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Fanwood Council Gets Update On PARSA Accomplishments

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Representatives of the Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority (PARSA) spoke to Fanwood's governing body last week about the organization's five-year history and dollar-saving initiatives it has implemented during that time.

The hour-long program, complete with computer graphic illustrations, was presented at Thursday's regular Borough Council meeting by PARSA Executive Director Robert Villee and former Fanwood Councilman William E. Populus, Jr., Chairman of the commission which governs the Authority.

PARSA serves as the main body into which sanitary sewer lines from eight area municipalities feed, among them Scotch Plains and Fanwood. Each participating community has a representative on the commission.

Member municipalities are charged annual fees based on their flow levels into the main line, with Fanwood paying approximately \$260,000, Mr. Villee revealed.

PARSA was established in February of 1996 as part of the settlement to a lawsuit brought some six years ago against the Authority's predecessor, the Plainfield Joint Meeting (PJM), which was governed by Plainfield, North Plainfield and Dunellen.

As a result of the suit, PJM was dissolved and restructured as PARSA, with each town served by the Authority given representation and a vote on the commission. Besides Scotch Plains and Fanwood, PARSA includes Plainfield, North Plainfield, South Plainfield, Dunellen, Green Brook and Watchung.

Recalling PARSA's inaugural year, Mr. Villee described how the Authority had to overcome major operational and administrative problems left over from PJM. A report accompanying his presentation stated the fledgling organization had "at least 10 immediate action problems to deal with simultaneously."

Among the operational difficulties, he noted, were odors and corrosion from gasses caused by buildups of waste in the sanitary sewer lines; sanitary sewer overflows; sewer moratoriums; collapsed pipes and a failing infrastructure, as well as lack of maintenance and a \$300,000 metering system which was not working.

On the administrative end, PARSA faced the lack of a home office, which had been given away in the settlement agreement from the lawsuit; fiscal hurdles and the challenge of overcoming PJM's legacy, plus

staff unwillingness to digress from old PJM policies, Mr. Villee revealed.

He explained that PARSA began its mission by accepting responsibility for resolving the odor and corrosion problems. Mr. Villee said the Authority selected and constructed new chemical feed sites, while "creatively" operating and monitoring the existing chemical system — all of which led to a significant reduction in odors.

The Authority also brought in a new staff and invested in training and technology, factors which Mr. Villee's report said were pivotal to PARSA's success over the past five years.

Beginning in 1997, PARSA added more feed sites throughout the system and fine-tuned odor control measures. It also reduced sanitary sewer overflows through infrastructure improvements.

The following year, PARSA engaged in the planning and design for major rehabilitation of pipelines, as well as planning minor projects.

During 1999 and 2000, the agency received low-interest loans from New

Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust (NJIEIT) which were used for rehabilitation efforts. NJIEIT is a funding agency for sewer projects throughout the state that is connected with New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection.

In addition, the Authority completed minor pipe stabilization projects and initiated studies and design for future projects.

As a service offered free to PARSA members, the Authority has been videotaping Fanwood's pipelines, which are more than 80 years old, to determine sources of infiltration and make the community aware of where work needs to be done.

In addition, other efforts have been made to curb infiltration into the borough system, which increases flow levels and, consequently, the annual fee Fanwood must pay as part of its PARSA membership, Mr. Populus explained.

Three hundred-and-fifty inserts have been placed under Fanwood sewer covers, with another 400 ordered, to keep water from going into

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Proposed Trash Train Would Pass At-Grade Rahway Ave. Crossing

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Times

The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders will hold a special hearing this Monday, August 13, on a proposed \$50 million barge-to-rail, marine trash transfer station on the Linden waterfront.

The hearing, to be held at Linden City Hall, 301 North Wood Avenue, will begin at 7 p.m.

The Tremley Point facility, to be built by Browning Ferris Industries (BFI), will process between 10,000 and 15,000 tons per day of household waste generated in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens, which will come to the Garden State daily by barge from New York City.

Reportedly, the 18-acre Linden waterfront would be the largest transfer station in North America.

BFI has said the waste will be loaded into sealed steel containers and put on rail cars that will transport the waste to landfills owned by Allied Waste in Georgia and South Carolina. Allied is the parent company of BFI.

The 5,900-foot train, consisting of

between 80 to 90 rail cars each, will pass over 27 at-grade crossings in New Jersey through the use of the Lehigh Valley and the Port Reading rail lines.

The Lehigh Valley line includes the Rahway Avenue grade crossing in Westfield. The line would bring the train through Clark and Scotch Plains.

BFI has indicated that solid waste loaded in steel containers "has been coming from New York through New Jersey across the Lehigh Line and the Trenton Line to Pennsylvania almost every day for the last three years."

BFI, in its response to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) memorandum dated July 23, estimated that the speed of the train when passing through the Rahway Avenue rail crossing will be 50 mph. The train will take two minutes and 20 seconds to pass through the at-grade crossing.

Despite concerns raised by the DEP, BFI has maintained that it is requesting a permit to process 10,000 tons per day, not 15,000, the maximum tonnage described in BFI's original application. The application indicated that the marine terminal would be designed to handle up to 15,000 tons.

New York's waste is currently trucked to the Essex County incinerator in Newark.

In relation to the project, the New Jersey Attorney General's Office executed a search warrant of the office of Linden Mayor John T. Gregorio on August 1. Press reports indicated that officials may have been looking for possible bribes involving the transfer station project.

Since a grand jury investigation was launched by the Attorney General in January, The Linden City Council has been subpoenaed twice for documents and correspondence related to the project, according to a *Star-Ledger* report.

The 18,000-acre property where the marine station will be built is reportedly owned by Mayor Gregorio's son-in-law, Dominick Pucillo. The *Star-Ledger* also reported that the partnership of Tremley Point Marine includes State Senator Ray Lesniak's law partner, Paul M. Weiner, and Agnes Villani, wife of Ben Villani, who has reportedly been barred for life from the New York State waste-hauling business.

The rental income for the property, once the BFI station is open, is said to be \$1.2 million per month.

The project has been overwhelmingly supported by the Linden City Council, the Union County Utilities Authority and the County Freeholder Board.

The Freeholders had approved an amendment last November to the county's Solid Waste Management

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FUN IN THE SUN...Senior Girl Scout Troop No. 561 from Fanwood-Scotch Plains recently took a dream vacation to Grand Bahama Island, accompanied by several adult chaperones and friends, with a portion of moneys they raised themselves through various fundraisers. Pictured on Paradise Beach, left to right, are: Back row, Sara Konzelman, Lisa Wagner, Carolyn Keeton, Judy Brown, Chrissie Morris, Amy Kempe, Delsa Slaugh and Katherine Walker, and front row, Jonathan Wagner, Allison Gigantelli, Beth Gigantelli, Malina Millonet, Cheryl Wagner and Jesse Allen.

SP Residents to Pay Average of \$4,248 In Local School Property Taxes This Year

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

Editor's Note: The following is the third and final article in a three-part series on 2001 property tax bills in Scotch Plains.

Thanks to a bond referendum approved last December and the nearly 5.5 percent increase in anticipated operating expenses for the 2001-2002 school year, property taxpayers in both Scotch Plains and Fanwood will see their education taxes increasing in the coming year.

With Scotch Plains residents making up the bulk of the student population in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district, township taxpayers will fund about three-fourths of the school budget. Of the average \$6,669 property tax bill in Scotch Plains, about 64 percent of that total, or \$4,268, will be earmarked for the board of education — an increase of just over 8 percent. Of the average \$6,087 property tax bill in Fanwood, 62 percent, or \$3,773, is earmarked for education purposes — an increase of slightly more than 3 percent.

In other words, the rate for the education portion of this year's property tax bill is \$3.64 per \$100 of assessed value in Scotch Plains and \$4.40 per \$100 of assessed value in Fanwood. This year's budget was

approved by voters in April, four months after voters backed a \$35.7 million bond referendum that means an additional \$172 per year for the average taxpayer in Scotch Plains and an added \$145 for the average Fanwood property owner.

While the bond referendum is earmarked specifically for new construction and renovations at the district's schools, the April budget is for operating expenses for the next academic year.

This year's school budget totals \$50,287 million versus \$47,687 million last year, \$44.55 million in 1999 and \$43.7 million in 1998. Ninety percent of this year's spending plan will be financed by property tax receipts.

State and federal assistance of \$4.8 million will finance 9.7 percent of the budget. Of that sum, state aid totals just under \$4 million, of which \$2.9 million is allocated for special education programs. The remaining revenue to fund the school budget will come from other sources, such as interest, gate revenue and building use fees.

Scotch Plains students will make up about three-quarters of the joint school district's total expected student population of 4,900 for the coming school year. There are about 400 members of the professional staff in the district, which operates eight

schools, with additional staff consisting of aides, secretaries, custodians and other support personnel.

Most of the property tax bill for education will go towards salaries and benefits for the board's teachers and other employees. Salaries make up more than 64 percent of the budget, with \$32.4 million allocated for this purpose in 2001-2002 — an increase of slightly more than 4 percent. Benefits total \$6.05 million, or about 12 percent of the budget — an 11 percent increase from last year.

Tuition for students attending schools outside of the district will cost the school board just over \$3 million, an 11 percent rise. If the district doesn't have a suitable and appropriate program for a student with special education needs, then he or she is sent to a district that has an individual educational program that suits their particular needs, with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district paying the costs associated with doing so.

Another significant item this year includes \$1.68 million for transportation — up 5.4 percent. Presently, the board provides busing only for those elementary and middle school students living more than two miles from school and for high school students residing more than two

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Westfield, Scotch Plains to Receive Commuter Jitneys From NJ Transit

Scotch Plains and Westfield are among 20 towns that will be receiving commuter jitneys as part of NJ Transit's community shuttle program.

The 20-passenger mini-buses, free of charge to the towns, will operate locally between residential neighborhoods and NJ Transit train stations, including Westfield and Fanwood, during peak commuter morning and evening rush hours.

During off-peak hours, NJ Transit officials said the vehicles can be used for other community-based transportation services.

"During these days of record ridership and limited parking on our rail systems, programs such as Community Shuttle are vital to the success of public transportation in New Jersey," said Westfield resident and NJ Transit Executive Director Jeffrey A. Warsh. "Our customers need and deserve alternate ways to reach our systems."

Three million dollars in federal funding for the program was secured by New Jersey Congressman William Pascrell (D-8th, Essex, Passaic) and Donald Payne (D-10th, Essex,

Hudson) as part of the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) for the second year of the Community Shuttle Program.

"The shuttle program is a creative, cost-effective way to make our communities more livable," said Congressman Pascrell. "At a time when we must have innovative mass transit investment, these federally-funded shuttle buses will go a long way toward easing traffic congestion, reducing air pollution, and improving the daily commute for so many across our state."

Congressman Payne called access to transportation "a key element of enhanced economic development."

The two Congressmen secured the same amount of funding last year to pay for the distribution of 20 mini-buses to 18 communities state-wide.

The Westfield and Scotch Plains buses, as well as the others in the second year of the program, are scheduled to arrive by spring 2002.

Westfield officials have said they plan to use the mini-bus, along with one to be obtained through a State Department of Community Affairs

grant, as part of a new jitney bus program in town to transport commuters to and from the Westfield Train Station.

A survey conducted by the town in 1999 revealed that 300 commuters would be interested in utilizing a curbside commuter jitney service. The town has proposed the operation of two routes, one on the north side and the other on the south side of town. When discussed several years ago, four routes had been proposed.

Scotch Plains has entered into a joint program with Fanwood on use of its mini-bus.

"We're going to use it to get commuters back and forth to the Fanwood train station," said Scotch Plains Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins. He indicated that the service is not going to start "for a while" because the bus route still has to be worked out.

The vehicles, which cost \$94,000 each, include a wheelchair lift and two wheelchair securements, air conditioning, reading lamps and overhead package racks.

Once the communities begin providing the service, they are approved for up to \$60,000 in start-ups from NJ Transit for the first three years of service. During off-peak hours and

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RIPE FOR THE PICKING...Local residents flocked to the Farmers Market in Scotch Plains on Saturday. Shoppers had their pick of juicy peaches, plump tomatoes, crisp lettuce and sweet berries. Sponsored by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, the market is held until the fall in the parking lot of the Scotch Plains Municipal Building on Park Avenue.

Ingrid McKinley for The Times

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Police, Community Seek To Create Safer Streets For Pedestrians to Cross

By ADAM BERNSTEIN
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- Following two accidents involving pedestrians in recent weeks, the Westfield Police Department, and business and community leaders are seeking to accomplish a tall order — getting motorists to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk.

There were two fatalities in 1999 when motorists struck pedestrians, and in the past two weeks, motorists struck — but did not seriously injure — two more in crosswalks downtown — one crossing Quimby Street, the other at Elm on the corner of East Broad Streets.

The police have been actively working to reduce speeds on major roads, and the Town Council has hired The RBA Group out of Morristown to change the texture of the entire East Broad Street corridor — what they call “traffic calming” — but problems persist as the accidents clearly demonstrate.

Police Captain Robert Compton said that the Westfield police are “taking a progressive, proactive approach” to the problem, but they are limited in what they can do. He commented that enforcement, not innovation, remains their role.

However, the police have taken steps to actively enforce the law, most notably in the S.O.S. (Safe Operating Speed) program that was initiated on April 1. The S.O.S. program involves strict radar enforcement on key streets and intersections, as well as education through newspaper articles, TV-36 and flyers.

This year, through the efforts of the program, the police have more than doubled the number of tickets given to speeders through radar enforcement.

“Our goal is to change the attitude of people who drive through Westfield, to promote safe driving,” Captain Compton said in reference to the program. He added, “We want you to know that if you violate the law, you will get a ticket.”

The cost of a ticket for failure to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk is a minimal of \$100 and a couple of points on the motorist driving record — but Police Sergeant Terence Gillespie said that, “under

extenuating circumstances, the penalty could go way up.”

The heavy traffic that zips through town is only one aspect of the traffic problem; the inadequate parking, a more pragmatic, pressing issue, detracts attention from the potentially unsafe crossing conditions in the downtown.

A possible partial solution — closing off Quimby to traffic and making it a Pedestrian only walkway — was met with skepticism by the Captain Compton for while only a thruway, the traffic that travels on Quimby Street would be diverted directly onto Elm Street and Central Avenue.

Debbie Schmidt, Executive Director of the Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce, hopes that any publicity about the accidents “would encourage people who come downtown for shopping, dining or entertainment to be a little more careful when driving through.”

She reacted favorably to the proposed traffic calming by saying, “traffic moving at a slower pace is always a positive in a downtown district.”

Ms. Schmidt, like Captain Compton, was hesitant to endorse the closing of Quimby Street. There are two issues that concern the businesses along the thruway; whether there would be adequate parking and also whether by closing of the street would reduce business traffic.

In a statement released to *The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood*, The BRAKES Group (Bikers Runners And Kids Entitled to Safety), a resident organization based in Westfield, indicated that they are “most disturbed by the incidents in town recently, especially since the summer is often a ‘quiet’ time.”

Sara Strohecker, Founder and Co-Chairwoman of the group, believes that while the police have done a good job with their efforts this spring, “the stepped up enforcement must be consistent and complete.”

The police and The BRAKES Group both agree that while measures can be taken to make crossing safer, ultimately, people have “to take responsibility for their own behavior.”

School Taxes

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and-a-half miles from the high school on Westfield Road.

The remainder of this year’s school budget includes \$1.8 million for maintenance and plant services; \$1.07 million to administer various state and federal programs; \$472,858 for debt service and \$3.72 million for miscellaneous expenses such as supplies and textbooks, insurance and occupational and physical therapy.

Jitneys

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

on weekends, communities may use the mini-buses for other municipal-sponsored services such as transportation of seniors or for recreational purposes.

In addition to the Raritan Valley Line towns of Westfield and Scotch Plains, Roselle Park also will receive a bus.

Paul J. Peyton and Fred Rossi contributed to this story.

Fanwood Council Gets Update On PARSA Accomplishments

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the sewer system. Manhole grouting is another technique which has been used to make the openings water tight, Mr. Populus said.

Mr. Villee noted last week that PARSA conveys about 14 million gallons of sewage daily through its pipelines to the Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) to be treated.

He stated that 72 percent of the Authority’s \$6,700,000 annual budget, or \$4,900,000, goes to the MCUA as a service charge for this process.

As detailed by Mr. Villee in his presentation, PARSA’s accomplishments over the past five years have included a 330 million gallon annual flow reduction from MCUA; no sanitary sewer overflows since 1997, with the exception of Tropical Storm Floyd in 1999; a capital improvement program and protecting the investments of municipalities.

He also noted that there have been few odor complaints and five years without a lost-time accident due to someone being injured on the job.

In addition, PARSA has won multiple awards from environmental organizations and has been asked by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to assess the collection system and pump stations in the United States Virgin Islands and to provide training to operators and regulators there.



COMINGS AND GOINGS...Several storefronts in Westfield and Mountainside will welcome new businesses. Pictured, top left, on Central Avenue, near the corner of Cacciola Place, the construction of two dozen townhouses is almost completed. Pictured, top right, the Fleet Bank, which owned and occupied the building at the corner of East Broad and Elm Streets, has merged with SummitBank, moving down the block into the former SummitBank drive-thru building on Elm Street. Pictured, bottom left, the site of the former Friendly’s on Mountain Avenue in Mountainside has been sold to Valley National Bank. Renovations are underway and the bank is expected to open by late fall. Pictured, bottom right, the construction of a 9,000-square-foot office building on Springfield Avenue is underway. The space has already been leased by the Westfield Eye and Surgical Group and another doctor.

Westfield Remains Attractive Venue to Locate Business; Day Care, Eye Doctors Coming to Town

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- With over 431 retail business establishments, including 28 restaurants and hundreds of second floor offices and apartments, the central business district of downtown Westfield is an evolving entity, which thrives on a combination of stability and change.

Last year, of the 31 new stores that opened in the downtown’s special improvement district (SID), 17 were locally owned “mom and pop” or franchise businesses (55 percent), six were regional businesses (19 percent), six were professional offices (19 percent) and only two were chain stores (7 percent), according to Sherry Cronin, Director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC), which manages the downtown special improvement district.

Although it may seem that an abundance of stores remain empty for long periods of time and that there are frequent vacancies, the current vacancy rate for a town of Westfield’s size is actually quite low, said Anthony Schilling, one of the downtown’s leading real estate brokers.

The fact that national chains seek out Westfield is a good sign that the downtown is healthy and thriving, Mr. Schilling suggested.

Ms. Cronin also remarked that when other towns want to create an economic development plan, they often use Westfield as a model of success, borrowing development

strategies and planning methods. Additionally, the smaller businesses need the major national retailers, also called “anchor stores,” to draw the shoppers to the area, creating more prosperity for everyone, she told *The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood*.

Many new changes are coming to Westfield’s central business district in the near future. The Fleet Bank, which owned and occupied the building at the corner of East Broad and Elm Streets, has merged with SummitBank and has moved down the block into the former SummitBank drive-thru building on Elm Street.

The Fleet Bank is now in the process of marketing the East Broad and Elm Street building. Fleet will also be selling their drive-through location on Clark Street, across from the Y.

The town has expressed an interest in purchasing this property for extended parking. *The Times* has learned that the Westfield Y is also interested in the Clark Street property. Both the town and Y seek to use the space for additional parking.

The corner of Elm and East Broad Streets used to be called bank square, because of the number of banks on that corner, explained Ms. Cronin.

Currently, First Union is the only bank remaining at that location. Ms. Cronin attributes this change to banks desiring a drive-thru location today, something which the busy corner cannot accommodate.

After the initial deal to turn the 1 Elm Street bank building into a steak house fell through due to financial obstacles, the building was purchased by real estate developer Mitchell Berlant from Warren in July.

Mr. Berlant’s firm owns and manages many suburban office and professional buildings in nearby towns.

The interior of the building is currently being renovated and several retail businesses have expressed an interest in occupying the ground floor, said Mr. Berlant.

He noted that it would be premature to guess who that will be at this time or to specify the exact renovations, which will be modified to the needs of the new leasers. The exterior of the building will remain the same for the time being, according to Mr. Berlant.

Shopper’s Liquors, located on South Avenue for 15 years, is in the process of doubling their space and renovating to incorporate a gourmet deli, an espresso and cappuccino bar, pastries and specialty gift baskets.

The shop will have an eat in or take out structure, with over 250 cheeses imported from around the world and other gourmet delicacies, according to owner, Sean Weinerman. Mr. Weinerman will change the name to Town & Country Fine Wines & Spirits Market Place, and will offer statewide delivery and Internet ordering service. He expects to be up and running by the end of September.

Adjacent to Shopper’s Liquors, in the same strip mall, Dress Barn has moved to Garwood and vacated 12,000 square feet of retail space. In addition, the 8,500 square feet of space next door, formerly occupied by Mandee’s, has also become available. Mr. Schilling is currently seeking retail renters for those spaces.

Westfield resident Roy Pascal has purchased the building at Lenox and North Avenues, previously occupied by Tulio’s Hair Spectrum. Mr. Pascal intends on renting out the existing 3,700 square foot ground floor, after completing some renovations.

“It’s an ideal location for retail and can be subdivided according to retailer’s wishes,” he said.

Coming to the previous location of West Coast Video on Central Avenue, is the Here We Grow Day Care Center, which will employ a relatively new technological advance in the day care industry.

The center will offer video access via the Internet, through their Internet camera system, so that parents can log on and view their children who are at the center, while at home or work, explained the center’s new owner, Cheryl Hoose. Scotch Plains’ residents Michael

and Cheryl Hoose hope to have the 4,700-square foot space renovated and ready for operation by September.

Mrs. Hoose said that this is the first day care center to offer the Internet-video viewing service in New Jersey. She expects to be able to accommodate up to 70 children, ages six weeks to five years.

Another major development on Central Avenue, near the corner of Cacciola Place, the construction of two-dozen townhouses by real estate developer Ralph Rapuano is almost completed.

The townhouses should be ready for occupancy within a few months, Mr. Schilling estimated. Additional townhouses, with 13,000 square feet of ground floor retail space on the corner lot, are expected to begin construction next month and take approximately one year to complete.

Sir Puff Café, a tobacco shop, which has been on Elm Street for the past four years, has been converted by the owner into Sweet Waters, an upscale steak house, which opened last month under new management. The owner purchased the former Raymond’s Restaurant liquor license and renovated the interior with richly-polished wood, leather sofas and chairs, sparkling crystal and starched, white tablecloths for an atmosphere of elegant dining.

The former Sinclair’s restaurant on North Avenue and Toon-Cel-Town, a Disney lithograph outlet on Quimby Street, are both with the buildings owners seeking retail establishments.

Real Estate Broker Maria Walters of Century 21 of North Edison is looking for a leaser for 102-106 East Broad Street, currently occupied by a Chinese restaurant.

“We’d like to find another restaurant renter as the space is already zoned for that,” said Ms. Walters.

Sole, a shoe store specializing in imported Italian children’s shoes, has come to Prospect Street. Owner Anna Mastroianni featured film star of HBO’s “The Sopranos,” Dan Grimaldi, who portrays Patsy Parisi in the hit series, at the grand opening on August 2.

Ms. Mastroianni is a Broadway actress and stunt woman, who is taking a break from her acting career to launch her new business.

Her brother, John, owns Bovella’s, a pastry shop on East Broad Street, across the street from her new store.

Real estate Developer Mitchell Berlant, who also owns 1 Elm Street, is constructing a 9,000-square-foot office building on Springfield Avenue. The space has already been leased by the Westfield Eye and Surgical Group and another doctor, said Mr. Berlant.

Across the street at 1024 Springfield Avenue in Mountainside, a 6,500-square foot office/professional building is being constructed to take the place of a previous fruit and vegetable stand.

The site of the former Friendly’s on Mountain Avenue in Mountainside has been sold to Valley National Bank. Renovations are underway and the bank is expected to open by late fall.

And finally, Success Express, which came to Elm Street from Scotch Plains last year, has new owners, and had a grand re-opening in June, expanding their line of New Age gift items and diversifying their inventory.



CONGRATULATIONS...Patrick Carroll, center, a senior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS), is congratulated by SPFHS Principal Dr. David Heisey and guidance counselor Michelle Ruscavage for receiving a book award from Columbia University’s School of Engineering and Applied Science. Recipients of the award must be in the top 15 percent of their class, have a strong interest in science, technology, or applied science, and be involved in their school and community. Patrick, who was nominated for the award by Mrs. Ruscavage based on his science and math talent, received a copy of the chemistry-related book “The Same and Not the Same” by Ronald Hoffmann.

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Trash Train

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Plan to include the Linden marine transfer station in the county’s Solid Waste Management Plan. However, the DEP rejected the application from BFI to amend the solid waste plan over the potential impact the operation could have on the environment.

Per its concerns, the DEP ordered a response from BFI and the subsequent re-adoption and re-certification of the Solid Waste Management Plan amendment by the freeholder board.