

2 Westfield Divers Die in Scuba Diving Accident; 3rd Survives

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Two Westfield residents died Friday in a scuba diving accident off Key Largo, Fla.; a Chatham man also perished and one Westfielder survived. Jonathan Walsweer and Scott Stanley drowned along with Kevin Coughlin of Chatham in the incident. Howard Spialter, also of Westfield, survived the accident.

The incident occurred while the four were exploring the U.S.S. Spiegel Grove, a 510-foot-long former Navy support ship. The vessel, a 1950s vintage designated as a dock-landing ship, used to launch smaller boats during an amphibious attack, according to several websites. The Spiegel Grove was sunk in 2002 to form an artificial reef and dive site.

Press releases from the Monroe County, Fla., Sheriff's Office said the

four divers were performing a penetration dive. R.J. Hartman, owner of Treasure Cove Watersports, a dive shop on South Avenue in Westfield, said this type of dive involves enter-

mised the divers' visibility. Mr. Hartman said that, since ships are made of steel, "anytime you stick steel into a salt-water environment, it begins to rust... Bubbles (from your scuba gear) would normally float to the surface if they were not in an overhead environment... [they] dislodge the rust and it begins to rain down."

He said silt can take an hour or more to settle. The divers' decision to use strobes, rather than dive reels (a cord), to mark their route out has been identified as a likely contributor to their deaths. According to sheriff's department reports, they had brought reserve air tanks aboard the wreck, but those proved useless when they ran out of air before locating them.

Becky Herrin, a public information officer with the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, described the incident as the worst diving accident loss of life that she was aware of in that area. She said three other deaths had occurred on the wreck, but all were single fatalities.

Mr. Walsweer, 38, was a Westfield native and St. Marks Avenue resident. He lived with his wife, Regina, and two young sons. Mrs. Walsweer's sister, Simone Muscarnera, told *The Westfield Leader* that their parents were "best friends" and re-introduced the couple after college.

Robert Algarin, a local architect who had done work for the Walsweers, described him as "a really terrific guy."

Mr. Stanley, 55, was a part owner of The Carpet Mill in East Hanover. He also was certified as an instructor in both scuba diving and karate. Mr. Stanley came to the area at the end of high school. The Stanleys lived on Harrison Avenue for about two years, after living in Cranford for many years.

Marianne Stanley, Mr. Stanley's wife, said she met Mr. Stanley at Union College, now Union County College. The Stanleys have two adult children, Lauren and David.

Mr. Spialter, 52, the lone survivor of the dive, is a lawyer with his own practice in Union. He is a past president of Temple Beth O'r/Beth Torah

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

WF BOE Approves Tech Curriculum for Grades 3-8

By CAROLINE KOELLHOFFER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The board of education on Tuesday night approved a new curriculum for technological literacy for grades 3 through 8 that will be implemented next fall.

In detailing the curriculum, board member and Curriculum Committee Chairwoman Alice Hunnicutt said third graders would learn keyboarding, word processing and multimedia; fourth graders would study spread sheeting and visual diagrams, and fifth graders would learn PowerPoint and expand other computer skills.

Ms. Hunnicutt said because "whole-class instruction is necessary," fourth and fifth graders would use new carts (one for each school) containing 20 laptops. They are already part of this year's budget, she said.

Board member Richard Solomon said, "I am concerned that we don't have enough hardware to support this new curriculum. Are we being realistic that we can fulfill the curriculum? We are being told that we can, but I am skeptical."

Board President Anne Riegel responded later, "I hope that teachers come to us in a couple of years, saying that we need more laptop carts." Ms. Riegel said it would be proof that the curriculum is having a positive effect.

Mr. Solomon said he is concerned about implementing the curriculum at all grade levels at the same time.

He asked specifically about the sixth-grade course, and whether it is the type of class that next year's students could jump into without an elementary-school foundation but would still be



WILD WEATHER...After a string of days when temperatures rose above 50 degrees, a winter storm brought snow, sleet and ice to the area last Thursday and Friday.

First Meeting on Superintendent Search Draws Dozen Residents

By CAROLINE KOELLHOFFER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — At a community forum held last Wednesday at Edison Intermediate School to discuss opinions and desired qualities of a new superintendent of schools, James Henderson of the consulting firm Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates reported that 500 town residents have completed online surveys.

"That is a very gratifying response," he said. "It may account for the minimal attendance tonight."

The public meeting Mr. Henderson conducted drew together approximately 12 residents.

Epi Betancourt, one attendee, pointed to a feeling of "apathy" in the town as the reason for the low attendance. "This is pathetic," she said.

"Is it pathetic?" asked a resident who wished to remain anonymous, "or is there a feeling of helplessness about making any impact by coming to a meeting like this?"

She said, "Over the course of 12 years in school, our children are evaluated many times. Yet there is no opportunity for parents and children to evaluate the faculty and administration. We are not welcome to have a voice."

In providing an opinion on a new superintendent, the resident said he or she must be "innovative, visionary and creative. But most importantly," she said, "we need someone who is not afraid to have a little tussle with

those who represent the status quo."

For Denise West, it is important that the new superintendent has the ability to partner with large corporations in the area, such as Schering Plough and L'Oreal. "We need someone who knows how to massage that relationship and get involved in the businesses to bring more math and science into the schools."

Jennifer Jaruzelski said the language program needs to be expanded. "I would also like to see Chinese in

Other residents expressed concern about how proposed legislation regarding a super superintendent would affect the hiring process.

Mr. Henderson responded, "Frankly, I don't think it has a snowball's chance in Hades of passing."

In describing the timeline for hiring the new superintendent, Mr. Henderson said that the school board would like to narrow the candidates down to "a small number of finalists"



LITTLE INTEREST?...James Henderson, a consultant with Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, discusses the search for a new Westfield superintendent of schools with the group of about a dozen residents who attended last week's meeting.

the high school," she said. Ms. West agreed, and she discussed the importance of students learning more than one foreign language.

Ms. Jaruzelski pointed out that languages are now offered in elementary grades, to the district's credit. "But districts like Union," she said, "that are lower socio-economically, have Chinese, and we do not."

Ms. West said "there is still an achievement gap" between black students and white students. "I know Dr. (William) Foley was working very diligently on closing that gap," she

by the end of May, and then hire someone to start September 1.

One resident asked how often Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates works on such a short timeline.

"It is an aggressive search," Mr. Henderson said. "But that says a lot about this school board. What it means is that the board has to be attentive to the process and be very involved in the interviewing of candidates."

The district's search for a new superintendent follows Mr. Foley's announcement that he will retire from the position this summer.

Store Owner Seeks Increased Downtown Police Presence

By GINA LEVINE-LEVY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Leader Store proprietor and downtown property owner Joe Spector asked town officials, at Monday's Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) meeting, to increase police presence in the downtown.

Mr. Spector, a former DWC board member, said the "millions of dollars" property owners in the Special Improvement District (SID) spend to "promote and beautify" the area are "negated" if there is not a police presence to keep the downtown safe and clean.

"We've had less officers covering downtown than ever before," he said. "Please provide what's required to take care of existing and festering problems...that is the responsibility of government."

Town Administrator Jim Gildea said the town's police department always responds to emergencies but is going through a "major transformation" because of turnover.

Mr. Gildea said the WPD does not have the manpower to dedicate to downtown and finding "seasoned personnel" has been a challenge. He also said "there is discussion" of adding a new substation downtown that would increase police presence.

BOE Budget News

Foley to Hold Public Meeting on Budget Tonight

WESTFIELD — Superintendent of Schools William Foley will hold a "Superintendent's Chat" tonight in the student center of Westfield High School at 7:30 p.m. He will discuss the proposed budget and enrollment for 2007-2008.

BOE to Hold Public Hearing on Budget Mar. 27

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Board of Education will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget for 2007-2008 at its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 27, at the Administration Building at 302 Elm Street at 8 p.m.

Following the board's approval of a tentative budget for the 2007-2008 school year on Tuesday, March 6, the board would approve the final budget on Tuesday, March 27, with the public voting on Tuesday, April 17, from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

A complete agenda will be available tomorrow on the district's website, westfieldnj12.org, and in the board secretary's office at 302 Elm Street. All board meetings are taped and televised on Blue Devils TV-36 on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 a.m. and 7:15 p.m., and on Saturdays and Sundays at 10 a.m.



REMEMBERING OUR TROOPS...Nearly 100 people attended a candlelight vigil at Mindowaskin Park Monday evening. The event marked the fourth anniversary of the United States action in Iraq. The ceremony consisted of readings from soldiers and family members of soldiers who served. It was one of almost 1,100 events nationally, coordinated by MoveOn.org. Warren Rorden and Nancy Boss organized the local event.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Education	9-10	Real Estate	13-21
Editorial	4-5	Obituary	11	Classifieds	22
Community ...	6-8	Sports	13-18	A&E	23-26

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12