



# MOUNT SAINT MARY ACADEMY

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**THE FORCE IS WITH HER...**The Cranford Public Library held its annual Summer Carnival August 17. It marked the end of the library's Summer Reading Challenge and celebrated the hard work of its readers. This year, about 364 people attended the carnival. Pictured, library staff member Sherry Lange, who runs the event each year, is joined by members of Star Wars' 501st Legion.

## Alpine Ridge Developer Files Suit to Allow Rentals

By KATE BROWNE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**MOUNTAINSIDE** — Borough Attorney John Post advised the public at Tuesday night's borough council meeting that the developer of Alpine Ridge, a 55-and-older community located on Route 22, last week filed a lawsuit against the borough in state Superior Court in Union County seeking to overturn the prohibitions on renting the units, which were imposed as part of the building approval process.

Several residents who attended Tuesday's meeting expressed concerns regarding the rentals, which can be found online at sites such as Apartments.com and stated that several young children may be living at the complex despite its age restrictions. Mayor Paul N. Mirabelli promised an investigation would be conducted.

Council members also discussed the possibility of investigating passing an ordinance to ban single-use plastic items. Mayor Mirabelli noted that Belmar, Maplewood, and Cranford have all recently passed laws. While several council members including Councilmen Glenn Mortimer and Rene Dierkes expressed concerns regarding enforcement and the impact on local businesses all agreed additional research and input from residents was needed.

On August 13, 2019, Cranford became the 17th town in New Jersey to enact a prohibition on plastic bags. The Cranford ordinance, which passed by a 4-to-1 vote, gives businesses until July 2020, to halt distributing certain items, "unless first requested by the customer." Those items include single-use plastic carry-out bags, single-use plastic utensils, plastic straws and stirrers, and plastic cups, including lids. The exceptions include if a customer requests a plastic hot or cold lid, certain types of recyclable containers, such as plastics No. 1 and 2, and wide straws.

The exceptions were required due

to the nature of some of the items, such as thick milk shakes and ice cream products that would not be consumable with a regular width straw. While the ordinance does not require a fine, businesses could face up to \$1,000 for violations, the maximum allowed under the current recycling ordinance.

Mayor Mirabelli reported that the September edition of *New Jersey Monthly* magazine has ranked Mountaintside No. 9 in its list of "Top 100 Towns in New Jersey." The research firm hired by the magazine considered five categories: home values, property taxes, crime rate, school performance and a "lifestyle factor." In 2017, the magazine ranked Mountaintside 12th. In 2015, it was ranked 70th.

The Mayor also noted that for the 10th year in a row there have been no comments by the auditors on the borough's operations, which he noted was a testament to the responsible stewardship and hard work of Chief Financial Officer Jill Goode and her staff. The Mayor also urged all homeowner and business owners that there will be a public meeting regarding the property tax reassessment program at 7 p.m. on Thursday, September 12 at the gymnasium at the Deerfield Elementary School. The meeting will include a presentation by the appraisal company and will provide detailed information to homeowners on the timetable and process.

In other business, the council members unanimously voted to participate in the Union County Leaf Disposal Program at the same rates as last year and to investigate applying for a New Jersey Department of Transportation state aid grant for Bristol Road. Councilman Robert W. Messler indicated that he is continuing to work with Union County and the state to see what options might be available to alleviate traffic congestion on New Providence Road.

The council's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 17.

## Westfield Council

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ously, three guards opted not to return, Mr. Gildea said. Police Chief Christopher Battiloro said, "You will still see police officers covering those posts." It will be about two to three weeks until the guards "are fully trained and ready to go," he noted.

In the past, Chief Battiloro said, "We have been covering 10 to 15 posts that need to be covered."

There are about 50 posts, Mayor Brindle said.

The fire department was authorized to purchase a new Pumper Fire Engine 5 for \$665,000. It is replacing a 25-year-old pumper truck. The department is expecting to have it in May or June of next year, Fire Chief Anthony Tiller said. The design mimics Engine 4, which is two years old, he stated.

An ordinance was passed to add a stop sign at the intersections of Mountain and Lawrence Avenues and North Avenue and West Dudley Avenue, where currently there is a yield sign.

In support of the town's move to add more public art, The Presbyterian Church in Westfield gave a \$10,000 gift to the Town for Westfield 300, which will be put towards the mural that will include The Presbyterian Church. In the same realm, the town passed on second reading an ordinance establishing a public arts commission to review and consider applications for the creation of public art.

In other news, a Senior Fair is to be held from 9 to 11 a.m. on Friday, September 20, in the municipal building.

Construction at the kiosk at the train station is to start in two weeks, Mr. Gildea said. Plumbing is to be added and electric upgraded. The work is expected to "take no more than a couple months," Mr. Gildea said.

Kathleen Miller Prunty started Tuesday in her role as interim director of

the Downtown Westfield Corporation, Councilwoman Mackey said. Ms. Prunty retired as director of Cranford's Downtown Management Corporation and is now running for a Democratic seat on the township committee in Cranford.

Ms. Mackey confirmed that Ms. Prunty is not seeking to remain in the position permanently. Councilman Frank Arena felt it would be a conflict of interest to have Ms. Prunty in the role if she was to be elected as a commissioner in Cranford. He questioned where her interest would lie should a particular business consider moving into either Westfield or Cranford. Mayor Brindle said she disagreed, and further said there are other municipalities that have had directors of downtowns serve in an elected position in a different town.

Mayor Brindle said she has been in talks with the landlord of the property where the Rialto Theater operated. "No one was more surprised than the property owner when the tenant vacated the building without any advance notice. To reiterate, the property has not been sold, and was closed as the result of a legal dispute between New Vision and Rialto Properties. I have spent many hours speaking with both parties about the current state of their litigation and also about the near and long-term possibilities for the theater. I am encouraged by the property owner's concern and commitment to reimagining what is possible, similar to what he enabled with his other property, the Bellevue Theater in Montclair, which is going through a significant transformation before reopening as a movie/performance arts space," Mayor Brindle said in her statement at the council meeting.

She noted that "numerous residents" have reached out about saving The Rialto. "I can promise you that all options are on the table, and I will do whatever is in my authority to ensure that the Rialto will remain a staple of our downtown for generations to come," Mayor Brindle said.

## Walling

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and collaboration skills that are critical for 21st century learners.

Despite the media's widespread focus on standardized test scores as the sole metric of performance, Mrs. Walling explained that the district's focus is to evaluate a variety of student achievement data in order to better target student learning needs so that every student is provided with the support necessary to be challenged and succeed at his/her appropriate level.

## Dolan Interview

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quickly lock classroom doors during an emergency. New and updated cameras also have been installed.

Monthly fire and security drills are held at schools. She said the Department of Education required lockdown and evacuation drills.

New classroom, cafeteria, library and gym doors are being installed at Edison and Roosevelt Intermediate Schools and Westfield High School. New elementary school doors will be installed next year.

"Some of those doors will be tied into our alarm system," Superintendent Dolan said, noting when a lockdown is called all doors are automatically locked.

Security gates also have been installed in the intermediate schools and the high school to block access to the rest of the school when community groups are using the school buildings such as when they are using a school auditorium.

In terms of elections being held in school buildings, Superintendent Dolan said voting used to be held in seven schools, but is now only in three schools. The three remaining schools have gymnasiums that have separate entrances which are better secured for voters entering the buildings. When school is in session police officers are present to prevent entry to the rest of those schools.

Another project nearly complete is the renovations to Kehler Stadium. The superintendent said the track has been completed, but it is important that no one uses the track as it was just laid. New turf for the field, grandstands and restroom renovations were included in the project and have been completed.

"So we need people to be patient until we can open up that field and track," Superintendent Dolan said.

New staff took part in the district's new teacher institute held last Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. A leader-

ship team of veteran teachers did some of the training along with school administrators.

The new school year also brings curriculum changes to AP Physics, one of the high-school humanity courses and K-4 Social Studies.

Superintendent Dolan said school resource officers at the intermediate schools and the high school have specialized training to work in schools, "to help build a culture in a school that's positive." In addition, Westfield police officers visit the elementary schools and the Lincoln Early Childhood Center twice a day.

The district's paraprofessionals are in contract negotiations as their contract expired on June 30. All other employees, including the Westfield Education Association, are still working within their current agreements.

Also, she said Westfield "continues to work as a district regarding social and emotional learning in our classrooms." She said this gives students "practice in being self aware and understanding self management, also making sure they have social awareness, how to interact with others, that they get practice in responsible decision making and understand the consequences of their decisions and that they develop their relationship skills."

She said the district does this in partnership with parents. Superintendent Dolan said all teachers have been trained to recognize warning signs in the students and to report such behavior to school counselors, who will assess the matter and, if support is needed, contact the child's parents.

"Part of education is the rapport between teachers and students. There is no doubt of that...If you have that rapport it is amazing what students will learn and they will grow in a classroom and our teachers recognize that," Superintendent Dolan said.



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**NEWLY HIRED...**Twenty-six newly hired teachers attended the Westfield New Teacher Institute last week in preparation for the new school year.

Courtesy of the Westfield Board of Education



**LEADER IN STOCKHOLM...**Richard Sherman and Lorraine Davis enjoy reading *The Westfield Leader* while in Stockholm, Sweden.

## Leader/Times Thanks Our 2019 Summer Interns

*The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* would like to thank our summer interns Jill Burke and Greta Frontero, both of Westfield, for all their hard work this past summer.

Miss Burke is entering the final semester of her senior year at the University of Southern California where she is an economics major and a sports media industries minor with a strong interest in sports journalism. She is a beat sports writer for the *Daily Trojan*. She is a 2015 graduate of Morristown-Beard School.

As a reporter for our newspapers, Miss Burke covered a visit by Governor Phil Murphy to Westfield, the Westfield High School, Cranford High School and Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School graduations, as well as a feature story on the removal of finials from the roof of the First United Methodist Church in Westfield. She also reported on National Night Out events in our area,

the Westfield Neighborhood Council anniversary and on meetings of the Westfield and Cranford zoning boards.

Miss Burke also helped launch our newspaper's Instagram page.

Miss Frontero is a 2019 Westfield High School graduate. She is entering her sophomore year at the University of Wisconsin-Madison studying journalism. As a freshman, she worked for the student-run publication, the *Badger Herald*.

Miss Frontero wrote a number of articles for our Arts & Entertainment Section over the summer including a feature on the Ghost Funk Orchestra, a review of *The Wake*, a profile of author Joshua Suri for his book, "A Book of Dreams," and a preview of The Westfield High School (WHS) Runway of Dreams Club's first-ever "WHS Rocks the Runway of Dreams" fashion show. She also wrote a feature on the late Fanwood Police Chief Anthony Parenti.

## Full Day K in Westfield

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the state because full-day kindergarten expansion is "an eligible project from the point of view of the New Jersey Department of Education."

Business Administrator Dana Sullivan said the bond debt cost to individual households would be about \$100 annually for approximately 30 years.

Ms. Sullivan also said that building the facility is a "one-time expense," while the operating costs would recur yearly. Ms. Sullivan speculated the annual staffing and operating expense would be "about three million in today's dollars, but by 2022 that would be higher" and "will grow every year."

Residents would pay an additional \$300 to \$400 annually. This, added to the \$100 for the next 30 years for the bond, brings the total cost to taxpayers to a "really rough" estimate of \$400 to \$500 per year, according to Ms. Sullivan.

Residents will get a chance to vote twice on these financial changes. The

first would be a special election on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 for the bond referendum. If the referendum passes, assuming time for project bids, agency reviews and approvals, Mr. Duthie proposed a March 15, 2021 construction start date with completion approximately by July 29, 2022.

The second vote, regarding the district's operating budget, will occur in November of 2021. According to Ms. Sullivan, if the referendum passes but the operating budget fails, the building addition will exist, but without a full-day kindergarten program. There is legislation being proposed in the state Senate and Assembly that could combine these two votes, according to board member Brendan Galligan, but no legislation has passed yet, and the two votes may remain separate.

"The final decision to move forward with this project will be made by the voters who turn out to vote for the March referendum," Mr. Duthie asserted.



**EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT...**Spencer Linenberg of Boy Scout Troop 77 recently built an entrance to the Dunham Ave. Bird Sanctuary in Westfield as part of his Eagle Scout project. With the help of friends, family and volunteers from Troop 77, he laid a gravel path and patio and installed a bench, entrance sign and information board. As a result, it is now much easier for visitors to find and enjoy the bird sanctuary. It is located at the end of the shared driveway between 870 and 902 Summit Ave.