

The story of Westfield



Public school volunteer Kay DelliBovi holds the attention of fourth-graders at Southampton Road Elementary School during a presentation yesterday focusing on the history of Westfield. Staff photo by DON TREGGER

Bringing hometown history to life

By **HOLLY ANGELO**
Staff writer

WESTFIELD — It's not true that George Washington once slept at the Sackett Tavern. The closest the father of our country got to Westfield was Agawam.

The bricks that hold the circa 1829 Fowler House on West Silver Street together came from the ballast of a sailing ship.

And, it cost only 14 cents to attend a day's worth of movies at the Strand Theater back in 1903.

"I didn't know there was so

much history to Westfield," said Elizabeth Kelley, 9, a student in Lisa Korzenecki's Southampton Road Elementary School's fourth-grade class.

Kelley and her classmates were treated to The Westfield Story yesterday. Public school volunteer Kay DelliBovi filled in the details of Westfield's past, from the dinosaurs to present day. It was an eye-opening presentation for many of the youngsters.

"I can't believe how much Westfield's changed," Kelley said.

Levi Porter, 9, was impressed by Westfield's dinosaur and whip

industry past.

"I didn't know there was a dinosaur that lived here," Porter said. "I also thought it was really neat that Westfield made 99 percent of the whips for the world."

The dinosaur Porter refers to is the dilophosaurus, a small Jurassic predator about 10 feet in length. "When they first discovered dinosaur prints in the valley, people thought they were giant chickens because they were 12 feet long," DelliBovi told the students.

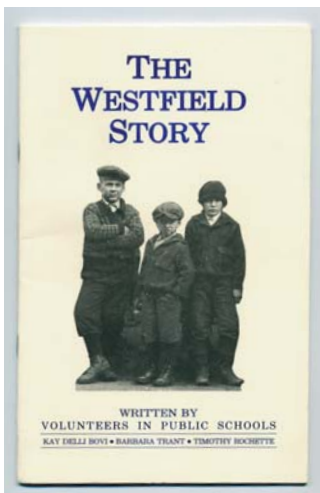
With photographs, props and good storytelling skills, DelliBovi

wove a history of this city that many of the students never knew existed.

She passed out lollipops to tell the story of murdered chemist, professor Louis B. Allyn, who helped Westfield become known as the Pure Food City.

Allyn, who was shot to death in 1940, wanted to know why some lollipops were giving children cancer sores. His chemical analysis determined that the candy contained dirt, arsenic and enough coal tar dyes to tint a living room

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The Westfield Story

Presented a 1 hour regional history to 4th grade students in the Westfield Public Schools

Co-authored book for 4th grade regional history program currently used in the Westfield Public Schools

Helped produce, direct and write a regional history video for the Westfield Public Schools

