

Summer Robinson, SPFHHS 2016, Murdered in North Carolina

By ALEX LOWE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Summer Robinson, a former Scotch Plains resident and a 2016 graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHHS), was murdered August 13 at about 10:30 p.m. on the 4300 block of Skycrest Drive near Charny Drive in Raleigh, N.C.

Ms. Robinson, 19, was found bleeding and unconscious in her car by Dustin Nguyen, who happened to be passing by with his girlfriend shortly after the incident transpired. Despite the efforts of Mr. Nguyen and several Good Samaritans to save her, Ms. Robinson passed away from her injuries.

Laquan Leon Williams, 27, has been charged with her murder. He has not yet been taken into custody and is wanted by police. Mr. Nguyen reported that the suspect threw a knife into a storm drain as he exited the scene. It is unknown what led to what has been reported as a stabbing.

According to news reports, Mr. Nguyen told CBS 17, the local news channel in Raleigh, that after he opened the door, Ms. Robinson fell out of the car and onto the street in the middle of traffic. He said dozens of neighbors and drivers gathered around to try and help save the young woman's life.

Ms. Robinson had a brief but memorable stay in Scotch Plains af-

ter moving to the township from Ohio prior to her sophomore year at SPFHHS. She starred on the Raider track team for three years and was a member of the winter and spring track and field teams during that time. She also was a cheerleader and a gymnast.

Some of her athletic accomplishments were: 2016 NJSIAA North II Group III State Sectional indoor high jump champion; 2016 Union County Conference Watchung Division high jump champion; 2015 Union County Conference Watchung Division triple jump champion; SPFHHS School record holder, triple jump (37 feet, 6 inches), and 2016 NJSIAA Meet of Champions qualifier, triple jump.

Ms. Robinson also anchored the girls shuttle hurdle relay team at New Balance Nationals in June of 2016.

"Most of us found out about Summer's murder about three days after it happened," SPFHHS Track and Field Coach Jeff Koegel told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*. "I received a number of messages from alumni who were teammates with her. This year's seniors were freshmen when Summer was a senior, so we don't have too many people left on the team or in school who were close to her."

Ms. Robinson and her mother had moved to North Carolina after she graduated SPFHHS. Ms. Robinson enrolled at the College of Wooster in Ohio for her freshman year (2016-2017). There she participated on the varsity track and field team under veteran Head Coach Dennis Rice.

"Summer was enrolled at Wooster for one year, 2016-17," Mr. Rice told *The Times*. "She was a talented jumper and a wonderful young woman. Our thoughts and prayers go out to her family."

Ms. Robinson was no longer enrolled at Wooster at the time of her

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David B. Corbin (May 2015 files) for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*
CLEARING THE HURDLES...Raider Summer Robinson, front, clears the hurdle during the 100-hurdle event at the 2015 Union County meet in Plainfield. Ms. Robinson, 19, was murdered in North Carolina on August 13.

George Weiss, 90, Helped Run TV 35 for 20 Years

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

FANWOOD — George Weiss, who made community television for Fanwood possible for more than 20 years, died Saturday in Virginia. Services were held Monday in Watchung. He was 90.

Mr. Weiss was advertising director for the *West Essex Tribune* in Livingston, N.J., from 1953 to 1974, and director of planning and development for Metro Associated Services in New York from 1974 to 1987. He made a living for decades designing, writing and printing ads for newspapers, circulars and magazines, then teaching others how to do it in seminars that took him to 48 of the 50 states. From the days of using hot lead to create type to modern-day digital graphic design and video, Mr. Weiss lived through almost the entire evolution of communications media.

He and his friend, Joe Nagy of Fanwood, were approached in the early 1990s about running Fanwood's new community television station, Channel 35 cable access TV station, which was established by Suburban

Cable, the only cable provider at the time. For 20-plus years he was Fanwood's chief videographer, editor and television producer, the job he retired from in 2014.

As the driving force behind Fanwood Community Television, Mr. Weiss videotaped hundreds of community events and borough council meetings and edited hundreds of programs, many historical in nature, in the small space now called the "studio" on the second floor of the historic Fanwood train station on North Avenue.

He was honored as Volunteer of the Year in Fanwood in the 2000s along with Mr. Nagy for their work at TV 35. He produced video productions on the Central Railroad of New Jersey, the Rahway Valley Railroad, and the Historical Society of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, detailing an auction held in 1919.

Marrying in 1955, Mr. Weiss and his wife, Betty, resided in Elizabeth, Plainfield, Middlesex and for 50 years in Fanwood. Mr. Weiss moved to Herndon, Va., in 2015, where he lived

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Courtesy of Tom Kranz/Borough of Fanwood
NOW YOU SEE IT...Josh Lawrence entertains with magic as Fanwood Rescue Squad EMT Joan Lozowski, far left, watches at the Chelsea at Fanwood's ice cream social on Monday. The event raised \$220 for the Fanwood Rescue Squad.



Courtesy of Tom Kranz/Borough of Fanwood
ICE CREAM FUNDRAISER...Volunteer Melanie Gabel dishes out ice cream to a satisfied customer at The Chelsea at Fanwood's ice cream social on Monday. The event raised \$220 for the Fanwood Rescue Squad. In addition to free ice cream and toppings, there was live music and table magic provided by Josh Lawrence. Members of the rescue squad were in attendance.

Plenty of Housing to Be Built, But Who Will Live There?

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — "If you build it, they will come," a play on the famous line from the movie *Field of Dreams*, has been applied to more than just baseball over the years, but will it apply when it comes to the thousands of housing units slated to be built as towns start to grapple with court-imposed affordable-housing obligations? Mayor Alexander Smith,

for one, seems skeptical.

At a meeting of the downtown redevelopment committee earlier this month, the mayor — when asked about what would happen if landlords were unable to rent all the housing units in their buildings — seemed to empathize. "Everybody is suddenly building all these units," he said, not only in Scotch Plains but in nearby towns like Fanwood, Watchung, Westfield and Cranford. With the state's population "barely growing," the mayor then asked, "Who's going to live in all of these units?" It is a feeling he has stated several times this year.

The affordable-housing units will comprise about 15 percent of what is expected to be close to 3,000 total new housing units set to be developed in the coming years. Mayor Smith has said this building will lead to a 35-percent increase in the number of housing units and a 28-percent increase in the township's population.

At a planning board meeting last month, questions were raised about why so much total housing had to be built instead of just the 450 or so affordable units the township is legally obligated to provide. Mayor

Smith pointed out that builders make their money building the market-rate housing and said it goes a long way towards recouping the builders' initial outlays in purchasing the land. But the mayor warned then of possible excess housing inventories, saying that if towns end up building to the levels mandated by the courts, "there's no way they'll all be filled."

Calling the court-driven process "out of control," the mayor told a state legislative committee last month that court-imposed housing obligations "will result in the mindless building of high-density residential projects, which in many cases will be built in areas not suited for high-density housing while breaking the resources and infrastructure of municipalities."

He called for increasing the minimum affordable-housing set-aside percentage for a builder to 30 percent from the current 15 percent. Using Scotch Plains' current obligations as an example, the mayor said a 30-percent set-aside would result in the number of total new residential units dropping from 2,655 to 1,513, while still providing 454 affordable-hous-

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RVSA Doubles, Quadruples Connection Fees to Its System

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

RAHWAY — The Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority's (RVSA) Board of Commissioners last Thursday raised the fees for connections to its system. The board also heard that its complaint against a new state law prohibiting annual cost increases greater than 2 percent has been filed.

During discussion on connection fees, Michael Gelin, Woodbridge's commissioner, suggested the fees be identified as administrative fees since RVSA's actions normally involve only paperwork review. The suggestion was approved. Stephen Greet, Garwood's commissioner, confirmed during the discussion that this change does not impact municipalities' ability to charge appropriate fees.

The new fees are: \$100 for up to 2,000 gallons per day (GPD), doubling from the current \$50; \$250 for 2,001 to 7,999 GPD, doubling from \$125, and \$1,000 for 8,000 and over GPD, quadrupling from the current \$250 fee. This rate also covers cases where a New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) treatment works application is required for reasons other than flow, such as a single-family home with a need to extend a sewer or a lateral that crosses a right-of-way (road). Cases where revisions are needed to RVSA's water quality management plan will see a \$2,000 fee. The latter two cases, other than for flow, are extremely rare, according to Jim Meehan, RVSA's executive director.

In other business, the digester cover replacement project continues to progress, although it is behind schedule. The first new membrane cover is slated to be installed on digester 3 during the week of August

27. Mr. Meehan continued to stress that the contractor seems now to be working with a true sense of urgency. According to the RVSA website, the digester reduces sludge and disease-causing micro-organisms.

A change order was approved to demolish and do asbestos abatement on the former U.S. Healthworks property. This will allow Tomar, the digester cover contractor, to use the space for staging as they continue their work.

The board approved purchase of a new pump costing \$103,406. This pump will replace one of two currently used to move waste to the drying facility. The pump that will be replaced will be rebuilt to serve as a backup. Plant Superintendent Dan Ward told the board that the pumps are essential in drying the waste to reduce shipping costs. He also told commissioners that he would not be comfortable removing the pump and covering the hole with plywood because of the size and depth of the tank.

The motion to throw out metering from the April 16 and 17 storm, which was tabled at last month's meeting, was re-introduced and re-tabled, partially due to the absence of two commissioners, Frank Mazzarella of Clark and Marty Rothfelder of Westfield. In discussion of this, John Tomaine, Mountainside's commissioner, raised the question of whether the board of commissioners had the authority to do this. Dennis Estis, general counsel, said he agreed with Mr. Tomaine's interpretation except in cases of faulty metering or similar circumstances.

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Courtesy of Tom Kranz/Borough of Fanwood
FANWOOD SUPPORTS CASA...Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr and the borough council issued a proclamation Monday supporting CASA. Since 2005, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Union County has been recruiting, training, supervising and supporting community volunteers to advocate for abused, neglected and abandoned children placed in foster homes or residential facilities. Receiving the proclamation from Mayor Mahr is Marla Higginbotham, executive director of CASA, right of the mayor, and some of the volunteers.

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