

Scotch Plains Farmers Market on Saturdays

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) has announced that the outdoor Farmers' Marketplace, held in the Municipal Parking lot on Park Avenue in the Towne Centre of Scotch Plains has started.

The markets, which began June 24, will run every Saturday through October 28. The hours are 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. (rain or shine - at the discretion of each vendor).

An estimated 500 people frequent the marketplace every Saturday. The event was originally established in 1992 as a community service to help local farmers develop new markets for their fresh-grown produce. In 1994, the SPBPA took over the management to enhance business activity in the Scotch Plains Towne Centre.

Since then, the marketplace has expanded and diversified. It now features a variety of fresh produce, homemade-style baked goods and gourmet food products.

Jeff Stein, the SPBPA event manager, selects vendors for the marketplace.

"Our philosophy is quite simple - we invite a varied and limited number of top-quality, experienced ven-

dors who have a passion for what they do," said Mr. Stein. "In doing so, we have been successful in attracting customers from all over who look forward to coming each and every Saturday to enjoy the fruits of their labor."

He added, "We continue to grow each year. Our vendors tell us that it is their most successful market. The residents tell us they look forward to Saturday shopping."

"We must be doing something better here. The Saturday time-slot has worked very well. People become accustomed to the schedule. The vendors really have a passion for what they do, and it shows in the quality and presentation of their products," he said.

A Farmers' Marketplace Hotline has been established. Starting next week, patrons can call (908) 322-1777 and listen to event information and updates.

The SPBPA is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to assist and enhance the business community of Scotch Plains.

The Scotch Plains Farmers' Marketplace is looking for two more vendors. Those interested can contact Mr. Stein at (908) 322-6774.



RADIANT BLOOMS... It's a difficult but pleasant choice for this lady in selecting her flowers last year at the Scotch Plains Farmers Market. The market opens this Saturday and continues through October 28.

SP Town Council Approves Hedge-Property Rezone

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Ray Pardon, a past President of the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, backed the rezoning, noting that planners hired over the years by the township have all said that the hedge property — so named because of the tall hedge that once shielded the parking lot from Park Avenue — needed to be developed to provide retail stores on both sides of the street.

As for the possible effects on parking, Mr. Pardon said, "We need a parking problem in this town."

Resident Ted Shiller said he hadn't heard anything to convince him that "a new building is going to change anything in the downtown." He said "there is no reason to come here right now. Two new stores are not going to create a reason."

Mr. Shiller urged that a plan for development be agreed upon before a re-zoning of the property. "Once that land is gone, it's gone."

Councilman Frank Rossi, recalling the "sense of frustration" after the defeat of the SID ordinance almost two years to the day, said that "by doing nothing, we would have endorsed" that feeling. The re-zoning, he said, "is a step in what will be a longer process."

Councilwoman Paulette Coronato said her position on developing the property had "evolved" over the years, said it was "time for the township to take more of a leadership role." Leaving the property vacant "serves no

purpose," she said.

Councilwoman Carolyn Sorge also said her opinion had changed over the years. Citing the planned refurbishment of the municipal building, some improvements on East Second Street and Front Street and at Alan Augustine Park, she said that "going forward [with the re-zoning] will be a positive movement to add to what is happening" in the downtown.

In addition to approving the ordinance changing the zone designation, the council, by a 4-1 vote, also passed a resolution stating its reasons for not following the recommendation of the planning board, which on Monday night reaffirmed its May 22 recommendation that the hedge property not be re-zoned because, among other reasons, it was inconsistent with the master plan.

The council's resolution cited five reasons for its disapproval of the board's recommendation, including a report by the board's professional planner that the re-zoning is consistent with the master plan.

The council declared its belief that the re-zoning will "serve to revitalize" the downtown business district and that a new building will provide additional property tax revenue to the township. In addition, a new building, in conjunction with the planned improvements to the municipal building, "may give (a) new appearance" to the central business district.

FW Recreation Commission Seeks New P/T Director

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revised fee structure for organizations renting the buildings at LaGrande and Forest Road parks.

This issue came up in the spring, as commissioners pointed to a significant increase in use of both buildings by a growing number of organizations and individuals.

The latest fee schedule proposal would allow local service and charitable organizations to use both park buildings free of charge. All other local organizations and clubs would have to pay \$15 to use the Forest Road Park facility and \$50 to use the building's kitchen. The cost to use LaGrande would still be free.

Non-local groups would be charged \$75 to use the LaGrande facility and \$150 for Forest Road Park plus another \$50 for kitchen use.

The commission also indicated that

plans remain on track for an August 1 start of major renovations and reconfigurations of LaGrande Park's ballfields.

Neighborhood residents will be updated in a letter to be sent out by the borough clerk's office within the next few weeks, officials said.

Councilman Higgins said nearby residents would be invited to the recreation commission's Tuesday, July 25 meeting, where the borough's engineer will be asked to provide a briefing about the project's scope and timeline.

Correction

A headline for a letter on the editorial page last week should have said, "Parent says BOE Patronized Parents, Teachers at Mountaintide Meeting."



NEW OWNERS... Lord & Taylor on North Avenue in Westfield is under new ownership. The store was sold by Federated Dept. Stores to an investment firm.

Lord & Taylor Under New Ownership; Store to Remain

By CASSIE LO

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — Federated Department Stores, Inc. last week sold its Lord & Taylor stores to National Realty & Development Corp. (NRDC) Equity Partners for \$1.2 billion in cash.

The deal was finalized on June 22 and is expected to close in the third quarter of 2006, company officials said.

The Lord & Taylor chain includes 48 stores scattered throughout the East Coast and the Midwest and is distributed in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. The North Avenue store in Westfield is one of Lord & Taylor's largest stores.

Federated bought the 180-year-old department store chain in 2005 when it merged with May Department Stores. May bought Lord & Taylor in 1986.

According to a June 22 article in *The New York Times*, the Lord &

Taylor chain had to shut down 32 poorly performing stores in 2003.

NRDC owns and manages many shopping centers nationwide, including Linens 'N Things.

"NRDC's plan is to continue to operate Lord & Taylor the way it is," an NRDC spokesperson told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* last week.

According to a press statement released last week, "NRDC's strategy going forward will be to leverage the strong Lord & Taylor brand with its existing management and store teams to continue operating Lord & Taylor as an upscale fashion retailer."

"We are excited about the future operating prospects of the business," said NRDC Principal Robert Baker in the press release.

Sherri Cronin, Executive Director of the Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC), said, "Everything will remain status quo."

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you can redeem your blooming bucks. Blooming bucks can be used for up to 50% of your purchase on any items at our nursery including those in our gift shop.

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PLENTY OF DOUGH... The Dunkin' Donuts in Fanwood officially reopened last Sunday morning with dedication ceremonies prior to the street fair. The business has undergone extensive remodeling and expansion.

NORTHSIDE TRATTORIA TAVERN & RESTAURANT



Owned & operated by Christopher & Timothy Boyle

The Bar Is Open

LUNCH: Tuesday - Saturday
DINNER: Tues. - Thurs. • 5:00pm - 9:30pm
Fri. - Sat. • 5:00pm - 10:00pm Sun. • 4:30pm - 8:30pm
16 Prospect Street, Westfield 908-232-7320

POLICE BLOTTER

Fanwood

Tuesday, June 20, owners of two businesses in the 30 and 40 blocks of South Avenue reported that someone overnight someone spray painted the rear of both their buildings.

Wednesday, June 21, a South Avenue grocery store manager reported that a black male attempted to shoplift \$75 worth of gum. Police said the suspect was observed putting the gum into his backpack when he was approached by the manager, police said.

Police said the suspect reportedly dropped the backpack and fled the store through the entrance breaking the glass in the door. He was seen fleeing the scene on a bicycle, police said.

Thursday, June 22, Brian Busardo, 35, of Kendall Park was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on South Martine Avenue, which revealed a \$90 warrant out of Lawrenceville.

Thursday, June 22, Chrisno Widhiatmodjo, 37, of Fanwood was arrested and charged with child endangerment after an anonymous call alerted police to a child left in a motor vehicle. According to police, the five-year old was in the back seat "sweating profusely" when officers arrived at the scene. The Union County Prosecutor's office was notified and approved the charges.

Thursday, June 22, Roy Baskerville, 33, of Elizabeth was arrested on a \$150 warrant out of Elizabeth following a field investigation.

Thursday, June 22, a business in the 200 block of South Avenue reported that a black male in his late 40s used a counterfeit \$50 bill to purchase merchandise. The \$50 was not determined counterfeit until after the suspect left the scene, police said. Police confiscated the counterfeit bill.

Friday, June 23, a juvenile reported that he parked his bicycle in the 30 block of Martine Avenue and when he returned the bicycle was missing. The bicycle was valued at \$100.

Saturday, June 24, a 17-year-old juvenile from Fanwood and a 16-year-old juvenile from Scotch Plains were arrested for possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS) at the Fanwood Nature Center.

According to two police, an officer observed the juveniles cutting through private property adjacent to the center while smoking a marijuana cigarette. The suspects were charged and released to their parents.

Monday, June 26, an employee of a South Avenue bank reported that her purse was stolen sometime between June 15 and 16 from behind the counter of the bank. According to police, the victim was waiting for bank security to review surveillance tapes before filing a report.

Monday, June 26, officers were canvassing the 180 block of South Avenue alerting businesses owners to the fact that counterfeit money was being used for purchases at which time a business owner stated that approximately three months ago he received a counterfeit \$20 bill for payment of merchandise.

According to police, the counterfeit bill was still in his possession and was turned over to police.

The Secret Service was contacted by the Fanwood police and was faxed a copy of the counterfeit bills. According to police, the Secret Service has been tracking counterfeit bills with similar serial numbers, which have been used in Essex and Union County for the past several months.

Scotch Plains

Tuesday, June 20, a student at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School reported that someone removed jewelry from her locker. The jewelry was valued at \$200.

Wednesday, June 21, a resident of Rahway Road reported that someone removed a lamp from the front of his property. The lamp was valued at \$70.

Thursday, June 22, an attendant at a Route 22 gas station reported that two individuals in a white van yelled obscenities at him and then drove off.

Friday, June 23, the owner of an East Second Street convenience store reported that someone removed bread from the outside delivery spot.

Sunday, June 25, John Checcio, 48, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with possession of a CDS. Police said they responded to his house on a 911 call and discovered cocaine in his possession. Checcio was transported to headquarters and processed. He was then transported to the Union County Jail and held on \$6,000 bail, police said.

Mountaintide

Monday, June 19, an employee of a Sheffield Street business reported someone gained entry to the vehicle

by breaking the diver's side window. Reported stolen from the vehicle was a global positioning system (GPS) prescription sunglasses and \$5 in toll tokens.

Thursday, June 22, a Mountain Avenue bank manager reported that someone damaged the front of the ATM machine located in the foyer of the bank. Police said the suspects broke the faceplate off of the machine, where the card would be inserted. The unit behind the faceplate was then pushed in, police said.

An ATM card was determined to be stuck in the unit and was confiscated by police. No monies appeared to be missing at the time, police said.

Tuesday, June 20, a resident of Saddlebrook Road reported that a neighbor noticed a SUV parked in the victim's driveway with a white male in the driver's seat. She stated that she then saw a beam of light from a flashlight in an upstairs bedroom.

The neighbor reportedly notified police and witnessed the SUV driving away. The homeowner, who was out to dinner, arrived home and surveyed the house along with police. The victim reported that jewelry belonging to his wife was missing and several rooms were ransacked. The detective bureau is investigating the incident, police said.

Friday, June 23, a Charles Street resident reported upon arriving at their house, which is under construction, they discovered that the doors were open. The victim reported that a 24-foot section of aluminum scaffolding and a Dewalt compound mitre saw were missing. The value of the property stolen was \$1,100.

Westfield

Wednesday, June 21, Kenneth W. Pope, 29, of Newark was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a Newark warrant. He subsequently was released on his own recognizance by Newark in lieu of \$132 bail.

Wednesday, June 21, Tyisha Cunningham Higgs, 27, of East Orange was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a Newark warrant. She later was released on her own recognizance in lieu of \$500 bail.

Wednesday, June 21, Brian S. Van Horn, 45, of Brick posted \$89 at Westfield police headquarters on a Mountaintide warrant.

Wednesday, June 21, Kelli C. Carter, 29, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a no-bail Union County Sheriff's Department warrant.

Thursday, June 22, Juan J. Gutierrez, 37, of Westfield was arrested in front of his residence on two Garwood warrants. He was released after \$1,261 bail was posted.

Friday, June 23, a resident of the 1100 block of Prospect Street reported an act of criminal mischief in which his home and motor vehicle, which was parked in his driveway, were defaced by eggs.

Friday, June 23, Jesse J. Sanders, 60, of Elizabeth was arrested at the Somerset County Correctional Facility in Somerville pursuant to a contempt of court warrant issued by the Westfield municipal court. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and held on \$165 bail.

Friday, June 23, a resident of the 10 block of Barchester Way reported that someone caused damage to a family member's motor vehicle by throwing eggs at it while it was parked in the roadway in front of the residence.

Friday, June 23, Christina Glover, 37, of East Orange was arrested after being turned over to Westfield police by Springfield authorities on contempt of court warrants issued by Westfield, for \$166; East Orange, for \$153; Orange, for \$149, and Newark, for \$95. Glover was released after posting \$563 bail.

Friday, June 23, Jessica Cortijo, 18, and David Samsonia, 20, both of Plainfield, along with two juveniles, were arrested following a motor vehicle stop at West South and Scotch Plains Avenues.

All were charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. Additionally, one of the juveniles was charged with possession of a prohibited weapon, identified by police as a knuckle knife. Cortijo and Samsonia were released with summonses, while the juveniles were released to their parents, police said.

Saturday, June 24, Chakei Chavies, 21, of Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Tuttle Parkway and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. He was released on his own recognizance.



WET STREETS... Crowds return to the Fanwood Street Fair last Sunday after rain caused a temporary disruption.