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SIXTY CENTS



TSUNAMI RELIEF...Tara Romano, right, worked with the Plainfield Chapter of the American Red Cross to organize the fundraising drive held Saturday afternoon in the parking lot of the Scotch Plains Municipal Building. The effort raised money for tsunami victims.

Twp. Resident Leads Effort to Raise Funds For Disaster Victims

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — A Scotch Plains resident led an effort last Saturday to raise money to help those affected by the December 26 tsunami in South Asia.

Tara Romano, working with the Plainfield chapter of the American Red Cross, organized the fundraising drive that was held on Saturday afternoon in the parking lot of the Scotch Plains Municipal Building on Park Avenue.

"It went real well," she told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, saying that despite the first real winter-like temperatures of the season, she collected about \$1,000 in cash donations between noon and 4 p.m.

"We didn't get a large number of people," Ms. Romano said, "but the amount of people who did come by gave large donations."

She said that one Scotch Plains family brought a large jar filled with dollar bills and coins — money that had been collected from relatives by the family's two young children — totaling about \$75.

The money raised last week will be given directly to the American Red Cross, which will send it to the

devastated region, where upwards of 150,000 people were killed in last month's tsunami and many times more are homeless and in need of clean drinking water, food, medical supplies and items to help begin to rebuild the region.

"I was watching the news coverage one night, and I felt helpless," Ms. Romano said when asked how she became involved in the effort.

After she came up with the idea of a fundraiser, she asked for and received approval from township officials to use the township parking lot. She then contacted the local Red Cross office in Plainfield, which assisted her with a press release that was distributed in Scotch Plains and took part in last week's fundraiser.

Three area businesses — Dunkin' Donuts on Route 22, Gameland on Park Avenue and Swiss Bakery on East Second Street — donated refreshments and snacks.

Ms. Romano said anyone wishing to make a donation to the tsunami relief effort should send checks payable to the American Red Cross (with "International Relief Fund" in the memo line) to its office at 332 West Front Street, Plainfield, 07060.

Plainfield Man Admits Attacking Fanwood Judge; Sentencing Scheduled For April 1

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — A Plainfield man will be sentenced on April 1 for attempting to attack Fanwood Municipal Court Judge Douglas Hansen in a courtroom last November.

Boris Taylor appeared last week in State Superior Court in Elizabeth and admitted to third-degree resisting arrest and fourth-degree aggravated assault charges stemming from the November 18, 2004 incident in Fanwood Municipal Court.

Mr. Taylor had been arrested a year

ago and charged with driving a car while on the revoked list. After missing several court dates following his formal arraignment, Mr. Taylor pled guilty last spring and was sentenced to 10 days in county jail. His public defender asked Judge Hansen to allow Mr. Taylor to serve his sentence as a



Former Municipal Judge Douglas Hansen

participant in the Sheriff's Labor Assistance Program (S.L.A.P.), a county initiative that allows qualified non-violent offenders to serve their sentences by performing various community service tasks as part of a group of fellow participants.

In August of 2004, Mr. Taylor was

recommended and ultimately accepted into the S.L.A.P. program. Two months later, he returned to Fanwood Court and told Judge Hansen that the program was too restrictive, given his job and family obligations. Instead, he asked to be sentenced to time in court, whereby a person is essentially confined to a courtroom during the court's regular sessions. Mr. Taylor began a nine-day in-court sentence in early November.

During his first day in court, Mr. Taylor engaged in an argument with Judge Hansen about an unrelated case adjudicated earlier that session. After being warned by the judge not to talk, Mr. Taylor continued arguing and was taken to the Fanwood jail for the remainder of that evening's court session.

On November 18, Mr. Taylor arrived more than two hours late for his in-court service. When Judge Hansen then ordered him to serve the remaining eight days of his sentence in a county facility, Mr. Taylor threw a large table in front of the bench at Judge Hansen and then attempted to climb onto the dais to physically attack the judge.

It took four Fanwood police officers more than five minutes to restrain Mr. Taylor and end a melee that in-

Downtown Redevelopment Plan Approved by Borough Board

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — Borough Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments members gave their unanimous approval Monday night to recommend the revised Downtown Redevelopment Plan to the Borough Council.

After a two-hour presentation by Dave Roberts of Schoor DePalma, board members agreed that this plan was more in line with the preferences and goals of downtown property owners as well as local residents.

The board's recommendation will now go to the Borough Council for a public hearing and a vote.

Mr. Roberts outlined the plan's details to the board, highlighting the differences between this plan and the previous one, which was scrapped after considerable objections by residents and downtown property owners.

The previous plan, which designated one developer to acquire downtown properties and rehabilitate them, was fraught with obstacles and misconceptions, Mr. Roberts told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

The new plan gives property owners more leeway in how they want to develop and renovate their own properties and does not rely on a developer buying them out, Mr. Roberts said.

Joseph Higgins, Chairman of the Downtown Redevelopment Committee, who was also present at the meeting, said that the new plan does not rely on condemnation by imminent

domain in order to encourage property owners to rehabilitate, a misconception that hindered cooperation with the previous plan. This plan was chosen from four scenarios, as the one most favored by a consensus of downtown property owners, he said.

The Revised Downtown Redevelopment Plan divides the downtown area, from South Avenue to LaGrande and from Martine to Second Street,

into three districts: development of the Dean Oil site for residential units, redevelopment of mixed-use buildings on Martine and South Avenue and rehabilitation of residential sites fronting on Martine.

Some of the goals set forth by the plan include linking the Fanwood Train Station with pedestrian use of the downtown, a Victorian design

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Park Middle Students Create Internet-Based Weather Station

By MATT MARINO
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Look out Al Roker, Sam Champion and Craig Allen. Park Middle School students are keeping a close eye on the weather these days.

At last Thursday's meeting of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, board members viewed a presentation made by several Park Middle students.

The sixth graders in Peggy Brown's science class, who put together a "weather station," demonstrated the station to the board members.

The weather station is made possible through use of WeatherBug Achieve, an Internet-based program that allows students to create their own weather site with different pieces of information.

The weather information is derived from a tracking station installed on top of Linden High School. Through the use of the tracking station, students can monitor such factors as temperature, wind speed, barometric pressure and other data.

Emma Kelly, a sixth grader in Mrs. Brown's class, showed how current weather is monitored. She navigated through the high/low temperatures, wind speed, and what it "feels like" outdoors, which takes into account the wind chill factor. Emma also displayed the daily and monthly weather trends and how different data graphs

overlapped with each other to compare various pieces of data.

"It gives you a very descriptive and colorful way to find the weather," Emma said.

Another student, Brian Farrell, demonstrated a subsection of the weather station that talks about hurricanes. Brian explained how hurricanes are classified using the Saffir-Simpson Scale, which relies on wind speed to measure intensity. He also used the weather station to show various paths of recent hurricanes including Charlie, Frances and Ivan.

"I was going to show Hurricane Floyd... that hit us six years ago, and we had to miss school," Brian added, which elicited laughter from the audience.

While the weather station was quite impressive, Mrs. Brown explained that the variety of lessons within the website made it possible for children to learn about weather in a fun and interactive way. She said there are "plenty of kinds of activities to enhance the classroom," and that all lessons meet state educational standards.

The board members were impressed with the students' work on the weather station. Board president Linda Nelson recognized the amount of time and effort on behalf of Mrs. Brown and her students, and board member Betty Anne Woerner acknowledged that the kids "all did a wonderful job" on the project.

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HOT HOBBIES...Boys collect Yu-gi-oh cartoon cards and duel in tournaments each Saturday morning at the Little Shop of Comics on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains. Shop owners Steven and Lena Olsen are celebrating their 10-year business anniversary this spring. Pictured above last Saturday, about 30 boys participate in battle.



Planning Board Inclined to Give Nod to South Ave. Development

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — The Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments said it would be inclined to approve a South Avenue development plan that includes a bank and day care center.

During a concept hearing at the board's meeting Monday night, members indicated they were in favor of the plan, provided storm water management, buffering and Victorian facades were incorporated.

A concept hearing is held to afford an applicant the opportunity to gauge the board's feelings on a particular plan so that the applicant knows

whether to spend money and move forward on a site plan petition.

Attorney Robert Kraus of Scotch Plains, who co-owns the property at 313 South Avenue, along with his business associate Edward Boyle, under the company name Fanwood Plaza Partners, presented their plan to purchase several additional lots on South Avenue.

Mr. Kraus told the board that he and Mr. Boyle wished to purchase and develop the lots located at 314 and 328 South Avenue if the board was amenable to a use variance for a parking lot adjacent to 313 South Avenue.

Currently, some of the parking space requirements for 313 South Avenue are satisfied by spaces across the street at 314 and 328 South Avenue.

This plan, Mr. Kraus explained, was contingent upon Fanwood Plaza

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Twp. Council Moving Ahead With User-Fee Clean-Up Program

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — It appears that the Township Council will revamp the township's spring clean-up program by instituting a user fee-based system that will require residents, beginning this spring, to purchase annual permits if they want to dispose of large household items.

It is possible that a draft ordinance, which will set fee schedules and various rules and regulations, will be discussed at the council's Tuesday, February 1, conference meeting, with a formal introduction of that ordinance taking place a week later.

At its conference meeting on Tuesday evening, council members discussed some of the details of a new program, which township officials say could save more than \$300,000 in

this year's municipal budget and as much as \$500,000 in future years as the program, which normally occurs in June, is switched from one being funded by all property owners via property taxes to one that is financed only by those homeowners with a need to dispose of bulky household items.

Township officials say the modification is necessary because the cost of the program has skyrocketed in recent years due to a number of factors, chiefly the lack of qualified bidders to perform the service as well as problems involving out-of-towners dumping their own household refuse at Scotch Plains curbs.

Township Manager Thomas Atkins cautioned the council that even if with a new, more privatized clean-up

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RECORD-SETTER...Hillary Klimowicz broke the all-time Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Raider basketball scoring mark of 1,482 points set by Willie McCoy in 1986 during the second quarter of a game with Linden on December 21. After scoring 13 points in nine minutes in the Newark East Side game on January 18, Klimowicz's career total jumped to 1,672 and her season total jumped to 221 points. She was presented with a special basketball, marking her accomplishment. Pictured, left to right, are: Elizabeth DeCataldo, Hillary, Jen Burke and Maura Gillooly.

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