



**HAPPY FOR VISITORS...**Cinnamon, this friendly pooch, is eager to say hello to visitors while enjoying his stay at the K-9 Resorts in Fanwood.

## BH Superintendent Rattner Addresses Mountainside BOE

By **BETSEY BURG DORF**  
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader

**MOUNTAINSIDE** – At the Tuesday night meeting of the Mountainside Board of Education (BOE), members were introduced to the Berkeley Heights superintendent of schools.

Judith Rattner, Superintendent of the Berkeley Heights School District, introduced herself to the board. Ms. Rattner and Mountainside Chief School Administrator (CSA) Dr. Richard O'Malley have been working closely to ensure that the transition of Mountainside eighth graders to Governor Livingston High School runs smoothly. She reported that Berkeley Heights is also working on a five-year strategic plan, which will result in major renovations at the high school. The BOE was given a copy of the plan for review.

"I know the volume is large, but

we're looking forward to implementing that," she said.

A motion to approve the establishment of a substitute nurse's daily rate of \$135 was met with contention from BOE member Pat Knodel.

Dr. O'Malley reported that Mountainside falls in the middle of the pay scale, with Chatham paying \$200, Berkeley Heights paying \$130 and Clark paying \$70 per day for substitute nurses. He also stated that, to date, \$2,000 was paid for a substitute nurse to accompany students on seven field trips.

Mrs. Knodel suggested the district downsize to one nurse for both schools. "I will never make the recommendation to put kids at risk," Dr. O'Malley stated.

The motion to approve the rate of \$135 per day was passed with Mrs. Knodel being the only vote against it.



Judith Rattner

## Plainfield Mayor McWilliams Switch

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for that office in that municipality at the general election following that primary."

Mr. Morin argues that Mayor McWilliams could have legally chosen to run for the Plainfield City Council, the State General Assembly or even the county freeholder board.

"It makes transparent those so-called government interests when one looks at that, as well as the rights of all Plainfield voters to select a candidate of their choice," Mr. Morin said.

Mr. Morin said as of February of this year, there were 18,900 registered voters in Plainfield. Of that total, 11,000 were either unaffiliated voters or registered Republicans.

"The unaffiliated number is huge in Plainfield," Mr. Morin said. He said the current statute unfairly discriminates against voters who could not vote in the primary without changing party affiliation to Democrat.

Mr. Morin said Mr. McWilliams name was filed with the county clerk's office on September 20. He said Ms. Rajoppi called him the following day, September 21, a half hour before the deadline to switch primary elected candidates.

The GOP wants Mayor McWilliams to replace GOP primary winner Cheryl Arana, who pulled out of the race on September 13, citing personal reasons. Plainfield GOP Chair Sandy Spector asked Mayor McWilliams to run on the GOP ticket on Election Day.

Ms. Spector is the Republican candidate this fall for county clerk against Ms. Rajoppi.

When reached for comment on Tuesday, Ms. Rajoppi said, "You can't lose in the primary and then run for the same position again in the general election."

"It's called 'the sore loser law.' I

didn't write it; the (state) legislature did. I make sure the law is upheld. No one argues that he (Mayor McWilliams) comes under that law. It's just whether that law is unconstitutional," Ms. Rajoppi said.

In past years judges have ruled in favor of the Democrats when they replaced U.S. Senator Robert Torricelli with Frank Lautenberg and the late State Senator Joseph Suliga with Nicholas Scutari after the dead-

lines to switch candidates had expired. In both cases, the courts ruled that it was more important to ensure that voters had a choice in the November elections, rather than technicalities in how political parties were represented on election ballots.

Ms. Rajoppi said the difference between the Mayor McWilliams switch and that of Mr. Torricelli and Mr. Scutari is that they "didn't run in the primary and then in the general election. They didn't change parties."

County spokesman John Salerno said County Counsel Robert Barry does not comment on pending litigation.

Mayor McWilliams said, "Going by the comments of the judge, it seems like he did grasp the inconsistency between the rights of the parties and candidates in municipal versus state. He seemed to be questioning how you could justify that distinction."

"If we are successful in the end, it is about increasing voter choice," he told *The Times*.

If successful in the court case, Mayor McWilliams believes he can win the election.

"We are in good shape to make this a very competitive race, and even win," he said.

Mr. Morin agreed. "If we pull this off, this guy's (Mayor McWilliams) got a real shot."



Mayor Al McWilliams



**DRIVE-IN BANK...**The driver of this car reportedly lost control while pulling into a parking space and drove through the front window of the Commerce Bank on Raritan Road in Clark last Sunday afternoon. The driver, a white male in his upper-sixties, operating a Ford Taurus SEL, was taken to Overlook Hospital by the Clark Volunteer Rescue Squad after complaining of a neck injury. No bank employees were injured. Clark Fire Chief John Pingor arranged for a tow truck, and after several tries, the vehicle was extracted.

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Scotch Plains

A Scotch Plains police representative said there was nothing to report this week.

### Fanwood

Wednesday, September 21, Mario Narvaez, 30, from Elizabeth was arrested on Martine Avenue on numerous warrants following an investigation.

Wednesday, September 21, Donald Barnes, 45, of Plainfield was arrested at the intersection of South Avenue and Fourth Street on numerous warrants following a motor vehicle stop.

Thursday, September 22, Silvana Orozco, 32, of Plainfield was arrested on numerous warrants following a motor vehicle stop.

Friday, September 23, Miguel Guzman, 28, of Elizabeth was arrested for allegedly volunteering false information following a motor vehicle stop.

### Westfield

Wednesday, September 21, Brandon Pantano, 19, of Westfield was arrested on Mountain Avenue in Mountainside and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia following a stop for a motor vehicle infraction. He was released on his own recognizance with summonses.

Wednesday, September 21, Deidre Griffiths, 19, of Mount Tremper, N.Y. and Shawn Spanhake, Jr., 19, of Lexington, N.Y. were arrested at Boulevard and South Avenue. Each was charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of alcohol under the legal age. Both were released on their own recognizance.

Friday, September 23, a First Street resident reported the unlawful use of her Chase Mastercard, whereupon an unknown amount of purchases were charged to her account.

Saturday, September 24, a Sandy Hill Road resident reported the theft of a silver-and-blue boys' Trek mountain bicycle, which had been left locked at the north side Westfield train station.

**Westfield Mayoral candidates address constituents via taped 20-minute interviews available on the Internet. Interviews are available at [goleader.com/video](http://goleader.com/video). Keep watching for coverage of events in your area.**

## SPF Board of Ed Language Arts

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trators, to address the issues around disbursement of state funding and the negative impact that it has on the district.

"There is a lot of anger. They have put schools in a dangerous position. Taxpayers haven't seen relief, and parents are angry," she said.

Superintendent Carol Choye's report found that enrollment has grown this year, with 180 new students in the district and 110 more in the elementary school system. This figure is double the normal number of new students in previous school years, with the first grade classroom sizes in McGinn and Coles Schools reaching 24 students.

"Twenty-five is the maximum number of students that we will allow. Eighteen students is the ideal; however, we will support the learning and teaching in the classroom," she said.

Dr. Choye has decided to give parents the option of sending their children to attend another adjacent school and will add an aide when the class size reaches 25 students. She will also complete a demographic study by spring 2006 because enrollment has been so great this year.

She said she will also consider putting some classes "on a cart" such as music and art, to make room for conventional classrooms.

Board member Craig Nowlin said, "Class size is the most important issue facing the district."

Mrs. Nelson also said that the board

is aware of the class size issue and the petitions being signed by parents in the district.

She said, "This topic will be revisited, and parents are gathering forces to talk about this with the board."

Margaret Ames, a parent from Scotch Plains, said, "If forced to choose between special subjects 'on a cart' or lower class size for academic subjects, I would have to choose the lower class size. I would like the administration to consider a lower number than 25 to trigger the addition of an aide or section sooner than they would in a classroom of 25 non-classified students. It would be better for all children in the room."

A large group of students and parents attended the meeting, interested in the proposed ice hockey program. The board adopted a policy that would allow self-funded additional sports teams at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

"We are not adopting an ice hockey program, rather a policy to look into this program," Mr. Nelson said.

Trip Whitehouse was sworn in at the meeting. The newly appointed board member replaced Lance Porter who resigned over the summer due to a job transfer. In addition, the board noted it will receive the auditor's report in November.

Also, school officials announced that there will be a 3 percent increase in the school busing budget due to the rise in fuel costs.

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**SP Council**

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nounced the program for Scotch Plains Weekend on October 7 to 9. Friday evening's activities will feature a bonfire and pep rally at Evergreen School at 7 p.m. followed by an outdoor screening of *Star Wars* on the field.

On Saturday, there will be a Craft Fair in the municipal building parking lot from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. On Sunday, a street fair on Park Avenue from noon to 5 p.m. will include a petting zoo, pony rides, food and a concert by The Nerds, a popular rock band in the region.

The weekend's activities are being jointly sponsored by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, the Lions Club and the Scotch Plains Recreation Commission.

Councilman Rossi announced that the annual Clean Communities Day will be held on Saturday, October 15 from 9 a.m. to noon. Any civic organization or school wishing to take part should call Carmen Grausso at (908) 322-6700, ext. no. 243.

At the start of the council's meeting, Brian Doyle and Cathy Budzinski of the township's environmental commission presented the winners of the commission's annual poster contest for local elementary school students.

Joseph Haverlock, Dominicka Blach, Karen Bao, Victoria Karakis and Kevin Charos were recognized for their artwork.

Mayor Marks issued a proclamation designating next week as International Walk to School Week. School One, McGinn and Evergreen Schools will participate in the program.