.

The SPFHS Marching Band, under the direction of Durand Thomas, will again lead the line of march. Following the band will be representatives from the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, YMCA activities, youth athletic organizations, multiple other bands, including SPFHS Rhythm Sense, and various civic groups.

Garwood Council

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liquor license transfer from Little Joe, Inc. - Eric Hirsch, president, to Joseph M. Polyak. Little Joe was a liquor store and bar, now closed, situated next to Kings Supermarket, where GNC is now located. Mr. Polyak was the former owner of Little Joe, which was transferred to a corporation headed by Mr. Hirsch. The corporation defaulted on its deed for the property occupied by Little Joe, and therefore Mr. Polyak resumed ownership.

Councilman Mathieu said in his Library Committee report that registration will begin Wednesday, June 13, for the summer reading program. Ryan Palmer was hired as a part-time seasonal helper to work for the DPW at \$9 per hour.

After the daughter of former Mayor George Casabona asked four months ago that a dedication to her father be made at the underpass in the borough, Mayor Quattrocchi said she was able to

get a meeting last week with NJ Transit. She received information she needed to go forward with having a plaque mounted there, but said the borough would have to hire an architect and an engineer. Also, she obtained a source for the funding of the plaque. The people who would fund it are more interested in having it hung at Borough Hall instead of at the underpass because of the dirt and grime that could be a detriment to the plaque, the mayor said. The underpass project began in 1952 and broke ground in 1962. Mayor Quattrocchi told *The Westfield Leader*. Ms. Todisco called the underpass a Garwood landmark.

Mr. Petruzzelli said the borough should reinstate the Green Team, which dissolved when former Councilman Anthony Sytko left office, to take advantage of the grant money available for alternate means of energy.

Cranford Council

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Mt. Laurel agreement.

"The ordinance will provide Cranford with a policy document, with a housing element, and a vision for future development regardless of the Birchwood matter," Mr. Morin said. "It provides an analysis of the number of units and a view of demographics and employment statistics based on the 2010 Census data."

"The housing element addresses the 360 units of which 54 are to be for low-moderate income families. The unit numbers are to be in ratio to the area median income designed to bring Cranford in compliance with the Fair Share Plan, and regulates how each project will be constructed. The goal for total compliance is 2018," Mr. Morin added.

Opponents to the change in the land use ordinance fear that the change would allow development in an area that is environmentally sensitive and prone to flooding. They also fear an increase in traffic and an overburdening of the school system.

In other business, the final reading and public hearing on the \$33.7-million budget for 2012 was postponed to the Tuesday, June 12 meeting, due to an error in the ordinance.

The Committee will also vote, on June 12, on an amendment to the budget to include a state Clean Communities Grant of \$400,000 from the State Payment In Lieu of Taxes Program (PILOT).

An ordinance authorizing the elevation of houses at various locations in, by, and for the township, appropriating \$4,182,012, which will be raised from federal grants from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and insurance payments from the affected property owners was adopted by the committee. The homes being raised were destroyed during Hurricane Irene.

Another bond ordinance was adopted by the Committee to authorize the reconstruction of the lower level and other improvements to the Cranford Municipal Building due to damage by Irene. The move will appropriate \$3,500,000 to pay for the cost, make a down payment, authorize bonds to finance the appropriation, and to provide for the issuance of bonds, and anticipation notes in anticipation of such bonds.

The Committee also honored Eagle Scout John Hollier of Troop 75 and his fellow scouts for landscaping and power washing done at the First Methodist Church of Cranford.

Westfield Vietnam War Memorial

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Veterans Fund will begin next month to construct a Vietnam War Memorial commemorating the service of all citizens of Westfield who served in the Vietnam War. The Vietnam War monument will honor those who sacrificed their lives in service of their country, as well the men and women who came home to begin or continue their adult lives.

The Memorial will be built in Monument Park on East Broad Street next to the train trestle. A sign currently marks the future location. Donations are still being accepted. The goal is to have the monument completed this summer and have a dedication ceremony on Veterans Day, November 11, 2012.

The Westfield Veterans Fund is appealing to all those who wish to honor these veterans by donating to this tribute. The Westfield Veterans Fund has been formed as a nonprofit 501c3 corporation to accept tax-deductible donations and grants.

The Westfield Veterans Fund would also like to thank those individuals and businesses that have already contributed to this Memorial. Donations can be made online at www.westfieldveteransfund.org or by mail to Westfield Veterans Fund, 405 Elm Street Westfield, N.J. 07090.



TO HONOR OUR HEROES...The Westfield Veterans Fund will begin next month to construct a Vietnam War Memorial commemorating the service of all citizens of Westfield who served in the Vietnam War.



GUTEN TAG...Bob Cozzolina catches up on local news in *The Westfield Leader* in front of Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, Germany. The checkpoint became a symbol during the Cold War, representing the separation of east and west by preventing escape across the city sector border from East Berlin to West Berlin.

Mountainside BOE

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recognizes the financial hardships of the school district as well as the struggles of many of the families within the community. We, too, have had to deal with many of the same situations in our own homes. For those reasons, we have made proposals reflective of our understanding of the current economic conditions."

Citing increases in health care benefit costs for MEA members as well as three unfair labor practices charges that were filed on behalf of MEA members in 2010, Ms. Jenks requested a solution to the negotiation process, one that is reasonable in her view.

"We have come here to the meeting tonight to reconsider the proposal currently on the table...we are the ones who counsel, protect and educate your children. We are on the front lines day in and day out. We are the safest investment this board will ever make," Ms. Jenks said.

Ridge Drive resident Marilyn Berney, a previous candidate for BOE, also addressed the board regarding the contract negotiations.

"As a parent in this district, I'm very torn in this scenario...I feel that there is a chasm within the school during the day when teachers come to school all dressed in black as a showing that they're in unity, they're unified. I don't believe necessarily that that is a great message for our kids."

Ms. Berney continued, "That being said, as a parent in the district knowing the financial constraints, I am appalled that after two years a contract has not been settled...This is nothing that happened overnight. Some of it was sprung on by the state, we all know that, but the over-

all picture, you knew a contract was coming up two years ago; something should have been in play back then. I don't think it's fair the teachers work without a contract. I do think they deserve some sort of increase to go along with their in-

creased health care cost contributions. I appreciate all their service, but there's got to be a better way than this divide that has been created."

Board member Dante Gioia, a member of the BOE's Personnel/Negotiations Committee, addressed Ms. Jenks and Ms. Berney. "Since everybody is here, just so we understand how schools are provided for, the majority in Mountainside is provided for through property taxes. In a lot of other districts, they have their property tax plus there's another huge pot of money that comes from our income taxes, which includes yours, and gets sent down to Trenton."

Mr. Gioia continued, "We send a little over \$50 million, the citizens of Mountainside. We receive back about 2 percent. There are other districts that are receiving four, and five, and six, and seven and eight hundred percent of what they send to Trenton. So, if you divide it equally, and I'm not sure that's the right formula, but if you did provide equally based on the number of students that are in the district, we would qualify for close to about \$8 million more [a year]."

"So we're having these conversations, and you know, in a way if everybody out there [Mountainside residents], if they understood what's happening, they could help us help you [the MEA] because it's not the teachers - the state did take stuff away. We're fighting to get it back, but it's going to be a very long battle."

BOE Vice-President Christopher Minks stated in a previous meeting that the next step in the negotiation process would include a fact finder, or mediator, to assist in the negotiations.

The next BOE meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 5, at 6:30 p.m., at Beechwood School. This meeting will be the annual goal-setting retreat. The public is encouraged to attend.

CenCom Closing June 1 As MONOC Takes Over 9-1-1

SUMMIT - Atlantic Ambulance Corp., a subsidiary of Atlantic Health System, has announced that it will officially transfer operations for its regional 9-1-1 emergency dispatch center, known as CenCom, to the Monmouth Ocean Hospital Service Corporation, better known as MONOC, as of June 1 under a seven-year agreement. MONOC's 9-1-1 dispatch center is based out of Wall Township.

As previously reported by *The Westfield Leader*, word first spread of the closing of CenCom in February, when letters were mailed by MONOC and CenCom to member towns. CenCom has operated out of Overlook Medical Center in Summit for 30 years.

According to a press release from Atlantic Health Corp., under the agreement MONOC's medevac helicopter will operate cooperatively with Atlantic Ambulance's medevac fleet, which will be dispatched for emergency flights by MONOC.

CenCom, which was founded in 1982, handled 9-1-1, fire, paramedic and air dispatch for 18 paramedic units in 22 towns in Union, Essex and Morris Counties, as well as all of Atlantic Ambulance's air and ground emergency units.

"Combining the services handled previously by CenCom with those currently handled by MONOC, will make response to medical emergencies far more efficient," said Richard Donovan, director of Atlantic Ambulance Corp. "This will be a huge step towards meeting the changing needs of dispatching services in New Jersey, and ultimately better serving the public."

"Both of our organizations have made great efforts to ensure that the transition of CenCom's services will be seamless, with no change in the level of services or cost to client agencies," said Jeff Behm, senior vice-president and chief operating

officer at MONOC.

"As part of our expanding strategic alliance with Atlantic Ambulance Corp., MONOC is also seriously investigating participation in a statewide MedEvac network Atlantic is currently forming," said Vincent Robbins, MONOC president and chief executive officer.

According to the press release, Atlantic Ambulance and MONOC representatives are in the process of notifying agencies that will be affected by the transition, such as local EMS squads.

In recent weeks, Union County has signed agreements with Scotch Plains, Springfield, Hillside, Roselle, Roselle Park, and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Rahway, as well as the Essex County community of South Orange, to join the expanding Union County dispatch center based out of Westfield as the county has reached out to or been contacted by towns serviced by CenCom.

In addition to their current dispatch responsibilities, MONOC will now dispatch Atlantic Ambulance's paramedic and 9-1-1 basic life support (BLS) units, several northern municipality BLS units, and will perform emergency medical dispatch 9-1-1 call screening for several other municipalities.

"As part of the agreement, MONOC will also dispatch Atlantic Ambulance's fleet of air medevac helicopters, known as Atlantic Air One, Two and Three. MONOC's own medevac helicopter, MONOC One, will operate cooperatively with Atlantic Ambulance's medevac fleet," according to the release.

Atlantic Ambulance will continue internal, non-emergency dispatch operations, such as inter-facility transport, as well as operating the Patient Transfer Center and proprietary ambulance dispatch, which are 24-hour-a-day, 365 day-a-year operations.