

Former State Senator Suliga Killed in Linden Car Accident

By FRED ROSSI

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader

LINDEN — Former State Sen. Joseph Suliga (D-22) was killed in a traffic accident last Friday night in his hometown of Linden.

Mr. Suliga, whose career in elective politics ended with his mid-campaign withdrawal from a 2003 re-election bid, was currently serving as chief financial officer in Linden.

Mr. Suliga, a former Democratic member of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the Linden City Council and Board of Education, was elected to the State Assembly in 1993 and to the State Senate in 2001, representing the newly drawn 22nd Legislative District, which includes Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

In the midst of his re-election bid against Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks, Mr. Suliga was involved in a September 2003 incident at an Atlantic City casino that led to his arrest for sexually harassing a woman patron and "fighting" with security personnel in an alleged alcohol-induced incident at the Trump Marina Casino.

The casino later dropped the charges. Several days later, Mr. Suliga withdrew from the race despite Republican Party protests and unsuccessful court challenges claiming that state law prohibited replacing a candidate just a few weeks prior to the general election.

Soon after his withdrawal, Mr.



SWEARING IN... On January 8, 2002 Senator Joseph Suliga took the Oath of Office from Senate President Dick Codey at the State House in Trenton. His wife Annmarie looks on.

Suliga entered an alcohol rehabilitation program and was replaced on the November 2003 ballot by Union County Freeholder Nicholas Scutari, who defeated Mr. Marks in the general election.

Union County Democratic Chairwoman Charlotte DeFilippo called Mr. Suliga's death "a devastating loss," saying he was "a compassionate advocate for those in need."

His former 22nd District colleagues also remembered Mr. Suliga, with Assemblywoman Linda Stender of Fanwood (D-22) calling him "a driving force who exhibited great vision on many issues" and a person who "cared deeply for" the people of Union

County. Assemblyman Gerald Green of Plainfield (D-22) called Mr. Suliga "a dedicated legislator who served as an advocate for the young and those less fortunate."

Mr. Suliga is survived by his wife, Annmarie Pakulski; his father, Joseph S. Suliga, Sr. of Linden; three brothers, Richard Suliga of Brick, Thomas Suliga of Westfield, and Raymond Suliga of Linden.

A funeral mass was held yesterday, Wednesday, February 23, at St. Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Church in Linden. Entombment was at St. Gertrude, Good Shepherd Mausoleum in Colonia.

K-9 Unit

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illegal drugs at Westfield High School is any worse than at any other typical suburban high school." The search, as well as the imminent threat of one, was meant to deter students at WHS from bringing any types of drugs into the school environment.

Although Dr. Petix wrote in his e-mail that "the idea of bringing the K-9 Unit to the school has been well received by most Westfield High School students and parents with whom we have spoken," the actual search was met with mixed feelings from students.

Junior Chris Pinheiro said, "I was offended by the drug dog search. Not all high school students do drugs."

Others were more supportive of the search. Senior Chris Hill said that, "if searches by the drug dogs help to keep drugs out of the school and out of town, then I'm supportive of them."

Some students found issue with the school's use of a 10-minute amnesty period, according to an announcement made by Dr. Petix before the search began, that allowed students to turn in drugs to a teacher that they had found.

"The 10-minute grace period," said senior Dina Ragab, "made a mockery of the school's effort to catch drug offenders."

Freshman Jimmy Boyle said he thought "that Dr. Petix was worried that he would be given a bad reputation if he didn't give the students any warnings about the search, so he gave us the 10 minutes to turn in any drugs we happened to have found."

Brandon Pantano Earns Dean's List Recognition

WESTFIELD — Westfield resident Brandon Pantano has been named to the dean's list for the fall 2004 semester at Bryant University in Smithfield, R.I. He is a freshman majoring in management.

Christopher Beil Named To Salisbury Dean's List

WESTFIELD — Christopher Beil of Westfield was named to the dean's list for the fall 2004 semester at Salisbury University in Salisbury, Md.

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Borough to Apply For DOT Grant For Road Projects

By ANNA GITHENS

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

GARWOOD — Borough Engineer Donald Guarriello Tuesday night presented five different streets for the Borough Council to review and decide on with respect to the Department of Transportation (DOT) grant. The applications will be submitted to the DOT in April.

"This money will be released probably in the third quarter of the year and it'll be a 2006 project," said Mr. Guarriello.

The council plans to give priority to the streets that are most in need of repair. A total of three street projects will be applied for. The streets that are being considered in order of priority are: Second Avenue between Oak and the Cranford line; Willow Street; and Spruce Street between Maple and the Westfield line.

Robert Renaud, the borough's attorney, raised some concern over work that will be done around the brook in Cranford on West Holly. The question was raised as to whether or not this may conflict with the Garwood street repairs in terms of timing.

In other business, the council has received a request to site wireless communications towers and antennae within the municipality. The site being considered for a cell tower is behind the Hess Station on North Avenue.

In addition, the towers will be configured in a way that would minimize the adverse visual impact on the community.

The borough will be receiving funds to lease the land from the company that builds the tower, officials said.

Councilman Victor DeFilippo inquired, "What revenue do we stand to generate from the tower?"

Mr. Renaud stated that the borough would seek bids and that the company that wins the bid will build the cell tower.

Councilwoman Kasthleen Villaggio also gave a report on the school board and said that it is anticipated that the final phase of the Lincoln-Franklin School construction project will be completed by November 2005.

The council's March meeting has been changed to Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m. at Lincoln School. The open house for the new technology room will be held at 6:30 p.m. and the public is invited to attend.

Councilman Walter Tucker reported on the annual Sunday, September 11, Family Fun Day and Car Show held by the Chamber of Commerce. The theme for the car show will be "We Remember."

WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8
Shawn Helen Adams, 47, of Rahway was arrested and charged with hindering apprehension for allegedly giving a false name to police after she was stopped for a motor vehicle violation at North Avenue and Elm Street.

Adams was wanted on several outstanding traffic warrants, including two from Woodbridge, for \$2,500 and \$1,500, and one each from Linden, for \$822, Carteret, for \$614, and Elizabeth, for \$250. She was released on her own recognizance on the Westfield charge, and turned over to Woodbridge police on the strength of their outstanding warrants.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

A Garwood resident reported that her wallet was removed from her pocket-book while she was working out at a South Avenue facility. The wallet, minus the cash that had been in it, was later recovered at the south side Westfield train station.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Neil Jordan, Jr., 43, and Ronald E. Way, 40, both described as homeless men from the Newark area, were arrested at North Avenue and East Broad Street after they were stopped for a motor vehicle violation and allegedly found to be in possession of a stolen car.

Jordan and Way were each charged with theft of moveable property, possession of drug paraphernalia. Way was additionally charged with possession of a hypodermic needle.

Each of the suspects also was wanted on contempt of court warrants, Jordan on one from Irvington for \$500 and Way on one from Hamilton Township for \$125. Neither of the men was able to post bail and both were transported to the Union County Jail.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Joseph Rinaldo, 27, of Westfield was arrested at Edgewood and Glen Avenues and charged with driving while intoxicated. He later was released on his own recognizance to a responsible adult.

Elzbieta Karpinska, 42, of Linden was arrested and charged with shoplifting \$133.99 worth of clothing from a store in the 600 block of North Avenue. She was released on her own recognizance.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

Kevin Garmony, 42, of Irvington was arrested and charged with hindering apprehension for allegedly giving police a false name and address after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation at Central Avenue and Grove Street.

He also was wanted on active contempt of court warrants out of East Orange, for \$1,500, and Newark, for \$500, as well as a no-bail warrant from the Essex County Sheriff's Office. Garmony was released on his own recognizance on the Westfield charge and was taken into custody by the Essex County Sheriff's Department.

It was reported that someone entered an Elm Street store while it was closed and stole \$325 in cash. There was no sign of forced entry.

MS BOE

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According to Ms. Cosimano, the state has approved and adopted new standards for every subject, which changed the district's curriculum standards.

The new 2005 edition science textbooks are what Ms. Cosimano calls "considerate of the learner." They will include 16 modules for the four years of science starting in grade five.

Earth science will now be introduced in grade five with physical science now being taught in grades seven and eight with Ms. Cosimano stating, "Physical Science was more appropriate for older kids."

In the past, the curriculum was not aligned with the standardized tests and students were scoring poorly because they had not yet covered material introduced on the tests.

"We altered the curriculum so they (students) would get a curriculum a little more aligned with the test (TerraNova)," she concluded.

The changes in the technology curriculum are designed to help students prepare for work and career.

Board Member MaryBeth Schaumburg asked the board to consider volunteering to read to students on Read Across America Day on Wednesday, March 2.

Mrs. Schaumburg also announced that the annual Parent Teacher Association Fashion Show to be held next Thursday, March 3, at L'Affaire in Mountainside is sold out.

"This is a big event, very well attended and a big fundraiser for the district," she said.

According to Mrs. Schaumburg, although the event is sold out, basket donations to be sold in a Chinese auction are still being accepted.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Goggi recognized Wayne DeVico for his help in making the transition to videotaped school board meetings a success. He also recognized Doug Black and Jerry Scioscia from the film and sound crew.

"Thank you gentlemen for all the hard work you do behind the scenes," he said.

Estimate on Reeve House Project Now Placed at \$1.3 to \$3.3 Mil.

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these discussions.

"It affects people's reputations and livelihoods. We have to be careful about what we discuss (at meetings) because people are reading (the local newspapers)," he said.

Fourth Ward Councilman James Foerst said official newspaper status is simply given to newspapers so that the town can place its public notices in a designated newspaper. He said he had not heard that the notices have been printed incorrectly in the paper.

On another matter, Assistant Town Engineer Kris McAloon said the town currently has 16 active residential excavation sites within its borders. Of that number, he said, 15 "had some sort of fence up."

He said the town has asked contractors "to secure their sites" in the short-term until the town develops a more concrete policy. Mr. McAloon said all builders have been notified of the town's new policy.

Town Attorney Robert Cockren said the town could choose to regulate from the point of demolition until construction begins, at which point state statutes regulate construction matters.

The council will introduce a \$32.3 million municipal budget on Tuesday, which is supported by a tax levy of \$17.7 million. The average assessed home in town will see a \$105 increase to support municipal services over last year.

WF BOE

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tion of dependency on outside technical services, instructional repairs, and outside consultants will net the district a savings of \$60,360.

The district will also see what Dr. Foley called "substantial savings" in containing utilities costs. By securing independent bids for natural gas and electricity supply, the district will save \$59,066 and \$32,000, respectively.

Additionally, the elimination of 25 telephone lines not currently in use netted a savings of \$15,000.

"These are the kind of things we need to do to keep budget costs down," said Dr. Foley.

The district is also piloting a class for autistic students in the 2005-2006 school year, in addition to running two classes at Westfield High School (WHS) for students with special needs and reducing services for both occupational and physical therapy.

Business Administrator and Board Secretary Robert Berman briefly discussed the declining percentage of each year's budget being covered by state aid. The percentage covered has dropped from 7.10 percent in the 1999-2000 school year to an estimated 6.26 percent to cover the 2005-2006 budget.

"It becomes a decreasing part of our revenue each year," said Mr. Berman.

The board's next public meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 1, where the proposed 2005-2006 budget will be further discussed.

Ann Ormsby-Cary Throws Hat Into School Bd. Race

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The district's burgeoning enrollment is another issue Ms. Ormsby-Cary knows will need to be addressed in the future, and she said that as a board member, she would help "meet that challenge head-on."

Ms. Ormsby-Cary, along with the other candidates listed above, will seek a standard three-year term.

Candidates Dorry, McCready, and Ziff have lived in Westfield for approximately the same amount of time, while candidate Hunnicutt has lived in Westfield since 1984.

Skibitsky

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Mrs. Walsh, who served on the school board for nine years, from 1992 through 2001, including three as board president, said she was "seriously considering" running for council. Noting that she has time to submit her nominating petition to the Town Clerk, she said there are "a number of other candidates considering" running for council.

Prior to being elected to the council in November of 2000, Mr. Betancourt served eight years as municipal prosecutor and two years as public defender. He has been a resident of Westfield for 20 years.

"It is time to move on," Councilman Betancourt said. He added that he wanted to "give other people a chance (to serve) and give myself a chance to do other stuff."

Westfield Town Democratic Party Chairman Ken Rotter said the committee would announce its candidates within the next few weeks.

"We still are in the midst of our (selection) process," he said.

The deadline to file nominating petitions for the office of mayor and council seats for the Tuesday, June 7 Primary is 4 p.m. on Monday, April 11.

GOP Gubernatorial Candidates to be in Clark

CLARK — The Republican Committee of Union County is hosting a Candidates' Forum for the Republican Candidates for Governor on Wednesday, March 2 at 7:30 p.m. at the Grand Centurion at 440 Madison Hill Road in Clark.

Invited guests include GOP Gubernatorial Candidates Todd Caliguire, Paul DiGaetano, Doug Forrester, Steve Longan, John Murphy, Robert Schroeder and Bret Schundler.

This event is open to the public and the press is invited. Tickets are \$25/person and include open bar and hors d'oeuvres.

For reservations, call (908) 789-0200. Tickets will be available at the door. For more information, please call Phil Morin at (908) 789-0200.



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