



Happy Birthday America

OUR 116th YEAR - ISSUE NO. 26-2006 USPS 680020 Periodical - Postage Paid at Westfield, N.J. Thursday, June 29, 2006 Published Every Thursday Since September 3, 1890 (908) 232-4407 www.goleader.com press@goleader.com SIXTY CENTS

Westfield Board of Ed. Approves Fyffe as WHS Interim Principal

By MEGHAN GILL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — In a special meeting held Tuesday evening, the board of education unanimously approved the appointment of Dennis Fyffe as interim principal of Westfield High School. Mr. Fyffe will be paid \$650 per day for the one-year contracted position, commencing July 1. He comes to Westfield with 35 years of experience, most recently serving as interim superintendent of schools for the Long Beach Island Board of Education. He was superintendent of schools in Sayreville from 2000 through 2005, having first served as the assistant superintendent from 1997 through 2000.

According to a press release obtained by *The Westfield Leader*, his experience at the high-school level includes serving as principal of Moorestown High School from 1986 to 1989. He was principal at Sayreville War Memorial High School from 1989 through 1997.

He was appointed assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at Summit High School from 1979 through 1986 and served in both administrative and teaching roles at South Brunswick High School from 1972 through 1979, according to the press release.

Mr. Fyffe, who resides in West Windsor, earned his master's degree in administration and supervision from Rutgers University and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English at Montclair State College (now a university).

"Dennis comes to us with glowing recommendations from the administrators, boards of education and colleagues with whom he has worked in the last several years," Superintendent of Westfield Public Schools William Foley said.

"We are fortunate to have such an experienced and admired high-school leader willing to serve as interim until our national search for a permanent replacement for Dr. Petix is completed," Mr. Foley said.

Assistant Superintendent Margaret

Local Woman Faces Charges In Stabbing

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Police have charged a Westfield woman in the stabbing of a fellow town resident that occurred on June 20 as the two argued on the 200 block of Windsor Avenue.

Sergeant Scott Rodger of the Westfield Police Department told *The Westfield Leader* Tuesday that the suspect, Danielle Woods, 34, turned herself in at 1:45 p.m. last Thursday at Westfield police headquarters.

According to Sergeant Rodger, Woods allegedly stabbed the 20-year-old victim with a knife at about 10 p.m. during what began as a verbal altercation, leaving the victim with wounds to the left arm, both shoulders and facial area. Woods reportedly left the scene before police arrived. The victim was treated at Overlook Hospital in Summit and released.

Woods has been charged with aggravated assault, unlawful possession of a weapon and possession of a weapon for unlawful purpose. She was transported to the Union County jail, with bail set at \$10,000.

Sergeant Rodger said the exact motive for the attack is still unknown, adding that the matter remains under investigation.

Lord & Taylor Chain Sold; Westfield Store to Remain

By CASSIE LO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Federated Department Stores, Inc. last week sold its Lord & Taylor stores to National Realty & Development Corp. (NRDC) Equity Partners for \$1.2 billion in cash. The deal was finalized on June 22 and is expected to close in the third quarter of 2006, company officials said.

The Lord & Taylor chain includes 48 stores scattered throughout the East Coast and the Midwest, and is distributed in Wilkes-Barre, PA. The North Avenue store in Westfield is one of the Lord & Taylor's largest stores.

Federated bought the 180-year-old department store chain in 2005 when it merged with May Department Stores. May bought Lord & Taylor in 1986.

According to a June 22 article in *The New York Times*, the Lord & Taylor chain had to shut down 32

Dolan replaced Mr. Foley at the meeting and introduced Mr. Fyffe to the board and members of the public. According to his references, he is "highly intelligent and insightful... (with) easy humor and enthusiasm," she said.



WELCOME... Board of Education President Anne Riegel welcomes Westfield High School Interim Principal Dennis Fyffe. He will start July 1.

"You don't do high school without a sense of humor," Mr. Fyffe said to the board. "I will be an active member of the school community during my time here."

Mr. Fyffe confirmed to *The Leader* that he is retired and will come out of retirement to fulfill a need for Westfield; he said he will not pursue the full-time position.

The board was compelled to hire an interim principal because Mr. Petix's

contract expires on Friday, June 30, and Anthony Akey, Summit High School assistant principal, declined the principalship offer from the district after initially accepting the job.

The board settled a three-year contract with the Westfield Association of Administrators and Supervisors (WAAS), allowing for an annual salary increase of 4 percent.

The contract includes the automatic enrollment in Point of Service (POS) health plan for all new administrators.

Administrators will no longer be entitled to enroll their children in the schools for free if they live out of the district as of July 1. Board President Anne Riegel said that those students who are already enrolled in the district will have to pay tuition.

The board approved the appointment of Sheryl Berkowitz as supervisor of gifted-and-talented programs and assistant principal of Wilson School.

It also approved the appointment of Anita O'Neal as special-education supervisor for grades nine through 12 and Mr. Robert Roth as world languages supervisor for grades kindergarten through 12, a 10.5-month contract based upon the annual salary of \$120,000.

The board will not meet again until August.

Memorial Park Renovation Plans Unveiled During Public Hearing

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — New concept plans for the redesign of Westfield Memorial Park were unveiled to the public at a special meeting hosted by the Recreation Commission on Wednesday, June 21 at Westfield Town Hall.

Recreation Director Bruce Kaufman introduced the plans to a gathering of two dozen residents, mostly from the neighborhood surrounding the park. Several members of the town council, the recreation commission and other town officials were also in attendance. Robert Lynes, a representative from the architectural firm that designed the plans, Hatch, Mott and MacDonald of Millburn, was also on hand to answer any questions. Mr. Lynes is also a Westfield resident who has frequented the park and is familiar with the recreational needs of the town, Mr. Kaufman told the audience.

Preliminary plans for the renovation of Memorial Park include reconfiguring and extending the existing softball diamonds to enable more teams to play simultaneously. By reconfiguring the diamonds, a half-acre of green space will be added to the existing half acre, Mr. Kaufman said. This will also expand the existing multi-purpose field to be entirely on green space instead of extending into the clay softball diamonds.

The tennis courts will be moved in order to turn the existing tennis courts into additional parking and additional green space for fields. A basketball court will be added as well as a pathway surrounding the park. The commission is considering connecting the pathway to a path that surrounds neighboring Brookside Park in Scotch Plains. Hatch, Mott and MacDonald also designed the renovations for that park.

The redesign of the ball fields will

poorly performing stores in 2003. NRDC owns and manages many shopping centers nationwide, including Linens 'N Things.

"NRDC's plan is to continue to operate Lord & Taylor the way it is," an NRDC spokesperson told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* last week. According to a press statement released last week, "NRDC's strategy going forward will be to leverage the strong Lord & Taylor brand with its existing management and store teams to continue operating Lord & Taylor as an upscale fashion retailer."

"We are excited about the future operating prospects of the business," said NRDC Principal Robert Baker in a press release issued by the company. Sherry Cronin, Downtown Westfield Corp. Exec. Dir. said, "Everything will remain status quo."

extend the diamonds 120 feet to the west, eliminating an area of woodlands behind several homes that front onto North Scotch Plains Avenue. No lighting and no sound amplification were planned, Mr. Kaufman assured the residents.

Neighboring residents said that they opposed the extension of the softball fields, which would they said would take away from the privacy and quality of life in their backyards.

Mr. Kaufman explained to the residents the need for the renovations was due to the large "influx" of children, putting a "strain" on the town's athletic programs. He said increase in population has led to an increased demand for athletic fields, he said. The current proposal was chosen from among 16 alternate plans and was determined to make the most efficient use of the space, he said. By reconfiguring the baseball diamonds, all four baseball diamonds could be used simultaneously, Mr. Kaufman said. He added that the plan would eliminate as few trees as possible and would



RAIN OR SHINE... The WHS class of 2006 gathers in the armory for graduation ceremonies last Thursday. Due to inclement weather, the graduation could not be held on the field behind the school, where it was originally scheduled to take place.

WHS Graduates Class of 2006 In Petix's Final Commencement

By CASSIE LO
Specially written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Despite the heat, hundreds of people turned out for Westfield High School's (WHS) commencement, held June 22 at 6 p.m. at the National Guard Armory.

The 422 members of the class of 2006 received a standing ovation from the crowd as they filed in to "Pomp

and Circumstance," played by the WHS Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Orchestra and Concert Choir. Senior Nick Williams sang a solo.

Class Vice President Samantha

ing about his time at WHS.

"Overall I feel like our years here have been well spent and we have all learned great life lessons."

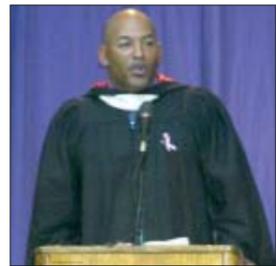
Maurice then riled up the class by saying, "don't question if we're ready for college, question if college is ready for us. We're not going out with a bang; we're going out with an explosion."

Selected speaker Jesse Garfinkel spoke about his optimism for the future when he said, "Four short years have turned so many of us into the leaders of tomorrow."

WHS Principal Robert Petix, in his final graduation speech, asked the students to rise and applaud their parents to show their appreciation. He then had the 26 students who received National Merit recognition rise, along with the 40 Bloustein scholars, 137 members of the National Honor Society and 150 students who received the President's Education Award.

Two students in the class of 2006 had perfect attendance; Lucy Frontling achieved perfect attendance for the four years of high school

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Harold "Butch" Woolfolk

Miller led the Flag Salute and seniors Stephen Markowski and Danielle Partenope conducted the band and choir for "America, The Beautiful."

Once seated, the class heard speeches from Class Co-Presidents Maurice Blackmon and Andrew Shaffer. Andrew began by reminis-

ing about his time at WHS.

BOE Approves Central Kindergarten for Westfield

By MEGHAN GILL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Based upon the recommendations of the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Enrollment (CACE), the board of education last Wednesday night unanimously approved a proposal to renovate Lincoln School to become the district-wide "early childhood center."

This proposal, with a price tag of \$5,828,707, would be presented to the public as a bond in December 2006.

"I was surprised to see the radical difference in cost for this option," Superintendent Foley said, referring to the \$8,112,960 it would cost to add early childhood centers to both Jefferson and Washington schools. "We have an immediate need now. Lincoln seems to fit that. I think it is a good idea that the railroad tracks don't become a barrier to this town. We are one school system; we are one town," Foley said.

Bob Berman, business administrator for the district, said that the Lincoln School renovation will add 12 classrooms at 840 square feet, one classroom at 720 square feet, two at 630 square feet, and two at 400 square feet.

Some renovations include installation of a three-stop elevator, replacing windows, doors, boiler, hot water heater, ventilation, sidewalks and ramps.

He further stated that the building will need new electrical service, a new generator and emergency power, new fire alarm system and technology infrastructure.

Operating costs for the early childhood center are estimated to be

include extensive landscape buffering.

Assistant Town Engineer, Kris McAloon addressed the residents regarding a proposed sidewalk to be installed along North Scotch Plains Avenue, extending from West Broad Street to South Avenue. The purpose of the sidewalk, he said, was to keep pedestrian flow near the park and to minimize the intersection crossings for park users so they would not have to walk in the street as they currently do.

Several of the neighborhood residents voiced their objections to the sidewalk, which they said would encourage more users to park their cars along North Scotch Plains Avenue. Residents said that field users tended to block their driveways, trespass through their yards and create traffic and safety hazards in the street during games. Residents reported that field users frequently dropped their children off on the wrong side of the street, allowing their children to run across North Scotch Plains Avenue,

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Area Fireworks Schedule

- Monday, July 3**
New Providence
New Providence High School on Pioneer Drive. Fireworks following 8:15 to 9:45 p.m. concert.
- Clark**
Arthur L. Johnson High School on Westfield Avenue. Fireworks at 9 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 4**
Mountainside
Deerfield School on Central Avenue. Fireworks at dusk.
- Cranford**
Nomahegan Park on Springfield Avenue. Fireworks at 9 p.m.
- Summit**
Soldiers Memorial Field off of Ashland Avenue. Fireworks at 9:15 p.m.
- Plainfield**
Cedar Brook Park, located at Park Avenue and Pemberton Avenue. Fireworks at 9 p.m.
- Union**
Biertempfel Park, located on Winslow Avenue. Fireworks at dusk.
- Kenilworth**
David Brearly High School on Monroe Avenue. Fireworks at 9 p.m.
- Springfield**
Sandmeier School Grounds on South Springfield Avenue. Fireworks at dusk.

Council to Increase Café, Limousine, Filming Fees

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — At Tuesday's conference session, the Westfield town council agreed to raise certain fees related to sidewalk cafés, limousine and filming licenses. In addition, the Code Review and Town Property Committee gave an update on its plan to curtail overdevelopment and will name a committee to incorporate planning-board recommendations.

First Ward Councilman Peter Echausse, chairman of the Finance Policy Committee, said his committee looked at amending fees the town has oversight on. He presented a plan that would look to increase revenue to the town by increasing the limousine license fee from \$10 to \$50, the application fee to film in town from \$50 to \$100 and the per-day filming fee on town right of ways from \$50 to \$1,000. He said the rise in the application and filming fees only pertains to big commercial vendors, not local residents.

The councilman also suggested that instead of a flat \$100-per-year permit fee for sidewalk cafés the town adopt Summit's model of a per-seat fee. Under the per-seat fee, a restaurant pays \$100 if it seats 10 or less people outdoors. The costs rise to \$250 for

establishments offering 11 to 25 seats; \$350 for those with 26 to 50 chairs and \$425 for those seating more than 50 people. Council members gave consent to the fee increases.

Fourth Ward Councilman and Code Review and Town Property Committee Chairman Jim Foerst recommended a "smaller, focused" ad-hoc committee appointed by the mayor to further the overdevelopment ordinance. He suggested the committee consist of two council people (one being himself), members of the Planning, Adjustment and Architectural Review boards, plus an architect and an attorney. He said the committee would not investigate "wholesale" changes to the ordinance or reexamine "whether there's an overdevelopment issue."

The council will approve demolitions to three dwellings, including 238 Canterbury Road, 645 Willow Grove

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Newspaper Office Closed for July 4

The newspaper office will be closed Tuesday, July 4. Please provide submittals as early as possible for next week's publication. E-mail editor@goleader.com.



ONE LAST SONG... Graduating members of the WHS Concert Choir sing Rogers and Hammerstein's "You'll Never Walk Alone" under the direction of vocal teacher Sharon Reynolds.

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