

# Obituaries

## Donald W. Belcher, 84, Was Executive; Active In Churches and Local Groups

Donald William "Bill" Belcher, 84, a long-time resident of Westfield, N.J., and son of the late Donald Ray and Mary Williams Belcher, passed away peacefully on Thursday, November 9, 2006, in Scranton, Pa. after a short illness. His wife of 60 years, Danelle Keith Belcher, now resides in Clarks Summit, Pa.

Bill lived a long, full life marked by his deep devotion to his family and friends, his country, his hometown community of Westfield and his profession as a chemical engineer. Born in New York City on July 13, 1922 into a musical family, Bill and his parents moved to Westfield in 1927, eventually settling at 550 Prospect Street. Following his education in the Westfield Public School system, he attended the Loomis-Chaffee School in Windsor, Conn. (then known as the Loomis School), from which he graduated in 1940.

He obtained a degree in chemical engineering from Yale University in 1943 after an accelerated education prompted by the United States entry into World War II. He served in the Pacific during the war as Naval Lieutenant (jg) and Chief Engineering Officer aboard an LSM and was present at the formal surrender of the Japanese forces in Tokyo on August 14, 1945. Immediately upon his return, he married Danelle Keith of Mahwah, N.J. on March 23, 1946 in Suffern, N.Y.

After residing in Red Bank and North Branch, N.J., Bill and Danelle moved to Westfield, where they raised their family, attended the Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal churches and sang in their choirs. He participated in various community organizations including the Senior and Junior Musical Clubs of Westfield, the Advance Club, the YMCA and the Boy Scouts of America. In addition, he served as a director of the Westfield Adult School.

Bill obtained his professional engineer's license in 1953 while employed with Bowen Engineering, Inc., a company specializing in spray-drying processes. During his 30 years as vice-president and president of Bowen and his subsequent 25 years

as president of Belcher Engineering, Inc., he traveled the globe, well respected for his technical savvy and experience.

He was a member of the New Jersey Society of Professional Engineers, the New York Academy of Sciences and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Bill was listed in the 1994-1995 "Who's Who Worldwide Registry of Business Leaders" and authored a number of papers and articles published in trade and professional journals.

First and foremost, however, Bill was a devoted family man whose warmth and humility, humor and compassion endeared him to many and make him sorely missed, but fondly remembered. In his later years, he particularly enjoyed Irish culture, crossword puzzles and family gatherings.

He was predeceased by his parents, who also were active members of the Westfield community and are buried in Long Lake, N.Y. (where the family has owned a camp for many years), and by his siblings, Jonathan Thompson Belcher and Mary Priscilla "Polly" Dello-Russo.

He is survived by his loving wife, Danelle; two daughters, Danelle Jean Sellers of Westfield, N.J. and Susan Penedos of Hop Bottom, Pa.; three sons, Donald Richard of Woodbridge, N.J., David Todd of Hop Bottom, Pa. and Jonathan Rockwood of Gansevoort, N.Y., and grandchildren Kim Glemboski, Ingrid Martinique, Jesse Penedos, Kate and Colleen Sellers and William Belcher.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, December 3, 2006, at 2:30 p.m. at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, 140 Mountain Avenue in Westfield, N.J. and immediately followed by a reception.

Contributions to honor his memory may be made to the Westfield Musical Club, in care of Marie-Danielle Mercier, 925 Mountain Avenue, Mountainside, N.J. 07092 or to the Westfield Historical Society, "Reeve House Restoration," P.O. Box 613, Westfield, N.J. 07091-0613.

November 23, 2006



Donald Belcher



HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS...Area residents are invited to view this Woodland Avenue home, along with several other Westfield residences, during the Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield's "Deck the Halls" holiday house tour on Saturday, December 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each of the homes will be decorated in holiday splendor and reflect a particular theme. Another home to be featured on the tour also appears on this page.

## Glee Club Winter Concert To Feature Special Artists

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Glee Club's 82nd Year Winter Concert will be held on Saturday, December 2, at 8 p.m. at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield at 140 Mountain Avenue.

A variety of choral groups will perform classic Christmas, spiritual, novelty and popular songs. The concert will include two sections with Special Artists Meredith Hoffmann-Thomson, soprano, and Barbara Thomson, accompanist, offering selections from opera and Broadway.

Ms. Hoffmann-Thomson has performed in opera, oratorio and recital venues. This year, she sang the role of Musetta in *La Boheme* at the Sarasota Opera and both Miss Wordsworth in *Albert Herring* and Antonio in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* in Opera North in Lebanon, N.H.

Previously, she was a member of the Sarasota Opera Studio and Apprentice Programs, the Opera Theater of St. Louis Young Artist Program and the Opera North Apprentice Program. She also has performed with Opera McGill, the Stony Hill Players and the New Jersey Concert Opera, as well as with the Westfield Symphony Orchestra.

A Cranford High School graduate, she was the winner of the Westfield Glee Club scholarship and has sung with the club on various occasions.

Ms. Thomson, an organist, has performed extensively in concert in the United States and Europe and has done recordings of her music. Her performances have included recitals at such venues as the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, the National Presbyterian Church and the Kennedy Center, both in Washington, D.C., and the Sacred Heart Cathedral Ba-

silica in Newark.

A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, she earned a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music and a doctorate from the Peabody Conservatory. She is a former professor at various colleges and currently is Voorhees Chapel Organist at Rutgers University. She also serves as organist and director of music at both the First Congregational Church of Westfield and Temple B'nai in Livingston and has performed with the Westfield Symphony Orchestra.

Tickets are available from glee club members and at the door at \$15 for adults and \$12 for students and senior citizens. For more information, please call Dale Juntilla at (908) 232-0673.

## Jewish Book Fair Set For December 3 to 7

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Jewish Community Center (JCC) of Central New Jersey will hold its annual Jewish Book Sale starting Sunday, December 3, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and continuing through Thursday, December 7. Weekday hours will be 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thousands of fiction, nonfiction, children's, cooking, Hanukkah and preschool books will be featured.

The JCC is located at 1391 Martine Avenue in Scotch Plains. For more details, please contact Susan Lemerman at slerman@jccnj.org or (908) 889-8800, extension no. 205, or visit www.jccnj.org.

## Denise Wittke

Denise Wittke of Westfield died on Sunday, November 19, at home.

Born in Strasbourg, France, she came to the United States as a small child. She grew up in New York City, where she worked for many years.

Denise was an avid gardener and enjoyed traveling, especially visiting family and friends in France. She became a worldwide "solar eclipse chaser" as a member of Amateur Astronomers, Inc., based at Union County College in Cranford.

She also was an active member of the Musical Club of Westfield, the Westfield Historical Society and the Genealogical Society of the West Fields.

Surviving are her husband, Edward Wittke; a daughter, Laurie Conrad of Ithaca, N.Y.; two stepdaughters, Gail Williams of Wilmington, Del. and Jill Swiecinski of Sewell, N.J.; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 26, at the chapel of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield. Private interment will be in the Revolutionary War Cemetery in Westfield.

Arrangements are by the Gray Funeral Home, 318 East Broad Street in Westfield.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the ALS Association, Greater New York Chapter, 116 John Street, Suite 1304, New York, N.Y. 10038 or to the project to restore the colonial cemetery on Mountain Avenue in Westfield. Donations for this should be made to the Cemetery Fund - The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, 140 Mountain Avenue, Westfield, N.J. 07090.

November 23, 2006

## Five Homes to Be Decorated For Holiday Tour on Dec. 2

WESTFIELD - The Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield's "Deck the Halls" holiday house tour, to be held on Saturday, December 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will feature five Westfield homes decorated in holiday splendor.

Unique decorations and floral designs will be showcased in keeping with the theme of each home. Attendees also will have an opportunity to shop at the artisan craft boutique and enjoy holiday refreshments at Danelle Walsh's home on Grandview Avenue.

Among the other homes on the tour will be the Laurenzi residence on South Euclid Avenue, a turn-of-the-century craftsman-style house featuring a central staircase and multiple fireplaces. Its theme will be a "Mediterranean Christmas," inspired by the family having lived for many years in Italy. While there, the family amassed a collection of art and sculpture from the Mediterranean region.

Designs decorating the home will be created using fruits of the region, such as pomegranates, lemons, limes, oranges and kumquats complemented with herbs. The Christmas tree will be decorated with the owner's unique elephant ornaments and the Rake and Hoe members' designer decorations.

Another home on the tour will be the Allen residence, a 1937 brick dwelling on Woodland Avenue. It will be decorated for a lavish Christmas

fete, featuring the lush bounty of fields and woods combined with the gleam of gold, silver and copper.

In the entrance foyer will be an elegant tree bedecked with lilies, orchids, pinecones and ribbons. Lilies, orchids and roses, along with white Minton china, will grace the dining room. A children's tree, decorated with pinecones and sweet gum balls burnished with the gleam of gold and copper, also will be featured.

The holiday house tour will be self-guided, with the addresses of the featured homes and a map printed on the back of the tickets. Participants may start the tour at any home and proceed to all at their leisure. Tickets are available in advance for \$30 at Christoffers Flowers in Mountainside, Baron's Drug Store and Williams Nursery in Westfield or from any Rake and Hoe member. They also will be available at any home for \$35 on the day of the tour.

The Rake and Hoe Garden Club is a non-profit organization. Funds raised by this event will benefit the club's many community projects, which include the Lyons Veterans' Hospital, the Cerebral Palsy Center of Union County and Mobile Meals, as well as the Miller-Cory House Museum Gardens, Shadowlawn Garden and the Claire Brownell Memorial Wildflower Garden. For tickets, please call Linda Winter at (908) 232-0449.



HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR...The Laurenzi home on South Euclid Avenue in Westfield will be among the stops on the Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield's "Deck the Halls" holiday house tour on December 2. Proceeds from the tour will benefit the club's various community service projects. In addition to visiting local homes decorated for the holidays, participants will have an opportunity to enjoy refreshments and shop at an artisan craft boutique.

## Library Programs to Focus On Business and Medicare

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains Public Library, located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, has revealed the dates for two programs to be held in its Community Room.

On Wednesday, November 29, Jack Armstrong, president of the Franchise Network of New Jersey, will present a seminar at 6:30 p.m. to help individuals interested in buying a business or franchise. It is part of a series presented by the Kean University Small Business Development Center.

Topics will include investment ranges, sources of financing, tools to research businesses for sale, key issues in negotiations, dealing with landlords and employees and determining whether to start from scratch or invest in an existing business opportunity.

The second program will feature Ed Evans in a discussion on Medicare D on Monday, December 4, at 1 p.m. Mr. Evans will explain the pending changes to Medicare D coverage, especially as it relates to Medicare, Medicaid and supplemental coverage.

Enrollees in the present Medicare D program may change or upgrade their plans through Sunday, December 31. Coverage will then be effective Monday, January 1, 2007. The New Jersey drug programs, PAAD and Senior Gold, have increased the income eligibility figures for 2007. All who are eligible are advised to carefully re-examine their choices.

All programs at the library are free and open to all interested participants. For more information or directions, please call (908) 322-5007.

## Harold Wright, 79, Ran NYC Agency; Was Active In Girls Softball League

Harold Rogers Wright, 79, of Westfield died on Friday, November 17, at Overlook Hospital in Summit surrounded by his loving family.

Born in Orange, N.J., he was raised in East Orange. He graduated from Clifford Scott High School, where he was a football hero, and attended Upsala College. Mr. Wright served in the United States Army as a sergeant in the Occupational Forces in Japan following World War II and moved to Westfield in 1960.

An employment counselor for over 30 years, Mr. Wright retired in 1990 at Trinity Personnel Agency in New York City, which was founded by his parents and which he and his brother ran. He was active throughout his life, participating in the Clark Lanes Bowling League, the Union County Senior Softball League and Golf.

He was a crossing guard in Westfield for several years and was active in the Westfield Girls Softball League as an umpire, coach, manager and officer in the 1960s. He continued to support his grandchildren on the sidelines of local sports teams in Scotch Plains-Fanwood, Westfield and Bethlehem Township, N.J.

Mr. Wright is survived by his beloved wife of 56 years, Adelaide Adams Wright, and his four devoted daughters, Patricia L. Longshore and her husband, Richard; Kathleen A.

Mahoney and her husband, John; Elizabeth A. Malavasi and her husband, Thomas, and Barbara R. Baranek and her husband, John. Also surviving are his siblings, Estelle Donovan, Ruth Walton, Augusta Jarmick, Frederick Wright and Charon Varvoe. He also will be deeply missed by his 11 grandchildren, Kristen, James, Sean, Matthew, Karen, Kimberly, Steven, Drew, Kyle, Adam and Thomas, and his three great-grandchildren, Jasmine, Olivia and Sophia.

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered on Tuesday, November 21, at the Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield. Burial took place at Fairview Cemetery in Westfield.

Arrangements were by the Dooley Colonial Home, 556 Westfield Avenue in Westfield. Memorial donations may be made to either the Alzheimer's Association, 400 Morris Avenue, Suite 251, Denville, N.J. 07834-1365 or to the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA Scholarship Fund, 1340 Martine Avenue, Scotch Plains, N.J. 07076.

November 23, 2006

## Mr. Bierman to Give Talk on Vintage Cars

SCOTCH PLAINS - Scotch Plains automobile buff David Bierman will speak to the Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood about vintage cars at its meeting on Tuesday, November 28, at 8 p.m. It will take place at the Scotch Hills Country Club, located at Plainfield Avenue and Jerusalem Road.

Mr. Bierman will show attendees how to disassemble a vintage car and how to restore it. Refreshments and fellowship will follow the meeting. For more information, please call Richard Bousquet, Historical Society president, at (908) 232-1199.

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