



ROCK AND ROLL MUSIC(FEST)...Chuck Berry displays some of his time-tested whimsical singsong moves during his performance at Nomahegan Park in Cranford Saturday afternoon. The musician appeared as part of Union County's annual MusicFest event. See related stories on page 22.

FAA Adopts Redesign Plan, Draws Opposition From Air-Traffic Groups

By DEBBIE HOFFMAN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

AREA - Local air-traffic noise opponents have criticized the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recent adoption of a plan to re-route air traffic in the region. The FAA says the plan will significantly reduce delays at East Coast airports, including Newark Liberty International Airport, but some area residents have expressed fear it will increase noise over their communities.

As reported by *The Westfield Leader* in May, FAA officials said at a spring hearing in Newark that the FAA's plan would "combine high-altitude and low-altitude airspace" to allow more flights in the area while maintaining safety and reducing noise levels for residents around the airport.

"I'm very upset about it," said Jerome Feder, a member of the New Jersey Coalition Against Aircraft Noise (NJCAAN) and a resident of Westfield. "They (the FAA) disregard environmental issues, and the gains are small to non-existent."

"The FAA states that the airspace redesign does not increase airport capacity," NJCAAN President Robert Belzer said in a statement. "However, the agency repeatedly states the exact opposite in promotional and aviation industry documents."

The City of Elizabeth immediately responded to the announcement with a lawsuit against Marion Blakely, administrator of the FAA, and the FAA itself, citing the increased air traffic over the city and the "significant" increase in aircraft noise. The suit states that additional departure headings over Elizabeth for flights taking off from Newark Liberty "will significantly and adversely increase aircraft noise levels for the City of Elizabeth and its residents above their current levels," according to a copy of the Elizabeth lawsuit obtained by *The Leader*.

"The FAA's EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) fails to provide an effective disclosure of the noise impacts to the City of Elizabeth and its

residents," the lawsuit alleges. NJCAAN has also hired a law firm and filed suit.

According to Union County Free-

With more planes flying directly over Union County municipalities, Ms. Ward said there is "more risk of injury or death in the event of a crash" to people on the ground.

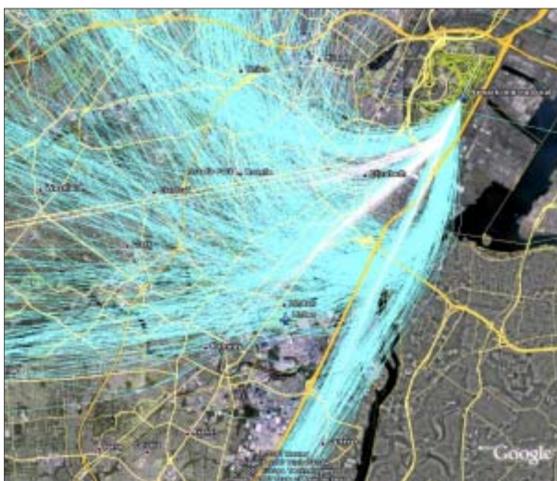
The Union County Aircraft Noise Advisory Committee (UCANAC), chaired by Mr. Feder, is encouraging all towns in Union County to join forces to fight the plan.

"If this plan goes into effect, it will decrease the quality of life of the people in Union County," said Ms. Ward, freeholder liaison to the UCANAC.

At a meeting of the committee last week, a formal request was made that the county and its municipalities join to oppose the plan and consider litigation.

Ms. Ward suggested that the FAA consider building another airport in a less densely populated area like the Poconos "instead of spending all this money on redesign."

The FAA and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey did not return calls seeking comment.



AIR TRAFFIC...The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved changes it had proposed to air-traffic patterns in the area for landings and departures at Newark Airport. Pictured above is the web of flights, rearranged to pass over the region surrounding the New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia hub. See goleader.com/features to download detailed FAA reports.

Westfield Council Hears Citizens' Pedestrian, Parking Concerns

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD - Residents raised quality-of-life concerns related to pedestrian safety and parking restrictions during Tuesday's town council conference session.

Dolores Russell of Stirling Place, who has addressed the council in the past about the same subject, spoke about a "major problem" for pedestrians crossing near the Cacciola Place/South Avenue intersection. She said drivers are "taking a left

turn from South Avenue onto Cacciola and making it a two-way street."

She said she confronts drivers who come down the one-way street illegally, sometimes writing down plate numbers.

She continued, "It's gotten worse... You take your chances out there. I stop traffic for mothers and young children... The bigger issue is [pedestrian safety throughout] the whole area."

Second Ward Councilwoman Jo Ann Neylan, who represents Cacciola

Place residents, said she walked the streets in question on Tuesday, noting that the road is designated as a one-way to "prevent the scenario you're speaking of."

She added, "There's no crosswalk. You're supposed to walk to Fujiyama Mama or where the light is, so that it's safer. We made it a one-way to avoid [these types of problems]. If someone is, on purpose, making a turn the wrong way down a one-way street, take their license numbers."

Mayor Andy Skibitsky said the town would get in touch with traffic-safety engineer Gordon Meth and create "better signage" in the short-term.

Ms. Russell said something has to be done. "Somebody is going to get killed." She noted that previously, a car heading the wrong way ran over a man's left foot as he used the crosswalk.

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca said Police Chief John Parizeau is "well aware" of the situation, while the intersection remains "on [the public safety committee's] radar screen." He told Ms. Russell to consult her neighborhood about conducting a meeting with him.

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Resident Claims Builder Won't Comply with Rules

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD - Robert Nehring of Carleton Road on Tuesday night described to the town council a demolition site on Boulevard, located behind his property, in which construction crews have dumped sand on one side of the entrance, strewn construction materials on the sidewalk and left the gate open.

"It's wide open," Mr. Nehring said. "He should know the rules and [he] is not complying with them. The fines and penalties are not effective... This is what you call a repeat offender."

Town Administrator Jim Gildea said, "The violations are not dictated by the town council. The con-

struction department is governed by the (New Jersey) department of community affairs... I know who this person is. He's a habitual offender."

Following the meeting, a member of the council who wished to remain anonymous, identified the individual as Ralph Rapuano.

First Ward Councilman Sal Caruana sought confirmation from Town Engineer Ken Marsh that the town "doesn't have more of a recourse for [addressing] habitual offenders," which Mr. Marsh verified.

"It boggles my mind that, in a situation where we know we're going to be dealing with someone who is going to ignore the rules and create a public danger, we have no leverage or flexibility to tighten the screws a little bit," Mr. Caruana said.

Mr. Marsh said, "We're on top of this. We're doing everything we can. It's not necessarily 'public danger.' It's perceived public danger."

He said in his 14 years on the job, he has witnessed no injuries to even prompt current ordinances, including the fence ordinance in question. "It hasn't been a major problem at all from a safety standpoint."

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca, who said he sees the problem as more than a "perceived danger," suggested giving memoranda - stressing items from the need to lock fences at night to the requirement of keeping all sidewalks clear of materials - to builders in order to take preventative measures.

Council Disputes Claim Of Lost Parking Revenue

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD - The town council disputed a resident's claim at Tuesday night's council meeting that the town squandered an opportunity to disperse employee parkers earlier from lots 1 and 8 and profit from shoppers using the lots.

Responding to a question by Fourth Ward Councilman Tom Bigosinski, Town Administrator Jim Gildea said work on merging lots 1 (Prospect Street) and 8 (Elm Street) would be "staged" in order to avoid eliminating all shopper parking.

Mr. Gildea reported there was "no major progress" earlier in the week due to survey issues.

He said, "At the end, this will be a shopper lot completely. Employees will continue to move out a few blocks away... where they should be."

In terms of timing, he said that the first weekend in November represented the project's drop-dead date. "We hope to get it done quicker," he said.

Jim Baker of Lincoln Road said it was "great to get permit parkers out of lot 8" and transferred to lot 9, Ferris Place and Elm and Orchard Streets.

However, he said, "We [WeCare] made this suggestion 34 months ago that that should be done," he said. "Why couldn't we have done that hours after the referendum stating that the town did

not want a parking garage? That's probably \$150,000 in parking fees the town didn't garner at that time."

Mr. Gildea called Mr. Baker's claim "farfetched," stating that the demand for employee spots was less than it is today.

Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca said the recent existence of pay stations in the lot also allowed for customers to use the spots when employees did not, limiting the potential lost revenue.

He said, "To say that shoppers haven't been parking there is a flawed assumption."

First Ward Councilman Sal Caruana praised Mr. Baker for his idea but noted that the council had to address an environmental issue in lots 1 and 8 through a remediation process that lasted two-and-a-half months.

"We still could have done what we've done today from day one," Mr. Baker said.

Mayor Andy Skibitsky ended conversation by saying that Mr. Baker's "mischaracterization of inactivity is ridiculous."

Please see related front-page story for what Mr. Caruana, during Tuesday's council meeting, described as the "single-largest turnout [during his tenure] of property owners to discuss parking" at Monday's Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC) meeting.



BIG DIG...Demolition of Westfield's Memorial Pool swimming facilities continues on Tuesday. At left, workers have completed the demolition of the kiddie pool. At right, a worker attacks the drained main pool. By yesterday, the interior walls had been pulled into the pool; exterior drain walls were slated to be pulled into the pool yesterday and today.

Merchants Seek Relief During WF Parking-Lot Renovations

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD - Monday night's meeting of the Downtown Westfield Corporation began with a discussion of ongoing renovations to parking lots 1 and 8, between Elm and Prospect Streets, in front of Trader Joe's. A group of about 20 business owners questioned Town Administrator Jim Gildea about the town's plans for the lots.

"Last Saturday was a mess," said Maria Iacono, owner of Maria Candida Hair Salon, of Saturday's closing of both lots.

Ms. Iacono requested some type of relief, noting that some of her clients are elderly. She was one of four Prospect Street business owners who voiced their displeasure with what they viewed as impediments to business they have faced over the last 18 months.

Anna Mastroianni of Sole Shoes said, "Our street is closed with no warning."

Mr. Gildea said many of the closures were the result of the Savannah age-restricted development under construction on Prospect Street, over which the town has little control.

Ms. Mastroianni also requested better signage; Mr. Gildea said the town had arranged to borrow two large lighted signs from the county.

"You really are hurting us," said Scott Edmunds of Flower Zone. Mr. Edmunds, along with other business owners, asked for the town to exhibit

some flexibility during the construction.

Town Councilman Sal Caruana said that he would speak to Police Lieutenant Ken Norton, who heads up the traffic division at the Westfield Police Department.

"Something else that might help, if the parking-enforcement officers treated people with respect," said Susan Rauer of Brunner Opticians.

Mr. Gildea said three of the town's five parking-enforcement officers had recently been replaced, noting that customer service was a key reason. He commented that people encountering the officers could expect a more service-oriented attitude.

Describing aspects of the parking-lot renovation project, Mr. Gildea said the project would be executed in phases; with lot 1 (bordering Prospect Street) being worked first, followed by lot 8.

"One side will always be open," said DWC Chairman David Martone. Mr. Gildea said there might be occasions when it would be necessary to close both lots, but that would be "infrequent."

Mr. Gildea also described changes affecting permit parkers using those lots. He described "underutilized" meter spaces on Elm Street, near Stop and Shop and on Ferris Place and Orchard Street, as being "bagged" for permit parkers.

Officials said permit parkers would be encouraged to use parking lot 9,

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NORTHERN EXPOSURE... Canadian Vietnam Veterans ride from Quebec to Warnaco Park in Roselle to join the Rolling Thunder motorcycle procession on Sunday to the PNC Art Center to honor and remember the POW's.

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