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SIXTY CENTS

SPFEA Voices Teachers' Contract Agreement Concerns to School Bd.

By MARIA WOEHRE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains and Fanwood Teachers Association (SPFEA) voiced its concern for the pending teachers' contract agreement at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting on Tuesday evening. More than 50 teachers of the staff showed up to support a contract settlement. Each 15 minutes of public commentary was met by clapping or a standing ovation.

"The two major issues seem to be nutrition and the teachers' contract," said Joann Clark, a resource center teacher. "Students can adjust to not having cupcakes, but the very reason for the BOE's existence is to maintain academic nourishment and starting the school year with a contract is the key to that."

Although the school budget passed this year, the BOE has not reached a contract settlement with the SPFEA, and teachers expressed concern over

meeting increased expenses with stalled wages.

"It seems the board is unconcerned—paying this year's bills with last year's paycheck," said Susan Bucola, a Scotch Plains speech teacher. "I'm concerned that without a contract settlement this will effect the school district's reputation and as a tax payer I'm concerned about how it is affecting property taxes."

"The cost of natural gas, food and electricity are up," said Dominic Turdoro, a science teacher. "We all have these costs too. Health care is a national problem and they are a necessity to us and represent our security as educators."

"Recruiting and maintaining teachers should be the highest priority," said Joan Townley, a middle-school geography teacher. "For every one of us who succeeds there is someone to show you the way."

"It's nice to see all the teachers here tonight, even under such circumstances," said Sasha Slocum, BOE member, in response. "We know this has been a frustrating process and perhaps once we settle negotiations we can discuss how to make this a more effective process for next year."

At the meeting the board approved the retirement of Superintendent Carol Choye. "I'll save the mushy stuff for later, but I want to thank you for your service," said Thomas Russo, BOE president.

A presentation on the nutrition policy will be made on June 8, and the board will take action on the issue on June 29. The widely debated "Cupcake Clause" that would eliminate birthday treats for school children is currently under scrutiny from several members of the community, according to Scotch Plains resident Jane Costello.

"Most people do not object to the policy, just to the specific clause concerning birthday treats," she said.

Also at the meeting the board approved transfers of five students to other districts for disabilities. This year, 103 students have received placements out of the district.

The district spends \$15 million on meeting the needs of special education every year. Much of that is supplemented by U.S. and state grants, according to Dr. Choye, with the district paying \$4 million a year.

The Scotch Plains Fanwood Soccer Association asked the BOE to upgrade School One's field, citing bad conditions and recent injuries that have resulted.

As part of the agreement for the renovation, the Scotch Plains and Fanwood Soccer Association will donate \$25,000 to the project.

"It is to the point where we can't use the field," said David Bernstein



Maria Woehre for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
CONTRACT CONCERNS...More than 50 Scotch Plains-Fanwood teachers attend Tuesday's board of education meeting to voice concerns about the pending teachers' contract agreement.



Don Williams for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
FIRE!...Three members of the Scotch Plains chapter of the American Legion fire three shots each in salute to the memory of local veterans who have died, beginning Monday's parade.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Community Marks Memorial Day With Parade

By DON WILLIAMS
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community gathered along Park Avenue Monday on morning to honor local veterans in this year's Memorial Day parade. The day's events began with a ceremony at the gazebo in Alan M. Augustine Park in Scotch Plains, continued with a parade down Park and Martine Avenues and finished with a ceremony at La Grande Park in Fanwood.

The opening ceremony focused on the laying of wreaths in front of the flagpole beside the Stagehouse Tavern. Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) DECA served as masters of ceremonies, introducing the community leaders who participated in the ceremony, including Scotch Plains mayor Martin Marks and Congressman Mike Ferguson.

Congressman Ferguson, who also gave the keynote speech at last year's parade, discussed his enthusiasm to return to the parade and his fondness for Scotch Plains and Fanwood, communities which he feels embody the "All-American, hometown feel."

The ceremony concluded with a benediction by Father Lester of Saint Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains, followed by a SPFHS choral ensemble's rendition of "God Bless America." The parade was immediately preceded by a nine-gun salute to the memory of the community's veterans who have died and a rendition of taps.

This year, the community's veter-



Don Williams for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
GOODBYE...A trumpeter from the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Raider Marching Band plays taps to end Monday morning's Memorial Day ceremony, while uniformed Marines hold the American and Marine Corps flags and await the start of the parade.

ans, instead of a grand marshal, headed the parade because the parade focused on the accomplishments of all veterans. Parade coordinator and Vietnam Veteran Lieutenant Joe McCourt directed the flow of the parade, sending forth first veterans, then politicians

and finally community organizations. The SPFHS Color Guard and Marching Band gave a proud display, leading the way for such groups as the Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA and

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Fanwood Planning Bd. Hears Study, Discusses McMansions

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD - Citing a need to curtail the construction of "oversized" homes, or "McMansions," in the borough, the Fanwood Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments commissioned a study of the current ordinances and existing oversized homes from its planning consultant, Paul Ricci, of T & M Associates. Mr. Ricci presented his findings to the board at its monthly meeting last Wednesday.

The board submitted to T&M a list of houses in the borough that board members perceived to be oversized and "out of character" with their surrounding neighborhoods. Mr. Ricci told the board that he reviewed the building standards of other towns with a character similar to that of Fanwood in formulating his recommendations.

Mr. Ricci reported that the feature of greatest concern common to many of these oversized homes was building height. The board and Mr. Ricci discussed the current ordinance, which limits building height to 35 feet to the median point of a roof line and which limits the number of floors to three-and-a-half stories in the residential R-75 zone. The board discussed how to define the number of stories for homes with a varying number of floors from front to rear, such as those homes with a walk-out basement.

They discussed whether to define height in terms of feet or number of stories and whether to measure feet and stories from the front or the rear of a home. They also considered disallowing flat roofs and limiting the pitch or slope of roof lines.

Bruce Walsh, council representa-

tive to the planning board, said, "Everybody's concept of a McMansion is different. When you try to define it, you end up excluding

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Primary Elections to Be Held Tuesday

Election Polls will be open for primary elections this Tuesday, June 6, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

In the race for U.S. Senate, State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. of Westfield, endorsed by all but the Bergen County Republican Organization, is being challenged by Bergen County GOP Committeeman and Ridgewood resident John Ginty, who is running under the slogan "Republicans for Conservative Leadership."

Democrat U.S. Senator Robert Menendez is being challenged by Chester resident James Kelly, Jr., who is listed under the slogan "End Corruption in The Government."

Rep. Michael Ferguson of New Providence and Assemblywoman Linda Stender of Fanwood are unopposed in GOP and Democrats primaries, respectively, for the Seventh District Congressional race.

Incumbent Democrat Freeholders Alexander Mirabella, Deborah Scanlon and Chester Holmes are being challenged in the Democratic Primary by Stanley Moskal, Joseph Aviles and Michael Romano, running under the slogan "Union County Democrats for America."

Republican voters will also select members to serve on the Union County Republican Committee.

Sierra Leone Court Delays Chemidlin Court Hearing

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - A Sierra Leone, West Africa, court hearing scheduled yesterday for a Scotch Plains missionary and former National Guard staff sergeant charged with espionage has been postponed until this Friday, June 2.

Michael Chemidlin, 58, was released from prison May 24 after posting the equivalent of \$8,000 bail. Mr. Chemidlin was originally arrested April 29 for conspiracy while taking pictures of the United Nations court complex.

A court dismissed all conspiracy charges against Mr. Chemidlin on May 15 and he was released. He was rearrested on espionage charges the next day after going back to the prison to pick up his passport and belongings. He is barred from leaving the country and faces 15 years in prison if convicted of the charges.

He faces espionage charges for allegedly attempting to free former Liberian President Charles Taylor from the court complex. Prosecutors have called taking pictures of the complex a crime of treason.

Taylor is accused of backing Sierra Leonean rebels who hacked off arms, legs, lips and ears of victims during the country's civil war.

Anthony Cinelli of Los Angeles, Mr. Chemidlin's nephew, said his family was waiting to hear more news from the U.S. Embassy in West Africa.

"We are getting a little nervous," he told *The Westfield Leader and The Times*. "Everything was a question over the weekend."

Andrew Chemidlin, 31, the oldest of Michael Chemidlin's three sons, said during an interview at *The Leader/Times* office last Thursday that he first learned of his father's arrest on May 15 from his aunt, Emmy Salerno of Edison.

"I was concerned after not hearing

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WPD Charges Ex-Red Cross Worker with Theft of Services at North Avenue Hotel

By CASSIE LO
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD - A Scotch Plains woman and former employee of the Tri-County Chapter of the American Red Cross, based in Plainfield, was arrested May 24 and charged with theft of services for allegedly pretending to be a disaster survivor to obtain a room at the Best Western Westfield Inn on North Avenue in

Westfield. Police said her bill for her stay was \$11,493.

Alan Karmin, in charge of marketing and development for the Red Cross, said that Gina Lewis, 43, began as a volunteer at the Red Cross but then became an employee with disaster services under the direction of Norm Jenkins at the Red Cross Elizabeth office from November until her arrest in May. Lewis

allegedly forged the signature of Mr. Jenkins to obtain a room at the Westfield Inn for several months, according to Trish Mulligan, executive director of the Tri-County Red Cross.

"We never put people up [in hotels] for more than three to five days," Ms. Mulligan said.

Ms. Mulligan also alleged that Lewis was living in the hotel with her daughter and husband, despite the family having a Scotch Plains mailing address. She told *The Times* that the Red Cross does not intend to press charges because the bill was in Lewis' name, but the hotel would press charges for non-payment.

Lewis was arrested and processed after she went to Westfield police headquarters to give a statement on May 24.

According to Westfield Police Sergeant Scott Roger, the Tri-County Red Cross "never authorized her stay at the Red Cross' expense." The initial complaint was brought to the Westfield Police Department by Mr. Jenkins and Andrea Tamkutusis of the Best Western Westfield Inn. Eventually, Ms. Lewis was charged with theft of services, but "she is not, as of yet, charged with forgery," Sergeant Roger said.

Ms. Tamkutusis was not available.

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Fanwood PD Seeks Info. On Shots Fired

FANWOOD - The Fanwood Police Department is looking for information on a report of shots fired on South Avenue in Fanwood on Monday, May 29, at approximately 3:45 p.m.

According to police, witnesses said two vehicles were racing east-bound on South Avenue when shots were fired from one of the vehicles at the other.

The vehicles involved are believed to be a blue mini van of unknown make and model and a blue four-door sedan, also of unknown make and model, police said.

Anyone with any information is asked to call Lieutenant Richard Trigo at (908) 322-5000 extension 117 or Detective Eugene Chin at (908) 322-5000, extension 119.



Don Williams for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
WANTED...A motorist fired a gun while racing another vehicle Monday afternoon along this stretch of South Avenue in Fanwood, between Terrill Road and Martine Avenue. The Fanwood Police Department is looking for information about the shooting.

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