



VISITING WITH A VERY SPECIAL MOUSE...Mike Nemeth and his daughter, Maria, 2, stopped on Saturday to greet "Minnie the Post Mouser" in the front of the Westfield Post Office. Minnie came to town to lend her support for the Food Drive sponsored by the Post Office. Maria got a special Tootsie Pop from the "Mousetriss."

Sohayla Massachi Recalled By Former Teachers As Being Dedicated to Family, School

BY LAWRENCE HENRY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Sohayla Massachi, a 1994 graduate of Westfield High School, never struck anyone as a likely murder victim.

Leah Jarvis, an art teacher, advised Ms. Massachi as one of a group of students who produced the 1994 Westfield High School yearbook. "They were good kids," she said this week, in wonder at how the lives of one of those students could have ended so tragically. Mrs. Jarvis specifically recalled Ms. Massachi as "very quiet, bright, did very well — a private kind of student."

Ms. Massachi, 23, who lived in Union and was close to completing her degree requirements at Seton Hall University, died at University Hospital in Newark last Friday after being shot by a former boyfriend in his Central Avenue duplex two days earlier.

The former boyfriend, 24-year-old Christopher Honrath, fatally shot himself after critically wounding Ms. Massachi. Authorities said he abducted her near the Seton Hall campus in South Orange and drove her to the Westfield apartment on the afternoon of May 10.

Thom Hornish, a history teacher and cross-country and track coach at Westfield High for 28 years, shared Mrs. Jarvis' astonishment at the murder.

"When this incident came up, I said, 'Naw, Jeez, it just couldn't happen,'" said Mr. Hornish.

Mathematics teacher Marilyn Diamond said she felt "a special bond-

ing" with Ms. Massachi. "I also had her mother as a student," Mrs. Diamond recalled. "During the year I had her, her mother

called. In addition, Ms. Massachi's mother came to the school during her daughter's sophomore year to talk to a health sciences class about the birth of Sohayla's baby sister. Gaile Boothe, twice President of



Sohayla Massachi

gave birth to her little sister. "She was an excellent student, a caring individual. She helped out at home and loved doing it," her teacher said.

Mrs. Diamond also remembered that Ms. Massachi had graduated with honors, had been a member of the National Honor Society and had founded an Amnesty International chapter at the high school.

She was proud of her family, and showed it at school, her former teacher noted.

"She even had her stepfather come in to talk about his experiences in Desert Storm," Mrs. Diamond re-

Authorities Focus on Gun Used in Murder

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Authorities are wrapping up their investigation of a tragic murder-suicide which occurred in Westfield on the afternoon of May 10.

In the hours and days which followed, authorities pieced together a bizarre set of circumstances which culminated in the murder of Sohayla Massachi, 23, by an ex-boyfriend, Christopher Honrath. Honrath, 24, then committed suicide.

Earlier that day, police reported that the two had been in Superior Court in Elizabeth for a hearing, as per a request by Ms. Massachi, to make a temporary restraining order she had filed against Honrath permanent.

However, because Ms. Massachi had a class at Seton Hall University in South Orange that day, a court decision on the matter was postponed.

Reports indicate that Honrath kidnapped Massachi in front of the Seton Hall campus, forcing her into his car in front of two 17-year-old witnesses.

One of the girls ran to university security guard Darrell Williams, 33, of Newark, for help. After consulting with his supervisor, Lloyd Pearson, 32, of Newark, Mr. Williams is alleged to have refused to offer assistance, telling the witness she would have to walk to the South Orange Police Department — located a half mile away on South Orange Avenue.

Honrath, meanwhile, took Ms. Massachi back to his one-bedroom, second-floor duplex apartment, where he shot her before killing himself.

Ms. Massachi, who was shot in the back of the head, died Friday at University Hospital in Newark. Honrath died at the

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Westfield Planning Bd. Sorts Out Plan For East Broad Street Site

By MELISSA A. BETKOWSKI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Westfield Planning Board held a special meeting Monday to discuss a controversial proposal by Ward and O'Donnell Property Development Co., LLC, owners of the New Orleans-style apartments at 159-169 East Broad Street.

The hearing of the proposal by Ward and O'Donnell had been held over from a previous meeting when

neighbors of the property in question had objected to the plans being discussed.

Those plans by Ward and O'Donnell call for an addition to be built onto the rear of the building for an exterior stairway and handicap lift so that the existing apartment space could be used as a catering facility. The applicant is seeking a variance regarding parking.

The Land Use Ordinance requires

111 parking spaces and the applicant is proposing three spaces and using municipal parking lots to make up for the balance of parking.

The board, however, was again unable to render a decision on this proposal as Glenn Kienz, attorney for those opposed to the plans, raised a number of procedural objections.

In an interview with *The Westfield Leader*, Mr. Kienz said that it was his feeling that the application had not been properly filed and that the Planning Board could not accurately hear the application.

After a lengthy debate, the board decided to adjourn the meeting and allow Mr. Kienz to present his objections in written form to Paul Strauchler, attorney for the Planning Board, by Monday, May 22.

"He was alluding to several different procedural objections," Mr. Strauchler said in an interview with *The Leader*. "Some may have been minimal, but it was difficult to tell."

Mr. Strauchler, after reviewing Mr. Kienz's objections, may convene a meeting with Mr. Kienz and Arthur Attanasio, attorney for Ward and O'Donnell, to discuss the objections.

In other business, the Planning Board approved plans for a one-story addition to a building at 132 South Avenue, East, which is currently the

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LOLLING AROUND IN THE LAKE...A mother goose and her babies were still celebrating Mother's Day in the warm Monday sunshine at Lake Surprise in Watchung.

Kerianne Spellman Cort for The Westfield Leader

Math Supervisor Evaluates Pilot Programs; Updates on School Construction Reported

By LAWRENCE HENRY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Westfield's elementary grades appear ready to adopt Everyday Math as a standard curriculum, according to a report presented by the district's Math Supervisor for Grades K-8 Regina Kiczek at Tuesday's meeting of the Westfield Board of Education.

Ms. Kiczek, described how the district has been "piloting" two different math curricula in four elementary schools at the fifth grade level for the past year.

Everyday Math has been taught by four teachers at Jefferson School and two at Tamaques School. The other curriculum, Math Trailblazers, has been taught by four teachers at Wilson School and two at McKinley School.

Everyday Math, developed by the University of Chicago School Math Project, is sometimes called "Chicago Math." Math Trailblazers was developed at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The Westfield elementary schools currently uses "Addison-Wesley Mathematics," published by Addison-Wesley Publishing of Menlo Park, Calif., and Reading, Mass.

Both Everyday Math and Math Trailblazers are so-called "standards-based" teaching systems, and conform to requirements set up by the

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM).

Ms. Kiczek said that now, near the end of the first "piloting" year, "It became increasingly clear that the Math Trailblazers teachers were much less enamored of their materials than the Everyday Math teachers."

Everyday Math, Ms. Kiczek said, is used by a number of districts "around us, like Westfield," which makes it easy to share ideas and compare results. In addition, Ms. Kiczek said, Math Trailblazers is "much less teacher-friendly" than Everyday Math.

Next year, Everyday Math's pilot program will be extended to two more grades in each of the four elementary schools involved. The year after that, Ms. Kiczek expects to implement the program fully from Pre-K through fifth grade.

School Board Members Dr. B. Carol Molnar and Annmarie Puleio pressed Ms. Kiczek to say whether children's test scores would improve as a result of the new curriculum.

"A new program takes a long time to take effect," said Ms. Kiczek. Test

scores "might go up, or they might go down. We couldn't make our determination based solely on that." Ms. Kiczek said it could take "as long as five years" for test scores to change in any way from the new curriculum.

What is the current math program? Board Member Eileen Satkin asked

Stranger Approaches Child Outside of Jefferson School

A first-grade student at Jefferson Elementary School in Westfield reported that she was approached by a stranger Friday afternoon who attempted to lure her into his car.

The suspect fled the scene when the child refused to go with him. She was uninjured and reported the incident to school authorities immediately afterwards, police confirmed.

Lieutenant John M. Parizeau of the Westfield Police Department said the suspect approached the girl on foot as she walked on the sidewalk outside of the school, which is lo-

cated on Boulevard. The incident occurred at about 3:10 p.m.

The man asked the girl if she wanted a ride home. Lieutenant Parizeau said that when the youngster refused and became upset, the suspect retreated to the opposite side of the street and left the scene in his car.

The girl subsequently returned to the school and reported the incident to teachers, who in turn told the principal. School officials then notified police.

The suspect was described as a white male, with brown hair and brown eyes, standing approximately 6 feet to 6 feet and 4 inches tall, with a medium build.

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question about how and when students use calculators in their math classes.

"Calculators have a place" in math classes, said Ms. Kiczek. "It depends on how the classroom teacher uses them."

Ms. Kiczek said she has seen some teachers use calculators all the time,



DEMOLITION...A home on Everson Place in Westfield, which was damaged five years ago by a 400-gallon basement heating oil spill, finally was demolished this Monday. Homeowners Burton and Nancy Michaels settled their \$2.5 million lawsuit against McDowell's Oil Heat, Inc. of Westfield and the Utica Mutual Insurance company, the insurer of McDowell's Oil Heat, in June of last year.

Lawrence Henry for The Westfield Leader

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