

## WF Candidates Explain Why They Are Running for Board of Ed.

By LISA HAGEN

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

*Editor's Note: The Westfield Leader contacted candidates for The Westfield Board of Education and other towns within in our coverage area this past week who had not submitted information on their candidacies. Those candidates who we were not able to reach or for which we had no contact information are invited to submit information on their candidacies to editor@goleader.com.*

WESTFIELD — Westfield candidates this week explained why

they want to serve on the board and the qualifications they bring to the table. Eight candidates have filed for three seats on the board.

A Westfield resident since 2007, Anastasia Harrison said that if she is elected to the board, one of her priorities would be helping to create an "acceptable" budget.

"At budget time I would like to insure that the needs of the children are met and not the first to be cut, improving the facilities in which they learn, and develop partnerships to continue this work," she said in a letter to the editor.

The mother of three daughters in the public school system, Ms. Harrison said she also wants to work on maintaining and funding the schools' older facilities to continue to provide opportunities for the students.

"I believe that my time and talents as an architect and facility planner can be of assistance to the Westfield Board of Education with managing our aging schools," Ms. Harrison said.

Ms. Harrison is currently a board member/officer for the New Jersey Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council, where she said she learned how to serve on a team.

Currently a healthcare IT solutions provider, Michael Bielen has used his experience to help improve Westfield's online presence. He helped recreate the town's website with several town departments and introduced social media to communicate with residents.

Mr. Bielen said the town's emphasis on social media platforms was particularly useful after Hurricane Sandy, with information distributed through Twitter and the website.

"I look forward to bringing my background, creativity and problem-solving experience, together with fiscal prudence, to the board of education for the benefit of our students, teachers, school administrators and, ultimately, for all Westfield residents," he said in a letter to the editor.

Mr. Bielen has lived in Westfield for 15 years with his wife and twin daughters, who will enter middle school this fall.

"As a parent myself, I want to help ensure that they and all Westfield students continue to have the resources, instruction and physical environment to excel academically in a rapidly changing world," Mr. Bielen said.

Serving as a board member since April 2011, Mark Friedman hopes to continue to serve on the board because he said there is still unfinished business.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader

**NIGHT OUT...** The Cranford Police Department held its National Night Out event Tuesday night at Patrolman Robert F. Hand Plaza. Police and emergency vehicles, including a marked police patrol car, a zodiac jet-powered rescue boat, a police motorcycle, emergency services unit utility vehicles and equipment from the Union County Office of Emergency Management were on display.



Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader

**PAYING TRIBUTE...** Danny V's 52nd Street, a Billy Joel tribute band, entertains a large crowd on July 30 at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside during the Union County free Summer Arts Festival. The concerts continue all summer long every Wednesday beginning at 7:30 p.m.

## MS Council Discusses Changes to FD Regulations

By KATE BROWNE

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**MOUNTAINSIDE** — Proposed revisions to the regulations governing the operation of the borough's fire department and a continued debate over the current restrictions on home and lot size (aka Floor Area Ratio or FAR) dominated the borough council's Tuesday session.

Councilman William Lane, who serves as the community's liaison with the fire department, reported on his recent discussions with Fire Chief Peter Esemplare on proposed changes to the current fire department regulations regarding term limits and appointments.

According to Mr. Lane, historically the fire chief has served for a one-year term and the members of the department are considering a revision, which would provide for a term of three years. The benefits of a longer term include improved governance and continuity. In addition, a longer term would be more effective and efficient than the current election cycle.

The second change would impact the procedure for section of the deputy chief positions, one is elected by the members while the other position is automatically reserved for the outgoing chief. The members of the fire department have proposed amending the regulations so that both deputy chiefs are elected by the members rather than having one appointed position reserved for the former chief. Council members and Mayor Paul Mirabelli discussed the issues and after reaching no agreement agreed to investigate the proposed revisions further and discuss them again at the September council meeting.

The council continued the animated discussion which began several months ago over whether the community had "gone too small" when it restricted the FAR to 22.5 percent for new homes several years ago. Council members debated the issues raised by the reports received from the borough's planner and attorney, but made no final decision on whether to cycle.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader

**PROPER DISPOSAL...** Workers sort items during the Union County hazardous materials collection event held Saturday morning at Union County Vocational-Technical Schools in Scotch Plains.

## Mayor Kalnins Discusses Flood Project, Birchwood, Road Repairs

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**CRANFORD** — Cranford Mayor Andis Kalnins discussed issues ranging the Rahway River flood control project, and the Union County College (UCC) athletic facility to the Riverfront and Birchwood development projects during and a recent interview with *The Westfield Leader*.

"Flooding has always been an issue in Cranford, (so) we are definitely looking to see what we can do to resolve that," the mayor said. "One of the ways is to fight some of this overdevelopment that is going on in our area and particularly also upstream."

He said Cranford has been working

through the Mayors' Council on Rahway River Watershed Flood Control to get other towns to pass ordinances to put stormwater management plans in place that contain "more stricter controls."

He said the township "continues to fight" for federal and state funding for the Army Corps of Engineers' feasibility study of flood abatement projects under consideration. A total of \$1.2 million is needed to finish the study, officials have said. The township is looking to get the funding within three years.

"We are trying to get it as quickly as possible while it is fresh on people's minds to keep the momentum going," he said.

The state Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) and the Army Corps have endorsed Alternative No. 4, which involves channel improvements with modifications to outlet pipes in the Orange Reservoir, and Alternative No. 7A, which involves raising homes in Cranford.

"Both the federal government and the state have said they are committed to getting us the money (for the story). We just have to make sure that happens," the mayor said.

He said the next step would be to

have Congress fund the project. In that regard, the Rahway Mayors Council has hired a lobbyist in Washington, D.C. "to keep this on the front burners."

"They (Rahway Mayors Council) have limited funds and Cranford has agreed to continue that (funding lobbyist) until at least the rest of this year once they run out of money," Mayor Kalnins said.

When asked about the status of the proposed 360-apartment development at 215-235 Birchwood Avenue, 60 of which would be "affordable" housing units, the mayor said he assumes a court date on the township's appeal "is still months away." Cranford Development Associates (CDA) had sued the township via a Builder's Remedy lawsuit, and in December of 2011, Judge Lisa Chrystal decided in favor of the developer. Cranford is appealing the court ruling as well as permits issued to CDA by the DEP.

"We think we have some really good issues (in the township's appeal of the Birchwood development) as opposed to some of the other development that is occurring downtown," he said, citing the Riverfront development on South Avenue across from the train station and 555 South Avenue, located within

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Parties Have Until Sept. 10 To File Sheriff Candidates

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

**COUNTY** — Following the passing of long-time Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich two weeks ago, officials are reviewing the legal process of holding a special election to fill the vacancy. State Assemblyman Joseph Cryan (D-20th, Union), who serves as undersheriff, has been named acting county sheriff in the interim.

Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi told *The Westfield Leader* her office is in the process of reviewing the legal state statutes for holding the special election. She said the election, to be on the General Election ballot in November, will be for a full, three-year term and not for the two years left on Sheriff Froehlich's unexpired term. There also will not be any Primary for the position, Ms. Rajoppi explained.

"We are proceeding. The General Election ballot will be drawn on Monday according to statute. The political parties have to September 10 to select sheriff candidates," Ms. Rajoppi told *The Leader* through an e-mail.

According to state statute 40A: 9-102, the election has to occur this November as Sheriff Froehlich's death occurred more than 37 days prior to the General Election. Had it occurred within 37 days or less, the election would have occurred in November of 2015.

All candidates for sheriff have to by state statute be a resident of both New Jersey and Union County for at

least three years.

Union County Republican Chairman Glenn Mortimer said his party is looking for sheriff candidates.

"We are actively seeking a candidate for sheriff, but no one has come forward yet," Mr. Mortimer said. He said the committee is looking for someone "preferably with a law enforcement background."

Mr. Mortimer invites any registered Republican to call the county GOP headquarters if they are interested in running.

"I am happy to have them call me," Mr. Mortimer said. He added that if multiple people apply the GOP will screen the candidates and decide on a candidate to appear on the ballot.

Calls to Assemblyman Jerry Green (D-22nd, Plainfield), Union County Democratic Committee chairman, were not returned.

Sheriff Froehlich passed away July 20 at Trinitas Regional Medical Center. He had served as sheriff since 1978 and was the longest-serving sheriff in state history.

Assemblyman Cryan is one of three undersheriffs who served under Sheriff Froehlich and is regarded as the most likely candidate on the Democratic ticket for sheriff.

If he is elected sheriff he would have to resign from the state Assembly and the party would appoint a new Assembly member to serve until the next General Election in November 2015. The 20th Legislative District includes Elizabeth, Hillside, Roselle and Union.



**SUMMER LEARNING...** Westfield Public School teachers voluntarily returned as students attending instructional technology workshops this summer. The 65 teachers that attended focused on honing their skills under the guidance of Westfield's Master Technology teachers Jeanine Gottko, at podium, and Adam Pizzi. See story on page 17.

### PAGE INDEX

Regional .....	2-3	Education .....	15
Editorial .....	4-5	Sports .....	9-13
Police .....	16	Real Estate .....	9-18
Community ...	6-7, 16	Classifieds .....	14
Obituary .....	6	A&E .....	17-18



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