



AND THEY'RE OFF (August 3)...Runners race down East Broad Street at the start of the fifth annual Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) 5K & Pizza Extravaganza; NATURE THRIVES (October 26)...A Mountainside resident spots two coyotes in the backyard of her Coles Avenue property. Mountainside Mayor Robert Vigilanti warned of coyote sightings in the borough. Mountainside resident Patrick Thomas, the curator of mammals at the Bronx Zoo, is gathering information to help residents protect themselves, their families and their pets; TEEING OFF (October 19)...Scotch Plains Mayor Marty Marks tees off Saturday during the grand opening of the newly opened miniature golf range at the Scotch Hills Golf Course in Scotch Plains; MAP QUEST (September 14)...Nearly 10 years after finding the original brochure used by The Wychwood Corporation to sell Wychwood properties, former Westfield resident George Pakenham, collaborated with a map artist and had it restored; BREAKING GROUND (October 19)...Fanwood officials break ground for Station Mews of Fanwood. The three-story, mixed-use redevelopment project at 234 South Avenue will include retail stores on the ground floor, with condominium units on the second and third floors. Breaking ground, from left to right, are: owner Helen Ling, Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr, architect Rocco Campanella, of Architecture Plus P.C. in Raritan and Planning Board Chairman Greg Cummings.

## The Year in Review 2006: Part 2 - July to December

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an investigation of actions of its employees, including Union County Freeholder Angel Estrada in his role as manager of the Elizabeth Motor Vehicle Agency in assisting Ms. Farber and Mr. Goore. The MVC report was turned over to the State Ethics Commission for review.

Union County assistant prosecutors appeared at a freeholders' meeting to seek a better contract.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Westfield

The traffic light at the intersection of Central Avenue, East Broad Street and Mountain Avenue became operational.

Eight residents of two apartment buildings were evacuated for three hours on September 3 following a gas explosion in the basement of Ferraro's Restaurant at 14 Elm Street. The restaurant's opening was delayed until town health and construction offi-



ON THE MARCH (October 26)...Front row, left to right, Officer Vincent Piano, Detective Lisa Perrotta, Officer Tom Ostrander, Sergeant Scott Rodger, Police Benevolent Association President Leo Lugo and Patrolman Kevin O'Keefe march down North Avenue in Westfield to voice concerns about contract negotiations.

cially approved the repairs and permitted the establishment to open for business.

The BOE voted in favor of a \$9.4-million bond referendum to create an early childhood center and central kindergarten school at Lincoln School, additions to the cafeteria and library at Roosevelt Intermediate School and new windows at Edison Intermediate School.

The town hired resident Jamie Lynn Drohan, a full-time producer on Union's TV-34 and a CN8 "Newsmakers" host, as TV-36 director of operations.

#### Scotch Plains

Four township police officers who filed a reverse-discrimination lawsuit against the township police department, a former African American police chief and the chief's white predecessor, reached a settlement under which they would each receive a \$25,000 payment, while their attorney would receive \$210,000 in legal fees.

Governor Corzine nominated New Jersey Associate Supreme Court Justice James Zazzali of Rumson to serve as the court's Chief Justice. Mr. Zazzali, a Democrat, is a former state attorney general and replaced Chief Justice Deborah Poritz, a Republican, upon her retirement in October. He is the first cousin of Ed Zazzali, chairman of the Scotch Plains Recreation Commission.

#### Garwood

The BOE approved a measure regarding school lunch purchases. Board member Gary Maher said some personal checks students have paid with have bounced, causing the district to lose money. The new regulation adopted a "one strike and you're out" policy - if a check bounces, that student would then have to pay in cash from that point on and cover both the bad check and bank fees.

#### Mountainside

Long-time resident Bruce Dickerson died on September 12. His dedication to the borough dates back



David Samsky for The Leader and The Times HARLEY'S ANGEL (September 21)...Thousands joined in New Jersey Rolling Thunder's "Ride for Freedom XI" from Warinanco Park in Roselle to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Holmdel.

to 1970, when he was appointed as the borough's insurance representative. He was active with the Mountainside Rotary Club.

The BOE approved 2006-2007 "School Level Objectives" to raise students' scores on state exams in various subject areas.

#### Regional

County officials would not comment at a freeholders' meeting on whether the purchase of safety-monitoring devices for Paratransit vehicles came in response to a lawsuit filed by the family of Plainfield man who died after falling off a Paratransit vehicle.

According to a lawsuit filed by Patricia McCloud, the sister of Adrian Riordan, Mr. Riordan fell off a Paratransit bus on June 4, 2004 on Myrtle Street in Roselle and died two days later. The suit, filed June 5 in State Superior Court in Elizabeth, names the county and the Paratransit system within the Department of

room, office and storage facility at the Highland Swim Club.

Mayor Martin Marks said he hoped plans for expanded baseball fields at Brookside Park would be ready for discussion early in 2007.

The recreation commission celebrated the grand opening of the Scotch Hills Country Club Mini Golf Course, which it expects to generate in excess of \$100,000 a year.

A month after approving a bond ordinance to finance the purchase of the upper half of Cooper Road island, the township council introduced a zoning ordinance to change the designation of that half of the property to a "conservation zone" to make the whole island off-limits to development.

#### Fanwood

Rosemary Dunlap admitted in open court that she stabbed her ex-husband, Fanwood Memorial Library Director Dan Weiss, in the neck on August 1, 2005. Ms. Dunlap, a local realtor, faces four years in state prison when sentenced before State Superior Court Judge William Wertheimer at the Union County Courthouse on January 12 on the charge of aggravated assault. Ms. Dunlap could have faced 30 years in jail on that charge as well as charges of attempted murder and unlawful possession of a weapon - an eight-inch steak knife.

Mayor Colleen Mahr and the borough council approved a 25-cent increase in the \$3 train station daily parking-permit fee in response to the state's new sales-tax measures.

The planning board received a revised application from Robert Kraus of Fanwood Plaza Partners to put a branch of the Town Bank and a Goddard Daycare Center at 314 South Avenue. The revised plan moved the building farther up to accommodate a fire lane in the rear of the building.

#### Garwood

The borough council discussed a plan by James Ward, the developer of the former St. Anne's School property, to relocate Hillcrest Academy South in Westfield to the site. A public meeting was scheduled for October 27, but Mr. Ward later cancelled it.

#### Mountainside

The borough council discussed a plan to encourage borough employees to waive health benefits. Mayor Robert Vigilanti recommended offering employees 50 percent of what their health benefits plan would cost, instead of the \$2,500 the plan had called for, for a greater financial incentive.

Police Chief James Debbie announced the takedown of an "enormous" credit-card skimming operation that he said netted nearly \$400,000 from unsuspecting victims.

#### Regional

The Union County freeholders unveiled the \$5.9-million, 24,700-square-foot expanded Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside.

The freeholders approved a plan for the county to assume collection of deer carcasses from local roads, at a cost of \$10,000 per year, after the state said it would no longer provide the service.

The freeholders adopted an ordinance prohibiting "registered sex offenders from loitering within 300 feet of any county-owned playgrounds." The board passed a resolution to adopt a "registered sexual offender map" in December.

#### NOVEMBER

##### Westfield

John Stasi was hired by the district as director of human resources at an annual salary of \$100,000.

On Veterans Day, November 11,

Boy Scouts and the Westfield Veterans of Foreign Wars dedicated Westfield's new World War II Memorial Plaza. Tom Hogaboom organized the memorial's creation for his Eagle Scout Project.

The Town of Westfield and Westfield Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA) No. 30 reached an agreement on a five-year contract. The previous contract expired on December 31, 2003. The agreement was the town's first reached through binding arbitration.

Contract talks between Westfield PBA Local 90 and the Town of Westfield were put on hold pending a December negotiating session, which resulted in a tentative settlement. The previous PBA contract expired December 31, 2005. PBA members attended council meetings and marched downtown in their efforts to reach a new pact.

Scotch Plains resident William McMeekan, Jr. filed a lawsuit against Westfield's former fire chief John Castellano and current Town Administrator Jim Gildea, alleging his application to become a volunteer firefighter was delayed beyond the point at which he could become a paid firefighter due to age. He had dropped a civil rights complaint against the town in September.

The town council's Code Review and Town Property Committee held a meeting concerning a proposed 140-foot cell tower, ultimately deciding it was "not the right time or location" to pursue it. Verizon's proposed tower would have been located at Firehouse Two on Central Avenue.

Plans were unveiled for the first remodeling at the Westfield Memorial Library in the two-decade history of the East Broad Street building.

The BOE approved the extension of interim WHS Principal Dennis Fyffe's contract for the 2007-2008 academic year. Mr. Fyffe will earn \$675 per day.

#### Scotch Plains

John's Meat Market on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains was chosen by the Rothman Institute at Fairleigh Dickinson University as the New Jersey Family Business of the Year. John Losavio began the business in 1939.

The township council said it would likely take action in January to restrict school-day parking to homeowners on streets surrounding SPFHs in the wake of increasing complaints from residents about excessive student parking in those areas.

#### Fanwood

The borough council delayed the implementation of a previously approved ordinance that would require new and existing businesses to be locally licensed.

The Borough of Fanwood and the PBA Local 123 held a second contract mediation at the end of November. The 21 members of the police department had been working under the previous contract, which expired on January 1.

The Fanwood Recreation Commission hired Mary Pembroke as assistant recreation director and Jamie Tannenbaum as secretary.

#### Mountainside

The BOE discussed a new first-grade learning model. Beechwood Elementary School teacher Annie Corley presented "The Basic School" model to the board, which stresses cross-curriculum learning.

The borough received a check from the Union County freeholders for \$102,500 from the county's Kids Recreation Trust Fund. Mayor Vigilanti said the money would be used to fund lighting at the Pony League field at Deerfield School, resurfacing of tennis courts and the fitness trail near Borough Hall and the purchase of

youth baseball equipment. The money will also go towards padding the Beechwood School gymnasium walls.

#### Regional

The county freeholders doled out \$2 million in grants to 20 of the county's 21 municipalities, as part of the Kids Recreation Trust Fund, funded through the county's Open Space, Recreation and Historic Preservation Trust Fund.

The county unveiled its revamped website with a "how to vote" section.

Incumbent Robert Menendez (D) defeated Westfield resident Tom

Kean, Jr. (R) in the race for the United States Senate, while incumbent Mike Ferguson (R) defeated Linda Stender (D) of Fanwood to hold onto his House seat, despite his party's loss of both houses of Congress to the Democrats.

Incumbent Democratic Freeholders Al Mirabella, Deborah Scanlon and Chester Holmes defeated Republican challengers Diane Barabas, Patricia Quattrocchi and Glenn Mortimer and independent Melvin Cody.

The Union County Republican Committee (UCRC) sent a formal complaint to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and the New Jersey Election Law Enforcement Commission (ELEC), stating that the Union County Alliance's *Union County Directions* publication, mailed just prior to Election Day, "[failed] to comply with FEC and ELEC regulations, including the failure to file as a continuing political committee under New Jersey election law."

New Jersey's three alternative political parties - the Green Party, Conservative Party and Libertarian Party - filed a lawsuit against the State, the State Division of Elections and the Attorney General regarding state election laws, which they say discriminate against independent-party candidates.

#### DECEMBER

##### Westfield

The state approved the \$9.4-million bond referendum for January 23, 2007.

The owner of the Wychwood South Gatehouse property on Canterbury Lane proposed a subdivision and development on the property. The application, originally scheduled for January 4, was postponed after it was determined that more variances were needed. The applicant also had to re-notify residents by mail of the changed application.

#### Scotch Plains

Fire department officials presented proposals to the council for renovations to the department's two firehouses, neither of which have had meaningful upgrades in decades.

The directors of the Scotch Plains and Fanwood libraries said they plan to apply for a grant to finance a feasibility study of merging the two services.

Township public works director Charles Cerami was indicted in Hunterdon County on December 12 for allegedly keeping at least \$200 from scrap metal sales during his tenure as public works director in Clinton Township. He faces a maximum fine of \$150,000, five to 10 years in jail or both.

#### Garwood

Developer James Ward broke off negotiations to lease the former St. Anne's School on Second Avenue to the UCESC for the new home of the Hillcrest Academy North.

#### Mountainside

Mayor Vigilanti announced the hiring of new chief financial officer (CFO) Jill Goode. Her one-year \$43,000 contract begins January 1.

#### Regional

The Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority told local mayors that municipal assessments would double by 2010.

The county freeholders said the legislation for a proposed county administrative school district, whereby all superintendents in the county would be abolished, would preclude Union County from participating because it has more than one Abbott district. Westfield Superintendent of Schools William Foley said the Garden State Coalition of Schools had informed him that Union County would be the pilot county. The legislation was stalled in Trenton, but is to be addressed again on January 8.

County officials said a draft of the Union County Bicycle Master Plan should be completed by March.

Hearings began on the state's plan to change the way school aid is calculated. The Department of Education's report, "The Cost of Education," drew opposition at a hearing held at Kean University.

County department heads received raises from the freeholders ranging from 2.75 to 4.88 percent retroactive to January 1. The county sheriff, clerk and surrogate received 3.75 percent raises effective January 2007.

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