

***EL-KHOURY, FRANCIS, AQUILES, HELMSTETTER LED CRANFORD COUGARS IN SCORING***

# Cougar Soccer Boys Envision Plenty of Potential Next Year

By **DAVID B. CORBIN**

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Growing pains existed, but this year's Cranford High School boys soccer team has been growing in a positive direction and envision plenty of potential for next year.

The Cougars struggled through a rugged season to finish with a 5-10-2 record, which included eight overtime games. In addition to playing their Union County Watchung Conference opponents, the Cougars also played Bernards and West Essex in non-conference games.

The Cougars' biggest victory came with a 4-1 road win over then undefeated, 7-0 Bernards.

"It was our third game in four days and the boys played extremely well. Bernards went on to win the state Group 2 championship, proving our team is not that far away from being very good," Cougar Head Coach Mike Curci said.

The Cougars lost to Union County Tournament semifinalist Linden twice by one goal and then beat them 1-0 on senior night at Memorial Field in one of their biggest games of the season.

"Senior goalkeeper Dan Weber had an outstanding game to earn the shutout under the lights at Memorial field," Coach Curci noted.

The Cougars also took a pair from the Plainfield Cardinals, 6-0 and 1-0.

Our biggest problem was inconsistency, mostly because of overall inexperience at the varsity level and missing some

golden opportunities on offense. Our record could easily have been 10-5 instead of 5-10. When we played a consistent 80 minutes of soccer, we could play with almost anyone," Coach Curci said. Senior center midfielder George

assists, followed by senior attacker Jeff Francis (All-County Honorable Mention) and junior attacker Matt Aquiles (First Team All-Conference, Second Team All-County, All-State Honorable Mention) both with five goals and

ning goal in the second Plainfield game," Coach Curci pointed out.

Senior Andrew Schneider (All-County Honorable Mention) netted three goals and an assist. Junior midfielder Mike Kniazuk put in a goal and added two assists. Junior Tommy Paparatto contributed two goals. Another player, who will return next year is defender Michael Wielgus.

According to Coach Curci, "Paparatto returned late in the season from a season-long injury and will play a big role in the midfield. Junior Tom Fitzgerald, another starter who also missed most of the season with injury, will be a force, as well as Matt Aquiles and Mike Kniazuk."

Junior Jake Waleski (All-County Honorable mention) did a strong job at sweeper, and sophomore Andrew Gee (All-County Second Team, First Team All-Conference, All-State Honorable mention) proved to be a fine stopper. Ryan Wright and James Sands will also be returning on defense.

Among the many young players, who received valuable field time was freshman Marc Christiano, who according to Coach Curci, "continued to impress as

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David B. Corbin (Season files) for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*  
**LAST LINE OF DEFENSE...**Cougar senior goalkeeper Dan Weber had several outstanding game this season. Above, Weber and teammate Jake Waleski, No. 12, attempt to prevent SPF Raider Kwamir Philippe, No. 14, from taking a shot.

*Probitas Verus Honos*

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El-Khoury (First Team All-County, First Team All-Conference, All-State Honorable Mention) led the Cougars with six goals and three

three assists. Junior attacker Mike Helmstetter, an All-Conference Honorable Mention, netted four goals.

"Helmstetter is a workhorse, who always looks to make things happen. He had the game-win-



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the season wore on."

Coach Curci added, "Sophomore Tommy Trotter will play a key role in 2012. Look for sophomore Mohammad Mansour to make an impact. Freshmen forward Matt Monte and Anthony Maglino also logged quality min-

utes that will only help them and us next year. All six of our returning varsity freshmen have a ton of potential."

One freshman, who did get plenty of playing time and should be a standout goalkeeper is Zach Hoffman, who according to Coach

Curci, "is the real deal and will be a force to be reckoned with the next three years. He was 3-3-1 in his first seven games after taking over the starting role, including the win over Bernards in just his second start."

Freshmen defenders Kevin

Trotter and Erik Monteagudo also had quality minutes in the Cougars' second game against Westfield. In all, the Cougars return 17 players with varsity experience

"I was happy with the way a number of our young players

stepped up to give quality minutes. Next year's team has an awful lot of potential and could make plenty of noise in Union County next year. A lot of players got important experience against a difficult schedule this year," Coach Curci said.



**BATTLING WITH RAIDERS...**Left photo – Cougar Ryan Wright, No. 8, tries to keep the ball away from SPF Raider Andrew Leischner, while Marc Christiano, left, and Andrew Gee, right, watch. Right photo – Cougar Jeff Francis prepares to take a wicked shot at the Raider goal, while Wright, No. 8, and Jake Waleski, No. 12, observe.

David B. Corbin (Season files) for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*

# Cougar Soccer Girls Made Significant Improvements

By **DAVID B. CORBIN**

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times*

Rebuilding from scratch after a glorious 2009 season that included a Union County Tournament (UCT) championship and a 17-3-1 record with a senior-

heavy squad has required some patience on the part of Cranford High School girls soccer Head Coach Jen Michewicz and Assistant Coach Frank Vito.

With only one returning starter, the Lady Cougars played their youth and took their lumps in 2010, but this year they showed that they are definitely heading

in the right direction.

Last year, the Cougars were crunched, 4-0, by Scotch Plains-Fanwood, winners of five out of the past six UCT by the end of the year. This year, in their opening game of the season on September 8 in Scotch Plains, the Lady Cougars found out just how much they did improve when battled

the Raiders down to the wire, losing 1-0. Additionally, the Cougars had a strong offensive push in the final 10 minutes. The Raiders later went on to win another UCT title.

In that game, the Raiders took six good shots on goal in the first half, but Cougar goalkeeper Leah Quinn made four fine saves. Quinn

demonstrated even more flare in the second half when smothered a pair of vicious shots off the foot of Raider Christy Monroy. But her best was yet to come when she blocked a point-blank shot launched by Leah Salituro, the Raiders' leading goal scorer.

The Cougars did finish the sea-

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# Cranford Cougar Soccer Girls Made Significant Improvements This Season

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David B. Corbin (Season files) for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*  
ACTIVE ON THE FIELD...Left photo – Cougar Madison Savulich prepares to kick the ball downfield. Right photo – Annie Vollenbroek, No. 18, attempts to settle the ball.

son with four wins and two ties, but eight of their losses were by just one goal.

"Our record doesn't reflect the intensity of our schedule, having to play the top six teams in the county each twice. We had four overtime games, five shut outs, and eight games lost by only one goal, a significant improvement from last year," noted Coach Michewicz.

One of those one-goal losses came in a closely contested battle with the Summit Hilltoppers at Memorial Field in Cranford on October 11. One breakaway run that resulted in a goal 10 minutes into the second half was all that was needed for the visiting Hilltoppers to earn a 1-0 victory.

The Lady Cougars got strong efforts from defenders Annie Vollenbroek Rachel Romano and

Hannah DeMars, and Quinn stopped one Summit attempt in the second half and made a smart decision later by charging and smothering a loose ball near the right corner of the box before a Hilltopper could get a foot on it. Defender Kristina Sosa added a fine slide check later to prevent a Hilltopper breakaway.

"Leah Quinn was phenomenal in goal. Rachel Romano led the defense," Coach Michewicz said.

Before any scoring took place, the pace of the game could have leaned in the Cougars' direction when Taylor Pace charged down the middle and launched a wicked shot that the Hilltopper goalkeeper got just enough hand on to deflect the ball over the crossbar.

Senior co-captains/midfielders Emily Lupin and Madison Savulich were always quite active and



David B. Corbin (Season files) for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times*  
PLAYING KEEPAWAY...Cougars Hannah DeMars, No. 21, and Ana DiGiovanni, No. 5, try to keep Raider Lisa Matrale from getting to the ball.

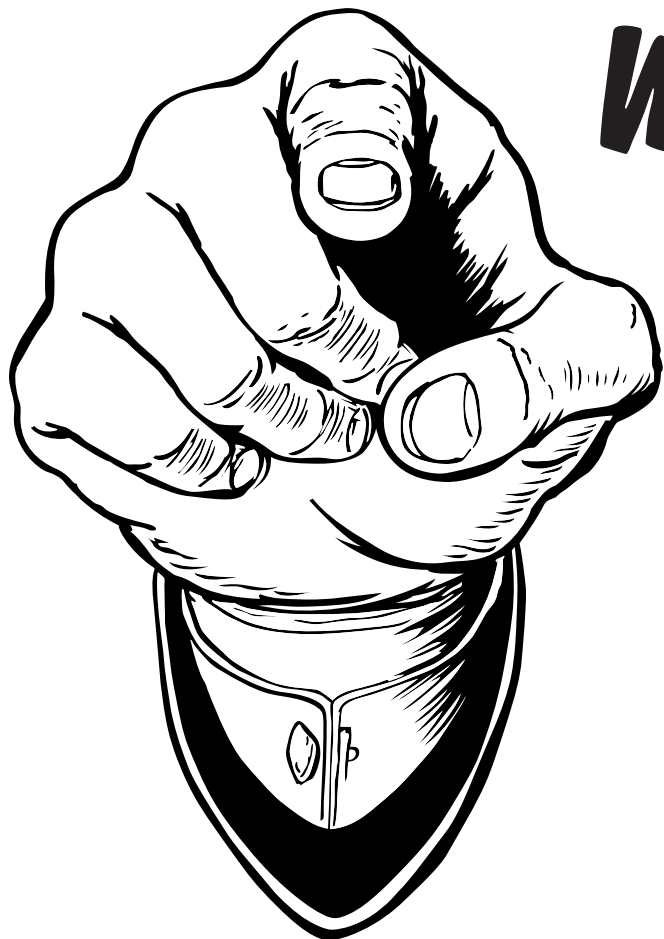
helped control the midfield, and senior forward Danielle Jakubik continuously put pressure on the opposition's backfield. Others who contributed defensively were seniors Hannah Dowzycki, Shannon Maher and Cara Costa.

According to Coach Michewicz, some of the season's highlights include taking the county runner up team, Westfield, into overtime, their wins over A.L. Johnson and one over Summit, and losing to county champions (Scotch Plains-Fanwood) 1-0 during a hard fought game.

"The girls were competitive dedicated and perseverant, always ready to face their next challenge. The seniors have inspired the underclassmen, who are looking to build on this year's improvement next year," Coach Michewicz said.

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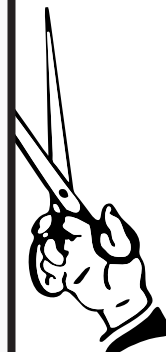
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## CF Mayor Urges Opposition to Birchwood Dev.

By FRED T. ROSSI

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

CRANFORD — Township Mayor Daniel Aschenbach said on Tuesday that the online petition opposing a proposed development on Birchwood Avenue has garnered more than 100 comments from residents, and said the deadline for signing the petition will be next week so that he can take the document to Trenton and present it to Governor Chris Christie and other state officials.

"Cranford is not going to stand for this type of overdevelopment," the mayor said at Tuesday's township committee meeting. The petition, which can be found at [change.org/petitions/oppose-birchwood-overdevelopment](http://change.org/petitions/oppose-birchwood-overdevelopment), allows residents to not only register their opposition to the proposed plan, but also includes com-

ments on why they are signing the petition that opposes the plan for the development of 360 residential units.

The Army Corps of Engineers has said the property would be "beneficial" as a retention basin for heavy rain water, the mayor said, and would help alleviate flooding problems on Casino Avenue, North Union Avenue and Wadsworth Terrace. He noted there is state funding available for water retention projects and suggested that if the entire property is not needed for a retention basin, part of it could be used for senior citizen housing.

In a related matter, the mayor said he had met recently with mayors of other communities along the Rahway River to consider potential water storage sites along the river to alleviate potential flooding problems during future storms.

Commissioner David Robinson, who will become

mayor on January 1 when control of the township committee passes to the Republicans, emphasized that the 2012 committee will be "equally unified" in opposition to the Birchwood Avenue development.

In other business, Mayor Aschenbach said that PSE&G officials are formulating a plan to relocate the South Avenue substation that flooded during Hurricane Irene and led to a multi-day power outage in Cranford and parts of surrounding communities. A special meeting will be held on Monday, December 5, during which the mayor's task force on the future of the municipal building — which was seriously damaged by the flooding in late August — will present its recommendations. The mayor also asked residents for their "patience" as the township works to pick up debris from the October 29 snowstorm. "We're behind on that," the mayor said, and he urged residents to bring "what they can" to the conservation center.

Tuesday's meeting was the last for Commissioner Mark Dugan, who did not seek re-election, and his fellow governing body members paid tribute to him at the end of the hour-long meeting. Mr. Dugan said it had been "an honor to serve this community." Committee members also paid tribute to Barbara Krause upon her retirement from the local airplane noise advisory committee.

At the start of the meeting, after eight members of Junior Girl Scout Troop 40113 led the flag salute, Mayor Aschenbach presented a certificate of appreciation to the Garwood Knights of Columbus for the group's assistance in the post-Hurricane Irene recovery in late August and early September.



Christina Hinke for *The Westfield Leader*

**FLOODING...** Mayors of the towns on the Rahway River met Monday in Millburn to discuss solutions. Pictured, left to right, are: Springfield Mayor Hugh Keffer, Cranford Mayor Dan Aschenbach, Union Mayor Joe Florio, Rahway Mayor Richard Proctor and Millburn Mayor Sandra Haimoff.

## Cranford/Garwood/Area News

# Garwood to Open Bids for Athletic Complex Contract

By CHRISTINA HINKE

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

GARWOOD — After a long debate among the governing body this year following a change from Democrat to Republican-controlled governing body, the borough is getting set to open bids for contractors interested in the athletic field project contract.

At the borough council's November 22 meeting, Councilman Louis Petruzzelli said 30 bids went out for the athletic field complex and that the council was to open bids on November 29. There was a mandatory pre-bid meeting with the prospective contractors on November 9.

On another matter, the council had discussed earlier in the year to buy a new snow removal vehicle. Councilman Keith Sluka said the council's Streets and Roads Committee has decided not to pursue the purchase this year.

"It is an item we would have to bond for. By the time that happens we are in the snow season," he said.

Councilman Jim Mathieu said, the chairman on the finance committee, said the borough is "looking to find something to double as field maintenance (equipment) for the athletic field complex. He said the vehicles ranged in cost from \$14,000 to 17,000.

At last week's meeting council members voted to adopt the consent agenda, which included authorizing upgrades of salary levels for three patrolman, five

grants awarded to be deposited in the 2011 municipal budget, amending the agreement with Musial Group, the architectural firm hired for the athletic field complex, and authorizing the borough clerk to prepare a request for proposals for borough attorney, planner and engineering services for the planning board.

The council also approved an annual maintenance agreement with SBP Industries for the firehouse generator at a cost of \$450 plus wattage.

The Garwood Board of Health is seeking a new member, Councilwoman Sara Todisco said during her Public Health committee report.

In addition, Mayor Patricia Quattrocchi honored Keith Gallagher, church and community activities chairman for the Garwood Knights of Columbus, with an award for his leadership in Hurricane Irene support efforts in the borough. He was able to gather five truckloads of food with help from students and scouts and \$1,200 in gift cards for people displaced by the hurricane.

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**SANTA VISIT...**Kate, Will, Christian and Luke Robinson of Cranford get ready to tell Santa Claus their Christmas wishes. Families will have an opportunity to have breakfast with Santa and enjoy other festivities this Saturday, December 3, from 8:30 a.m. to noon in Sherlock Hall at the Trinity Episcopal Church. The church is located at North and Forest Avenues in Cranford. All are welcome.

### Santa Breakfast Set Saturday at Trinity

CRANFORD – The Trinity Episcopal Church, located at North and Forest Avenues in Cranford, will present Breakfast with Santa this Saturday, December 3, from 8:30 a.m. to noon in Sherlock Hall.

Families will have an opportunity to enjoy a pancake breakfast with Santa and have their children's picture taken with him. There also will be a gift basket raffle; 50/50 drawing; wreaths and greens sale; a crafts table and face painting.

Breakfast will be \$5 per person; photos with Santa will be \$7. All are welcome. For additional information, call (908) 276-4047 or visit [trinitycranford.org/](http://trinitycranford.org/)

### *Probitas Verus Honos*

## Christmas Tree Holiday Celebrations

**Saturday, December 3**

Garwood will light its Christmas tree at 6 p.m. at the municipal building parking lot on North Avenue. The event is sponsored by the Garwood Celebrations Committee.

Mountainside will light its Christmas tree at 4:30 p.m. at Borough Hall, located at the intersection of Route 22 and New Providence Road.

**Sunday, December 4**

### Westfield Holiday Entertainment

The Watson Highlanders Bagpipe Band will be roaming Westfield's downtown streets, Saturdays, December 3, 10 and 17, from 2 to 5 p.m.

The Yuletide Carolers will be roaming Westfield's downtown streets on Saturdays, December 10 and 17, from 1 to 2 p.m.

The Harmonics Quartet will be roaming Westfield's downtown streets, Thursdays, December 1, 8, 15 and 22, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



Paul Lachenauer for *The Westfield Leader*

**NAUGHTY OR NICE...**Santa listens to the wishes of children at the Cranford Christmas tree-lighting ceremony held Friday night at the Gazebo.



Paul Lachenauer for *The Westfield Leader*

**HO HO HO...**Santa makes an appearance at the Cranford Christmas tree-lighting ceremony held Friday night at the Gazebo. The event, sponsored by the Cranford Chamber of Commerce, also featured Christmas carols.



Paul Lachenauer for *The Westfield Leader*

**FA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA LA...**Genevieve enjoys the Cranford Christmas tree-lighting ceremony held Friday night at the Gazebo. The event also included Christmas carols and the arrival of Santa.

## Search Continues for Killer of Former Cranford Woman

UNION — One year after she was discovered inside her Union Township home, the Union County Homicide Task Force continues to investigate the circumstances behind the stabbing death of Diane Mary Zaleski, 54, inside her Laurana Road home in Union. Her body was discovered on November 18, 2010 by family members.

Ms. Zaleski suffered multiple injuries in the attack that led to her death, according to a report from the medical examiner. Over the course of the last year, the case has remained a priority for the Homicide Task Force and the Union Township Police Department.

Born in Elizabeth, Ms. Zaleski moved to Union 20 years from Cranford. She was a legal secretary for Schering Plough Corp. in Kenilworth for 17 years, retiring one year ago.

Over the last 12 months, members of the Task Force have consulted members of the FBI's Behavioral Analysis Unit to help identify who might have murdered Ms. Zaleski. Given the forensic evidence recovered and analyzed, the Task Force is looking for a male suspect.

Nearly 100 people have been interviewed and more than 80 men have been cleared as potential suspects, in some cases by use of forensic testing.

"The fact is that Ms. Zaleski was a very cautious person and was not in the habit of opening her door to strangers. Through interviews we have learned that she was even hesitant to open her door after dark to people she did know," Mr. Romankow said. "There were no signs of forced entry to her house, so it is possible and likely that Ms. Zaleski knew her killer."

As the anniversary of her death approaches, investigators are again appealing to the general public as well as friends, acquaintances, and the Zaleski family to recall the days before and after she was killed, in the hopes that a memory or credible piece of information will be recalled.

Forensic evidence was recovered at the scene that shows the

suspect likely suffered a cut on the hand or arm during the attack — including one that likely required at least the use of a band-aid. There were also likely defensive wounds in the form of scratches.

"No matter how small an inkling, if there is someone who feels like they have information that can solve this case and give the family

peace of mind, we urge them to come forward," Mr. Romankow said. "A simple forensic test can exclude suspects quickly."

After the murder the killer remained at Ms. Zaleski's house for several hours and attempted to use her credit card to purchase two specific electronic items, including a MacBook computer and an iPad. The transaction was denied twice.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Task Force Detective Robert Henderson (908) 347-2686. Anonymous calls can also be placed to Union County Crime Stoppers at (908) 654-TIPS or via the Internet at [www.uctip.org](http://www.uctip.org) [www.uctip.org](http://www.uctip.org).

Tips that lead to an arrest and indictment are eligible for a reward up to \$5,000.

## Garwood Library Among Food Drive Participants

GARWOOD — The Garwood Public Library is among local libraries currently participating in a food drive sponsored by Union County Public Libraries through Friday, December 16, to fight hunger during the holiday season.

Donations of non-perishable food items will benefit the Community FoodBank of New Jersey and other local food pantries. A collection bin is available at the Garwood Library, located at 411 Third Avenue behind the Lincoln School complex, at the corner of Walnut Street. Library staff will route 100 percent of the donations to designated food banks.

Among those served by area food banks are low-income families, struggling single parents, the elderly on a fixed income and the unemployed. The Community FoodBank of New Jersey supplies food to more than 1,500 non-profit charities in 19 counties, including soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, local food banks, after-school programs and senior centers.

Groceries most urgently needed are canned meat and fish; canned soups and stews; peanut butter (in plastic jars); boxed pasta and rice; powdered milk; infant for-

mula; canned vegetables and fruits. Individuals are asked to make sure that their donations are not expired.

Other participating libraries include Berkeley Heights Public Library, Clark Public Library, Cranford Public Library, Elizabeth Public Library, Fanwood Memorial Library, Hillside Public Library, Kenilworth Public Library, Linden Public Library, Mountainside Public Library, New Providence Memorial Library, Plainfield Public Library, Rahway Public Library, Roselle Free Public Library, Roselle Park Veterans Memorial Library, Scotch Plains Public Library, Springfield Public Library, Summit Public Library, Union Free Public Library and the Westfield Memorial Library.

In addition to collecting food for the food banks, the Garwood Public Library is collecting non-perishable pet food to be distributed to local animal shelters. Any canned, boxed or bagged cat food and dog food can be dropped off at the Garwood Library as well.

For more information, call the Garwood Library at (908) 789-1670 or visit the Union County Public Libraries' website, [lucnj.org](http://lucnj.org).

## Knights Continue Holiday Food Drive

GARWOOD — The Garwood Knights of Columbus are continuing their holiday food drive with requests for donations of canned and dry food goods, turkeys and hams. Food baskets will be distributed to needy families in Garwood and surrounding areas through December.

Donations may be dropped off after 4 p.m. weekdays at the council hall, located at 37 South Avenue in Garwood (opposite Pathmark). On weekends, individuals are asked to call first. Parking is located behind the hall off Willow Avenue. Participants are asked to use the side-door entrance.

Monetary donations, made payable to the Garwood K of C Food Drive, also are appreciated. For more information, call the Knights at (908) 789-9809 after 4 p.m.



**PERFECT...**The Garwood Board of Education honored 15 students who received a perfect score on the NJASK test last year. The following students received perfect scores: Math: Dayna Gallucci, NJASK8; Mark Stouffer, NJASK 3; Ross Wildes, NJASK 5; Anya Nordstrom, NJASK3; Andre Schlauberg, NJASK4; James Duffey, NJASK 5; Kyra McDevitt, NJASK 5; John Taylor, NJASK5; Alexandra Knowles, NJASK3. Science: Daniel Courtney, NJASK8; Michael Pellino, NJASK 4; Christopher Froden, NJASK4, Jason Maher, NJASK4, Tomas Cvercko, NJASK4, Brian Maher, NJASK8.