

Letters to the Editor

Dean Oil Hearing Was Rescheduled To Accommodate Residents and Law

I must respond to the letter from Councilmen Louis Jung and Stuart Kline regarding the postponed February 24 Fanwood Planning Board hearing on the "Dean Oil" site.

The Councilmen commented that the meeting should have been relocated to accommodate the large crowd.

I couldn't agree more, which is why the meeting has been rescheduled for tonight, Thursday, March 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the Park Middle School auditorium. This site has been chosen for its size, comfortable seating and the availability of a sound system so that each speaker may be heard by all in attendance.

Councilman Jung's suggestion that we pick up and move to a school auditorium that evening was unrealistic. As a former member of the school board, Mr. Jung should know that our schools are not available for use without advance notice and preparation.

Their suggestion that the firehouse

garage would be a suitable meeting site was impractical. The firehouse has no seating, no heat and no sound system to enable attendees to listen to the proceedings. Subjecting Fanwood residents to such conditions would be unproductive and inconsiderate.

But those issues are moot in the face of the Open Public Meetings Act, which requires proper and timely notification of meeting time and place. Councilman Kline, an attorney, surely must know that a change of venue at the last minute would be in violation of the Act and could possibly subject Fanwood taxpayers to costly litigation.

It is important that each and every Fanwood resident have the opportunity to participate in the hearing process. That was the primary concern behind the Planning Board's decision to reschedule the hearing to tonight.

Gregory S. Cummings
Chairman
Fanwood Planning Board

School One Building's 25th To be Celebrated Tomorrow

SCOTCH PLAINS — School One Elementary in Scotch Plains will celebrate the building's 25th year with various festivities for students, staff and parents tomorrow, Friday, March 26.

The current building on Willow Avenue replaced the original School One, the township's first elementary school, which stood on Park Avenue from 1890 until April 1973.

That year, during spring recess, the staff transferred all of the school's educational materials and resources to prepare for the opening of the present school.

Tomorrow's activities will include an after-school party with refreshments and music for the current School One students from 3 to 4 p.m., and a celebration from 8 p.m. to midnight at the Scotch Hills Country Club for parents, staff, and teachers.

This event will include dinner and an "oldies dance" with a disk jockey. It will also serve as a fundraiser to support the School One technology fund, which focuses on bringing Internet access to the classrooms.

A school-wide assembly with music and presentations is also being planned.

Absentee Ballot Applications Must be Received by April 13

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Public School district has issued a reminder that the last day for Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi to receive mail applications for absentee ballots in the Westfield school election is Tuesday, April 13.

Absentee ballot applications are available in all nine of Westfield's public schools, as well as in the Business Office located in the school district's Administration Building at 302 Elm Street.

The school election will take place on Tuesday, April 20. Polls will be open from 2 to 9 p.m. Voters will decide whether to support the proposed 1999-2000 school budget, with taxes totaling \$47,254,054.

If passed, individual property taxes would be increased seven cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. This is the same increase as last year.

Voters will also cast their ballots for three out of four Board of Education candidates. The ballot order for

the candidates, each of whom is seeking a three-year term on the board, are Annmarie Puleio, William T. Wallace, Arlene Gardner and Genevieve Weber.

Fanwood GOP Plans Discussion on April 5 With BOE Candidates

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Republican Club will host a discussion with Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education candidates Victoria Manduca and Jessica D. Simpson on Monday, April 5, at 8 p.m. at the Community House at the Fanwood Train Station.

The event is being presented under the direction of Sophie Kauchek, Club President. Club members and school board candidates will discuss the school elections to take place on Tuesday, April 20.

Dr. Sheldon Cites Importance Of Preparing Youth for Future

SCOTCH PLAINS — Dr. Donald E. Sheldon, who has announced his candidacy for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, stated that he strongly believes in the importance of public education and the need to provide educational experiences which will prepare all district students to successfully cope with the social, economic and technological changes in their future.

This education, he asserted, must be based upon a strong foundation in the basic skills of communication (reading, writing, speaking, listening); in mathematics, study and research, and in the use of technology, while maintaining high standards for the achievement of each student.

He further stated that, based on his experience as a parent, a public school teacher, counselor and administrator, as well as a former member and President of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education and a long-time Scotch Plains resident, he believes he is well prepared to contribute to the leadership of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools as a member of the Board of Education, representing all residents of the dis-

trict.

Dr. Sheldon completed six years as a member of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education from 1992 to 1998, serving five years as President.

He has served as Vice President of the Garden State Coalition of Boards of Education, as a member of the New Jersey School Boards Finance Committee, as a charter member and

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Dr. Donald E. Sheldon

Morris Gillet States Education Must Mirror Changing World

SCOTCH PLAINS — Morris H. "Butch" Gillet has announced his candidacy for reelection to a third three-year term on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education.

A 30-year resident of Scotch Plains, Mr. Gillet has been a member of the

County Educational Services Commission.

Mr. Gillet has attended many conferences given by the New Jersey School Boards Association on topics such as technology, financing of school contracts, negotiations, curriculum, and board and staff relationships, earning State Board Credits.



Morris H. Gillet

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education since 1993. He has been a member of the Negotiation Committees for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association, Teamsters, and administrators, serving as Chairman of each of those committees.

The candidate has also served on the Budget, Finance, and House and Grounds Committees. He is currently the board representative to the Union

County Educational Services Commission.

Mr. Gillet is a Past President of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Music Boosters and a founding member and first President of the Terrill Music Boosters. He is a Past President of Congregation Beth Israel.

In addition, he was a member of the Ad Hoc Steering Committee for the Education Fund of Scotch Plains-Fanwood. Mr. Gillet served on the Technology Action Team for the Strategic Plan.

The candidate is a member of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Athletic Boosters, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Music Boosters, and the Learning Disabilities Association of Scotch Plains-Fanwood.

He is a past member of the Coles Elementary School and Terrill Middle School PTAs. Mr. Gillet is a certified New Jersey State Interscholastic Ath-

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Edward Saridaki States BOE Must be Accessible to Public

SCOTCH PLAINS — In announcing his candidacy for reelection to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education incumbent Edward J. Saridaki, Jr. this week discussed the issues which he feels will be paramount to the local school district in the next several years.

Mr. Saridaki, who resides in the Evergreen Elementary School area and is employed by a Springfield-based publisher of non-fiction books for children and young adults, was elected to his first term in 1996.

He is one of six candidates running for the two Scotch Plains seats up for election this year.



Edward J. Saridaki, Jr.

"The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education will be asked to make decisions on many issues over the next three years," Mr. Saridaki remarked.

"Upgrade and expansion of facilities, introduction of block scheduling, remodeling of course leveling and student tracking, meeting state-mandated standards and testing, these and the financial considerations involved are just a few of the topics that will be coming before the board in the not-too-distant future," he stated.

Mr. Saridaki has asked all voters,

including district parents as well as taxpayers without children in the school system, to carefully examine every candidate's qualifications for making these decisions before casting their ballot during the School Election on Tuesday, April 20.

The candidate said he believes decisions such as these — ones that have a direct impact on the quality and/or cost of education — are "bottom line" decisions. He said consideration must be given as to how the upgrade of facilities or the need for new construction will affect the "bottom

line" on the school budget.

"Will a bond referendum be necessary to meet the needs? Will the curricular modifications, time use alterations or changes in state-mandated testing programs satisfy the 'bottom line' educational needs of our students?"

"The school board will need members who are willing to scrutinize the 'bottom line' in order to make the best decisions for our communities," Mr. Saridaki maintained.

In order to make quality decisions on these and any other important issues that come before the board, board members must be willing to

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Jessica D. Simpson Brings Local Experience to BOE

FANWOOD — Jessica D. Simpson, a Fanwood resident, a claims representative with the Social Security Administration for the past 25 years, has kicked off her campaign for a third full term on the board.

Originally appointed to the board in May of 1992 to fill a one-year vacancy, she was re-elected in 1993 and 1996. In 1995, she was one of 87 board of education members statewide to be named by the New Jersey School Boards Association as a certified board member based on her extensive training in areas deemed critical for effective board service.

On the local board, Mrs. Simpson said she has tried to be a forceful voice toward broadening the educational options available for all students. She persistently questioned

why fifth-grade assessments intended for student placement in sixth grade limited opportunities for those same students in high school.

"I do not think we should be making judgments about children's abilities at age 10, particularly not judgments that limit their options in grade 9 and beyond," she said.

The administration reexamined this issue and recommended significant changes. All students are now taught algebra in the eighth grade, and science prerequisites were modified.

Mrs. Simpson enthusiastically supports those changes.

"This is a substantial improvement in our academic program, and raises the bar for all," she noted.

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