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BOE Disagrees with Councils Over 'Field of Dreams' Project

By JENNIFER PINTO
Specially Written for The Times

The "Field of Dreams" project at Park Middle School in Scotch Plains will lead to the creation of two future baseball fields as opposed to three, the number originally agreed to by the governing bodies of Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

At the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education's public meeting, held last Thursday, the board opted for Concept Two. This involves a configuration of two baseball fields, as opposed to Concept One, which allows for three baseball fields.

The Shared Services Committee, consisting of three members each from Scotch Plains, Fanwood and the local school board, has appointed Killam Associates to redevelop the Park Middle School field.

A \$300,000 grant, approved by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, which matched contributions of \$100,000 each from Scotch Plains, Fanwood, and the school board, brought a total of \$600,000 to the project.

The board's review of the "Field of Dreams" status report was the final topic of discussion on its agenda.

Business Administrator/Board Secretary Anthony Del Sordi asked board members if they would agree on a design for the facility, so that Killam Associates can move along with the project. That evening, the board approved Concept Two in a 6-1 vote (board member Thomas Russo voted against it).

No representatives from Killam Associates were present at the public meeting. Board President Lance Porter and board member Craig Nowlin were also absent.

On Friday, Mayor Louis Jung of Fanwood told *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* he had not heard about the board's recent decision and that his council made its decision based on Killam Associates' recommendation.

The Times also spoke to Mayor Martin Marks of Scotch Plains on Monday regarding the board's recent decision. Mayor Marks, who at that point had not spoken to any board members, stated, "Killam made the recommendation that the three fields (Concept One) was feasible."

"Another issue, especially on Park fields, is that they have been over-used," Mayor Marks said. He mentioned how three fields would help avoid the problem of overuse, which tends to lead to major maintenance problems.

Lighting for the field was briefly discussed, but due to the high cost of lighting, no decisions were reached. It is also likely that all games will be scheduled by recreation officials using new and efficient computer software provided through a Union County REDI (Regional Efficiency Development Incentive) grant.

Under other board business, Mr. Del Sordi gave the board and the public a brief construction update.

"I visited all the school sites to-

day; we are very confident that we will be ready when school starts," Mr. Del Sordi said.

According to Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol Choye, registration for Park Middle School will most likely take place at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, due to extensive construction at Park School.

Dr. Choye also stated that the an-

ticipated fifth grade orientation would be canceled and incorporated into the morning portion of the first day of school on Monday, September 9. Parents will receive letters in the mail in light of this change.

A recap of the Parent Teacher Association Safety Report highlighted safety conditions and behaviors. Mr. Del Sordi listed some of the safety

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Mayor Says SP Green Could be Renamed For Alan Augustine

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

Alan Augustine served Scotch Plains as a longtime member of the Township Council and as Mayor. He represented the area as a member of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders and then as a State Assemblyman. Now, Scotch Plains is close to recognizing Mr. Augustine, who died in June of 2001, by renaming the Village Green at the corner of Park Avenue and Front Street in his honor.

After Mr. Augustine's death, recalled Mayor Martin Marks, township officials met with Mr. Augustine's wife, Jean, and "we told her we'd really like to remember him in some significant way."

Mayor Marks told *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that Mrs. Augustine had said that one of her husband's favorite places in Scotch Plains was the Village Green.

Mr. Augustine had been instrumental in securing state Green Acres funding for the development of the park.

Though nothing has been officially decided, Mayor Marks said it is possible that the renaming of the park will occur on Scotch Plains Day on Saturday, September 28.

Mrs. Augustine also told township officials last summer that it had always been her husband's hope that a fountain could be placed on the Village Green. And the township is moving forward on fulfilling that wish.

In recent weeks, letters have been sent to Mr. Augustine's former colleagues and associates in Union County and throughout New Jersey soliciting donations to help pay for a fountain that will ultimately be placed in the center of the future Augustine Park.

Saying that he expects the fountain's installation to take place sometime next spring, Mayor Marks

reported that donations "are coming in quite nicely."

All decisions concerning the park and the fountain are being handled by the Augustine Park Committee, whose members include Mrs. Au-



Alan Augustine

gustine and former Mayors Geri Samuel, Joan Papen and William McClintock, Jr., who serves as Chairman.

In recent months, the council has reminded residents that their donations toward the fountain are also welcome.

Checks payable to Township of Scotch Plains Augustine Park can be sent to the Municipal Building at 430 Park Avenue, Scotch Plains, 07076.

SHOPPERS HAVE CURTAILED PURCHASE OF LUXURY ITEMS, OWNERS SAY

Several Local Businesses Describe Economy Since September 11 Attacks As Being Tough

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

Since September 11 and after numerous corporate accounting scandals, the economy has weathered several drastic and unpredictable upsets.



A WET SATURDAY IN SCOTCH PLAINS... Fire departments from various parts of New Jersey represented the spirit of the state's bravest during the Scotch Plains Volunteer Fire Department's "Wetdown" on Saturday. Fire crews kept crowds of attendees cool on the scorching summer day, and the Union County Police & Fire Pipes and Drums Corps kept the beat throughout the evening. The Scotch Plains Fire Department, Engine No. 23, was presented with a "Wetdown Participation Award." See Page 4's "Straight On" column for more details.

RETIREES IN WESTFIELD SCHOOLS BENEFIT MORE

School Administrators Contracts Compared in WF, SP-F and MS

By LAUREN S. PASS
Specially Written for The Times

In a recent comparison of the contracts for administrators in the school districts of Westfield, Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Mountaintopside, research has proven that retiring administrators from Westfield receive superior benefits to those in neighboring districts.

The retirement plan states that if an administrator has 25 years of service or more in Westfield, then they are entitled to their pension and benefits. Those who retire with less than 25 years of service, in Westfield, may continue in the district health program with their dependents at their own expense, until they reach the age of Medicare eligibility. Retirees may also participate in prescription and dental coverage at their own expense.

For a full-year administrator who retires between June 30 and Septem-

ber 1 and is used as a consultant receives a \$9,000 a month stipend, for 10- and 10 1/2-month administrators the stipend is \$7,000 a month.

The administrative contract in the Westfield public school district covers the elementary and secondary principals, department chairpersons, district supervisors, department supervisors, elementary and secondary assistant principals, directors of technology and state/federal program, grants and testing, as well as the supervisor of the maintenance department.

However, the contract excludes the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, assistant business manager, assistant board secretary, assistant superintendent of curriculum instruction and assistant superintendent for student personnel services.

The contract includes provisions

for 12-month, 10 and a half-month and 10-month work years.

From 2000 to 2003, all administrators received a 3.9 percent salary increase per year.

Department supervisors who oversee more than one department in a school, or oversee a department in all three secondary schools receives \$1,500 a year.

The board will pay for all administrators and dependents the full premium for CIGNA designated provider program as well as the full premium for Delta Dental, providing \$1,500 per year for each insured person. Any person wishing to enroll in the CIGNA traditional indemnity coverage for health and major medical will pay \$800 if they earn \$100,000 or more, \$700 if they earn between \$70,000 and \$99,999, or \$600 if they earn \$0 to \$69,999.

Each administrator is also eligible

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HOSING DOWN...A barrage of red and yellow fire trucks, fire chiefs' vehicles and rescue automobiles occupied Martine Avenue outside of the Southside Station in Scotch Plains, as sprays of cool water sprung from the vehicles to relieve attendees from the Saturday heat.

In addition to too few customers,

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From the archives of *The Westfield Leader*
NEW MEMBER...Lifelong Scotch Plains resident Carolyn Sorge has been selected to replace Guy Celentano on the roster of GOP candidates for Township Council in November's election. Please see Page 4 for the full story.

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Borough BOE Learns School Year Changes, Major Construction Delays

By TRACY EVANS
Specially Written for The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE -- Thursday evening's Mountainside Board of Education meeting opened to a full audience that heard Chief School Administrator Dr. Gerard Schaller introduce a revamped schedule for the 2002-2003 academic year, in light of the continued delay on the Deerfield and Beechwood School construction projects.

While the opening of the year will be pushed back from Wednesday, September 4, to Monday September 9, the larger problem remains with the process of re-opening Beechwood School to house grades Mopet through 2.

The new plan calls for the temporary housing of all grades at Deerfield school, until Beechwood School officially opens its doors on Wednesday, November 13.

Anthony Randazzo of Randazzo Builders Inc. explained to the frustrated group of parents that there have been "industry-wide delays in obtaining materials." The asbestos abatement project was also noted as a factor that caused an additional 24-day delay.

The Deerfield School abatement was concluded on August 16, with

construction left to begin on this past Monday. The September delay will accommodate this delay in the work, which includes the demolition of the science and math rooms at the location.

In addition, the schools will be closed on Monday and Tuesday, November 11 and 12, as part of the effort to assist a mid-year transition and the delayed reopening of Beechwood. These school days, as well as the preceding weekend, will allow teachers to set up their new classroom locations.

The school board hopes to encourage both students and parents of the younger grades to visit the new schools prior to the move in order to acquaint themselves with the new surroundings.

Trailers, which will be utilized for two out of the five kindergarten classes, will contain bathrooms and air-conditioning. These facilities, which have been in the possession of the Mountainside school district, have undergone testing for mold spores. The test results were available this past Tuesday.

Adjustments to the school calendar were made along with the new plans for reopening. The addition of a half-day on Monday, December 23, with 1 p.m. dismissal, was a main part of the discussion.

While board member Frank Geiger questioned the effectiveness of open school days late into the holiday season, Board of Education President Richard Kress reminded those attending the meeting that the dates voted upon at Thursday's meeting will remain "flexible."

The arrangements currently account for the 180-day calendar required by state, but do not factor in the possibility of inclement weather. If there are any snow days during the school year, the board will act to take away days from either President's or Spring Breaks, or add onto the end of the school year, which is slated for Monday, June 23.

Dr. Schaller's advised parents in the audience "to watch the calendar carefully" and prepare for the possibility of any changes.

President of the Mountainside Educational Association, Jeanette Maraffi, informed those gathered

at Thursday's meeting that Mountainside is not the only school district facing challenges this school year.

"Every district is going through exactly the same thing right now," she said.

While words of similar circumstances did not alleviate the problem at hand, Councilman Keith Turner, who spoke on behalf of Mountainside Mayor Robert Vigilanti and the Mountainside Borough Council, presented a more comforting piece of news.

He said that the borough will offer engineering resources and sub-code officials toward the facility plan, an effort that was accepted by the board to hopefully avoid further delay.

The board adjourned into an executive session to meet with the contractor and architects of The Musial Group, which were on hand for the meeting.

In addition to other new considerations, the contractor faces a \$1,000 fine for each day beyond the Sunday, August 25, contract date where work is incomplete.

Information from the school board describing the alterations to the 2002-2003 school year were mailed out to parents and students this past Tuesday. A listing of each student's teacher and classroom assignments will be made available during the final week in August, and again in October in response to the transition to the Beechwood School for the younger grades.

Colgate Univ. Reports Baker Graduation

SCOTCH PLAINS -- The graduation of Scotch Plains resident Elizabeth G. Baker was recently revealed by Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen R. Baker of Scotch Plains, Elizabeth received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Colgate on May 19.

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Many Local Businesses Describe Economy Since September 11 Attacks As Being Tough

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Mr. Pardon attributed the slowdown to corporations spending less on his products.

KMG Computers, which is located on East Second Street in Scotch Plains, has also been struggling with the tough economy.

Owner Keith Quezara told *The Times*, "Some months have been good, while other months have been terrible," adding that many people are attempting to upgrade the computers they have rather than buy new ones.

However, Crystal McCormick, the manager of Westfield's Lancaster, Ltd., claimed that she has not seen any change in their balance sheets from last year. Lancaster sells greeting cards and small gift items.

"We're completely even with last year's sales," Ms. McCormick stated. "I think September 11 brought people closer and they're buying more cards and gifts than before," she said.

David Martone, one of the owners of Classic Thyme in Westfield, agreed with Ms. McCormick. He said that his sales were steady and ahead of last year's.

"Our type of business doesn't seem to suffer in bad economic times," he stated. "We have a mix of high-end items and moderately priced kitchen necessities, making us recession-proof."

Juxtapose Gallery Proprietor Gerri Gildea, whose store sells fine art and frames, said that business has been good.

"We're related to the entertainment industry and home furnishings," Ms. Gildea said. "During times of trouble, people have a strong nesting instinct. Surrounding themselves with beautiful things helps their mental health."

"Despite these uncertain economic times, many people have a 'let's-get-it-now' mentality," Ms. Gildea suggested.

Laura Sulovski, a travel agent for 25 years and owner of Key Travel in Scotch Plains, told *The Times* that this past spring was not the best season, but much better than the drastic slowdown seen immediately after 9/11.

"September 11 was a terrible shock to the industry," she said.

However, Ms. Sulovski said that people have gotten over their fear of flying and the numbers of people traveling have returned to normal.

She said that the Internet has had more of a detrimental affect on the travel agency industry than anything else.

"There's a misconception that there are better deals on the Internet," she said. "There are great deals to be had, but you won't know this if you only shop on the Internet," she added. Business flights are booked up and economy class flights are also full, she mentioned.

Real estate has been one of the few industries to flourish during these economic upheavals.

According to Dom Lamastra of ERA Suburban Realty in Scotch Plains, the lower-priced housing market is booming with no signs of slowing down.

"Typically, we see a slow down in the market in July and August," he said. "This has held true for houses over \$400,000, but under

that price range remains in high demand," he related.

His brother and business partner, Paul Lamastra, added that houses between \$175,000 and \$300,000 are still flying off the market. He attributed this to the lower interest rates creating a huge incentive to buy a home now and the influx of new people into this area.

One thing that all of the retail owners and managers agreed on is that local businesses need the support of local customers to stay afloat and thrive.

Adler's owner, Mr. Arkin, said that it was vitally important for homeowners to recognize that the value of their homes is directly related to the success of their towns' businesses.

Most of the private storeowners also stressed that the personal service which they could provide is unmatched by the big chain stores or Internet shopping.

Administrators

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for a grant of \$2,000 but a \$4,000 limit to meet reasonable travel or other expenses occurred outside of school hours.

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood public school contract for administrators includes all principals and assistant principals for elementary, middle and high schools.

Administrators are allowed \$14,000 annually for tuition reimbursement.

The board will provide and pay for the cost of health and dental insurance. For those who retire after 20 years of service to Scotch Plains-Fanwood will receive 100 percent coverage paid for the first year, with board payment decreasing by 10 percent each year, and 50 percent paid by the board from the sixth year of retirement on.

Administrators also receive 25 days of paid vacation per year, and 30 days after six years of service, as well as 13 paid holidays.

The base salary for an administrator in the year 2002-2003 is \$73,807. There is also longevity increases for employees hired before July 1, 1997 of \$750 per year after 15 years of service, seven of which served in Scotch Plains-Fanwood, and \$3,500 per year after 25 years of service, 13 of which in the district. They also receive an additional \$550.

Mountainside has separate contracts for the chief school administrator, principal of Deerfield School, the curriculum coordinator/supervisor of Deerfield School, and the supervisor of special services/learning consultant of Deerfield School.

All administrators receive the same health and dental benefits as provided to the teachers of Mountainside. Health benefits are provided by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

The principal of Deerfield School is salaried at \$94,500 for the year 2002-2003. The principal receives 20 vacation days per year.

The salary of Dr. Gerard Schaller, Chief School Administrator, salary is determined by the school board and is increased each year based on performance. He receives 13 sick days and 20 vacation days per year. He also receives \$2,000 annually in automobile travel expenses incurred.

The curriculum coordinator/supervisor is salaried at \$82,500 for the year 2002-2003. She also receives 20 vacation days and 15 holidays per year.

The supervisor of special services/

Novartis Employees Volunteer At CSH's Fanwood Facility

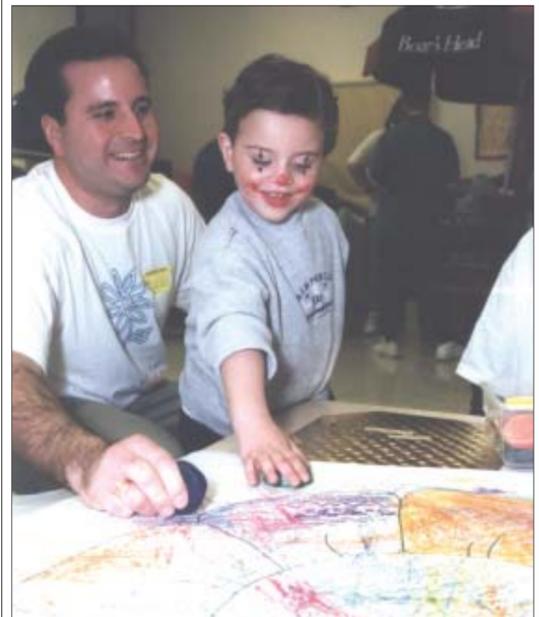
FANWOOD -- Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation recently held its annual day of service, Community Partnership Day, at its headquarters sites in East Hanover and Summit.

On this day, company employees are invited to volunteer for nonprofit community agencies on company time, either at the agencies' facilities or during ac-

tivities held on behalf of the agencies at Novartis.

Children's Specialized Hospital in Fanwood participated in Community Partnership Day by hosting a group of 30 Novartis volunteers.

There, the volunteers assisted with the school's annual Spring Carnival, helping children with relay races, games, artwork and snacks.



NEWFOUND FRIENDS...Emilio Agueros, a Senior Systems Analyst at Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, enjoys a coloring activity with Juan, a student at Children's Specialized Hospital's Fanwood facility. Novartis employees volunteered at the annual Spring Carnival there as part of their company's Community Partnership Day. Mr. Agueros is a resident of Fanwood.

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'Field of Dreams'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

objectives, including installing intercom phone systems, adding more staff members and installing additional outdoor lighting. Many of these issues will be discussed in the student handbook that will be distributed during the first week of school.

Resolve Community Counseling Services, Inc. presented its annual report to the board for renewal of contact services for September 2002 through the end of August 2003.

According to Resolve's Dr. Lydia Abrams, Resolve has increased its student referrals up to 26 percent, an 8 percent increase from the previous year. Resolve will provide most services during school hours, but according to Dr. Abrams, students can also seek counseling through Resolve after school and during the summer months, free of charge.

Resolve advises students on academic and social issues, as well as such topics as depression, sexual activity and drugs. Resolve also counseled a few students who were affected by the events of September 11. The board approved the Resolve contract in the amount of \$140,336.85.

In addition, the board approved submission of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) grant in the amount of \$264,120; a total of \$545,345 was awarded to Kyle Conti Construction for improvement of the high school varsity baseball and softball fields, and the Music Shop of Boonton has been awarded the bid for \$27,828 for new musical instruments.

The next Board of Education meeting will be held at 7:45 p.m. on Thursday, August 29, in the administration building.

Elizabethtown Water Company's customer service can be reached at (800) 272-1325 or accessed via its website at www.etownwater.com.

The council passed several other resolutions during the session. Officials will honor the request from the court administrator to return unclaimed bail to Willie Smith in the amount of \$250. The council also agreed on a request from the finance officer for the insertion of a special item of revenue into the 2002 budget: a municipal alliance grant addressing alcohol and drug abuse in the amount of \$15,285.

The borough also agreed upon the reappointment of part-time tax collector Patricia Scherer, retroactive to January 1, 2000, after an oversight upon completion of the previous unexpired term ending December 31, 1999.

The council awarded the contract

WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7
• Jewelry and a pair of skis, valued at a total of approximately \$2,500, were reported stolen from a Moss Avenue residence during a burglary.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8
• Steven Muzeni, 19, of Westfield was arrested in the 100 block of Marlboro Street and charged with possession of under 50 grams of suspected marijuana. He was released with a court summons.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 9
• A resident of the 200 block of Ross Place reported that the passenger side mirror on her motor vehicle was smashed. The incident occurred on the same street where the victim lives.

• A one-foot by four-foot glass window was broken during the night at a business located in the 700 block of Central Avenue.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10
• Two New Jersey license plates were reported stolen from the parking lot of a local recreation facility.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11
• Jonathan J. Singhbawa, 19, of Westfield was charged with resisting arrest after he allegedly attempted to elude police who were seeking to take

him into custody on a \$180 contempt of court warrant issued by the Westfield Municipal Court. Singhbawa was apprehended at his home and was later released with a summons.

MONDAY, AUGUST 12
• A Cumberland Avenue resident reported the unauthorized use of her debit card, whereupon \$300 was withdrawn from her bank account.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13
• Three juveniles reported the theft of their bicycles, which had been chained to a lamppost in front of the Rialto Theatre on East Broad Street. The total value of the missing bicycles is \$2,250.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15
• A Carleton Road resident reported that someone entered his locked motor vehicle, which was parked in his driveway, and removed a Cobra radar detector.
• Brandon Fooster, 27, of Westfield was arrested in the 200 block of Cacciola Place and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. He was released on his own recognizance with a summons.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16
• Johana A. Avendano, 21, of Elizabeth was arrested and charged with theft, theft by deception and shoplifting, based on a complaint from a North Avenue store. The case involved \$580 worth of merchandise and currency, according to police. She was issued summonses and released on her own recognizance.

• Frank Linda, 40, of Watchung was arrested at Lamberts Mill Road and Warren Street and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of an alcoholic beverage. He was also charged with refusal to submit to a breathalyzer test and subsequently released.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18
• Paola S. Possoperez, 25, of Newark was arrested at Central and Ayliffe Avenues and charged with driving while intoxicated. She was later released.

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