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TIMBER!...Part of the reconstruction work at Park Middle School in Scotch Plains has involved the removal of giant trees on the property. Workers will make way for underground wiring, the first stage of a renovation of the parking lot.

FORMER PROSECUTOR RECALLS FRUITFUL CAREER

Mr. Manahan Assumes New Post

Director of State Police Affairs

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

Union County Prosecutor Thomas Manahan told *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that he has been appointed Director of the Office of State Police Affairs by Attorney General David Samson. He began his new term of office on July 29, after finishing up his five-year term as Union County Prosecutor last week.

Mr. Manahan was replaced by Westfield Attorney Thomas Romankow, who took over as Prosecutor on July 26.

The Office of State Police Affairs was created in 1999 to ensure compliance with racial profiling reforms required by federal decree. Mr. Manahan replaced Interim Director, Edward Neafsey.

As Director of State Police Affairs, Mr. Manahan's duties will in-

clude reporting on State Police activities and implementing discrimination reforms in hiring, training and other internal police affairs.

In a press release published by the State Attorney General's Office, Mr. Manahan said that he looked forward to carrying out the two important objectives of promoting public safety and protecting civil rights, which "need not be in conflict."

As Union County Prosecutor, Mr. Manahan was previously involved in discrimination reforms for the county's 21 police departments. He was also responsible for initiating many innovative crime prevention programs in the county.

Mr. Manahan established the High-Tech Task Force to investigate computer crimes and the Save a Life Today (S.A.L.T.) Program, which joined together citizens and law en-

He also emphasized the need for continued vigilance in the areas of drug abuse and gang prevention through education and community-based alternatives.

Other programs implemented by Mr. Manahan include Family to Family, a peer-to-peer drug abuse counseling program and Project Pride, which offers students an opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of the pitfalls of drug abuse from inmates.

"I've gotten very positive feedback from high school students telling me how this program had changed their life," Mr. Manahan said.

"We must continue to give young people alternatives to joining gangs and experimenting with drugs," Mr. Manahan commented. He said that although the success of prevention programs was difficult to quantify, he observed decreasing crime statis-

Local Senior Citizens Pose Medicare Queries To Congressman Ferguson at Public Forum

By JENNIFER PINTO and BILL SHEPPARD
Specially Written for The Times

Senior citizens from Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Mountainside and surrounding communities packed the Community Room of the Westfield Town Municipal Building on Monday, July 29, for a question and answer discussion on Medicare.

The forum was arranged to update seniors about Medicare and the House of Representatives' vote to create a comprehensive drug prescription benefit. The event was held by Congressman Michael Ferguson and Tom Scully, Administrator of the Federal Center for Medicare and Medical Services (CMS).

Mr. Scully said that the public has had a bad perception of Medicare, just like the Internal Revenue Service. Now, they are working to change that perception.

Congressman Ferguson addressed issues ranging from his own experiences to issues regarding social security, pharmaceutical companies, health research and affordable and acceptable prescription drugs.

Marian Kosler of Westfield stated that she is extremely thankful for the research achievements of the drug companies in New Jersey, because they have enabled her to live.

Jack Potashkin, a veteran from Springfield, asked Congressman

Ferguson and Administrator Scully, "Why can't Medicare take care of the Veterans instead of shortchanging them?"

Seniors had the opportunity to ask a variety of questions during the public forum. Both Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Scully answered the questions by referring to the comprehensive drug prescription benefit.

The audience, including Arthur Guarriello of Union, asked several questions. Mr. Ferguson was asked why drug companies advertise, and if this raises the cost of drugs. They then asked Mr. Ferguson if he was a lawyer. He responded by stating that he is not a lawyer, but he is a teacher by education. He stated that he has taken "Economics 101" from which

he learned that if advertising can increase the volume of sales, then the cost for prescription drugs could be reduced accordingly.

Mr. Scully said, "CMS has a budget of \$560 billion." The budget is roughly split in half to equally accommodate Medicare and Medicaid.

According to Mr. Scully, a minimal portion of the \$560 billion dollar budget goes to advertising for CMS. One of the programs mentioned by Mr. Scully was the 24-hour toll-free number for assistance on Medicare related issues. This number is (800) MEDICARE.

Congressman Ferguson stated that on October 15, as part of the Medicare awareness advertising, he plans on running one-page newspaper ads with extensive information regarding local senior citizen housing and nursing homes.

Westfield Mayor Gregory McDermott told *The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*, "It is really important to know that Congressman Ferguson and Administrator Scully picked Westfield — given the state of high taxes today. It is important that seniors can know how to pay for prescription drugs without having to worry about their meals."

Following the public session, Mr. Ferguson, Mr. Scully and members of their staff individually answered the seniors' questions on Medicare.



AIRING ISSUES...Senior citizens from various communities came to air issues of particular importance to them during Monday's seniors town meeting with Congressman Michael Ferguson and Administrator of the Federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Tom Scully. The event was held in the Community Room of the Westfield Municipal Building.

U.S. Senate Candidate Doug Forrester Taps Former Governor Kean to Head Campaign

By JENNIFER PINTO
Specially Written for The Times

At a press conference on Tuesday in Mindowaskin Park, U.S. Senate candidate Doug Forrester announced that former Governor Tom Kean would become Chairman of Forrester's campaign to unseat Robert Torricelli.

Mr. Forrester praised Governor Kean as one of the most influential and popular leaders in New Jersey history.

"This is the man who is in politics for the right reasons," stated Governor Kean.

The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood asked Governor Kean if he

plans on running the whole campaign. He responded that he would be the campaign chairman but that he wouldn't be part of the daily details of running a campaign. *The Times* also asked if he would rely on his son, Assemblyman Tom Kean, Jr., to help with the campaign. Governor Kean answered with a smile, "I always rely on my son."

Mr. Forrester released the following statement: "Governor Kean was a great leader of this state. I was honored to have been a part of his administration, where I fought to protect the pensions of over 500,000

New Jersey teachers, policemen, firemen and public employees.

"Governor Kean is a man of integrity and honor, and I am extremely proud that he has agreed to serve as Chairman of my campaign. Governor Kean will be a tremendous asset to this campaign, and I look forward to his counsel and support during the next few months — and as a member of the United States Senate.

"Our campaign continues to gather momentum. Last week, a poll indicated that this race is a dead heat. It is clear that the people of New Jersey have had enough of Mr. Torricelli's

poor conduct and poor voting record. And last night, the Deputy Chairman of the Republican National Committee, Jack Oliver, came to New Jersey and told New Jersey leaders that the national party is fully committed to this race.

"Enthusiasm is clearly building in our campaign. Though it is only July, the people of New Jersey are already beginning to tune in to the race. They realize that this is their chance to retire Senator Torricelli, and we are pleased that they are joining our campaign."

"He (Torricelli) has been in Con-



POLITICIANS IN THE PARK...On Tuesday afternoon at Mindowaskin Park in Westfield, U.S. Senate candidate Doug Forrester officially announced that former Governor Tom Kean will lead his campaign. Pictured, above, left, Mr. Forrester and Mr. Kean shake hands, while Assemblyman Tom Kean, Jr. looks on, far left. Photographers and members of the media, pictured above, right, were on hand to capture the moment.



Jennifer Pinto and Bill Sheppard for The Times



FROM POST...Thomas Manahan of Scotch Plains recently recalled his position as Union County Prosecutor. Mr. Manahan now serves as the Director at the Office of State Police Affairs.

forcement in a community-based approach to combating crime.

Reflecting on his most memorable achievements as Prosecutor, Mr. Manahan told *The Times* that several programs, which he initiated, had a significant impact on drug abuse and drug-related crimes in the county.

tics after implementing these programs.

One of the most significant observations Mr. Manahan said that he has made while Prosecutor is that "you're not saved from drugs by your address," referring to the increasing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Four SP Teenagers Face Sentencing In Sex Assault Case

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

Sentencing for the four Scotch Plains teenagers who sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl outside of Park Middle School in January has been scheduled to take place in Elizabeth County Courthouse before Judge John Malone on September 13.

All four of the boys, students at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and underage at the time of the incident, have pled guilty as adults to separate charges but will be sentenced at a joint hearing according to a Clerk at the Courthouse.

Two of the teenagers, Mark Russell, 17, and Jesus Gonzalez, 16, in addition to being charged with aggravated sexual assault are also being charged with kidnapping.

They admitted in separate court hearings, in May, that they dragged the girl from the school to a creekbed behind the school, where the incident took place.

Both Gonzalez and Russell are being held at the George W. Herlich Detention Center in Elizabeth in lieu of \$100,000 bail.

By pleading guilty, Gonzalez and Russell face a minimum of 8 1/2 years each in jail and up to a maximum of 10 years for their roles in the attack.

All four of the co-defendants could have faced up to 20 years in prison had they been convicted at trial.

The other two boys, Bryan Soriano, 16, and Manuel Batista, 16, previously pled guilty in March; Soriano to aiding and abetting a sexual assault and Batista to aggra-

vated sexual assault.

In a plea agreement, they each face up to five years in jail according to press releases from the Union County Prosecutor's Office. Soriano and Batista were released to the custody of their parents.

A fifth boy who was 14 at the time of the attack faces a hearing next month when a judge will decide whether he should be tried as an adult.

Thomas Manahan, who was serving as Union County Prosecutor at the time of the incident, said in the press release that his office sought to prosecute the boys as adults, "in light of the physical injuries and emotional trauma inflicted on the girl."

Prosecutors said in the press release that the girl was forcibly dragged from the school in a headlock, then pushed and slapped in the face several times during the assault.

Gonzalez faces a second count of aggravated sexual assault following the girl back into the school and sexually attacking her again after she left the creekbed.

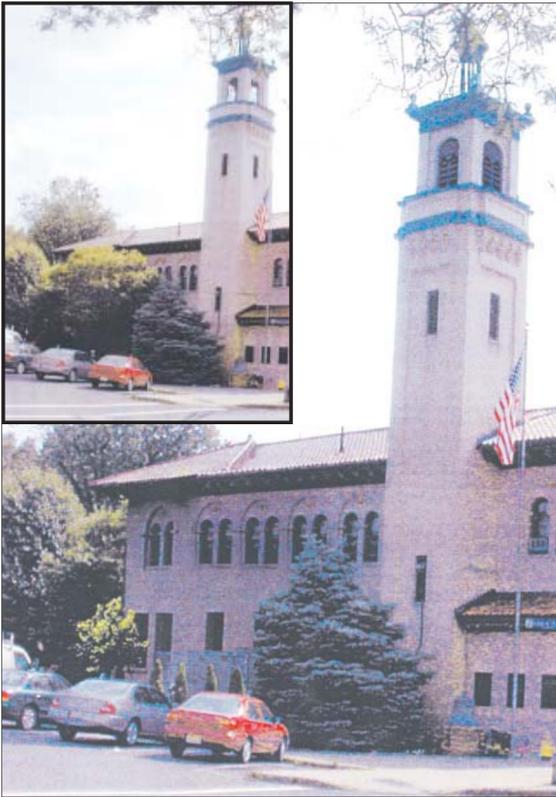
The four boys were arrested several days after the attack, after an investigation by the Scotch Plains Police Department.

The four co-defendants now face evaluation at the Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center in Avenel to determine if they are compulsive and repetitive sex offenders. They are also subject to lifelong registration as sexual offenders under New Jersey's Megan's Law and subject to the state's "No Early Release Act" if they commit any other violent crimes, the press release stated.

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CYAN YELLOW MAGENTA BLACK



BEFORE AND AFTER...Westfield Fire Chief John Castellano provided *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* with images depicting the current facade of the firehouse and how it would appear with the addition of the cellular antenna.

HEALTH RISKS, AESTHETICS ASSOCIATED WITH ANTENNA QUESTIONED

Fire Chief Castellano Wants Cellular Antenna For Better Communication

By LAUREN S. PASS
Specially Written for *The Times*

WESTFIELD -- Westfield Fire Chief John Castellano has been in communication with Verizon to install a cell antenna atop the Northside Westfield Firehouse.

The antennas are proposed to be installed as louvers that would cover the windows on the tower. Also proposed is a 6-foot by 10-foot pad on the east side of the firehouse which would be fenced in and surrounded by trees. The machinery on the pad will take the signal from the antenna and feed it into the phone lines.

The North Side Westfield Firehouse is a historic building, listed on the local, state and national registry. Due to this designation, Chief Castellano appeared before the Westfield Architectural Review Board so that its members could make aesthetic recommendations to the changes.

Also present at the meeting were Nancy Priest, Chairwoman of the Historic Preservation Commission and Town Historian, and Executive Director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC), Sherry Cronin. According to Chief Castellano, the

building will look the same and no bricks will be moved.

The Westfield Fire Department has been having communication problems throughout town. They carry multiple radios, and sometimes neither of them will work in these "dead spots" in town. These dead spots include Lamberts Mill Road and inside Genesis Elder Care, downtown Westfield along North Avenue, and inside Children's Specialized Hospital. The proposed antenna would allow for communication in the downtown area.

"We have a viable downtown business center, if we can't protect it, we're in a world of trouble," Chief Castellano said at Monday night's meeting.

The Chief also made it clear that safety of the firemen, residents and the buildings are the reason he has asked for the antenna. He explained to the board that one third of the fireman that were killed on September 11 died because they lost communication. He explained that according to laws put forth by OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), the fire department has to provide communication inside and

outside the buildings.

Chief Castellano added that he was also speaking on behalf of Westfield Police Chief Bernard Tracy, as the police department will also use the antenna.

Mrs. Priest told *The Westfield Leader* that the commission is against the antennas going in as they will impact the fabric of the building. She added that it would require drilling into the building.

Mrs. Priest said that the louvers are, "just going to look awful." Adding that it was not just aesthetics that she was concerned about, but safety issues regarding cell antennas as well.

Currently, chicken wire exists across the openings in the tower to keep birds out. The tower was originally used to hang and dry hoses.

Mrs. Cronin told *The Leader* that there are many questions to be answered. She cited a publication from the national historic trust, which explains how to conceal cell antennas in historic buildings. She said that this plan calls for a large canopy, and the louvers would close off the bell tower, and then there would be a chain link fence.

Mrs. Cronin also wrote a letter to ARCH, the firm which represents Verizon, on June 21, questioning the prudence of looking into other locations, the fact that according to the zoning laws cellular antennas are not permitted in the central business district, among other concerns.

Mrs. Priest and Mrs. Cronin echoed their remarks on behalf of their boards at the meeting. They both also noted that because the firehouse is a historic building, there will be a Section 106 review to obtain public input and that the final decision on whether the antenna can be installed will be made at the state level.

Chief Castellano told *The Leader* that many changes have occurred to the building over the years. There are now three bays where there were once four, and windows have been bricked in, as well as changes to the inside of the building. The building was built in 1911.

Mrs. Priest questioned the safety of a cell antenna and cited other communities that are looking into towers, such as Fanwood. She also suggested that the antenna go in another location, to which, the Chief responded that the department needs 24-hour, seven-day-per-week access to the equipment.

The board unanimously approved the antenna, asking Chief Castellano to look into a different type of fence for the pad and the possibility of inseting the antenna into the tower.

"I don't think that the DWC should oppose antennas that will protect the downtown area and buildings," Chief Castellano told *The Leader*.

According to Zoning Officer Kathleen Neville, a list of all cell antennas in town does not exist. She did say that she knows of antennas atop the Westfield Arms on the corner of Prospect Street and Cowperthwaite Square, as well as some on top of a downtown building.

Many news reports and citizens have raised concerns over the health risks associated with cell towers, antennas and cellular phones. Though there do not seem to be any conclusive reports that they cause health problems, there is also no guarantee that microwave radiation is safe at any level.

A most recent study has shown increased lymphoma in mice exposed to radio frequency radiation (RFR), according to <http://www.mcv.edu/gcr/cop/cell-phone-health-FAQ/toc.html>.

Mountainside Board of Education Updated On Construction and Academic Action Plan

By TRACY EVANS
Specially Written for *The Times*

MOUNTAINSIDE -- The Mountainside Board of Education gathered in last Thursday evening at the Mountainside Public Library, its temporary home. The change in venue was the result of one of many aspects of the board's Long Range Facility plan which is quickly preparing the Deerfield and Beechwood Schools for the fall opening.

The former home of the school board meetings, Deerfield School, had begun its own process of asbestos abatement for what will be nearly a two-week period of establishing critical barriers and intensive demolition.

As both schools undergo massive interior and exterior construction efforts, the board has become increasingly concerned as to whether or not the work will meet the fall deadline.

Joining the board was Ciro Randazzo, of Randazzo Builders, Inc., as well as James Ruban, representing the Musial Architectural Group, which is controlling the project.

Mr. Ruban provided a detailed update on the progress made to date. Classroom extensions at Beechwood School are nearly complete, with the vinyl siding and masonry showing signs of development. Interior work has already taken place, accommodating the enlarged spaces. Outstanding materials for both sites, however, still need to be ordered.

"There is a good amount of site work that needs to be done," continued Mr. Ruban, describing the state of the reopening Beechwood School. "It's not extensive but it's important."

School Board Vice-President

Sally Riveccio attempted to find out exactly how extensive the remaining work will be. Despite the finishing date set on the current contract, which was projected to be on or around August 29, Mr. Ruban offered his, "professional opinion," and advised the board to, "prepare for the worst."

The next step for the board to consider was how this possible delay will affect the students.

Mr. Randazzo stressed that the builders are prioritizing with this in mind.

"The students won't be displaced. Areas that need to be open will be," he said.

The major areas of construction that remain are the school board offices and the library and media centers, while the classrooms and cafeterias promise to be complete.

Board members Frank Geiger and Peter Goggi both persisted in questioning the guests, expressing their concern for the children's safety among the presence of construction work. While the construction would be confined if continued into September, Mr. Ruban stated that one of the primary questions of a smooth opening to the school year, "is ultimately in the town inspector's hands."

While the students may be able to move about the building safely, there is an imminent hazard of fire alarms not extending to those parts of the schools that are incomplete and under construction.

Mr. Randazzo estimated that, if delayed, all construction work will conclude by the end of September at the latest possible date.

Chief School Administrator Dr. Gerald Schaller proceeded with the preliminary report of the board's Action Plan in response to the GEPA (Grade Eight Proficiency Assess-

ment) testing results.

Working with a curriculum coordinator, the board hopes to establish in-service programs that will utilize staff input and address particular academic areas of interest. The complete breakdown of testing results will be made available to the board in September.

Due to the high scores on the GEPA testing, which place the Mountainside school district in the 75 percent and above tier, a prioritized state evaluation is scheduled for early this fall. The state's assessment will cover such topics as school level planning, the curriculum connection to core academic standards, pupil behavior and staff development as well as school board ethics.

The final discussion of the evening was related to the second reading of a newly revised policy of zero tolerance for fighting and assault within the schools. The board recently sought to define the term "zero tolerance" and its implications more specifically.

In addition, Mr. Goggi recalled how the policy was re-crafted to reflect, "the chain of command" with respect to the multiple school buildings that will be active beginning this fall.

The policy states that the Chief School Administrator, or his designate, is responsible for disciplinary actions toward the student body. Since Dr. Schaller will assume the role of full-time principal at the Beechwood School, the principal of Deerfield, Mrs. Church, will assume the role as his designate at her respective office.

Board member John Perrin addressed the possibility of another individual serving as designate in outstanding circumstances, which the board decided was lawful if such an individual was appointed by the acting principals in either school in their absence.

On a bittersweet note, the board

bid farewell to School Administrator and Board Secretary Florence Shukis, who will be officially retiring this fall to spend more time with her family. She will remain, however, through the fall audit and to witness the completion of the Long Range Facility Plan projects.

Mr. Manahan's New State Post

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

numbers of young adults with drug problems from upscale communities. Quoting Ex-Health Secretary, Joseph Califano, Mr. Manahan said that it's not whether or not your kids will be thrown into a sea of drugs, but whether or not you teach them how to swim."

Mr. Manahan also reflected that during his tenure, his office made great strides in educating the public about identity theft and protecting children from predators, especially on the Internet.

Regarding recent developments in terrorism and security, Mr. Manahan said, "every government agency is better prepared today than ever before. The Counter-Terror Task Force in New Jersey is coordinated with all local agencies and the likelihood of terrorism is no longer great," he added.

Prior to serving as Union County Prosecutor, Mr. Manahan was a private practice attorney and an Assistant Prosecutor in Union County. He also served as a Chairman of the District XII Ethics Committee and served as a Supreme Court of New Jersey Special Ethics Master.

"Very few people have the opportunity to make changes. I've been one lucky guy to be able to have had such a positive impact every day that I went to work," he said.

Mr. Manahan remarked that his new position will be much more focused in specific areas, where he hopes to make a real difference.

Forrester, Kean

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

gress for 20 years, that is long enough," said Mr. Forrester.

Toward the end of the press conference *The Times* asked Mr. Forrester why they chose Westfield to make this announcement.

Mr. Forrester responded, "Mayor McDermott (of Westfield) makes me feel so welcomed, the location is also convenient for Governor Kean and I'm just very pleased to be in Westfield."

Kelly Feil of SP Earns Dean's List Recognition

SCOTCH PLAINS -- The Office of Public Information at Ithaca College in Ithaca, N.Y. has reported that Kelly Feil of Scotch Plains was named to the Dean's List for the spring 2002 semester.

A graduate of Union Catholic Regional High School in Scotch Plains, Kelly has chosen the exploratory major in the field of humanities and science.

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ALL SYSTEMS GO...Fanwood Library Director Dan Weiss looks on as patrons enjoy new workstations and software at the library, located at North Avenue and Tillotson Road. The Friends of the Fanwood Library helped to fund the improvements. See story below.

Library Friends Help Fund Computer System Upgrades

FANWOOD -- New workstations and software have greatly improved computer systems at the Fanwood Memorial Library, according to Library Director Dan Weiss.

Instead of buying a series of fully loaded computers, the library has established a network of machines that share software. Each machine occupies a workstation, or kiosk, and provides Internet access and a suite of office software.

The software includes word processing, spreadsheet and Powerpoint capabilities.

Mr. Weiss and Peter Billson of ELB Internet Services installed the system. The Library Director reported that the system upgrade, "provides a more stable, dependable and uniform experience for patrons who use the computers." "Despite the fact that they are in constant heavy use - which is a

good thing - there have been very few problems," Mr. Weiss remarked.

Although each new session at one of the seven computer stations begins the same way for everyone, users can personalize any individual session, for example, by adding bookmarks.

In addition, users may work from their own floppy disks and access their web-based e-mail.

The Friends of the Fanwood Memorial Library has joined the Borough of Fanwood, library trustees and the Freeholders of Union County in funding the system upgrade.

In addition to being easier to administer than a complete personal computer, the workstations are also significantly less expensive. The Friends paid just \$725 for a workstation, compared to \$1,000 to \$1,500 for a personal computer.

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