

Westfield Campaign Release

Penalties Are Required For Violating Tree Ordinance

By TOM BIGOSINSKI
Candidate 4th Ward Council

How many times has a builder come into Westfield, recklessly developed into one of our neighborhoods, removed healthy trees, and left nothing behind but the sawdust and a McMansion?

As a member of the Westfield Tree Preservation Commission since January 2004, I have conducted physical inspections all over Westfield of landscapes like the one pictured. In every Westfield neighborhood, scenes similar to this are far too common.

In addition to beautifying our neighborhoods and adding visual interest, trees filter pollutants from the air, absorb water that helps prevent flooding and soil erosion and provide shade, privacy and tranquility.

The value of healthy vibrant trees to a neighborhood is echoed by Westfield schoolchildren. I planted a red oak at the McKinley Elementary School this past Arbor Day with enthusiastic children from the Early Act program, and their appreciation for trees should not be lost on Town Hall.

The indiscriminate and uncontrolled destruction of trees is unacceptable, and I propose a specific common-sense solution to stem the tide of trees lost as a result of careless building on undeveloped lots and teardowns. The municipal code should be changed. The Tree Preservation Ordinance is far too limited and needs to be given teeth. If a developer comes into Westfield and violates town law, or is reckless during construction, he or she should have to pay a significant fine.

The Tree Preservation Ordinance is deficient in several respects. For example, the town code only permits a maximum monetary penalty of \$500 for each unauthorized tree removal; whereas, neighboring towns' ordinances impose penalties of up to \$1,000.

If a developer wants to remove 10 large trees in order to transform a beautiful thickly-wooded property into a bald platform for an oversized McMansion, will a \$5,000 penalty serve as a meaningful disincentive? Of course not, especially for a new 6-bedroom house that is likely to sell for well into seven figures.

The municipal ordinance should also be revised to protect trees from being damaged by heavy machinery during construction. Presently, builders are not required to place barriers protecting tree roots from cranes, backhoes or large piles of dirt. This simple step would prevent an otherwise healthy tree from dying a few years later, or decaying to a point where limbs and branches fall unexpectedly.

Walking throughout the Fourth Ward, I have spoken to many citizens about the need to preserve Westfield's unmatched beauty. The residents fail to understand why properties cannot be developed responsibly without healthy trees being compromised, nuisances to the neighbors being minimized, and the community's character being preserved. However, residents want creative solutions that will not hit them squarely in the wallet.

I intend to bring to the town council a genuine interest in the continued vitality of one of Westfield's precious natural assets. With little effort and no cost, we can preserve our healthy, mature trees. The first steps are broadening the TPC's jurisdiction and revising the municipal code to include stiffer fines for reckless development.

Voters in the Fourth Ward and elsewhere are urged to discuss with me their shared interest in responsible development, beautifying the town, and other issues or concerns by phone (908) 232-6606 or email at: Bigo_For_Council@Comcast.net.



INTERNS...Ed Kramkowski of Westfield receives recognition at an awards luncheon along with the other interns that served the 21st Legislative District during the summer. Pictured, left to right, are: Assemblyman Eric Munoz, Ed Kramkowski, Senator Tom Kean, Jr., and Assemblyman Jon Bramnick.

Summer Interns Praised For Service to 21st District

WESTFIELD — Senator Tom Kean, Jr., Assemblyman Eric Munoz and Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21) recently honored interns who volunteered in their Westfield and Summit offices this year during a luncheon at Ferraro's Restaurant in Westfield. All participants received a citation signed by the legislators acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

"Each and every year we are fortunate to have a number of well informed and highly motivated students volunteer their time to work in our busy legislative offices," said Sen. Kean. "Their eagerness, enthusiasm, and familiarity with various issues facing our state are a direct reflection of the high quality education students are receiving in our schools."

The internship program is intended to help students gain a better understanding of the legislative process while cultivating their interest in governmental service. "We make every effort to tailor the internship experience to the student's interests in conjunction with the needs of our district offices. Hopefully, by interning in our office, a student gains a better understanding and appreciation for the relationship between legislator and constituent," said Asm. Munoz.

Asm. Bramnick said that they were an exceptional group of students that were more than willing to undertake any assignment given to them. "Not only were they eager to take on the responsibility, they were more than capable of doing the work. I was very impressed with their positive attitudes and professional demeanor," he said.

Mihal Gross of Livingston, who will be a sophomore this fall at Brandeis University, said, "As an introduction to government, I gained both knowledge and experience in the legislative process and believe that it was a very worthwhile experience. I am grateful for the opportunity that was given to me and I encourage anyone interested in government to apply for an internship."

To learn more about internship opportunities please contact the Westfield office at (908) 232-3673 or the Summit office at (908) 918-0414.

The interns for the past year were: Short Hills: Lisa Adler, Margaret Chapman, Anne Feely and Amanda Greenbaum.

Westfield: Garrett Cockren, Katelin Conroy, Kevin Devaney, Allie Fleder, Ryan Gundrum, Ed Kramkowski, Michelle Kupper-Smith, Jim McCabe, James Morton, Dina Regab, Hope Skibitsky and Satya Tagat.



TREES NEED PROTECTION...Westfield candidate for 4th Ward Council Tom Bigosinski believes ordinances need to be strengthened to protect trees during development such as shown above.

Schering-Plough to Provide Donations for Relief Effort

KENILWORTH — Schering-Plough Corporation, last week, announced that it would make a \$500,000 cash contribution and provide \$2 million (wholesale value) in medicines and other products in support of the massive relief effort under way to help victims of Hurricane Katrina.

In response to a request from the American Red Cross, the company has already contributed 100,000 units of Coppertone sunscreen.

In addition, Schering-Plough is putting in place a special employee-matching gifts program for employ-

ees to contribute to the relief effort. The company will match employee contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Colleagues will be able to select from a number of charitable organizations to receive their donations.

"We are all deeply saddened by the loss of life and massive destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina," said Fred Hassan, Schering-Plough Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "Schering-Plough is proud to be able to contribute to the relief efforts to assist victims of this disaster, which now appears to be among the worst natural catastrophes in the nation's history."

GW Mayor McCarthy Holds Saturday Hours

GARWOOD — Garwood Mayor Dennis McCarthy will hold his monthly Mayor's Saturday hours from 10 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, September 10 at the Garwood Municipal Building at 403 South Avenue.

Residents are invited to stop by to discuss any concerns they have, or just to say hello and meet the mayor. For more information, please call (908) 789-0710.

County to Remember POW/MIA on Sept. 16

ELIZABETH — All veterans and residents of Union County are invited to attend and participate in the annual POW/MIA Remembrance Day Ceremony on Friday, September 16 on the front steps of the Union County Courthouse on Broad Street in Elizabeth. The ceremony will begin at 11:15 a.m.

Girl Scout to Conduct Fitness Day For Kids

WESTFIELD — Ilene Goodman, a Girl Scout from Westfield High School, will present a fitness and nutrition day for children eight to 11 years old entitled "Be A Better You" as her Gold Project.

This free event will take place on Sunday, September 18, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Roosevelt Intermediate School Track & Field and the Westfield Area "Y."

Participants at this Girl Scout and Westfield Area "Y" sponsored event will learn how to live healthier with field games and preparing a nutritious snack. A nutritionist and fitness expert will be on hand to offer information. Attendees also will leave with a prize.

This project is part of Ilene's requirements for attaining the Gold Award — the highest award offered in Girl Scouting. It is necessary for interested individuals to respond in advance. They may do so by calling Ilene or Susan at (908) 233-6991.



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The WF Optimist Club Begins a New Season

WESTFIELD — As the Optimist Club of Westfield begins its 17th year this month, it draws on a national tradition of service to youth. Optimist clubs have been serving their communities, particularly their young people, for over 90 years.

Since the Westfield chapter was formed in 1989, the men and women who are its members have supported community needs in a variety of ways:

They have helped bring to life 16 Project Graduation "Bashes" — safe, alcohol-free, all-night graduation parties for Westfield High School seniors.

They assemble and distribute holiday food baskets for the neediest citizens. Last year alone, with the help of local businesses like Kings of Garwood, Lancaster's, Vance Florists and Brummer's Chocolates, the organization created holiday cheer for 88 Westfield families with baskets.

By supporting Westfield High School's 9th grade transition community service project, over 1,000

unused coats were put to good use rather than discarded.

Junior Optimists have been part of the "frigit" crew at the Recreation Commission's annual Haunted House and part of the "smile" crew at the Sunrise Assisted Care facility.

This past season, the Optimist Club honored two outstanding teachers, Liz Sheuerer of Roosevelt Intermediate School and Kathy Zippler of Edison Intermediate, with the Optimist Intermediate School Teacher award.

Optimists recognized volunteers in the community with the 2005 Youth Volunteer (Gregory Ryan, Jr.) and Friend of Youth (Jack Martin and Rich Hughes) awards.

Members of the community are invited to join the Optimist Club and meet other community-minded people at the next meeting, 7 p.m., Wednesday, September 14, at Ferraro's, as the organization begins a new season of civic activities. Visit www.westfieldnj.com/optimist for more information on how to become an Optimist.

GRAND OPENING!

Please join us for the Grand Opening of our Earthchild Store on **September 13, 2005** at **366 Park Ave. Scotch Plains, NJ 07076** (Attached to the Stage House Restaurant) (908) 322-2875

Earthchild is a unique, durable line made of 100% preshrunk English cotton, manufactured in Cape Town, South Africa.

Fashion Show

To show our fall/winter line, we are having a fashion show at **Snuffy's Pantagis Renaissance** Park & Mountain Ave. Scotch Plains, NJ 07076 (On Route 22)

Date: September 10, 2005
Time: 10:00am Fashion Show
10:00am - 1:00pm Sale

Everyone is welcome. So please join us.

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excludes Pride Go-Go

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