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**ALL ABOARD...**The Caramagno family of Westfield — Dan, Mary Elizabeth, Alex, 10, and Joshua, 7, vacationed in New Mexico and Colorado in late August. Dan, Alex and Joshua share *The Westfield Leader* with an engineer on the Narrow Gauge Railroad in Silverton, Colo., before a scenic ride to Durango, Colo. Alex and Joshua are students at Tamaques School.

## Cranford Bd. Recommends 'Complete Streets' Program

**By DELL SIMEONE**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

CRANFORD — The Cranford Township Planning Board passed a resolution on August 21 to recommend the Complete Streets program be considered by the township committee. The recommendation followed a presentation by Rebecca Hoeffer of Cranford and Ranjit Walsia, a planner from Clark, who said the program would make Cranford more convenient for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and public-transportation riders.

According to Mr. Walsia, the program is part of a nationwide movement to make getting around towns safer and easier. Ms. Hoeffer, who is a third-generation resident, said she became interested in the program after having a very hard time trying to cross Centennial Avenue with two small children in tow. She has gotten 101 people to sign a petition in favor of the program and has written out a policy for making streets easier to negotiate for children, cyclists and the elderly.

The program suggests bike lockers be put at the Cranford Train Station and changes be made in the downtown parking program. Mr. Walsia said he has been advising Ms. Hoeffer on a pro basis. He also said new policies, if adopted, may not be one-size-fits all, saying certain policies may be specific to addressing the needs of young pedestrians, senior citizens or the disabled. He suggested making changes where appropriate.

Board member Rita LaBrutta commented, "When I walk around town, there are places that I avoid."

Everyone agreed that the intersection of North and Centennial Avenues is dangerous. Also in recent months a pedestrian was struck by a car while crossing the street near the train station. Parts of the program, if adopted by the township committee after recommendation of the planning board, might include new signage, countdown lights to help persons wanting to cross the street, new paving, curb cuts, and an educational program fostered through the school district and the town-

ship TV channel. Mr. Walsia said the township should prioritize what it wants to do first, perhaps by working with the Cranford Police Department.

"You have to figure out what would be appropriate and feasible," he said. He also suggested that grant money might be available from the state for some projects.

Mayor Thomas Hannen, Jr. said, "We may be eligible for some funding through NJ Transit."

Board member Peter Taylor questioned the need for the program. The rest of the board agreed that there were problem spots in town for cyclists as well as pedestrians and motorists.

## Root Update

well as musical performances and poetry readings—all of which will be free events open to the public. The space will be available to be rented for private functions as well.

"Gallery U Boutique had positioned itself as a valuable arts resource in the community during our time in Red Bank and Montclair through the coordination of seasonal town-wide Art Walks, by providing a venue for local artists and students to exhibit their artwork, and by aligning ourselves with community and non-profit organizations to raise funds and promote their mission," Mr. Langdon said. "We look forward to providing the same resource to Westfield and the surrounding communities."

The grand opening is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, from 6 to 9 p.m., and will feature artwork by members of Women Painting Women NJ.

"We're excited to move to Westfield—everyone has been so gracious," Mr. Langdon said. "It's a beautiful facility and we are expanding our business, so it's win-win!"

## From Westfield Public Schools Westfield Teachers Contract Ratified

On September 3, 2013, the Westfield Board of Education ratified a one-year contract with the Westfield Education Association (WEA), which is effective July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014. Under the new contract, teachers will receive a 2 percent increase in salary. The average settlement rate for teacher contracts in the state this year is 2.5 percent. This school year, Westfield teachers will be required to contribute more to their health insurance. They can continue to waive Westfield district insurance coverage if they have additional sources of health insurance. According to Business Administrator Dana Sullivan, this waiver will yield approximately \$760,000 in savings during the 2013-14 school year.

"With this contract in place, our 2013-14 school year can begin with emphasis where it belongs—on our students and their learning," noted Board of Education Negotiations Chairperson, Ginny Leiz.

WEA President Kim Schumacher stated, "Although negotiations are never easy, the Westfield Education Association is pleased

to announce that we have reached an agreement with the Westfield Board of Education on a successor contract. We look forward to doing what we do best...educating the students of Westfield."

In addition to Ginny Leiz, Westfield negotiating team members included Board members Ann Cary, Gretchen Ohlig, and Mitchell Slater, as well as administrative liaisons Barbara Ball—Human Resources Specialist, and Dana Sullivan—Business Administrator.

The WEA negotiating team members included Mrs. Schumacher and WEA Chief Negotiator Michael Seiler, Lillian Alston, Dominick Ceccio, Scott Rutherford, Mary Wickens, and Debbie Ann Vezos.

The WEA represents more than 500 teachers, nurses, librarians, guidance counselors, social workers and school psychologists.

**Lorre Korecky**  
School/Community Relations  
Westfield Public Schools

## Westfield BOE

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cent. The contributions are a four-tiered progression of increasing contributions mandated by chapter 78, which was instituted by Governor Chris Christie and approved by the state Legislature two-and-a-half years ago.

WEA chief negotiator, Michael Seiler, said, "By tier four, the contribution will be 35 percent of the health care premium, or 1.5 percent of your salary, whichever is greater. It's a sliding scale affecting each teacher differently. It's not even in negotiation any longer."

The WEA represents 500 teachers, nurses, librarians, guidance counselors, social workers and school psychologists. No salary guide was available for the new contract, but the previous contract stated that a step one teacher

with a bachelor's degree would make \$57,862, those with a master's degree would make \$60,660, a teacher with 30 plus credits above a master's degree would make \$63,239, and a step one teacher with a doctorate degree would make \$66,175. The new contract will increase those rates by 2 percent. Details as to longevity increases in the new contract were not available.

In other business, Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan said Jonathan Blitt, who was a candidate for the board in November, has withdrawn his candidacy.

The next meeting of the board will be a workshop meeting on Tuesday, September 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the administration building at 302 Elm Street.

## Mountainside Council

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(Elizabethtown Gas) basically agreed that anything we had paved since 2001, they would reestablish full curb-to-curb," he stated.

Affected streets in this category include Sunny Slope Drive from Ledgewood Road to Belair Court, Ledgewood Road from Sunny Slope Drive to Chimney Ridge Drive, Charles Street from Summit Road to Darby Lane, Turnabout Circle, several intersections on Central Avenue and a section of Knollcrest Road.

Mr. Disko continued, "They also then offered that what they typically do in this situation is to mill from the curb to the furthest disturbance limit, typically seven to 12 feet...essentially one-third. Most of their mairs, they're trying to hug the curb line for the most part."

Depending on the age and the condition of these roads, the borough has the option to put out to bid the paving of the other two-thirds of the roads in this grouping so the entire road would be repaved.

Affected streets in this category include Belair Court, Ledgewood Road from Chimney Ridge Drive to Rolling Rock Road, Elston Drive from Rolling Rock Road to Old Grove Road, Elston Drive from Old Grove Road to Sunny Slope Drive, the cul-de-sac on Belair Court, the remainder of Knollcrest Road, Old Farm Road and Holly Hill.

The estimated cost to the borough for these roads would be approximately

\$212,000. The borough also has the option not to repave the two-thirds of the road that it would be financially responsible for if resources cannot be allocated.

A third category for potential road improvements includes portions of roads not affected by the infrastructure upgrades by Elizabethtown Gas but which require repaving due to general wear and tear. These roads are Charles Street, Rolling Rock Road and Sunny Slope Drive. According to Mr. Disko, these roads may be eligible for future New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) grants. A "significant portion" of the costs of repaving these roads would be covered by the NJDOT if eligible.

The council resolved to approve the construction permits for Elizabethtown Gas and will determine how much or how little the borough will upgrade roads at a later date.

In other news, Mayor Paul Mirabelli announced that the borough was rated as one of the "best places to live" in New Jersey by *NJ Monthly* Magazine. "For anyone who hasn't seen or heard, we were ranked number 44 in the state," he said.

Mountainside was the top-ranked town in Union County, stated Mr. Mirabelli, surpassing such towns as Berkeley Heights and New Providence.

The next borough council meeting open to the public is scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, at 8 p.m. at the Mountainside Borough Hall.

## Garwood Planning Board

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ments and still have a pitched roof. He pressed Mr. Maher to show how granting the variance would be beneficial to the public as opposed to only his client.

"There's really no detriment," Mr. Maher said in response. "The house already is in that space. Certainly it would be a detriment if the applicant had to follow the existing setback and build kind of a setback second floor, which I suppose he could do within the zoning, but it would look hideous."

Architect Arthur Henn testified that the house would be no closer to the street than the houses on either side. He said he considered pushing the second floor addition back, but it would have changed the air flow.

"Basically, we would have had to increase the amount of circulation space," Mr. Henn said. "We have a small little hallway now, thus making the proposed addition a bigger volume than we really need. Keeping it forward would basically compact the second floor and give us the space we need."

He added that pushing the second floor back could potentially cast shadows on neighboring properties. "Keeping it forward, it falls on the house, and it allows the people on the left some

light, especially that morning light, the morning sun," he said.

Mr. Nierstedt also expressed concern about the two-car driveway that is in front of a one-car garage, and that while Mr. Pacella is not planning to turn his home into a two-family, the prospect would be tempting for future buyers. It was the impetus for requiring the deed restriction, reconfiguring the driveway to a one-car space and prohibiting any further encroachment toward the street.

In other meeting news, Mr. Nierstedt chastised Mr. Maher for submitting a 30-year-old survey for an application for a parking variance on Center Street. Erminia Savino Livieri is building four apartments above existing retail shops. The survey showed a vacant lot.

"Couldn't you at least have gotten an updated survey?" Mr. Nierstedt asked, adding that he is in support of the project. "Should we even move on this? As far as I'm concerned, the property is vacant."

Mr. Maher apologized. After a 15-minute recess, he asked the matter be postponed to the Wednesday, September 25 meeting. "We feel it is prudent to accept Mr. Nierstedt's very reasonable and probably wise suggestion," he said.



**BON JOUR.....**Mark Martini, candidate for Union County Freeholder and resident of Westfield, takes a break from the campaign trail to enjoy *The Westfield Leader* while traveling in Cannes on a recent trip to the South of France.

## Superintendent's Report

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The district's new staff training institute was held last week. "Our new teachers will be learning about our mission statement and the expectations of both the district and the community," the superintendent said. Among other things, they will learn about school emergency plans.

The new school resource officer at WHS, Westfield Police Officer Jeff Johnson, a 1999 WHS graduate, will be introduced to students and staff. He has already met with Ms. Dolan and WHS Principal Peter Renwick and was introduced to school administrators.

"We are really very pleased to welcome him back, but in a role as school resource officer," Ms. Dolan said. "It is so great to have that position reinstated; it truly is."

On the security issue, she said the district is working with a security firm that has provided training for administrators and office staff regarding security of buildings and admitting visitors to school buildings. All district schools are locked from the outside and visitors must buzz the intercoms at the main entrances to the school, where security cameras also are located.

"The majority of our parents really do respect the fact there should not be unannounced visits at the school(s) and they understand the need for the security," Ms. Dolan said.

In discussing curriculum changes for the new school year, she said 35 curricula have been revised and updated. Two new science classes, Forensics Science and Sports And Science, have been added at the high school, both of which have been filled. The district's Mandarin Chinese I class, started last year with one section, has been extended to a second section along with one section of Madarin Chinese II.

This past summer the district held a STEM Camp (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) for students in grades 3 to 8. Initially the camp was to be for a one week session, but was expanded to a second one-week

session, "because the interest was so high," Ms. Dolan said. Both sessions were filled.

"The students who attended were studying rocketry, they were building and programming robots, they were learning about computer-assisted design, and LEGO engineering and animation," she said. "It truly was a great success and we are looking forward to planning STEM Camp 2014."

Community Relations Director Lorre Korecky, who sat in on the interview, noted that the district is working on upgrading its website to be launched in early 2014. Ms. Dolan said the new website will integrate social media.

"It will allow more interactions between the students and the teachers and the parents and the information on the website as well," the superintendent said. The new website will be hosted off-site so it can be accessed even during storms like Superstorm Sandy through wireless technology.

The district also has a Twitter feed which parents are encouraged to sign up for so they can access "messages of interest about the district" as well as emergency messages.

Ms. Dolan also noted that the district installed a fiber optic network over the summer connecting all schools and the administrative offices, which she said would result in a "cost savings to the district." The district installed WiFi in all schools last year for wireless and Internet access.

The district has purchased 350 computers this year for student use. All are laptops, notebooks or tablets. Each has instruction specific software installed for the course and grade level of the student.

The district has two master technology teachers who provide training and support for staff for utilizing technology in the classroom.

"The whole focus is you don't just teach technology. You focus on your goals of what the students are learning and than how can technology enhance that," Ms. Dolan said.



**FUN TIMES...**Ryan Bluntschly reads *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* while his cousin, Nancy Barnes, holds on for dear life while riding Expedition Everest in Animal Kingdom at Walt Disney World recently.

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