

Recreation Events

Editor's note: The following is a new weekly column prepared and submitted by the Westfield Recreation Commission.

The Westfield Recreation Commission is sponsoring the following upcoming events:

Bus trip to Franklin Mills Mall on Saturday February, 3.

The bus will leave the Municipal Building at 9 a.m. and return at approximately 6 p.m. Tickets are \$13 per person and must be reserved by Monday, January 29.

Free Qigong Demonstration on Monday, February 5.

The event will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Westfield Municipal Building. Please contact the Recreation Department to register at (908) 789-4080.

New Jersey Devils vs. Pittsburgh Penguins on Friday, February 16, at the Meadowlands.

The National Hockey League contest will feature the return of NHL super star Mario Lemieux to the Penguins' lineup. The bus will leave from the Municipal Building at 5:45 p.m. for and return around 11:15 p.m. Tickets are \$50 per person, which includes transportation.

Ringling Bros & Barnum & Bailey Circus, Sunday, March 18, at the Meadowlands.

The bus will leave from the Municipal Building at 2 p.m. and return at approximately 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$30 per person.

Street Hockey, Saturdays, March 3, 10 and 24 at Memorial Pool Parking Lot.

A portable rink will be set up on the pavement. The program will be held as follows: ages 6 to 9, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; ages 10 to 13, 12:30 to 2 p.m.; ages 14 to 17, 2:30 to 3 p.m. Please call (908) 789-4080 to register and for further information.

The Westfield Recreation Commission is selling discount ski lift tickets to several ski areas.

If interested, please come to the Recreation Office to purchase the tickets.



Thrift Shop to Hold Bag Day on Saturday

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Service League's Thrift Shop, located at 114 Elmer Street, will hold its annual end-of-winter "Bag Day" this Saturday, February 3.

On "Bag Day," customers may purchase a grocery-size paper bag for \$3 and fill it to the brim with clothing, accessories, books, toys and household items. There is no limit on the number of bags which may be purchased.

On Tuesday, February 6, the shop will be stocked with a large selection of ladies', men's and children's spring apparel. Patrons may also purchase jewelry, shoes and accessories.

The Thrift Shop is open for business Tuesday through Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Proceeds are donated to local charities. For more information, please call (908) 233-2530.

PA Approves Scaled Back Toll Increases

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

NEW YORK CITY — If you work in New York City and use your car to get there, get ready to dig deeper into your pockets — or seriously consider taking the train.

Last week, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announced hikes in tolls at all bridges and tunnels between New Jersey and the Big Apple, as well as an increase in PATH fares.

The Port Authority had originally proposed even steeper toll and fare increases, but New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman was opposed; the authority ended up compromising sooner rather than later, when it might have had to face opposition to the revised tolls and fares from incoming Acting Governor Donald T. DiFrancesco.

Tolls at the four bridges connecting the Garden State with New York City — the George Washington Bridge, the Outerbridge Crossing, the Goethals Bridge and the Bayonne Bridge — will increase from \$4 to \$6. PATH fares will go up 50 percent, from \$1 to \$1.50.

The fare hikes, which take effect on Sunday, March 25, were implemented to help finance a five-year, \$9 billion infrastructure improvement program that the Port Authority says will lead to improvements at the area airports, as well as new PATH cars. Tolls at the bridges and tunnels have not been increased since 1991, while PATH fares have been \$1 since 1987.

There will be slight discounts, however, for those drivers using the EZ-Pass system. During peak hours, the bridge and tunnel tolls will be \$5, while during off-peak hours, the tolls will be \$4. PATH riders who purchase a 10-trip fare card will get an 11th ride for free.



Harrison T. Watson, Jr.

County Clerk Reports 2000 As Highest Revenue Generating Year in History

ELIZABETH — Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi reported last week that 2000 was the highest revenue generating year in the history of the Clerk's Office.

More than \$11.1 million in revenue was generated, \$4.5 of which was realized for Union County, \$6.6 million was allocated to the state as part of the real estate transfer fee.

The total \$11.1 million generated by the Clerk's Office is the highest in the 143-year-old history of the Clerk's Office, Ms. Rajoppi revealed. The Clerk returns the county portion of the revenue to the County's General Fund to offset the county tax rate; the state's portion is forwarded to the New Jersey Division of Taxation for the State's General Fund.

"This dramatic revenue high," Ms. Rajoppi reported, "directly parallels the sustained activity and consistently low mortgage rates which continued to stimulate re-financing of mortgages as well as first-time home buying in 2000. Added to an extremely robust and healthy economy, we recorded the second highest number of deeds and mortgages in our history."

Although there was a decrease of 18 percent in the total filings of real estate documents in 2000 compared to 1999, revenue remained stable. Total filings of business documents in 2000 saw an

Harrison Watson Looks Back Fondly On 22 Years on Westfield Library Board

WESTFIELD — During nearly 22 years on the Board of Trustees of the Westfield Memorial Library, Harrison T. Watson, Jr. helped guide and oversee a technological revolution in the way patrons find books and information.

Mr. Watson became President of the board 11 years ago, shortly after the library moved from the Municipal Building to its present \$4.1 million

facility on East Broad Street and Stanley Avenue.

The contrast between the old library and the present one is enormous, Mr. Watson said recently.

"We have gone from being a crowded, old-fashioned, card-catalog library to a state-of-the-art facility in which we can do things that were undreamed of 20 years ago." Through the Internet, Mr. Watson explained,

today's library patrons "have access to the resources of a major city library."

For example, they can search for magazine articles and read them on their home computers via the library's Web page, which had more than 55,000 hits last year.

Mr. Watson stepped down as library president and board member at the end of last year. Susan Sherman, a member of the board since 1990, also retired.

Edmund Faltermayer, a contributing editor of *Fortune* magazine who has been on the board since 1990, was elected president on January 24 to replace Watson. The other newly elected officers are: Cynthia Cockren, Vice President; Michele Albano, Treasurer, and Mrs. Bettye Barcan, Secretary.

Other members of the nine-member library board are Melissa Stanton, Carol Molnar, and three members new in 2001: Susan Jacobson, Barbara Bagger, and Lynn Kolterjahn.

Though the library's breathtaking technological changes occurred on his watch, Mr. Watson said, neither he nor the board can take the real credit for them.

"That was done 100 percent by Barbara Thiele, the library's director, and the staff," he said. On the other hand, Mr. Watson is proud of his role in helping plan the new library building under his predecessor, the late Paul Kolterjahn.

Mr. Watson also devised a new system of financial controls and pushed aggressively for Sunday hours, which are now in their second full year.

"I worked on Sunday hours for 15 years," he says.

On January 30, Mr. Watson was scheduled to depart for a 19-day trip that will take him to Thailand and Cambodia. This is the fourth year in a row that he has traveled to the Far East. The previous trips were all to China, and included a camping trip in the remote Far Northwest province of Xinjiang.

"I'm intrigued by the history of that part of the world," he says. Mr. Watson is the owner of volumes on the history of Chinese science and civilization that cost him \$150 to \$180 apiece. He is quick to point out, however, that with the help of a search of other library collections by a reference librarian, a Westfield Memorial Library patron can borrow expensive books like these by inter-library loan.

Drama Program for Youth Will Be Presented at Terrill Middle School

SCOTCH PLAINS — Patti Murtha of the Shoestring Players at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University will be the drama coach for the Scotch Plains Recreation Department's Drama Program at Terrill Middle School in Scotch Plains, to be held on Tuesdays beginning March 6, from 7 to 9 p.m.

These classes are designed for youngsters interested in learning the basics of stage movement and voice projection and in building greater self-esteem through acting.

The sessions will conclude with a production performed by students for their families and friends.

Registration will take place from Monday, February 5, through Friday, Febru-

ary 16, for residents and from Monday, February 12, through February 16 for non-residents.

The fee is \$55 for residents and \$60 for non-residents. Participation is limited, so interested individuals are encouraged to register as early as possible in Room No. 113 of the Scotch Plains Municipal Building, 430 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains.

The Recreation Department is also interested in continuing its senior citizen aerobics program, conducted Monday and Friday mornings at the Towne House. Certified instructors interested in teaching are asked to call (908) 322-6700, extension no. 222. The department has tapes of routines which can be used or adapted.

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