

## Parking Deck Proposal, Congressional Primary Battles, Murder-Suicide Top News Headlines in Westfield During First Six Months of 2000

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of Representatives Commerce Committee counsel Patrick Morrissey of Westfield, former Sixth District candidate Michael A. Ferguson of Warren, Eric Urbano of Scotch Plains, Green Brook Mayor Patricia Walsh and former Woodbridge Council President Ken Gardner.

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders applied for a Highway Project grant from the New Jersey Division of Highway and Traffic Safety to fund a lighted crosswalk at crosswalk near Temple Emanu-El.

Claire Lazarowitz took the oath of office as Westfield's new Third Ward Councilwoman. She replaces John J. Walsh who resigned in January.

The Recreation Commission amended the pool membership process by requiring in-person registrations only.

Nearly 500 persons attended a community forum entitled "Listening to Our Youth" which was held nearly one year after Westfield was selected by MSNBC for a special program to discuss the shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado in 1999.

The Town of Westfield asked surrounding towns to consider having fluoride added to the local water supply.

The Westfield Planning Board held a meeting to tackle the topic of potential amendments to the town's existing historic preservation ordinances.

A series of roadblocks delayed renovation efforts at Sycamore Field.

### MARCH

Rick Rich of Rich And Associates, a parking consultant hired by the town, recommended that the town build a parking deck on municipal parking lot 3A, located on the South Avenue side of the Westfield Train Station. The capacity of the parking facility would range from 743 to 1,327 spaces, with construction costs estimated to run between \$10.1 and \$16.2 million.

During the town's municipal budget process, the Westfield Memorial Library sought a \$44,000 increase over the amount the town allocated to the library in 1999. The library's Board of Trustees proposed budget was \$1,344,086.

Cynthia Cockren, Library Board Treasurer, explained that the increase over 1999 was 3.8 percent. She said that the biggest capital expenditures in 2000 were the replacement of carpeting in high traffic areas in the 11-year-old library and replacement of lighting on the building's second floor.

The 12th annual AIDS Benefit Auction at Temple Emanu-El raised more than \$60,000.

Westfield's Board of Education campaign officially with incumbents Dr. B. Carol Molnar, Anne Riegel, Thomas Taylor being challenged by Peter W. Billson and Kimberly Rhodes. Incumbent Michael Kessler filed to run for an unexpired one-year term.

Sal Antonelli was returned to the Recreation Commission as a "hold over" member by Mayor Jardim following the defeat by the Town Council of the Mayor's appointment of former Councilman Walsh to fill a Commission vacancy. The 5-4 vote was along party lines with all five Republicans voting against Mr. Walsh's appointment.

First Ward Councilman Carl A. Salisbury said he would fight to deliver a cut in municipal property taxes, a notion that Second Ward Councilman and Finance Committee Chairman James J. Gruba called "unrealistic."

The Westfield Rotary Club's annual pancake breakfast drew some 1,200 attendees. The event raises funds for the club's Student Scholarship Fund.

Westfield joined the number of towns supporting mandatory childproof trigger locks on handguns in New Jersey.

The Board of Education passed a \$57.2 million budget, calling for a \$48.2 million tax levy if approved by voters on April 18.

Jeffrey Walsh, a Westfield resident, was interviewed by *The Westfield Leader* on his new position as Executive Director of NJ Transit. Upon his arrival, he had 30,000 customer surveys regarding commuter concerns.

Among his long-term goals are a one-seat ride into New York City for Ranitan Valley commuters.

In a letter announcing his intention to retire, Fire Chief Battiloro called on the department to expand its EMS capabilities and its in-service inspection program as well as better educating the community on fire safety. Saying only 7 percent of the department's calls are actual fires, he said, "It has become increasingly difficult to justify a 40-man paid fire department with annual salaries and expenses of \$2.7 million a year."

Barbara J. Thiele, Westfield Memorial Library Director, prepared to assume her duties as President of the Trenton-based New Jersey Library Association.

### APRIL

The Town Council introduced a municipal budget with a 2 cent hike in the rate, from 67 to 69 cents, per \$100 of assessed valuation. The \$24,324,685 spending plan will be supported by a tax levy of \$12,595,289. The increase averages \$36 per household over last year. The council saved a penny on the tax rate per state legislation which reduced by \$146,000 the appropria-

tion for the Police and Firemen's System, the state's pension system.

Westfielders Lenore Scurry, an On-air Chairwoman for the Lou Rawls Parade of Stars Telethon for the United Negro College Fund, and Holly E. Westscher, a rehabilitation counselor for United Palsy, received Women of Excellence citations from the Union County Commission on the Status of Women.

The Concerned African American Parents (CAAP) of Westfield marked their 10th anniversary with a dinner-dance at the Pines Manor in Edison. The group provides a forum for parents to discuss issues regarding the education, treatment and evaluation of their children and to build a working relationship with the school board.

Trista Pollard was presented with the Charles Philhower Fellowship Award for "outstanding teaching, interest in children...and school spirit without limit."

The Town Council approved an application to demolish a house on Everson Place which was damaged five years ago by a 400-gallon basement heating oil spill.

School Board incumbents Ms. Riegel, Dr. Molnar and newcomer Ms. Rhodes posted victories in the annual school board election. Mr. Kessler was unopposed for a one-year unexpired seat. Voters also passed the \$48.2 million school tax levy, 1,824 to 821, with a 23 percent turnout at the polls.

Danielle Walsh and Arlene Gardner were re-elected as Board of Education as President and Vice President of the board.

Democrat Susan Jacobson, former School Board President, filed her petition for Mayor as a Democrat with the Town Clerk's office after Mayor Thomas C. Jardim opted against a third term. Councilman McDermott filed his petition for the office as the Republican candidate.

Running for the Town Council were Republicans Peter Echausse, First Ward; Mr. Betancourt, Second Ward; Karen Trzesniowski, Third Ward; and Gerald P. Boyle, Fourth Ward. They would face Democrats incumbent Carl A. Salisbury, First Ward; William B. Ziff, Second Ward; and incumbents Ms. Lazarowitz and Mr. Goldman, representing the Third and Fourth Wards, respectively.

The Westfield Planning Board approved a storage structure on the

Westfield Lumber & Home Center site on North Avenue.

The *Leader* reported that construction of Crossway Place was to be completed by the end of April. However, the work dragged on to the end of the year, with both the town and NJ Transit critical of who was at fault for the delays.

The County of Union announced a new \$3 million grant program aimed at creating new and improving existing senior citizen centers.

Mr. Betancourt announced his resignation as Municipal Prosecutor effective June 6 in order to seek elective office to the Town Council.

### MAY

The Board of Adjustment approved a 350-seat steak restaurant in a former bank building at 1 Elm Street. The restaurant deal fell through later in the year when one of the partners reportedly pulled out of the venture.

For the second consecutive summer, Westfield pool memberships were sold out.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. William J. Foley proposed expanding Westfield High School to accommodate a 36 percent increase projected at the high school over the next seven years.

Westfield remembered Sohaya Massachi, 23, after she was shot to death by her ex-boyfriend, Christopher Honrath, 24, who then killed himself in a Central Avenue apartment. The story made front page coverage in the *Star-Ledger* when it was learned the woman was forced into a car by Honrath in front of Seton Hall University in South Orange and then driven to Westfield. Ms. Massachi had filed to upgrade a temporary restraining order to a permanent order against Honrath.

The Town Council adopted a \$24.39 million budget with a \$12,866,514 tax levy. The spending plan represents a 3 cent increase over last year in the tax rate. The council amended the budget to add a \$60,000 item to fund a jitney service in town.

Vivian's Kitchen closed its doors after 80 years of business following the retirement of Vivian Collyer-Bucher. The store was Worth's Confectionery 1993 when it was named Vivian's Kitchen. Vivian's originally located on Prospect Street.

World War II Marine Fighter Pilot Lawrence M. Smith led the Westfield Memorial Parade as Grand Marshall. Resident James Gildea was named

Assistant Town Administrator and Westfielder Lisa F. Crystal was sworn in as a Superior Court judge sitting in Union County.

### JUNE

The town held a weekly series of roundtable discussions on topics of community concern as identified by a planning group convened by Mayor Jardim.

Mr. Ferguson and Mrs. Connelly were the winners in the June 6 Seventh Congressional District primary. Republican Congressman Bob Franks and Democrat Jon Corzine won contested primaries for their respective parties' nominations for the U.S. Senate.

The Town Council initiated a policy to require that the town use the least hazardous chemicals for maintenance of town-owned parks and land.

The policy is known as Integrated Pest Management, or IPM.

Union County Republicans elected

former Westfield Mayor Ronald S. Frigerio as County GOP Chairman, replacing Frank X. McDermott of Westfield, who stepped down after 11 years in the post.

Brenda Coppola Cuba was named the town's new prosecutor, replacing Mr. Betancourt, who resigned to run for Town Council.

Parking consultant Rick Rich of Rich & Associates said the town needs two parking decks, one of 732 spaces for the South Avenue train station lot and a second of 462 spaces for lots 1 and 8 and Elm and Prospect Streets.

An exploratory committee approached the Council to gain their support for a proposed 484-seat community arts center to be located in an unused auditorium in the Board of Education administration building on Elm Street. The project carried a price tag of \$700,000-\$800,000.

## Mr. Jardim

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ings from a traffic analysis of the Elm Street and Prospect Street (where the deck is proposed) standing in the way of the \$12 million project.

"Financially, I think we've made the commitment and it's a commitment that is doable with the budget and the finances that we have," he said.

Mr. Jardim also cited capital improvements on the horizon including work near the Central Avenue railroad overpass, a townhouse and retail development at Cacciola Place and Central Avenue as well as plans to place utility wires in the south side business district underground.

As Mayor, Mr. Jardim conducted 75 weddings over the past four years as well as countless store grand openings and political fundraisers not to mention numerous speaking engagements.

During his first terms, Mayor Jardim said he averaged 40 hours per week as mayor including weekly meetings. That number dropped to 25 hours over the past two years. Mr. Jardim estimates he receives 17 calls a day in his role as mayor.

Mr. Jardim said he would like to see the mayor and council compensated for the costs associated with serving in elective office. He also said he would like the council to consider lengthening mayoral and council terms from two to four years.

Mayor Jardim has been asked to serve on the Board of Directors of the Westfield Neighborhood Council and the planning committee for Westfield's annual Martin Luther King Day ceremony. He also will remain on the Raritan Valley Coalition board as well.

"I would very much like to stay involved in politics, in public life and public policy. I honestly don't know what that means in terms of my future," he noted.

"The job of mayor is a great job. You really have a chance to have an impact. It's the government that is closest to the people."

For now he will work on his career as an attorney and on raising his children with his wife, Karen Fountain.

## Festival of Lights



Cheri Rogowsky for The Westfield Leader

**STARTING THE SEASON...**About 150 members of Westfield's Jewish community gathered on North Avenue last Thursday evening to commemorate the beginning of the eight-day Hanukkah holiday. Mayor Thomas C. Jardim and Mayor-elect Gregory S. McDermott offered their best wishes for the season. Rabbi Levi Block of the Union County Torah Center welcomed the group and offered thanks to the Mayor, the Mayor-elect and all of the Town Council for their help in approving the installation of the Menorah and explained the significance of the holiday in Jewish history and tradition. Rabbi Block explained that the Hanukkah Menorah is a symbol of the triumph of freedom over oppression, of spirit over matter, and of light over darkness. Chuck Lightner, a Westfield resident, drew a parallel between the willingness of the city to approve the installation and the kind of leadership reflected in the vitality of the community, as well as in its willingness to be open to, supportive and affirming of all of its constituents. Marty Spector, owner of Pan American Cleaners, lit the first candle signifying the beginning of the season.

## Opposition to Bowcraft's Expansion Plans And Settlement Of Lawsuit Regarding Zoo Property Made News in 2000

*Editor's Note: The following is a summary of news events in Scotch Plains, as reported by The Times, that occurred during the first half of 2000. The second will be published next week.*

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By FRED ROSSI

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

### JANUARY

**SCOTCH PLAINS** -- The new millennium started with Republicans formally regaining power on the Scotch Plains Township Council. Martin L. Marks was chosen by his Council colleagues to serve as the Mayor for 2000, the last time the township's top official would be selected this way.

Scotch Plains' first direct mayoral election was set to be held in November. Mayor Marks signaled his desire to change the tone of the council's meetings by allowing the public more freedom to speak at meetings.

In one of the more unusual council meetings in recent times, a severe sleet and ice storm limited attendance at a late January, non-televized session to the five council members, the Township Manager, Attorney, and Clerk, two members of the press and, briefly, one resident.

Negative press reports about Garden State Kennels, the Long Hill company responsible for Scotch Plains' animal control efforts, led the council to begin looking for another firm to provide those services.

### FEBRUARY

Meetings and hearings on the 2000 municipal budget began, with Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins estimating that township government spending would increase about 2.2 percent over last year.

Councilwoman Geri M. Samuel said the Township's Technology Advisory Committee was moving forward on the establishment of a township Web site that would include information about township government, provide continuing updates on upcoming community events and give visitors to the site the ability to send e-mail to township officials.

Despite some concerns raised by two residents about added chemicals in the drinking water, the council passed a resolution urging Elizabethtown Water Company to provide fluoridation in the water supply delivered to Scotch Plains.

The council, acting in its capacity as local alcoholic beverage control authority, began a series of hearings on whether the liquor license of Club Malibu should be renewed. Testimony was heard from the establishment's new owners as well as the Scotch Plains Police and Fire Chiefs and homeowners who live near the night-

club, which was closed in early 1999 after a fatal shooting in the club's parking lot.

Environmental groups from the area questioned the council about its plans for the development of a portion of the Ashbrook Reservation into a 22-acre park with ballfields and soccer fields, and expressed their concerns about the impact of such a development on the local ecosystem and on the potential for flooding in the area.

The council approved an agreement to have Associated Humane Societies (AHS) of Newark provide animal control services for the remainder of this year and, if the fee can be continued for an additional 12 months, through 2001. AHS replaced the troubled Garden State Kennels of Long Hill Township, which was the target of animal rights groups and was fined by the state for its euthanasia practices.

In a move aimed at exploring the potential for shared services, Mayor Marks announced the formation of a Cooperation Advisory Committee composed of officials from Scotch Plains, Fanwood and the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education. The Mayor said this group will "investigate the possibility of sharing services, personnel, land and buildings."

### MARCH

At a meeting of the township Board of Adjustment, angry residents squared off against those favoring an expansion application submitted by Bowcraft Amusement Park, which wants to convert five acres of unused property into a water park.

The council awarded a \$235,688 contract to Country View Inc. to make extensive improvements to Kramer Manor Park.

The 2000 municipal budget was introduced, with the majority Republicans on the council supporting a zero property tax increase to support township government services.

### APRIL

Republican Mayor Marks and Democratic Councilwoman Samuel announced their candidacies for Mayor. Republican Councilman William F. McClintock, who has served on the Council since early 1991, announced he would not seek re-election this year. Paulette Coronato, an unsuccessful GOP candidate for Council in 1998, announced she would run to succeed Mr. McClintock. Democrat Peter Tripet was tapped to oppose her.

The council unanimously approved the \$17,006 million municipal budget, which contained no property tax increase to support municipal government services and activities. Unlike the 1999 budget debate, there was little

public outcry or partisan rancor this year.

The council approved a ban on political fundraising activities at the Municipal Building.

### MAY

Several years after the matter first came under discussion, the Scotch Plains took the first concrete step toward the eventual sale of the so-called "hedge property" on Park Avenue by approving a resolution authorizing submission to the township Planning Board of a subdivision application that would officially separate the small tract of land next to the Municipal Building from the rest of the township-owned property. The hope is that, as part of the downtown revitalization efforts, the property will eventually be sold and developed into a commercial building.

Ending several years of legal wrangling, the council approved a resolution that settled the dispute at the former Terry-Lou Zoo site and allowed the municipal government to begin looking at turning the six-acre property into a passive park. Under the agreement, the township will pay Sunrise Assisted Living corporation about \$800,000 to settle the dispute that arose just over two years ago.

Citing environmental and historical concerns, the Township Environmental Commission urged township officials to move cautiously as they go forth with plans to turn some 22 acres of land in the Ashbrook Reservation into ballfields.

The Union County government approved a \$150,000 Senior Focus grant



William A. Burke for The Westfield Leader

**IN THE EYE OF CONTROVERSY...**In February, the Scotch Plains Township Council acted in its capacity as local alcoholic beverage control authority and began a series of hearings on whether the liquor license of Club Malibu should be renewed. Testimony was heard from the establishment's new owners as well as the Scotch Plains Police and Fire Chiefs and homeowners who live near the nightclub, which was closed in early 1999 after a fatal shooting in the club's parking lot.

to Scotch Plains that will be used to make some significant improvements to the township-owned Scotch Hills Country Club and expand certain services there for senior citizens.

### JUNE

After six hearings, the council voted unanimously not to renew the liquor license of Club Malibu. Among the reasons cited by coun-

### Mary Korfmacher Inducted Into Jesuit Honor Society

WESTFIELD -- Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia, Pa. recently announced that Mary Korfmacher was inducted into Alpha Sigma Nu, the National Jesuit Honor Society, in campus ceremonies on December 3.

Mary is a major at Saint Joseph's University and a resident of Westfield.

Founded in 1915, Alpha Sigma Nu recognizes students at Jesuit colleges and universities in their junior and senior years who represent the top 4 percent of their class. The students are chosen on the basis of three ideals: scholarship, loyalty and service.

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