

## Former Township Clerk Reidy Recalled Fondly

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specialty Written for The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood

SCOTCH PLAINS — She was called "the most popular person in Scotch Plains" by Township Manager Thomas Atkins. Helen Reidy, who died last month, served as township clerk for 28 years and for the first part of her tenure, her position was subject to the will of the voters, who re-elected her starting in 1959 by large margins.

"She was the biggest vote-getter in town," said Barbara Riepe, who worked with Miss Reidy for 30 years before succeeding her as clerk in 1987. Miss Reidy began working for Scotch Plains in 1947, and Mr. Atkins told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that the township and its government were far different from today. The population in the immediate post-World War II years was only several thousand and the township government was smaller, which meant that Miss Reidy and one or two other women served as the clerical staff for the entire municipal operation.

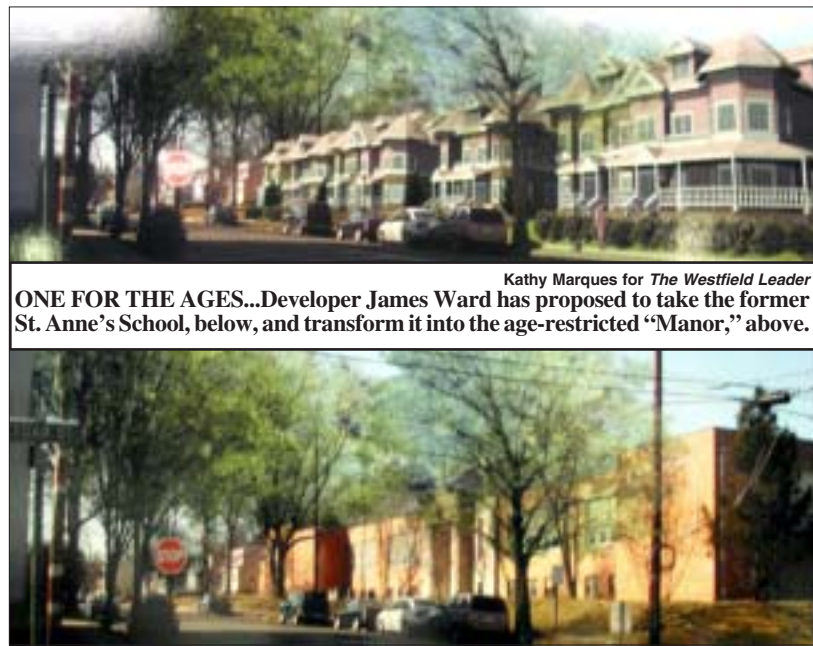
"She did a little of everything," Mr. Atkins said. Even though she worked for 12 years before being elected clerk in 1959, "she knew the ins and outs of being clerk well before assuming the

position." In the late 1960s, state officials decided the municipal clerk should not be an elected position, so Miss Reidy was appointed to the post that she held for the following 20 years.

"She loved people," Mrs. Riepe told *The Times*. "She always said she missed the people when she retired" in 1987. "And she loved animals."

Mr. Atkins said Miss Reidy and Mrs. Riepe "were doing tons of stuff" back in the 1950s and 1960s when Scotch Plains' population grew to 22,000 by 1970. In those days, he said, "the clerk took care of people" and their varying needs since the clerk's office was one of the few municipal offices that was open full-time.

The municipal building back then was located next to the existing building, and Mrs. Riepe recalled Miss Reidy shouting requests or questions out an open window across to another municipal office. And both Mr. Atkins and Mrs. Riepe recalled the state of Miss Reidy's desk, which often had "several large piles of papers on it," Mr. Atkins said. "But if you went in and asked for a particular paper, she'd be able to reach into the middle of a pile and know exactly where it was." "She was one of a kind," he said.



## GW Planning Board Hears St. Anne's 'Manor' Proposal

By KATHY MARQUES

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — James Ward of Ward and O'Donnell Management presented his development proposal for knocking down the former St. Anne's School and constructing "The Manor at St. Anne's," during Garwood's January 9 planning board meeting.

Mr. Ward proposed to build an age-restricted (55 and above), 47-unit, three-story condominium complex.

"I would love to build this beautiful complex and sell [the units] at a low rate to residents. I think this would enhance the town's appearance while generating over \$400,000 a year in tax revenue for Garwood," Mr. Ward said to the more than 60 residents present at the meeting.

Mr. Ward's attorney, Glenn Kienz, from Weiner Lesniak, LLP, asked board members Mayor Dennis McCarthy and Councilwoman Kathleen Villaggio to step down from the appeal hearing.

He said since Mr. Ward is requesting a use variance, state law forbids elected officials on the planning board to vote on the appeal. Mr. Kienz also asked all board members who worship at St. Anne's to

also step down in order to avoid any conflicts of interest.

"When in doubt, step out," he said. Eventually, three board members stepped down, with board member William Nierstedt voluntarily removing himself because he served as a church board member. The church still owns the school.

Councilwoman Villaggio told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* she wanted to "clear up rumors," she claimed that resident Bruce Paterson was spreading.

She said, "The mayor and I did not accept any money (campaign contributions) from Mr. Ward's law firm. People are saying that this is the reason why we have to sit out, and that's not true. You heard the lawyer; by law, we can't sit on this appeal."

State Senator Raymond Lesniak of Elizabeth (LD-20), a Democrat, is a senior partner with Weiner Lesniak.

Mr. Ward said if the board doesn't approve the project, "I'll eventually do something with the property. I do have an interest in this project but don't have a 'Plan B' at this time."

Planning board member Robert Scherer questioned Mr. Ward as to why he hasn't purchased the building yet. "Why no closing date?" he asked. "Is it so you can avoid paying taxes?"

Mr. Ward replied, "No reason. It's in limbo right now. No one wants to pay taxes on something they're not constructing on yet."

Mr. Nierstedt asked whether the Archdiocese of Newark has given its consent to the project, to which Mr. Kienz said, "There is no corporate disclosure for a church. It goes to Rome. They're bigger than us." Mr. Kienz said he had a copy of a consent agreement and would submit it to the board.

According to the applicant, the units would be sold to Garwood residents at \$350,000 — or whatever the market value is at the time of sale — and sold to "non-residents at \$100,000 over cost."

"Non-residents will pay a higher price, that I will guarantee," Mr. Ward said.

Mr. Ward's representatives said a deed restriction would be placed on buyers to prevent a breach of condominium-association rules should units be sold or leased to anyone below 55.

The building proposed would be 35 feet in height — higher than the current school building. The proposal will also include 94 underground parking spaces.

Residents who attended the meeting said traffic congestion in the area was a concern.

Elizabeth Dolan, a traffic engineer hired by the developer, conducted a one-day traffic survey during a weekday in November. She said, "We found during the peak hours of 7 to 9 a.m. and 4:45 to 5:45 p.m., there were 200 cars traveling on Cedar Street and 600 cars traveling on Walnut Street, due to two-way traffic... below significant traffic areas such as North Avenue. This is not a level that would deteriorate the trip area."

Mr. Scherer asked how the garbage removal would be handled. "The residents of Garwood are frugal and already pay enough in taxes. We want no surprises," he said.

The developer said the \$198-per-month, per-unit maintenance fee would cover the garbage-removal cost. The water bill would go to the management company, which Mr. Ward also operates.

"I can put it in writing; the [borough] of Garwood will not pay for garbage removal. I am a man of my word. The [Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times] editor recently [published] a letter about how reputable I am," Mr. Ward said.

Mr. Ward's application will continue at a public meeting on Wednesday, January 30, at Lincoln School at 7:45 p.m.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Westfield

Sunday, January 6, an employee of a business on the 200 block of East Broad Street reported that someone defaced with red ink graffiti the wall and ground just outside the front door of the business.

Sunday, January 6, a Tinton Falls resident reported the theft of her Louis Vuitton wallet and its contents from the counter of a business on the 300 block of South Avenue, East. The wallet contained her driver's license, \$500 in cash and assorted credit cards.

Monday, January 7, Brandon Gassmann, 23, of Winfield Park was arrested at the Linden Police Department on a Westfield criminal warrant. He was released after posting \$195 bail.

Monday, January 7, Scott Callender, 21, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a Westfield motor vehicle warrant. He was released after posting \$175 bail.

Monday, January 7, Gordon Novak, 44, of Westfield was arrested on the 400 block of Coddling Road on a no-bail New Jersey wanted person fugitive warrant. He was turned over to the Union County Sheriff's Department.

Monday, January 7, Derek Mogull, 24, of Scotch Plains was arrested on two Westfield motor vehicle warrants at Westfield police headquarters. He was released after posting \$110 bail to settle the two warrants.

Monday, January 7, Michael Risberg, 19, of Westfield was arrested on a Westfield motor vehicle warrant at Westfield police headquarters. He was released after posting \$175 bail.

Thursday, January 10, Alfonso Willock, 33, of Flushing, N.Y. was arrested on outstanding traffic warrants from Secaucus and Newark, with bail amounts of \$250 and \$200, respectively, following a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Cacciola Place. He was released after posting bail.

Friday, January 11, Susan Krause, 59, of Westfield was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) after a motor vehicle stop at East Broad Street and Gallows Hill Road. She was released on her own recognizance to a responsible individual.

Saturday, January 12, Amanda Bracuto, 20, of Kenilworth was arrested and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and an outstanding Roselle Park traffic warrant with bail of \$800, after a motor vehicle stop at South and Windsor Avenues.

She was released on her own recognizance on the warrant per Roselle Park Municipal Court and issued a summons on the marijuana possession charge prior to being released.

Saturday, January 12, a resident of the 1400 block of Boynton Avenue reported that the motor vehicle he had borrowed from a family member was damaged while parked in the roadway outside his home. The driver's side window was smashed.

Saturday, January 12, a resident of the 300 block of Roger Avenue reported the passenger side window on his motor vehicle was smashed while the vehicle was parked in his driveway.

Saturday, January 12, Bernard P. Burns, 26, of Phillipsburg was arrested on the 500 block of Rahway Avenue on a Pohatcong motor vehicle warrant after being stopped on the 500 block of Rahway Avenue for a motor vehicle violation. He was released after posting \$190 bail.

### Mountainside

Tuesday, January 1, Darrell Benford, 24, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant from Mountainside for \$250 and a warrant out of Springfield for \$1,000.

Tuesday, January 1, staff at a Route 22 theater reported finding the wallet belonging to the daughter of a Newark firefighter. Police contacted the owner.

Wednesday, January 2, Roy Bryan, 49, of Plainfield, was arrested for driving with a suspended license after being stopped by police on Route 22 at Lawrence Avenue for having passenger license plates on a commercial vehicle. He was given a Thursday, January 17 municipal court date.

Thursday, January 3, Amirah Brack, 21, of Plainfield was arrested by the Fanwood Police Department and turned over to Mountainside on an outstanding warrant of \$165.

Friday, January 4, a Whipoorwill Way resident reported that he lost his New Jersey driver's license while flying through O'Hare Airport in Chicago last month.

Sunday, January 6, Jacqueline Crowell, 23, of Mountainside was arrested for DWI over her car ran off the road at Sunny Slope Drive and Summit Road. Police reported the woman's two children were in the car at the time. Her mother was contacted to take care of her children.

Crowell was also charged with refusal to submit to a breath test and careless driving, police said.

Monday, January 7, a Kings Court resident came to police headquarters to report a missing silver Olympus digital camera. The victim said he last had the camera while at Webster Hall in New York City on New Year's Day. The camera is valued at \$375.

Monday, January 7, a Sheffield Street business owner reported that his Chevrolet truck was burglarized. Police said the right center tool compartment door of the vehicle was pryed open and that work tools were stolen. The victim said he would review surveillance tapes and contact the detective bureau.

Tuesday, January 8, a Wyoming Drive resident reported that he received a letter from a Publisher's Gaming Co. saying he had won a million dollars. A check for \$4,835 was included. The resident was instructed to send a money order for \$2,500 to a Walmart in Canada. He cashed the check and contacted the company to arrange delivery of the prize before contacting police.

Police said this is a "classic money scam."

Tuesday, January 8, a Summit Road resident reported that she received a letter from a credit card company of balance transfers in the amounts of \$9,900 and \$9,500 to a credit card and a department store card, respectively, in her name. The victim said she did not have credit cards with either company. The victim notified the major credit bureaus. The detective bureau is investigating.

Thursday, January 10, three juveniles were arrested and charged with being under the influence and in possession of marijuana following a complaint of a suspicious vehicle on Outlook Drive, West. Police found an envelope of marijuana and a blunt cigar, which was bagged for evidence. The juveniles were released to their parents.

Monday, January 14, a Darby Lane resident reported her wallet was missing. She reported that the wallet contained \$40 in cash, credit cards, her driver's license, Social Security card and personal items.

Monday, January 14, an employee of a Route 22 nursing home reported the theft of a 32-inch LG flat screen LCD TV. The TV was valued at \$800.

### Garwood

Saturday, January 12, Sean Ferro, 19, of Westfield was arrested on the 400 block of Locust Avenue and charged with underage consumption of alcohol. He was arrested after police discovered him lying unresponsive on the ground near a tree. With the assistance of police he slowly came around. Police detected a strong odor of alcohol on his breath. Ferro was transported to police headquarters where he was released to a family member pending a municipal court date.

Sunday, January 13, Brendan Stark, 20, of Cranford was arrested and charged with underage consumption of alcohol on the 100 block of South Avenue.

Police observed several individuals in a parking lot to a service station and stopped to investigate. While interviewing the individuals, police said they detected a strong odor of alcohol on Stark's breath. According to police, Stark admitted to consuming five beers earlier. He was transported to police headquarters and released to a family member pending a municipal court date.

### Fanwood

Wednesday, January 9, Jamie V. Mercer, 39, of Plainfield was arrested on active warrants out of Scotch Plains, Jersey City and Bulloch County, GA after a motor vehicle stop in the 50 block of South Avenue.

Wednesday, January 9, William R. Myers, 51, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Wednesday, January 9, Richard J. Harden, 54, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Fanwood warrant after a field investigation.

Thursday, January 10, William A. Reid, 22, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue. According to police, he was also charged with obstruction of justice after providing police with false information. He was processed and turned over to the Plainfield Police Department, authorities said.

Thursday, January 10, Lori E. Armour, 48, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding East Windsor warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Friday, January 11, Salvatore Savatteri, 58, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding Clark warrant after a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Sometime between 9:30 p.m. on Friday, January 11, and 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, January 12, a resident of Tilloson Road reported that someone entered his unlocked vehicle while it was parked in his driveway and attempted to steal the vehicle by tampering with the ignition switch. According to police, the attempt was unsuccessful.

Saturday, January 12, sometime between 11 and 11:30 p.m. a resident of Oakridge Road reported that someone stole his red, four-door 2004 Hyundai while it was parked unlocked in his driveway with the keys in the ignition.

Sunday, January 13, James H. Gordon, 39, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Maplewood warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Monday, January 14, Samira R. Jones, 32, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding Newark warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Pleasant Avenue.

### Scotch Plains

Friday, January 11, an employee at a Terrill Road business reported that someone hit his vehicle and then left the scene without reporting the accident.

Friday, January 11, Khyrie Jenkins, 22, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop.

Saturday, January 12, a resident of Montague Avenue reported that someone entered his unlocked vehicle and removed cash and CDs valued at approximately \$160.

Saturday, January 12, a resident of Cook Avenue reported that someone entered his unlocked vehicle and removed a global positioning system (GPS) valued at approximately \$250.

Saturday, January 12, Kyle McLean, 27, of Willingsboro was arrested for an outstanding warrant after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation.

Saturday, January 12 a resident of Union Avenue reported that someone entered his unlocked vehicle and removed approximately \$40.

Sunday, January 13, Willie Pena, 32, of New York, NY was arrested and charged with DWI. According to police, Pena was involved in a motor vehicle accident at which time officers smelled a strong odor of alcohol. Pena was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released with a summons, police said.



NABBED...Escaped convict from the Union County Jail in Elizabeth, Otis Blunt, is locked up at the high security Union County Police Headquarters in Westfield last Thursday after being captured in Mexico City last Tuesday through the efforts of an international manhunt.

## SPF Education Officials Concerned about State Aid

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Other districts that level in the seventh grade include Cranford, Millburn, New Providence and Westfield, officials said.

The board approved a list of 38 courses that will be offered in the 2008 Creative Summer Workshop, as well as four band programs offered through the workshop's Music School.

The course offerings include "Puppetry," "Budding Fashion Designers," "Yoga for Youth," "Microwave Cooking," "Social Skills and Decision Making" and "Globe Trotters." The courses offered are dependent upon grade level and cater to younger students ("Kindergarten Express") as well as older ("Don-Tre Professional Driving School").

Ms. Nelson said it seemed this year the "offerings are growing."

"It's a nice balance this year," she said. "There are interesting choices."

The board received a \$15,000 donation from the Miles Hodsdon Vernon Foundation, which will be used towards technology at Brunner Elementary School.

During committee reports, board member Warren McFall said the board's policy committee would add a cyber-bullying component to its Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Policy. Thomas Beese, director of special services, explained that if the bullying "comes into the school," the administration would be able to take disciplinary action. "This is serious cyber bullying that has to be disclosed to us," he said.

"In this new age of technology and bullying through the Internet, our policy has to be in compliance to cover those unfortunate opportunities that could take place after school hours," Superintendent of Schools Margaret Hayes said.

"I love that we are addressing this issue," Ms. Slocum said. "I think it's very helpful, and it's a great idea."

At its Thursday, January 24, the board will vote on a contract with Strauss-Esmay Associates that would provide services for policy updates. Mr. McFall said Strauss-Esmay would provide information regarding necessary updates or changes to current policies, as well as information on new policies that may be of value to

the district.

Strauss-Esmay would make recommendations to the committee on these changes, but Mr. McFall said the finished product of any new policy or policy update would be the board's.

"We're not accepting anyone else's policy," he said. "This is our policy."

Board member Rob O'Connor said the board's facilities committee would conduct a site visit to Terrill Middle School in the upcoming week as the first step before presenting a proposal to the board regarding the school's current over-capacity status.

"We are taking a careful, slow approach," he said. "We want to make the right decision. It will have long-range effects."

The next Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education regular public meeting is Thursday, January 24. A roundtable discussion with the PTA will be held on Monday, January 28.

## County Super Centuolo

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how boards of education can increase shared services."

BOE President Norman Trip Whitehouse told *The Times*, "The budget formula, in terms of state-aid, 'looks terrific on paper.' As opposed to Westfield's 2 percent, Scotch Plains will see a 10 percent bump, or roughly \$400,000." However, Mr. Whitehouse cautioned, "things always look better on paper." He said approximately \$300,000 would be returned in the form of property-tax relief but noted, "we'll take any increase we can get."

He said the meeting focused on "collaboration" and districts "bonding together" to save money. When asked if Scotch Plains was prepared to assume students from other districts, such as Elizabeth, he said, "Facility-wise, no."

He termed the middle schools to be "at capacity" and said "we don't have the facilities for our own students," a problem he sees as "fairly widespread throughout the county."

The Union County School Boards Association sponsored this program.



FAMILY LEGACY...Vincent Losavio, Jr. (right) joins John's Meat Market in Scotch Plains to continue his grandfather's legacy in the longest, continuous business in the township. Mr. Losavio attended Seton Hall University and now works alongside family members in the 69-year-old business. Vincent Losavio, Jr. is pictured above with his grandfather years ago.

## UC Jail Escapes Blunt, Espinosa Returned to Prison

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have their meals delivered to their cells. According to TV's "America's Most Wanted," it was not known if nearby trains obscured the banging noise from jail guards.

The basement apartment on a Summer Street in Elizabeth where Espinosa was hiding out was charred by fire on Sunday. Fire officials have said the blaze may have been intentionally set.

This development follows the January 2 suicide of jail guard Rudolph Zurick, 40, of South Amboy who was the corrections officer named in a note left by the Espinosa and Blunt.

"Thank you officer for the tools needed. You're a real pal. Happy holidays," the note read. Mr. Zurick was to have been interviewed by authorities on the jailbreak the day he took his life.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, who said he was helping to arrange Blunt's surrender after being contacted by a friend of Blunt's, said the Union County prosecutor "had a lot of explaining to do" about the escape.

In response, Mr. Romankow said, "Obviously, the Rev. Sharpton knows less about Union County than he knows about capturing dangerous escapees. If he had his facts straight, he would know that my office does not oversee the jail in any way. In fact, we are the agency investigating the escapes."

Bail for Espinosa has been set at \$750,000 for the escape charge. Blunt's bail was set at \$300,000 for the escape and \$550,000 set for the pending robbery and weapons charges.

## Deer Hunt

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which involves the use of sharpshooters in the reservation for several days, seeks to reduce the deer herd from the more than 100 per square mile counted in late 2005 to about 20 per square mile.

In other business, Councilwoman Nancy Malool said a meeting "to gauge the public's opinion and to provide information" about the possible establishment of a Special Improvement District (SID) in the downtown business district will be held on January 28. The 7 p.m. meeting, which will be held at Scotch Hills Country Club, is open to the public, Mrs. Malool said.

Downtown business and property owners will receive formal notification of the meeting via mail within the next week, she said, saying some owners not located in the downtown area may receive letters as well.

"Getting a letter," Mrs. Malool said, referring specifically to those not located in the immediate downtown district, "doesn't mean you'll be in a SID, but it's a possibility" if the SID's parameters are ultimately broadened.

The council also introduced an ordinance that will, according to Councilman Jeffrey Strauss, "codify" an informal parking arrangement that has been in effect for several years at Green Forest Park. Under the ordinance, which will be voted on at the council's Monday, January 28 meeting, 28 parking spots would be formally designated for use by high-school students between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The council also passed a resolution approving the purchase of nearly \$30,000 worth of furniture for the police department's new offices that will be located on the new second floor of the municipal building.

At the start of its meeting, the council welcomed Miss New Jersey, Amy Polumbo, who will be representing the state in the Saturday, January 26 Miss America pageant in Las Vegas.