

Assemblywoman Stender Honors Nurturers and Heroes In May

By LINDA D. STENDER

The month of May is drawing to a close. Mother's Day, Nurses Week, Women's Health Week and Teacher's Appreciation Week were all celebrated early in the month, as they are each year. Mother's Day is the most prominent but each in its own right was an opportunity to acknowledge and openly appreciate and support the role of caregivers in our society. In our culture, vocations that are traditionally dominated by women and that provide for the nurturing of our citizens have never been seen as positions of "power". Just think about how intolerant big business can be about taking time for maternity leave or caring for an ill or dying family member. Being unpaid or underpaid is akin to being undervalued. Yet what is more powerful than raising a child to be a caring, productive adult, educating a generation in the skills needed for a free and democratic society or nursing a sick person back to health? May was a good opportunity to say thank you not only to our mothers but also to many others who do so much.

National Teachers Appreciation Week was celebrated May 5 to 11. Designated by the National PTA as a time to honor teachers. It allows students, parents and the rest of society to show support and esteem for the teaching profession. Teacher's Appreciation Week began with the proclamation for a National Teachers Day in 1953. In March of 1985, the National Education Association and the National PTA established Teacher's Appreciation Week as the first full week of May. How we fund education so that we can pay for well-trained and excellent teachers, as well as the necessary facilities and supplies, is central to an ongoing debate over property taxes. I have received a lot of letters and phone calls both for and against the convening of a constitutional convention as a means of solving the ever-spiraling costs. I support a revenue neutral, limited constitutional convention for the purpose of addressing how we fund public education. It must be convened solely for the purpose of examining how we fund public education and must not propose an increase in the overall amount of taxes collected. To date there has not been a vote on this issue.

National Nurses Week was celebrated May 6 to 12. I joined Governor McGreevey and Assemblyman Jerry Green at Muhlenberg Hospital to participate in their recognition ceremonies for the service that nurses provide to our community. It is estimated that by the year 2010, one million new nurses will be needed. As the nursing shortage grows more

severe with each passing year, it is essential to acknowledge the important work the nursing community provides. It is equally important to encourage more people to become involved in the profession. I am in support of the initiatives moving in the legislature to improve staffing ratios, eliminate mandatory overtime and create incentive programs to encourage people to pursue a nursing career.

National Women's Health Week commenced on Mother's Day, May 12 and continued through May 18. It was established to help increase public awareness of diseases and illnesses that are prevalent in women. Breast Cancer and many others such as heart disease and arthritis can be successfully treated when detected early, at the onset of the disease.

Preventative health care is a vital component in every woman's life. Women should visit their health-care provider regularly and keep themselves well informed about proper care. Accurate information and a good relationship with your doctor will help all women and men lead a healthy life.

We close out the month of May with Memorial Day. We gather at war memorials and cemeteries to honor the memory of those soldiers who died to preserve our freedom. This year, as the names of soldiers listed on the memorials are read, we cannot help but to also ache for those who died on September 11th, and for the soldiers not yet listed but already killed in far away places as the war on terror grows. The pain is fueled by the gnawing fear of possible future attacks and the concern that we will need to add names to future memorials.

As we grapple with the impact of an amorphous enemy on our daily lives in an open and free society, the government is working to be prepared to prevent or respond to future attacks. My first major piece of legislation is the Fire Deployment Act, which creates a mechanism for a statewide deployment of fire personnel and equipment. At the local level we already have mutual aid plans which allow one town to call in another when needed. Built on that model it creates a process for county, then regional, then statewide deployment of fire departments. The goal is to make sure that in a disaster event, resources are in place to protect citizens statewide.

In this month when we honor caretakers and those who died in our defense, a passage from the Bible, Paul to Romans, Chapter 12 seems like a fitting close. "Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good."



Tracy Evans for The Westfield Leader and The Times
REMEMBERING OUR HEROES... The New York Lambs Artillery are pictured in a group photo after firing three rounds, preceding the presentation of wreaths at the Memorial Day festivities in Westfield.

Westfield Recreation Events

Summer Classes & Camps are as follows: (Camp and Class Registration Starts June 5)

Adult Tennis Class: Held on from 9 to 10:30 a.m., Saturdays: July 13, 20, 27, August 3, 10 and 17. The fee is \$60.

Summer Tennis Tournament: Junior Tournament age categories are: 12/under, 14/under, 16/under and 18/under. Adult Tournaments are for ages 18 years and above. (Singles only) The fee is \$10 for the Junior Tournament and \$20 for the Adult Tournament. Please register by July 1, forms may be obtained at the recreation office.

Hyper Peppy Robotics: August 14 to 16, from 9 to 2 p.m. This event is for children, ages 7 through 12 and will be held at the community room. The fee is \$100.

Mad Science: August 19 to 23 or Aug. 26 to 30, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., for ages 5 through 8 years; August 19 to 23 or August 26 to 30, from 1 to 4 p.m., for ages 9 and above. Event will be held at the community room. The fee is \$110 per week.

Art and Craft Sessions: Session 1: July 22 to 26; Session 2: July 29 to August 2; Session 3: August 5 to 9, Monday to Friday, (one-hour sessions) from 9 a.m. **Crafty Kids:** For ages 5 to 13, \$12 per day. Classes begin at 10:30 a.m. **Art:** For ages 4 to 8, \$45 per week. Classes begin at 12 p.m. **Art:** For ages 9 to 13, \$50 per week. Please apply by Friday, June 28.

Westfield Youth Art Expo: (August 5-9) Awards Presentation: Friday, August 2 from 7 to 9 p.m. Open to ages 14 to 17 years. Pieces entered must be matted with shrink-wrap and able to be hung. The entry fee is \$7. Art pieces must be dropped off by July 31. Monday through Friday from 9 to 4 p.m. **Kids Art Show:** Open to ages 4 to 13. Pieces entered must be on 8 x 11.5 sized paper. There is no fee for the kids show.

Summer Concert Series: Mindowaskin Park, Thursday

Nights from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Bring a blanket and a lawn chair.

Soccer: July 1 to 5 and July 8 to 12, in Tamaques Park, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The fee is \$45 per week.

Baseball: Ages 8 through 13, July 8 to 12 and July 15 to 19, Monday through Friday, from 9 to 12 p.m. The cost is \$45 per week.

Wrestling: August 5 to 9 for ages 7 to 11 and August 12 to 16 for ages 12 to 15; Monday to Friday from 9 to 12 p.m. at the Roosevelt School Cafeteria. The fee is \$45 per week.

Football: July 22 to 26, for ages 8 to 12, from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Tamaques Park. The fee is \$45.

Roller Hockey: July 15 to 18, July 22 to 25, July 29 to August 1, and August 12 to 15, Monday and Thursday 9 to 10:30 a.m., for ages 6 through 9; 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., for ages 10 to 13. The fee is \$45 per week and will be held at Tamaques Park Basketball Courts.

Tennis: Weeks of July 8, 15, 22 and 29; August 5, 12, 19, and 26. Monday and Thursday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The fee is \$50 a week.

Summer Playground Program: Begins June 28 to August 8, Monday to Friday, 9 to 11:45 a.m. and 1 to 3:45 p.m. Held at all local elementary schools, neighborhood council, & the Exceptional Center. Registration begins June 27 at 1 p.m. on site. The fee is \$10.

Teen Night At Memorial Park Pool: Join us Wednesday Nights from 8:30 to 10:30 p.m., for grades 6 to 12, D.J. dancing, swimming and special events. Program begins on June 26. The fee is \$3 at the door.

For information call the recreation department at (908) 789-4080 or online: www.westfieldnj.net

WHS Grad Makes National Headlines For Diet Research

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Groundbreaking discoveries in weight-loss research authored by a Westfield High School Graduate have recently made national headlines in newspapers and on television. Doctor

David Cummings, who grew up in Westfield and graduated in 1978 from WHS, is the chief research scientist, who has recently been interviewed by *The NY Times*, on *Nightly News* with Tom Brokaw and in *The Wall Street Journal*, highlighting his meritorious discoveries in weight-loss science.

Dr. Cummings graciously shared his time with *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* during a telephone interview from his office in Seattle at the University of Washington. He is an Endocrinologist, who divides his time between teaching, clinical care and research in dieting and weight-loss. Dr. Cummings explained that his research, which has focused on the body and brain's biochemical responses to dieting, has discovered that weight has much more to do with genetic factors, biochemistry and heredity than lack of willpower or environmental causes.

His research has focused on measuring levels of hormones, which signal the brain to regulate appetite, metabolism and weight-loss. Various hormones seem to play key roles in increasing appetite and decreasing metabolism, especially during periods of low-caloric intake, essentially thwarting most weight-loss attempts.

"It is common knowledge that diets don't work, at least not long term," Dr. Cummings stated. "We are beginning to understand why most people can't lose more than five percent of their weight and why, even if they do, they gain it right back. The good news is that you can stop feeling guilty for being overweight, because it's not your fault. The bad news is, there's not much you can do about it, yet," he added. "Future research will possibly focus on ways to mitigate the effects of these hormones on the brain to enable greater weight-loss success," he said.

After graduating from WHS, Dr. Cummings earned his Bachelor's in Biology at Dartmouth and went on to study medicine at Harvard Medical School in a collaborative program with MIT. He fondly recalled attend-

ing WHS along with fellow-classmate Richard Bagger. He said that he benefited greatly from the positive influence of his classmates as well as some very inspiring teachers.

"My most memorable class was

Ancient and Medieval History taught by Frank Nodel," Dr. Cummings recalled. "Mr. Nodel inspired a love of learning," he said. "Another fond memory was of Mrs. Foster's biology class in 9th grade at Roosevelt School," he said. "She also had a zeal and joy for learning that inspired everyone. And, WHS, offered a superb education," Dr. Cummings remarked. He also said

that his parents, Westfield residents Elaine and Donald Cummings instilled a great love of learning throughout his childhood.

Dr. Cummings' mother told *The Leader* and *The Times* that when her son was only three years old, he would often pour over the anatomy overlays in the *World Book Encyclopedia* set in their den. She said she used to kiddingly say, "My son the doctor," which turned out to be prophetic.

Besides a love of teaching and a desire to help patients, Dr. Cummings also said he has a passion for mountain climbing. He found the perfect combination of a top-notch medical school and Alp-size mountains in Washington State. "I was swept away by the magic of the mountains here," he said.

When asked how he was handling all of the recent media attention, which his research was generating, Dr. Cummings said that he loved it.

"I get over 100 emails and phone calls a day from people thanking us for our recent discoveries. People are just so relieved to hear validation that they are not bad or weak for being overweight," he said. "Hearing from people and actually getting to apply the science to patient care is what's important and keeps me grounded," he added.

Dr. Cummings and his wife, Felicia, who was a fellow Harvard medical school classmate reside in Seattle with their two sons, Cameron age 3 and Nathan, age 6.

Dr. Cummings visits his parents and sister, Carolyn in Westfield every other Christmas and he always looks forward to coming back to his hometown, he related. He advises current Westfield students to, "discover what they love and then pursue it with gusto."



Dr. David Cummings

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