



SCOTCH PLAINS

# THE TIMES

of

# Scotch Plains – Fanwood



OUR 43RD YEAR – ISSUE NO. 10-43

USPS 485200  
Periodical – Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, N.J.

Thursday, March 8, 2001

Published  
Every Thursday

(908) 232-4407

FIFTY CENTS



**DONE!...STILL NOT DONE!...WHY?...The Hetfield Bridge in Scotch Plains, top, has been totally completed for some time. The Crossway Place bridge in Westfield, bottom, has been completed but the condition of the road is embarrassing. Oddly, construction on the Hetfield Avenue Bridge began several months after the construction of the Crossway Place bridge. The plaque shown between the two bridges reads, "Original bridge built by Central Railroad of New Jersey in 1887, Replacement Bridge built by NJ Transit in 1999."**

David B. Corbin for *The Times*

## Pet Store Owner to Appeal Township's Denial of License

By FRED ROSSI  
Specially Written for *The Times*

A Burlington man is going to appeal the denial by Scotch Plains officials of a license allowing him to operate a pet store on Route 22.

Charles M. Guthrie, owner of Puppies Inc., was informed this week by Township Health Officer Andy Snyder that, based on some two dozen violations, his license to re-open was being denied. Mr. Guthrie's shop, on the former site of Puppies Just 4 U, had been operating through the end of January under the license of the former owner.

Mr. Snyder, in his three-page denial letter, said Mr. Guthrie had, among other things, failed to obtain certain necessary permits, failed to provide a method for disposing of dead animal carcasses, failed to separate animals with contagious illnesses from healthy animals, failed to feed newborn puppies three times a day as mandated by state statute, failed to

maintain certain necessary records, and failed to have animals examined by a veterinarian prior to selling them.

The Township Council, acting as the local Board of Health, will hold a hearing to hear Mr. Guthrie's appeal of the license denial, most likely at the end of the month.

At the Council's conference meeting on Tuesday night, Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins told the members that he will be meeting in the next few days with Killam Associates, a consulting engineering firm, to get a more specific outline of environmental cleanup work that needs to be performed at the former Terry-Lou Zoo property. The Council earlier authorized Killam to undertake a preliminary environmental review of the site, which local officials hope to turn into a passive park.

Mr. Atkins said on Tuesday night that additional funding may be needed for additional environmental studies beyond Killam's preliminary

work. He added that there may be grant money available for this purpose.

Separately, Councilman Frank S. Rossi told his colleagues that the shared services committee composed of representatives from Scotch Plains, Fanwood and the joint board of education had received a \$26,000 state REDI (Regional Efficiency Development Initiative) grant to pay for a consultant to assist the committee in its activities. The REDI program was created specifically to pay for consultants and to encourage sharing of services between neighboring communities.

The local shared services committee has been working since last year with Jersey Professional Management (JPM) on these activities. Mr. Rossi said JPM will soon undertake two studies—one focusing on shared services possibilities in the two communities' public works departments

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Storm Fell Far Short of Meeting Great Expectations of Forecasters

By DEBORAH MADISON  
Specially Written for *The Times*

Downgraded from "the storm of the century" to "an unpredictable dud," this week's triple whammy still slammed New Jersey with a memorable one-two-three punch. Beginning on Sunday afternoon with just about everything winter can dish out, a mix of rain, sleet, flurries and hail blanketed Central Jersey with a dangerous coating of ice on the roads in time for Monday morning's messy commute.

Then, by Monday afternoon, it appeared as if Doppler Radar, had once again, goofed. Weather casters at all of the major news stations attempted to explain how they could have been so far off the mark, and recalculated that Central Jersey would be dusted with two inches, not dumped on with two feet.

However, Tuesday afternoon's sur-

prise additional snowfall seemed to somewhat vindicate the humbled forecasters.

The predictions were six to eight inches for our area by Monday morning, downgraded to three to six inches by the afternoon and re-calculated to two to four inches by early Tuesday morning, and then again changed back to six to eight inches by the afternoon. By the end of the three-day weather ordeal, precipitation totals for Central Jersey had accumulated to somewhere between four to six inches, not the two feet initially predicted, but more than some of the earlier recalculations.

Bob Chartuk, Public Information Officer for the National Weather Service, said that the East Coast storm was a challenge to forecasters because of its unusual mixture of ingredients.

"There were two separate systems—one with a northern stream, with cold air, the other with a southern stream, driving in the bulk of the moisture," he said.

As Nor'Easters go, said Dave Reynolds, a National Weather Service senior forecaster, on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association's (NOAA's) Web site at [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov), these storms are tricky to forecast, and the current system was no exception. In this case, the changing behavior of one front, affected the other, causing it to stall and change directions, making predictions unreliable. However, the advanced new technology and equipment was able to predict the storm way ahead of arrival, which could not have been accomplished that far in advance several years ago, according to NOAA weather experts.

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood School system closed school for two days more due to the hazardous road

conditions than accumulations, while some municipal offices remained open both days, others closed early on Monday.

Local supermarkets and hardware stores reported empty shelves by Sunday afternoon, as everyone had ample warning to stock up on staples and storm supplies. Rock salt, batteries and shovels flew off the shelves in record numbers and some area su-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Guarnuccio Pulls Out Of BOE Race

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The field of candidates for a Scotch Plains seat on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education has narrowed with the announcement that Joanne Guarnuccio has dropped out of the race.

In speaking with *The Times*, Mrs. Guarnuccio said, after weighing her decision, she was afraid she would not have the time she needed to give to board service, given the young ages of her two children.

"If I was going to do it," she said, "I wanted to do it right. This wasn't the time to make such a commitment."

The remaining Scotch Plains candidates are Craig Nowlin of Graymill, incumbent Lance Porter, and Peter C. Triplet. Pat Hoynes-O'Connor is running unopposed for the open Fanwood seat.

## Planning Board Hopes Variance Approval Will Prevent Further Flooding at Fanwood Lot

By SUZETTE F. STALKER  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The Fanwood Planning Board last week granted minor subdivision approval for a property on Tillotson Road, along with a side yard variance, in the hope that conditions attached to the approval will prevent increased flooding problems in the area.

About 20 neighbors of the site, among them former Fanwood Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly, turned out for the February 28 hearing on the appeal, submitted by D. Villane Construction of Westfield, to express concerns that the subdivision would increase flooding and other problems in the area.

The company has a contract to purchase the lot, currently occupied by a one-story frame house. Once the lot is subdivided, the company intends to build another home on the second lot, and then to sell both properties.

However, only the subdivision was approved last week. The applicant will have to reappear before the board at a later date for approval of a site plan and storm water management plan before the second lot can be developed.

The applicant plans to move the lot line on the property 5.3 feet to the southwest, adding 522 square feet to the pending second lot, so both lots will conform to borough regulations for lot sizes.

A side yard variance was required because, while the main portion of the existing house meets the permitted 10-foot setback, a covered patio attached to the structure has a setback of only 5.62 feet.

The property earmarked for the subdivision exists within a low-lying area that has been subject to chronic flooding for years, residents testified, even with moderate rainfalls.

They argued that the addition of another home and driveway — increasing the amount of impervious surface — would only worsen the situation, as would the planned removal of several trees from the site. Mrs. Connelly, who has lived on

nearby Waldon Road for more than 20 years, described how it once took the Fanwood Fire Company two days to pump floodwater out of a neighbor's home, adding that a mother and her two young children were put in a life-threatening situation by the water level.

"No home is an island," she observed, indicating circumstances involved in construction of one house can impact neighboring residences. "One more house is going to exacerbate the problem," Mrs. Connelly commented.

Patrick Harrington, a resident of Westfield Road, which borders the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment Denies Operating Permit to Home-Based Business

By DEBORAH MADISON  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment voted to deny a 12-month temporary operating permit (TOP) to Melinda Salahi to operate a medical billing business from the basement of her home on Blue Ridge Circle.

At their March 1 meeting, board members stated that Mrs. Salahi's five to six employees constituted much too large of an operation to be conducted in a residentially-zoned neighborhood.

Mrs. Salahi's business does the medical billing for her husband and her sister-in-law, both of whom are doctors. She also has 11 other clients.

In addition to the five employees, Mrs. Salahi testified that FedEx trucks delivered packages to her residence on a daily basis, and that Staples made occasional deliveries. Several of Mrs. Salahi's neighbors testified before the board that they were not in favor of the business because of the added

traffic and employee cars parked in front of their houses on the quiet residential street.

The board also cited possible fire safety violations posed by the employees occupying the basement, without sufficient exits.

Mrs. Salahi explained to the board that she could not afford to rent office space for the small business and that before she and her daughter purchased the home, the realtor assured her that there were numerous home-based businesses and offices operating in residential neighborhoods in Scotch Plains.

Board members stated that the home-based businesses, which they have approved, were usually one or, at most, two-person operations that did not impose any hardships on the neighboring residences. The board did, however, grant Mrs. Salahi a three-month TOP to permit her adequate time to relocate her business, conditioned on approval by the

township's Fire Department to continue operating at all.

Several board members commented on a recent editorial in *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that published the opinions of several residents regarding various decisions made by the board. Some board members stated that they were upset by the editorial's insinuation that some of their decisions, which have imposed perceived hardships on certain neighborhoods, were based on unfair socioeconomic or racial factors.

Other board members, pointed out that the editorial was not taking this position, but rather stating that this was a misperception by some residents in those neighborhoods. Several Board members agreed with the

editorial that the board needed to do more to communicate with the public regarding the board's role and decision-making processes.

Board member Maureen Berger said of the board's recent decisions, "Our decisions are not haphazard or capricious. We're guided by laws and ordinances, which govern whether we must approve or deny each application. Many hours of homework and research go into each application."

Board Chairman James Fawcett as well as other board members said that the editorial should have clarified that this perception involved only a few residents and was not the general opinion of the majority of the residents in Scotch Plains.

### INDEX

A&E.....	Page 18	Editorial.....	Page 4	Religious.....	Page 7
Business.....	Page 16	Education.....	Page 7	Social.....	Page 6
Classifieds.....	Page 15	Obituary.....	Page 9	Sports.....	Page 11

CYAN YELLOW MAGENTA BLACK



Ingrid McKinley for *The Times*

**A SWEET TREAT...Patients at Children's Specialized Hospital in Fanwood were embraced with cheer and love during a special visit from the Hershey's Kissmobile last month. The motto of the Kissmobile is "Every kid deserves hugs and kisses, especially Hershey's Hugs and Kisses." The 25-foot Kissmobile travels nationwide to bring smiles to children.**

# Westfield Y Decides to Pull Out As Organizer of First Night Festivities

By MICHELLE H. LEPOIDEVIN  
AND PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- After five successful years, Westfielders may have to find a new venue to ring in the new year following a decision this week by the Westfield Y that it will no longer be organizing First Night Westfield.

Organizers said the decision to no longer run the event was based on an inability to attract a sufficient number of volunteers to man the multi-faceted event and not any lack of interest on the part of the Westfield community. First Night averaged 3,000 to 5,000 attendees each year, most of whom were Westfield residents.

"Unfortunately, the original group of volunteers who initiated this event has dwindled and new volunteers have not stepped forward to replace them. Fundraising has become more difficult. At this time, we feel that the event has run its course," said Julia C. Black, who coordinated First Night

Westfield for the Y along with Arlene Bertrand and Barbara Karp.

"The emotional and financial support of The Westfield Foundation, right from the start and throughout the five years, was an absolute reaffirmation that First Night Westfield was worth every bit of the effort that was put into it," stated Ms. Black, in a detailed letter released last Friday by the Y.

"We always tried to raise approximately \$80,000," Ms. Black told *The Westfield Leader*.

Fundraising efforts, Ms. Black explained, involve numerous entities such as Westfield houses of worship, schools and printing facilities, and countless hours offered by volunteers. Temple Emanu-El has also been the site for First Night Westfield's major fundraising event, Taste of Westfield.

"We would spend \$45-\$50,000 on entertainment," she said, "other money would be spent on paper products. We've been very frugal with what we spend," said Ms. Black.

"The fundraising hasn't been the hardest part, but getting new volunteers to take on a portion of the event has been hard," she revealed.

Two to three years ago, it became evident to Ms. Black, Ms. Bertrand and Ms. Karp that it was becoming increasingly difficult to find a steady staff of volunteers.

"People move away," started Ms. Black, adding that while publicity began to "peter out," she, along with Ms. Bertrand and Ms. Karp, tried to keep generating public relations efforts.

"This event has been so good for families, children, especially senior citizens," she said. "It's just so wonderful for the community due to the agencies, clubs and churches that always get involved."

Ms. Black told *The Leader* that, through last Friday's letter, she notified Mayor Gregory S. McDermott, Town Administrator Thomas B. Shannon, Assistant Town Administrator James Gildea and the Westfield Foundation of the Y's decision not to serve as organizer of the event.

Calling the Y's decision "unfortunate," Mayor McDermott said he does not envision the town taking over the First Night program, noting the council already has a lot on a "full plate" of projects planned in the 2001 budget.

Ms. Black added that Summit, which hosts its own First Night, is organized by a paid coordinator, while First Night in Manasquan is run by the local PANDA organization. A paid director who coordinates the arts council and other cultural events also organizes the First Night in Montclair.

Ms. Black stated that none of these entities on the local level has stepped forward to take over planning First Night Westfield.

The offer to rejuvenate and reestablish First Night Westfield is a worthy undertaking Ms. Black said she would enjoy seeing pursued in the future.

"Someone new should step in," she said. "First Night Westfield has almost been a New Year's tradition."



IN STYLE...Fifth grade Junior Girl Scouts from McGinn Elementary School's Troop No. 829 recently visited the Short Hills Mall where they fulfilled the requirements for the Limited Too Fashion Badge. The girls viewed a fashion video, chose an outfit with accessories, and modeled for their troop members. The scouts also experimented at the makeup counter to find the right look.

# Recreation Head and Program Director Among Those Leaving Positions in Westfield's Town Hall

By DEBORAH MADISON  
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- Major personnel changes are in store for the Westfield Recreation Department this month. Recreation Director Glenn S. Burrell will be leaving to become Recreation Director in Branchburg.

Mr. Burrell has been Westfield Recreation Director since 1993, a position that currently pays \$55,000. Prior to that, he was Assistant Director since 1990.

Mr. Burrell said that he is moving on "for personal and professional reasons." One of the main considerations involved the three hours of commuting he did between his home in Doylestown, Pa. and Westfield. He also will receive a \$5,000 bump up in pay.

In the 10 years Mr. Burrell has served in the department he has seen many changes. In particular, he said that he will miss the staff and dedicated volunteers who he has had the opportunity to work with over the years.

Branchburg, he said, has an established department with a lot of growth in population and a very aggressive open-space program.

"It will be a new challenge for me," Mr. Burrell commented.

The town plans to contract the services of Jersey Professional Management of Cranford to hire an interim recreation director until a full-time replacement is hired. They have recommended Laura Botto, who recently retired as Director of the Scotch Plains Department of Parks and Recreation, for that post.

His last day with the Recreation Department will be Friday, March 16, which also happens to be the day that Allison Halperin, the Program Coordinator for the Recreation Department is also leaving.

Ms. Halperin, who was the first candidate to fill the newly created position of Program Coordinator in November of last year, will become

the new Recreation Supervisor for the Scotch Plains Recreation Department.

"I regret this move coming at such a bad time," Ms. Halperin said. Her new position in Scotch Plains will involve many of the same program coordination responsibilities and will begin on Monday, March 19.

The Recreation Department will be hard hit yet again, losing 15-year veteran Lucy Lettier, Secretary to the Director. Ms. Lettier has been with the Westfield Recreation Department as their chief bookkeeper and purchasing agent, as well as Secretary to the Recreation Commission since 1986.

Ms. Lettier said that it is time for her to retire and as the saying goes, "smell the roses." She said that she will greatly miss all of the wonderful people that she has had the opportunity to work with over the years,

## Mrs. Rogers Drops Out Of BOE Race

By MELISSA BETKOWSKI  
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- Westfield Board of Education President Danielle Walsh announced at Tuesday night's board meeting that school board candidate Marcee Rogers has chosen to halt her campaign for one of the three available seats on the board.

Mrs. Rogers, currently recovering from bronchitis, said that now wasn't a good time, and she hopes to run again in the future.

Her decision to drop out of the race has left three remaining candidates for the three seats: Lisa Alter, Virginia (Ginny) Leiz and Richard Solomon.

The open seats are those being vacated by Mrs. Walsh, Budget and Finance Committee Chairman Michael J. Kessler and Long Range Planning Committee Chairwoman Eileen Satkin.

especially the children in the recreation programs.

"It was a really fun job," Ms. Lettier recalled. "I served food at the races for the kids for 11 years and I will really miss them."

Ms. Lettier, who lives in Cranford, said that she has many hobbies that she will finally have time for, as well as time for her eight grandchildren. Ms. Lettier will continue to work part-time at Baron's Drug Store in town. Her last day in the Recreation Department will be Friday, April 27.

The town has also lost another municipal employee in the Clerk's Office.

Deputy Clerk Camille Roscigno has left her position in order to re-enter the corporate world for a position with a local CPA firm. Ms. Roscigno was Office Clerk with the Town Assessor's Office since 1997, switching over to the newly-created position of Deputy Clerk in August of 2000.

Ms. Roscigno said that she missed the fast-paced challenge of the corporate environment, which she came from, prior to working for the town. "I will miss the people who are

## SPFHS Repertory Group To Present Anything Goes

SCOTCH PLAINS -- Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* is this year's offering from the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Repertory Theater Group. A cast of student musicians will present a spirited evening of romance and musical comedy on Fridays and Saturdays, March 23 and 24, as well as March 30 and 31 at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, located on Westfield Road in Scotch Plains.

Tickets are \$8 for general admission, \$6 for student admission. Renaissance-card holders will be admitted for \$3 and senior citizens will be admitted for free. Please purchase tickets in advance to assure seating. For more information, please call (908) 233-8643.

like family here," Ms. Roscigno remarked. "But I can't refuse a really good opportunity." Ms. Roscigno has been a resident of Westfield for 18 years.

## Planning Bd. Hopes Variance Approval Will Prevent Further Flooding at Lot

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Tillotson Road lot, was among those who discussed how flood conditions have affected their own properties. He said water has filled up his yard to within 15 to 20 feet of his house, sometimes remaining there for several days.

James Watson, a land surveyor and planner with EKA Associates of Scotch Plains, testifying on behalf of the applicant, said stormwater runoff calculations would be done pre-development and post-development, to determine the amount of excess water that would be created by the subdivision.

Any excess, he noted, would be detained and gradually released into the existing system so as not to cause increased flooding in the vicinity.

He emphasized, however, that the applicant could not alleviate current flooding problems in the neighborhood which includes the Tillotson Road site. "We can't solve the problems for the entire area," he explained. "We're only dealing with these two lots."

According to Mr. Watson, who years ago served on the now-defunct Fanwood Board of Adjustment, the runoff calculations will be made using standard state data of rainfall intensity for one-year, two-year and 10-year storms. These categories refer to the severity of a storm and flood damage and the probability of how often it occurs.

Josephine Harrington, a Westfield Road resident, questioned why state statistics would be used, rather than a direct analysis of the neighborhood where the subdivision will be located.

Mr. Watson responded that rain-

## James Madison Univ. Announces Dean's List

SCOTCH PLAINS -- James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Va. has revealed that Jaclyn Sanders, Jonathan Winkler, Megan McEneely, and Jason T. White, all of Scotch Plains have been named to the Dean's List for the fall 2000 semester.

Fanwood resident Brian Roll was also listed as a Dean's List recipient.

## Storm Fell Far Short of Meeting Great Expectations Of Forecasters

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

permarkets were cleaned out of bread, milk and eggs by Monday morning.

"Jerseyans panic whether they hear two inches or two feet," commented

Mike Buck, Manager at A&P in Fanwood. "People were buying food like they were going to be snowed in for a week." Mr. Buck said that his shelves were amply restocked by Monday afternoon, all except for some brands of milk, but storm staples like batteries and rock salt were cleaned out.

Road crews from the Scotch Plains Department of Public Works were out in full force by late Sunday night trying to stay one step ahead of the multiple colliding fronts.

DPW Director Walter DiNizio said that by Monday afternoon, the main roads were fairly clear except for the continuing light sleet, which fell sporadically throughout the day. Many smaller side roads, however, that didn't get the same amount of traffic were still icy-laden and had one to two inches of sleet and ice throughout Monday and Tuesday as the mixed precipitation continued.

On Monday afternoon it was a waiting game, Mr. DiNizio commented.

"We're waiting to see what happens next," he said on Monday afternoon. "We have numerous private contractors on call in the event that the snow does accumulate as predicted."

As it turned out, DPW crews handled the sporadic snow themselves.

"No harm done," said Ray Manfra, Director of Public Works for Fanwood. "Most people were happy that they didn't have to dig their cars out from under two feet."

However, Mr. Manfra pointed out, this type of on again off again storm made it more difficult for the DPW crews to keep the roads clear.

"We have to plow each road several times when it keeps snowing like this," Mr. Manfra remarked. "That's much harder and more time consuming than one large downpour that's over in an hour or two." Additionally, because many local employees went to work on Monday and Tuesday, it was more difficult for the snowplows to work around all of the traffic and parked cars, Mr. Manfra said.

Lieutenant Tom Denizio of the Scotch Plains Police Department reported that there were relatively few accidents or emergencies due to the storm.

"Residents wisely stayed off the roads and there were really no more accident or emergency calls than normally reported," the Lieutenant said.

## Pet Store Owner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and one looking at field and facility usage in the two towns.

He added that JPM is interested in applying for a grant to pay for the purchase of computer software that would allow Scotch Plains, Fanwood and the board of education to share and schedule the various athletic fields and park areas for groups and teams.

The council's next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 13. Mr. Atkins said he expects the council to introduce its 2001 municipal budget at its March 27 meeting.

## FANWOOD POLICE BLOTTER

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

• The floor hockey rink at Forest Road Park was defaced with spray paint, according to police.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17

• Brian Donaldson, 27, of Plainfield was charged with eluding police after he fled from a law enforcement officer who stopped him for a motor vehicle violation at LaGrande Avenue and Terrill Road.

Donaldson, who was apprehended a short distance away in Plainfield, was being held on \$3,500 bail in the Union County Jail.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26

• Jenice Ferguson, 31, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with shoplifting a walkman valued at \$29.99 from a Martine Avenue pharmacy. It was also discovered that a no bail warrant had been issued for the suspect by the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office.

Apprehended at LaGrande Avenue and Terrill Road, she was turned over to Middlesex County authorities.

## One Step at a Time



There are times when what we need most is someone to help keep us on course...to offer support so we can stand firm...someone to cheer us on. At Patient Care, we understand these needs. For more than twenty years, our mission has remained the same: providing home health care services that allow people to live with dignity, renewed independence and restored hope.

patient care inc.  
ACCREDITED BY JCAHO

Patient Care. Offering help, one step at a time.

Montclair  
973-509-3328

Ridgewood  
201-447-3200

Westfield  
908-654-5656

West Orange  
973-325-3040

## Douglas M. Fasciale

Certified Civil Trial Attorney  
by the Supreme Court of New Jersey

Concentrating in personal injury  
and malpractice cases.

Hoagland, Longo, Moran, Dunst & Doukas, LLP  
Attorneys At Law - A Full Service Firm

40 Paterson Street  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
(732) 545-4717

116 S. Euclid Avenue  
Westfield, NJ 07090  
(908) 232-9944

DFasciale@hoaglandlongo.com  
www.hoaglandlongo.com