



— Serving the Town Since 1890 —

# The Westfield Leader

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**SOUNDS OF JAZZ...**The Coleman Mellett Trio performed in front of Talbots on North Avenue in Westfield during last weekend's second annual "Sweet Sounds Downtown" jazz festival. The festival will continue tonight, Thursday, July 23, through this Sunday, July 26.



**HOW SWEET IT IS...**The Alfred Patterson Trio performed last Friday night at the Westfield Train Station during the opening weekend of the second annual "Sweet Sounds of Downtown" jazz festival. The Patterson Trio will be among the groups performing this weekend. Please see story on Page 7.

## RECOMMENDATIONS EXPECTED AUG. 4

# Committee Putting Finishing Touches On Parking Plan

By ANDREW FISHKOFF  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Emotions continue to run high over the issue of parking in downtown Westfield, despite the progress made by the Town Council's Transportation, Parking, and Traffic Committee.

The committee is currently analyzing 23 potential solutions of ways to alleviate some of the parking and traffic congestion in the downtown.

Many of the recommendations come from the three public forums held this past spring and summer at which residents, merchants, and property owners submitted ideas for potential solutions.

"Clearly we can't solve all of the problems overnight," said Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, who chairs the committee. "But it is time that we take concrete steps, even if in the beginning they appear to be little steps."

Councilman Sullivan said that the committee has already met once in private to begin whittling down the recommendations in time for a conference session on Tuesday, August 4.

From there, the committee will present its finding at the meeting of the Town Council on the following Tuesday, August 11.

Nevertheless, merchants and residents throughout downtown Westfield remain pessimistic about progress on increasing the availability of parking.

Ric Miller, owner of The Music Staff on Quimby Street, said that he is "totally disgusted" by the parking situation.

"There has been study after study and meeting after meeting, but nothing has ever been done," he said.

Mr. Miller also said the lack of enforcement for "meter feeding," a term that refers to someone who parks in a metered spot for an entire day, continually "feeding" quarters into the meter throughout the day to avoid being ticketed, was a problem.

Many merchants charge that meter feeding drives away customers because the lack of available parking spaces in front or near the stores.

In the short-term, the committee is looking to increase the number of available metered parking spots in the downtown, according to Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, who serves on the committee.

"We want to move employees of downtown businesses off of the street and into parking lots, so other spots will be available for shoppers," Mayor Jardim said.

However, the committee is also considering the addition of a tiered parking deck, similar to one in Summit. While the committee has not yet discussed the specifics of a parking deck in their meetings, Mayor Jardim said that the deck is "certainly likely in the long-term."

Many employees throughout Westfield...

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## Three Mayoral Candidates Express Concern Over Decision Regarding Elm Street Leases

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Last week's announcement that a children's clothing store, that is part of a national chain, would replace two long-time independently owned businesses was met with concern from the three Westfield mayoral candidates.

The chain store, Gymboree, will take over the storefronts of Elm Delicatessen and Backroom Antiques on Elm Street next year.

Gary Goodman, one of the building owners, said the new tenant will rent the two spaces which have a combined 1,800 square feet of space. Storytime on Elm, a children's bookstore, rents a storefront in the Goodman building, but will remain.

Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, a Democrat seeking reelection this November, said that, "Obviously, it saddens me to see two local businesses, who have contributed so much to this town, be put out of their locations." He further said that such decisions are "dictated by the (commercial real estate) market."

The Mayor said he asked Downtown Westfield Corporation Executive Director Michael La Place, who operates the downtown special improvement district, to look at other

towns "to see what tools can be utilized to insure a balanced mix of national and local retailers."

The mayor has also been surfing the Internet to see what, if anything, can be done by the town to preserve a mix of "Mom and Pop" and larger chain stores.

Commercial rent control — which evidently exists in Berkeley, California, — is not necessarily a viable option in Westfield, according to the Mayor.

Mayor Jardim emphasized that the community and Town Council need to make "constructive" comments on the future of the downtown as opposed to "bashing" the downtown revitalization plan for the town or the DWC, which has been toiling in this regard.

First Ward Councilwoman Gail S. Vernick, the Republican Mayoral candidate, said she feels "very badly" that two long-standing tenants have been "literally, forced out of their locations."

"I feel that they should have been asked whether they could meet the new lease structure before a new tenant was accepted," she told *The Leader*.

While saying that she likes the mix of mall stores and small businesses in

Westfield, "Ultimately, I feel there should be room for everyone - the stores that want to remain and the stores that hope to come to Westfield."

Mrs. Vernick, who has served on the council since January of 1995, said the council cannot intervene in the matter since it is one of private enterprise which does not involve public policy.

In terms of the town's ability to respond, she said, "The SID should speak with realtors who are placing stores." However, she emphasized an earlier point, in adding, "I don't think municipal government has a role in it" although the government "can make recommendations" to the DWC.

"I don't think we're micro-managing their budget," Councilwoman Vernick said about the DWC.

However, the Town Council is required to vote annually on whether to release over \$200,000 to the DWC in tax funds that are collected from property owners in the downtown special improvement district.

Norman N. Greco, a former councilman who is making a second run for the mayor's office as an independent, said he believes the mix of businesses in the central business district has tipped in favor of national and regional chain stores.

As a small business owner in Westfield himself, Mr. Greco said he knows "Mom and Pop's" are the "backbone" of this country. He said he wants to see these types of businesses stay in downtown Westfield.

He said that while landlords are not actively seeking new tenants, they are finding it more and more difficult to refuse leasing deal offers that more than double the current rent for retail space.

Mr. Greco put much of the blame on Tony Schilling of Relocation Realty, a local commercial real estate broker, who he said put the notion of lucrative lease deals in the heads of downtown property owners.

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## Burner Deal Slated Today

Officials with the Union County Utilities Authority and Ogden Martin Systems of Union, Inc. were expected to sign contracts yesterday, July 22, as this newspaper went to press, to initiate the private operation of the county's solid waste incinerator in Rahway. The agreement will go into effect as of 12:01 a.m. today, Thursday, July 23.

Revenue from the 25-year lease agreement will pay off \$180 million of the outstanding debt on the burner. That leaves \$86 million in debt which the authority plans to pay off through the creation of a tax on all waste generated in Union County — a fee known as an Environmental Investment Charge, or EIC.

In order to fulfill its obligation to bring 250,000 tons of waste to the incinerator each year, the authority has signed long-term contracts with 14 towns in the county. These communities were able to sign such contracts since they already have control over solid waste collection through municipal contracts.

Seven other communities — among them Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside — chose not to sign contracts since solid waste

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**PEACE!...**David Cheek sits in the door frame of his 1966 Volkswagen Westfalia camper. The camper still has all its original curtains, paint and interior. The camper was displayed during last week's Class Car show on Quimby Street in Westfield.



**A REAL CLASSIC...**Mickey Venezia, the owner of this 1925 Ford Model T three-door touring car, shows off the vehicle to his granddaughter, Marcie Wood, who was visiting him from Florida.

## Sycamore Trees in Union County Are Threatened By Fungus Following Wet Weather This Past Spring

By ANDREW FISHKOFF  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Sycamore trees throughout Union County are being threatened this year by a fungus that causes the leaves to wither.

The fungus, known as atrachnose, thrives especially well after a cool, rainy spring, according to David Edelman, Supervising Forester at the New Jersey Forest Service.

"If you have a wet spring, you have more atrachnose," he said.

Under different conditions, atrachnose is capable of attacking other shade trees, including the oak, walnut, and maple, said Jack Shurat, Assistant Regional Forester for the New Jersey Forest Service.

"However, this year the conditions favored the sycamore," he said.

Atrachnose begins to attack the trees early in the spring, before budding takes place, and causes the sycamore leaves to wilt, according to Mr. Shurat. In the majority of the cases, however, the tree is able to grow back leaves by the middle of summer.

"Unfortunately, the trees have not been able to fully refoliate this year," Mr. Shurat said.

While atrachnose is not directly deadly, Mr. Shurat warns that the fungus can be dangerous to the health of the trees.

"If the tree is already weak, then atrachnose may be fatal to it," said

Mr. Shurat. He said that a combination of factors, including the tree's age and the weather, could severely weaken the tree.

Throughout the county, the effects of atrachnose of sycamore trees are noticeable, as many sycamores have not achieved full foliage.

"This is the worst year we've ever had," said Martin Schmiede, a state-certified tree expert, who owns his own company in Scotch Plains.

Mr. Schmiede said that the fungus is particularly harmful because it destroys the leaves and, thus, the trees do not have a full season of protection. This makes the trees very weak and, as a result, "the leaves don't stay on (the trees) and some branches just die right off."

Despite the tough season, Mr. Schmiede assures that the sycamore trees are "coming back with a vengeance," adding that most of the foliage should reappear by the end of July.

He said it is possible to treat the trees that would otherwise suffer from the fungus. Licensed tree care professionals can inject a systemic fungicide into the tree on a regular basis, which would protect the tree.

"The process is similar to a tetanus shot," said Mr. Schmiede. "A few ounces will vaccinate the tree for a whole season."

However, Mr. Schmiede warned

HERE ARE SOME SPACES...A few parking spots opened up after rush hour in the south side Westfield train station parking lot last week. At most any time, shoppers and diners must make a couple of loops in their autos around the downtown before settling for a spot at the station.



Andrew Fishkoff for The Westfield Leader

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that the injections carry a heavy pricetag.

Clifford Murphy, Superintendent for the Union County Shade Tree Bureau, said that he disagreed with Mr. Schmiede's assertion that the trees could be treated. He called the treatment "highly unfeasible," claiming that "half of the time it would not work anyway."

Regardless, Mr. Murphy said that despite the outbreak of atrachnose earlier on this summer, the majority of sycamore trees throughout Union County have grown back their leaves and are "beautiful right now."



Andrew Fishkoff for The Westfield Leader

**FUNGUS ATTACKS LEAVES...**Sycamore trees in the region are losing their leaves to a fungus that looks like this, sometime causing tree branches to die. Experts say this is the one of the worst years we've had but that most of the leaves should be begin growing back this month.

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**FUN ON THE WATER...**The Westfield Girl Scout community recently held its annual encampment at Camp Lou Henry Hoover in Middleville. Pictured are Jessica Ropars, Erin Klein and Salina Resman, members of Junior Troop No. 186 of Franklin Elementary School in Westfield, canoeing on Swartswood Lake.

## Free Photography Contest Open to Area Residents

The International Library of Photography, based in Owings Mills, Maryland, has announced that over \$100,000 in prizes will be awarded this year in the International Open Amateur Photography Contest. Photographers from the Westfield area, particularly beginners, are invited to try to win their share of 1,000 prizes. The deadline for the contest is Monday, August 31. The contest is open to everyone and entry is free. "Any photograph, whether previously published or not, can be a winner," stated Jeffrey Bryan, Contest Director. "Photographers from the Westfield area have successfully competed in past competitions," he added. Every photograph entered also has a chance to be published in a deluxe, full-color, museum-quality album, according to Mr. Bryan. To enter, participants are asked to send one photograph in only one of the following categories: People, Animals, Nature, Action, Humor, Portraiture, or Other. The photograph must be a color or black-and-white print (unmounted), measuring 8 inches by 10 inches or smaller. All entries must include the photographer's name and address on the back, as well as the category and the title of the photograph. Photographs cannot be returned. They should be sent to: The International Library of Photography, Suite 350-9001, 10045 Red Run Boulevard, Owings Mills, Maryland, 21117. Entries must be postmarked by August 31.

### Local Students Earn Dean's List Honors At Lafayette College

Four residents of Westfield were among 488 students at Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania who were named to the Dean's List for the Spring 1998 semester. Each of the students has achieved at least a 3.45 semester grade point average out of a possible 4.0. The students recognized included Molly Christine Phelan, Christopher P. Hanas, Mark E. Hobbie and Stephen Jay Chiger.



**OFFICER COMPLETES COURSE...**Westfield Police Officer Mark Cierpial recently completed the Advanced Traffic Accident Investigation course sponsored by the Automobile Association of America (AAA) New Jersey Automobile Club Foundation for Safety and Education. The 40-hour course consisted of classroom instruction and practical field exercises designed to provide officers with the skills necessary to determine what happened at the scene of an accident and to offer expert testimony in court cases relating to traffic accidents. Pictured with Officer Cierpial is Pam Fischer, Assistant Vice President of Public and Government Relations for the AAA New Jersey Automobile Club in Florham Park.

## WYACT 2x7

## Mayoral Candidates Express Concern Over Elm St. Leases

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"I don't know what anyone can do about it — the future of Westfield is not with the SID (special improvement district), the Chamber of Commerce or the Town Council. It is with Tony Schilling," he claimed.

As a landlord himself, Mr. Greco said he "wants to keep the status quo (in rent rates) as long as bills are being paid and I can make a return on my investment."

Corporation management closes local stores like Koo Koo Roo California Kitchen solely on management priorities with little concern for a local community, Mr. Greco indicated, while local business owners like Tim DeRubeis of Elm Deli and Vicki Priscoe-Spurr of Backroom Antiques provide a personal touch which leads to repeat business — something that is crucial for the survival of independent businesses.

Mr. Greco said he believes the Town Council can play a role in the makeup of the downtown in terms of the mix between independent stores and chain operations.

"I think government has a role in everything that goes on in the town," he said, noting the town's involvement in parking meters, approving downtown café licenses, enforcing the new property maintenance code and even in the colors of storefronts as recommended by the town's Architectural Review Board.

He added that the special improvement district should be fully under the direction by those persons with "downtown interests" and not by government.

Mayor Jardim observed that although the Elm Street building decision is "market driven," the town and DWC "should look for ways to keep what we have — to keep the Mom and Pop's in business."

He said that through the town government's approval of the town's land use or zoning ordinances, the council "most certainly has a role in logical planning for downtown Westfield." Although, he said, in terms of the authority or power of a local government to maintain a viable mix of stores, "that's a different question."

"And that is something we need to find out if we want to preserve a mix of stores," he added.

Additionally, Mayor Jardim, who is also a Planning Board member, pointed to the Planning Board as a tool whereby government can influence the character and development in a town. "By its very essence," he said, the Planning Board is an "interference" in the use of "market forces."

### Lease on Burner Expected Today

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collection is not included in their municipal budgets, and residents contract privately with haulers for service.

Haulers not dumping at the incinerator face the \$18.51 per ton EIC fee. The amount is included in the \$50 per ton dumping fee for those towns which have signed contracts with the county. The fee, which may drop between 50 cents and a dollar due to lower than expected interest rates at the time of refinancing, will increase based on rises in inflation.

UCUA officials indicated that since the county reduced the disposal fees at the incinerator from \$83.05 to \$50 a ton in November, to make the burner more competitive, the authority has been losing between \$60,000 and \$100,000 a day. The authority has been forced to dip into its reserve funds to keep the burner financially solvent.

The incinerator deal comes on the heels of a court ruling which declared the state's previous system of controls on solid waste disposal to be unconstitutional, on the grounds it violated the interstate commerce clause of the United States Constitution.

The initial ruling in 1996 was upheld on an appeal made by the county. Waste flow controls were lifted in November after the United States Supreme Court decided not to hear the case. Solid waste headed to the county incinerator dropped significantly following the court decision, thus forcing the county to reduce its disposal fees.

### Committee Putting Finishing Touches On Parking Plan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

field seem to embrace the idea of a parking deck.

"The parking deck would alleviate a lot of the problems, especially with the town building up," said Jennifer Mandy, Manager of the Gap, referring to the recent influx of new businesses, including Banana Republic, Bombay Company, and Poppyfields.

Michael La Place, Executive Director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation, who guides the town's downtown special improvement district, said that the construction of a deck could take place within one to two years, depending on which location is selected.

Mayor Jardim remains optimistic that the committee is on schedule to "roll something out" by early fall.

"Basically, we are at the phase where we want to roll up our sleeves and craft something that takes care of lingering problems and is something that people will support," said Mayor Jardim.

## American Heart Walk Returns To Echo Lake Park on Oct. 3

The American Heart Association's American Heart Walk returns to Union County and Echo Lake Park in Westfield on Saturday, October 3, presented by Aetna US Healthcare.

Volunteer and sponsorship opportunities are currently available in Union County. Money raised from Heart Walk helps to fund American Heart Association cardiovascular education, community programs, research and advocacy.

American Heart Walk sponsorship opportunities from \$100 to more than \$10,000 are available at the Union County walk site and all New Jersey walksites.

The Union County American Heart Walk committee needs volunteers, and volunteers are also needed at the walksite location on the day of the event.

For more information about the 1998 American Heart Association, American Heart Walk, the Union County walksite, or to volunteer or register for Heart Walk, interested

individuals may call their local American Heart Association, or (800) AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721.)

Union County women may call the American Heart Association at 1-888-MY-HEART to receive a free women's heart health information packet and a free telephone card to use to share the information and toll-free number with other women.

### Reunion Organizers Seek WHS Alumni From Class of 1958

Organizers of the Westfield High School Class of 1958's 40th Reunion are searching for classmates to send them information about the upcoming reunion.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of class members is asked to send the information to: Lynda Wright, 1086 Bunker Road, East Dummerston, Vermont, 05346, or call (802) 387-5058.

## WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

TUESDAY, JULY 14

• Antoinette Di Iorio, 44, of Westfield was charged at police headquarters with possession of more than 50 grams of marijuana and with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. The suspect was released on her own recognizance, according to police.

Law enforcement officials confirmed that the arrest took place as the result of an extended investigation by Westfield and Union County authorities into narcotics distribution in the area.

• The manager of an East Broad Street restaurant reported he was assaulted behind his establishment by an employee of the eatery with whom he was involved in a dispute. No formal complaints had been filed at the time in connection with the incident, authorities said.

• A Coolidge Street resident reported that her bicycle, valued at \$500, was stolen from the north side train station.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15

• Police revealed that unknown individuals broke two glass window panes on the west side of a building in the 200 block of South Avenue, West.

• A Schwinn bicycle valued at \$280 was reported stolen on West Broad Street.

THURSDAY, JULY 16

• As the result of a search warrant executed in Linden, police arrested Harry Beckler, 31, of Linden on charges of possession of more than 50 grams of marijuana, possession with intent to distribute,

and possession with intent to distribute in a school zone, according to police.

The suspect was one of several individuals arrested recently as the result of a two-month-long investigation by Westfield and Union County authorities into narcotics distribution in the area. Beckler was being held in lieu of \$25,000 bail.

FRIDAY, JULY 17

• A man reported that his bicycle was stolen while he was inside a Central Avenue establishment getting a haircut.

SATURDAY, JULY 18

• A 1993 BMW was reported stolen from in front of a Glen Avenue residence. Police said the vehicle was recovered on Monday night in Newark.

SUNDAY, JULY 19

• A vehicle parked in a driveway on Arlington Avenue was burglarized and two Sony compact disk players, valued at approximately \$206, were taken.

MONDAY, JULY 20

• A Westfield construction company reported that \$200 worth of lumber was stolen from a Gallows Hill Road site, according to police.

• Police received a report that \$529.17 worth of clothing had been stolen from an East Broad Street store.

• Jose Agurto, 19, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of stolen property in connection with the theft of a bicycle near East Broad Street and Central Avenue, according to police. The suspect was being held in lieu of \$1,000 bail.

## WESTFIELD FIRE BLOTTER

MONDAY, JULY 13

• Four hundred block of Beechwood Place — lock out.

• Five hundred block of Summit Avenue — car fire.

TUESDAY, JULY 14

• One hundred block of Bates Way — power line down.

• Four hundred block of East Broad Street — system malfunction.

• Two hundred block of North Avenue West — mulch fire.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15

• Five hundred block of South Avenue West — hazardous condition.

THURSDAY, JULY 16

• One hundred block of Sandra Circle — power line and pole down.

• One hundred block of Central Avenue — mulch fire.

• Nine hundred block of Talcott Road — carbon monoxide detector activation.

• Eight hundred block of Nancy Way — good intent call.

FRIDAY, JULY 17

• Eight hundred block of Winyah

Avenue — service call, hydrant leaking.

• Clark Street and Tuttle Parkway — automobile accident.

• Four hundred block of North Avenue West — good intent call.

• Clifton Street and Summit Avenue — automobile accident.

• Five hundred block of Dorian Road — system malfunction.

• One hundred block of Pine Court — wires down.

• Three hundred block of Hillside Avenue — odor investigation.

• Seven hundred block of Hanford Place — wires down.

• One hundred block of Sandra Circle — wires arcing in trees.

SUNDAY, JULY 19

• Six hundred block of West Broad Street — assist police.

• Seven hundred block of Austin Street — system malfunction.

• Three hundred block of South Avenue East — system malfunction.



**ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION...**The Westfield Service League recently congratulated six of its members on their seventh anniversary with the organization. Pictured, left to right, are: Mary Kay Danskin, Faye Brown and Lucy Banta. Missing from the photograph are Nancy Lau, Ronnie Caravello and Janet Williams.



**CONGRATULATIONS...**During its annual meeting, the Westfield Service League, a non-profit volunteer organization, honored four of its members who were celebrating special anniversaries. Pictured, left to right, are: Margot Komar, the current President, 15 years; Arlene Bertrand, 20 years; and Judi Duchek, 15 years. Missing from the photograph is Ingelise Caroe, 15 years.



**CHANGING OF THE GUARD...**The Westfield Service League's Associate and Sustainer group recently elected its officers for the 1998-1999 year. Sally Bockus and Margaret MacPherson will assume the duties of Co-Chairwomen, and Ann Fontana will take over the position of Secretary/Treasurer. Pictured, left to right, are: outgoing officers Jennie Williams and Peggy Walsh, Co-Chairwomen; Jeanne Meiklejohn, Secretary/Treasurer, and incoming officers, Mrs. Bockus, Mrs. Fontana and Mrs. MacPherson.