

MS BOE Reorganizes, Discusses Curriculum

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of the Virginia Tech shootings and their families.

Richard O'Malley, chief school administrator (CSA), thanked the "Mountainside community for supporting our budget this year." The budget passed by a 2-to-1 margin last week.

Beechwood Elementary School Vice Principal and District Curriculum Coordinator Tom Conroy presented a writing program to be piloted this school year and implemented in September. The program, "Units of Study for Teaching Writing," introduces writer's workshops in kindergarten and them through grade 5.

Mr. Conroy said it is a "spiraling curriculum," like Everyday Math, where topics are "revisited each year."

He said the workshops allow students to "self-select" pieces to write, which "brings in a whole other motivational component for them." The workshops have three components: "mini lessons," "writing and conferencing" and "sharing."

"We give them an opportunity to share their experiences and what they've written about," said Mr. Conroy.

Workshops will be 45 minutes to an hour long, three to four times a week. Mr. Conroy said surrounding districts, such as Millburn/Short Hills, use the program.

Some of the six "Units of Study" in kindergarten to grade 2 include Personal Narrative Writing, Authors as Mentors and Poetry. Each unit lasts four to six weeks.

In grades 3 to 5, topics include Breathing Life into Essays, Writing Fiction, Literary Essays and Memoir writing.

Four to five teachers will attend a summer workshop at Teacher's College Summer Institute to learn the program and develop a "full-year writing calendar."

Approximate cost to the district will be \$2,875 for the summer workshop and \$2,250 for further professional development.

Second-grade teacher Kim Lasch said her students who have already participated are "taking it very seriously." She added "it's nice to watch them just write." She said students are referred to only as "writers" during the sessions.

Mr. Conroy said "at this time next year, you'll be able to walk into a kindergarten classroom and watch them write in silence for 20 minutes."

During public participation, Mountainside parent of two and Westfield Leader writer Linda Condrillo asked how teachers would be held accountable for implementing the program.

Mr. Conroy said teachers are required to submit their monthly curriculum, which will include the program.

"We do a lot of managing by walking around," adding that it is "our job as administrators," he said.

Mr. Conroy said teachers would also have an on-line training session on May 14 for the new criterion writing-evaluation program, which was also introduced this year.

Ms. Condrillo commended the



MOUNTAINSIDE BOE...Above, board of education members pose at their reorganization meeting Tuesday night. Pictured, left to right, are: Business Administrator Roderic McLaughlin, Chief School Administrator Richard O'Malley, Board President John Perrin, Board VP Marybeth Schaumberg, Gene Nagel, Raymond Haggart, Scot Worswick, Carmine Venes and Joseph Tinnirella. **RECOGNITION...** Below, students display their Reflection Awards received at the BOE meeting. Pictured, left to right, are: fifth-grader Shannon Compton, seventh grader Kelly Goense, eighth grader James Murdoch and seventh grader Vincent Bennett.



BOE, Mr. O'Malley and Deerfield Elementary School Principal Robert Burkhardt for their work thus far.

"Thank you on behalf of a lot of parents," she said. "I hope you stick around a long time."

In other business, the BOE passed a resolution to "accept a donation of a scoreboard from the Mountainside Softball Association (MSA)." The scoreboard will be installed at Deerfield School.

The final height of the scoreboard will be based on recommendations from Borough Engineer Michael Disko and determined by Mr. Disko and the BOE.

MSA board members Margie Pires and Tom Murphy said the total cost of the scoreboard is about \$3,000.

Ms. Pires said an "aggressive fundraising campaign" raised the money. "It was amazing how many people sent us money," she said of the letter-writing campaign.

Ms. Pires said MSA, which is a year old, wanted to "give something back to the town." She added one main goal was to "do something for the girls in town."

The BOE also approved a three-year technology plan for the district, which will be submitted to the state Department of Education (DOE).

Mr. O'Malley said the state mandates the report every three years, which

WF Celebrates 13th Spring Fling Sunday

WESTFIELD—This Sunday, April 29, marks the 13th annual Spring Fling. The street festival will take place between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., rain or shine, along the streets of downtown Westfield.

This year, the Spring Fling will kick off with a family Mardi Gras Parade led by Little Miss Esprit Westfield, Lily McGuire.

More than 200 businesses, including an assortment of local merchants, clubs and organizations, will combine with artisans, entertainers and food purveyors to create a large open public market.

Merchants will display goods and services ranging from handmade jewelry to shoes.

The KidZone will offer rides and activities for youngsters. A petting zoo with pony rides will be located on Prospect Street just past SOLE. Local bands will provide music throughout the festival.

Those attending can visit the teen Relay for Life team from Westfield High School, "Kasey's Crew East," which will have a table at the event.

WECARE (Westfielders Concerned About Responsible Development) will provide information on teardowns and will conduct a free drawing to win a "Westfieldopoly" game courtesy of Blue Tulip.

WACC said the following streets will be closed: Quimby Street from Central Avenue to Elm Street, Elm Street from North Avenue to the Texaco station located north of East Broad Street, East Broad Street from North Avenue to Central Avenue and Prospect Street from North Avenue to Ferris Place.

For more information, contact the Chamber at (908) 233-3021 or WestfieldAreaChamber.com.



STORM DAMAGE...A retaining wall on Kimball Avenue near North Chestnut Street is a casualty of last week's Nor'easter. This view of the collapsed wall, looking west along Kimball, shows the collapse sent debris onto the sidewalk.

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Tuesday, April 17, a Westfield resident reported that someone smashed the passenger-side window on his work vehicle with a pickaxe while it was parked on the 1100 block of South Avenue, west. Once access to the vehicle was gained, a GPS navigational system valued at \$400 was removed.

Tuesday, April 17, Dominic Pitrelli, 26, of West Orange was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Dudley and Lawrence Avenues on an outstanding Englewood motor-vehicle warrant. He was released after posting \$141 bail.

Tuesday, April 17, following a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue, west and Boulevard, Jose M. Rivera, 43, of Bloomfield was arrested and charged with driving under the influence.

He was also charged with possession of a prescription drug in the amount of four dosage units or less and placed under arrest pursuant to a contempt-of-court traffic warrant issued by the Paterson Municipal Court, with bail of \$221.

Bail on the prescription-drug possession charge was set at \$500. Rivera also was issued a summons for DUI. He was held at Westfield police headquarters pending his release on bail.

Thursday, April 19, Carlos A. Flores, 21, of North Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Park Street and charged with driving while intoxicated. As he was being processed, Flores allegedly became uncooperative and began struggling with police. Four officers were assaulted, although none sustained injuries, according to police.

While being searched, Flores allegedly was found to be in possession of suspected cocaine and a gravity knife. He subsequently was charged with refusal to submit to an Alcotest, resisting arrest, possession of a controlled dangerous substance (cocaine), possession of a prohibited weapon and four counts of aggravated assault on a police officer. Flores was held pending an evaluation by Mobile Outreach personnel from Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center.

Friday, April 20, Jamee McCoy, 29, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor-vehicle stop.

Saturday, April 21, Anthony Smith, 24, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics after police responded to a call regarding suspicious activity. According to police, Smith was unable to post bail and was transported to the Union County jail.

Sunday, April 22, a resident of Tussel Lane reported that someone damaged her front door.

NJ DEP Extends RVSA Deadline for Generator

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

AREA — The Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) revealed at its regular meeting last Thursday that New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection has extended the RVSA's deadline for completion of its standby generator project.

The authority has also increased the amount of its contract with J.H. Reid for construction of the cogeneration and sludge drying facility. Additionally, the fire suppression system at the authority's cogeneration system failed a test.

The extension of the deadline moves the RVSA's project-completion date from April 20 to September 21. The extension was added to a prior extension from January 3 and was granted due to force majeure, which essentially means delays due to construction difficulties.

The added expense of \$290,306 added to the cogeneration/sludge drying facility contract increases the cost of the facility to \$21,805,633, or about 1.4 percent. Michael Brinker, the authority's interim executive director, described most of these expenses as details needed to comply with demands of insurance companies, improved safety requirements and other "necessary but minor points" to make sure the new facility is properly monitored and safe.

Mr. Brinker said the fire-suppression-test failure at the new cogeneration facility was a result of the water pressure and volume being supplied to

the facility by Rahway's municipal water system. He said engineering studies at the start of the project showed that Rahway's pressure and flow rates were adequate. He also explained that efforts were being made to determine the cause of this discrepancy.

Mr. Brinker said the likely solution to this problem would be a connection to Middlesex Water's system at Randolph Avenue. This change would raise the supplied pressure from approximately 45 pounds per square inch (psi) to about 85 psi. This solution would be possible in part because the treatment facility lies both in Rahway and Woodbridge, he said, noting that the added cost of this change would be about \$90,000.

The nor'easter that impacted the area two weekends ago did not do any damage to the sewerage facility, officials reported. Commissioners at the meeting claimed that some portions of Rahway had problems with sewage backing up into basements during the storm. Following the meeting, Mr. Brinker said that the outflows, slated to be closed as a part of the judicial consent order, were used to divert excess flow during the storm.

Mr. Brinker said the outflows are still permitted and their use was in compliance with current permits. Additional discussion at the meeting revealed that an outflow would still be required after completion of all the work but that anything released through it would likely be given at least ultraviolet treatment. Details remain to be negotiated.

Garwood Council

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oversee this project, and I have a problem with protocol and the tax increase." Senior citizen Ruth Davey said, "Taxes go up regardless of what you do. I remember in 1946, my taxes were \$79, and now it's about \$6,000. It's time we do something, and the time is now."

Earlier in the meeting, Ms. Davey stressed the need for a storage room that seniors could use. Currently, everything from boxes of plates and cutlery are stored in her two-car garage, within a space of five by five feet, "Only I can get to my locked garage, and we need a storage room. You people need to think about your future. You'll be seniors one day too. I gave 60 years to this town and it's up to you to give back."

Ms. Villaggio thanked residents for their input and said she wanted to "bring something up that wasn't spoken about much."

"I wrestled with the idea of a field house," she said. "The current building is not big enough for the seniors to

meet, but the proposed field house would be able to accommodate maybe 30 adults with tables. It would help the seniors and kids. The project would cost \$50 a year for 20 years, instead of \$25 for 15 years, on a house assessed at \$100,000. It's cheaper to make something now than try to add on five years from now."

Mayor McCarthy said the council should have a decision by its meeting on Tuesday, May 22.

WF Foundation Invites Public to Meeting

WESTFIELD — The public is invited to attend the Westfield Foundation's annual meeting on Tuesday, May 1, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Westfield Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street.

Reports on the prior year will be presented, and several recent grant recipients will discuss their programs. For more information, call Betsy Chance at (908) 233-9787.

VA Tech

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Alumni attend the college, including Molly Schmidt, also of Mountainside.

Because of the volume of calls from overwrought friends and relatives, it was next to impossible to reach students and faculty by telephone. Mrs. Moore was fortunate to have reached Kaitlyn. Her daughter said, "I think many parents learned how to send a text message that day."

Kaitlyn noted that the popular college social-networking site Facebook.com filled up with reaction and concern, and many friends checked on their peers' safety through AIM, where away messages simply read, "I'm okay."

About going back right away, Kaitlyn said, "If I don't go back, then I would just feel like, he's 'winning.' There's so much school spirit—'Hokie Pride' as we call it. I always felt safe there."

Hokie, SP Mayor Marks 'Wears VA Tech on His Sleeve'

By LINDA B. CONDRILLO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

SCOTCH PLAINS — Visiting a number of campuses in search of the right school can be an arduous task for both teenagers and their parents. For Scotch Plains Mayor Marty Marks, the decision to attend Virginia Tech was a no-brainer.

In a telephonic interview over the weekend with *The Westfield Leader*, Mayor Marks, class of 1984, recalled his experience at Virginia Tech and reacted to the recent tragedy.

Remembering his college experience as nothing but positive, Mayor Marks said, "While I did visit other colleges with my parents, Virginia Tech was the only school I applied to. I asked for early decision, and it was my first choice." He added, "To this day, Virginia Tech is a big part of my life."

Mr. Marks was practicing dentistry in his office when he heard the news of the shooting. He told the newspaper, "There's a TV in the waiting room, and as soon as I hear 'anything Virginia Tech,' my ears perk up. I just sat there with my staff, astonished."

Mayor Marks regards his college career as the best four years of his life, and said, "When I saw the images coming over the TV of such familiar places, hearing the names of the buildings and describing the campus of what once were places I remembered so fondly — and now described to me so horrifically — it is staggering. In some way I feel those great memories are tarnished. And I don't look at it the same way anymore."

He said news of the shootings added a difficult component to the process of looking at colleges with his own daughter, a junior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Mayor Marks noted that while "we're not putting any pressure on her," he would be happy should she choose to attend his alma mater.

He also said, "In light of what happened, Virginia Tech may wind up being one of the safest schools you can go to."

Mayor Marks says that his own parents are equally upset about the catastrophe. "They know how much I enjoyed it there, still enjoy it today, and are emotionally invested in the school as well," he said.

He also noted how his experience at Virginia Tech was different from others. "For a lot of people, going to college is a stepping stone. But with me, it was such a big part of my life in so many ways. It still is. There's a lot of enjoyment getting involved — whether it's the bumper sticker I put on my car, or following a sports team, or wearing a Virginia Tech sweatshirt, ball cap or wristwatch." Metaphorically speaking, he said, "I wear it on my sleeve."

He added, "I'm not going to claim that Virginia Tech is the only school that has that special combination of pride and enthusiasm that follows you long after you receive your diploma, but it is evident that this spirit is as strong as ever today, and will go a long way towards healing what has come to be known as Hokie Nation."

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REMEMBERING VICTIMS...Kean University students participate in a candlelight vigil last Thursday night for the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings on April 16.



COURTESY OF PATTI BANKS
REMEMBERING VICTIMS...Kean University students participate in a candlelight vigil last Thursday night for the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings on April 16.