

Night Out Events Bring Together Community and First Responders

By JILL BURKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD/CRANFORD — Towns and cities across the country Tuesday night celebrated National Night Out (NNO), a festivity intended to foster positive relationships between emergency service workers and the community.

National Night Out has been an annual event throughout the country since 1984 and came to both Westfield and Cranford in 2015. It began as “an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighbor-

hoods safer, more caring places to live,” the National Night Out website states.

Many towns have expanded their celebrations to include the fire department, emergency medical services and public works departments, in addition to the police department. During NNO events, town residents can mingle with first responders and interact with them as a community in a casual, fun setting. “To be out here interacting with the public, we get our faces out and about, people recognize who we are, and we can answer their questions face to face, and I think that’s the best way to do it,”

Westfield Fire Chief Anthony Tiller said.

Some cities in the south hold National Night Out later in the year because it is too hot outside in August, but the weather was just right in the Westfield area Tuesday night. Between the two towns, NNO included fire trucks, ambulances, food, music, bounce houses and more. Kids were overjoyed to put on a plastic fire helmet or dunk police officers in the dunk tank.

Kids, and older citizens as well, often are frightened when emergency services personnel arrive at their house. “You see all the time when you go into an emergency situation that people may be afraid of the ambulance or afraid of the police officer, or kids may be afraid of the firefighter in all their gear, so it’s a great opportunity for them to see us, the police, the fire department, the EMS people, in a non-emergency situation and to be comfortable around us,” volunteer EMT Art Cook said. “It can make them feel more comfortable to know that these people are not invading their house; they’re there to help.”

Cranford Police Chief Ryan Greco said that a chance for the public to get to know police officers on a personal level can be humanizing. “A lot of our officers are from Cranford and went through the Cranford school system, so they can be role models for kids in the community,” he added.

Westfield Police Chief Christopher Battiloro noted that in order to do their job, the police department needs help from residents in reporting crime, testifying, identifying perpetrators, etc. “We can’t do this job without the help of the community; the community has to trust you. So this is about building relationships and building trust between the police and the community,” he said.

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Mountainside Announces Borough’s Next Police Chief

By JESSE WINTER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — Borough officials announced that Lieutenant Joseph Giannuzzi will become the municipality’s next police chief during Tuesday’s work session meeting of the mayor and council.

“The time has come to appoint Lt. Joseph Giannuzzi as our police chief,” said Council President Keith Turner. “And we will do that at the next public meeting.”

Lt. Giannuzzi will be formally appointed during the Tuesday, August 20 meeting inside the Municipal Court Room.

The next police chief was met with congratulations from the governing body and other borough officials attending the meeting. Lt. Giannuzzi also updated the council regarding the next wave of volunteer firefighters set to join the ranks of the Mountainside Fire Department by announcing a background check had been finalized approving the new firefighters.

The borough’s first responders will be bolstered by the addition of Jorge Aparicio, Joseph Fiorenza, Brandon Fontaines and Francis Whitley, according to the meeting’s agenda.

“Our fire company is growing and growing, which is great,” said Mayor Paul Mirabelli.

In additional borough news, the mayor and council Tuesday night discussed capital budget expenditures featuring the purchase of new computers for Borough Hall totaling approximately \$24,000, with another \$10,000 allocated for the electrical system supporting the computers.

“There was some talk about taking it out of the operating budget



PERFECT PITCH... This boy aims at the target to dunk a Westfield police officer during Westfield National Night Out Tuesday on Quimby Street in downtown Westfield.

Board of Health Agrees to New Policy Banning Sale of Vaporizers

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The board of health has agreed to pass a policy disallowing vaporizers, better known as e-cigarettes, or nicotine “pods” and “juices,” in any store where food or gasoline is sold.

Westfield Regional Health Department Director Megan Avallone said the ordinance will essentially disallow vaporizers or associated service

products to be sold in Westfield convenience stores or at gas stations. Mayor Shelley Brindle informed Ms. Avallone that the board of health can independently enforce the policy without mayor or council approval, according to Ms. Avallone.

The policy change is meant to create businesses where patrons are immediately “carded” upon entering the store when vaporizers are sold in the vicinity, stated Ms. Avallone. Often under-age individuals will access vaporizers through faulty identification checking methods at establishments such as convenience stores or gas stations.

At previous board of health meetings, Ms. Avallone cited employee turnover, employee inconsistency, and blatant disregard for state law as having contributed to minors accessing such devices.

Ms. Avallone said the board of health will often enact “sting opera-

tions” on local businesses to make sure businesses are in fact properly identifying patrons. Ms. Avallone said one time a business owner, not realizing, suggested the intended purchaser was part of a “sting operation” or “informant.”

“He was right,” said Ms. Avallone, stating that even the board of health’s undercover efforts are subject to unforeseen shortcomings at times.

She said designating specific establishments which can sell vaporizers emphasizes the professionalism required in the transaction process.

Westfield Tobacco and News will remain permitted to sell vaporizers, vape accessories, and nicotine infused (flavored and unflavored) pods, stated Ms. Avallone. The vaporizer restriction will “possibly” be proposed to begin January 1, 2020, she said.

Ms. Avallone said the policy’s enactment could also be discussed at

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UP CLOSE... The crowds get to see how the police work in the Mobile Command Center and peek behind the scenes in the fire engine rigs and police cars and ambulances on National Night Out held in downtown Cranford. There was face painting, balloon animals, a dunk tank to support a local charity, a live animal show, and a variety of bounce houses.

Fanwood’s Community House Restoration Proposed

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

FANWOOD — Reporting on the proposed restoration project for the Fanwood Community House, Michael DeBiasse, of DeBiasse & Seminara, gave a brief breakdown of what was needed to restore the building at Monday evening’s borough council meeting.

According to Mr. DeBiasse, the existing wood structure at the base of the community building at the Fanwood train station is deteriorating because of years of salting and moisture that has been absorbed by the wood. He noted, “The wet salt has been eating away at the water table around the building.” He also noted that the trim is rotting at the base of the building where it meets the concrete. He stated that the concrete gets wet and the “wood soaks it up.”

He also stated that some new drainage needed to be installed and some stainless steel flashing needed to be incorporated to protect from future damage.

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END GUN VIOLENCE... Following the two mass shootings this past weekend in Texas and Ohio, a solemn crowd gathers for a vigil in Mindowaskin Park on Monday night. During the vigil, townspeople honored those who lost their lives in the tragic events and showed solidarity with the victims’ families. Those in attendance were handed cards with the names of the deceased.

Online Bonus at goleader.com Index

Letters -- “Racism: A White Man’s Journey,” by Walter Sosnosky, Kenilworth; “We Support Scott Katz In Ward 4 on Westfield Council,” by Lisa and Schuyler Quackenbush, Westfield.
Sports -- St. Anthony/St. Wolfgang; Darby Brainard/Diva’s; St. Francis/St. George; Charlie Brown’s/Darby Brainard.



POLITICS AND BURGERS... Union County Republicans gather for their annual barbeque on July 30 at the home of GOP Chairman Glenn Mortimer.

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(across from Lord & Taylor)

Tel: (908) 233-0065

