

Westfield Squad Among Recipients of State Awards

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

AREA - The New Jersey State Department of Health and Senior Services, Office of Emergency Medical Services, announced the winners of the 2002 Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Week Awards. Awards are being given in 18 categories and will be presented during EMS week on May 20 at the Radisson Hotel in Mount Laurel.

The Westfield Volunteer Rescue Squad will receive the EMS Volunteer Service of the Year Award. Westfield is one of more than 400 volunteer rescue squads in the State. "I'm very proud that we are being recognized for the wonderful work that we do. This is very gratifying," Captain Miki Urso told *The Leader/Times*.

She went on to say, "the reason that our members deserve this honor is primarily because of the high level of training they receive; our Training Lieutenant deserves a special thank you."

Though many were nominated, several other area individuals and organizations will also be receiving awards: Margaret McMahon, Mobile Intensive Care Paramedic (MICP) from Trinitas Hospital Mobile Intensive Care Unit (MICU), Elizabeth will receive the EMS Paramedic of the Year award; Dr. Sol Nevins, M.D. of Atlantic Health Sys-

tem - Morristown Memorial Hospital MICU, Morristown, will receive the EMS Medical Director of the Year Award; Tonnie Glick, RN, MICP, from the Union County College Paramedic Program will receive the EMS Educator of the Year Award; Joel Bunis of Scotch Plains will receive an EMS "Star of Life" Award; and Jeanne Kerwin of Atlantic Health System Mobile Intensive Care Program, Summit will receive the EMS Career Lifetime Achievement Award.

One of four NJEMS Memorial Awards will be given in memory of Clive Ian Thompson, Emergency Medical Technician - Basic (EMT-B), of Summit Volunteer First Aid Squad, Summit, Mr. Thompson died on September 11, 2001 in the line of duty.

Lions Club Collecting Glasses For Needy

WESTFIELD - During May, the Westfield Lions Club is collecting old, unwanted eyeglasses and sunglasses, which may be deposited in yellow mailbox receptacles identified with the Lions emblem. One such receptacle is located at the northeast corner of Broad and Elm Streets in Westfield.

Donated glasses are processed at several recycling centers in North America and distributed by optical mission teams to needy people in developing countries.

Individuals interested in donating eyeglasses or sunglasses may also call Westfield Lions Sight Chairman Dave Hensel at (908) 233-5533.

Scotch Plains Recreation Events

Tennis Ladders: will be formed depending upon registrations for men's and women's singles and doubles and seniors as well. There is a \$5.00 registration fee. For all those interested there will be a meeting on Tuesday May 7 at the Scotch Hills Country Club at 7 p.m. to discuss the details of the program.

Overnight Vacation Trips: are sponsored by Scotch Plains, Mountainside and New Providence Recreation Departments. The trips are as follows: August 17 to 20 to Gettysburg and Pigeon Forge, Tenn. in September 28 to October 4. For further details, contact the Recreation office at (908) 322-6700, ext. 221.

Summer Programs: will include but are not limited to Parks Program, Small Fry Summer Program, Basketball clinic, tennis lessons, trip to see Somerset Patriots Ball game, Teen Club Night, Teen White Water Rafting trip, golf clinics and tournaments, adult yoga, senior aerobics and adult dance and much more, keep your eyes open for the summer brochure which you will receive in May.

Teen Club Night: Will be held on Friday June 7 at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School from 8 p.m. to

Midnight. All students, 13 through 18, who attend the High School are invited. Activities include, DJ, Human Foosball, Rock Climbing Wall and Virtual Reality as well as refreshments. This program is sponsored by The Scotch Plains Recreation Commission and by the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Municipal Alliance and funded by the Governor's Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse through the UCDHS Division of Planning.

The High School Moonglowers Music Group: will be performing on Wednesday, June 12 on the Village Green at 7 p.m. This is a free concert provided to the residents of the community.

The Cultural Arts Concert Series: will begin on Thursday, July 11 and will conclude on Thursday, August 29. All shows will be held on the Village Green at 430 Park Avenue. In case of rain, the concerts will be moved indoors to the High School Auditorium. Concert performances include but are not limited to: Jim Barone as Elvis, Teddy Halek with a tribute to Frank Sinatra, Beatlemania, and The Nerds! You won't want to miss it! Bring a chair and a blanket and relax under the stars.



From The Desk Of Mayor McDermott

2002 Municipal Budget Puts Improvements On Fast Track

"Don't put off until tomorrow what can be done today." The proverbial wisdom of Benjamin Franklin is not often adhered to in local government, but this year Westfield has made a major financial commitment to heed Franklin's advice. The passage by the town of Westfield's 2002 budget this spring represents a first step forward toward ensuring that the projects budgeted for in this year are started and completed this year as well. The town budget earmarks some \$1.8 million for capital projects for 2002, and our goal is to complete as many projects as possible before year's end.

Why not put off until tomorrow? For one thing, significant cost efficiencies can be achieved when projects are completed within the year in which they are funded. For example, capital projects can be put out to bond counsel as a lump-sum figure since the costs for the projects are already known. This enables the town to expedite the eventual awarding of contracts and, ultimately, keeps key town projects on schedule and on budget.

Keeping to this more aggressive schedule also pays dividends in terms of overall aesthetics and convenience. The town intends to begin several projects this summer, when the town is not at its greatest capacity. Having improvements finished by fall will then enable the public works department to dedicate its energies to important ongoing maintenance efforts, such as recreation field maintenance and leaf pick-up. Perhaps, even snow removal will be a priority this coming winter.

Capital improvements are essential to preserving the beauty and safety of our town, which is why they will always be a priority in Westfield's budget. But so too are the many other quality services that we provide our residents. Town government worked hard this year to craft a budget that would not only produce a strong infrastructure, but also a financially secure future as well.

Westfield, like many towns in our area, faced three significant financial hurdles this year. First, state aid - which makes up 16 percent of the town's budget - was held flat. Level state funding becomes a decreased figure when coupled with rising costs, particularly in the area of insurance. Like many municipalities, Westfield faced a dramatic rise in insurance premiums as a result of post-September 11 rate increases. Working against this backdrop of decreased aid, increased expenses and an increase in Union County costs, the town was able to approve a budget that contained a 4.5 percent increase in taxes, a figure far below comparable Union County towns.

It should be noted that reining in an increase in taxes did not require the town to cut or eliminate essential services. The town government found new ways to streamline and to save. As a result, Westfield residents will not see a decline in the services and programs they have come to expect and to rely on from their town.

What they will see in 2002, however, are their tax dollars going to work immediately to pave roads, to update safety equipment and to make improvements to Westfield that can be used and enjoyed this year. Ben Franklin would be proud.

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