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(908) 232-4407
press@goleader.com

FIFTY CENTS



COURTYARD...The science addition at WHS forms a new courtyard at Westfield High School. Jennifer Pinto for The Westfield Leader

Westfield and SP-F Schools On Time for Sept. Opening

By JEREMY LIPSTEIN and JENNIFER PINTO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Both Westfield and Scotch Plains-Fanwood school districts are buckling down on construction during the last week or two, prior to the school openings.

Westfield High School (WHS) is currently undergoing over \$10 million in construction and renovations.

According to Westfield Board Secretary and Business Administrator, Robert Berman, "school will open on time on September 4."

The greatest project at WHS is the new wing that will accommodate about 14 new classrooms predominately dedicated to the science program.

"Economically it works to build new science rooms, they are larger, our old rooms are only about 700 square feet."

Also included in the new facilities will be storage rooms for all the

science classrooms, restrooms and utility rooms. Mr. Berman said that the new building would be, "com-

pletely separate from a utility point of view."

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Seven Candidates Vie For BOE Seat Left Vacant By Lisa Alter

By MICHELLE H. Le POIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

At the close of last Friday's business day, Board Secretary and Business Administrator for Westfield Public Schools, Robert Berman, had received seven applications to fill a vacant seat on the school board by Lisa Alter as of September.

William Sweeney, Beth Reese,

Thomas Pyle, Jr., Ron Snyder, Jenny Carroll, Beth Cassie, and Joseph Miceli have all thrown their hats into the ring for the position of Ms. Alter's successor, a term which will expire when the school elections take place in April of 2003.

Elected in April of 2001, Ms. Alter announced her intention to leave her post following the first year of her three-year term. She will enter a graduate program, which would have conflicted with her obligations as a board member. An attorney and active member of the community, Ms. Alter and her husband, Dr. Joel Confino, are longtime Westfield resi-



PAVING THE WAY...Construction workers lay out cinderblocks around the stairwell of the new science addition at Westfield High School. Jennifer Pinto for The Westfield Leader

WHS to Open On Schedule; BOE Discusses Criteria for Board Post

By CHARLOTTE LEDERMAN and LAUREN S. PASS
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Despite continued construction, classes will begin as scheduled at Westfield High School (WHS) on Wednesday, September 4, as scheduled.

At the Westfield Board of Education's public meeting Tuesday, Board Secretary and Business Administrator Robert Berman revealed that while the construction on Trinity Place would proceed into the spring, work on the inside of the high school will be up to speed by the anticipated commencement of classes.

WHS will be under construction for much of the school year, although students' use of the building and their safety will not be compromised, according to Mr. Berman.

The board recognized the availability of the National Guard Armory, across the street from the high school, to accommodate possible spill over.

The school board will tour the construction site on Tuesday, September 3. This will follow a walk-through by the Fire Department,

which will ensure the new additions provide emergency egresses that can be used as exits if necessary, although they will not be used in fire drill patterns.

Board President Arlene Gardner will lead the group's inspection of the newly-renovated cafeteria, art rooms, former sewing room and gym storage facilities, as well as the main addition on Trinity Place.

During the WHS construction update, Mr. Berman stated that the cafeteria extension was "moving fairly well," noting the windows were the key to completing this section. This addition not only enlarges students' eating space, but also provides a ramp for accessibility by the handicapped.

Like the other areas originally projected to be finished at summer's end, the cafeteria and art rooms require only fine tuning to be fully operational.

Mr. Berman also pointed to the rapid rate at which the rooms are being completed. He said that rooms are "totally different in four to five hours" of work.

To expedite the process, all rooms are receiving their various inspections and certificates as the work goes along. Mr. Berman also offered that, even if the new rooms were not completely ready, construction will not affect the use of the old classrooms.

The board noted that the high school was not the only building to receive needed updates. Other projects in progress include renovation of the restrooms on the first and second floors of Wilson Elementary School, partial completion is anticipated by October 1; the creation of a co-ed training facility and female locker room at the athletic complex at Kehler Stadium, and the enhancement of the Tamaques Elementary School field.

The field recently underwent striping and seeding and will soon be regraded and leveled for safety. Due to drought restrictions, progress on the

field will continue slowly, as reduced watering inhibits rapid grass growth.

These improvements mean the field is off-limits until at least spring, which has sparked questions about the students' placement and activities during lunchtime.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. William Foley, will attend the next Parent Teacher Organization meeting to address this change and to listen to and answer parents' concerns and questions.

Pending projects that await the approval of the state include the update of the WHS gymnasium floor, which would be redone in such a way that the entire bleacher section would occupy one side of the gym, leaving the athletes' space uninhibited by supporters. This change would still maintain the present number of seats.

Also in the works is the air-conditioning of the 2000 addition at Franklin Elementary School and replacement of windows in the 1964 addition at Roosevelt Intermediate School.

The board also approved seven change orders for \$131,545 in cost changes related to the construction at WHS. Crain Construction Company of Hackensack required an increase of \$4,505 for an enlarging the size of the sanitary sewer main. TEC Electric, Inc. of Pompton Plains required \$43,971 for miscellaneous electrical work and PSE&G utility fees. Hammond Cont. Co., Inc. of Bloomfield, although coming in \$3,500 under cost on an acid waste system, still required an additional \$83,069 for ductwork revisions, air cooled condensing units and converting steam to hot water.

In other business, the board discussed the criteria for making an appointment to the board. The board will choose someone to replace Lisa Alter, who is leaving to pursue her master's degree in women's studies.

The board has received a list of seven candidates and will make a decision after holding public inter-

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Lisa Alter

dents with two daughters. Mr. Sweeney, a 21-year resident of Westfield, who previously served on the school board from 1993 to 1996, held the post of Finance Committee Chairman.

Mr. Sweeney, whose children have all graduated from Westfield Public Schools, told *The Westfield Leader* that he, "doesn't see himself as running (for a board position), but as a person offering his services to the board."

He believes that he holds a, "wealth of experience, particularly in the area of finance." Mr. Sweeney, who is an attorney-at-law, added that it is beneficial if the board looks to its "alumni" to fill seats left vacant, as such an individual would be able to, "hit the ground running."

While the board has encouraged candidates for the post to consider running for another three-year term once the one-year vacancy has been filled, Mr. Sweeney stated that he could not absolutely confirm that he would be willing to run for another term. For full details regarding the criteria for the post, please see the school board meeting story on this page.

A six-year resident of Westfield, Ms. Carroll said, "my purpose is to work with the board and the township to help improve the school district and the school board."

"From a parent's perspective, I would like to help children to attain their educational goals," she added. She said that "motivation" is the one word she would use to describe as the quality she would bring to the board seat. She is the mother of a one-year-old daughter.

The father of three children, Mr. Pyle has lived in Westfield with his wife for seven years. He told *The Leader* that he has always had an interest in running for the school board, especially since his children will be going through the public school system over the next 17 years.

Encouraged to seek appointment to the board by fellow attorney and Westfield resident Douglas Fasciale, Mr. Pyle said that since he has observed a "mini baby boom" occurring in Westfield, he would like to ensure that the schools continue to grow as the community expands.

"I want to see Westfield grow as well as its schools," he said of his long-term goal for the board seat.

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Mountainside Meeting Canceled; Parents Left Angry in Parking Lot

By JENNIFER PINTO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Over 20 parents wandered the parking lot at Deerfield School in Mountainside on Tuesday, talking to each other about the canceled Board of Education meeting.

The Mountainside Board of Education canceled its scheduled public meeting without notice.

The Westfield Leader contacted the Mountainside Board of Education administration office, which is temporarily working out of a building on Mill Lane in Mountainside, in the afternoon to confirm the scheduled meeting.

According to a representative of the school board administration office, the meeting was still planned for 8 p.m. on August 27.

The *Leader* spoke to Mountainside resident Colleen Manion, who was shocked by the canceled meeting.

"One of the many things that the Mountainside Board of Education is suffering from is lack of communication. Canceling the meeting seems like an effort of the board to not involve parents on decisions being made," said Mrs. Manion.

Mrs. Manion told *The Leader* that she, and other parents, arranged for a babysitter to watch over their children in order to attend this meeting.

"Our babysitter is a student at Deerfield School and she has been taught science in the cafeteria for years," said Mrs. Manion. "Classes in the cafeteria are a problem, portable trailers are a problem and postponing art and music classes are a

"One of the many things that the Mountainside Board of Education is suffering from is lack of communication,"

Colleen Manion, Mountainside resident

problem."

"Our children deserve a competitive education...not angry and frustrated teachers," said Mrs. Manion.

Other parents, who did not want to offer comments on the record, will consider writing letters to the editor.

The agenda for the canceled meeting included discussion about construction delays, the transition of MOPPET through second grade back to Beechwood School in November, and the results of the mold spores testing performed on the trailer.

The school board's public meeting has been postponed to Tonight, August 29 at 8 p.m.

Freeholders Want to Privatize Printing Services; Prosecutor Creates Task Force to Stop Area Gangs

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Union County government will shut its print shop and, instead, will contract with a private firm for its printing needs.

During its regular meeting last Thursday, the Board of Chosen Freeholders voted to authorize County Manager George Devanney to enter into a contract with Xerox Corporation to provide all printing services for the county.

The cost for this outsourcing over the next five years will be about \$47,641 per month, or \$571,000 annually. The potential annual saving of privatizing the printing services, which won't take effect until next month, will be at least \$228,000 a year.

The board also accepted \$240,000

in funding from the state Division of Criminal Justice that will enable Union County to implement a Gang Suppression initiative over the next year.

County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow has created a task force to monitor local gangs. Comprised of local police officers, sheriff's officers and personnel from the prosecutor's office, the task force will collect and share information with towns in Union County and also offer direct assistance to the smallest municipalities that lack the manpower to address the gang situation on their own.

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CYAN YELLOW MAGENTA BLACK



SEALING THE CEILING...A construction worker at Westfield High School works on the ceiling of the second floor of the new science addition.

Seven Candidates Seek Seat Left Vacant By BOE Member

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"but not at the expense of the quality of the education." Mr. Pyle cited the value of a Westfield public school education as one of the reasons his family, and other families, have decided to move to town.

An attorney practicing in Roseland, Mr. Pyle said that while he does not possess a career background in education, "I'd like to help plan what the future is going to be. I have experience running a business in New York and as an attorney, I can assess problems, get the information to solve those problems and make cogent, concerted decisions to make sure the right things are done."

Mr. Miceli, an elementary school principal in Bergenfield, who recently moved to Westfield, reported that he hopes his expertise in the field of education will contribute to the board and the welfare of the children.

The candidate added that he has been watching the progress of the construction projects in the school district and has been pleased with how well these jobs have been accomplished within the district's budget.

A resident of Westfield for two years, Ms. Reese is a mother of three children, who are attending Jefferson

Elementary School. A certified teacher in Illinois, Ms. Reese is seeking her teacher certification in New Jersey.

While teaching in Chicago, Ms. Reese was involved in a socializing program, "Skill Surfing," which taught pupils how to communicate with their peers. She believes such a program would be useful in the Westfield school system.

"Communication" is the one word Ms. Reese chose to describe as the asset she could bring to the school board. She added that parents, teachers and boards should be in constant communication with one another for the betterment of the students' experience.

After being contacted by *The Leader*, Ms. Alter, Mr. Snyder, and Ms. Cassie did not return phone calls.

Once the school board conducts public interviews with the candidates, the board will go into private session to discuss the appointment. After a public discussion, the new board member will be elected during a regular public meeting in September.

Ms. Alter's successor will complete the second year of her term, while the April 2003 election will decide who will complete the third year of her term.

Free College Courses on Tap For County Senior Citizens

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Senior Citizens Housing Corporation, in conjunction with the Westfield Foundation and the Learning Is Forever (L.I.F.E.) Center of Union County College, will sponsor two classes on its premises during the fall semester of 2002.

"Topics in History - Rise of Modern Europe," will be taught by Dr. Christopher Gibbs. This course will focus on European history from the revolutions of 1848 to the Great War. The class will be held at 1133 Boynton Avenue on Fridays from 10 a.m. to noon, beginning on September 6.

The second course offered is "Music Appreciation," taught by Professor Chris Dubrock. The emphasis of the course is on increasing sensitivity to classical music, but also in-

cludes jazz and rock music where appropriate. The music class will be held at 1129 Boynton Avenue on Mondays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., beginning on September 6.

The L.I.F.E. Center courses are offered free of charge to Union County senior citizens. Registration will take place during the first sessions of each class.

Parking is available in designated visitor parking areas and along Boynton Avenue, or the access road between the two buildings. Please note that the front entrance of the 1133 Boynton Avenue facility is closed due to construction. Follow signs for additional parking and use the east-side entrance.

For more information or directions, please call Susan Lampert at (908) 233-1733.

Mr. Losavio was 21 years old when he bought the butcher shop — the expected age for him to have his own business in those days. One of the most shocking differences between then and now is how prices have changed, he said.

"In 1939, I could buy a new car for about \$2,000," he stated.

He bought his first home, on Stout Avenue, for \$5,000 from the Chief of Police at that time.

"During the Depression, I remember the masons and the carpenters standing on the corner, out of work. No one was building and many people in town lost their homes," he said.

"But, back then, a leg of lamb was only 19 cents a pound and people still had to eat, so we did okay," he related. Over the years, he has seen more than a dozen mayors come and go. He remembers when the Mayor lived in the Muir House on the Village Green before they tore it down. Bartle Avenue was only a dirt road and the parking lot behind his store was a wooded field overgrown with tall grass and bushes.

"The town bought the field and I was very glad when they turned it into a parking lot," he stated. "Then developers knocked down the houses on Park Avenue to build more stores. Back then, development was a good thing."

"The Stagecoach Inn was always full of out-of-town guests," he said. And they arrived in town on the trolley cars, he recalled. He even remembers when vegetables were delivered door to door by a horse-drawn cart.

"They used to come around and sell live chickens. They'd pull their heads off right in front of you. You'd have to gut it yourself, of course," he added.

He also recalled how, as a boy, his father took him to see a bootleg distillery in South Plainfield during the Prohibition.

"They used to get all dressed up to go shopping in Plainfield on Thursday nights," he said.

He remembered fashions changing from the sleek suited look of the 1940s to the poodle skirts and saddle shoes of the 1950s. He finds today's revealing styles the most shocking of all. He remembered bigger families. He said that mothers didn't work as much and had four or five children, and they didn't worry so much about too much meat in their diet like they do today.

"The vegetarians look so pale. They need more iron," he remarked.

"People used to eat more liver and kidneys years ago," he recalled. "Liver's not so popular today."

There were also famous people who frequented John's over the years. Ac-

ording to Mr. Losavio, the famous singer, Jimmy Roselli lived in the Watchung Mountains. When Mr. Roselli was entertaining Frank Sinatra for dinner one night, he sent his bodyguards to John's to pick up a few steaks.

Mr. Losavio said that he called Mr. Roselli the next day to see how dinner went. He told him that Mr. Sinatra liked the steaks.

"When Jack Nicholas rented a house in Westfield, his wife came in to buy some meat, but I didn't even know who she was," he said. The realtor who recommended them to John's came in to tell him that the Nicholas' loved the chops.

But his favorite celebrity to grace his counter was the man who made the shot heard around the world. Mr. Losavio proudly related that Bobby Thompson, who lives in Watchung, was and still is a frequent customer. His favorite cut is a two-inch thick Porterhouse, John revealed.

For most of the 63 years that he has worked, Mr. Losavio has worked 18-hour days, six days a week. He didn't take a vacation for 24 years, until his son, Vinnie, graduated from college and came to work for him. Vinnie, who has a degree in marketing, does the books, but he's no stranger to cutting up a side of beef. John's other son, Nicholas, also works alongside his father and brother. He joined the family business after graduating with a degree in speech therapy.

His mother, the late Marie Losavio, encouraged the boys to join their father's business. Mrs. Losavio was a professional opera singer, who graduated from Julliard and sang at Carnegie Hall.

"I miss her cooking the most," Mr. Losavio recounted.

Construction Update

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The new science edition is to be completed by Friday, April 4, 2003. Once the new wing is completed, the current science rooms at WHS will be renovated into three large art classrooms, which are due for completion in the summer of 2003.

"All external work should be completed by the winter," stated Mr. Berman.

According to Mr. Berman, all other construction will be complete by school opening. These renovations include a newly-renovated home economics room, new computer rooms, new faculty room and conference rooms, and the expansion of the cafeteria.

Many of the classrooms have been modified to accommodate the expansion of the new science wing. Mr. Berman said that the new editions would also prepare WHS for its future classes, which plan on being substantially larger.

In the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district, construction is going well and all schools are expected to be ready for the first day of school on Monday, September 9. The projects in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood district will cost a total of \$35.7 million, including \$11.6 million in state funds.

While classrooms, hallways, bathrooms and other necessary facilities will be ready for this first day of school, additional gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms music rooms may not be, as has been planned all along. These projects should be finished later this fall; except for the high school, where a corridor will be constructed to connect the two-second floor-sections. This project will begin in December, once school is underway.

While both Park and Terrill Middle Schools had additional classrooms built to accommodate the incoming fifth graders, all the elementary schools have an additional multi-purpose room. As for the high school, the only work done over the summer involved asbestos removal, the addition of an elevator, and the installation of new windows.

The largest project done in the district is renovations at Park Middle School, the oldest school in the district. New floors, lockers, ceilings and lighting were installed.

Just two years ago, the Losavio's went high-tech, converting their books over to a computerized system. The market now takes orders from all over the country via the Internet.

"They can't get dry-aged prime in other parts of the country," Mr. Losavio related. "I never imagined 60 years ago that I'd be selling meat across the country through the computer."

Mr. Losavio explained that meat has to be not only a prime-cut, but also aged to be tender. He attributed the longevity of his store's success to the quality of the meat.

Mr. Losavio said he has no regrets about spending his life as a butcher. He loves his work and that's why this octogenarian has no plans on retiring anytime soon.

"I wouldn't know what to do everyday if I didn't go to work," he remarked.

Westfield BOE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

views with each of the candidates on Tuesday, September 10. Board members will conduct their normal business meeting at 7 p.m. At 8 p.m., the board will begin a series of 15-minute interviews with the applicants.

After the interviews, the board will meet in closed session with the appointed board attorney. Upon reaching a decision, members will rejoin the public and announce their decision.

In an attempt to increase the public's interaction and accessibility to the board's proceedings, it is anticipated that the interviewing process will be broadcast on local television.

Ms. Gardner asked school board members to discuss the criteria which they believed to be key in choosing the new board member.

After a suggestion from board member Kimberley Rhodes, the board ultimately agreed it should ask the candidates the same questions, which had yet to be determined at the meeting's end. The members will, however, be sure to examine the candidates' familiarity with the Westfield community and school district; willingness to run in April for either the remaining year of Ms. Alter's term or the three-year term, and whether or not they have a background complementary to the board.

The board agreed that the candidate's background will hopefully demonstrate diversity and an understanding of the time commitment the position demands.

The board also approved the final reading of WHS's new open lunch policy.

The new policy requires students to enter and exit through specific, unlocked doors, where they must present their student identification cards. Only juniors and seniors are permitted to leave campus during their lunch period.

Students and parents must sign a contract stating they will comply with the rules and regulations set forth. Parents must also give permission for their children to use the open lunch privilege. Parents may withhold their permission.

Each year, the officers of the sophomore and junior classes will submit a request to keep the open lunch policy for the next year. The principal reserves the right to revoke the privilege from the entire class at any time should a substantial pattern of rules violations become present.

Any student who returns to school under the influence, or in the possession of, drugs or alcohol will have open lunch privileges revoked for one year. Freshman and sophomores returning under the influence, or in the possession of drugs or alcohol, will have their privilege revoked in their junior and senior years.

Depending on the grade the student is in, punishment for violations of the policy range from spending all free periods and lunch in a study hall for 10 days, to loss of open lunch privileges and out of school suspension.

Ellen Anderson, a parent of an eighth-grade Westfield student, complained to the board about what she called its lack of understanding regarding the special needs of a gifted student, whom she will now be home schooling.

In response to Mrs. Anderson's statements, Ms. Gardner stated that the "statutes of the Board of Education is only to set policy" and not to deal with individuals on a case-by-case basis.

Board members Miss Alter, William Ziff and Richard Solomon were absent from the meeting.

Join the Team:

The Westfield Leader and THE TIMES of Scotch Plains-Fanwood

Freelance Reporters:

We are currently seeking freelance professionals to cover meetings in Westfield, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Fanwood. Freelancers must be available during evening hours. Meetings typically covered in our newspapers include Board of Education, Planning Boards, Municipal Councils, etc. College students welcomed. For information, contact Lauren Pass at (908) 232-4407 or send email to editor@goleader.com.

Student Interns:

Area high school students who are interested in journalism are encouraged to write for *The Student View*, a weekly column by local high school students. For information, contact Jeremy Lipstein at jlipstein@goleader.com.



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Attorneys At Law - A Full Service Firm

40 Paterson Street
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 545-4717

116 S. Euclid Avenue
Westfield, NJ 07090
(908) 232-9944

DFasciale@hoaglandlongo.com
www.hoaglandlongo.com