



MARCH ON...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Raider Marching Band swept the group 6A competitions on October 7 and 8 at Giants Stadium and at the J.P. Stevens competition. Pictured are (back row, left to right) drum captain James Kavinsky, drum majors Kirsten Mandala, Yeershati Ahati and Alison Baier and band President Chris Rodriguez; (front row, left to right) Color Guard captains Kristen Barry, Portia Price, Stephanie Fredas and Ashley Castore.

Letter Raises Controversy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

regard for their own power than the law or their obligations to the people of Scotch Plains. It is also unfortunate that the Chief is as careless with the facts as he has been with his gun."

Mayor Martin Marks said, "I became aware of this deposition a few weeks ago."

"It raised some serious concerns for me," the mayor said. "But the thing that really raised a red flag to me" was Mr. LeStrange's attendance at a "Good Old Boys Roundup" in Tennessee. He said he searched the Internet for the event and was "surprised" by what he found out.

In his letter Mr. O'Brien said, "It was an event with derogatory racial overtones and had received national press coverage back in the nineties."

Mayor Marks said Mr. LeStrange owes township an "explanation" of his comments. "A 'no comment' is woefully inadequate," he said.

Scotch Plains Township Manager Tom Atkins said he was aware of the deposition given by Mr. LeStrange. "The council (at the time) had a few concerns about it."

"With him being a candidate now it would be best for me not to comment

any more," Mr. Atkins said.

On another issue, there is still no progress in efforts by *The Times* to finalize a date for a candidates' forum to be televised on TV34 between the six candidates for Scotch Plains Township Council.

While Republicans have agreed to the Monday, October 30, date for the forum, Scotch Plains Township Committee Chairman Ken Lipstein said yesterday that, "We are trying to (work out) that tangible date."

"There is something we are trying to resolve on that date," he said.

Last week, Democrats and Republicans were unable to agree on a date for the forum, sponsored by *The Times* and the League of Women Voters.

After multiple dates in early October were proposed to the two parties last month, scheduling conflicts and other issues forced a new set of dates later in the month to be put forth.

The public can submit topics for discussion to the newspaper to be debated along with topics proposed by the candidates, newspaper and the League of Women Voters. The public can submit questions by e-mail to editor@goleader.com.

Fanwood Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ment, such as gloves and protective suits, would help "keep them safe while they're out keeping us safe."

The borough announced final plans for annual its Halloween parade, scheduled for October 31. Councilman Joseph Higgins said the parade will begin in the library parking lot, where the library will sponsor a "trunk-or-treat" event. Participants will load their cars' trunks with treats for the kids.

Afterward, the actual parade will begin at 6:15 p.m. and take its usual route through town, ending at the LaGrande Park facility.

Mr. Higgins said that because of

the ongoing reconstruction of the sports fields at the park, end-of-parade awards and festivities will take place at the ice skating area adjacent to the LaGrande Park building.

During the meeting's public comment portion, resident and Democratic council candidate David Valian asked whether any repairs or upgrades are being planned for the sports fields at Forest Road Park.

Mr. Higgins said the fields require an irrigation system to properly maintain the turf, but he said that project would not be considered until the LaGrande Park ballfields project is complete.

Mirabella Interview

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

whole," Mr. Mirabella said.

Mr. D'Elia said Sheriff Froehlich's office was required to uphold the judge's order for seizure and auction of the cars despite the involvement of the sheriff's family in the case.

"He is who we all aspire to work towards. To have something like this pop up, I think he was frustrated how it played out," Mr. Mirabella said.

In terms of reducing county taxes in future years, the freeholder chairman pointed to sharing services, such as equipment and bulk purchases, with other municipalities and surrounding counties as an avenue the county was investigating. He mentioned a county animal shelter as one service the county is looking to establish to save towns money on animal-control services.

The county recently sponsored a forum on shared services per a \$104,000 state grant it received. Eleven of the 21 municipalities in the county participated. Mr. Mirabella said he wants to hold another forum with school districts. He is also working to establish a coalition of North Jersey counties similar to ones in the southern and western parts of the state through the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC). He said northern counties have a good deal of "buying power" that they could take advantage of by working together.

He reasoned that fire services and school administrative services could be regionalized, as is the case with ball fields and sports leagues in Scotch Plains and Fanwood, not to mention the school system. "(SP-F) is a model for how things should work," he said.

Another area Mr. Mirabella said the county has worked at is an early retirement program for county employees, which he said "is going to save significant dollars in the next couple of years."

He said the county has frozen the jobs of employees who took the plan until officials determine the need for filling the vacated positions. He said only emergency positions, such as public safety and mandated positions, have been filled since the county instituted a hiring freeze.

A state Division of Pensions and Benefits report in *The Sunday Star-Ledger*, published after *The Times'* interview with Mr. Mirabella, indicated in the long run the program would cost the county \$9.3 million when benefits, including to persons over age 65, are factored. County officials have disputed that claim. The county and some of its unions have agreed to 0-percent increases in the first few years of contracts in exchange for retiree benefits beyond what Medicare offers.

On communications with the state, Mr. Mirabella said he had a good working relationship with Democratic and Republican members of the Legislature. He said that County Manager George Devanney also directly calls the Governor's Office and commissioners when county issues arise. **On school safety, he said the county**

was charged with generating emergency plans for all schools in the county. Union County, working with local police departments and school superintendents, was the first to create the plans in the state. "With two young children in the school system, I take that very seriously," he said.

Mr. Mirabella said he was proud of the county's Open Space Trust Fund effort to work for a compromise of open space at the former Sevell Ponderosa Farm property in Scotch Plains, which will contain soccer fields instead of a children's farm, and the purchase of the Esposito Farm in Clark, which is being developed for baseball and soccer fields, tennis courts and skateboarding. The county also has purchased the Clark Reservoir and is in the process of cleaning up the 150-acre property.

He said the newly expanded Trailside Nature and Science Center is "unbelievable. That is a tourist stop now."

When asked what he wanted to convey to residents, he said, "We are working hard to provide the right services and the best services we can from the county level at the best cost, and we are looking at ways to do better."

Fanwood Police Department Notice

As of Wednesday, October 11, the price for daily parking has increased from \$3 to \$3.25 per day.

Anyone placing \$4 in the token machine will receive a token and 75 cents in change.

The reason for the increase is a change in the New Jersey State Sales Tax Law.

For more information, contact Sergeant Howard Jarvis of the Fanwood Police Department at (908) 322-5000, extension 153.

SP-F Board of Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Eagleton Institute at Rutgers University. Another provided local schools and libraries with literary classics through the formation of a non-profit organization. The students worked on their projects from mid-May to the end of the year. Letters will be sent out to each senior household after the holiday break with details and application information.

Board member Donald Parisi suggested the board include an item on their future agendas to permit time to discuss issues pertinent to public education funding in Trenton. Both Mr. Parisi and board member Linda Nelson have been monitoring the joint legislative committee meetings that are assessing property-tax reform. Ms. Nelson reported to the board that Trenton has discussed ways to change the school funding formula, including a proposal to consolidate local school boards and municipal governments.

Ms. Nelson is the vice president of the New Jersey Garden State Coalition, an education coalition of administrators, parents and educators. The four task force committees, commissioned by Governor Jon Corzine, are expected to hold their final meetings later this month and issue their final reports by November 15, Ms. Nelson said.

Mr. Parisi shared with board members some of the discussions he overheard while monitoring the state's consolidation and shared services committee. Mr. Parisi said the board

POLICE BLOTTER

Fanwood

Tuesday, October 3, Renee Lucas, 35, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant out of Green Brook after a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Tuesday, October 3, Bradford E. Scher, 31, of Blairstown was arrested and charged with shoplifting at a South Avenue grocery store. According to authorities, a store employee alerted police to the crime and a county alert was put out on the suspect's vehicle. Cranford police apprehended the suspect and transported him to Fanwood headquarters for processing.

Wednesday, October 4, Quajerah M. Charles, 26, of Elizabeth was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue, which revealed a Union County no-bail warrant.

Thursday, October 5, Kennard E. Naipaul, 30, of Brooklyn, N.Y. was arrested and charged with an outstanding Hackensack warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue.

Friday, October 6, a 17-year-old juvenile from Westfield was arrested and charged with driving without a license.

Friday, October 6, Carlos A. Martinez-Sorian, 33, of North Bergen was arrested on an outstanding North Bergen warrant after a field investigation.

Friday, October 6, Kerry Ann C. Clarke, 28, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Watchung warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Monday, October 9, Joseph M. Annicchiarico, 40, of Clark was arrested on an outstanding Union County Sheriff's Department no-bail warrant after a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Westfield

Sunday, October 1, Erika Lytell, 23, of Plainfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop in the 300 block of Hyslip Avenue and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. She was released on her own recognizance with summonses pending an October 11 court date.

Monday, October 2, Gordon Novak, 42, of Westfield was arrested on Coddling Road on a no-bail Union County Sheriff's

Department warrant. He was processed and transferred to the Union County jail.

Monday, October 2, a motor vehicle belonging to a resident of North Euclid Avenue sustained damage as the result of criminal mischief. Dings and scratches were discovered on the roof of the vehicle. The damage occurred while the vehicle was parked in the owner's driveway.

Monday, October 2, Amani Simeon, 18, of Piscataway was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding Westfield traffic warrant. She was processed and released after posting \$91 bail.

Monday, October 2, Kunwar "Eddie" Baba, 22, of Westfield was arrested at St. Paul Street and Tremont Avenue on an outstanding Scotch Plains criminal warrant. He posted \$466 bail and was released pending a court date.

Monday, October 2, Kasaidme Barlow, 29, of Plainfield was arrested at Plainfield police headquarters on an outstanding Westfield town code warrant. Barlow posted \$151 bail and was released pending a court date.

Tuesday, October 3, Juan Balbuena, 32, of Westfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop at North Avenue West and Clark Street and charged with driving while intoxicated and refusal to submit to an Alcotest. He was held until sober or released to a responsible individual.

Tuesday, October 3, Raymond Walsh, Jr., 43, of Westfield was arrested at his residence on an active no-bail Union County Sheriff's Department warrant. Further investigation revealed an outstanding Elmwood Park traffic warrant with bail in the amount of \$516. Walsh was turned over to the Union County Sheriff's Department and committed to the Union County jail.

Wednesday, October 4, William D. Bercaw, 34, of Westfield was arrested at the south side Westfield train station and charged with theft of services for allegedly failing to pay his taxicab fare. Bercaw was processed and released with a summons.

Wednesday, October 4, Richard L. Franko, 46, of Westfield was arrested and charged with obstructing justice during an incident in the 100 block of Prospect Street. Police said Franko, who was in his motor vehicle, failed to obey a traffic officer's direction to stop. He is alleged to have then screamed profanities at the officer and refused to comply with the officer's order to pull over. Franko was subsequently released with a summons.

Wednesday, October 4, Eliana Tobar, 35, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding Wall Township criminal warrant following a motor vehicle stop at South and Summit Avenues. She was released after posting \$451 bail.

Thursday, October 5, a North Avenue resident reported the theft of his blue Schwinn men's three-speed bicycle, which had been locked at the north side Westfield train station.

Friday, October 6, Dean Kalamaras, 47, of Westfield was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Prospect and East Broad Streets on a contempt-of-court traffic warrant from Fanwood. He was released after posting \$500 bail.

Mountainside

Tuesday, October 3, Manuel M. Merchan-Silva, 42, of Newark was stopped for displaying passenger plates on a commercial vehicle and subsequently was arrested for driving with a suspended license and for an active warrant from Orange in the amount of \$371, as well as hindering apprehension.

Wednesday, October 4, Gavid G. Zamora, 23, of Angier, N.C. was stopped for improper passing and arrested on an active Bound Brook warrant in the amount of \$250.

Wednesday, October 4, Tamir Q. Leake, 19, of Mountainside was stopped for a headlight violation and driving with tinted windows. He later was arrested and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana and hindering apprehension. He also was arrested on an active warrant out of East Orange in the amount of \$114.

Paid Bulletin Board

An Open Letter to the Citizens of Westfield From New Jersey State P.B.A. Local 90

Where do you turn when you have an emergency? Whether it's responding to urgent calls for assistance, investigating criminal activity or simply helping a lost child, the men and women of the Town of Westfield Police Department are committed to providing a high level of service to the community. The police force, nearly sixty members strong, works 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year, to ensure the safety and security of Westfield's growing population. These men and women are proud to serve the people of Westfield, and New Jersey State PBA Local 90 is equally proud to represent these officers and detectives.

Now, Your Police Officers Need Your Help

For nearly a year now, the police force in the Town of Westfield has been working without a contract. At meeting after meeting, PBA Local 90 has tried to persuade the town to make a reasonable offer to settle the contract, without success. While our contract issues will never diminish the level of service that these officers are prepared to provide, the ongoing struggle to win fair compensation has undermined officer morale and created a great deal of anxiety for members of the force. Seeing no light at the end of this dark tunnel, we are now compelled to turn to our most important and valued constituency - the citizens of Westfield - for help.

Called To Step Up, But Falling Behind...

As police officers, we each swore an oath to serve and protect, even at the cost of our own lives, and we live by that oath every day. But, like you,

we also have more mundane concerns - paying the bills, raising our children, and planning for retirement. According to the latest data, the cost of living has gone up by 3.8 percent nationally from August 2005 to August 2006, and in the New York/North Jersey region, the one-year cost of living increase is a staggering 4.7 percent.¹ If these trends continue, the cost of living over the next four years can be expected to increase by nearly 20 percent.

Remarkably, the town has demanded that many officers go without a cost-of-living increase for the next four years! Even where increases are proposed for certain officers, the town's offer falls far short of keeping pace with the rising cost of living in New Jersey.

Planning For The Future....

Equally troubling is the town's stance on salary for newly hired officers. The town is proposing to increase starting salary by a paltry \$1,723 over the next four years! This means that the starting salary for a Westfield Police Officer would remain at less than \$35,000 until 2009! How can the town expect to compete for top-flight candidates for its police department if the starting salary is kept at this depressed level? We have posed this question to the town, but there has been no answer.

Please join us on Tuesday, October 24 at 8 p.m. at the council meeting, Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street, to show your support. Let Mayor Skibitsky know of your support. E-mail - mayor@westfieldnj.gov.

¹ Data Source - Bureau of Labor Statistics - www.bls.gov/news.release/cpi.t03.htm

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Take a bite...

Apple Tasting This Weekend

They're sweet and juicy fresh from the orchard. We have over ten types of locally grown apples for you to taste. Some of the newer varieties include Honey Crisp and Cameo. We also will have Stamen Winesap.

Grab a bottle of fresh cider while you're here.

Hayrides, Kids Haunted House and pumpkin picking Thu & Fri 3-5pm, Sat & Sun 10am-4pm. Weather Permitting. (Apples are already picked at a farm an hour from here).

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