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SETTING UP SHOP... Former Union County Freeholder and Fanwood Mayor Linda d. Stender sets up her new office in Fanwood, which she will occupy as Assemblywoman of the 22nd Legislative District. Pictured, above, Assemblywoman Stender hangs a few cherished framed photos on the wall of her new headquarters.

Scotch Plains Council Faces Tough Decisions in Planning for 2002 Budget

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

This month, the Scotch Plains Township Council will begin to tackle the 2002 municipal budget, a process that promises to be tougher than in recent years, given the condition of the state and national economies.

Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins has presented council members with his expenditure recommendations for this year — just under \$18.046 million, a 2.36 percent increase over last year's level and, preliminarily, a 4.4 tax point increase on the spending side of the township ledger.

"This year is a very difficult year," Mr. Atkins told the council during its Tuesday night conference meeting, pointing to the national recession, the state budget crisis and related threats to state aid to localities, as well as the negative effects of low interest rates on municipalities' investments.

Mr. Atkins noted that in past years council members have tended, in general, to be somewhat accepting of and wedded to the Township Manager's spending recommendations.

"The council this year may have to have an ax" as it considers specific spending requests, he warned. If revenue levels were to remain

the same this year as they were in 2001, Mr. Atkins foresaw a tax increase for local government services of around four tax points.

"Unfortunately," he wrote in a detailed memorandum to the council, "the revenues have not remained stable particularly due to a considerable loss in the earning of interest income."

Last year's municipal budget represented a 3.4 percent increase over 2000, and resulted in a four-point increase in the portion of local property taxes that finance municipal government services.

Final decisions on the revenue side of the budget will be made after the council holds two public budget meetings on Wednesday, February 13, and Thursday, February 21, at the Municipal Building.

Mr. Atkins told the council he has already made cuts in 12 different departmental spending requests totaling close to \$750,000, and pointed out that if those requests had been approved in full, it would have translated into an additional eight tax points.

"This, of course, is not acceptable," he reported. Major reductions, Mr. Atkins added, were made in spending requests from the Police and Fire Departments, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Construction Office and the Scotch

"Unfortunately, the revenues have not remained stable particularly due to a considerable loss in the earning of interest income."

Township Manager
Thomas E. Atkins
In a memorandum to the council

Plains Public Library. Among the factors contributing to the proposed hike in spending are the creation of the township's LOSAP (Length Of Service Awards Program) for the local fire department and rescue squad, which was approved by local voters in November (an expenditure of nearly \$75,000); a \$62,000 emergency appropriation to cover auditing and legal costs stemming from last year's embezzlement by the former Township Treasurer; and continued high health insurance costs, which Mr. Atkins called "a nightmare."

It is expected that the 2002 budget will be formally introduced sometime next month, with a final public hearing and voting taking place in April.

Plains Public Library.

Among the factors contributing to the proposed hike in spending are the creation of the township's LOSAP (Length Of Service Awards



MANNEQUINS READY FOR VALENTINE'S DAY... The mannequins in the window of Victoria's Secret on East Broad Street have been causing quite a stir for some Westfield residents, who believe the Valentine's Day display is a bit too risqué.

Fanwood Borough Council Listens to Proposal For Victorian Gazebo to Display Antique Sleigh

By KIMBERLY MERZ
Specially Written for The Times

A proposal to build a Victorian gazebo where an antique sleigh could be displayed during the year was the main focus of the Fanwood Borough Council's Tuesday night agenda meeting.

In addition, discussions continued on the redevelopment plan for a block of downtown property that is expected to be adopted via an ordinance by the governing body in March.

Although the plan was unanimously endorsed with a 9-0 vote by the Fanwood Planning Board on January 23, two amendments to the plan were recommended by the board for

the Borough Council's approval prior to adoption of the ordinance.

The first called for clarification on the definition of yard setbacks and lot lines. Borough Attorney Wilfred Coronato said the amendment was not necessary, however, and might confuse things, due to a more detailed definition found in the Fanwood Borough Code.

The second amendment advocated applying existing provisions in the borough's zoning ordinance dealing with the removal and preservation of trees to the redevelopment plan.

Mr. Coronato said that he did not have a problem with making that change. The ordinance will be put to a final vote on Tuesday, March 12.

At the top of the meeting, Clayton Pierce, Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Coordinator, asked the council's permission for the gazebo to be constructed as a display venue for the sleigh.

The inspiration for the gazebo came from the need for a place to display one of three antique, horse-drawn sleighs that are currently being restored by local craftsmen Joseph Shott, Alan Ebersole and Robert Germinder.

In addition to plans and illustrations concerning the proposed gazebo, Mr. Pierce and Mr. Shott presented at the meeting the driver's seat of one sleigh which is in the process of restoration.

"In its day, it was quite the fancy sleigh," Mr. Shott explained, noting that the sleigh was adorned with gold leafing and elaborate line decoration.

The project, dubbed the Fanwood Friends of the Gazebo (FFOG), will be entirely underwritten by the Fanwood Business and Professional Association. Estimated total costs would be around \$8,000, with approximately 400 volunteer hours, for assembly, Mr. Pierce said it was hoped many of the materials would be donated.

"Our thought is, if we could get permission to build this gazebo, then we could put the sleigh in the gazebo

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RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT... New traffic lights have been erected at South and Martine Avenues in downtown Fanwood. Pictured, above, Tony Barroquiro and Firmino Marcus of Frascella Electrical of Bound Brook, make certain that the red, amber and green lights will run smoothly.

New Jersey Naval Militia Experiences Growing Pains With Recruitment Process

By DEBBIE MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

According to Rear Admiral Timothy Beard, the New Jersey Naval Militia is in need of volunteers, but they do not have the personnel available to review and evaluate the multitude of applications they have recently received.

Hundreds of applicants have been waiting, some more than two years, to be appointed to an appropriate rank and position. The Naval Militia has been flooded with applications by volunteers wishing to donate their time, especially since the terrorist attacks on September 11, said Admiral Beard.

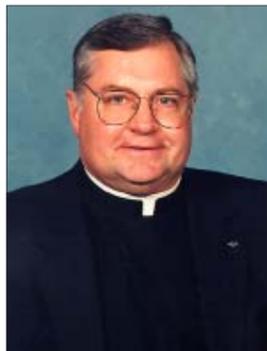
The Naval Militia, a division of the New Jersey National Guard, is an all-volunteer, adjunct organization, made up mostly of retired reservists and ex-military personnel, who in times of emergency or disaster, lend their assistance to other branches of the armed forces, such as assisting the National Guard and the Coast Guard.

Civilians, with special expertise in some skills, such as doctors and nurses, are also recruited by the Naval Militia to serve in a variety of roles within the organization's three battalions.

Bill Sheppard, Public Affairs Officer for the Naval Militia, described the organization as a "force-multiplier," especially in times of disasters, such as during hurricanes or floods.

With the interest of the public to volunteer, growing pains have resulted, particularly with respect to

determining rank. Many of volunteers are seasoned professionals in civilian life. They expect their vol-



Reverend Donald Hummel

unteer role to reflect their accomplishments.

The Public Affairs Officer for the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Colonel John Dwyer, said that only prior military experience is given consideration, but not civilian accomplishments, when determining rank.

Colonel Dwyer explained that even surgeons, assemblymen and congressmen enter the organization at lower ranks. In his experience, no one ever enters into the Naval Militia at a rank of Captain, which is the second in command.

He said that it is possible to offer someone an "honorary" position and rank, which would encompass the title and some of the privileges, but not the command authority.

For example, this controversy over rank in the Naval Militia, Joint Command, has been brewing between a local Catholic priest and the Naval Militia's Head Chaplain, an Assemblies of God Minister.

The conflict has escalated into a standoff, preventing The Reverend Donald Hummel, of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains from volunteering, as he would like to, for the organization.

Among Reverend Hummel's many accomplishments, he has served as the Chaplain for several local Police Departments and the Police Academy in Scotch Plains. He has also been the Chaplain for the National Catholic Committee on Scouting for the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, as well as a liaison to the Bishop's Committee on Scouting and an international representative.

He has also been assigned to coordinate the Priest's Health Commit-

tee by the Archbishop of his Diocese. Father Hummel has been a Catholic priest and an educator for over 25 years.

According to Reverend Hummel, he was initially recruited by the Naval Militia with the promise of being commissioned at the rank of Captain, to the Third Battalion to recruit Catholic Priests to serve the New Jersey National Guard's units, statewide.

There is currently a shortage of Catholic priests serving within the Roman Catholic Church and the military.

Reverend Hummel contends that the rank of Captain would be commensurate with his 25 years of experience serving the civilian community and necessary in order for him to successfully carry out his networking duties.

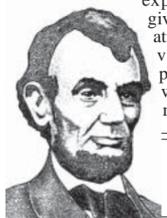
He said that Admiral Beard and Ex-Adjutant General Paul Glazer, the two head Commanders of the Naval Militia, promised him this rank upon his being commissioned.

Chaplain Errico Ianello told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that there was a miscommunication and that Reverend Hummel was never promised a rank of Captain. The Chaplain said that there is a very strict process that must be followed in order to properly rank and position newcom-

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Lincoln's Birthday - February 12

Leader/Times Reporter Maria Woehr Accepts Job at KSVI Television

WESTFIELD — Maria L. Woehr, Westfield resident and correspondent at *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood*, has opted to accept a



Maria L. Woehr

position as an on the scene television reporter at KSVI in Billings, Mont.

A Quorum Broadcasting Station, KSVI is a division of ABC/FOX.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Craig Woehr of Westfield, Maria graduated Westfield high school in 1997. She majored in journalism, with a concentration in broadcast journalism and international relations at Boston University, where she graduated in 2001.

Her reporting name with be Maria McCarron.



PRIDE IN COUNTRY...Principal of Coles Elementary School in Scotch Plains, Dr. Debbe Evans, is proud of first graders, twin brothers Jesse Ozdamar and Alex Ozdamar. The students sold red, white and blue pins, raising \$42 and donating the funds to the Walsh family, victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Westfield Council Establishes Self As Redevelopment Agency

By NANCY CROSS LANDALE
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD -- During its conference meeting Tuesday night, the Westfield Town Council approved a draft resolution establishing the Town of Westfield Redevelopment Agency and designating the council as the Redevelopment Agency, as per state statute. This measure was taken in furtherance of the council's examination of land redevelopment to address the parking issue.

Referring to the search for parking consultants, Town Administrator James Gildea said, "We are getting a lot of responses to the Requests For Qualifications (RFQs)."

Mr. Gildea asked Traffic Parking and Transportation Committee Chairman and Second Ward Councilman Rafael Betancourt for the RFQs to be reviewed by the committee at its next meeting on Tuesday, February 19. Thereafter, requests for proposals will be sent out.

Mr. Gildea also advised that the Finance Committee has discussed and set aside monies in the legal budget for anticipated expenses in the Ward Commission suit, an action pending in New Jersey Superior Court challenging the 2001 redrawing of Westfield's ward boundaries.

With the Recreation Commission's support, the council also decided to pursue plans to make the Memorial Pool Complex a smoke-free area.

The council also addressed a proposal to designate all town fields as smoke-free areas. Mayor Gregory McDermott pointed out that banning smoking from athletic fields may be excessive since, in his view, smokers are sensitive about where they smoke and their behavior does not interfere with athletes on the fields.

Third Ward Councilwoman Claire Lazarowitz agreed, stating that most smokers already feel alienated and still need places to engage in such conduct.

Fourth Ward Councilwoman Susan Jacobson pointed out that Kehler Stadium was successfully included in the ban on smoking for school property. In response, Mayor McDermott distinguished stadiums from open fields, where the area is not circumscribed.

Fourth Ward Councilman Lawrence Goldman observed, "Some people will walk off (to smoke), but some will stand with the parents and light up. These are the people that offend others."

The discussion concluded with the council agreeing to the Mayor's suggestion to "start with the pool and then work on expanding (smoke-free areas)."

In committee reports, Laws and Rules Committee Chairman and First Ward Councilman Carl Salisbury advised that Harrison Street resident Kerry Hanson and others have developed a proposal for front porches to be exempted from property coverage limitations so that residents with porches

can more readily incorporate additions to their homes.

Currently, for the majority of town properties, an owner may have up to 20 percent of the lot covered by structures. A standard back deck may occupy an additional 2 percent of the lot.

Under the proposal, the coverage limitation would increase from 20 percent to 28 percent for homes with unheated, roofed, or open porches.

According to Mr. Salisbury, the Laws and Rules Committee is unanimous in its agreement that an ordinance be adopted to change the coverage limitation in this manner.

Mr. Salisbury explained that when residents with front porches attempt to add to their existing homes, in order to comply with the current coverage limitation they are faced with the prospect of tearing down part or all of their porches or enclosing the porches.

He emphasized the communal importance of front porches and the need to preserve them to the greatest extent possible. He advised that both the Planning Board and the Historic Preservation Committee have endorsed the proposal.

Mr. Gildea added that the Board of Adjustment is still reviewing the matter and will provide its response in writing.

Town Attorney Robert Cockren expressed concern over the proposal, stating, "I have some misgivings because we could end up with all kinds of unintended results." Illustrating his point, Mr. Cockren asked, "What's to stop someone from putting on a very substantial front porch and then asking for a substantial lot increase?"

Mr. Salisbury responded that the proposal addresses this concern by limiting the size of front porches to 400 square feet.

Councilwoman Lazarowitz added, "It is prohibitively expensive to put on a front porch."

Ms. Hanson, who was present at the meeting, suggested that a width limitation also could be incorporated into the proposal.

Mr. Cockren advised that the town's zoning officer and an outside planner should be asked for their opinions about what other communities have done in similar instances.

He added, "We have a very strict lot coverage limitation compared with other towns. This is why the blocks don't look crowded."

In other committee news, Councilwoman Jacobson, Chairwoman of the Solid Waste Committee, advised that there have been 74 complaints concerning recycling services since January 1. Of these, 48 have been resolved and the remaining are being tracked by Town Engineer Kenneth B. Marsh.

As for garbage collection, Ms. Jacobson reported that the committee is considering revising fees to account for the varying usage of senior and adults living alone versus larger families.

Councilman Goldman, Chairman of the Public Works Committee, reported that at committee's request, Mr. Marsh prepared a status report of capital projects approved in 2001 and incomplete capital projects ap-

proved prior to 2001. This report will be updated monthly and include 2002 projects.

The Public Works Committee agreed that the goal is to complete capital projects in the year approved, to the extent feasible. This will require development of specifications and drafting implementing ordinances shortly after the council's consideration of the capital plan during the current budget process.

Specific projects discussed included repaving Scotch Plains Avenue from West Broad Street to Dartmoor Terrace and installing curbing on a portion of the block south of Shackamaxon Drive in the spring; as a traffic calming and safety measure, installing sidewalks on the north side of North Scotch Plains Avenue and narrowing the road, likely to be completed with improvements to Memorial Park in 2003; and repaving Dickson Drive and Channing Street in the spring.

Mr. Marsh also suggested that the town take advantage of a "T-21" grant offered by the New Jersey Department of Transportation by installing sidewalks on the eastern side of Central Avenue, between Grove Street and Sycamore Avenue. He suggested that "T-21" moneys be used to improve North Scotch Plains Avenue sometime in the future.

In other business, a draft resolution regarding the construction of a new restroom building at Tamaques Park. The resolution increases the contract price paid to Suburban Building Company, LLC by \$14,559.30, for a total contract price of \$134,059.30.

According to the draft resolution, the increase was necessitated by unanticipated site conditions encountered during construction causing, "additional work items and more material than had been anticipated."

Special ordinances were also preliminarily approved, assessing \$137,275 for curbing to certain sections of Prospect Street, Clark Street, Forest Avenue, Kimball Avenue, Summit Avenue, Boulevard, Carleton Road, Charles Street, Maye Street, Dudley Court, Birch Avenue and Knollwood Terrace.

Special ordinances for certain sections of Westfield Avenue and Summit Avenue will be rescinded, as they relate to state-funded improvements that are not assessable.

Finally, a draft resolution directed to the Governor, Union County State Legislators, the New Jersey League of Municipalities and the Municipal Clerks of all Union County municipalities was approved urging that state aid to municipalities and school districts not be reduced.

The resolution, following those of other area municipalities, references Governor McGreevey's plan to reduce state aid. It emphasizes: "if aid is reduced even by one tax point (\$180,000) it would put a great burden on the Town of Westfield to defray the increasing every day expenses of the town. Reductions would have to be addressed by reducing vital services or with or by increasing regressive property taxes."

NJ Naval Militia Experiences Recruitment Growing Pains

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

into the military organization. If called to active duty, during a time of war or disaster, even Chaplains could be called on to command and coordinate an operation.

Chaplain Ianello commented that in a military organization the proper rank is essential to the smooth and efficient operation of each division and that mis-ranking someone could not only be embarrassing in an emergency, but dangerous.

"The level of rank really doesn't matter to me," Reverend Hummel explained, "but it seems to me that everything was all set until Chaplain Ianello realized that I would outrank him. It is now a matter of principal, and I am not satisfied with their reasons for rescinding that promise," he added.

Reverend Hummel stated that his only duties would be to recruit, not command.

"I don't know what he was promised, but perhaps it was an honorary rank, not an official rank of full command authority," said Colonel Dwyer. He also wanted to clarify that Reverend Hummel would be recruiting other priests to go through the application process, not directly recruiting them.

"It seems that there are issues that lie beneath the surface of this dispute," Reverend Hummel remarked. "A good question is why there have been so few Catholic priests recruited previously?"

To that remark, Chaplain Ianello replied that the severe shortage of Catholic priests in general has trickled down to all branches of the military.

Colonel Dwyer estimated that the Na-

tional Guard was short five or six Chaplains, throughout the state. He said there was no way of knowing how many Catholic service men were underserved because religious affiliation was not something they asked or kept statistics on.

Although military Chaplains are trained to perform non-denominational services for any sect or religion, Reverend Hummel explained that in some circumstances, Catholic service men and women would prefer to receive spiritual guidance from a priest.

Chaplain Ianello added that the board was ready to bring Reverend Hummel aboard at a junior rank, but it was Reverend Hummel that was delaying his own entry by refusing to accept the required process.

Neither Reverend Hummel nor Chaplain Ianello possess prior military experience.

Fanwood Lions Offer Scholarships to Pupils

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Lions Club Scholarship Program will be awarding three \$1,000 scholarships to seniors in high school from Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

Phyllis Fischer, Scholarship Chairwoman, and the committee, will review any of the scholarship applications received at the following address: Fanwood Lions Club, P.O. Box 266, Fanwood, 07023.

Scholarship will be awarded on scholastic ability, activities, and financial need.



STAYING HEALTHY...Earlier in the fall, Superintendent of Schools in Scotch Plains, Dr. Carol B. Choye, led the way for the district's staff in having their flu shots for the year. An inoculation session was set up by Dr. Timothy Hamway, District Director of Special Services, who arranged for medical personnel from Complete Care of Scotch Plains to be available at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School to serve all interested staff members. Assistant Sally Rowland, left awaits her turn as Carolyn Sorge of Complete Care administers a shot to Dr. Choye.

Newark Academy Pupils Earn Fall Term Honors

AREA — Debbie Marr, Director of Communications at Newark Academy in Livingston, has reported the names of students who earned high honors and honors for their academic achievements for the fall 2001 term.

To qualify for the High Honors list, students must earn grades of "A-" or above for each course taken. Students placed on the Honors List must attain grades of "B-" or above for each course taken.

Pupils earning High Honors include: Karishma N. Katti, seventh grader from Berkeley Heights, Julien M. Cobert, ninth grader from Westfield, and Nina Subhas, seventh grader from Westfield.

Berkeley Heights residents placed on the Honors List include Tracy L. Jacobson, eighth grader; Lauren M. Martino, sixth grader; David R. Mazzuca, 11th grader; Rebecca Shulman, sixth grader; Evan Sills, 11th grader, and Akshay S. Uberoi, 11th grader.

Scotch Plains resident Alexandra Smith, seventh grader, was also placed on the Honors List.

The following Westfield residents were placed on the Honors List: John N. Acquadro, 12th grader; Michael S. Forman, sixth grader; Stefanie D. Forman, 12th grader; Zachary Harris, seventh grader; Maria Hove, 10th grader, and Eric Weinberg, 10th grader.



BRUNNER BEAT...Teachers and aides from the preschool and Pre-K classes at Brunner and School One Elementary in Scotch Plains participated in a Teaching With Music workshop, which included an afternoon concert with "Guitar Bob" Messano, who offered a concert for Pre-K students and parents, as well as kindergartners and Brunner first graders. The event was funded by Joan Vagelos Currie Award monies, presented to Bernadette Hoyer, the 2001 Elementary Recipient of the Joan Vagelos Currie Award for Excellence in Teaching. Pictured, above, Rosetta Fogarty and her son, Anthony, share a dance.

University of Hartford Tells Fall Dean's List

AREA — The Office of Communications at The University of Hartford in West Hartford, Ct., has announced the names of students from Westfield and Scotch Plains who qualified for the fall 2001 Dean's List.

These pupils include: Cara Matossian of Westfield, Annie Thode of Westfield, and Scotch Plains resident Samantha Tenenbaum.

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