



July 4, 2018

**EXHAUSTED...** Firefighters cross the finish line after running the Cranford Firecracker 4 Miler race on the Fourth of July in full gear.

Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader



July 25, 2018

**SERIOUS ACCIDENT...** The drivers of a Toyota Camry and a pickup truck were seriously injured and traffic was tied up for hours following a motor vehicle accident in the eastbound lanes of Route 22 near the intersection of Lawrence Avenue.

Courtesy of Paul Mecca



September 13, 2018

**GOING, GOING, GONE...** Work crews begin the demolition of the former Casale factory on South Avenue in Garwood to make room for a 297-unit apartment complex.

Courtesy of Bruce Paterson

## Second Half 2018, June Through November: Scotch Plains Endorses Downtown Redevelopment Plan; Malinowski Defeats Lance In 7th Dist.

### JUNE Westfield

After several women came forward to say that former Westfield High School English teacher Marc Silbergeld engaged in inappropriate behavior with them while they were his students, Mr. Silbergeld resigned from his present teaching position in Telluride, Colo.

Mayor Shelley Brindle and Garwood Mayor Charles Lombardo met to walk through the installation of the ice rink that would be set up in the fall at Gumbert Park and remain open through most of the winter, address concerns, and explain the permits and improvements to the park.

An appellate court failed to deliver a decision on the court case that was delaying the planned \$3-million renovation of Kehler Stadium. After a bid was accepted from Your Way Construction of Irvington to carry out the massive overhaul of the stadium, the third-place finisher in the bidding, H&S Construction and Mechanical, Inc. of Elizabeth, took legal action against the board of education, claiming the winning bid was invalid.

A municipal judge dismissed a harassment complaint filed by former Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky last fall against another town resident.

### Scotch Plains

The Downtown Redevelopment Committee launched a visual preference survey aimed at gathering input from the community on architectural themes that are preferred in the downtown area.

At a town-hall meeting, State Senator Holly Schepisi (R-39th, Westwood) said towns in New Jersey are being "crushed" by court-imposed affordable-housing mandates and urged residents to become involved and press legislators to take action to avoid overbuilding that she said is making the state an increasingly unaffordable place to live.

Deputy Mayor Llewellyn Jones announced his resignation from the township council due to he and his family relocating out of state over the summer.

Mayor Alexander Smith intimated that visible progress on redevelopment in the downtown would not be evident until after a new facility has been built elsewhere in town for the police and north-side fire headquarters and the rescue squad.

The planning board approved a report declaring the Parker Gardens property on Terrill Road as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, clearing the first hurdle in turning the 13.5-acre property into an apartment and condo development that would help the township meet its affordable-housing obligations.

### Fanwood

The borough looked to renew three shared-service agreements, one with Union County pertaining to dispatching services, another with Garwood to share Department of Public Works Director Clint Dickson through August 1, 2021, and a third with Scotch Plains to utilize Mr. Dickson's services.

### Garwood

Councilwoman Sara Todisco defeated first-term incumbent Mayor Charles Lombardo in the Democratic Primary. She would face Republican Councilwoman Ileen Cuccaro in the November election.

Russo Development held a town-hall meeting to address residents' concerns regarding public safety during the Petro/Casale building demolition on South Avenue and subsequent cleanup.

Councilman Joseph Sarno resigned from the borough council after moving to Scotch Plains and was replaced by Stephanie Bianco.

Mayor Lombardo said he and Police Chief James Wright met with Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle to discuss the Gumbert Park temporary ice-hockey rink and residents' concerns about the rink's impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

### Cranford

It was announced that funds left in the township coffers for 10 years that were never used to repay a bond for the Flagpole Fund would be split between maintaining the newly-restored flagpole at Eastman Plaza and for the Downtown Management Corporation's improvement to public spaces.

A group of Cranford High School seniors asked the board of education to maintain an open campus at the high school for the upcoming school year for the class of 2019.

### Mountainside

Mayor Paul Mirabelli addressed a lawsuit filed by five Mountainside police officers and a dispatcher against the police department alleging a hostile work environment. The mayor said the allegations did not reflect the community's values and assured the public that the borough council was evaluating all the issues that have come to light and said an independent attorney was hired to investigate the allegations.

The council heard from dozens of residents who expressed concerns over a loss of trust in the police department, the community's damaged reputation and the potential impact of legal fees on property values and tax rates.

### Regional

The Union County Freeholder Board swore in Rebecca Williams of Plainfield as its newest member. She replaced Linda Carter, who resigned after being appointed to the 22nd Legislative District Assembly seat held by the late Jerry Green.

The Freeholders approved a \$244,000 architectural contract for the renovation and reconfiguration of the Union County Clerk's office in Elizabeth.

### JULY Westfield

A group of residents who live adjacent to Gumbert Park formed the Gumbert Park Neighborhood Coalition to collectively oppose the construction of an ice rink at the park.

It was announced that the town's bulky waste curbside pickup program in the fall would cost \$185 per household.

A protest filed by one of the vendors who bid on the contract for the renovation of Kehler Stadium was denied by an Appellate Court, clearing the way for work on the stadium to begin next spring.

### Scotch Plains

More than 2,100 respondents, mostly township residents, took part in a survey designed to get input about architectural styles for the downtown business district, and the clear preference among the six options was a design that looks like Princeton's downtown.

Mayor Smith said the formal plan for the first phase of downtown rede-

### Cranford

A 39-percent increase in the student population could result from the construction of 905 apartments at 750 Walnut Avenue, a board of education-funded study by Ross and Haber found.

Assembly Minority Leader Jon Brannick (R-21st, Westfield) held a town-hall meeting on July 9 at The Kilkenny House to discuss the impact of state-imposed, high-density affordable housing on communities like Cranford.

The Cranford school district was one of 12 New Jersey school districts named in a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey protesting its enrollment policies.

gets of regional sewerage authorities.

### AUGUST Westfield

Mayor Shelley Brindle announced that Police Chief David Wayman would be retiring and that Captain Chris Battiloro would be appointed acting police chief.

The planning board approved plans for a three-story development on South Avenue adjacent to the traffic circle — called the "Circle Plaza of Westfield" — that would consist of 30 apartments above retail and commercial space on the ground floor.

Members of the board of health discussed the possible negative health

### Fanwood

George Weiss, who made community television for Fanwood possible for more than 20 years, died in Virginia. He and his friend, Joe Nagy, were approached in the early 1990s about running Fanwood's new community television station. Before his retirement in 2014, Mr. Weiss was Fanwood's chief videographer, editor and television producer.

The borough council unanimously passed resolutions to replace the fencing at the skate park at Forest Road Park and to upgrade restrooms at borough parks.

The recreation commission discussed a proposal from borough resident Carol Chimento to add a pickleball court at La Grande Park. Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis.

### Garwood

The planning board endorsed the Garwood Paperboard (75 North Avenue) redevelopment plan. Project manager Michael Mistretta of Harbor Consultants stated the 4.5-acre site's redevelopment would include a "one-building, 124-unit inclusionary housing development" in keeping with the borough's affordable-housing obligations set forth in the borough's court settlement agreement.

New Jersey American Water field operations manager Michael Bange told the borough council that the utility had invested more than \$3 million into rehabilitating more than 13,000 feet of water lines in Garwood.

### Cranford

The township committee announced that it is establishing a subcommittee to evaluate the North and South Avenue redevelopment projects in neighboring Garwood and to provide a formal analysis of issues that the redevelopment may cause.

The township committee enacted an ordinance designating the Sunny Acres neighborhood as Cranford's first historic district.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded a \$1,668,563 Flood Mitigation Award grant to the township for a 2017 application to fund the elevation of six flood-prone homes.

### Mountainside

At a borough council meeting, several residents questioned the recently announced settlement with former Police Chief Attanasio and Detective Sergeant Huber. All of their comments and concerns focused on when Mayor Mirabelli and the members of the council knew about the officers' misconduct and why they did not take action earlier.

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June 14, 2018

**READY TO DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY...** Roosevelt Intermediate School students in Westfield gather for their school's pre-formal eighth-grade dance.

Courtesy of Kim Haley

velopment would be ready by the next month and promised that it would be a "bold plan" for transforming the central business district.

Andrew Bondarowicz was appointed to the township council to fill out the remaining five months of the term of Mr. Jones, who resigned his position to relocate out of state.

Mayor Smith told a State Legislative committee that "the time is now for the State Legislature to take the lead on fixing affordable housing."

### Fanwood

The borough council adopted the 2018 municipal budget of \$9.932 million, with municipal property taxes remaining at last year's rate.

Mayor Colleen Mahr said the additional \$396,000 in state aid that would be received by the board of education should go toward reducing the property tax levy for residents.

### Garwood

At a town hall-style meeting held to allow borough residents to gather insight and ask questions regarding the Paperboard redevelopment project, redevelopment attorney William Northgrave said that no more than 124 rental units would be developed at the North Avenue site.

### Mountainside

Mayor Mirabelli and the borough council updated residents on the status of the lawsuit filed in May by five members of the Mountainside Police Department as well as a part-time employee that alleges sexist, racist and homophobic conduct by several members of the department. The mayor said the borough had filed disciplinary proceedings against one of the officers, Thomas Murphy, who had been suspended without pay. In addition, Police Chief Alan Attanasio and Detective Sergeant Andrew Huber submitted their retirement papers to the New Jersey Division of Pension and Benefits.

### Regional

The Union County Freeholder Board settled a lawsuit for \$400,000 that was brought by four teachers employed by the Westfield-based Union County Educational Services Commission against the county regarding working conditions at the Union County Juvenile Detention Center in Linden where they taught juveniles held in custody.

The Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority was expected to file a lawsuit against the state regarding a new law that requires certain state oversight of bud-

impacts if residents elected to reduce their garbage pickup from twice weekly to once a week.

### Scotch Plains

The township council enacted an ordinance setting out standards for keeping chickens on residential properties. Residents would be permitted to keep up to six chickens on their property and would be required to confine them to a house or coop not more than 100 square feet in size.

Mayor Alexander Smith said he hoped the downtown redevelopment committee would approve the Phase 1 redevelopment plan at its September meeting and that the township council would then give its assent to the plan at its meeting the following week, meaning developers could then be solicited to submit actual proposals.

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