



MEETING AND GREETING... Senator Leonard Lance, Republican candidate for the 7th congressional district seat, left, campaigns at the Westfield farmer's market last week. Third Ward Westfield Councilman Mark Ciarrocca appears at center.

Westfield Health Officer

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

While the state requires yearly inspections, the department conducts them twice a year at a minimum, as well as looking into any consumer complaints regarding a restaurant.

Recently, the department responded to a complaint from a Westfield resident, who became ill after eating from a local caterer. The health department "went in immediately" to investigate, according to Ms. Cornish.

The complainant, whose husband sits on the board of health, thought the chicken she consumed, might have been the culprit, but the health department's investigation "did not find anything that could have definitely made that person sick," Ms. Cornish said.

"The thing with food-borne illness that a lot of people don't realize is that [we] eat so many things throughout the day and it's really a food history of days, making it very, very hard even for the pros at the federal level to pinpoint exactly what it is [making someone sick]," Ms. Cornish said.

When questioned by *The Leader* if people can feel safe eating in local establishments given the aforementioned situation, as well as the national phenomenon of wide-spread reoccurring Salmonella outbreaks, Ms. Cornish said during her time as

acting health officer, there have been no reported cases of St. Paul Salmonella within the department's jurisdiction and that restaurants in the area have been eager to open their doors to inspectors to show that they run their kitchens properly.

"Establishments in general are very obliging and, overall, the restaurants in our eight towns are extremely safe," she said.

To help area restaurant owners get up to speed on the new procedures and understand how to implement them, the department holds food handler courses every few months, which have been so popular that additional sessions have been added to accommodate the high attendance.

In addition to overseeing restaurant-related issues, Ms. Cornish has recently organized and publicized free influenza vaccinations offered by the department, in response to new state laws that require any child six months and older who is enrolled in pre-kindergarten or daycare/childcare to have an influenza vaccine starting in the fall.

"We're really trying to make people aware that we do offer influenza vaccines, free of charge," Ms. Cornish said. "So if [people] don't have health insurance they can come to the local health department and get it."

SP 'Very Close' to Naming New Township Manager

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Mayor Martin Marks says the township council is "very close" to announcing the appointment of a new township manager after a search and interview process that began late last year.

Speaking earlier this week with *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, the mayor said the council had agreed on Monday to make a formal offer to one of the two candidates who was still being considered. He said he hoped to be able to introduce the new manager at the council's Tuesday, August 12 meeting, which will also be the final meeting for outgoing manager Thomas Atkins, who is retiring at the end of next month after 28 years of running the day-to-day operations of the municipal government.

The mayor, saying he didn't want to jeopardize anything, declined to provide further details about the candidate. But he said the five council members took the process of choosing a new manager "very seriously," and added, "We were unanimous in deciding who should receive an offer." He said he hoped to hear back from that candidate "within days."

"It was an arduous process," the

mayor said. "It was many weeks, there were many candidates and there were many interviews." He called the council's decision one of the more important ones that members would make, given its "long-lasting repercussions." He said the final two candidates were each interviewed three times by the council.

Jersey Professional Management (JPM), a management consulting firm in Cranford, initially facilitated the search. Mr. Atkins told *The Times* this week that he and Dan Mason from JPM were involved in all interviews the council conducted with every candidate throughout the process. In addition, once the pool of candidates was winnowed to three, each individual spent a day in Scotch Plains meeting with various department heads and having lunch with Mr. Atkins.

Having a new manager in place by early next month would be "fortunate" in terms of a transition and a few weeks of overlap with Mr. Atkins, the mayor said. Mr. Atkins' final day is set for Friday, August 29, although he will be asked to attend the council's Tuesday, September 9 meeting so council members and others can recognize him for his years of service.

FW Council Hears Suggestions On Trimming Munic. Budget

By MARTIN SWEENEY
Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Council convened for the second time in three days on July 16 at Fanwood Borough Hall for further public hearings on the 2008 municipal budget.

"There will be no formal action taken on the budget tonight," said Mayor Colleen Mahr in the meeting's introduction. The council made clear that despite the \$425,000 the borough received in extraordinary aid, budget cuts are still inevitable.

Former Councilman David Pickering of Watson Road addressed the council, revealing to the public that the council spent a long time (roughly two hours) in executive session on Monday night because the Carriage House lights were "shining in [his] bedroom all night" until nearly 10:30 p.m.

Mr. Pickering asked the council if it had come to a conclusion about certain amendments to the proposed budget or whether the council would pursue the discussed topic of personnel layoffs, to which Mayor Mahr responded that the council had not finalized their plans on either subject.

Mr. Pickering brought up the potential library merger with Scotch Plains Public Library, saying that the Fanwood Public Library received a statutory \$392,000 in the proposed municipal budget.

"This town cannot afford that library," said Mr. Pickering, who has experience in library focus groups and previously sat on the library's board. Mr. Pickering also encouraged the council to cut Fanwood's bulky waste collection service, a "luxury" that other towns do not incorporate in their budgets.

Joe Nagy of Oakwood Court asked Chief Financial Officer Frederick Tomkins specific questions about the budget's "structural deficit." Mr. Tomkins said Fanwood's generated surplus revenue dropped \$500,000 from 2006 (\$920,000) to 2007 (\$420,000), which, in large part, accounted for the budget's shortcoming prior to receiving the state aid.

Phil Ugoni spoke again on the behalf of the Fanwood Police Benevolent Association Local 123, asking about the possibility of a referendum or a waiver through the state to pass the budget as it stands with the \$425,000 aid.

"We can go through waivers... but then me and you pay higher taxes," Mayor Mahr said. She said the council had not discussed a referendum "in any way, shape or form."

Mr. Ugoni urged the council to immediately inform personnel about layoffs when a final decision is reached. "It is a disservice that it has gone on this long," said Mr. Ugoni, explaining that talk of the potential layoffs causes "undue stress on all the employees of the borough."

Man Who Stole from SP Landscaper Gets Nine Yrs.

ELIZABETH — Randall Zandstra, who fled during his 2006 in Union County trial for stealing \$16,000 from a Scotch Plains landscaper and spent nine months on the run before he was arrested in Colorado, was sentenced to nine years in prison on July 18.

Zandstra, 45, was sentenced by State Superior Court Judge James Heimlich. He will be eligible for parole after serving four years, according to the prosecutor's office.

Zandstra's sentence followed an 11-month federal prison sentence for violating supervised release, said Executive Assistant Prosecutor Eileen Walsh, who prosecuted the case.

"Zandstra is indeed a danger to the public," Ms. Walsh said. "He assaults and he steals. He's physical and he's financial in his criminal acts. Randall Zandstra is only one victim away from his next crime at all times."

While he was awaiting his federal trial in New York, Zandstra was working as a foreman for the Scotch Plains landscaper.

Zandstra walked out of a Union County courtroom during a break in his theft trial in July 2006. He was free on bail at the time. The jury found him guilty a few hours later of the theft of \$16,500 from the landscaping company.

He was captured in Greeley, Colo. by five U.S. Marshals from the New York/New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force along with authorities from Colo. and Texas last April following

He also asked the council what the approximate impact on a Fanwood resident's tax bill would be to retain the lowest paid officer employed by the borough. The council did not answer his question.

Mayor Mahr provided the public with a few numbers attached to the borough's police force, saying that the force was composed of 21 employees with various salaries, averaging out to roughly \$100,000 per employee in 2007, including overtime pay and excluding benefits.

"We don't look at this as a police problem... the borough and myself look at it as a town-wide problem," Mayor Mahr said. "I find it very uncomfortable... I don't come into the police department nearly as much as I used to because of the atmosphere there... I get it."

Marian Menzer of Byron Lane provided the public with a different perspective. Ms. Menzer, 81 and a resident of Fanwood for 46 years, said her tax bill for one quarter was \$3,217 and her income was \$3,244 per quarter. She confessed that neighbors often confront her and say that "moving is the only option" for her, although she would prefer to stay in Fanwood. Ms. Menzer said she is currently looking for a job.

With 17 years worth of experience working with the school budget as an assistant to the Superintendent for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, Ms. Menzer empathized with the council's task at hand with budget cuts but reminded them that there are places in the budget where money can be saved.

"We can't do everything for everybody," she said. "I didn't think I would be working at 82."

Mayor Mahr thanked Ms. Menzer for adding balance to the meeting, saying that Ms. Menzer's case is a "powerful and sobering reality" for the council.

Mr. Pickering spoke for a second time at the meeting and asked how each council member felt about the possibility of a waiver; all responded that they were against applying for a waiver at that time.

Over the course of the evening, Mayor Mahr repeatedly reminded the audience that the council feels an 18 percent tax increase is unfair to residents and is too high a price to pay, regardless of whether the municipal budget abides by the state's mandated 4 percent cap on tax levy increases.

"We are not making cuts for the sake of making cuts, ladies and gentlemen," she said. "We are looking at cutting property taxes."

The council will meet this Monday, July 28, at 7:30 p.m. at Borough Hall to introduce an amendment to the 2008 municipal budget, to consider increasing the permit parking fees and an ordinance to establish a bulk waste program.



THEY'VE GOT GAME... Children found plenty of games to enjoy last Thursday evening in Scotch Plains at the downtown block party sponsored by the Cultural Arts Committee.



Courtesy Squad Lt. Tom FitzGibbon

BBQ IGNITES HOME... A house located at 38 Shady Lane in Fanwood caught fire last Saturday night. Neighbors reported that the homeowners were barbecuing around 6 p.m., left the grill on and went inside the house. Shortly after, someone heard a pop from the back of the house, and realized it was on fire. Residents Wayne and Angie Mags and their guests all escaped unharmed. Shady Lane residents (specifically Kate Francisus at 26 Shady Lane) are taking up a collection to help the owners with any immediate needs.



POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Tuesday, July 15, Salvatore O. Fazio, 24, of Westfield was arrested on the 200 block of Mountain Avenue on an outstanding Seaside Heights traffic warrant. He was released after posting \$106 bail.

Wednesday, July 16, Glenn W. Jones, Jr., 37, of Roselle was arrested on a Jersey City traffic warrant at Central and Lenox Avenues following a dispute with a parking officer. He was released after posting \$700 bail.

Friday, July 18, Salvador Sepulveda, Jr., 41, of Perth Amboy was arrested on multiple traffic warrants after a motor vehicle stop at Clover Street and Central Avenue. The warrants were from Westfield and Perth Amboy, both with bail amounts of \$500, and Princeton, with bail of \$200. He was committed to the Union County jail on default of bail.

Friday, July 18, David J. Napiorski, 25, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant. He was processed and released after posting \$155 bail.

Friday, July 18, a front glass window was shattered at a business on the 200 block of East Broad Street. The approximate cost of the damage is \$500.

Saturday, July 19, Hanna Krysiak, 39, of Kenilworth was arrested and charged with Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) after a motor vehicle stop at East Broad Street and North Euclid Avenue. Krysiak subsequently was turned over to a responsible individual.

Sunday, July 20, after a motor vehicle stop at Belvidere Avenue and Chestnut Street, Jeffrey D. Teal, Jr., 29, of Piscataway was arrested on a charge of DWI and on four outstanding warrants. They included a motor vehicle warrant from Clark, with bail of \$1,266, and criminal warrants from Metuchen, Edison and Newark, with bail amounts of \$880, \$250 and \$350, respectively.

Mountainside

Tuesday, July 15, a resident of Old Tote Road reported that someone made fraudulent charges on her credit card without authorization.

Saturday, July 19, a resident of Indian Trail reported that she left her purse unattended while she helped at a garage sale and someone removed \$50.

Monday, July 21, the manager of a Route 22 restaurant reported that he has been receiving threatening phone calls. According to police, the current manager traced the phone number to the residence of an ex-manager of the restaurant who was terminated in 2002.

Teal was held at Westfield police headquarters until sober enough for transfer to the Clark Police Department, as he was unable to post bail at that time.

Scotch Plains

Thursday, July 17, a resident of Essex Road reported that someone did \$75 worth of damage to his mailbox.

Friday, July 18, a business on Front Street reported that someone did \$85 worth of damage to the front window of his store.

Friday, July 18, someone reported a hit-and-run accident, which damaged the rear of his vehicle while it was illegally parked on Park Avenue.

Saturday, July 19, Eric Hendricks, 24, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Stephen Bogart, 89, Fraud Victim, Dies at WF Home

WESTFIELD — Former Westfield Tax Collector Stephen Bogart, 89, who was bilked out of his life savings by an Elizabeth family, died on Friday, July 18 at his Westfield home.

Richard Garcia, 26, and his mother, Janet Garcia, 53, were sentenced in April to three years in state prison and ordered to make restitution of \$120,000. Lucia Heinz, 23, Richard Garcia's girlfriend, was also convicted.

Janet Garcia pled guilty to conspiracy to commit theft, while Richard Garcia and Heinz pled guilty to two counts of theft. Janet Garcia's daughter, Jacqueline Garcia, was also implicated.

Richard Garcia was Mr. Bogart's barber at Jersey Cutz Barber Shop on South Avenue in Westfield, which he owned. Initially doing errands for Mr. Bogart, authorities said Richard Garcia took advantage of Mr. Bogart's failing sight by offering to pay Mr. Bogart's bills, but instead, he made the checks out to himself, his mother and to cash. Janet Garcia had Mr. Bogart give her power of attorney, which she used to transfer \$225,000 to her son's account and \$11,000 to her own.

The thefts came to light in February 2007, when Helen Rentoulis, owner of Vicki's Diner on East Broad Street in Westfield, noticed that Mr. Bogart had stopped coming into the diner for his two meals a day and remembered that he had told her that Richard Garcia was helping him pay his bills. Ms. Rentoulis notified the Westfield Police Department.

A search warrant of the Garcia's home turned up bank documents be-

leased.

Saturday, July 19, Guy Barlow, 24, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. According to police, he was processed and released.

Monday, July 21, Gary Jones, 23, of Elizabeth was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for an outstanding warrant. According to police, he was processed and released.

Monday, July 21, a business reported that someone entered a locked office and removed approximately \$500 in cash from a locked box.

Fanwood

Wednesday, July 16, at 10 p.m., a resident in the 100 block of Locust Avenue reported that someone removed a GPS system valued at \$500 from his unlocked vehicle while it was parked in his driveway.

Sunday, July 20, at 1:25 p.m., a Woodland Avenue resident reported that a black female approximately five foot-six inches tall — wearing a black baseball cap, jeans and a red or orange shirt — rang her doorbell and stated that her car broke down and she needed to use her phone.

According to police, the victim asked the suspect to wait outside while she went to get the phone. When the victim returned with the phone, the suspect pulled out a firearm and pushed her way into the home, police said.

The suspect then led the victim into the living room to retrieve the victim's purse then fled with the purse eastbound on Woodland Avenue in a lime green, older-style minivan with box-style windows, authorities reported. According to police, the value of the purse and its contents is \$250.

The event is still under investigation, and no more details can be revealed at this time, police said.

Seven Vehicles Damaged in Fire

MOUNTAINSIDE — Seven vehicles sustained damage from a fire last Friday at the AMC Loews Theaters on Route 22, East, in Mountainside, according to Mountainside police.

Police were the first to arrive on the scene just before 5 p.m. and to see smoke and fire coming from a parked 1994 GMC Yukon.

"The fire continued to spread and caused damage to six other vehicles," according to police.

The Mountainside Fire Department extinguished the blaze.

An investigation of the fire determined the fire started in the engine block of the Yukon. Police said the owner reported the vehicle was serviced "within the last week for an unspecified problem with the fuel pump."

A light pole also sustained damage, in addition to the vehicles.

One of the vehicles was towed to Sevell's in Westfield; five vehicles, including the Yukon, were taken to L&J Towing in Kenilworth, while the owner of the remaining vehicle had the car towed by a private company.

Residents of Springfield, Union, Scotch Plains, Summit, East Orange and Mountainside owned the cars that were damaged. Police withheld their names.

Stephen Bogart, 89, Fraud Victim, Dies at WF Home

WESTFIELD — Former Westfield Tax Collector Stephen Bogart, 89, who was bilked out of his life savings by an Elizabeth family, died on Friday, July 18 at his Westfield home.

Richard Garcia, 26, and his mother, Janet Garcia, 53, were sentenced in April to three years in state prison and ordered to make restitution of \$120,000. Lucia Heinz, 23, Richard Garcia's girlfriend, was also convicted.

Janet Garcia pled guilty to conspiracy to commit theft, while Richard Garcia and Heinz pled guilty to two counts of theft. Janet Garcia's daughter, Jacqueline Garcia, was also implicated.

Richard Garcia was Mr. Bogart's barber at Jersey Cutz Barber Shop on South Avenue in Westfield, which he owned. Initially doing errands for Mr. Bogart, authorities said Richard Garcia took advantage of Mr. Bogart's failing sight by offering to pay Mr. Bogart's bills, but instead, he made the checks out to himself, his mother and to cash. Janet Garcia had Mr. Bogart give her power of attorney, which she used to transfer \$225,000 to her son's account and \$11,000 to her own.

The thefts came to light in February 2007, when Helen Rentoulis, owner of Vicki's Diner on East Broad Street in Westfield, noticed that Mr. Bogart had stopped coming into the diner for his two meals a day and remembered that he had told her that Richard Garcia was helping him pay his bills. Ms. Rentoulis notified the Westfield Police Department.

A search warrant of the Garcia's home turned up bank documents be-



County Commentary Creative Solutions For Union County

By Chairman Angel Estrada
Union County Freeholder Board

Lively, healthy communities depend on a strong slate of outdoor activities and cultural events. Now more than ever, it's important to preserve and improve our local parks and recreation programs.

To accomplish this, we will have to do more with less. One avenue worth exploring is to share more services between county and local governments.

This process is already well under way. Over the past two years, the freeholder board has conducted five working sessions to develop new shared-service agreements. The response has been enthusiastic. Several school districts and all 21 municipalities have attended at least one workshop.

As a direct result, we reached new agreements in several key areas, especially in computer-related services provided through county offices. The savings to municipalities has already reached hundreds of thousands of dollars. We expect this figure to keep growing substantially.

The amount of money saved is only part of the story. By sharing resources, we also cut duplication among different levels of government. This provides local governments with more leeway to allocate staff and facilities.

County-local sharing is not a new thing. For example, our shared pur-

chasing contracts have helped municipalities cut administrative costs while getting access to higher quality vendors. Our K-9 unit and other public safety programs offer valuable services to municipal police departments. And, our award-winning county high schools provide vocational and academic opportunities of the first rank.

Now we're taking this traditional approach into new territory. The topic of our most recent shared services workshop was parks and recreation, including cultural events. The approximately 30 attendees brainstormed on ways to combine and share facilities, to improve local access to county resources, and to develop more shared county-local arts programs.

It's an effort that will pay off in many ways. Encouraging outdoor activities is a public health goal that affects every resident. And for our youth, early exposure to cultural events has been linked to lifelong engagement in the arts, which in turn leads to better chances for academic and career success.

By pulling our resources together in new and innovative ways, we can ensure that public recreation and cultural events remain a strong and vital part of our civic landscape, in each of our 21 municipalities and throughout Union County.