

WF BOE Hears Report on WHS Class of 2014, Testing

By DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD – Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan gave a “where are they now” presentation at Tuesday’s board of education of where the recent June Westfield High School (WHS) graduates are going to college. That was followed by Assistant Superintendent Paul Pineiro talking about the testing schedule for this school year.

Ms. Dolan said 97 percent of WHS graduates are pursuing higher education this fall. She said 452 are continuing their education, with 90 percent attending four-year colleges and universities and 4.7 percent attending two-year colleges. She added that 2.3 percent are entering vocational and business institutions. She also said that others are taking a year off or are undecided.

She said that seven of the eight Ivy League schools are represented and the most popular schools are state universities. In New Jersey, 28 of the 2014 graduates are attending Rutgers University, and 17 are attending Union County College, she said.

Mr. Pineiro gave a Power Point presentation about the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) testing and the NJASK (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge) testing to take place this school year. He said the testing would take place for grades 3 to 5 on Monday, March 2 and Friday, March 27; grades 6 to 8 on Monday, April 27 and Friday, May 22; grades 9 to 11 on March 2 and March 27. He said the end of year component would take place on April 27 and May 22.

In describing the new Endline Management System, Mr. Pineiro said, “We are prepared and ready to go for the spring.” The new online system will be interactive and provide information on the district, links to school and teacher’s websites, he said. He suggested using Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari on browsers.

Parents, he said, can access specific information pertaining to their children’s classes. Teachers will post assignments, projects and class specific materials. Elementary students can access games, class news and web based reference material and data, he said. They can interact with other classmates and teachers through message boards, he added. Parent Peggy Oster asked if teachers are required to be up to date on their websites. Mr. Pineiro said they will be. She also asked how she could access her account. Mr. Pineiro said the school will invite parents to open an individual account which will have a password.

Festfall to Mark 25th Anniversary on Sept. 21

WESTFIELD — The fall street fair season will kickoff locally with Westfield’s Festfall on Sunday, September 21, starting at 10 a.m. and running until 5 p.m. The Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce is celebrating the 25th year of the street fair.

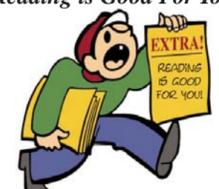
“Once again, we expect thousands to be in attendance and enjoy festive atmosphere created in downtown Westfield,” said Gene Janotti, GWACC executive director.

Festfall will be held in the center of Westfield on Elm, Quimby, East Broad and Prospect Streets. Vendors, local businesses, entertainment, activities for all ages include a kid zone with games and activities. The fair will run rain or shine. “I am so proud of our vibrant and multiple award-winning Downtown area. Certainly much of its continued success is attributable to the efforts of the many businesses that are Chamber members,” Mayor Andrew Skibitsky said.

“This 25th anniversary of the Chamber’s FestiFall not only reflects the Chamber’s commitment to the community, it serves as an opportunity to showcase all that Westfield has to offer. I congratulate the Chamber on its 25th year of organizing this great annual tradition and look forward to seeing everyone in our downtown on Sunday, September 21,” the mayor said.

Musical entertainment starts at 10 a.m. with The Barros Band. At 11 a.m. Pre-School of Rock will be featured followed by The Jersey Beat at noon. The afternoon lineup includes The Backbeat at 2 p.m. and The Core at 3 p.m.

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Board Rejects Porch on West Dudley Avenue

By DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD – The board of adjustment, on Monday evening, spent two-and-a-half-hours hearing one application and had to carry over 15 others to the Wednesday, October 15, meeting. Most of those had already been carried over from the July meeting as there was no August meeting. The board took two breaks during the long evening.

The application, which took so much time was by Scott Giardina, of 125 Dudley Avenue, who sought to construct a new front porch contrary to code. A new front walkway would also be added. In the end, the board rejected the application.

The project architect was David Bailey, of Westfield, who described the porch as being open with a railing and pillars. Mr. Giardina, the homeowner, told the board that he has a special child, and that the porch would protect her from the elements and make it safer for her to leave for the school bus in the mornings during inclement weather.

He also said that his home was built in 1985 and was in a neighborhood of older homes, most of which already had porches. A portico would extend over the steps, he said.

Nicholas Dividio, a neighbor on West Dudley Avenue, objected to the proposed application and said that 52.28 is the average setback on Dudley Avenue. The ordinance requires a front yard setback of 49 feet where the proposed was 39.65 feet. He also argued that the open porch would not prevent rain and snow from being on the porch. He wanted to know if the applicant considered a side entrance and asked if the other homes on the street had wood porches.

The applicant’s planner, David Karlebach, told the board that Mr. Giardina had improved his property with new landscaping, shutters and a new slate sidewalk. He also said the porch would enhance and comply with the older homes in the neighborhood. He said the grading and drainage patterns would remain the same. He added that the c-1 variance sought would not cause a substantial detriment to the neighborhood and that the c-2 variance needed for the 84 square-foot porch would be in compliance with the neighborhood.

Mr. Dividio said there are storm water issues in the area. Mr. Giardina said any water on his property is channeled out to the street. Mr. Dividio countered with the assertion that the woods behind the Giardina property causes water problems. Mr. Dividio, who said he and his wife had lived in their 106-year old home for 32 years, opposed the application because said it reduces the setback requirement.

Board member Mitch Slater suggested that a session be held for the parents to learn how to access the Endline Management System, other board members agreed.

In other business, board Business Administrator Dana Sullivan said that all repairs are on track and should be finished soon.

The board approved a transfer of \$6,375 from the maintenance reserve account to cover additional asbestos tile removal at the Jefferson Elementary School, Franklin Elementary School and Edison Intermediate School.

The board voted to accept a gift of \$400 from the Westfield Coalition for the Arts to provide Master Classes for the Westfield High School Choral through out the 2014-2015 school year.

The next meeting of the board will be Tuesday, September 23, at 7:30 p.m., followed by a workshop meeting, at the administration building, 3 Elm Street.

Watson Coleman Launches New Website

REGION — Bonnie Watson Coleman for Congress campaign manager James Gee has announced the launch of the campaign’s new website. The site can be found at www.bonnieforcongress.com/

Ms. Watson Coleman is the Democratic nominee for New Jersey’s 12th Congressional District, which includes Fanwood, Plainfield and most of Scotch Plains.

“Bonnie has been traveling throughout the 12th Congressional District discussing the issues with constituents and our website is indicative of not only what she has been hearing in the community, but also what she has fought for her entire life,” Mr. Gee said.

“Bonnie has been a leader in the effort to provide equal pay for equal work and protect women’s access to contraception. She will make it a priority to fight Tea Party efforts to dismantle Social Security and she is committed to creating jobs and opportunities for New Jersey’s middle-class families. Her economic agenda starts with strong public schools and affordable higher education, investments in research and development for 21st century industries such as bio-tech and clean energy and policies that reward companies that create jobs here in America and stop tax breaks for companies that send U.S. jobs overseas,” Mr. Gee said.

Ms. Watson-Coleman currently represents the 15th Legislative District in the New Jersey General Assembly.

For more information on how to volunteer for Bonnie Watson Coleman’s campaign for Congress and for her positions on women’s health care, pay equity, education and job creation, please go to www.bonnieforcongress.com/

County Paving to Begin Next Week With South Ave.

REGION — Private contractors hired by Union County will be paving major roadways over the next few weeks, according to the county’s website.

Paving projects are as follows:
South Avenue:
From the Garwood Line to Centennial Avenue in Cranford, on or about Wednesday, September 17. The project is expected to take six days.

From Center Street in Garwood to the Westfield line, Monday, September 29. The project is expected to take six days.

From the Garwood line to the Westfield traffic circle, on Thursday, October 8. The project is expected to take six days.

Meisel Avenue:
In Springfield from Maple Avenue to Springfield Avenue, Wednesday, September 24, and continuing for 10 days.

East Broad Street in Westfield, from Mountain Avenue to Chestnut Street, Wednesday, October 15, and continuing for four days.

According to the county, all of these projects will be completed at night and include milling, paving, and striping of the roads. The roads will be closed from approximately 9 p.m. until 6 a.m.

Clearly marked detour routes will be established and maintained by county forces for each project. Emergency vehicles will be allowed through at all times. Access to residences, including deliveries and other services in the work zone will be allowed as much as possible.

Traffic questions should be dialed into the county’s Traffic Bureau at (908) 789-6011 during normal business hours.

State Takes Action to Allow Legal Sports Wagering

TRENTON – Through a combined statewide directive issued by the Attorney General’s office and a motion filed on behalf of Governor Chris Christie in the U.S. District Court, the Christie Administration took action on Monday to allow casinos and racetracks to operate sports pools without fear of criminal or civil liability.

The Attorney General’s directive follows the Third Circuit’s ruling and concludes that nothing under New Jersey law prevents casinos and racetracks from operating a sports pool.

The motion in federal court, filed on behalf of Governor Christie, asks U.S. District Court Judge Michael Shipp to clarify or modify his February 2013 injunction in conformance with the decision of the Third Circuit. Based on the arguments of the sports leagues and the United States Department of Justice, the Third Circuit has already ruled that New Jersey can carry out sports wagering as described in the directive. The motion would clarify and formalize that authority and give clear guidance to casinos and racetracks waiting to open a sports pool in New Jersey.

In 2012 New Jersey passed the Sports Wagering Act to license and regulate the extensive sports wagering that already was going on within the state. New Jersey was then sued in federal court based on a statute from 1992 – the federal Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) – which prohibits the state from authorizing or licensing sports betting. Relying on PASPA, Judge Shipp issued an injunction in February 2013 enjoining the imposition of New Jersey’s comprehensive licensing and oversight regime.

The Third Circuit Court of Appeals subsequently upheld the District Court’s action, but, at the same time, made clear that New Jersey was free to remove prohibitions against sports wagering. The Third Circuit’s decision mirrored the express arguments of both the sports leagues and the United States Department of Justice, both of which stated that nothing in PASPA prohibited New Jersey from removing its prohibitions against sports wagering.

Union County to Hold ‘Seat Check Saturday’

COUNTY – Union County has announced that a free “Seat Check Saturday” child safety seat inspection event has been added to the county’s regular safety seat inspection program at the AAA Care Care Center, located at 135 Route 22 East in Springfield.

The extra day will be held on Saturday, September 20 from 9 a.m. to noon, when Union County will join in the national Child Passenger Safety campaign.

The county’s ongoing free child safety seat inspection program takes place every Wednesday and Thursday morning at the AAA Car Care Center, from 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. No appointment is necessary.

For more information, visit ucnj.org or call (908) 789-6830.

See it all on the Web!
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DEMS Plan Events in Local Towns

AREA — The Union County Democratic Committee has listed a number of local upcoming events on its website.

On Friday, September 12, the Garwood Democrats will hold a campaign kick off party from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the home of Councilman and Mrs. Bill Nierstedt, 320 Hickory Avenue, Garwood. The deadline for tickets, priced at \$75, was September 5th.

On Saturday, September 13, from noon to 5:30 p.m., Scotch Plains Democrats will hold a fundraiser at the Jerseyland Park Community Center. Tickets are \$25 per person with children under 10 admitted for free.

On Thursday, September 18, the Westfield Democrats will hold an event for Democratic candidate for Congress Janice Kovach at the home of Janice Siegel and Lloyd Marks in Westfield at 7:30 p.m.

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