



FRESH FUN...Residents have fun finding plenty of fresh produce at the Scotch Plains Farmers Market last Saturday. The market on Park Avenue next to the municipal building is open every Saturday throughout the summer.

A Day With Linda Stender

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city council.

Another big name present at the picnic was Mark Alexander, the senior advisor to Senator Barack Obama's Presidential campaign.

During the picnic, Mrs. Stender met and spoke with supporters who were able to ask about her stance on issues.

She admitted that the topic she speaks about the most is the Iraq War because her opposition is why she decided to run for Congress in 2006 and again this year.

"The country spent so much money over there," she said. "We went from a record surplus to a record deficit."

According to Mrs. Stender, people are uneasy because they aren't confident the government can provide the functions it's supposed to.

Mrs. Stender said the country needs energy independence and to concentrate on conservation and efficiency, "for the economy and the environment."

However, when asked about her opponent, Senator Leonard Lance, Mrs. Stender admitted to a lack of knowledge about his campaign.

"There doesn't seem to be a strong campaign going," she said. "He doesn't have a campaign headquarters. He doesn't have a campaign phone. We haven't been getting a lot of feedback about him."

Mrs. Stender's own campaign

seems to be going strong, according to Ms. Curran.

As of June 30, the last date of Federal Election Commission (FEC) financial reporting, Mrs. Stender's campaign had \$1.2 million cash on hand to spend. Mr. Lance's campaign had \$80,000 cash on hand after listing contributions of \$385,238 after winning a seven-candidate primary four weeks prior to the FEC quarterly filing deadline.

"There's a real sense on the ground that this is the year that she's going to do it," Ms. Curran said.

"There's a real sense of enthusiasm on the ground, and you can feel the energy as Linda's traveling around," she added. "She really hears from families who are struggling, who are worried about the high cost of gas or facing skyrocketing health care costs or worried about their homes. The Bush Administration has left our economy in shambles, and we need new leaders in Washington to clean up the mess."

Even though these summer months are what Mrs. Stender called "quiet," Ms. Curran said she has noticed more involvement.

"I feel that voters really know that we need a change, and they're getting involved earlier," she said. "So even in the slower summer months, there's definitely an increased interest and level of activism from years past."

Muhlenberg Medical Center

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tem with cab companies, where the health center's maternity patients could receive rides to Trinitas.

According to Fanwood Volunteer Rescue Squad President, John Oatis, women in labor that his squad transports would most likely go to Overlook Hospital in Summit.

He said in the last two years the squad has slowly taken patients to Overlook, which takes about 12 to 15 minutes, instead of the six-minute drive time to the Plainfield hospital.

Trinitas is even further away. Recently 50 percent of all calls were sent to Muhlenberg, where just two years ago it was at about 75 to 80 percent, Mr. Oatis said.

As of August 1, according to the letter Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer for Muhlenberg Nancy Fiamingo drafted, Muhlenberg's emergency room is on "full divert status," meaning the emergency room will no longer admit inpatients and they are diverted to area hospitals.

"The people in the local communities are going to suffer because they are going to take them on longer runs outside of our normal radius. It's going to effect us time wise and gas wise. Fortunately, our town is paying that for us," Mr. Oatis said.

"Towns like ours where we have a basis to go the extra mile, that is literally what we are going to be doing," he continued.

Should a person call 911, the emergency medical technician (EMT) would make the decision if the injured person needs a bed.

"It leaves it on us, whether it is an ALS (advanced life support) or BLS (basic life support)," Mr. Oatis said.

Instances such as "bumps, bruises, burns, stitches, broken bones" routinely do not require a bed and the ER could treat the person and send them home, said Steven Weiss,

spokesperson for Solaris Health Systems, the corporation that decided to close the hospital because of the institution losing more than \$10 million per year.

"It will be interesting if your bumps and bruises are the same as ours," Mr. Oatis said.

"It would be nice to know that they will be open to patients that are not bumps and bruises," he said, in cases where a patient was initially diagnosed as a BLS, but when the person arrived at Muhlenberg it was determined that it was more serious.

"If it's a serious call, cardiac, motor vehicle, maternity, the paramedics are called and they assist us in telling us what hospital to go to," he said.

Mr. Oatis said he has not heard of any instances when a person did not make it to a hospital in time, given the longer distances of other area hospitals than Muhlenberg, but said, "That is definitely a possibility with advance life support."

"There is a golden four minutes. If someone is having trouble breathing or a cardiac problem anytime over that four-minute mark you start playing with the lives of the people that are the patient. If we go over four minutes and drive a longer distance, it is definitely going to hurt, and in the long run will effect the calls we go on."

According to a press release, Overlook recently built a new \$15-million emergency department to assist in the increased patients visits, which is an increase of 3 to 5 percent yearly in the last few years.

It has 46 beds, separate sections for specialties such as pediatrics, geriatrics and chest pain, a dedicated radiology area, and a system to move patients with less-urgent needs through the emergency department in less than an hour.

Trinitas' emergency department, according to its website, "has 15 acute-care beds, a six-bed observation area, a six-bed 'Fast Track' area for patients with minor illnesses and injuries, two triage rooms and a decontamination shower facility," and designated chest pain center.

Muhlenberg's satellite emergency room accommodates 20 beds, with five available for overflow.

At JFK, the ER has eight beds in its intermediary care, which handles fast track and some higher acuity patients that do not require monitoring, 12 beds in pediatric care for children 18-years-old and younger, and 21 beds in the main ER to care for higher acuity patients, and those who require monitoring. In the fall, an additional eight bays will be added.

When someone comes to Muhlenberg on his or her own admission, they would be stabilized in the emergency room, then sent to another hospital, via transportation provided by Solaris, according to Mr. Weiss. It does not have helicopter service.

Correction on FW Budget

Editor's Note: A story on last week's borough council meeting contained a number of factual errors. The story listed the budget in billions instead of millions of dollars. The following is the way the story should have read.

The Fanwood Borough Council introduced an amended budget last

an increase of \$410,178, or 2.79 percent. Another \$177,584 will be collected for the county's open space tax, a \$7,800, or 4.5 percent, increase.

The municipal budget in February called for a 28 percent tax increase over the 2007-2008 budget. In the amended budget, total revenue to be raised by taxes would be reduced

Comparison of Fanwood Property Taxes

Fanwood	Increase	Delta	2008	2007
BOE	3%	\$410,000	\$15,111,840	\$14,701,840
UC	3%	\$115,320	\$3,897,248	\$3,781,928
Muni	16%	\$727,003	\$5,300,000	\$4,572,997
Subtotal	5.4%	\$1,252,323	\$24,309,088	\$23,056,765
Total	5.6%			

week that calls for a 5.46 percent hike in overall taxes, including county, school and municipal, or \$1,252,498, over 2007.

A total of \$5.3 million will be raised in municipal taxes, an increase of \$727,003, or 15.90 percent over 2007. County taxes are going up \$115,320, or 3.05 percent, to \$3,897,248. School taxes are \$15,112,018 (including operating expenses and debt service),

from earlier projections of \$5.9 million to \$5.3 million.

Regarding current taxes, Mayor Colleen Mahr said residents would see a 10 percent drop in their taxes from the third quarter to the fourth quarter. The third quarter taxes were calculated using the budget figures from February.

A public hearing on the budget is scheduled for Wednesday, August 20.

Volunteer Organizations Struggle to Find More Help

By KATHERINE VOWELL
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

AREA — Running a rescue organization is no easy task, and when that organization relies 100 percent on volunteers, the task is all the more challenging. Local towns have always struggled with recruitment, but as volunteer levels are reaching an all-time low, these organizations are issuing a cry for help.

The Mountainside volunteer fire department has been the target of public scrutiny over the past few weeks. According to Mountainside Fire Chief Neil Williams, part of the problem is a lack of understanding regarding what goes on behind the scenes.

"What the general public doesn't understand is that we don't stop being volunteers on Christmas, Thanksgiving or Halloween, and when the routine fire alarms go off at 2 a.m., we are getting out of bed," Chief Williams said.

With 29 members, volunteers try to give what they can, when they can. "Everyone works different hours, different jobs; it is a give-and-take kind of thing. Most of us have families, and a lot of us work two jobs, so it is tough," Chief Williams said.

In addition to their volunteer requirements, some members take additional classes to become certified EMT's, licensed fire inspectors and HAZMAT technicians.

According to the chief, the shortage of volunteers all goes back to a monetary issue. "It all comes down to the money," Chief Williams said. "To ask someone to go to fire academy is a big responsibility," which according to the chief can be a financial burden on potential volunteers.

"The other side of the coin to that is it's a [financial] responsibility down here because we (the fire department) pay for a physical, and if we don't have the proper equipment to fit that person, we have to buy it, which is almost \$2,000," he said.

"If the public is happy with the way the taxes are, come down and volunteer. If not, it (the volunteer fire department) is going to be a dying thing, and eventually, they are going to have to have a paid fire department, and it is going to be costly," he said.

Chief Williams added, "To put down the fire department and put down negativity that we didn't respond fast enough or we didn't have enough people, that may be true. But we still need the public's help. Anyone that can volunteer is more than welcome to. It all goes back to protecting your homes, friends and families. We're here to save lives. I'm here to try and do the best job I can for free."

Although the Mountainside Rescue Squad uses a paid service during the day, its volunteer levels "have been pretty low for a while now," Corrine Moore, vice-president of the squad, said.

With about 15 volunteers, some of whom also volunteer with the fire department, members are expected to be on duty 12 hours every week, with shifts running from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Ms. Moore believes that the primary reason for volunteer shortages is the "class you have to take for five months." Although the class is paid for by the town, she said that the "schooling just sounds worse than it is."

President of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, Dan Sullivan, believes that word of mouth is the best way to

recruit new volunteers.

The Scotch Plains Squad, comprised of 62 members, has had difficulties recruiting individuals to cover the daytime shifts from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Although Mountainside has a paid service during the work week, Mr. Sullivan said that a paid service is "something we don't want to consider."

Scotch Plains is a little more lenient with its required hours and members usually volunteer about four to five hours every week.

In the meantime, Scotch Plains has maintained a good relationship with its neighboring town, Fanwood, to ensure that the daytime calls are answered.

"We have a unique situation because Scotch Plains surrounds Fanwood, and there is a very good relationship between the two squads," Mr. Sullivan said.

For Mr. Sullivan, being part of the squad is to "do something good for people. You will never get rich doing EMS...It is an appreciation for what we do and how we do it."

The Westfield Fire Department had a volunteer station back in 1876. The department became a paid station in 1953 and currently has 40 paid and eight volunteer firefighters.

Westfield Fire Chief Daniel Kelly said, "There is a lot of interest out there" to volunteer, but people don't have the time to get the amount of hours necessary for certification. Westfield has volunteers in addition to its full-time paid firefighters.

Chief Kelly said paid years ago a volunteer could just sign up and go through in house training, now, it can take up to year before a volunteer can go on a call. "There is a shortage [of volunteers] across the state, not just for the fire departments, but for rescue squads as well," Chief Kelly added.

For Mountainside Fire Department volunteer of 31 years, Dean Paskow, the bottom line is simple.

"If you're interested, you find the time to do it."

FW Council

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committee.

"We should be looking into a group to look at facts, circumstances and legalities of a consolidation with Scotch Plains...in the event that it would be necessary in the future to go down that road," said Councilman Walsh.

"I think that's something that we need to bring up," agreed Councilman Valian, but he said the governing body first needs to "get our bearings on where we need to be and where we want to go before getting input from others."

Mayor Mahr said any new committees would be set up "with a very specific charge," similar to the downtown's redevelopment committee. She added that, "there is a tremendous amount of money available from the state" to finance shared services studies. "The budget issues are certainly not going away," said the mayor. "So, we need to get our arms around this and, at the same time, not suffocate our residents."

In other business, before adjourning into executive session to discuss unspecified personnel and legal issues, the governing body approved on second reading an amendment to the borough code that defines which employees are eligible for the "defined contribution" retirement program.



CRY FOR HELP... With the number of volunteers reaching all-time lows, local volunteer fire departments and volunteer rescue squads struggle to find help, especially between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Pictured above is the Scotch Plains Volunteer Fire Department building.

POLICE BLOTTER

Scotch Plains

Friday, August 1, Alisha Simon, 19, of Elizabeth, was arrested on an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, she was processed and released.

Friday, August 1, Rabine A. Cook, 25, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released to the Union County Sheriff's Department.

Friday, August 1, Kyle Briggs, 22, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Friday, August 1, Troy Jones, 31, of Newark was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Friday, August 1, an employee of a Park Avenue business reported that someone struck the driver's side quarter panel of her vehicle that was parked on the street. The hit-and-run occurred between 2 and 4 p.m. According to police, there were no witnesses to the incident.

Saturday, August 2, Patricia A. Collins, 41, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, she was processed and released.

Saturday, August 2, Robert Campora, 28, of Woodbridge was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Saturday, August 2, Melissa Perez, 32, of Rahway was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, she was processed and released.

Sunday, August 3, Robert Ribot, 32, of Perth Amboy was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Sunday, August 3, Christian Valencia, 24, of North Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Sunday, August 3, Sharif Dismuke, 31, of East Orange was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Sunday, August 3, Juan Bustamante, 27, of West New York was arrested and charged with driving with intoxicated (DWI) after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation at which time officers said they noticed his eyes were red and his speech was slow and slurred.

According to police, Bustamante failed several field sobriety tests and was placed under arrest. He was processed and later released.

Sunday, August 1, Dudley Dempaire, 31, of Hillside was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance after a motor vehicle stop at which time officers said they smelled the odor of burnt marijuana in the vehicle. According to police, a small amount of marijuana was found in the vehicle. Dempaire was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released.

Fanwood

Thursday, July 31, Crystal G. Fagardo, 22, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road. According to police, she was processed and released.

Thursday, July 31, Sergio D. Custodio, 28, of North Arlington was arrested for allegedly providing police with false information after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Saturday, August 2, Aisha S. Williams, 28, of East Orange was arrested and charged with possession of stolen property after she was found allegedly driving a stolen vehicle. According to police, she was processed and released.

Tuesday, August 5, Shavonne B. Delaney, 26, of Newark was arrested on an outstanding Newark warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue. According to police, she was processed and released.

Westfield

Wednesday, July 30, George Robinson Jr., 55, of Plainfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on an outstanding Scotch Plains warrant for \$158. He posted bail and was released.

Wednesday, July 30, Richard Colligan, 51, of Plainfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at the intersection of North Avenue and Clark Street for an outstanding warrant of \$250 from Somerville.

Wednesday, July 30, report of theft of a bicycle from the 400 block of North Scotch Plains Avenue. The bike had an estimated value of \$200.

Wednesday, July 30, Mervin Ramos, 24, of Rahway, was arrested for an outstanding warrant out of Linden for \$144. Police said Ramos was arrested in the driveway of 1000 Central Avenue at the Duncan Hills Apartments, following several calls of a disorderly person kicking a

car window. Police said Ramos was kicking his own car door.

Thursday, July 31, Michael Woodward, 43, of Philadelphia, Pa., was arrested in the parking lot of 1000 Central Avenue, on a warrant out of Hamilton Township in the amount of \$500. He was arrested following a call of a suspicious group of people loitering in the parking area driveway. He was released after posting \$500 bail.

Thursday, July 31, officers responded to Plainfield police headquarters where they took Alex Montiz, 26, of Elizabeth into custody for an outstanding Westfield warrant of \$99. Montiz was unable to post bail. He was turned over to the Union County Sheriff's Department.

Thursday, July 31, Salvador Sepulveda Jr., 41, of Perth Amboy was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Central and Starlight Avenues. He was charged with having a suspended driver's license and for an outstanding warrant out of Perth Amboy for \$620. He posted bail and was released.

Thursday, July 31, officers arrested Jerry Pine, 28, of Mountainview, Calif., for outstanding warrants out of Mount Laurel in the amount of \$500 and Monroe County, Fla. in the amount of \$2,000. He was held pending his turnover to the Mount Laurel Police Department.

Friday, August 1, Bryan Ackerman, 23, was arrested on the 900 block of Woodmere Drive for outstanding warrants out of Livingston in the amount of \$1,000 and Emerson in the amount of \$250. He was processed and was held in custody.

Saturday, August 2, officers arrested Danielle Hazel, 32, of Union for an outstanding warrant out of Kenilworth for \$81 following a motor vehicle stop in the area of Livingston and South Avenue. Hazel posted bail and was released.

Saturday, August 2, Maria A. Nunez, 38, of Plainfield was arrested for outstanding warrants out of Elizabeth for \$250 and Linden for \$550 following a motor vehicle stop in the area of South Avenue and Tuttle Parkway. She was released after posting bail.

Saturday, August 2, Richard Ingram, 55, was arrested for an outstanding warrant out of Westfield for \$200 following a motor vehicle stop at the intersection of East North Avenue and St. Paul Street. He posted bail and was released.

Saturday, August 2, Christopher Rodriguez, 18, of New Brunswick, was arrested at Middlesex County jail pursuant to contempt of court warrant issued by the Westfield municipal court. He was transported to Westfield Police Headquarters where he was processed and released after posting bail.

Mountainside

Friday, July 11, Raymond C. Stark, 39, North Plainfield was arrested and charged with credit card fraud. According to police, he stole a credit card from a Springfield Avenue suite and attempted to purchase a computer at Walmart in Union. According to police, bail was set at \$6,500 and Stark is being detained at the Union County jail.

Tuesday, July 29, Majlissa Forbes, 31, of Newark was arrested and charged with attempting to pass a bad check to the Mountainside court in the amount of \$500.

Tuesday, July 29, Heather Hines, 27, of North Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving with a suspended license after being involved in a motor vehicle accident on Route 22 East.

Tuesday, July 29, Antandras C. Jackson, 34, of Newark was arrested at the Essex County jail for an outstanding Mountainside warrant.

Tuesday, July 29, officers responded to Woodland Avenue on a report of a rabid raccoon. According to police, when they arrived at the scene a large raccoon was attacking a small raccoon injuring it. Police then witnessed the rabid raccoon attacking a small dog at which point they sprayed it with Oleoresin Capsicum (OC), better known as pepper spray, in order to get it to release the dog, police said.

The raccoon then ran across the street into the back yard of an adjacent property at which time the officer was able to safely destroy the animal with two shots from his duty weapon, authorities reported. According to police, the raccoon was placed in a plastic bag and transported to headquarters where the Humane Society picked it up for testing. The dog was transported to veterinarian for treatment and testing and the small raccoon was not located, police said.

Wednesday, July 30, a Mary Allen Way resident reported that someone removed the front license plates from two of her construction vehicles. According to police, the victim is uncertain weather the plates were lost or stolen.

Wednesday, July 30, a Sunny Slope Drive resident reported that the wheel of a large truck drove on his property leaving a rut approximately 20 feet long and six inches deep in his front lawn near the curb.

Saturday, August 2, a Foothill Way resident reported that someone opened a Verizon account using his personal information but bearing a Brooklyn, NY address.

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ASTROLOGY
READINGS
BY
JESSICA
I can answer for
your most difficult
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Cheating spouse, money
matters, job & business
decisions.
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S. Plainfield
908-757-4450
10am-9pm



TASTE TESTING... Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association's (SPBPA) members get some tips on wine tasting from Arlene Knox of The Traveling Vineyard at the SPBPA's networking night on July 29.