

Westfield Foundation Holds Annual Meeting, Names New Trustees

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Foundation recently held its annual meeting to report on its 2005 activities and to honor members leaving the board, as well as to welcome a new board president and five new trustees.

Grant recipients UCPC Behavioral Health Care, The Martin Luther King, Jr., Association and the Little Opera Company reported on grants they had received from the Foundation in 2005 and the Little Opera Company performed a few scenes from the opera *Figaro*.

The annual meeting is a means for the foundation to showcase its philanthropy within the Westfield area. The Foundation, created in 1975 with an initial balance of \$2,000, has grown to a current value close to \$10 million. In his report, Foundation President David Owens highlighted the establishment of three new funds, which will benefit the Westfield Symphony Orchestra, Westfield Community Center as well as a new scholarship fund for Westfield High School students.

Mr. Owens also offered his resignation as president of the Foundation, having completed his second, three-year term on the board. Mr. Owens has been a member of the foundation for six years and has served as grants chairman, vice-president and president.

Executive Director Betsy Chance recognized the service of retiring trustees Pam McClure, Andrea McDermott, David Molowa, Ellen Albertson and Mr. Owens. Ms. Chance then handed the gavel to the newly-appointed president, Barbara Doyle Frantz.

Ms. Frantz, an 11-year resident, is an attorney and has been a trustee of the foundation for four years. She previously served as vice-president and chairman of the grants committee.

New trustees joining the board are

Tony Cook, Joseph DeMaio, Victoria Wicks, Miriam Span and Ingrid McKinley. Mr. Cook, a life-long Westfield resident, is a senior vice-president of W.P. Stewart Asset Management Inc and is Westfield 'Y' board member, chairing the Investment Committee and the 'Y' Cares annual fund drive.

A 30-year resident, Mr. DeMaio is an oral surgeon in Westfield. He and his wife, Inge, have three sons. Mr. DeMaio is a volunteer at Overlook Hospital in Summit in the hospital's residency program and is a former member of the Westfield Jaycees and a founding member of the Westfield Optimist Club.

Ms. Wicks, a 12-year resident, is director of public policy for Sanofi-Aventis Pharmaceuticals. She has been a volunteer at the First Congregational Church in Westfield and serves as vice-chairman of the Bates College Board of Trustees and as co-chairman of the Sanofi-Aventis

Women's Network.

Ms. Span is an attorney who recently retired as a State Superior Court judge, a position she held for 21 years. A 35-year resident, she is of-counsel to the law firm of Gomperts and Braun as a mediator/arbitrator. She has served on the board of Temple Emanuel, the Union County Bar Association, and the I Have Dream Foundation and is about to become a member of the Overlook Hospital Advisory Committee.

Ms. McKinley has been a resident of Westfield for over 10 years. Ms. McKinley has always been an active member of her school and church community and is a member of the Westfield Service League.

Gifts made to the foundation are tax-deductible. Area residents interested in learning more about activities of the foundation should call Executive Director Betsy Chance for more information at (908) 233-9787.



NEW TRUSTEES...President Barbara Doyle Frantz and incoming Westfield Foundation Trustees, from left to right, include Victoria Wicks, Joseph DeMaio, Ms. Doyle Frantz, Tony Cook, Miriam Span and Ingrid McKinley.



NEW BISTRO OPENS...Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks (center) cuts a ribbon in front of 503 Park Restaurant to kick off the opening of this new American bistro. Pictured are Chef/Owner Tom Vogler, former head chef of the Garlic Rose in Madison, and his wife, Amanda.

Mayors Meet to Discuss RVSA Privatization Plan

By KEREN SCHULTZ

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

RAHWAY — As Rahway Valley Sewage Authority (RVSA) commissioners consider whether to undergo privatization, a group of mayors met privately last Wednesday to discuss their own ideas about the plant undergoing privatization.

According to Westfield Town Administrator Jim Gildea, representing Mayor Andy Skibitsky, every municipal within the RVSA, except for Springfield, was represented at this meeting, which was spearheaded by Rahway Mayor James Kennedy and Clark Mayor Sal Bonaccorso.

"I'm a little upset that it took this long to get us all together," said Scotch Plains Deputy Mayor Nancy Malool. "I'm a little disappointed that this is going forward without input from the governing body."

According to Ms. Malool, the board will vote during the next RVSA Board of Commissioners meeting on a motion to put out a request for qualifications (RFQ) regarding privatization.

"Mayor Kennedy said he thought he had the votes (for an RFQ)," she said.

"The meeting seemed pointless because he's already going to do it. I would like to have a meeting with people on both sides of the issue, but I didn't get good feedback that that's going to happen."

The cost for an RFQ, according to Ms. Malool, would be at least \$500,000. "To me, a half a million dollars is a lot of money to put out for a big maybe. And I think \$500,000 is conservative. I would recommend that our counsel vote against it."

Mr. Gildea, however, told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that he does not know what the cost of an RFQ would be, it's "relatively a drop in the bucket" compared to other costs stemming from the RVSA's court-mandated upgrade.

According to Commissioner Joan Papan, Scotch Plains' RVSA representative, the idea for a meeting originated from the RVSA commissioners who wanted to meet with the mayors and discuss advantages and disadvantages of the recent proposals for RVSA to privatize all or some of its facilities.

"The municipal building (staff) said an invitation was sent to the mayors," Commissioner Papan told *The Leader* and *The Times*. "It was sent out in Clark letterhead to discuss the advantages of privatization. Most of the commissioners did not know about it."

Last month, the NW Financial Group,

LLC, RVSA's financial advisor, recommended to the commissioners that it would be advantageous to RVSA to contract all or some of its operations. The RVSA currently serves more than 300,000 residents and 3,500 industrial and commercial customers in Westfield, Scotch Plains, Garwood, Mountainside, Springfield, Kenilworth, Roselle Park, Cranford, Clark, Rahway and Woodbridge. In January, United Water, a subsidiary of Suez Water, instigated talks of privatization when it presented the RVSA board with a proposal to take over operational control of RVSA. In its proposal, United Water claimed that it will save the RVSA \$3 million during the first year of privatization.

This discussion comes at a time when the RVSA is faced with a \$137-million upgrade to bring its operations in compliance with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The RVSA upgrade includes an expansion project to eliminate sewer overflows, due to be completed in 2008.

According to Ms. Papan the RVSA board is almost split on whether privatization is the best option for the plant.

"I'm very much against (privatization). I feel our employees are very capable of running our plant. That's their livelihood — they've been doing it for years," Commissioner Papan said. "Suez (Water) is traded in the New York Stock Exchange. They want to make money for their stockholders. We are here for the welfare of our community."

She said cited reports that two former United Water Toms River managers were indicted in Trenton this month on charges that they attempted to conceal elevated radiation levels in the Berkeley Township well water in September by deliberately shut off a well. United Water Toms River, a subsidiary of Harrington Park-based United Water, was fined \$64,000 by the DEP for having failed to report seven instances of elevated radiation levels in its system during 2005.

RVSA Chairman James Murphy of Cranford agreed at last month's meeting that the RVSA should research other authorities that have undergone privatization or talks of privatization.

Commissioner Papan said RVSA staff is setting up a meeting with mayors in September. "Elected officials will be invited to ask questions," she said. "We're told that the commissioners can make the decision (regarding whether RVSA will undergo privatization) but the towns put a lot of money in the plant, as do taxpayers, and I feel that (elected officials) should have a say, too."

SP Adds Second Small Fry Park Program

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Recreation Department has added a second Small Fry park program to its summer list of activities.

This program is for kids ages 3 to 5 (must be potty-trained) and will run from Wednesday, July 5 through Friday, August 11 at Jerseyland Park. Choose from either of two sessions, 9 to 11:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. to 1:45 pm. The program includes daily activities, games and arts & crafts. The fee is \$50 for the six-week program.

Parents should register their children in the Scotch Plains Recreation Office, room 113 in the municipal building. For more information call Allison Halperin at (908) 322-6700, extension 222.

Early registration is encouraged as there will be a limited number of participants in the program.

Trailside Center Seeking Volunteers

AREA — Trailside Nature and Science Center is seeking volunteers, ages 15 and older, who enjoy working with children and being out of doors. Volunteers are needed for Trailside's summer camp programs where they assist park naturalists with pond and stream searches, crafts, games and nature hikes.

Interested applicants should contact Cheryl Wagner at (908) 789-3670, extension 224 for information on becoming a Trailside summer camp volunteer. Trailside is located at 452 New Providence Road in Mountainside.

St. Paul's to Host Patriotic Music Event

WESTFIELD — St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield will host a Festival of Patriotic Music in observance of Independence Day on Sunday, July 2.

The St. Paul's Summer Choir, joined by percussion, will sing Wilhousky's *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. The service will also include patriotic hymns and organ music performed on the church's four manual, 160-rank pipe organ. St. Paul's Episcopal Church is located at 414 East Broad Street in Westfield across from Town Hall. For more information e-mail cbanks@stpaulswestfield.org.

Freeholders Support Restoration of Drake

PLAINFIELD — Union County Freeholder gathered in Plainfield last week with officials from the Historical Society of Plainfield, the New Jersey Historic Trust and elected officials from the City of Plainfield to mark the progress being made in the restoration of the Drake House Museum.

The historic house at 602 West Front Street has been undergoing structural upgrades, roof repairs, exterior restoration and painting — all part of Phase One of a three-phase strategy to restore the Drake House to its grandeur during the city's Victorian era. Funding for the Phase One work came from a variety of sources, including \$50,000 from the Union County Freeholders via the Preserve Union County Grant Program. Other funding included \$128,034 in City of Plainfield capital funds; \$199,893 from the New Jersey Historic Trust; and \$20,000 from the New Jersey Department of the Treasury. Completion of phase one is expected by the fall.

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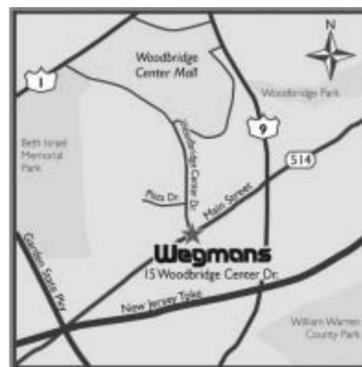
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