



Christina M. Hinke for *The Westfield Leader*
GETTING READY TO REOPEN... Jim Augis, who co-owns Racquets Etc. with his wife, Lynne Augis, is getting ready to re-open this weekend after the Village Plaza strip mall at 1004 to 1008 South Avenue, Westfield, caught fire September 1.

Plaza Fire Update

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

here and most of it didn't return back to the shop," Mr. Augis said.

Nearly 70 customer racquets were in the shop for repair when the fire hit. None were damaged. The Augises are repairing the racquets at no charge to their customers.

Karate 'N' Motion lost over \$50,000 in equipment and a special cushioned wood floor, said Mr. Simms, who started the business 14 years ago. He was able to procure a space at the Westfield Community Center to hold his classes, where he plans to stay until his dojo is rebuilt.

"It is smaller, it is not like having your own school, but they have been very gracious," Mr. Simms said. "We are doing something special... My focus is on teaching as opposed to the space," Mr. Simms said.

Salon South had water damage to its floors from a sewer backup and ceiling tiles needed replacement, said Ms. Munkel, who co-owns the salon with Sonia Mack. The floors were replaced last week. Most of the salon's clientele are long-standing clients, she said, which has helped to keep the business operating normally.

"Maybe some of the younger girls who work for us might have a tough time building up business," Ms.

Munkel said.

As a result of having over 25 years under his black belt teaching in the Westfield community, Mr. Simms said he was able to retain his students despite having to relocate the operation temporarily. On Sunday, October 26, from 3 to 6 p.m., his demonstration team will be on hand to entertain patrons at the Taste of Westfield. Eight of his students, who are all Westfielders, are rated top 10 in the nation.

La Casa Pizzeria opened within two weeks after the fire. It is open seven days a week, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays and 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. on weekends. "We're back to about normal," co-owner Hassan Diwane said.

Some business was lost from patrons of the other stores of Village Plaza that are now closed, said Mr. Diwane, who owns the business with his brother Franco Diwane. The pizzeria has been in business 19 years, and his loyal customers remain his primary source of income.

Minor damage was sustained at the pizzeria, with ceilings being replaced and the loss of food due to power outages.

"It could have been a lot worse. No one was hurt," Ms. Munkel said.

Calls to the owner of Village Plaza were not returned by press deadline.

Cranford Bd. of Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Superintendent Carrick said a video showed a personal project where high school students were charting their own education program, and Ms. Carrick suggested applying that to the kindergarten through fifth-grade classes. "As one example, using the media specialists to actually facilitate that type of work for our children," Superintendent Carrick said.

Another example came from a fifth-grade teacher, Rosie Sholz, who wrote a letter to Superintendent Carrick, who read the letter aloud.

Ms. Sholz suggested making her classroom a pilot classroom. Ms. Sholz asked her fifth graders what they might want to study. They suggested topics such as the effects of global warming, building a hovercraft, creating models of the *Titanic* and brainstorming ideas of how to save the ship, and building a scale model of a catapult.

"We have teachers, at least one, no longer saying I do that — there is nothing else I need to do for personalized instruction," Ms. Carrick said.

"If we want to get to the pure pinnacle of personalized learning, than actually letting students defer-

ring what they personally want to study for a period of time is the tip of the iceberg," Ms. Carrick said.

"There are some things we could do to add to the list of programs we are looking to implement that could take us to the mountaintop," Superintendent Carrick said.

Brain-based learning was another example of furthering the personalized approach, where eighth graders would put together a success folder and discuss the portfolio with the school administrator.

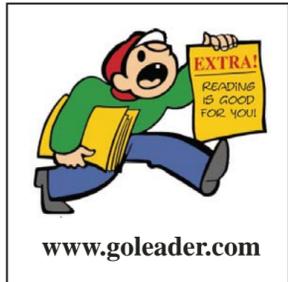
"I think the eighth-grade level is perfect," board member Camille Widdows said. "I think it is a wonderful idea."

The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) Statement of Assurance for the school year 2014-2015 shows that the Cranford school district has scored 100 percent in its compliance with the statement of assurance in all areas — instruction and program, fiscal management, governance, personnel and operations.

The standardized test reports for 2013-2014, for grades 3 to 11, show that a higher percentage of students fall into the category of proficient in language arts literacy and the category of advanced proficient in mathematics, on the three scales: partially proficient, proficient and advanced proficient.

For science, in grade 4, 65.6 percent of students tested as advanced proficient, 31.2 percent proficient and 3.2 percent partially proficient. In grade 8, 54.9 percent were proficient, whereas 37.4 percent were advanced proficient and 7.7 percent were partially proficient.

Student Liaison Bart Lahiff announced the spring musical will be *Seussical* and the fall musical will be *Moon Over Buffalo*.



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COLUMBUS DAY... Dr. Stephen DeFelice of Westfield participated in the Columbus Day Parade on 5th Avenue in New York City. Wearing his Marconi Science medallion award and waving to the crowds, he sang a few Italian favorites during the parade, much to the pleasure of the crowd.

CF GOP Incumbents Say Consistency Is Necessary

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
 Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader*

CRANFORD — Republican incumbents for township committee, Mayor Andis Kalnins and Deputy Mayor Lisa Aduabato discussed topics such as flood control, the new engineer and township administrator, development, and sewer fees during a video-taped interview with *The Westfield Leader* Monday night. They are running for re-election in the Tuesday, November 4 General Election against democrats Brian McCarthy and Robert Salvatore.

A constant theme in their discussion was consistency, and they announced should they be re-elected that Mayor Kalnins would serve again as mayor. In 33 years, there have been 30 mayors in the township, Mayor Kalnins said.

"There is a lot we have started and we want to see that continue," Mayor Kalnins said.

Recently, members of the Mayors Council Rahway River Watershed Flood Control met with Congress in Washington, D.C to gain support of funding for the completion of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers study of flood control along the Rahway River, which was initiated 12 years ago.

"They were all very supportive of the measures and getting us the funding...but it could take a long time," Mayor Kalnins said. One method to move along the study is pre-funding some projects through the state or county under the agreement that the federal government would refund the cost, Mayor Kalnins said.

"Experiencing these floods more often can't continue. We have to move forward. Now it is just getting it done," Deputy Mayor Aduabato said.

Funding the study would have a "small" impact on taxes, Mayor Kalnins said. Eleven towns in the Mayor's Council would potentially share 15 percent of the \$1.4-million cost to fund the completion of the study.

The township committee is also moving forward on funding the Phase 2B and Phase 5 of its Northeast Quadrant Stormwater Management Project by applying for a low interest loan from the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust Fund. "By getting that work done we would take the surface water on Riverside Drive, on Belmont, on Doering (Way) and Crescent (Place) and take that water and put it back in the river to resolve those medium type storms that have a negative effect on our neighborhoods," Mayor Kalnins said.

"That's part of our strategy... these projects have lingered for many years. Part of it is our form of government. There is constant change. We need some consistency. Personally, that is why I'm running again to get some consistency to get projects moving," Mayor Kalnins said.

Reducing the amount of impervious surface in new development is also at the forefront of flood mitigation in the township, Deputy Mayor Aduabato said.

The township was involved in litigation with the Cranford Development Associates (CDA), the developer of 215/235 Birchwood Avenue.

The township is currently appealing a state Superior Court's 2011 decision that approved Cranford Development Associates (CDA) builder's remedy lawsuit to build a 419-unit housing complex at 215/235 Birchwood Avenue, with 63 of those units being used for affordable housing in what the township says is a wetland.

"The only real objection to that project is the location is unsuitable... we are trying to do whatever we can to reduce the flooding and then we are hit with this project..." Deputy Mayor Aduabato said. "We have held a strong case," she said later.

They both agreed development should be in the downtown, and cleaning up derelict and vacant downtown properties is a problem they are currently addressing by tightening the township's property maintenance code and hiring a part-time person to enforce the codes.

"We want to make sure new development is within the standards... part of the master plan and consistent," Mayor Kalnins said.

"And make sure they do what they are supposed to do," Deputy Mayor

Aduabato added.

At last week's township committee meeting, the committee introduced an ordinance that will codify the new master plan that had been in the works for nine years. "That is one of things I ran on. And I wanted to see..." Mayor Kalnins said.

In addition to a new master plan, the township has also hired a new township administrator, did away with an in-house engineer in favor of a part-time consultant, and made its Chief Finance Officer (CFO) a full-time staff member from part-time.

Both GOP incumbents currently serve as finance commissioners to the township committee, and Deputy Mayor Aduabato said, "We have gotten a lot accomplished in that office." "We have a CFO who has been working with her staff to bring us — for the first time — to have our budget done in a timely fashion so we do not as a town have to borrow money, called tax anticipation notes... to fund our programs because we got our tax bills out in time," Deputy Mayor Aduabato said.

Both candidates also said projects in Cranford are moving swifter with the new part-time engineer, Carl O'Brien of Maser Consulting, whose office staff of 400 in a variety of engineering expertise is also available to the township.

"That has proven to be very useful as we have encountered various problems," Mayor Kalnins said.

"I believe that it will show at the end of year we are saving money in terms of what we are paying for engineering services, but more importantly we are getting things done on a level that has not been happening," Deputy Mayor Aduabato said.

This fall, the engineer is overseeing a \$4-million paving project spearheaded by Ms. Aduabato and passed by the township committee this year, that is part of a "comprehensive and continuing plan," Ms. Aduabato said.

"We have been very conscious about not being locked into a position. Frankly, that whole mentality has led to a lot of issues in the past where that is how we have always done it. I don't believe we should change just to change, but when you need to make progress you need to make decisions," Deputy Mayor Aduabato said.

When asked if there is a conflict of interest by using a consulting engineering firm who could bid for Cranford projects, Ms. Aduabato said, "If there was any question we would consult with our legal counsel and make sure we would do it above board."

The new business administrator, Terrence Wall, is the third administrator in four years. "I really hope that Terrence is here for many years and I expect that he is... Going forward we need that consistency," Mayor Kalnins said.

Both candidates had sought after being elected three years ago to study a change in the form of government in Cranford, but was defeated by the Democrats last year. "While my views have not changed, I am committed to working in the form of government we have and feel much better that we are utilizing and working in the framework of government we have in the best way we can," Deputy Mayor Aduabato said.

"I agree. It's unfortunate people did not have a choice to look at. I am not looking to change again right now," Mayor Kalnins said.

During the GOP incumbents' election three years ago, they said they would look at how the sewer fee was being administered. Mayor Kalnins said since they were elected, the administration was changed.

"The way it was originally set up — 75 percent of everybody came under what the minimum was — we didn't think that was right. Now we lowered the minimum amount, and now it is 25 percent of people fall under that minimum and they pay for the amount of water that they use and put into the sewerage authority. We have looked at it every year since," Mayor Kalnins said.

"Our overall usage going into the RVSA (Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority) has gone down, where several other towns have gone up, and that has helped a lot as far as our sewer fee goes," he said.

For full video interview, please see goleader.com/services/video/



Photo courtesy of John and Mary Devitt
GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY... Former longtime Westfield residents John and Mary Devitt of Bayville recently celebrated their 50th anniversary with a family cruise to Bermuda. Their three sons, daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren enjoyed the trip and reading *The Westfield Leader*.



Horace Corbin for *The Westfield Leader*
SEEKING RE-ELECTION... Cranford Deputy Mayor Lisa Aduabato, center, and Mayor Andis Kalnins, Republicans seeking reelection to the township committee, are interviewed by *Westfield Leader* reporter Christina M. Hinke Monday at the *Leader* office.

Union County Freeholders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

its sports fields with artificial turf which he said are "cost effective," receive more usage, and are safer than non-turf fields.

He said Rahway approached the county last year about partnering with the county on the project due to the regular flooding of Veterans Field.

Mr. Hudak said he thought "5,000 (seats) was a bit large" for the park. He said the board wants the facility to be "aesthetically pleasing to that particular park but also safe in terms of the size."

He said the county wants the size of the facility to be "appropriate to that facility." Mr. Hudak said the project's plans are "preliminary" at this time.

"We're committed to a good project in that particular field and to make sure it is a good, safe playing surface for kids," Mr. Hudak said, adding that the county will keep Clark "abreast" as the project moves forward.

Clark resident Kelly Tropeano, whose property is adjacent to the park, said she was "disturbed by this whole project." She said NBC has reported a link between cancer and turf fields over long-term use. She asked if additional parking will be added and if the county has considered the impact the facility could have on the surrounding area.

Margaret Shannon of Clark was concerned over the tax impact of the Rahway project, noting she has heard there might be a traffic light added on Valley Road due to increased traffic volume from the athletic facility.

Rahway School District Athletic Director Tom Lewis said most of Rahway's athletic fields are in flood zones. He said Rahway and Clark mayors should "work slowly and diligently...but it should never impede the sentiment of all the things the freeholders are doing in concern of a city that is in need for our so-called students."

"This is a dire need for the City of Rahway," Mr. Lewis said. "I just think we're looking for equity, we're looking for fairness and we everyone on the side of Clark and Rahway to be fair and balanced."

Rahway Board of Education President Peter Kowal said Rahway last year had to move three of its home games in Clark due to poor conditions at Veterans' Field. He noted that other towns such as Cranford, Clark, Linden and Plainfield all have lit fields.

"There is always going to be a group that's going to say no to something that is good," Mr. Kowal said. "I just hope that doesn't slow you people down. Let's go forward. Let's give the Rahway kids what the Rahway kids deserve."

On another issue, representatives of the Union County Policemen's Benevolent Association (PBA) Local 199, representing correctional officers at the county jail, spoke of their concerns to the freeholders about the county's plans to move inmates from the Union County jail to the Hudson County jail.

Joe Krech, president of PBA 199, requested that if the freeholders are planning to reduce the jail population or to close the jail, that the union "be brought into the discussions."

"At the end of the day, public safety must come ahead of any perceived savings or budget deals. The risks and procedures involved in detaining, transporting and security of

the most dangerous among us can't be overlooked," Mr. Krech told the board.

He told the board he was committed to working with the county "on any cost savings within collective bargaining that we can achieve to accomplish a goal of finding savings in our budget without laying off any correction officers."

"It's funny that everyone I've spoken to in the last several weeks that should know whether this jail is going to shut down has absolutely said it's going to shut down. And it's unfortunate in a free and open democracy that there is no one on the freeholder board that is ready to admit this," added New Jersey State PBA President Pat Colligan.

County Manager Al Faella responded that, "Hudson and Union Counties are in preliminary talks relative to the possibility of expanding the number of Union County prisoners to be housed at the Hudson County Correctional Center. The discussion also includes the possibility of Hudson County sending juvenile detainees to Union County's juvenile detention facility." He said "nothing has been finalized and no recommendation has been made to the Board of Chosen Freeholders."

GW Planning

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obtained, Ms. Hartmann said, through a Union County program.

That would leave Garwood to construct 19 units, which Ms. Hartmann said could easily be met by incorporating them into any plans for developing the largely abandoned industrial sites along North and South Avenues, including the Garwood Paper-pulp plant, the Casale Sheet Metal property and the Petro Plastics building.

Some on the board suggested that The Lofts apartments, the rental section of The Pointe development, was approved with three "affordable" units and that should count toward Garwood's COAH requirement.

But Zoning Code Officer Victor Vinegra acknowledged that in his conversations with Lofts owner BNE Real Estate Group the borough had been unable to enforce the caveat because it did not have someone dedicated to COAH issues.

And Borough Attorney Bob Renaud added, in regard to the suggestion that the restriction could be enforced retroactively, "That ship may have already sailed."

Ms. Hartmann noted that COAH compliance is monitored annually in March and therefore urged the board and council to work quickly.

"I would certainly get it done in the next three or four months," she said. "At the council level, if you're moving forward, the ordinance and the resolution on the housing liaison needs to be adopted so you can finalize a little bit more with the affordable housing ordinance, which needs to be tweaked — and that ordinance comes out of the Council on Affordable Housing, things that you need to add to your project."

Developing an operations manual, enrolling in the Union County home improvement program, as well as arranging other agreements also are necessary to fully comply with the new COAH requirements, Ms. Hartmann said.



Alex Lowe for *The Westfield Leader*
THE ROAR OF THE CROWD... Fans cheer at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood versus Westfield soccer game last Thursday. Scotch Plains-Fanwood beat Westfield 1-0 on a penalty kick; see the full story on Page 13.