

Advisory Board Continues to Shape Plans to Renovate, Upgrade TV-36

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD — Exciting new developments for Westfield's local access cable station, Channel 36, are underway.

An advisory board appointed by Westfield Mayor Thomas C. Jardim earlier this year boasts 20 members with a wide variety of talents and skills necessary to the task of upgrading the station from its current status to a more widely-accessible tool, as envisioned by the Mayor.

The initiatives being proposed by the advisory board include technology upgrades as well as a much wider variety of programming that would reflect the diverse needs and cultural activities of the entire Town of Westfield.

Programming would continue to include the traditional school broadcasts, but would also add broadcasts of town events, Town Council meetings, live interviews and other offerings.

A questionnaire has been sent out to local businesses, non-profit organizations and residents, asking for their input on the types of programming which they would like to see developed.

Many of the improvements will be funded by a \$50,000 capital grant awarded to the station by Comcast Cable Company. Other funding will come from a percentage of Cable TV revenue that reverts to the town, as well as from foundation and private donations.

Since its inception in the early 1980s, the TV station's studio has been located in Westfield High School and is utilized almost exclusively by the students and teachers as a teaching tool.

Students in grades 9 through 12 have been able to enroll in television production classes as an elective, and gain hands-on experience in many aspects of video production, from taping to editing to broadcasting.

The school program has been run by David Davis, a television production teacher at WHS, assisted by Station Facilitator William McMeekan, and overseen by Westfield High School Principal, Dr. Robert G. Petix.

The focus of the station's programming has been mainly school-oriented, including pre-taped school concerts, sporting events and movies. The station broadcasts Board of Education meetings, school menus

and a calendar of local events. Programming has also included interviews by Dr. Petix of prominent people from Westfield, such as local celebrities and business leaders, as well as live broadcasts of school election night.

The only budget for the station has come from the Board of Education, which has enabled the teachers and students to produce two to four hours of pre-taped programming a day. The station has traditionally relied on many volunteers who contribute their time and expertise to the daily operations of the station.

"The Mayor came to us with his proposal to make the station more accessible and to expand the station's programming to reflect the diverse needs of the entire community," Dr. Petix stated. "I explained to the Mayor that our job was to focus on the educational aspects of the station, not broadcasting for the entire community."

Dr. Petix explained that broadcasting additional programs, such as Town Council meetings and other local events, would require a full-time station manager, as well as many volunteers in order to operate and coordinate the extended programming, which was really beyond the scope of what the school could effectively manage.

"I am all for the enhancements being proposed. I just hope that their aspirations are met with realistic awareness of the complexities involved in operating on the level that they are considering," Dr. Petix remarked.

"And we, of course, hope that the school will continue to have the same access we have previously had so that the students can also benefit from these improvements," he added.

Phillip Falcone, Secretary to the Mayor's advisory board and the station's technical advisor, has been researching other local access stations as models, and reviewing pertinent literature in order to make recommendations to the board regarding all of the upgrade options available.

"There are many different types of station models depending on what you want to accomplish," Mr. Falcone said.

Some of the proposed upgrades being considered by the advisory board include digital cameras, computerized-editing software and better quality broadcasting equipment. "Digital technology has revolution-

ized the field of television production, making exceptional quality very affordable. It's very exciting what we can accomplish," Mr. Falcone said.

The current editing technology of the studio is similar to the old, cut and paste method traditionally used in the film industry, according to Mr. Davis.

"It is very rudimentary compared to the new technology available," said Mr. Davis. "The new editing software has greatly expanded capabilities, more analogous to desktop publishing features."

The current broadcasting technology being used by TV-36 only permits broadcasting when someone is in the studio, according to Mr. Falcone.

"We hope to upgrade to equipment that will allow us to broadcast on an automatic timer, up to 24 hours a day," he added.

However, before the advisory board can decide on technology upgrades, there are other considerations that must be taken into account, according to advisory board member Horace Corbin, Publisher of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*.

"We need to determine the focus of our goals, and what it is we want to achieve, before we can choose the kind of technology that can accomplish those goals," Mr. Corbin stated.

"There is a structured method to how a process of this type evolves, and we are cautiously following that path," he added.

Mr. Corbin, who drafted the station's organizational charter, which was published in *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* last week, believes that it is important for the town and the citizens to take an active role in directing the outcome of the station's development, especially in determining the quality and content of the programming.

"All communities have different factions vying for control, to insure that their interests are represented," Mr. Corbin stated. "Creating a community in which our schools, our government, our local newspapers and our television station can work together, in a cooperative effort, is our desired goal."

Other improvements being proposed are the creation of a more accessible studio location, in addition to the studio at the high school, and utilizing the station as an emergency broadcast system that could be activated by the police in the event of an emergency.

Arrest of Alleged Cop Killer May Close 40-Year-Old Case

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

ELIZABETH — Having never given up on the investigation to find the person responsible for killing Rahway police officer Charles Bernoskie 41 years ago, Union County and Rahway law enforcement authorities announced last Friday that they have arrested a suspect who they believe fired the fatal shot.

The arrest thus closes what is believed to be the longest murder investigation in the history of Union County. Only the John List murders in 1971 came close. List was arrested in 1988 for killing his entire family in Westfield. He was found guilty of those killings the following year.

Theodore Schiffer, 61, of Peckville, Pa. and Land of Lakes, Fla. was arrested at his apartment by Blakely, Pa. Police Officer Chris Kolchamo on the evening of August 12, after a warrant was issued for his arrest by Pennsylvania State Superior Court Judge John F. Malone.

Schiffer was arraigned before Pennsylvania State Magistrate Terry Gallacher of Lackawanna County, Pa., on charges of murder and a separate count of burglary.

He was being held without bail pending a hearing this week to determine if the suspect will waive extradition and return to New Jersey voluntarily.

According to *The Star-Ledger*, the key to the investigation was information relayed to authorities by Schiffer's cousin, Judith Sapsa, which implicated both Schiffer and Ms. Sapsa's brother, Roger Zarinsky.

Rahway police officers and officers in Pennsylvania, upon checking the evidence, "determined there was sufficient probable cause" that Schiffer was allegedly involved in the murder, according to Rahway Police Chief Edward Tilton.

Upon receiving the information, authorities indicated they were able to match fingerprints obtained at the crime scene with those of Schiffer.

Zarinsky, according to news accounts, is serving a 98-year prison term in the East Jersey State Prison in Avenel for strangling to death a 17-year-old Atlantic Highlands girl in 1969.

Ms. Sapsa told her story to United States Postal Inspector J.S. Jakubiec who, at the time, was investigating a charge by Zarinsky that Ms. Sapsa was stealing money from a Mutual Fund set up for him by his mother.

Chief Tilton, who was a sophomore in high school at the time of the murder, said at a press conference last week that Elizabeth Bernoskie, the widow of the slain officer, was relieved when she was told that an arrest in the case had been made.

"She is pleased that the investigation has come to the conclusion it has," said Chief Tilton.

The couple have six children, the youngest of which was born after Officer Bernoskie's murder.

Chief Tilton said he was happy his department has finally "uncovered at least a portion of the mystery that has gone on for 41 years."

Officer Bernoskie, 30 years old at the time of his murder, was checking the door of the Miller Pontiac and Cadillac dealership on St. Georges Avenue in Rahway shortly after Thanksgiving Day in 1958 when he surprised two individuals who were in the process of burglarizing the dealership.

Gunfire was exchanged, and Officer

Bernoskie received multiple gunshot wounds that proved fatal.

Chief Tilton said retired officers from the Rahway force "continued to render invaluable assistance" to the ongoing investigation.

Union County Prosecutor Thomas V. Manahan said, despite the number of years that have gone by in the investigation, he believes his office has obtained sufficient evidence to have a successful prosecution.

Assisting in the case were the Major Crimes Unit of the Union County Prosecutor's Office, the FBI, the Lackawanna County District Attorney's Office and the Pennsylvania State Police, as well as the prosecutor's offices in Middlesex and Monmouth Counties.

State Water Restrictions Outlined by Governor's Office

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

According to the mandatory water restrictions released by Governor Christine Todd Whitman's Office, the following rules and exceptions apply locally.

- The watering of grassed areas is prohibited, except for newly-seeded or newly-sodded areas, which may be watered for 20 days from the date of planting, from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. or from midnight to 6 a.m., with watering not to exceed 45 minutes per day, for any one area. Watering of newly-sodded areas with sprinklers within one hour after planting is permitted.

- Grassed areas may be watered after application of fertilizer, pesticide or herbicide within the same time limitations as newly-sodded areas.

- Companies engaging in the installation or repair of lawn irrigation systems may test a customer's newly installed or newly repaired sprinkler system for a maximum of 10 minutes per sprinkler zone, and the company must display a sign which reads, "Authorized Limited Testing of Sprinkler System," large enough to be visible from the road.

- The watering of plants, trees, shrubs and vegetable gardens is prohibited by any means other than by bucket, can or hand-held hose equipped with a nozzle, which will be shut off automatically when dropped.

- The watering of agricultural food crops is exempted at this time. Commercial sod at sod farms and nursery stock at nurseries or retail outlets may also be watered with sprinklers or by other means with certain time restrictions.

- The washing of any vehicles, except ambulances and fire engines, is prohibited, except by businesses engaged exclusively in car washing. Certain restrictions apply to commercial car washes, such as using recycled water and shortening rinse cycles.

- The use of water for sweeping or washing streets, driveways, sidewalks or paved areas is prohibited, except in the instance of a threat to public health determined by the municipal health department.

- The serving of water in restaurants, clubs or eating places is prohibited, unless specifically requested by the patron.

- The use of water for flushing sewers by municipalities or private individuals is prohibited, except in the instance of a threat to public health or safety.

- The use of fire hydrants by fire companies for testing or for fire department drills is prohibited, except as deemed necessary in the interest of public safety.

- The use of fire hydrants by municipal road departments, contractors and all others is prohibited, except as necessary for fire fighting or fire protection purposes.

- The use of water for outdoor-recreational purposes is prohibited subject to the following exceptions: Golf course greens, tees and clay tennis courts may be watered with certain time limitations.

- Partially-filled pools shall not be drained for maintenance.

- Children's pools measuring four feet in diameter and six inches deep are allowed. Larger pools are prohibited.


- The outdoor use of any water for ornamental purposes, such as fountains, artificial waterfalls and reflecting pools is prohibited.

- No charcoal and wood fires are allowed in public parks. Backyard grills are permitted.

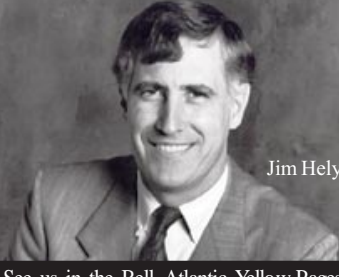
Further information may be obtained by calling the state Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) drought hot line at (800) 4ITS-DRY (448-7379).

The DEP Web site is <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/precip.htm>.

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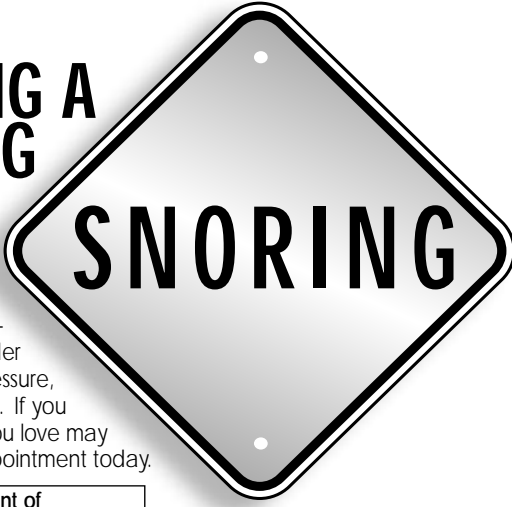



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