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FRESHLY PAVED...Workers are shown last week paving Midway Avenue, the extension of North Avenue, in Fanwood. The work on North and Midway created traffic havoc while the paving work was completed. Paving and other roadway work will continue through the fall on both Union County and town roadways.

Questions Arise Over Building Plan at Central and Cacciola

By MELISSA A. BETKOWSKI Specially Written for The Westfield Leader The Westfield Planning Board held a special meeting last Thursday to hear and consider the application of RRD Contractors Inc. to redevelop the corner of Central Avenue and Cacciola Place.

After reviewing plans for the construction, members of the board criticized the developer for what was termed as "inadequate handling" of the Cacciola Place side of the project. Board Chairman Martin Robins said that, in drafting plans for the project, RRD Contractors "turned (its) back on Cacciola."

The proposal, which calls for two L-shaped structures to be built on the property, originally required 16 variances to be considered by the Planning Board. The property, which was recently re-zoned by the Town Council, is what is considered a split zone, meaning that there are areas for commercial and residential structures

within the same property.

Town Attorney William S. Jeremiah, 2nd, formerly the Planning Board's attorney, said the re-zoning of the property was "sympathetic to the applicant."

The re-zoning, he said, "made it easier for the development of such a project." A particularly important aspect of the case is that the area, originally zoned only for garden apartments, was re-zoned to allow townhouses.

Mr. Jeremiah said that although the number of variances being sought by the applicant has been trimmed to a dozen, the project is still "pushing the envelope."

The front building, at the corner of Central Avenue and Cacciola Place, is planned as a three-story structure. The first floor would comprise 12,500 square feet of retail space, with the upper two floors consisting of 24 apartments. The rear structure would be made up of 10 townhouse units.

The apartments would vary in size from 626 to 1,054 square feet in area.

The board's concern over the Cacciola Place part of the project were based on the absence in the plans of any retail entrances on that street. Instead, the entrances to the retail spaces on Cacciola Place would be in the rear of the structure, and would be accessed from the parking lot.

Additionally, the windows on that side stopped about one-third of the way down the building, leaving the rest of the facade to be a plain brick wall.

Town Engineer Kenneth B. Marsh, in an interview with The Westfield Leader, cited a town ordinance which requires that a first-floor facade be no less than 40 percent glass, while the plans called for roughly 16 percent of the facade to be glass.

James B. Flynn, the attorney for Ralph Rapuano, the owner of RRD, along with architect Roger Winkle, agreed that something could be done to include more glass in the Cacciola Place facade.

Entrances to the stores from Cacciola Place were considered. However, engineer Donald Guarriello testified that, due to the grade of the property, stairs would need to be incorporated, and the idea of placing entrances there was reconsidered.

Another concern raised was the proposed height of the buildings. One resident called the front building "a monster" that would be out of scale with other buildings in the area. An issue was raised about whether the plans called for that building to have three or four stories.

There was also a discrepancy between the image presented in the rendering and in the elevations which were presented. Mr. Marsh said that some concern over the height could be alleviated by using a mansard roof instead of a traditional pitched roof, which would add height to the building.

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Central Ave. Renters Seek Justice, Repair Of Apartment Complex

By KIM KINTER Specially Written for The Westfield Leader Several Westfield residents who rent apartments from the developer proposing a commercial and residential development on Central Avenue want to make the Planning Board aware of problems they say they have had with the maintenance of their properties over the last few years.

The residents, who live on Central Avenue and rent property from Ralph Rapuano, appeared at the Planning Board meeting July 15, but will not have a chance to present their concerns until the meeting is continued later in August (please see related story).

Mr. Rapuano is proposing a combined commercial and residential project for the Central Avenue area beginning in the area of 509 Central

and around the corner to Cacciola Place, and the Westfield Planning Board is currently in the process of considering his plan.

Grace Pierce, one of the Central Avenue apartment renters, said that she wants the Planning Board to know that she has had trouble getting necessary repairs made and that even though the project is pending, she and others are still tenants and deserve to have their apartments maintained.

Several town officials commented that they are aware of complaints from some neighbors in the proposed development area, including Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, who on Sunday toured the neighborhood as part of his summer walking tours of Westfield. He also stopped in to tour Ms. Pierce's apartment at the invitation of Ms. Pierce.

"I am, as a member of the Planning Board, aware of the problems residents have had and if the application is approved it will carry very strict limitations on how the property is maintained and a resolution of the current problems," Mayor Jardim told The Westfield Leader.

Mr. Rapuano, meanwhile, reached by The Westfield Leader, said that when he purchased the buildings on Central Avenue several years ago, he found that they were beyond repair and that he gave several renters reductions with the idea that they would have time to find another place to live.

"I think I have been very fair on my part," he said. "There has been no rent increase in years."

Ms. Pierce has lived for the last four years in a first-floor apartment owned by Mr. Rapuano. She said was paying \$650 a month in rent, which is well below the average apartment rental in Westfield. She said she was

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OFFICIALS ADVISE MOTORISTS OF ROAD CLOSINGS IN COMING WEEKS

Roadway Projects Now Under Way In County, Local Municipalities

By KIM KINTER Specially Written for The Westfield Leader It's summertime and that means delays and rerouting as a number of area roadways receive maintenance and reconstruction work.

If you drove on North Avenue in the last week, you already know that Union County has been working on that street in Westfield, Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

On North Avenue in Westfield, which continues as Midway in Scotch Plains and Fanwood, the top two inches of the surface were scraped, or milled, and repaved over the last two weeks by Schifano Construction Corp., of Middlesex, according to Joe Policay, Union County Road Superintendent.

The job, which caused considerable backups in traffic while the work was being completed, also included making curbs accessible to disabled individuals.

The surface of Seventh Street in Plainfield from Terrill Road to Roosevelt Street also was being milled and repaved this week.

In addition, South Springfield Avenue from Mountain Avenue to Meisel Avenue in Springfield was to be paved Wednesday and Thursday this week. In Springfield, Mountain Avenue from Shunpike Road to South Trivett Avenue also was being repaved this week.

Bruce Connor, Director of the Union County Division of Engineering, said that Schifano Construction Corp. of Middlesex is handling all the repaving work including five other jobs in Linden, Rahway, Elizabeth and Summit. The total amount of the contract is \$1.5 million, \$1.37 of which is covered by federal funds

and \$78,000 of which is state financed.

Mr. Connor added that another group of Union County resurfacing projects are being planned. Bids will be accepted in August and work will probably begin in the fall, he said.

In Westfield, expect some delays as construction begins on Willow Grove Road, which intersects with Rahway Avenue and Lamberts Mill Road, in the next few weeks, according to Kenneth B. Marsh, Westfield Town Engineer and Director of Public Works.

The entire length of Willow Grove will be milled and repaved, Mr. Marsh said. The job will be completed by Penaloza/Calderone Asphalt Co., Inc., in Somerset. The \$95,000 contract also includes

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Stronger Speeding Enforcement Program Yields Substantial Jump in Revenues to Municipal Court

By DEBORAH MADISON Specially Written for The Westfield Leader A financial activity report issued by the Westfield Municipal Court and Violations Bureau has indicated a substantial increase in traffic violation revenues generated by the court for the first half of 1999 over 1998 figures.

The major basis for the additional revenue, according to Judge William L. Brennan, is "the increased efficiency of the Westfield Police Department in implementing an enhanced speed enforcement program since March of this year."

In March, the police put into place the beefed-up speed enforcement initiative following the deaths of two

pedestrians in town. This program has resulted in a more than 70 percent increase since last year in the number of traffic citations issued, according to a memorandum from Westfield Police Chief Anthony J. Scutti to Town Administrator Edward A. Gottko.

According to the municipal court report, revenues generated from January to May of this year totaled \$277,863, compared to a total of \$186,174 for the same period in 1998 — a dollar amount increase of over 49 percent.

Of the \$277,863 total revenue generated through May of this year, \$39,206 will go to the state, \$61,098 will go to the county and \$177,559

will accrue to the town. Of the total revenue for the first five months of last year, \$37,560 went to the state, \$25,441 went to the county and \$123,173 went to the town.

In a letter submitted to Mayor Thomas C. Jardim and the Town Council, Judge Brennan reported that "revenue for every month in 1999 has increased compared to revenue generated from fines and costs from the preceding year."

According to Judge Brennan, the advent of night court has also contributed to the increase in revenues, as well as the diligent efforts of the town's court staff in collecting old violation debts.

"We will also be evaluating the

implementation of credit card acceptance to pay traffic violations, in order to further enhance our efficiency and as an added convenience to our citizens," Judge Brennan told The Westfield Leader.

Acceptance of credit cards by the court, Judge Brennan stated, would allow people to pay fines even if they did not have sufficient funds to immediately cover the full debt.

"This eliminates the need for the court to track down outstanding accounts, which results in a loss of staff time and court revenue," Judge Brennan explained. "Other municipalities have successfully adopted credit card usage, and it is something

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Town Officials Say Solution to Maintaining Westfield Fields Is Full-Time Maintenance Crew at Total Cost of \$250,000

By DEBORAH MADISON Specially Written for The Westfield Leader Editor's Note: The following is the second part in a series of articles related to the condition of Westfield's parks and fields.

Field maintenance costs money. That is the explanation expressed by town officials in response to the numerous complaints from adult softball and baseball league members about the deteriorating conditions of Westfield's baseball fields.

Westfield Recreation Commission Director Glenn S. Burrell and Third Ward Councilman and Chairman of the council's Public Works Committee, John J. Walsh, agree that there is

just not enough money in the current budget to cover the extra \$250,000 per year that would be required for a full-time park maintenance crew.

According to Mr. Burrell, the Public Works crew drags the fields at each park approximately twice a week, but this is not often enough to maintain those fields considering how often they are utilized.

"When you have parks used as often as we do, you need a full-time maintenance department," Mr. Burrell emphasized.

Mr. Burrell stated that he submitted proposals to the Town Council in both 1998 and 1999, requesting a full-time park maintenance department to maintain all of Westfield's



NOT DRAGGED...This picture, taken last month, shows that this field at Tamaques Park had not been dragged prior to an adult softball league game.

parks.

The proposal, according to Mr. Burrell, has not been approved or declined. He believes that this will be the necessary solution to our fields' problems. Councilman Walsh stated that the Council will not adopt any proposal without first establishing the funding source.

While Mr. Burrell said he agrees that many of the fields need some maintenance work, he took exception to the harsh language, used by league members in The Westfield Leader and The Times story last week, that the town's fields are the "worst" in Union County.

Director of Public Works Kenneth B. Marsh, who also serves as Town Engineer, was also surprised to hear the numerous complaints voiced by league members in last week's Leader article.

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Bond Projects Under Way At Roosevelt

By MICHELLE H. LePOIDEVIN Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Work on several projects has continued throughout the summer at Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield as part of the \$11.7-million bond referendum approved last December.

Metropolitan Metal Window, Inc. of Fanwood began replacing 275 windows in the original building of the school on July 6 to improve energy efficiency. This project includes the installation of screens and built-in blinds to reduce the amount of light in the classrooms.

The third floor and the main office windows were the first to be replaced in the school. School board officials



estimate that the project will be completed in October. Work will be done after 3 p.m. in September and October.

The window replacement project was estimated to cost \$437,000. However, the bid was awarded at \$429,300 to the Fanwood firm.

Industrial Roof Maintenance of Roselle began roof repair to the 1964 addition of the school on June 29.

School board officials estimate that the repairs will be completed by August. The project was estimated to cost \$165,700, but was awarded to Industrial Roof Maintenance at a price tag of \$142,657.

Computer cabling and integration for 358 workstations by Elcom Services Group, which maintains corporate offices in Pennsylvania and local offices in Edison, was also expected to reach completion by August. The project was estimated to cost \$134,800, but actually carries a \$131,025 price tag.

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CYAN YELLOW MAGENTA BLACK



William A. Burke for The Westfield Leader

WATCH YOUR STEP...The renter of this apartment on Central Avenue is seeking help in having these stairs fixed as well as other repairs to the building. Several citations issued by building officials are pending. The developer is seeking to demolish this and other buildings and replace them with a townhouse, apartment and retail development. (See related story on page 1)

Central Ave. Renters Seek Justice, Repair of Complex

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pane in the back door of the house. He had until February 8 to repair the conditions, but to date, none of the repairs have been made, according to Ms. Pierce.

Mr. Hirsch said he was unaware of the status of the citation.

Mayor Jardim, however, told *The Leader* that he has talked with Mr. Rapuano's attorney and was told that Ms. Pierce will receive a new oven. He added that he is looking into the status of the other citations.

Currently, Mr. Rapuano has been cited by Mr. Hirsch for a deteriorating short set of outside back steps. He has asked for an extension, which was granted, until this week to repair the steps, according to Anthony J. Scelsa, Westfield Construction Official and Building Subcode Official.

And, Mr. Rapuano said he intends to fix those stairs, but said in the meantime Ms. Pierce could use the front steps. He also pointed out that he did put a used stove on Ms. Pierce's front porch that she could have used to replace the one that was not working.

He added that he has tried to have workmen make various repairs at Ms. Pierce's apartment over the years, but he said when they come to her apartment no one is at home and they were unable to gain entry.

Mr. Rapuano added that his plan for the Central Avenue area will enhance that part of Westfield and that is the vision he has had for that property for some time. James B. Flynn of Westfield, the attorney for Mr. Rapuano, declined comment.

Building Plan at Central, Cacciola Raises Questions

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Additional concern was raised over the lighting proposed for the parking lot between the two buildings. The type of lights planned for the lot were criticized because they have been known to cause a glare and do not meet the town ordinance which, according to Mr. Marsh, requires that they cast light down.

At the meeting, Mr. Guarriello was qualified to testify as an engineer, not as a planning consultant, and an issue was raised by the board over whether the testimony of a planning consultant was going to be heard.

It was agreed to by the board and the applicant that the hearing would continue at a later date, when the testimony of a planning consultant could be presented.

"The concept is okay," Mr. Marsh said. He said that the board just needed to hear from a planning consultant about certain elements of the project. Again, he said that the board's main concern had to do with the look of the front building, and the Cacciola Place side of that structure.

Residents of three Central Avenue homes which sit on the proposed construction site were in attendance at the meeting, hoping to tell their side of the story—a story which paints Mr. Rapuano in a less-than-favorable light. The developer owns several existing multi-family apartments where they live. (See related story on page 1).

Both Nicola Cox and Janet Rice told *The Westfield Leader* about running out of heating oil in the winter, while Mr. Rapuano was out of the area. Grace Pierce also spoke of the back steps to her home, which she said are in such disrepair that they are unusable.

However, Mr. Marsh commented that these issues "have nothing to do with what the board decides (regarding Mr. Rapuano's application)." He said, "The neighborhood might want to get involved."

In addition, Kennis Fairfax of the Westfield Neighborhood Council said, in an interview with *The Westfield Leader*, "I don't know how (the plan is) helping the community."

Mr. Fairfax raised concerns over the safety of children in the neighborhood if the development is approved. He noted that the project seems to be coming about "hastily."

The board's next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, August 31, or Wednesday, September 1, at 7:30 p.m.

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Roadway Projects Under Way In County, Municipalities

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finishing paving work on three roads built by the town for the Lexington Heights Subdivision off of Prospect Street, Mr. Marsh said. Those streets include Bailey Court, Hamilton Avenue and Sedgewick Avenue.

Currently in progress are two projects on Myrtle Avenue, at Grandview Avenue and Central Avenue, and Ripley Place from Cacciola Place to Windsor Avenue. Both jobs are milling and paving. The \$42,000 job, which was covered by a Community Block Grant, is being handled by Della Pello Contracting, Inc., of Union.

A number of other roadway projects in Westfield will likely occur in the fall. They include Gallows Hill Road, which will be entirely reconstructed with new curbs. The project has been designed and the town will be taking bids at one of its first council meetings in August. Estimated cost, according to Mr. Marsh, is \$150,000.

The town is working on designs on Crossway Place in connection with work being done by NJ Transit on a bridge off of North Avenue near the Westfield Public Works Department building. The road will be rebuilt so it lines up more accurately with Edgewood Avenue.

The job, which town officials hope to complete before winter, is estimated to cost \$125,000.

Ross Place, at Central Avenue and South Avenue, also is being designed now. Mr. Marsh said that it is an extremely wide road and will be reconstructed to bring it into the normal 36-foot wide roadway.

A backdrop overlay project on Prospect Avenue between Madison Avenue and Trails End Drive also is scheduled to be completed this fall.

Included in that contract will be the overlay of the entire length of Woodland Avenue, Canterbury Road from Winyah Avenue to Wychwood Road, Winyah Avenue from Canterbury to Wychwood, Prospect Street to the end of Madison Avenue, Kimball Avenue from North Chestnut Street to Baker Avenue, and the entire length of Doris Parkway.

The contract, for which bids will be accepted next month, also includes the milling and repaving of First Street from Rahway Avenue to Lynwood Place; the paving of shoulders and the overlay of Lynwood from First to Edgar Road, and the paving of the shoulders on Florida Street from Ayliffe Terrace to Wyoming Street.

After surveying all of the town's municipal parking lots, the town has decided that Lot No. 5 behind the Rialto Theatre will be reconstructed in the fall. Lot No. 2 and No. 2A on the north side of the train station also will be under construction. No. 2A, behind the former Wyckoff's Restaurant, may need a total reconstruction, while No. 2 may only need to be repaved, Mr. Marsh said.

He indicated that the town will need to hire an outside consultant to draw plans for the two parking lots, and he will seek authorization from the council to hire the consultant.

In Mountainside, the borough is working on plans for the resurfacing of Mill Lane, which runs between Springfield Avenue and Route 22. Michael Disko, Borough Engineer, said that borough officials hope to seek bids for the project in August, and begin work in late summer or fall.

The borough has received a \$90,000 New Jersey Department of Transportation grant to pay for the project.

The other big project for the borough this summer is the construction of a parking lot adjacent to the library across the road from Borough Hall on Route 22. The project was awarded to R. Mellusi Sons Paving, of Berkeley Heights, with a bid of \$199,822. The borough received a \$180,000 New Jersey Department of Transportation grant to pay for that project, and the borough will handle the remaining \$19,822.

That project should begin within the next few weeks, Mr. Disko said. Because the project will take place behind Route 22 and has no access from the highway, there should be no traffic disruption, Mr. Disko stated.

Numerous other roads throughout the borough also will be receiving crack sealing work throughout the summer, he added.

Throughout the summer in Scotch Plains, a number of roads will be overlaid with black top. Those roads include Heather Lane, Cushing Road, Aberdeen Road from Highlander Drive to Sunnyfield Lane, Birch Street and Fenimore Drive.

Earl Jackson, Superintendent of Scotch Plains Public Works, said that the township is renting equipment from Al Sanguiliano, Inc. of Scotch Plains, to handle the resurfacing. The work should begin in the next few weeks through mid-August and residents should be able to get back on their streets within four hours.

Raritan Road, from Michael Lane to the bend near Clover Lane, will receive new curbing, reconstruction, overlays and resurfacing as will Rahway Road from Clarks Lane to the Plainfield border. The project currently is being designed and carries no estimate or timetable.

In Fanwood, 22 streets will be "slurry sealed" to extend their lives until it is necessary for an entire repaving. The "slurry seal" is a liquid asphalt sealant spread over the surface of a road much the way a resident's private driveway is periodically sealed, explained Raymond Manfra, Director of Public Works for the Borough of Fanwood.

The sealing, which will be handled by Shore Slurry Seal Co. of Hammonton, will include on the South Side of the township: Beech Avenue, Belvidere Avenue, Brohm Place, Burns Way, Clemence Place, Coriell Avenue, Daniel Place, Herbert Avenue, Kempshall Terrace, Klaniacki Place, Kye Place, MacDermott Place, Marian Avenue, Roosevelt Avenue, Third Street, Trenton Avenue, Second Street (from Coriell Avenue to King Street and from Coriell Avenue to Herbert Avenue) and Winfield Place.

On the North Side of the township Arlene Court, Birchwood Terrace, Deborah Way and Mary Lane all will be sealed.

The sealing will start in the next week or so and last three to four days, Mr. Manfra said. The entire project, including preparation of the streets, required tree trimming and the actual sealing by the Hammonton company, totals \$50,000, he said.

The borough also is bundling together a number of projects that will include milling and repaving so that bids can be sought to complete the work. Those include North Avenue from Martine Avenue to Forest Road, the municipal parking lot, Waldon Road, Glenwood Road, Tillotson Road to Rainer Road, and Old South Avenue East.

Mr. Manfra said that bids will be sought on those projects the end of July or early August and work would begin in the fall.



WESTFIELD FIRE BLOTTER

- MONDAY, JULY 12**
 - One hundred block of South Avenue East - wire down.
 - Three hundred block of Orenda Circle - system malfunction.
 - Two hundred block of East Dudley Avenue - service call.
- TUESDAY, JULY 13**
 - One hundred block of Mohawk Trail - unintentional alarm.
 - Eight hundred block of Village Green - wire down.
- WEDNESDAY, JULY 14**
 - Eleven hundred block of Boulevard - good intent call.
 - Fifteen hundred block of Lamberts Mill Road - system malfunction.
 - Five hundred block of Dorian Road - system malfunction.
 - Thirteen hundred block of Prospect Street - false call.
 - One hundred block of East Dudley Avenue - unintentional alarm.
 - One hundred block of Marline Court - lock out.
- THURSDAY, JULY 15**
 - Two hundred block of Sheffield Street, Mountainside - mutual aid.
 - Two hundred block of East Broad Street - system malfunction.
- FRIDAY, JULY 16**
 - Six hundred block of Hort Street - electrical short.
 - Three hundred block of North Avenue West - smoke scare.
 - Seven hundred block of Prospect Street - unintentional alarm.
 - Five hundred block of Edgar Road - lock out.
 - Three hundred block of Lenox Avenue - unintentional alarm.
- SATURDAY, JULY 17**
 - One hundred block of Quimby Street - mulch fire.
 - Two hundred block of Linden Avenue - system malfunction.
- SUNDAY, JULY 18**
 - Two hundred block of Prospect Street - system malfunction.
 - One hundred block of East Broad Street - system malfunction.
 - Ten hundred block of Grandview Avenue - hazardous condition.
 - Nine hundred block of Woodmere Drive - electrical short.



WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

- TUESDAY, JULY 13**
 - A South Avenue pharmacy reported the receipt of a check in the amount of \$73.95 for which there were insufficient funds, according to police. Authorities said they have a suspect in the case but no one had been charged at press time.
 - A Woodmere Drive resident reported the theft of \$1,200 in jewelry from her home sometime between May 30 and July 12. Police said no one has yet been charged in the case.
- WEDNESDAY, JULY 14**
 - A resident of Tremont Avenue reported that her 26-inch, 21-speed "Trek" bicycle was stolen from the northside Westfield Train Station.
 - The theft of a 12-speed "Iguana" bicycle from the southside Westfield Train Station was reported by a Central Avenue resident.
 - Brian Edelman, 32, of Livingston and Steven Bertone, 34, of Old Bridge were each charged with disorderly conduct after a patrol officer spotted the two men on East Broad Street allegedly punching each other with closed fists. They were released on their own recognizance, authorities said.
- FRIDAY, JULY 16**
 - An Elm Street resident reported that one or more suspects scratched her 1999 Toyota while it was parked on the street where she lives.
 - A Forest Avenue resident reported the theft of a pocketbook from the kitchen of her apartment. The pocketbook contained jewelry worth approximately \$1,500, according to the victim. It is believed access to the residence was gained through a rear entrance, although there was no sign of forced entry, police said.
 - James Leahy, 33, of Fanwood was arrested and charged with aggravated sexual assault, according to police. Because the alleged victim, who is female, is a juvenile, authorities did not release any further information about the case. Leahy was being held on \$75,000 bail in the Union County Jail.
- TUESDAY, JULY 20**
 - An 18-year-old Roselle man was injured after his bicycle struck a curb and he was thrown through the front window of an Elm Street store. Police confirmed that the store owners were notified of the incident. The shattered window had been covered with boards.
 - The victim, who sustained a large cut to his left shoulder, was transported to Overlook Hospital in Summit, where he was admitted to the emergency room, a hospital spokeswoman said yesterday morning.

Full-Time Crew, Extra Cost Needed to Maintain Fields

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"This year, we have added new equipment and more maintenance personnel. I have actually heard a lot more positive feedback from the league players this year than in previous years," Mr. Marsh stated.

He attributes the deteriorating condition of the fields to the recent severe drought, causing the fields to "harden like concrete and make dragging ineffectual." There has also been frequent unauthorized usage of the fields, according to Mr. Marsh.

"We maintain the fields in accordance with the recreation schedule. If there is unauthorized usage of the field before the next game, the field will be in poor condition," he explained.

Mr. Marsh acknowledged that insufficient maintenance as well as unauthorized usage are issues that need to be addressed. He stated that the resolution to these problems has been and will continue to be discussed by all of the town officials involved.

"The Recreation Commission has actually received more positive comments this year, regarding the condition of our fields, than in prior years," Mr. Burrell related. "We are aware that there are various problems with the fields, and it is on our agenda to address these problems."

Extensive renovations are scheduled for Memorial Park's four baseball fields as part of overall master plan created for the park.

"The major problem with Memorial Park is that it was built on a landfill, which is now sinking causing drainage and leveling problems," Mr. Burrell explained. "This, as well as other upgrades are in our master plans, which we expect will take several years to complete."

A public meeting is scheduled for September to release the details of these plans to the community.

"I plan on meeting with the Town Engineer and with Public Works (officials) very soon, to discuss and review the maintenance and renovations needed at our other parks," Mr. Burrell stated. "We have about \$40,000 in County grant money for improvements at Tamaques. It is too soon to say if that will be sufficient funding to cover all of the renovations needed there."

Gumbert Park fields have recently been maintained by the Westfield Youth

Baseball League. Parents of league members have been dragging the fields before games. This was an option suggested by several league members as a solution for all of the parks.

Mr. Burrell explained that the other parks need renovations that are too extensive to be handled by league members.

"The problems with our fields are not simply a matter of just dragging the fields, as league members have suggested. In most cases, heavy equipment and extensive tilling are needed, which cannot be accomplished by the leagues themselves," he said.

The Recreation Director continued by saying that the Recreation Commission would certainly not turn away any league members who wanted to perform minor maintenance such as dragging, but that type of maintenance was not the long-term solution that the fields need.

"The problem is manpower," Councilman Walsh said. "Our Public Works Department currently does not have the time or resources to maintain all of the fields to the extent that is needed."

"One option is to charge league fees to help defray the costs of hiring more public work's crew members," he added.

Other options, according to the Councilman, are a one- to three-point tax increase in the municipal tax rate or requesting that large businesses "adopt" a field similar to the "Adopt A Highway" program.

"We are discussing all of our options to resolve the problem," Mr. Walsh stated.

"The problem is that charging league fees would only be a drop in the bucket compared to the \$250,000 per year needed to support a full-time maintenance crew," Mr. Burrell said.

"There are various ways to fund a maintenance department," Mr. Burrell stated. "One option would be an 'open-space trust' whereby a referendum is put on the ballot and voted on by our residents, to allow a small percentage of our taxes to go toward this necessity. I hope our residents can appreciate that this is a worthwhile cause to fund."

"Other towns, who have less park land than we do, have full-time maintenance departments. We need that as well," Mr. Burrell added.

Speed Enforcement Program Results in Revenue Jump

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that I have recommended to the Town Council that should be implemented in Westfield."

According to Court Administrator Linda Chieffo, the court has worked diligently this year on pursuing old, outstanding violation accounts. Some of these accounts are from a few months ago, while others go back as far as the 1980s.

Since January, the court has collected \$23,929 from old tickets.

Commenting on increased revenues, Judge Brennan said, "The main focus of my court is to insure that justice is served for those who come through our system. If, by increasing efficiency and convenience, we generate greater revenue, that's great, but never our main goal."

"In the interest of justice, I will always take into account a person's prior driving record, and listen to justifiable reasons that may have caused the violation," Judge Brennan explained.

"In some cases, we also permit violators to plea bargain by paying higher fines for lesser points," he added. "We are always looking for ways to improve our service to the public."

Mayor Jardim noted that, "the intended purpose of the enhanced speed enforcement program is to insure greater safety for our community, and to act as a deterrent. After a period of time, I expect to see the number of citations decline to reflect this, as people come to know Westfield as a town that enforces its traffic ordinances."

Judge Brennan, who has been Westfield's Municipal Court Judge since January, is filling out the three-year, unexpired term of former Judge Marion Mogielnicki, who resigned in 1998. Judge Brennan stated that he would like to continue on as Westfield's Municipal Court Judge for another term, after this term expires in December.

"Judge Brennan is doing a wonderful job, and we are very pleased with the innovations and improvements he has implemented in our court system," said Mayor Jardim.

Local Residents Graduate From Oak Knoll School

WESTFIELD — Westfield residents Colleen Higgins and Maire Abraham are among the recent graduates of Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit.

Colleen was president of the school's Science, Environment and Animal Rights organization and was on the Student Council Review Board. She was also a member of the Foreign Language Honor Society.

She recently received the Piscataway Township Education Association scholarship. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Higgins of Westfield, she will attend the College of the Holy Cross.

Maire, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Abraham of Westfield, served as president of the senior class. A member of the Cum Laude Society, Maire received the Sister Elizabeth Barber Award, which is presented to a senior who assumes responsibility, solves problems and anticipates the needs of others.

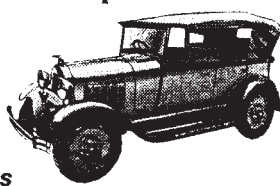
A member of the Varsity Math League, Maire has received a number of other awards including the Science Department Award, the Williams College Book Award, and the Girl Scouts of America Gold Award, that organization's highest honor. In addition, she captained the varsity cross-country team, for which she received the award of most valuable runner.

Maire received scholarships from the Rotary Club of Westfield, New Jersey Friends of Vietnam Veterans and the College of New Jersey, where she will attend school this fall.

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AWARDED FOR EFFORTS...At the New Jersey Association of Student Councils' (NJASC) Business Meeting, Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield was awarded a first place trophy for the fourth consecutive year for contributing the most funds to NJASC's 1998-1999 state charity, the Missy Maloney Foundation. Through their efforts during Spirit Week, as well as year-long fundraising events, Roosevelt students were able to raise \$6,000 — more than any other high school or middle school in the State of New Jersey. Pictured, left to right, are: Student Council officers Andrew Ruotolo, President; Shelby Cherin, Secretary; Kaitlyn Patella, Treasurer, and Darcy O'Brien, Vice President. During the 1999-2000 school year, the Roosevelt Student Council will actively raise money to benefit those with autism.