

Man, 46, Arrested With Loaded Gun In Tamaques School Lot

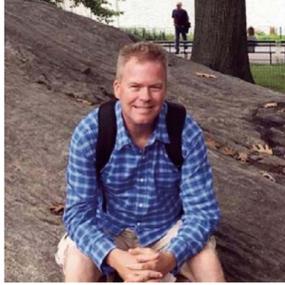
By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — A 46-year-old armed Delaware man was arrested last Thursday afternoon in the parking lot of Tamaques Elementary School in Westfield after police received information from New Castle County Police Department in Delaware that the man was en route to Westfield.

Thomas J. Wilkie, of Bear, Del., has been charged with second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, third-degree possession of a firearm in or upon the grounds of an educational institution, fourth-degree possession of hollow-point bullets and fourth-degree trespassing on school grounds. Westfield Police Chief Chris

Battiloro said police units responded to the school around 3:54 p.m. after they received a call from New Castle County Police, “seeking an individual they believed may be on the premises of Tamaques School.”

“Police responded immediately and found the individual in his car in the Tamaques School parking lot, in possession of a firearm and ammunition. The individual was immediately taken into custody while the building was placed on lockdown with after-school activities in session,” according to a statement from Westfield Police Chief Chris Battiloro. “A security sweep of the building and its perimeter was conducted prior to the lockdown being lifted at approximately 5:32 p.m.,



Thomas J. Wilkie (Facebook)

and children were released to their parents without incident. Police canines were brought in for a final, precautionary sweep, but there is currently no evidence to suggest any threat to the community.”

According to a press release from Acting Union County Prosecutor Jennifer Davenport, police located Wilkie in the front seat of his 2019 Mitsubishi SUV, parked in the school’s parking lot, holding a .45-caliber handgun loaded with hollow-point bullets. Two additional loaded magazines of ammunition were recovered on Wilkie, with another 130 rounds of ammunition located in the vehicle’s trunk.

When asked by *The Westfield Leader* why Wilkie had come to Westfield, Union County Prosecutor’s Office spokesman Mark Spivey said the “motive remains under investigation.”

Citing a “senior law enforcement official,” NBC News reported last Friday that Wilkie “targeted the school because of a relationship gone bad with a faculty member.”

NBC News also reported that Wilkie, while not armed, gained entrance to the school looking for a woman who worked at the school. When he could not locate her, Wilkie returned to his car and called the woman, who told him she was tutor-

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CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF SPFD...Dozens of fire departments across Union County and New Jersey participated in the Scotch Plains Fire Department’s 150th anniversary parade down Westfield Avenue in the township Saturday. Westfield, Clark, Cranford, Elizabeth, Garwood, Mountainside and Linden were among the neighboring municipalities represented.

Scotch Plains May Back Med. Marijuana Dispensary Application

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

SCOTCH PLAINS – The township council will consider endorsing an application to state authorities by a local business seeking to become a dispensary for medical marijuana.

The Chillin’ Out coffee and smoke shop on eastbound Route 22 made the request for the council’s backing of its application as New Jersey seeks to expand the number of licensed dispensaries and the types of illnesses covered by medical marijuana. At the council’s meeting on Monday evening, members of the governing body had a number of

questions about the particulars of how such a facility will be operated.

“I’m open to it,” said Mayor Alexander Smith, although he raised a number of questions and thoughts about the idea. He asked whether there are similar dispensaries in the area and wondered how the council will judge whether the business, which has been in operation since 2010, is going to be prepared to dispense the product. The mayor also wondered if the township will incur any additional expenses from a public safety point of view.

Deputy Mayor Josh Losardo said there currently are six dispensaries in the state serving some 40,000 patients, but that just-announced reforms will result in coverage for patients suffering not only from cancer-related illnesses but also anxiety and chronic pain, meaning a much larger number of patients will be covered—and a greater number of dispensaries will be needed. He told of a friend with cancer who had “benefited” from using medical marijuana and said he thought having such a facility in town would be a “benefit to our residents and neighboring residents.”

Councilman Ted Spera asked whether the council wanted to limit such sales to pharmacies “since it’s a medical product,” although the mayor said doing so and then having to deal with major pharmacy chains and their own rules and regulations could be

problematic. Councilwoman Elizabeth Stampler said it was “important to help” those with serious illnesses.

The Chillin’ Out business needs the council to endorse its application to the state Department of Health, whose application period for opening a dispensary runs from Tuesday, July 16 to Thursday, August 15.

Township legal advisors will provide the governing body with an explanatory memo that will answer the various questions and concerns and also submit a draft resolution in favor of the application for consideration at the council’s July 16 meeting.

In other business, the council approved an ordinance authorizing a financial agreement between the township and the developers of the former Bowcraft Amusement Park site, which is slated to be developed into 190 apartments and 10 townhomes, with 35 of those units being designated as affordable housing. Part of the agreement calls for a long-term tax abatement — also known as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)—that will see the property owners pay fees directly to the township based on a percentage of rental income from the units that are sold, with the township retaining most of the payments.

Mayor Smith said on Monday that close to \$800,000 could be added annually to township coffers during

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SESQUICENTENNIAL...Scotch Plains Fire Chief John Lestarchick leads the department in Saturday’s 150th anniversary parade down Westfield Avenue. More than 18 towns were represented in the parade.

Fanwood Rec. Discusses Rentals, Summer Events

By LAUREN A. SILVA
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — There was much discussion about the rental of park buildings by charities, as well as the upcoming Summer Party in the Park, during the Fanwood Recreation Commission’s Tuesday night meeting.

The commission recently received requests for charities to rent building space in the local parks. Recreation Director Bob Budiansky said that charities, “should be charged the same fee as anyone else for building rentals. They need event insurance. We need to treat charities like any organization renting our buildings.”

The Summer Party in the Park will be held on Tuesday, June 25, from 6 to 8:30 p.m., at LaGrande Park. The rain date is the following evening. There will be a Spider-Man scavenger hunt, food, music, contests, in-

flatable rides and a challenge course. The movie *Spider-Man Into the Spider-Verse* will be shown.

Mr. Budiansky spoke about the upcoming free Movies Under the Stars series at LaGrande Park. All films will be screened on Tuesdays as follows: *Hotel Transylvania 3* on July 2; *Peter Rabbit* on July 9; *Smallfoot* on July 16; *Bumblebee* on July 23; *Ralph Breaks the Internet* on July 30; *Incredibles 2* on August 6 and *Mary Poppins Returns* on August 13. All movies will be shown at dusk.

Mr. Budiansky also discussed the success of this year’s summer camp registration, saying 1,506 children are registered and the total revenue is \$144,866. Last year’s total revenue was \$129,000.

The recreation commission’s next meeting is Tuesday, July 23, at 7:45 p.m., at LaGrande Park. All are welcome to attend.



MALLERY’S ARMY...The founder of Mallery’s Army, Dianne Grossman, mother of Mallery Grossman, a 12-year-old Rockaway, N.J., girl who committed suicide in 2014, awarded trophies at Monday’s Fanwood council meeting to her Soldiers of Strength, young girls who are spreading the word to fight bullying in schools. A bill she is championing, S-3433, “Mallery’s Law,” which adjusts anti-bullying laws to increase responsibility for parents, was passed by the state Senate Education Committee on Monday.

Fanwood Gives Out Awards, OK’s Recycling Contract

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD – Awards were given at the start of Monday’s borough council meeting to longtime Fanwood business owners and a young woman advocating for human rights.

Helen and Jeff Ling, owners of Enchantments on South Avenue, were honored by having their store named Business of the Month. Operating since 1989, the Lings have been selling jewelry, candles, glassware, pottery and other specialty items from their store. It was noted that the establishment offers handcrafted items made in the United States and carries many gifts that are made in New Jersey. The store is open every day except Sunday.

In addition, 10 young women from the borough were given “Soldiers of Strength” awards for their volunteer efforts on behalf of Mallery’s Army.

Mallery’s Army is a non-profit group started by Mallery Grossman’s mom, Diane Grossman, to combat the terror and maliciousness of bullying and to educate communities.

According to Mrs. Grossman, Mallery Grossman took her own life at the age of 12 in June of 2017 because of relentless bullying.

Mrs. Grossman also noted that she had just come from Trenton after a bill she introduced to bring adjustments to the anti-bullying law, calling for more parent accountability, had just been passed by the state Senate Education Committee.

In other business, it was reported that the Rockin’ for Autism event held at the end of April raised \$17,000 for an autism awareness non-profit organization. Borough resident Mallery Banks, 17, has been organizing the event yearly since 2016. This year’s event was held in LaGrande Park on April 28 and featured music acts, food trucks, raffles, sports clinics and an obstacle course. It was noted that Mallery started the event to support autism awareness because of her brother, Ethan.

Resolutions passed during the meeting included a six-month contract with Bayshore Recycling for doing the actual job of recycling for Fanwood and a five-year contract with the Plainfield Municipal Utilities Authority for curbside pickup of the recyclable materials. Fanwood implemented curbside recycling in 2016. Prior to that, residents dropped off materials at the Fanwood Recycling Center on North Avenue for almost 30 years.

In addition, council members passed a resolution to authorize a signed agreement with Scotch Plains for the reconstruction of Westfield Road.

Also, a proclamation was read recognizing June as Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month.

The next council meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 1, at 7 p.m., at Fanwood Borough Hall, located at 75 North Martine Avenue.

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Congratulations to the Top Producers for the Month of May!



Sharon Steele
Top Sales and Overall Production
908.447.3579



Beth Sullivan
Top Listings
908.578.3812

Westfield West

600 North Avenue West
Westfield, NJ 07090
908.233.0065
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