

### Accident Claims Life of Mother From Westfield

**By MEREDITH MANNINO**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — A 40-year old Westfield woman died last Thursday in a car accident on Meisel Avenue in Springfield.

According to witnesses, the early morning crash occurred when an SUV driven by Cheryl Lambert, 40, crossed the double yellow line and careened into oncoming traffic, colliding with a tractor-trailer and then a pick-up truck.

Mrs. Lambert's 1996 Chevrolet Blazer then rolled over, and the mother of one was pronounced dead at the scene. According to the Springfield Police Department, the cause of the accident, which remains under investigation, is unknown at this time.

Mrs. Lambert's five-year old son, John, survived the crash.

Mrs. Lambert was born in Newark and lived in Rockaway for nine years. She lived in Westfield for a short time and then relocated, recently returning to the community.

The homemaker is also survived by her parents Jack and Jean Durante, brothers Jack and Anthony, grandmother Ada, and husband John.

Mrs. Lambert's funeral was held Tuesday, April 26, at St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church in Westfield. Funeral arrangements were handled by Gray's Funeral Home in Westfield.

## Council, BOE Setting Process To Review Defeated Budget

**By PAUL J. PEYTON**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — The Town Council and Board of Education (BOE) this week began ironing out the process for the council's review of the school budget following its defeat last week by voters.

The defeat of the \$66 million school tax levy is the first to be defeated by Westfield voters in a decade. The entire proposed \$77 million budget was delivered last Friday along with related documents to all council and school board members.

with a "good opportunity to come together."  
 "People need to maintain their cool heads," Councilman Betancourt said. "There is no axe to grind here."  
 Mayor Greg McDermott said, "Our job is not to hinder or reduce the quality of education (in Westfield)."  
 "Our goal is to give our residents a

stated.  
 A proposed multi-million parking deck referendum was trounced at the polls in November and a referendum for a turf field and new track at Kehler Stadium passed by only 280 votes and now the school budget was defeated.  
 Mayor McDermott said, "It is getting difficult to make those (tax) payments."

**"This is the second vote of no confidence in six months; the first one being the (parking) deck."**  
**Second Ward Councilman Rafael Betancourt**

Second Ward Councilman Rafael Betancourt, a member of the council's Finance Policy Committee, commented that he thought, "this is the second vote of no confidence in six months; the first one being the (parking) deck."  
 "People feel they are paying too much in taxes," Councilman Betancourt stated.  
 "It is premature to predict what we (the council) are going to do," Councilman Betancourt added. "We need to see where the fat is" and cut the tax levy to appease the "majority of voters who rejected the budget."  
 "This (the budget defeat) does not reflect on how people feel about the schools. It reflects on how people feel about being taxed," Councilman Betancourt said.  
 Councilman Betancourt believes this provides the BOE and Council

quality education at a slightly reduced price," Mayor McDermott said. "I think everyone is shocked that this (the budget) didn't pass."  
 One factor in the budget defeat, the mayor noted, has been less state aid to the BOE and the town.  
 "We have an obligation to residents of this town" to review the entire budget "line by line," according to state law Mayor McDermott stated. Town auditors and the council's finance policy committee will review the school budget.  
 Mayor McDermott, who is moving to Bernardville at the end of June, said he would see the process through to completion.  
 "You are starting to see a change" in terms of voting in town, the Mayor

Third Ward Councilman Skibitsky said the council and school board need to work together "in a collaborative effort to see if the tax levy can be reduced without a negative effect on the educational system."  
 He said he would welcome any proposals from school officials, as they are more familiar with the spending than council members.

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**SPECIAL VISITOR...**Governatorial Republican candidate Bret Schundler visited the office of *The Westfield Leader* on Wednesday morning to invite the public to a special forum sponsored by the Mountaintide Republican Club during which attendees can meet the Republican gubernatorial candidates. The forum will be held on Wednesday, May 4, at 7:15 p.m. at the Mountaintide Borough Hall. Pictured, left to right, are Assignment Editor Paul Peyton, Mr. Schundler, *Leader* Publisher Horace Corbin, Sports Editor and Assistant Publisher David Corbin and Arts & Entertainment and Education Editor Michelle Helen Le Poidevin.

## Committee Unveils Plan to Create 110 Parking Spaces In Downtown

**By PAUL J. PEYTON**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — A downtown parking improvement plan is expected to generate upwards of 110 spaces through the redesign of municipal lots and on-street parking spaces. Voters soundly rejected a multi-million dollar parking deck and redevelopment proposal last November.

Mark Ciarrocca, Third Ward Councilman and Chairman of the Town Council's Public Safety, Transportation and Parking Committee, unveiled the plan during Tuesday night's Town Council conference meeting. \$500,000 is available in existing parking improvement funds previously budgeted by the town, officials said.  
 The plan, to be completed in three phases, will begin this summer, according to Town Administrator James Gildea. The plan includes improved lighting and landscaping in lots, consistent signage throughout Westfield's parking system, improved handicap accessibility, redesign of on-street parking, pushing on-street employee parking out of the center of the town, and additional pay stations and new meters.

and behind Baron's Drug Store, respectively.  
 Councilman Ciarrocca said the town would create employee permit spaces on Orchard Street, upper Elm Street and Ferris Place. He said the town has begun ticketing employees' vehicles parked on Quimby and lower Elm Streets.  
 The first phase of the plan includes lot 3 on South Avenue where lighting and landscaping will be enhanced and a pay station will be added. The lot will also be repaved. Lots 1 and 8 at Elm and Prospect Streets, a priority in the plan, will be redesigned and repaved. One of the lots was once home to a gasoline station, will undergo remediation for any environmental problems.  
 Lot 9, at Central and North Avenue, will be allocated for north side commuters and employees from lot 8. More spaces will be allocated for employees at lot 6 on Watterson Street and 18 on-street spaces will be changed to permit spaces as needed by the town in the initial phase of the plan.  
 All on-street meters will be replaced with smart card technology. Parking Services Director John Morgan said.  
 As part of the second phase of the plan, Councilman Ciarrocca said the last block of Lenox Avenue would be closed between Central and North Avenue in order for the town to reconfigure the lot (lot 7) across from the post office. The additional property will result in 25 new spaces. The second block of Lenox, near the post office, will be made one-way with diagonal parking on one side of the street.  
 Also under the second phase, lot 2 at the north side train station will be reconfigured to line up with the traffic signal at North Avenue and Elm Street. Eleven spaces would be added through the redesign, Councilman Ciarrocca said.  
 "I think closing Lenox Avenue is a brilliant idea," said Rob Nehring of Carleton Road.  
 The Watterson Street lot, municipal lot 6, will be repaved and re-striped during the second phase.  
 During the final phase, lot 4 behind Baron's Drug Store will be redesigned and improved for pedestrian safety and lighting, with 10 to 30 spaces added in the process.  
 Sharon Stockwell of Nelson Place said she was "really pleased to see that we are going to move forward on all these improvements."  
 Jim Baker of Lincoln Road called the improvement plan "just sensational."  
 In other business, Recreation Commission Chairman James Marvin revealed that bids were received Monday on the Tamaques Park tennis courts repaving and Houlihan Field turf and lighting projects.  
 While the bids were within the \$1.1 million range the town budgeted for the project last summer, Mr. Marvin said another \$300,000 would be necessary to replace fencing that would be removed at Houlihan due to the widening of the field, as well as to turf the Sid Faye portion of Houlihan and improve parking at the park.  
 Under the project, Houlihan Field would be cut in length from 360 to 330

cording to Town Administrator James Gildea. The plan includes improved lighting and landscaping in lots, consistent signage throughout Westfield's parking system, improved handicap accessibility, redesign of on-street parking, pushing on-street employee parking out of the center of the town, and additional pay stations and new meters.  
 "I think we have a good plan to move forward," Councilman Ciarrocca said.  
 Immediate parking improvements to be completed include changing the parallel parking on Prospect Street to one-side of the street diagonal parking, replacing existing pay stations in lot 5 behind the Rialto Theatre, and adding pay stations in lots 7, 2 and 4 located across from the Westfield Post Office, at the north side train station

## Perrin Named President Of Mountaintide BOE

**By BETSEY BURGENDORF**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

MOUNTAINSIDE — A week after the two empty seats were filled on the borough's Board of Education (BOE), incumbent John Perrin and write-in candidate Mountaintide Police Sergeant Scot Worswick, were installed and a new president was elected.  
 Mr. Perrin, who is serving his third term on the board, was named president. BOE member MaryBeth Schaumburg was reelected as Vice President.  
 Sergeant Worswick's wife, Carol, sons Zach and William, and daughter Kacie were in attendance for his installment as the newest member of the BOE.  
 Mountaintide resident Scott Schmedel addressed the board regarding his concern over Sergeant Worswick's installment to the board and the fact that he is an employee of the borough.  
 "Your presence as an elected member of the Board of Ed is a conflict of interest," Mr. Schmedel stated. "It seems to me if the budget has to go to Borough Council, I feel your loyalty should be to the budget."  
 "I am first and foremost a police officer. If there is a conflict, I would have to go to law enforcement," Sergeant Worswick responded. He continued by saying, "I have spoken to Chief (James) Debbie and he feels there will be no problem with any conflict."  
 Chief Debbie took the podium in

Sergeant Worswick's defense stating that he fully supports him as a member of the BOE.  
 "I would like to assure anyone that there will be no conflict," he said.  
 In what seemed to be a contradiction to earlier statements, Mr. Schmedel later addressed the BOE on his belief that the governing body does little to attract viable candidates to fill empty seats on the BOE.  
 He referred to the absence on a school board Candidates Night this year due to the fact that Mr. Perrin was running unopposed and Sergeant Worswick was the only write-in candidate who made his intentions known prior to Election Day on April 19.  
 "For 40 years, there has not been a 'no contest' for a seat on the Board of Education," board member Pat Knodel said.  
 "It was not just too little, it was too little, too late," Mr. Schmedel responded. "Appoint a community relations committee that I can call up and complain to," he continued, implying that the BOE is inaccessible and does not involve the community in its business.  
 Mr. Schmedel stated that he felt the school budget was not properly presented to residents and that BOE meetings were not properly advertised. He also stated that he was unaware of a special meeting of the Borough Council and the BOE to discuss the budget, and said the BOE was not living up to its commitment to the community.  
 Board member Carmine Venes said, "I would like to make three points: It was a committee that met with Borough Council, not the BOE; meetings are televised, and *The Echo Leader* complimented us on our presentation of the budget. I think we did live up to our commitment."  
 "You have to do more than throw it (the budget) out and let it lie and wait for someone to pick it up," Mr. Schmedel said.  
 Interim Chief School Administrator Walter Rusak replied, stating that board offices remained open late on February 28, the deadline to submit applications to run for BOE, to ac-

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**ICE CREAM ANYONE?...**Westfield mayoral candidates, Third Ward Councilman Andy Skibitsky, left, and former mayor Tom Jardim, right, serve ice cream on Monday as part of a fundraiser for Cold Stone Creamery to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. In exchange for a free slice of ice cream cake, customers were asked to make donations to Make-A-Wish, an organization that grants the wishes of children with life-threatening medical conditions.

## Riegel and Leiz Reelected to Posts Of BOE President, Vice President

**By MEREDITH MANNINO**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

WESTFIELD — Despite the Board of Education's disappointment regarding the school budget defeat last week, Board President Anne Riegel and Superintendent of Schools Dr. William Foley expressed optimism about the coming year during Tuesday night's reorganization meeting.  
 Ms. Riegel was re-elected as school board President, and Ginny Leiz was once again chosen as Vice President. New board members Ann Ormsby

Cary and Gary McCready, along with incumbent Alice Hunnicutt, were sworn into office.  
 "I'm honored to be elected as Board President," Ms. Riegel said. She expressed how seriously she takes her position, and noted her very positive relationship with Dr. Foley.  
 "I think we've done a good job with keeping the lines of communication open," she remarked.  
 Ms. Riegel promised to give the community her continued dedication, and attributed the success of the Westfield school system to the "high

caliber" of its staff members.  
 Ms. Riegel expressed her disappointment concerning the budget vote last week, indicating the defeat came as a surprise.  
 "The BOE takes the defeat of the budget very seriously," she said. She urged parents to talk to the school board about their concerns or suggestions.  
 Despite the budget defeat, Ms. Riegel, Superintendent Foley, and board member Richard Solomon said they remain optimistic about negotiating with the Town Council regarding what will be cut from the school budget. The council must make its decision by Thursday, May 19.  
 Dr. Foley said a meeting with Mayor Gregory McDermott and Town Administrator James Gildea was very positive.  
 "They really want to understand the budget process," he revealed. Dr. Foley also indicated that the Town Council is looking to the school board for advice on what is best to cut in the spending plan.  
 Things are "up in the air" right now as far as what is going to result from the budget vote-down, noted Dr. Foley. The superintendent said that discussions between the board and council are underway.  
 Mr. Solomon added that the council is receptive to working things out, and described the handling of the budget situation as a "fair, well-thought-out reasoned approach."



**CLOSING FOR GOOD...**The Union County Trap and Skeet range in Cranford will close its doors for good after 78 years in business on Monday, May 2.

### Westfield School Bd. Will Meet on May 3

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Board of Education will meet on Tuesday, May 3, at Wilson School auditorium, 301 Linden Avenue.  
 The 8 p.m. business meeting will be preceded by a reception at 7:30 p.m. in honor of first grade teacher Mary Dura, this year's Westfield Rotary Philhower Fellowship recipient.  
 A complete agenda of the Board meeting will be available on Friday, April 29, in the Board Secretary's office at 302 Elm Street.  
 All school board public meetings are taped. They are broadcast on Channel 36 on Tuesdays at 8 a.m., 3 and 11 p.m. and Thursdays at 8 a.m. and 7 p.m.

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