

Mountainside BOE Thanks Retiring CSA Lubarsky

By KATE BROWNE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — The board of education during its Tuesday meeting thanked retiring Chief School Administrator (CSA) Nancy Lubarsky, Ed.D., for her energy, commitment and devotion to the children of Mountainside. Ms. Lubarsky is retiring after eight years of service to the district.

Board of Education President James Ruban detailed the many legacy challenges that CSA Lubarsky faced when she took the position and commended her for significant improvements that occurred during her tenure, including the implementation of the social and emotional learning curriculum, major renovations to school facilities including the Deerfield Elementary School Media Center, and the growth in the music and arts programs.

The board reviewed the status of three major projects that will be done over the summer. These include the installation of a canopy at the Beechwood School, a major renovation of the science room at Deerfield School and the installation of state-of-the-art projection systems at both schools. According to Technology Coordinator Jason Whitaker, all classrooms will be equipped with hi-definition 4K projectors and stereo speakers. All of these infrastructure improvement projects are on schedule to be completed prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

Board member Dante Gioia congratulated all of the recent graduates from Governor Livingston High School. He noted that 111 Mountainside residents received awards and recognitions for outstanding performance in academics, sports, service and the arts. He also thanked all of the parents, teachers and volunteers who made the eighth-grade dance a success.

The board accepted a \$25,000 donation from the Mountainside PTO. Twenty thousand dollars will be allocated for

district-wide technology upgrades, while the remaining \$5,000 will be spent on capital improvements at Deerfield and Beechwood Schools. The board also accepted a \$200 donation from the Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield, which will be used for the outdoor learning center at Deerfield School.

The board appointed Kim Richards and Suzanne Jenks as the Affirmative Action officers and Paula Pontoriero as the gender equity and ADA officer. It also voted to approve new policies for service animals and administration of opioid antidotes and new procurement policies for school nutrition programs.

The board presented Deerfield student Katama O'Donnell with a certificate acknowledging her winning the New Jersey Literary Association's writing contest. Katama's essay will be published on the Association's website.

The board's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 23.



CHS GRADUATES OF 2019...Cranford High School holds its commencement June 25 at Memorial Field.

Cranford High School Graduates 322 Students

By JILL BURKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Three hundred and twenty-two students graduated from Cranford High School (CHS) on Memorial Field Tuesday evening.

The bleachers were packed as the Class of 2019 and CHS faculty processed into the stadium in front of family and friends. Class Vice-President Ellen Rokicki gave the first speech of the night, in place of Class President Grace DiGiovanni, who later gave the Salutatorian speech. In her address, Ms. Rokicki noted how lucky their class was to spend their "growing-up years" in Cranford.

"I am always so impressed by the capabilities of my classmates, in the classroom, on the stage performing their art, or on the field, representing our school as student athletes," Ms. Rokicki said. "For this talented class of students, these years also included award-winning performances, trips to DECA, Model UN, volunteering at the first aid squad and working part-time jobs. Yet, in between those achievements were the ordinary moments that perhaps we might miss the most."

CHS Principal Mark Cantagallo delivered the commencement address and asked the students how they will confront their fears. "Will you meet them head on? Or will you avoid them?" he asked the Class of 2019.

"You are not only capable, you are equipped," Mr. Cantagallo told the students. "You are about to graduate not just from one high school, but a district that has empowered you and your abilities to put no limit on your greatness. Whether you went to Walnut, Livingston, Hillside, Bloomingtondale, Lincoln, Brookside, Orange, or just transferred, you are here now and ready to embark on your journey."

Superintendent Scott Rubin, Ed.D.,

followed, thanking faculty and staff throughout the whole Cranford school district for all that they do, and for contributing to making Cranford a place where people genuinely care about each other.

Each graduate walked across the stage to receive his or her diploma. When Mr. Cantagallo reached Anthony Granata's name, he announced that Mr. Granata was not able to attend the ceremony because he was on his way to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. The crowd cheered for Mr. Granata, proud of him both for his accomplishment and for his service to his country.

Class President and Salutatorian Grace DiGiovanni addressed her class after the conferring of diplomas. "Cranford High School has given me so many opportunities and advantages," she said. Noting that "until now, Cranford has been the center of our world," she challenged her class to "make a difference, no matter how small it may seem."

After musical performances of "Until We Meet Again" and "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" by members of the CHS Concert Choir, Valedictorian Bridget Dineen addressed her class. Ms. Dineen stressed the importance of being kind to one another. "Being from such an excellent group of graduates, we often find ourselves caught up in cutthroat competition, constantly comparing ourselves to those on our left and our right," she said. "In this environment, it's easy to lose sight of our most important duty as members of society, to treat each other with kindness." She left her class with inspiring words. "I'm confident that as we all begin the first chapter of the next book in our series, we will find that being Cranford High School graduates has prepared us for whatever endeavor we find ourselves pursuing," she said.

After Ms. Dineen's speech, the class together moved their tassels from right to left, symbolizing that they are now high-school graduates. The Class of 2019 then threw their blue and white caps into the air and recessed out of the ceremony, into the world ahead of them.

Wilkie

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from the far end of the courtroom as Wilkie was the first person to be heard by Judge Daniel in the Courthouse Tower courtroom. Wilkie was represented by public defender Janice Massaro. The Union County Prosecutor's Office was represented by Assistant Prosecutor James C. Brady.

Wilkie's detention hearing comes after the Westfield community and many of the surrounding suburban municipalities breathed a collective sigh of relief as Wilkie was apprehended without incident. The school entered a lock-down phase during his apprehension, with the arrest occurring at approximately 3:55 p.m. when Tamaques' after-school activities were in progress.

Mary Asfendis Appointed Principal at WHS

WESTFIELD — The board of education on Tuesday morning unanimously approved the appointment of Mary Asfendis as principal of Westfield High School (WHS) effective Thursday, August 1.

"In my formative years of teaching, Westfield Public Schools cemented my philosophy of education, showed me the value of school and community and pushed me to be the best professional I could be," said Mrs. Asfendis, in remarks at the board meeting. "Fast forward 20 years later and I am so proud to represent this district which has given me so much."

Currently, Mrs. Asfendis is principal of Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield, a position she has held since May 2017. Her career in the Westfield Public Schools began as a middle-school Spanish teacher in 1999, a position she held until 2004. From 2004 to 2012, she was supervisor of world languages in the Bernards Township School District before returning to Westfield as an assistant principal at WHS from 2012 to 2016 and assistant principal at Edison Intermediate School for the 2016-2017 school year.

"Mrs. Asfendis brings 15 years of educational leadership to the role of principal at Westfield High School. And, as a former WHS assistant principal, she knows the school well," said Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan, Ed.D. "I am certain that she will be a dedicated leader with vision and commitment to the more than 1,800 students, their families, and the staff of Westfield High School."

While an assistant principal at WHS, Mrs. Asfendis supervised and evaluated the world language, practical arts, and special-education departments, developed a variety of course offerings to suit both students and teachers, planned and implemented technology programs, initiated a diverse array of professional development for staff, and strengthened the partnership with the WHS Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) by working collaboratively on various projects.

During her extensive career in education, Mrs. Asfendis also has shared her knowledge as an educational consultant, providing workshops to school districts on the effective use of educational technology.

Earning a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision from Rutgers University, Mrs. Asfendis also holds a Master of Arts in Teaching Spanish from Rutgers and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Education from Messiah College, Pa.



Mary Asfendis

In addition to Superintendent Dolan and Human Resources Specialist Barbara Ball, the interview committee for the Westfield High School principal position included a high-school assistant principal, two high-school teachers, a high-school parent, two district supervisors and one board member. Prior to the interviews, the process also included conversations with various WHS stakeholders — students, teachers, counselors, the WHS head custodian and the principal's executive secretary — to collect their thoughts on the skills and attributes necessary for the position.

"As Roosevelt's principal, Mrs. Asfendis has learned a great deal about leading a building and she succeeded in building a staff community dedicated to professional growth, instructional excellence, and the social and emotional wellness of students," Superintendent Dolan said. "She articulated a vision that endorses the team approach, and provides multiple opportunities for exploration and growth during the critical years of middle school."

Mrs. Asfendis will fill the position held by the late Derrick Nelson, Ed.D., who died in April after suffering complications while undergoing a stem cell donation procedure.

"While I am so grateful for this opportunity and the promise it brings, it comes at the end of a very difficult year for our community," said Mrs. Asfendis at the board meeting. "We lost a friend, colleague and leader. I was fortunate to have worked alongside Derrick and to have been his friend as we both became principals. While we will always remember Derrick, I am grateful for the honor and privilege of helping Westfield High School move forward."

Cranford Gets Extension To Submit Housing Plan

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — The planning board on Wednesday discussed reexamining the master plan, considering rezoning portions of a zone, and also announced the township has received an extension to submit its affordable-housing plan.

The planning board has a deadline of Monday, September 30, to complete its reexamination of the master plan. The board is considering sending out an electronic survey to residents about topics within the master plan.

Zoning Officer Jason Bottcher discussed the rezoning of an area that contains mostly single-family, split-level-style homes, as well as open space owned by the township, from an R-3 zone to an R-6 zone. An application by a homeowner to build an addition to the back of his house had warranted a use variance, and so Mr. Bottcher looked into the issues with the zone. He said the area was rezoned from R3 to R6 sometime after 2009.

There is not one conforming lot and

not one conforming use, Mr. Bottcher said of the area in question, which is off of Bloomingtondale Avenue.

Mr. Bottcher's primary recommendation is to split the area between R6 and R3 zones, which he described as "realistically going back to what it was and taking away the burden on the homeowner."

Mayor Patrick Giblin, who also is a member of the planning board, announced that the township has been given an extension of immunity from builder's remedy lawsuits until September 30.

"We are close to settling with Fair Share Housing," Mayor Giblin said. Cranford is "one of a handful of towns" that are close to settling their affordable-housing plan, he said.

In other business, a resolution for 125 Moen Street was memorialized.

The board will have its next meeting on Wednesday, July 17, at 7:30 p.m. Prior to the regular meeting, a community session will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the municipal chambers for those interested in becoming a member and in learning about the zoning and planning board.

Cranford Bd. of Ed.

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and the enhancements) went for a vote, approximately 90 percent of those surveyed would like to see them listed as separate items to vote on.

According to Superintendent Rubin, the next step in the process is to get a committee together of community stakeholders and "try to develop the next steps." When a resident inquired about the possibility of the plans going to referendum in the fall, the superintendent made clear there is "no chance" that could happen.

In other business, the board authorized acceptance of grant funds from the Cranford Fund for Educational Excellence in the amount of \$34,915. Mr. Rubin described the relationship with those involved with the Cranford Fund as another example of the "wonderful partnerships" that exist in the Cranford district.

Furthermore, the board authorized

the submission of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) combined grant application in the amount of \$867,603 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) combined grant application in the total amount of \$147,674.

Additionally, Business Administrator and Board Secretary Robert J. Carfagno, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Brian Heineman, Director of Human Resources Paul E. Ward and Director of Student Services Kristin Szawan were reappointed by the board.

Eric Cosentino, special-education teacher; Allison Walker, biology teacher; William Aspe, special-education and Spanish teacher; Nicole Vaccaro, math teacher, and Stephen Monaghan, Jr., social studies teacher, were approved for hire by the board.

The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be Monday, July 22.

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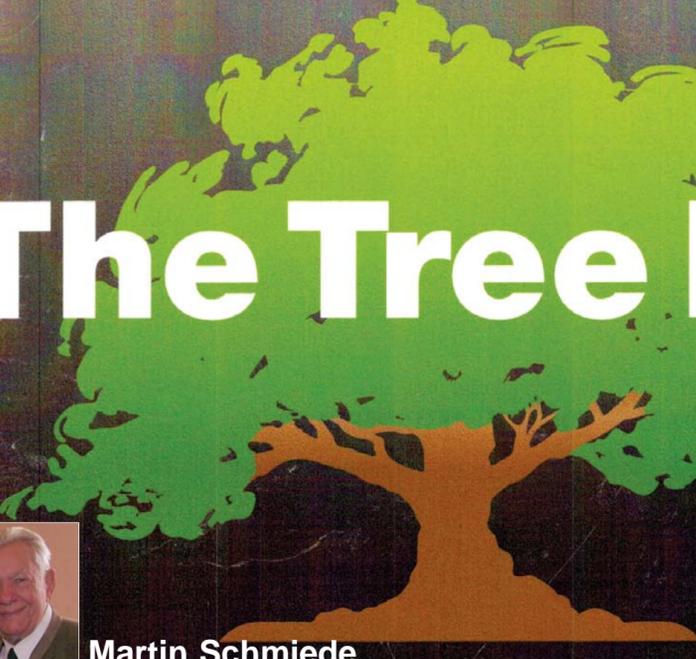
Session 1: July 5 - 24
Session 2A: July 25 - Aug 13
Session 2B: July 25 - Aug 20

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The Tree Man



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LEADER IN SANTA FE...Julie Nestor of Brooks, Ga., and Honey Corbin of Peachtree City, Ga., pictured right, stand in front of the Native-American Museum of Art in Museum Hill, Santa Fe, N.M., holding The Westfield Leader. They lunched at the museum cafe that overlooks the botanical gardens featuring flora indigenous to the area complemented by a spectacular sculpture garden, which they toured after lunch.