

District 22 GOP Candidates

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

back and forth to my job?"

He said, "They are taxing us into the ground, and when we can't gasp another breath, 'Now what else can we sell?'"

Ms. McConnell said, "Trenton is broken. Is [Senator Scutari] trying to fix it? I have not seen one solution that has effected my quality of life from my opponent."

Talking about the school portion of property taxes, Mr. Gatto said the state needs a "simple" school-aid formula. He questioned why the state hasn't moved for a "regional model" to reduce the number of school districts in New Jersey, which currently stands at 600. He proposed reducing the number of districts to 21 regional ones.

He said having 600 districts increases administrative overhead, which he said amounts to 10 percent of the total cost, compared to 3 to 4 percent in some other states.

"How many superintendents do you need?" Mr. Gatto asked.

In terms of the 31 Abbott districts in the state, "Sixty percent of the education dollars coming down from the state is distributed to 5 percent of the students," Mr. Gatto charged. He said the money is not getting into Abbott districts classrooms.

"It just seems [the state is] throwing money at the problem and hoping something happens," he said.

FW Forum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ment," he said.

Mr. Populus framed his candidacy around "Fanwood's long history of civic involvement and volunteerism." He also advocated "the best possible use of each dollar the borough spends."

Mr. Parenti, noting his record as a former borough police chief and sponsor of legislative bills, said, "I'm a people person." He added, "The mayor and council are doing a good job; I would like to join them."

Ms. Mitchell said, "I will continue to control costs while providing public services; we need to keep expanding our tax base, and [downtown] redevelopment is key."

Fanwood has nearly 5,000 registered voters; about three-fifths are unaffiliated with a political party, with the remainder nearly evenly split as registered Democrats or Republicans.

Ms. McConnell said she is opposed to the so-called proposed "super" superintendent. "We don't need a czar."

Mr. Gatto said he favors "streamlining" government, including school districts, to produce "less bureaucracy, less red tape" to reduce taxes.

Regarding the potential privatization of the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA), Ms. McConnell said she favors public hearings in the 11 member towns covered by the RVSA.

Mr. Gatto added, "The thing we want to get away from is this backroom politics, where a small group of people under a cloak of secrecy make some type of huge decision to impact a large area like this, and then we're stuck with it."

"I want the light to be shone as brightly on everything that is going on right now," he said.

On corruption, Mr. Gatto said some politicians arrested and indicted "think they are untouchable." He said Democrats in Trenton are "treading so lightly" during election season on ethics reform. He questioned whether the reforms put through after this year's election would "have any teeth."

Ms. McConnell said she believes "the people of New Jersey will wake up one of these days and there will be a revolution. I mean this cannot go on... It should be the will of the people and the fact they are serving the people. The people are not serving them."

Mr. Gatto, noting the state is facing a \$4-billion debt, said he is "amazed there aren't more people screaming that 'this has to stop.'"

Both said they favor more access to the public, such as televising municipal-government meetings in those towns that don't offer such a service.

Ms. McConnell, noting the Democratic majority in registration in District 22, said she hopes "the people will say, 'Hey, I've got a choice now. I'm going to put the best person in, not the party person. This is what we're really hoping for.'"

"I feel very confident on what I could offer the people of New Jersey because I certainly know that I would not do anything worse than what is being done right now," she said.

Mr. Gatto said, "There are going to be a lot of unpopular politicians in Trenton for the decisions that they make for the future of New Jersey."

Read up on these and other candidates at goleader.com/07election.



Susan Cook for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
SCORING DONATIONS... Westfield neighbors gather to box up soccer equipment to donate to a community in Zambia, Africa. Efforts of local residents—including Billy Sikes and his family, Rebecca Sarkos and her family, and the Westfield Soccer Association—inspired donations of hundreds of soccer cleats, shirts, shorts and balls. The Regenstrech family, whose son Andrew is in Africa working at a refugee camp, started the drive after Andrew sent a letter requesting "some" equipment.

SPF BOE Receives Positive District-Assessment Report

By JESSICA E. JASKULA
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Assistant Superintendent Madeline Meyer said the results of Scotch Plains-Fanwood's 2006-2007 District Assessment Report were "a great cause for celebration." She presented her report at Thursday's board-of-education meeting.

Ms. Meyer gave some factual information on the federal government's No Child Left Behind Act and said it would require all students, including every subgroup (subgroups must include 20 or more students to be counted), to be considered proficient or advanced proficient by 2013. Some examples of subgroups would be special-education, and limited English. The special-education subgroup in Ms. Meyer's report totaled 35 students.

Assessments were based on a total of 41 indicators. Grades 3 and 4 were grouped together, as were grades 6 through 8. Grades 5 and 11 were assessed individually.

According to Ms. Meyer, district scores show that for 2007, all five elementary schools and both middle schools achieved all 41 indicators for their Adequate Yearly Progress. The high school met 40 out of 41 — the special-education subgroup did not meet the math indicator.

Results for the NJ Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK) for third graders showed 98.3 percent for proficiency and advanced proficient in math and 97.9 percent in language arts. Last year, general-education third graders scored 99.1 percent in math and 97.6 percent in Language Arts. School One scored 100 percent in both subject matters.

"That's very impressive," board member Betty Anne Woerner said.

On the NJ ASK, general education fourth graders for 2007 scored 98.8 percent in math (96.9 percent in 2006), 95.5 percent in language arts (96.9 percent in 2006) and 96.0 percent in science (95.2 percent in 2006), above state percentages for the district factor group (DFG). In the NJ ASK 5 for mathematics, 43.90 percent scored proficient, 52.80 percent scored advanced proficient and 3.30 percent scored partial proficient.

In language arts, 72.90 percent scored proficient, 25.50 percent

scored advanced and 1.70 percent scored partial.

"We work very hard to get all students to pass," Ms. Meyer said. "That certainly is a goal we work towards."

Proficient and advanced proficient sixth graders (NJ ASK 6) in language arts were 95.3 percent, the same as last year, and 97.2 percent in math, a jump from 92.9 percent.

"We made great strides," Ms. Meyer said.

On the NJ ASK for grade 7, 96.1 percent of students were proficient/advanced in language arts (95.8 percent in 2006), but scores dropped from 92.9 percent (2006) to 86.2 percent in mathematics. The drop, Ms. Meyer said, was a state-wide trend, but the schools have been looking into their curriculum and working with teachers to come up with ideas to help students and improve scores.

On the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), middle-school scores rose in all three categories — language arts, math and science. Eleventh-grade special-education students who did not meet the math indicator for the High School Placement Test (HSPT) testing have received new technology connections (so that they can use an online study program). The math score for 2006-2007 was 34.2 percent proficient, a drop from 60 percent in 2005-2006. Ms. Meyer said the district would continue to work toward improvement and students' needs.

On the SAT reasoning test, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School students scored above New Jersey and national averages in writing, critical reading and math. National math scores averaged 515; the SP-F average was 550.

In general education, "we're keeping pace with our District Factor Groups (DFG)," Ms. Meyer said. "Our students are fairing very well."

She said standardized testing is "just a small snapshot of what a child can do."

"You really have to look back at it as a small piece of the whole puzzle. A lot of variables can factor testing."

BOE member Sasha Slocum elaborated. "It's remarkable what we do in the district beyond testing," she said, noting sports, poetry contests and science competitions as some of the other activities in which district students participate. "I'm always impressed," she said.

"The quality of what is happening day-to-day is what we have to be proud of," said BOE president Trip Whitehouse.

Superintendent of Schools Margaret Hayes announced the October 15 enrollment report. For 2007, 5,452 students are currently enrolled in the SPF school district; enrollment in 2006 was 5,456. The numbers "stayed steady," she said.

The board unanimously approved the non-public-school technology-initiative program entitlements for 2006-2007 to Union Catholic High School (\$32,560), St. Bartholomew The Apostle Interparochial (\$8,400) and Christopher Academy (\$1,080). Jodi Heinz, liaison to the SPF Music Boosters Association, thanked the board for its work fixing pothole problems at the high school and asked if it could correct a dip in the walkway leading up to the football field, after a band member recently tripped and fell.

Business Administrator Anthony Del Sordi said the "entire walkway will be repaved," referring to the turfing project taking place in the coming months. In the meantime, he said, he would "take a look to make sure that it will be safe for the rest of the year."

Mr. Whitehouse commended the marching band, stating "this particular group continues to make us proud."

The BOE will meet November 15 for an open agenda meeting and on November 29 for a regular public meeting.

PT REPORTERS NEEDED

Strong, community-minded, detail-oriented writers with professional demeanor needed to cover local government evening meetings. Must be able to meet deadlines, know how to write a lead, and take an active interest in a regular beat in order to develop news stories. This opportunity is perfect for stay-at-home moms, as a second income or just for those who love to write. Please e-mail resume and clips to:

editor@goleader.com

The Westfield Leader & The Scotch Plains-Fanwood TIMES

POLICE BLOTTER

Scotch Plains

Wednesday, October 17, a resident of Westfield Road reported that a former friend confronted her and yelled obscenities at her because he thought she was spreading rumors about him.

Friday, October 19, Abdullahi Halliu, 47, of Staten Island, N.Y. was arrested for criminal sexual contact after the victim reported that he touched her on a private part. Halliu was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released after posting bail, police said.

Friday, October 19, a resident of Raritan Road reported that someone damaged the pool pump located in her backyard.

Sunday, October 21, a vehicle parked on Cedar Street sustained damage after someone spray-painted words on the vehicle.

Westfield

Monday, October 15, a Westfield resident reported the theft of a blue Schwinn mountain bicycle from Franklin Elementary School on Prospect Street.

Monday, October 15, Beverly Cook, 53, of Plainfield was arrested at Plainfield police headquarters on an outstanding Westfield criminal warrant with bail set at \$830. She was released on her own recognizance.

Monday, October 15, Keith Jefferson, 29, of Rahway was arrested at South Avenue and Sussex Street on an outstanding Westfield motor-vehicle warrant. He was released after posting \$500 bail.

Monday, October 15, Joseph Annicchiarico, Jr., 41, of Westfield was arrested on North Avenue near Elmer Street on an outstanding Scotch Plains traffic warrant. He was released after posting \$300 bail.

Wednesday, October 17, Jermaine L. McDougald, 24, of Elizabeth was arrested at an Elm Street grocery and charged with shoplifting and theft, with bail set at \$250. He also was arrested on a Newark traffic warrant with bail of \$300. McDougald was released after posting bail.

Thursday, October 18, Patrick Stroup, 31, of Central Square, N.Y. was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Drake Place. He was charged with possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Stroup was released on his own recognizance with a summons.

Thursday, October 18, Mark Monroe, Jr., 20, of Plainfield was arrested

on an outstanding \$550 Roselle motor-vehicle warrant during a motor-vehicle stop at Clifton Street and Summit Avenue. He was committed to the Union County jail on default of bail.

Friday, October 19, Joseph Catalano, 40, of Old Bridge was arrested on the 600 block of North Avenue, West, for allegedly driving while intoxicated. He was released to a responsible individual.

Mountainside

Wednesday, October 17, Jaime F. Aguirre, 36, of Newark was arrested after a field investigation for an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$500.

Thursday, October 18, a resident of Elizabeth reported that while her car was parked on Sunny Slope Drive, someone removed the license plates from the vehicle.

Friday, October 19, an employee at a Summit Road business reported that someone cut a hole in a chain-link fence to gain access to a custom vehicle parked inside the storage area located behind the business. According to police, once inside the storage area, the individual cut a hole in the vehicle's convertible top to gain access into the vehicle.

Taken from the vehicle were a radio, an exhaust temperature gauge, a custom turbo charger valued at \$3,000, and a custom intake manifold valued at \$1,000, police said. Police stated that the suspect was most likely familiar with the vehicles location and custom auto parts.

Sunday, October 21, a resident of Garrett Road reported that someone removed a 20-foot extension ladder from his back yard.



Fred Rossi for The Times
FIELD DAY... Residents attend a hearing on the Scotch Plains bond ordinance for a new south-side field Tuesday night. See story on page 1.

RVSA Votes on Privatization

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

similar conflict or appearance of conflict that arises from the fact that the Clark representative, Frank Mazzarella, was just recently appointed to be the director of the Department of Public Works in Rahway." He questioned whether Mr. Mazzarella could be counted on to vote Clark's interests while employed by Rahway.

Mr. Pelissier responded to Mr. Landale's statement, saying that "to wait years is not responsible." He said Mr. Landale's statement was "slanderous."

Mr. David questioned the wording of the resolution, noting that it states, "the authority interim executive director, secretary/treasurer and all of the authority's other officials, employees

Cranford

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

make a nice big chunk of change."

A later exchange rose questions as to why multiple area wastewater authorities had rejected the concept of privatization.

RVSA interim executive director Michael Brinker, who attended the Cranford meeting, noted that the Bergen County Utilities Authority had conducted a two-year study and decided against privatization.

Mr. Puhak asked whether the RVSA had spoken formally with those authorities that rejected privatization, to which Mr. Brinker answered "no."

Further questioning led Mr. Murphy to say that the Bergen County study on privatization had generated 55 boxes of paper.

Mr. Puhak asked why the RVSA had not requested an executive summary; Mr. Murphy concurred that would be a good idea.

The RVSA portion of the committee's workshop meeting had begun with Mr. Brinker giving the township committee an overview of the ongoing projects and challenges the authority faces. The focus of the questions Mr. Brinker and the authority's secretary/treasurer, Robert Materna, faced related to "steep" growth in debt-service costs over the next few years as part the RVSA court-mandated \$139-million upgrade of its treatment facility. A \$24-million cogeneration/dry sludge facility is also included, as well as another \$11 million in various facility improvements.

Cranford faces a double hit on taxpayers, with the debt service on the facility upgrade hitting at the same time as a low sewerage rating moves out of the township's five-year rolling average. The change would result in an estimated 12-percent rate rise before any debt service is calculated, officials said.

Commenting on the impact of the rate rise, resident Jim O'Neill said, "I can see my fixed budget going to hell very fast."

and professionals are authorized and directed to execute those documents and perform those tasks that will affect the purposes of this resolution," could be construed to require any and all of the authority's employees to work on privatization, thus neglecting the work they were hired to perform.

Mr. Venturo said the key difference between the current structure and a privatized structure is that with privatization, "they're here to make a buck."

Speaking during the public-comment portion of the meeting, Cranford Deputy Mayor Robert Puhak said, "Although initial RFP costs may not be costly, it sets off a series of events that could ultimately sustain highly substantial costs to the constituent communities."

"Reports indicate that procurement costs are expected to cost up to and perhaps exceed \$500,000. That's before any contract is executed," he said.

He said the commissioners' vote was "highly distressing."

Tina Renna, president of the Union County Watchdog Association, described the commissioner's job as to "carry out the will of your towns" and said she, "[doesn't] believe you are doing that."

Fanwood Recreation prepares for Halloween

By MARIA WOHR

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — The recreation commission discussed plans for a Halloween parade and party on October 31.

The commission will hold a jack-o'-lantern and costume contest at LaGrande Park; it will award 250 prizes.

Scotch Plains' recreation commission tried to participate and subsidize part of the event, but the 45,000 flyers had already been printed.

"We are not exclusive to Fanwood and everyone is welcome to join in the parade. Next year, if the Scotch Plains Recreation Commission speaks with us earlier, we will be happy to include them in the event," said Bob Budiansky, the commission's executive director.

The commission discussed the holiday celebration it will hold December 2 outside of the North Avenue train station. Due to the Fanwood museum's creation this year, the commission must rent a tent for Santa and crafts. "The tent will cost about \$1,200 with a heater. I am going to put in a request for the cost to the council because there was no way we could have foreseen this expense," Mr. Budiansky said.

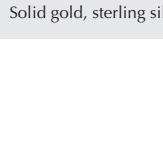
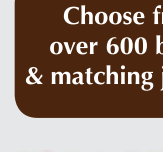
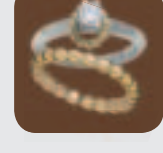
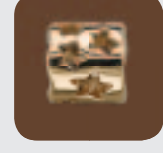
The commission will seek volunteers, including a Mrs. Claus, for the celebration.

The commission discussed establishing an AARP driving-safety class for seniors in either December or April. "We are still looking into it, but it will cost about \$10 per person," Mr. Budiansky said.



Fred Rossi for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
BARGAIN HUNTING... Area residents flock Scotch Plains for the flea market, sponsored by the Lion's Club as part of Scotch Plains Day festivities, on Saturday afternoon.

Unforgettable Moments



NEW ARRIVALS!
 New Pandora Charms are in

Choose from over 600 beads & matching jewelry

PANDORA
 Jewelry

ADLERS
 JEWELERS

219 NORTH AVENUE • WESTFIELD, NJ 07090
 (908) 233-6900

1/2 block from Northside Train Station Plaza

M-F 10:00 - 5:30 • Thurs. til 7:30 • Sat. 10:00 - 5:00

Solid gold, sterling silver, and precious stones • U.S. Pat. No. 7,007,507 • © • All rights reserved • visit www.pandora-jewelry.com