

Volunteers Needed to Join 'Bio-Blitz' in Lenape Park

CRANFORD — Scientists and environmentalists, assisted by community volunteers, will fan out across Lenape Park in Cranford over a 24-hour period on Friday and Saturday, May 20 and 21, to conduct New Jersey's first "urban bio-blitz."

A bio-blitz is an intensive effort to identify every living plant or animal found in a given area—in this case, the 450-acre Union County park that borders on Cranford, Kenilworth, Springfield, Union Township and Westfield.

The event is being sponsored by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation and the Rahway River Association in partnership with the Arthur Kill Coalition, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Watershed Ambassador Program, the Friends of Lenape Park, and National Biodiversity Parks Inc.

"The goal of this effort is to raise awareness of the incredible diversity of life in this suburban park and the wonderful resources Lenape Park offers for recreation and as an outdoor classroom and science lab," said Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski of Cranford, Liaison to the Union County Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

"Specialists in areas ranging from birds and insects to mushrooms have already been recruited, but more volunteer workers are needed to identify the hundreds of species to be found in the park in the springtime," she said. The "blitz" will start in the park at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 20, with some workers on hand throughout the night. Other volunteers will work in shifts throughout May 21, until 6 p.m.

A Bio-Blitz Headquarters tent will be set up where results and identifications will be posted.

Scientists and lay people interested in volunteering for the event must call Holly Jantz at the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation

at (908) 527-4032 or Betty Ann Kelly at (908) 527-4231 to register.

Some members of the public will have an opportunity to work alongside the scientists during parts of the 24-hour period; advance registration is also required for this.

For further information, please call Dennis Miranda, Committee Chairman and President of the Rahway River Association, at (973) 209-6321.

Engineers Group To Tour Vo-Tech

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Professional Engineers Society of Union County will hold an evening tour and dinner meeting on Tuesday, April 26, at the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools, located at 1776 Raritan Road, West, in Scotch Plains.

The tour will include the Union County Magnet High School for Science, Mathematics and Technology and a short presentation on the Vo-Tech and Magnet High School programs, including remarks by Superintendent Dr. Thomas Bistocchi.

The tour will begin in front of Baxel Hall at 6 p.m. Dinner will follow the tour at Fanwood's Sun Tavern at 7:30 p.m. at South Avenue near Terrill Road in Fanwood. For reservations, e-mail marcwpe@waage.com or call (908) 245-9363.

Garwood Knights Plan Blood Drive

GARWOOD — The Garwood Knights of Columbus will hold a blood drive on Saturday, May 7, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at their Council Hall, 37 South Avenue in Garwood (opposite PathMark).

Parking is available behind the building off Willow Avenue. For more information, please call the Knights at (908) 789-9809 after 4 p.m. or the Blood Center of New Jersey at (973) 676-4700, or visit www.bloodnj.org.



OUT WITH THE OLD...The old Thomas and Betts building, located across the street from the Garwood ShopRite, was demolished last week to make room for 21,000 square feet of residential and commercial development in a Main Street-like setting. The project is expected to be completed by the fall.

Recyclable Electronics To Be Collected April 30

AREA — The County of Union will sponsor a recycling event for electronics and automobile tires on Saturday, April 30, so Union County residents can get rid of unwanted tires, computers and other electronic equipment in an environmentally proper manner.

The collection will take place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Arthur Johnson High School, located at 365 Westfield Avenue, east of Raritan Road, in Clark.

All residents of Union County are eligible to participate at no cost.

"Computer monitors and televisions are the source of a considerable amount of lead — about five pounds per screen," said Freeholder Chester Holmes, Liaison to the Union County Solid Waste Advisory Board. "Up to 95 percent of most electronic appliances can be recycled. This is a responsible way to keep hazardous heavy metals out of our environment."

Electronic equipment that will be accepted on April 30 includes computer monitors, hard drives, modems, keyboards, CPUs, mice, printers, scanners, speakers, televisions,

VCRs, fax machines, telephones, and circuit boards.

"This is a great opportunity to get rid of old automobile tires as well," said Freeholder Holmes. "In warm weather, unwanted tires can become a breeding site for mosquitoes."

All that residents need to do is drive to the site with their unwanted electronic equipment and as many as eight automobile tires, without rims. Workers at the site will unload the vehicles.

Pre-registration is not required for this special Saturday collection.

Refrigerators, washers and dryers, microwaves, and air conditioners will not be accepted.

A complete list of the materials that will be accepted is available at the Union County Environmental Services website, www.ucnj.org.

The electronics collection and tire recycling will be held rain or shine, for Union County residents only and not for businesses. Proof of Union County residency is required.

For more information, please call the Bureau of Environmental Services Hotline at (908) 654-9889.

Cranford Crossing Cited By Smart Growth Group

CRANFORD — The Cranford Crossing project is among four projects to be honored by New Jersey Future, the state's leading smart growth group. The project, earmarked for South Avenue, won the Transit Friendly Project award.

The township and Westminster Communities will be recognized, along with projects in Bayonne, Orange, West Orange and Paterson, during a cocktail reception on Wednesday, May 4, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Newark Club in Newark.

Cranford Crossing is the township's first major development project in 100 years, offering new condominium homes and shopping adjacent to the downtown commuter station.

"Cranford Crossing represents so much more than the investment value of the project — it embodies the prin-

ciples of sustainable development that position Cranford for the future while respecting the history and character that define our town," said Kathleen Miller Prunty, Director of the Cranford special improvement district.

"The township remains steadfast in its approach to development and economic revitalization of the business district, mixed use projects, building near public transportation, and design standards that mirror the existing traditional downtown and respect the vital role of the pedestrian."

"We believe this type of development has the staying power that encourages reinvestment for years to come. Cranford is already experiencing an unprecedented level of investment and building renovation," Ms. Punty added.

Ex-Candidate Is Warned Again for 'Crossing Line'

By DAVID GIALANELLA

COUNTY — Members of the Board of Chosen Freeholders warned Bruce Paterson of Garwood, a 2004 Republican freeholder candidate, that he'd once again "crossed the line" with his comments at last Thursday's regular meeting.

The warning came after Mr. Paterson remarked how "the county fits right in" with recent allegations of corruption in New Jersey's political arena, and how easy it is "connecting the dots."

Mr. Paterson referred to a newspaper article about the tapes recently released of South Jersey political boss George Norcross. The article quoted Mr. Norcross as saying that New Jersey engineering and consulting firm and Democratic campaign contributor Schoor DePalma would "do fantastic in a Democratic administration."

Schoor DePalma's Municipal Services Division does business in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

Schoor DePalma has been awarded several contracts in Union County, including the Borough of Fanwood, where the company is helping with the borough's downtown redevelopment.

"Am I crossing the line yet?" Mr. Paterson asked while explaining his position, after having been specifically warned at the board's March 31 meeting about addressing the freeholders civilly.

Freeholder Chairman Rick Proctor of Rahway said Mr. Paterson was indeed "coming close" to unacceptable comments to the board. However, it was Mr. Paterson's declaration that "I think you're unethical people funneling money" that caused a slight uproar and even laughter from the board, indicating that he had gone too far in his comments.

On another matter, Freeholder Angel Estrada reported that Mr. Paterson's remarks on the construction project at the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools in Scotch Plains, as stated at the March 31 board meeting, were not accurate.

Freeholder Estrada said 21,168 square feet of Baxel Hall, the main building on the vo-tech campus, will be renovated. Another 25,323 square feet of new construction will be added to the building.

At West Hall, a total of 12,489 square feet is being renovated, with new construction totaling 21,385 feet.

Freeholder Estrada said the cost breakdown on the \$19.8 million project is \$226 per square foot at Baxel Hall and \$259 per square foot at West Hall.

Mr. Paterson had said the project added up to \$570 per square foot.

Freeholder Estrada said that once a bid is awarded to a contractor, the county will have a better idea of total construction costs.

In other business, the board passed a resolution allowing the Center for Hope Hospice of Scotch Plains to perform hospice services at Runnells Specialized Hospital in Berkeley Heights at no cost to the county.

The board appointed Dr. Bertram Warren of Fanwood to the Mental Health Board of Union County. The Mental Health Board provides referrals, crisis intervention and inpatient and outpatient services for county

residents. The board passed a resolution expanding coverage of the Senior Citizen Home Improvement Program to Union and Elizabeth. The program grants seniors who qualify up to \$5,000 for home improvements.

The resolution also expands the county's contract with Development Directions, LLC by \$120,000 until February 28, 2008. Previously, Union and Elizabeth had similar municipal programs.

Scotch Plains was granted permission to hang a banner across Park Avenue to publicize the National Day of Prayer observance scheduled for Thursday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. on the Village Green.

The board approved a resolution authorizing County Manager George Devaney to apply for a grant from the Fiscal Year 2005 Homeland Security Grant Program to bolster the county's ability to react to acts of terrorism.

Mr. Devaney also will apply for a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the amount of \$45,264 that supplements a pollution control staff that will investigate odors emanating from the Terminal Avenue area of Clark, and evaluate pollution levels in the area. The county is required to put up \$158,743 if the EPA approves the grant.

Mr. Devaney additionally was authorized to enter the county into a mutual aid agreement with Somerset County that would allow emergency services between the two counties to be shared in the event of an emergency.

On another matter, the Township of Springfield and the 225th Anniversary Committee of the Battle of Springfield were given permission to close Echo Lake Plaza and North Trivett Avenue between 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. for a parade on Sunday, June 26. Permission also was granted to hang banners publicizing the event.

Another resolution was passed allowing Springfield to close Mountain Avenue between Caldwell Place and Morris Avenue from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, September 17 for the Springfield Chamber of Commerce Street Fair.

Law Day to Include Nationalization Event

COUNTY — The Union Vicinage of the New Jersey Judiciary will host a program in celebration of Law Day on Monday, May 2, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the assignment judge's courtroom on the first floor of the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth.

This year's theme is "The American Jury: We the People in Action."

A nationalization ceremony to welcome new citizens has been added to this year's program. State Superior Court Assignment Judge for Union County, Walter Barisonok, said the nationalization ceremony is a way to tie into this year's Law Day theme.

"Citizenship comes not only with privileges, but also duties, and jury service is a duty of all American citizens," Judge Barisonok said.

As in past years' events, dignitaries from various branches of Union County government will also be in attendance and give remarks.

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