



David B. Corbin for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
ALWAYS LIFTING THE SPIRITS...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School cheerleading squad will be present for the ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the new turf field prior to the football game between the Raiders and Irvington.

Fanwood Soil Permit

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that additional public notice would not be required as long as the revised plans complied with the previous conditions of approval. The board will have their planner review the plans to determine if all the conditions of approval have been met, officials said.

It was announced that the professional planner to the board, Paul Ricci of T & M Associates, has left T&M for a position with another company. T&M planner Stan Slachetka will step in for Mr. Ricci as planning advisor to the board. The board will review T&M's contract with the board in January.

GW BOE Vacancy, Health Care Buyout Offered

By CAROLYN FREUNDLICH
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

GARWOOD - During Tuesday night's board of education meeting, Superintendent Teresa Quigley said the "opening of schools went smoothly" on September 4 for the 418 students in the system that encompasses up to the eighth grade.

The board reported that teachers will be paid \$4,000 if they opt out of their health plan. Three teachers accepted the money.

Washington School renovations were approved. New gym doors and copiers will be added. Offices will be relocated within the building.

There is a vacancy on the board of education due to the resignation of a board member. The board asked all interested residents to send a letter to the board with a resume for consideration to fill the vacancy. So far, there has been one applicant. The board will review all applications at its October 16 meeting.

AP classes for computer science and microeconomics have been added to the curriculum for 11th- and 12th-grade students at the high school in Clark.

Back to School Night for Washington School is tonight, September 18, at 7 p.m. for first and second graders, and 8 p.m. for the rest of the school. Back to School Night was last night for high school students who attend Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark.

Bernadette Bodnar announced her retirement after 24 years of teaching in Garwood. Board member Adele Lewis wished her "happiness and success in her retirement" and presented her with a certificate of appreciation.

Previous students, family and friends were present to wish her well on her future endeavors.

Garwood teachers learned a new computer program called Real Time on September 2 and prepared classrooms and lesson plans on September 3 in advance of the students' arrival.

September 11 was labeled School Spirit Day in remembrance of the tragedies that happened seven years ago.

Students and teachers wore red, white and blue, and observed a moment of silence.

Star-Ledger Warns Of Sale or Closure

AREA - According to poynter.org, "Since it is doubtful that the drivers will ratify an agreement by October 8, 2008, we will be sending formal notices to all employees this week, as required by both federal and New Jersey law, advising you that the Company will be sold, or, failing that, that it will close operations on January 5, 2009," writes Newark Star-Ledger publisher George Arwady.

Gottko Weighs In On Shared Services, Deck

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD - Former Westfield Town Administrator Ed Gottko is enjoying his life away from municipal government, where he spent some 30 years, including 20 with Westfield.

He is now an adjunct professor at New Jersey Institute of Technology, New York University and Union County College, and teaches graduate school students enrolled in Rutgers University's engineering and construction management program.

Mr. Gottko is also the region nine director for the American Public Works Association. His region includes New Jersey, New York State, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Manhattan and Long Island.

He said the association has been pushing for more certifications for public works professionals and has been working to get a master's program in place for the public works field.

When asked about the biggest challenge faced by municipal public works departments (DPW), Mr. Gottko said simply, "money."

"Municipalities don't have it, states don't have it, and counties don't have it. Public works has not been the glamorous profession that a police department or a fire department is," he said. He said a DPW director in a town in Pennsylvania recently was given instructions to lay off 33 percent of his employees, yet the number of projects remained the same.

Mr. Gottko came to Westfield in 1979 as the town engineer and was elevated to administrator in 1994. With the town's budget increased from \$23.6 million in 1999, when he left the town, to \$37.9 million in 2008, Mr. Gottko said one has to look at how much of the town's spending has been mandated by the state or federal governments and how much is discretionary spending under the town's control. He said of the \$23.6 million put forward in 1999, only \$5 million was discretionary spending with the rest mandated by other levels of government, law or employee contracts.

He said the court-mandated upgrade to the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority facility, which Westfield utilizes, has caused its assessments to member towns to go "through the roof." Also, the amount of municipal taxes that supported the local library is based on the total value of property in a town. This has caused a big increase for towns like Westfield.

Mr. Gottko said Westfield has been impacted in 2008 by a decision made by the administration of Governor Christine Whitman in 1994. That year, the state decided to float \$2 billion in bonds to fund employee pensions and opted not to bill towns for their municipal pension obligations.

He said Westfield used the savings in 1994 to fund the \$400,000 cost for 17 snowstorms that occurred that year. He said not paying the pension fund has come back to add yet another added expense for towns at a time when they are dealing with less revenue due to an economic downturn.

"It's all been a constant tug-of-war with what was going to be the next gimmick that came from the state, from some place else that you had to react to," he said, noting pensions, as well as the spend down of school surpluses in the 1990s, have impacted municipal budgets.

In discussing shared services to help lower costs, Mr. Gottko said the Westfield Regional Health Department and the Suburban Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) are examples of programs initiated by Westfield.

"This (the JIF) was a prime example of towns getting together, pulling their resources, sharing the benefits, sharing the problems but working collaboratively to get it done," Mr. Gottko said.

In terms of merging municipalities, he pointed to Princeton Borough and

Princeton Township, which, he said, have put forth referendums three times since the 1950s to merge, but each time, voters have defeated those ballot questions.

He said the debate often comes down to "who is going to give up what?"

"Is there the political will to do it? And, a lot of times, it's not there," Mr. Gottko said. He said Long Beach Island has "seven communities on an island" that would seem to be a good fit for merging operations.

"It's about who wants to give up the prestige of not having [a town]," he said.

Mr. Gottko said when sharing services, governments should look to relationships they have with other towns such as between Scotch Plains and Fanwood. He said small towns often have departments with only a few people; thus, there are not many areas that can be cut.

Merging municipal courts has been accomplished, but again, the question becomes who is going to be the judge, the court administrator, prosecutor, public defender or will each have its own prosecutor and defender, thus cutting down on any potential savings.

Mr. Gottko said Westfield once talked with Fanwood about sharing construction services, but "it just wasn't a fit," he said.

As far as producing more revenue for towns, Fanwood Councilman Anthony Parenti, the borough's former police chief



RETURN...Former Administrator Ed Gottko, center, visited the newspaper office Friday. See the video of his discussion of municipal government on the Internet at www.goleader.com.

and the former director of the county's police academy, has proposed that 80 percent of revenue from moving-violation summonses written by local police departments stay with municipalities, while the remaining 20 percent go to counties. Under current state law, counties receive 50 percent of the revenue.

"This is the problem. The county has counted upon that money to do certain things. And now you are going to take that money from them, the counties," Mr. Gottko said.

He questioned about whether towns would use the money to offset taxes or on new initiatives.

One of the biggest issues in Westfield has been parking. Mr. Gottko recalled reading parking studies from the 1960s when he arrived in town in 1979. He said the town had considered a parking deck across from the post office on Central Avenue, but the bids the town received for the project were double the estimates the town was working with, and the project never moved forward.

He said the deck proposed for Elm Street which was heavily defeated by voters in 2004 went through a number of phases before the location was picked.

"It became...more than a parking deck," Mr. Gottko said. "It just got out of hand. It just got too massive."

"I personally thought it got to the point where we were losing site of the parking and were trying to create something else," a reference to having retail stores along the front of the deck as part of the redevelopment project.

In his opinion, a deck at the South Avenue train station parking lot, which was originally proposed, "was something that could have been accomplished."

See a video on goleader.com/video.

MS Council Honors Whytes As Parents of Year by NJ Foundation

By JOHN MAGUIRE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

MOUNTAINSIDE - The Mountainside Borough Council recognized residents Gary and Debra Whyte as Parents of the Year by the New Jersey Parents Foundation.

The Whytes' children wrote an essay to the Parents Foundation nominating the couple for the award. State legislators were in attendance to recognize the couple's achievement.

Calling the Whytes a "renaissance family," Senator Tom Kean Jr. praised them for their work on behalf of children who suffer from Fibrodysplasia Ossificans Progressiva (FOP) - a disease that causes fibrous tissue to ossify when damaged. The disease affects one in two million children, according to the International FOP

Association.

"New Jersey is a far better place because of your efforts," Mr. Kean said.

Joseph Coyne, president of the New Jersey Parents Foundation, presented the Whytes with the award. Mr. Coyne praised the couple, saying to those in attendance, "these are true heroes."

Mr. Whyte praised his mother, who was in attendance, saying, "I have no regrets as a child." He said he and his wife have simply tried to instill the same values in their children that they were privileged enough to be raised with.

The council also unanimously approved the payment of \$1,398,942 in bills and agreed to hire Lewis Giordino to fill the position of communication officer at an annual salary of \$31,465.



SMILES...Pictured enjoying the festivities at a fundraiser for the re-election of Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-D21) held at 16 Prospect in Westfield on Monday, from left to right, are: Helen Rosales, chairwoman of the Elizabeth Republican Party; Garwood Councilman Anthony Sytko; Roselle Republican Chairman Roger Stryeski, and Union Township Republican Chairman Ralph Gaglione.

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Monday, September 8, Jamie Agullo, 20, of Roselle was arrested after a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue, West, and Boulevard and charged with exhibiting false documents (driver's license) and possession of a stolen property (license plate on motor vehicle). Agullo, who also was arrested on a Perth Amboy criminal warrant for \$25,000, posted \$2,500 on the Westfield charges and was committed on default of bail on the warrant.

Monday, September 8, Tammy Khalil, 45, of Plainfield was arrested at the southside train station lot on a charge of obstruction of administration of law and on traffic warrants from Roselle and Newark. Bail amounts on the warrants were \$550 and \$500, respectively. Khalil allegedly refused to pay the fare aboard a NJ Transit train or to leave the train when requested to do so. She was released on her own recognizance on both the warrants and issued a summons on the Westfield charge.

Tuesday, September 9, Orlando Camilo, 31, of Roselle Park was arrested after a motor vehicle stop in the area of East Broad Street and Hampton Court on an outstanding Elizabeth criminal warrant. He was released after posting \$381 bail.

Tuesday, September 9, Richard Bennett, 44, of Plainfield was arrested at the Somerset County jail on an outstanding Westfield criminal warrant. Bennett was unable to post the \$500 bail and was held for court.

Wednesday, September 10, Chika Uche, 27, of Plainfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop in the area of South and Westfield Avenues on an outstanding North Plainfield traffic warrant. Uche was released after posting \$150 bail.

Wednesday, September 10, Denise Black, 44, of Plainfield was arrested at Middlesex County jail on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant. She was unable to post the \$1,000 bail and was held for court.

Wednesday, September 10, Virginia Dewitt, 50, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant after responding to Westfield police headquarters. She posted the \$655 bail and was released.

Wednesday, September 10, Gordon Novak, 45, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding no-bail Union County Sheriff's Office warrant. He was turned over to the sheriff's office.

Saturday, September 13, Robert Davis, 52, of Edison was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) after a motor vehicle accident on the 500 block of Prospect Street. No injuries were reported. Davis was released to a responsible adult.

Scotch Plains

Friday, September 12, Kevin Midwinter, 43, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Friday, September 12, a resident of Riga Court reported that someone damaged her front window valued at approximately \$125.

Friday, September 12, police investigated a hit-and-run accident that occurred in a municipal parking lot. According to police, someone struck a vehicle while it was legally parked, damaging the rear of the vehicle.

Saturday, September 13, Luiz Anguieta, 26, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Sunday, September 14, Thomas Charles, 50, of Piscataway was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI) after police smelled the odor of alcohol after stopping him for a motor vehicle violation. According to police, he was processed and released.

Sunday, September 14, David Cavelli, 48, of Scotch Plains was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Sunday, September 14, Dereck Squire, 56, of New Brunswick was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released.

Sunday, September 14, a resident of Route 22 reported that someone made several phone calls to his home and yelled profanities at him.

Mountainside

Tuesday, September 9, a suspicious message was received at headquarters stating that "someone is going to get whacked at the Foodtown in Springfield." According to police, the message was played for the Springfield Police Department and the incident is under investigation.

Tuesday, September 9, a resident of Short Drive reported that someone made fraudulent charges to her credit card on Friday, September 5.

Friday, September 12, a contractor reported that someone removed ladders, from the garage of a home on Ledgewood Road that he had previously been working on. According to police, the contractor had a dispute with the homeowner and when he returned to get the ladders they were missing. The homeowner reported that he did not know what happened to the ladders, police said.

Monday, September 15, Melvin L. Watson, 34, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop.

Tuesday, September 9, Jesus A. Moreno-Diaz, 39, of Plainfield was arrested on a no-bail Federal Immigration warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue. According to police, he was processed and turned over to the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency.

Wednesday, September 10, a resident of the 200 block of South Avenue reported that someone broke into his locked vehicle while it was parked in the street. According to police, it is not yet known if anything was removed.

Wednesday, September 10, a resident of the 200 block of Farley Avenue reported that someone entered his unlocked vehicle while it was parked in his driveway and removed a GPS system valued at \$500.

Thursday, September 11, a resident of the 100 block of Farley Avenue reported that someone between Wednesday, September 10, and Thursday, September 11, someone broke the side window of his vehicle. Access was not gained to the vehicle, police said.

Saturday, September 13, a resident of the 200 block of Belvidere Avenue reported that someone between Friday, September 12, and Saturday, September 13, someone attempted to gain entry to his home through a side window. According to police, the attempt was unsuccessful.

Thursday, September 11, Timothy Williams, 52, of Newark was arrested on an outstanding Fanwood no-bail warrant after a field investigation on Martine Avenue. According to police, he was processed and turned over to the Union County jail.

Thursday, September 11, a 15-year-old juvenile from Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with burglary in connection with an incident that occurred on May 22. According to police, he was processed and released pending a court date at the Elizabeth Family Court.

Friday, September 12, Charles Hampton, III, 21, of Allentown, Pa. was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS) after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue. According to police, he was processed and released.

Sunday, September 14, Travis M. Cassett, 18, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of CDS after a motor vehicle stop on the 200 block of South Avenue. According to police, he was processed and released.

Monday, September 15, Felton R. White, 48, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Florham Park warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue. According to police, he was processed and released.

Monday, September 15, a resident of the 100 block of Pleasant Avenue reported that a contractor allegedly removed \$1,200 in jewelry from her home sometime between July 25 and September 15. According to police, the incident is under investigation.

Congress Debate

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Mrs. Stender also said that she favored "a system of shared responsibility" regarding health care, and that "government has to be involved" in the process.

The candidates did find some common ground during the evening. Both Mrs. Stender and Mr. Lance expressed their support for the State of Israel and said they would support a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Mr. Lance said he would not favor negotiations with Hamas and Hezbollah and that Palestine needs to "recognize that Israel has a right to live in peace and security."

The candidates also expressed concern over Global Warming and the

need for energy independence, but said they would oppose off-shore drilling, particularly along New Jersey's coast.

The race in the 7th District is expected to be close. Mrs. Stender came within less than 3,000 votes of unseating Mr. Ferguson two years ago. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee has targeted the district as part of its "Red to Blue" program and has recently begun running advertisements opposing Mr. Lance.

Mr. Lance is also playing catch-up in terms of fundraising, having survived a seven-person GOP primary in June, while Mrs. Stender ran unopposed for the Democrat nomination.



David Samsky for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
GETTING INFORMED...The Scotch Plains Junior Statesman of America from Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School attend the debate of Congressional candidates in Scotch Plains Tuesday night. Pictured, left to right, are: Kristina Kalkstein, Luke Durett, Amanda Ho, Ben Strauss and James Walsh.

WBA

Westfield Basketball Association

Winter Registration Coming October 2008

In-Town Girls and Boys Saturday Leagues

Grades 2 - 8

Registration will begin in early October.

Information and link will be posted to:

WWW.Westfieldnj.com/WBA

Travel tryouts for Girls and Boys

Grades 4 - 8

Will be held in the first 2 weeks of October 2008.

All Dates will be posted to the WBA Website and in The Leader.

Adults interested in volunteering to work as:

League Directors, Coaches and Asst Coaches

Contact WBA@Westfieldnj.com

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