



REWARDING WORK...Members of the Youth Ministry at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield gather on a porch they built from "scratch" during a recent week-long trip to West Virginia, where they were divided into work crews for projects designed to improve living conditions for people in the Appalachia region.

St. Helen's Youth Ministry Returns From West Virginia

WESTFIELD — Eighteen youth and seven adults from St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield returned July 14 from Preston County, W. Va., after a rigorous yet rewarding week of serving others.

This is the fourth year that the group has taken this trip to help improve living conditions for families in Terra Alta, Kingwood and Mastontown, W. Va. On the eve of their departure, team members attended a Liturgy celebrated by the Reverend Larry Fama, where they were given a special blessing, followed by dinner in the Parish Center shared with family and friends.

The team was made up of students from Westfield, ranging in age from 15 to 18. In attendance were: Ashley Alvernes, Marisa Anthony, Melissa Bakunas, Lindsey Ciarrocca, Bryan Cordes, Mike DeBrossy, Kiera Evans, Chris Gismondi, Adam Gormley, Liz Horan, Heather Idland, Kristin Messina, Caitlin O'Shea, Brandon Pantano, Fred Schmidt, Matt Toriello, Melanie Totams and Jon Williams.

Adult volunteers who accompanied them included Carol Haines, Andres Reyes, Roger Idland, Dan and Siobhan McVay, Michael Rodihan and Patti Gardner, Youth Minister.

Financial support for this trip came

from local businesses, along with the help and support of St. Helen's parishioners. The team also raised funds through a car wash, bake sale, T-shirt sale, penny drive and sponsorship.

The St. Helen's team was divided into three work crews. The first, under the leadership of Roger Idland and Michael Rodihan, were responsible for home repairs for a middle-aged woman who was in desperate need of window and door replacements, house cleaning, painting, and other minor repairs.

The second work crew was sent to a trailer park to build a porch on both sides of a family's mobile home to enable the occupants to enter and exit their home. The crew, led by Dan and Siobhan McVay, had no knowledge of how to build a porch, but with the help of "How to Build a Porch" books, along with lumber yard personnel and old-fashioned teamwork, they were able to get the job done.

The third work crew, led by Carol Haines and Andres Reyes, had the task of painting a rectory garage for the parish of St. Zita and helping a 78-year-old man repaint his deck and repair some of his window rims.

The group stayed at nearby Camp Galilee, where they slept in cabins and were able to enjoy recreational activities after their work was done. Throughout the week, the team was also responsible for meals and daily prayer and reflection.

Sophomore Ashley Alvernes said, "I can't believe that a week away from home helping other people could change my outlook on so many different things."

St. Helen's Youth Ministry offers a variety of outreach programs for young people. Once a month, a group helps out at Habitat for Humanity in Plainfield and every Tuesday visits the Ozanam Catholic Charities Homeless Shelter in Edison. Along with that, the parish hosts the homeless for a week three times a year under the direction of Marilyn Ryan.

Cell Phones, Driving Is Recipe for Disaster

By JON CORZINE

If I were to use the expression 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock, most drivers would know exactly what I mean — two hands on that steering wheel.

But what would our old driving instructors say about the millions now tooling around with small, box-like, instruments stuck against their ears, elbows akimbo, necks permanently crooked? Or what would they say about the drivers with eyes straight down, peering at tiny dial pads?

I'd think they'd say something like, "Recipe for disaster." Or, "High tech run amok."

There is no question that cellular telephone phones have had an enormous impact on the way we live our lives. It's brought us closer together; it's brought productivity gains to many service-oriented businesses. But mixing cell phones and driving could also have the worst impact imaginable — distraction and death.

Common sense tells us that drivers cannot safely operate vehicles when they have to worry about holding onto, or worse, dialing, cellular telephones.

That is why I, along with Congressman Gary Ackerman of New York, have introduced federal legislation that demands that states pass legislation banning the use of hand-held cell phones while driving.

States that do not pass laws restricting cell phone use in cars would be subject to a loss of federal highway aid.

We are not alone in our battle. As many of you know, in June New York became the first state to ban the use of hand-held cell phones by drivers. Many other states, including New Jersey, are considering laws on the use of cell phones by drivers.

Some state legislators argue that hands-free cell phone use is also a distracting problem.

While statewide legislation here in New Jersey has stalled, a number of municipalities led by Marlboro Township in Monmouth County, have taken steps to ban the use of hand-held cell phones while driving. Paterson and Nutley recently acted to ban driving while talking. Why? Too many stories about motorists and pedestrians reporting that folks seemed to be trying to turn steering wheels with their knees. Too many stories about sudden swerves and near misses, cars driving in and out of lanes. But I don't think this should be a hit or miss proposition — to purposely use a pun to draw attention to the potential consequences of talking on a phone while driving.

I think the ban should be uniform throughout our state, and throughout the nation.

Just the other day, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reported that as many as 500,000 drivers are using hand-held cell phones at any point during the day. The NHTSA also estimates that 20 to 30 percent of all accidents are due to driver distraction. But using a cell phone is not like fiddling with a radio dial. It's not just a matter of whether you have two hands on the wheel. It's a matter of being engaged in a conversation that distracts from what should be your number one concern: paying attention to the road.

In 1997, a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that the use of hand-held cell phones while driving quadruples the chance of an accident. The Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association conducted a phone survey last winter from which they reported an estimated 54 percent of drivers usually have a phone in their car, and 73 percent of those drivers said they use the phone while driving.

But people understand the risk; cell phone use is a significant highway safety concern.

Earlier this year, the Quinnipiac University poll found that 86 percent of voters surveyed in New Jersey agreed there should be a ban on using a cell phone while driving. As a matter of fact, 83 percent of cell phone owners favored banning cell phone use by drivers.

Just a few seconds of distraction while talking on a cell phone can mean the difference between safety and peril, between life and death.

My bill would ban the use of hand-held cell phones, except emergencies or other exceptional circumstances, as determined by a state. It also would allow the operation of a phone that uses hands-free technology — but again, only if a state determines that such use does not pose a threat to public safety.

The aim here is simple: to reduce accidents and save lives.

Freshman United States Senator Jon Corzine is a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. His bill mandating that states take action banning the use of hand-held cellular phones while driving had been referred to the committee.

Another Letter to the Editor

Trash Train Will Pass Through Town At Rahway Avenue Grade Crossing

Within the pages of the 1 1/2-inch wide document that is BFT's Response to New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Shinn's Letter of Remand to the Union County Freeholders, there are two items that I never knew about or heard discussed at any of the public hearings concerning the Tremley Point Marine Trash Transfer Station, and they are:

1. Use of Trucks for Waste Removal. In this section the reader will find in print of the plan to haul up to 100 tons of New York City garbage on a daily basis. The trash truck route would be for them to travel west on Wood Avenue, then south on Routes 1 & 9 for disposal at 1499 Routes 1 & 9 North, Rahway.

That address being the garbage incinerator. But the document does not say to an "incinerator." The only clue the docu-

ment mentions is the street address. Someone like me would know the address.

The other is in regards to the trash train. We are led to believe that there is only one train route and that the route will take the train directly through Middlesex County. Not so.

2. The Consolidated Rail Corporation railroad grade crossing, railroad milepost 0020.05, at Rahway Avenue in Westfield, will be one of the routes that this train and its 90 plus trash containers will be traveling on.

This and a whole lot more is available in the document, and you may be able to get your own copy from the Clerk of the Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Vincent Lehotsky
Elizabeth



A CLEAN RIDE...Assemblyman Eric Munoz of Summit, right, and Assemblyman Tom Kean Jr. of Westfield examine a hybrid, low emission vehicle with Jasmine Vasavada of the New Jersey Public Interest Group (NJPIRG).

Munoz Tests Hybrid Vehicle At NJ PIRG Demonstration

SUMMIT — State Assemblyman Eric Munoz of Summit (R-21st) met with representatives from the New Jersey Public Interest Research Group's (NJPIRG) Clean Car Campaign last week to take a ride in a new low emission vehicle, the Toyota Prius, and learn more about state policies to improve New Jersey's air quality.

"There are so many cars driving so many miles on New Jersey's roads every day that any long-term solution to New Jersey's air quality problems must address motor vehicle pollution," said Billy Grayson, a campaign coordinator of the New Jersey Interest Research Group (NJPIRG).

He explained that the campaign seeks to protect the public health in New Jersey by requiring that New Jersey follow the lead of other states like New York, Massachusetts, California, Vermont, and Maine, by adopting the most stringent emissions standards available for new cars sold in New Jersey.

Mr. Grayson said auto emissions account for roughly one-third of smog-forming emissions in New Jersey.

In discussing the Clean Cars for

a Healthier New Jersey campaign, Assemblyman Munoz had the opportunity to drive in the new low-emission hybrid-electric Prius. The vehicle has been available in Japan since 1987 and there are now over 35,000 on Japanese highways.

"In place of the national standard for motor vehicle emissions, certain states, such as New York, California, and Massachusetts, have adopted an improved clean car standard known as Low-Emission Vehicle Phase II (LEV II). NJPIRG said this standard would reduce the average emission air toxics of automobiles from all new cars and trucks sold in New Jersey.

NJPIRG noted this June, State Senator John O. Bennett (R-12th, Monmouth) and Assemblyman Tom Kean Jr. of Westfield (R-22nd, Union) introduced legislation to adopt LEV II in New Jersey. The bipartisan legislation reportedly has 75 co-sponsors.

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jim McGreevey has announced support for such a program while his Republican opponent Bret Schundler has not publicly adopted a position at this time.

WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

MONDAY, JULY 30

- A Fanwood resident reported that the front quarter panel and all four doors on his 2000 Audi were scratched while it was parked at the Westfield Memorial Pool.
- A 1996 Nissan belonging to a Scotch Plains resident was reported stolen while parked on Elm Street. It was recovered the next day on Elm.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1

- William Fortich, 26, of Edison was arrested and charged with shoplifting merchandise valued at \$243 from a Central Avenue store and with possession of a forged document. He was being held on \$5,400 bail at the Union County Jail.
- Clifford Lawson, 43, of Westfield was arrested and charged with shoplifting a Nintendo item valued at \$79.99 from an East Broad Street toy store. Lawson, who was also arrested on a warrant issued by the Garwood Municipal Court, was released on his own recognizance on the Westfield charge.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2

- A resident of Cacciola Place reported that she was assaulted by two other females on Livingston Street. The victim, who sustained a small lump on her forehead as a result of the incident, was advised of the process for filing a complaint. No charges had been filed at press time, according to police.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

- It was reported to police that someone damaged the lettering on a truck belonging to a South Avenue business.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

- Anthony Lazo, 20, of Linden was arrested at South Avenue and Downer Street and charged with possession of alcohol under the legal age. Lazo, who was also arrested on an active warrant from the Linden Municipal Court, was released on his own recognizance on the Westfield charge and turned over to the Linden Police Department.

- Peter Gobel, 20, of Linden was also arrested at South Avenue and Downer Street and charged with driving while intoxicated as an underage person. He was transported to police headquarters, where he was administered a breathalyzer test and released to a responsible party.

- An assault was reported at the corner of Cacciola Place and Stirling Place, in which the female victim said she was approached from behind and punched in the head with a closed fist by a male juvenile. Police said the victim did not require medical attention and no complaints had been filed in connection with the incident.

- Stephen Rizzo, 21, of Colonia was arrested at the north side Westfield train station and charged with serving an alcoholic beverage to an underage person. Also arrested was a 15-year-old female who was charged with possession of alcohol under the legal age.

- Rizzo was released on his own recognizance with a summons, while the juvenile was turned over to the custody of her mother.

MONDAY, AUGUST 6

- A trailer containing landscaping equipment was reported stolen from the 800 block of Central Avenue. It was recovered a couple of hours later in Roselle.



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