

## Brunner Set to Implement New Drop-Off Zones for Kids

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Pending some further consultations with parents and school officials, the police department in conjunction with the board of education will likely implement a pilot program to better define morning drop-off zones for students at Brunner School.

At a township council workshop session on Tuesday night that was devoted mainly to a wide range of parking and traffic issues, Police Chief Brian Mahoney unveiled the plan, which is being done in an effort to boost driver and pedestrian safety around school. Under the proposal,

parents dropping students off in the morning will have to turn off Westfield Road onto Woodland Terrace and then drive to Muir Terrace, where they will turn left and then turn left again onto Homestead Terrace. Students will be dropped off on or near the path at the rear of the school. Volunteer parents will be on hand to assist in expediting the drop-off process and getting students into the school building.

The plan was backed by school Superintendent Margaret Hayes and Brunner Principal Scott Bortnick, who attended Tuesday's meeting. Superintendent Hayes said a crossing guard would likely be needed at

the intersection of Homestead Terrace and Westfield Road to control traffic. Chief Mahoney estimated a new guard would cost \$7,000 to \$8,000 per year and raised the prospect of Fanwood sharing the cost.

In other business, at its nearly three-hour parking-and-traffic workshop, the council announced that will likely introduce an ordinance later this month to designate an area in front of the YMCA on Grand Street as a loading zone that will make it easier for parents to drop off their children. Chief Mahoney told the council there have been complaints from residents and from the YMCA, which operates a childcare facility at the site, about the lack of a designated area for drop-offs.

There was some hesitation about the designation, though, with Mayor Nancy Malool questioning the need since streets in front of other schools are not recognized similarly. She wondered whether designating the area as a "15-minute parking" zone would be preferable. Councilman Kevin Glover agreed, asking if it was necessary to have what he said was a "long stretch of restricted parking" on Grand Street.

On another issue, the Scotch Police Department is recommending that a large shrub be removed at the intersection of Fanwood Avenue and Madison Avenue in order to improve sight lines and traffic safety in the area. In addition, two stop signs will also be placed at the crossing. The council is expected to introduce an ordinance on Tuesday, February 21 to effect these changes.

Chief Mahoney said that after several weeks of study and analysis by his department, he saw "no need to change" the existing traffic pattern on Sunset Place, thus keeping the street open to traffic. The street had been closed to through traffic for much of 2010 and 2011 while the Route 22 bridge and the overpass's intersections with Park Avenue and Bonnie Burn and New Providence Roads were widened and renovated. Prior to Sunset Place's closing in early 2010, commuters used Sunset Place as a way to bypass heavy traffic on Park Avenue en route to Route 22 or the bridge.

As the project neared an end, Sunset Place residents asked the town-

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## SPF BOE to Decide on Moving School Election

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - After hearing enough enthusiasm for moving school-board elections from April to November, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE) President Trip Whitehouse called for a special meeting on Thursday, February 9, to decide the issue.

Last Thursday, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE debated the election-date switch for nearly an hour. Proponents of the change said it would save the district money, allow for higher turnouts and offer more assurances about passing budgets. Opponents of the change worried about attracting candidates to run for office and lumping nonpartisan elections with "the normal political fray."

If elections are moved to November, and a district keeps its tax-levy increase to 2 percent, budgets will not require voter scrutiny. Two percent does take enrollment and healthcare adjustments into consideration; and pension costs are outside the cap. Mr. Whitehouse began the discussion by saying that switching to November would provide more "certainty" to the budget process. The board, he said, would not have to spend as much time "sell-



STUDENT DELEGATES... Over 100 Student Delegates, recommended by the faculty of Park and Terrill Middle Schools and St. Bartholomew's Academy (grades 5-8), participated in Leadership Training Conference 100 (LTC 100) last Saturday. The conference develops, reinforces, and promotes leadership skills.

## County, Westfield PD Officials Probe Fatal North Avenue Accident

By SUZETTE F. STALKER

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — Union County and local authorities are continuing to investigate a multi-vehicle accident that occurred in Westfield last week, in which one pedestrian was killed and another seriously injured.

Union County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow reported that the chain of events began the evening of January 25 when Patricia Currie, 68, of Scotch Plains apparently grazed a pedestrian while driving through the intersection of North Avenue and Tuttle Parkway at about 6:05 p.m. as the man was crossing the street.

According to Mr. Romankow, Ms. Currie immediately stopped and assisted the pedestrian. As she attempted to lead the man across the street, a Chevy Cavalier operated by a Westfield resident struck the pair. The man and woman landed several yards away on North Avenue with injuries, Mr. Romankow stated. The driver of the Cavalier stopped at the scene and later was transported to a local hospital for observation.

Mr. Romankow stated that a second vehicle, a GMC pickup, almost immediately afterward struck Ms. Currie, which resulted in further injuries to the victim. She was taken to Overlook Medical Center in Summit, where she was pronounced dead. The male victim was transported to University Hospital in Newark for treatment of his

injuries. John Holl, communications director for the prosecutor's office, told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* Monday that all aspects of the case remain "under investigation at this point" and that no charges had been filed.

Mr. Holl said the accident was being

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## Berman Gets Probation For Role in Bid-Rigging

WESTFIELD — Former Westfield School District business administrator Robert Berman was sentenced January 27 to one year probation for accepting \$13,000 in windows and doors from a contractor he recommended be hired by the school district, Attorney General (AG) Jeffrey Chiesa has announced.

Berman, 55, pleaded guilty on October 24, 2011 to conspiracy to make false representations for a government contract. He is required to forfeit his positions as business administrator and board secretary for the Westfield School District and ordered to pay a \$6,000 penalty. The probe by the Division of AG's Criminal Justice Corruption Bureau also led to charges against a school district engineer and three contractors. The engineer and two of the contractors have pleaded

guilty. Charges are pending against the third contractor, John Sangiuliano, 57, of Scotch Plains, co-owner of Metropolitan Metal Window Company, which provided the windows and doors to Berman.

Kenneth Disko, 48, of Mountainside, the contracted engineer/architect on record for the Westfield, Tinton Falls and Scotch Plains-Fanwood school districts, pleaded guilty October 12, 2011 to taking thousands of dollars in kickbacks from 2001 to 2010. He admitted that he submitted those quotes and estimates to the school districts and recommended approval of the fraudulently bid contracts in exchange for kickbacks from contractors.

The other contractors, Martin Starr, 45, and Stephen Gallagher, 51, have pleaded guilty and will be sentenced Friday, March 2 along with Disko.



Greg Ryan for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SKILLFUL SCOUTS... Scotch Plains Boy Scout Troop No. 104 works on lashings during the 57th annual Klondike Derby, which the Watchung Mountain District of the Patriots' Path Council of the Boy Scouts of America held last Saturday in the Watchung Reservation. The event gives participants the opportunity to demonstrate skills they have learned from their scouting experience.

## BOEs Gather Input on Whether to Move Election

By MICHAEL J. POLLACK

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

AREA — New state legislation allows school-board elections to be consolidated into the November General Election, and four Union County municipalities have already pledged to move in that direction.

Last month, Cranford, Linden, Elizabeth and Winfield Park took advantage of the law's opt-in provision. Taking part in the new plan is strictly voluntary and can be achieved by three means: a school board or a government council can pass a resolution that approves the change, or 15 percent of those who voted in the last Presidential election can petition such a move. In the case of Scotch Plains-Fanwood, since they have a conjoined school board, either the Board of Education (BOE) must move a resolution forward or both governing bodies would have to approve resolutions.

Towns have until Friday, February

17, to notify their county clerk if they wish to make a change.

For school boards that move their elections to November, if the tax levy's year-over-year increase is limited to 2 percent, there is no vote on the annual school budget tax levy; voters would decide on school-board candidates and any proposed cap-over-ride referendum. School budgets for districts that move elections would still go through introduction and adoption proceedings this spring, with BOEs that exceed 2 percent having to wait until November to see if voters support the additional tax monies.

In Westfield and Scotch Plains-Fanwood, school boards are gleaming public opinion before making a determination.

In weighing the pros and cons, Westfield BOE member Ann Cary listed higher voter turnouts, no risk of program cuts due to budget defeats and an annual savings of close to

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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE... Volunteers at the Leadership Training Conference held Saturday at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School gather for a photo. Over 100 Student Delegates, recommended by the faculty of Park and Terrill Middle Schools and St. Bartholomew's Academy (grades 5-8), participated the conference. Pictured, left to right, are: Phyllis Mirabella, Rich Rozycki, Freeholder Chairman Al Mirabella and Joan Preztunik.



FINDING CURES... John Crowley, center, joins Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th), standing, second from left, to discuss legislation the Congressman introduced seeking to promote the development of meaningful treatments for patients with chronic or rare diseases. Also in attendance were Debbie Schlossberg, Greater New York/New Jersey ALS Chapter; Bonnie Anderson of Berkeley Heights, a mesothelioma survivor; Sally Fullman of Murray Hill, representing osteoporosis bone density and Eric Gascho, the director of government affairs for the National Health Council in Washington, D.C.

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