

Swastika Drawn on Forehead Of Baby Jesus in WF Crèche

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- Vandals struck the crèche display at the Westfield train station on North Avenue sometime late last week, damaging five spotlights and drawing a swastika on the forehead of the Baby Jesus figure in the manger.

It was the second time an outdoor nativity scene has been targeted recently -- last week, the Baby Jesus figure was reported stolen from the crèche in front of Saint Helen's Roman Catholic Church on Rahway Avenue. The statue, valued at \$500 in financial terms, has not yet been recovered.

The vandalism to the train station

display -- sponsored by the Knights of Columbus -- was discovered by one of the Knights members and reported to police at 9 a.m. last Saturday.

Lieutenant John Parizeau of the Westfield Police Department stated the swastika had been drawn on the Christ child figure's face in black ink. He confirmed that the incident remains under investigation.

He said there have been no other recent incidents in the town involving sacred images or houses of worship being defaced with swastikas or other such symbols. Anyone with information is asked to call the Westfield Police Department at (908) 789-4000. All calls will be kept confidential.

Township Council Authorizes Deer Hunts at Reservations

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you to do."

He said township officials continued to look at all options, including, perhaps, incentives for voluntary leaf bagging by residents.

The council approved an ordinance that re-zones a portion of township-owned property on the island on Cooper Road as a "C-Conservation" zone, thus putting it off-limits to development of any kind.

Councilwoman Malool noted that it was the fifth such zone designated since the conservation zone was established in late 2000.

The council approved another ordinance setting fees for materials distributed by the Township Police Department.

Councilwoman Malool said the ordinance brings the township into compliance with the state's Open Public Records Act by formalizing a fee structure that has been in place for the past two years.

The council also approved resolutions awarding bids for the leasing of

cellular telephone communications space on the planned new communications tower at the south side firehouse.

Lin Cellular, a joint effort between AT&T and Cingular, bid \$42,000, which ensures its equipment is placed highest on the new tower.

Verizon bid \$27,545 and Sprint bid \$21,804, making the total for the three bids just over \$91,000 near the upper end of the projected range initially anticipated by township officials.

The initial term for the leases will be 10 years, with options for two five-year extensions. The lease costs will increase 3 percent annually.

The township will continue its animal control contract with Associated Humane Societies of Newark for 2005 at a cost of about \$34,500.

Mr. Atkins noted a lack of alternatives in this area while Mayor Marks said that "we are dealing with a de facto monopoly" as he urged Union County officials to seriously investigate a county-sponsored animal control program.

Borough Council to Vote Feb. 8 On Downtown Redevelopment

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He worries that "the property owners have had 10, 15, 20 years already to redevelop their properties," but have not done so. He is concerned that with the project being done "piecemeal" that it "will result in a hodgepodge," and that "some properties may not be developed."

Regarding Landmark, the developer that was chosen by the previous administration, he felt that "Landmark had an outstanding plan, and Fanwood deserves an outstanding plan, not an assortment of developers."

Councilman Kline is waiting to hear the comments of the Planning Board regarding the plan before making his decision of how to vote.

Councilman Andrew Calamaras also plans to vote for the revised plan, but stated similar reservations and a desire to look at the incentives given to owners.

"I will vote for this because I feel it is important that this move forward. The actual site plan is impressive, and if it happens, will be a real monument to Fanwood."

After the comments of all council members were made, Mayor Colleen Mahr thanked the advisory committee who "worked very hard for eight to nine months."

She emphasized that "we listened well and long" to the opinions of the public regarding the downtown, and the changes to the plan "reflect what they had to say. We understand the sentiments of the residents," as well as the property owners and merchants, who she referred to as the "stakehold-

ers" in this issue.

"The property owners have told us that they are ready to go, they are interested in reinvesting in their properties, and I trust they will not let us down," Mayor Mahr said.

Regarding divided opinions and comments relating to how long the plans for redevelopment have been delayed, she encouraged: "We need to stop the rhetoric and move forward."

The final reading of the ordinance to amend the redevelopment plan will be held and voted on at the Tuesday, February 8, regular council meeting. The public will have another opportunity at that time to voice opinions during the open microphone portion of the meeting.

Those who wish to attend should note that Fanwood's council meetings now begin at 7:30 p.m., rather than the previous start time of 8 p.m. In other business, Councilman Molenaar reported that the reexamination of the Planning Board's master plan has been approved and was adopted before the conclusion of 2004. The board is required to perform an analysis of the plan every six years, "to meet legal requirements," stated Councilman Molenaar.

Those wishing to view the reexamination report can find it online at Fanwood's website at www.visitfanwood.com.

In her Public Works report, Councilwoman Dolce reminded homeowners that after any snowfall they are required to clear the sidewalks on their property within 24 hours.

Borough of Fanwood Appointments for 2005

FANWOOD -- The following appointments were made during the reorganization of the Fanwood Borough Council on January 2.

Municipal Appointments

Eleanor McGovern, Borough administrator; Chief Financial Officer, Frederick Tomkins; Dennis Estis, Borough Attorney; Joseph Pryor, Borough Engineer; Susan MacMullen, Municipal Judge; Lara Katherine DiFabrizio, Borough Prosecutor; Kelly Waters, Public Defender; Patricia Lusardi, Court Administrator; Barbara Ferro, Deputy Court Administrator; Colleen Huehn, Tax Collector; Michael Ross, Tax Assessor; Borough Administrator Eleanor McGovern, Public Agent; Borough Administrator Eleanor McGovern, Official Assessment Searcher; Official Tax Searcher, Colleen Huehn; Donald Domanoski, Police Chief; Richard Regenthal, Fire Chief; Thomas Scaleria, Officer in Charge-Bureau of Fire Prevention/Deputy Chief; Thomas Scaleria, Fire Official; Joseph Pryor, C-2 Collections Systems Operator; Nancy Koederitz, Zoning Officer; Nancy Koederitz, Public Officer; Borough Administrator Eleanor McGovern, Personnel Director; Katherine Mitchell and Donald Domanoski, Municipal Alliance Representatives; Bruce Helmstetter, Construction Official; Bruce Helmstetter, Building Sub Code Official; Bruce Helmstetter, Building Inspector; Frank Oberlies, Fire Sub Code Official; Christian Jessen, Plumbing Sub Code Official; Raymond Manfra, Recycling Coordinator.

Fanwood's Special Officers:

Class 2, Jack Ross; Howard Drewes.

Fanwood School Crossing Guards:

Agnes DiDario, Alan Krey, Sigmund Mruczynski, James M. Brewer, Vincent Krey, Marge Pate; Subs: Lynn Sorf and Edward Frame.

Registered Nurses:

Katherine Mitchell.

Assessment Commission (one-year term):

Joseph Nagy, December 31, 2005; George Weiss, December 31, 2005; William Populus, December 31, 2005.

Environmental Commission (Three-Year Term):

Eric Gaulin, December 31, 2007; Elizabeth Trimpin, December 31, 2007; David Schwartzberg (Alternate No. 1), December 31, 2005; Gayle Steinfeld (Alternate No. 2), December 31, 2006.

Planning Board (four-year term):

Peter Sayles, Class II, December 31, 2005; Gregory Cummings, Class IV, December 31, 2008; Roseanne Tobey, Class IV, December 31, 2007; Bruce Walsh, Class IV (Alternate No. 1), December 31, 2006; Daniel Zucker, Class IV (Alternate No. 2), December 31, 2005; William Lee, Class I, (Mayor's Designee), December 31, 2005.

Shade Tree Commission (Five-Year Term):

Joanne Muoio, December 31, 2009; Tom Plante (Alternate No. 1), December 31, 2005; Steve Falco, Chairman, December 31, 2005.

Library Board of Trustees (One-Year Term):

Katherine Mitchell, Mayor's Representative, December 31, 2005.

Shared Services Coordinating Council:

Colleen Mahr, Mayor, December 31, 2005; Andrew Calamaras, December 31, 2005.

Union County Community Development Revenue Sharing Committee (one-year term):

Mayor Colleen Mahr, December 31, 2005; Mayor's Alternate Representative, William Populus, December 31, 2005; Council's Representative, Llewellyn Fisher, December 31, 2005.

Union County Transportation Advisory Committee (one-year term):

Mayor's Representative, William Daly, December 31, 2005; Alter-

nate Representative, Councilman Jack Molenaar, December 31, 2005.

Union County Air Traffic & Noise Advisory Committee (One-Year Term): Lynn Brown, December 31, 2005.

Raritan Valley Rail Coalition (One-year term): Harry McNally, December 31, 2005.

Union County Cultural and Heritage Programs Advisory Board: (one-year term): Adele Kenny, December 31, 2005, and Tom Plante, Alternate, December 31, 2005.

Solid Waste Advisory Council (One-year term): Raymond Manfra, Representative, December 31, 2005; Robert Sommerich, Alternate Representative, December 31, 2005.

Cultural Arts Committee: Councilwoman Mitchell, Council Liaison; Adele Kenny, Chairwoman; Faith Grobman, Leslie Minski; Seena Allen, Raj Dogra, Robert Chang, Tom Plante, Carol Oakes, and Dan Weiss.

Communications, Volunteerism, TV 35 Committee: Seena Allen; Peter Billson; Mary Ann Kuhn; Victoria Cook; Donna Dolce, Council Liaison; Charles Cooper; Joseph Nagy; Laurie Feinberg; David Pickering; Joan Feller; Robert Sommerich; Thomas Jedic, and George Weiss.

Fanwood Downtown Advisory Committee: Joseph Higgins, Chairman; Peter Chemidlin, Frank Constanzi, Gregg Cummings, Jim Dozier, April Dunleavy, Patricia Hoynes, and Charles Mancuso.

Standing Borough Council Committees for 2005:

Administrative and Finance Committee - Katherine Mitchell, Chairwoman; Administration & Judicial, Katherine Mitchell; Communications and Volunteerism, Donna Dolce; Board of Education, Stuart Kline.

Public Safety Committee - Jack Molenaar, Chairwoman; Police, Jack Molenaar; Fire, Joseph Higgins; Rescue Squad, Stuart Kline.

Public Works Committee - Donna Dolce, Chairwoman; Public Works, Donna Dolce; Recycling, Andrew Calamaras; Shade Tree Commission, Joseph Higgins.

Land Use and Historic Preservation and Committee - Andrew Calamaras, Chairman; Planning Board, Zoning, Building, Jack Molenaar; Historic Preservation, Katherine Mitchell; Environmental Commission, Andrew Calamaras.

Recreation and Community Services - Joseph Higgins, Chairman; Recreation Commission, Joseph Higgins; Library Board, Katherine Mitchell; Community Events, Donna Dolce.

Health and Senior Services - Stuart Kline, Chairman; Board of Health/Local Public Assistance, Stuart Kline; Senior Citizens, Andrew Calamaras; Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority (PARSA), Jack Molenaar.

Historic Preservation Commission (Four-Year Term): Dolores O'Brien, December 31, 2008; Edward Groskinsky, (Alternate no. 2), December 31, 2006.

Local Assistance Board (Two-year term): Theresa Cosmo, December 31, 2006.

Library Board of Trustees (five-year term): David Kiley, December 31, 2006; Al Mirabella, December 31, 2009; Ann Minski, December 2009.

Recreation Commission (five-year term): Robert Burke, December 31, 2008; Michael Brennan, December 31, 2009; Jennifer Gilbert, December 31, 2006; Russell Wells, December 31, 2009; Russell Yeager, (Alternate no. 3), December 31, 2005; Robert Budiansky, (Alternate no. 4) December 31, 2009.

Ferguson Describes Region Hit By Tsunami Like A War Zone

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Although floodwaters have receded, pools of water remain and provide perfect conditions for the onset of an epidemic such as malaria.

Congress will vote soon on a supplemental package to aid those countries impacted by the tsunami, Mr. Ferguson stated. President George W. Bush has pledged \$350 million in aid to the region.

"The individual response from the United States is quite evident, very generous," the congressman said.

He noted the "first-hand" evidence he witnessed from the air and on the ground would assist him and other members of Congress that made the trip in analyzing where resources need to be directed.

"It's important not to just throw money at a problem," he stated.

In the coming weeks, the congressman will visit schools and hold Town Hall meetings throughout the Seventh Congressional District in an effort to increase statewide relief efforts already underway.

He expressed awe at how individuals from different cultural, political and religious backgrounds have come together to aid the tsunami victims, adding how it reminded him of the way people from all walks of life joined forces following the September 11 attacks on the United States.

"No one cares about the differences, (between countries) they are more concerned with assisting those in need. This tragedy is an opportunity for the future of this country," Congressman Ferguson said. "It is an opportunity for reconciliation."

He was also profoundly affected by how proud the people of the area are and their unwillingness to take handouts even in the wake of such

sizable destruction. The victims expressed their desire to work for the aid they were receiving, as charity is difficult for them to accept. As a result, Congressman Ferguson is trying to have boats repaired or replaced for fishermen so they can go back to work.

He said as floodwaters recede, debris and destruction can be seen everywhere. Volunteers are packaging materials daily for survivors living in camps and temples and distributing them to the victims.

"It's extraordinary how people have put aside their differences to assist people in need," Congressman Ferguson commented. "We're discovering things that used to divide us really don't matter at all."

Congressman Ferguson said the relief teams, particularly the United States military, are making a difference. He said their morale is high as they are eager to do and give everything they have to the relief effort.

"I'm so proud of soldiers, our young people -- their morale is high," he said.

The crew of *Abraham Lincoln* has been "very impressive," he said. He said crewmembers on the aircraft carrier constantly stop their captain, asking when they can go to shore to help.

He remarked that the aircraft carrier is "amazing" in that it can produce drinking water from seawater. It has an excess capacity of 79,000 gallons per day and that this production of drinking water is being delivered to the disaster victims.

Congressman Ferguson noted that the United States military has been there for two weeks providing help. He said United Nations relief workers just started showing up this week.

Area Neighbors to Be Heard At Cooper Hearing in March

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rejected requests by the applicant to purchase a small sliver of adjacent municipal-owned land to bring the AT&T property into lot-size compliance and had also refused a request to purchase the property itself so that the entire island would be township-owned.

Elizabeth McKenzie, a professional planner, pointed out that the site met all zoning criteria except size and that the application was "well within the parameters" of the intent and purpose of local zoning ordinances.

James Bielefeldt, representing AT&T, told the board that the building on the site has been there for several decades but, due to technology improvements, has been unused for the past few years and is no longer of use to the utility, which is the reason for the telephone company's wish to sell the property.

Mr. Kastrud presented to the board an overview of the site plan. The proposed house, he said, would face the westbound lane of Cooper Road, with a long driveway extending from the house to a point on westbound Cooper Road, just north of where the roadway splits.

Mr. Kastrud maintained that there would be no additional storm water runoff resulting from development of the property and said much of the property will remain unchanged. Only the center of the lot is slated for tree clearance and other landscaping, a so-called "limit of disturbance," in order to make room for the house.

Bahman Izadmehr conducted traffic studies on Cooper Road and concluded that the proposed house would not negatively affect vehicular traffic in the neighborhood. He said site distances from the driveway were "adequate."

He drew derisive laughter from residents when he said after Mr. Bielefeldt's earlier statement that the building had been unused for the past several years, that there had been no reported car accidents at the intersection of Cooper Road and the existing driveway leading to the AT&T building between 2000-2002.

Under questioning from Marc Rogoff, an attorney representing Vince DeLisi, a Cooper Road resident, Mr. Izadmehr admitted he had not conducted any formal traffic counts on Cooper Road and had visited the area

twice, on the afternoon of December 24 and on New Year's Day.

During their own questioning of the four witnesses representing the applicant, members of the board focused on concerns about traffic safety near the proposed house and on the overall suitability of building a home on an isolated piece of property. Speaking of a family living in the proposed house, Board Chairman James Fawcett asked, "How do they interact [with the neighborhood?]" How does this house work in this neighborhood?"

Ms. McKenzie maintained the home would function the same as others in the area, noting that other neighborhood homes are located some distance from Cooper Road, at the end of cul-de-sacs, similar to the somewhat isolated nature of the proposed island property.

"There are plenty of people who might enjoy the privacy of the [island] lot," she said, adding that she was "convinced that it is an eminently buildable site."

There were also questions about the height of the proposed house. A sketch was displayed of a typical house that could be built on the property, which rises about 15 feet above the roadway.

The home itself would be about 35 feet high, and board member Tim Livolsi asked Ms. McKenzie whether the combined height of about 50 feet concerned her. She reminded the board of plans to retain the trees beyond the so-called "limit of disturbance," which she said would provide a screening for the home's occupants as well as for the neighbors, who she felt "are not going to see very much of [the house]."

Several questions were also directed at Mr. Izadmehr regarding traffic and related safety issues.

He told Mr. Livolsi that fire trucks would be able to turn easily into the driveway in the event of an emergency.

In response to a question from Board member Sharynn Porter, he said he had not done targeted traffic studies during certain times of the day because there was no need to do so.

"It's a residential road," he said, and the addition of one new driveway is not going to create a problem when none exists at present.

The Zoning Board will resume the hearing at its Thursday, March 3, meeting.

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