

Coup In Thailand Was 'Extremely Peaceful'

By MARY L. SNAUFFER
Editor's Note: MarySnauffer is on a two-year assignment with the Peace Corps in Thailand. She is writing a first-hand account of her experiences in this column for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

It was my father who called first to tell me the military had overthrown Thailand's government. It was late when he called.
 "I'm asleep," I mumbled.
 "I know, but I wanted to let you know that there has been a coup in Thailand and the military has overthrown Thaksin, the Prime Minister while he was in America."

"I was a little too groggy to process this."
 "Yeah. Okay, don't worry. It's not a big deal," I assured him.
 "So, everything there is alright?" he asked.
 "Yeah, all's fine."

Not that I really had any clue what was going on outside my bedroom. Only moments later Peace Corps began calling me. There are tanks rolling down the streets in Bangkok. Stay in your house. We are on stand fast. Thailand is under martial law.

When the phone stopped ringing, I fell back to sleep.
 The next morning I got out of bed — or rather, stood from my mat on the floor — and heated water for coffee. For a few minutes I had forgotten what had happened. That morning I was scheduled to teach the Governor and afterwards go to a rural school and work with the teachers.

My phone rings again. It's a teacher I work with at the rural school. In broken English she says, "No school. Military in the street." Shortly after that another phonecall, the governor's secretary. "The Governor will not be able to have his English lesson today," he explained. "He had to go to a military base in Surat Thani, we're under martial law."

"Okay," I said and hung up.
 That evening I went to dinner at a friend's house from England. She works as an English teacher in my town and has a TV with a satellite dish. As we spooned out the bags of curries we had bought at the market we tried flipping through the stations to see what was going on. Everything was cut off. The military had put Thailand in a news blackout. All Thai channels had a picture of the King's Royal emblem and had been repeating patriotic songs all day. International channels would play but when the news would come on, concerning

the coup in Thailand, it would suddenly go black.

"Well, this is a little creepy, huh?" my friend laughed.

The coup has been extremely peaceful. Shortly after the event the King made a public announcement endorsing it. Thais basically do and believe what the King says. They do this because, I think, they truly love the King but also because it's technically illegal to do otherwise. Several weeks later the former commander-in-chief of the military was appointed as acting Prime Minister. The cabinet was also filled with military personnel. The King has supported this as well, so the Thais remain peaceful, happy.

I asked my Thai supervisor what he thought about it.
 "Oh it's very good," he said with a big smile.
 "But they weren't elected," I go, my inner American sounding with alarms.
 "It's good, that doesn't matter. It is good that my country can have a coup if we do not like the government. Your country cannot. You have to wait four years. I know."

I wanted to say, well any country can have a coup, but I didn't.
 Now everything seems to be back to normal. The TV stations are back. Schools are back in session. No one really talks about it. I heard the United States has put sanctions on Thailand showing their disapproval for the coup, but no one here really cares.

"Mary," my supervisor has told me, "people here aren't like people in America. We think that to have too much money is the same as to have too little money. Both are bad. We don't want that. We don't like to compete with each other. We want to be happy. Respect family. Respect the King."

I am always left like that. My mouth slightly ajar with a "But..." dangling off my bottom lip. But I let it drop. And just smile and nod.

Notice is hereby given that the PLANNING BOARD OF THE BOROUGH OF FANWOOD, after public hearing on September 27, 2006, granted approval for a rear yard setback variance to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Ahlin for property located at 70 Willoughby Rd., Fanwood, New Jersey, being Block 31 an Lot 3.01.

Documents pertaining to this application are available for public inspection at Borough Hall during normal business hours.

Harold and Patricia Ahlin
 70 Willoughby Road
 Fanwood, New Jersey 07023
 T - 10/12/06, The Times Fee: \$16.83

Notice is hereby given that the PLANNING BOARD OF THE BOROUGH OF FANWOOD after public hearing on September 27, 2006, granted approval for a rear yard setback variance to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Ahlin for property located at 70 Willoughby Rd., Fanwood, New Jersey, being Block 31 an Lot 3.01.

Documents pertaining to this application are available for public inspection at Borough Hall during normal business hours.

Harold and Patricia Ahlin
 70 Willoughby Road
 Fanwood, New Jersey 07023
 T - 10/12/06, The Times Fee: \$16.83

Candidates & Letters

CONTINUED FROM PAGES 4 & 5

Patricia Quattrocchi GOP Candidate for Freeholder No Surprise County is in Taxes Top 10

Union County made *The New York Daily News* on Thursday, October 5. We are ranked number 10 of the top 10 counties with the highest property tax levies in the United States. The other nine counties are all in New York and New Jersey with Hunterdon, Bergen, Essex, Morris and Somerset counties, having higher median tax bills than we do.

It is no wonder that only about half of my high school graduating class of baby boomers have chosen to stay in New Jersey and even fewer are here in Union County. This came to light recently when preparing for my high school reunion, which took place this past weekend. (I do admit to being in the class of 1968, and don't bother to do the math; that makes me 56.) The highest number of those who relocated settled in Florida followed closely by Pennsylvania with the rest scattered one or two here and there in the remaining 50 states.

A surprising number of former classmates returned for the event and I would urge those who have the opportunity to attend their own to do so if they graduated 30 or more years ago. Time is a tremendous equalizer, with the exception of property taxes apparently. Incredibly, even at a high school reunion people were talking about taxes and of course all of the

other political goings on here in New Jersey, it seems we make the news from coast to coast. It is depressing however to hear that people with four-bedroom, three-bath homes on two acres are only paying two or three thousand dollars a year in property taxes outside of New Jersey and certainly outside of Union County.

The outlook for Union County property tax wise doesn't appear to be very bright especially when we keep hearing about financial shell games such as the county's early retirement plan that they moved forward with this past summer. It has been reported that 183 employees took advantage of the plan, of these; only 17 positions were eliminated. This leaves 166 job vacancies. How many of these were necessary employees? Will these positions be filled? And if they are filled are we now paying for benefits for over 350 people instead of the original 183? If so then perhaps the county should have left well enough alone. And what of the hiring freeze announced earlier this year? Has that been forgotten because it has exhausted its usefulness in the press? The state says this early retirement plan is expected to cost us \$9.3 million rather than save the \$15 million projected by the county.

The State of New Jersey Division of Pensions and Benefits as well as their private consultants certainly have more experience and information at their disposal than the county, after all this is the division's area of expertise. However county officials do not agree with the state's analysis and believe that they, not the state, are the experts. My money is on the state.

Quick fixes, which deliver only short-term results rather than looking forward and coming up with solutions for long-term relief, are not the answer. Bonding for this plan, which is how it will be funded, is putting the county residents further into debt, and certainly akin to regularly putting one's weekly groceries on Master Card than making only the minimum payment each month, an action frowned upon by financial experts. Is it any wonder that with plans like this Union County is in the top 10?

PUBLIC NOTICE
BOROUGH OF FANWOOD PLANNING BOARD

Notice is hereby given that the PLANNING BOARD OF THE BOROUGH OF FANWOOD after public hearing on September 27, 2006, granted approval for a rear yard setback variance and driveway with variance to Mr. & Mrs. Paul Rojek for property located at 54 Locust Avenue, Fanwood, New Jersey, being Block 93, Lot 6.

Documents pertaining to this application are available for public inspection at Borough Hall during normal business hours.

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Rojek
 54 Locust Avenue
 Fanwood, New Jersey 07023
 T - 10/12/06, The Times Fee: \$17.34

Stender is Better On Environment Issues

When the Sierra Club endorsed the election of Assemblywoman Linda Stender to represent the 7th Congressional District, the Sierra Club noted that she has supported environmental and quality of life issues throughout her career in public service.

In comparison, her opponent in the election has attempted to create the illusion of an environmental legacy based upon a single instance in which he became involved in the government's movement of sealed containers of stored chemicals. In the real world, Mike Ferguson worked to protect manufacturers of polluting chemicals. He gave tax breaks to big oil so that oil companies could post record-breaking profits as our gasoline and heating bills skyrocketed. Is anyone foolish enough to think that a pre-election price drop will last?

Based upon my own personal experience and the experience of her many friends and neighbors over these many years, Linda Stender has established a record of responding favorably when it comes to preserving open space, maintaining tree cover, protecting historic resources and supporting quality of life.

Simply put, Linda Stender understands how we live our lives. She is our best bet in the 7th Congressional [election].

William Fidurski
 Clark

By GOP Candidates for UC Freeholder Politics Jeopardize Homeland Security

Union County Republican Freeholder candidates Pat Quattrocchi, Glenn Mortimer and Diane Barabas called for an investigation into the hiring practices at the Union County Office of Emergency Management.

"There seems to be a mystery around the procedure and process of hiring of the position of domestic preparedness planner, a key position should our area fall under a WMD attack in the future," said Mrs. Quattrocchi.

The situation is particularly disconcerting since the job description calls for developing a regional plan capability that addresses the special needs of the UASI area that encompasses critical infrastructure target hardening measures, unique regional first responder capabilities and regional communications and information sharing resources.

"It appears as though the individual hired for this position had no experience, has not submitted a resume, and her only qualification is that she is a good Democrat Party worker and friend of the political bosses. After months of attempting to determine what process was followed, I think we might just have the Union County version of Golan Cipel in our Emergency Management Planning Office," said Ms. Barabas.

Union County Republican Committee Chairman Phil Morin said that Salena Carroll was hired in 2000 and her title was "Community Organization Specialist." Her salary was \$38,659. Parts of her job

duties were to train residents in activities necessary for them to assist them to develop and maintain a community garden and to establish a tutoring program for neighborhood youth.

Mr. Morin said that in 2004, the county received homeland security funding to establish the position titled "County Emergency Management Planner." Ms. Carroll was promoted to the position and given a salary of \$64,500. Her new job duties are to "develop, plan and provide technical guidance in the development of a regional response capability to a weapons of mass destruction incident." Her current salary is \$69,696, he said.

Last week's chemical spill in Elizabeth has put this issue on the front page again. Over 50 people were sent to the hospital on Monday, September 25. The Republican candidates expressed their concern about the effectiveness of an unqualified political appointee running and planning emergency preparedness for the citizens of Union County.

"This is just another example of the Democrats playing favorites, and putting their own political interests above the safety and welfare of the public," Mr. Mortimer said.

The candidates said that this situation smells worse than the chemical spill. In the interest of public safety and our own Union County homeland security, we are calling for an immediate investigation and we believe the public deserves an answer.

PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC NOTICE
NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT, BUREAU OF CONSTRUCTION SERVICES
1035 PARKWAY AVENUE, PO BOX 605
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

SEALED BIDS will be received from bidders classified under N.J.S.A. 27:7-35.1 et seq., in the NJDOT MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, New Jersey Department of Transportation, 1035 Parkway Avenue, Trenton, New Jersey 08625; until 10:00 A.M. on 11/2/06 and opened and read for:

Maintenance Structures Repairs Contract No. 1-2006, One (1) Orphan Bridge, Walnut Street over Elizabeth Industrial Track; Borough of Roselle, Union County 100% State, DP NO: 06417

Bidders are required to comply with the requirements of P.L. 1975, C.127 N.J.A.C. 17:27.

Effective October 15, 2004, Pursuant to P.L. 2005, C. 51 (formerly known as Executive Order 134) apparent low bidder must provide a completed, signed Contractor Certification and Disclosure of Political Contribution Forms within seven (7) state business days from the project bid date.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:32-44, Business Registration, proof of valid business registration shall be submitted by a bidder with its bid proposal at the time of bid for 100% State funded projects.

Pursuant to the "Public Works Contractor Registration Act", N.J.S.A. 34:11-56.48 et seq. (P.L. 2003, c. 91), bidders must register with the New Jersey Department of Labor, Division of Wage and Hour Compliance.

The Department, in accordance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252 U.S.C., 49 C.F.R., Parts 21 and 23 issued pursuant to such Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 will afford minority business enterprises full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not discriminate against any bidder on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or handicap in the contract award. Drawings and specifications for the proposed work are available at Bid Express website www.bidx.com. You must subscribe to use this service. To subscribe follow the instructions on the website. The fee is \$35.00 per month for unlimited access to view and download the documents and additional \$95.00 per month for unlimited access to download the plans, directly payable to Bid Express.

Drawings, special provisions, and bid documents may be inspected (BUT NOT OBTAINED) by contracting organizations at our various Design Field Offices at the following locations:

200 Sterli Court Mt. Arlington, NJ 973-770-5141	Route 79 and Daniels Way Freehold, NJ 732-308-4025	1 Executive Campus Rt 70 Cherry Hill, NJ 856-486-6624
---	--	---

T - 10/12/06, 10/19/06 and 10/26/06, The Leader Fee: \$211.14

Single Size: 10 Weeks \$275 Double Size: 10 Weeks \$425 Goods & Services You Need! email PDF to: sales@goleader.com

SALES / SERVICE / INSTALLATION
Supreme
 HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING INC.
 RESIDENTIAL / INDUSTRIAL
 HEATING AIR CONDITIONING
 VENTILATION EXHAUST
 YORK CARE 10 YEAR WARRANTY PARTS & LABOR
 257 Wagner Street Middlesex, NJ 08846 800-882-5160
 Remember the Summer of 2005! HOT-HOT-HOT

Fine Finish
Home Renovations & Repairs
 Kitchen • Baths • Basements • Trim Work • Built Ins
 NO JOB TOO BIG OR SMALL
 Licensed & Insured
 908.447.7460

Bathrooms For All Budgets
 Free Estimates
 Free Design Ideas
732-667-7262

Kean Flooring
Hardwood Floor
 SCRAPING - SANDING - REPAIRS
 REFINISHING - DECK CARE
 STAINING - INSTALLATION
 "Dust Free Sanding Equipment"
 TEL: (201) 955-1073
www.keanflooring.net

RALPH CHECCHIO, INC.
BLACK TOP PAVING
 Driveways
 Parking Lots
 Concrete or Masonry Work
 FREE ESTIMATES
908 • 889 • 4422

Nature's Beauty
Marble & Granite Fabricators
 High quality wholesale prices on all your marble & granite needs.
 Specializing in kitchen countertops, bathroom vanities & fireplaces.
 "Looking forward to doing business with you. Come in for a FREE estimate or simply fax us your layouts."
2476 Plainfield Avenue 908-233-5300
Scotch Plains, NJ Fax: 908-233-5655

"Buy FACTORY DIRECT AND SAVE THOUSANDS!!"
 Authorized Factory Designers
 On Staff
FREE SHIPPING WITH AD
FACTORY DIRECT
 CUSTOM KITCHEN CABINETS
 Call (908) 358-0008
 Showroom Hours by Appointment

QUEST "FOR PERFECTION"
Home Improvements
 No Job Too Small
 • Kitchens • Baths • Ceramic Tile
 • Corian & Laminated Counter Tops
 • General Maintenance & Repairs
 • Full Handyman Service
Ph: 908-391-2040
 NJ Lic. # 13VH01315500
 Free Estimates • Insured

ROMAN HOME IMPROVEMENTS
 All Types of Carpentry
 Kitchens • Bathrooms
 Bedrooms • Living Rooms
 Basements • Decks • Stairs
(732) 680-9626
 Free Estimates Fully Insured

Free Estimates Fully Insured
MARK L. DiFRANCESCO
PAVING • MASONRY
 Driveways • Parking Lots
 Steps • Walkways • Patios
 Pavers • Concrete • Curbing
 Drainage • Water Proofing
 3RD GENERATION
908-668-8434

EVERYTHING BUT THE ROOF
 Bathrooms • Kitchens
 Decks • Painting • Tile
 Basements & More!
B&L Properties, LLC
908-472-4095

PERFECT PAINTING & POWER WASHING
 Residential • Commercial
908-272-4456
 Division of Consumer Affairs
 Lic. #13VH01608306
www.perfectpaintinginc.com

"Experience the Difference."
J.C. ALDANA INC.
DUST FREE REAL WOOD FLOORS
908-301-0602
 Cell: 908-377-5446
 Fax: 908-301-0603
 VHO2678400
 Westfield, New Jersey

JK's Painting & Wall Covering Installation
 Faux Finishing
 Venetian Plaster
 Call Joe Klingebiel
908-322-1956
 FULLY INSURED FREE ESTIMATES

This Space is Available
 Call the Advertising Department:
 T: 908.232.4407
 F: 908.232.0473
sales@goleader.com

OLIVER A. HOWARTH PAVING
 DRIVEWAYS PARKING LOTS
 SEAL COATING RAILROAD TIES
 DRAINAGE PROBLEMS
 BELGIUM BLOCK CURBING
 STUMP GRINDING
 "Serving the area for over 30 years."
 Family Owned & Operated
 Fully Insured • FREE Estimates
908-753-7281

AJ Professional Services, Inc.
HOT POWER WASHING HOUSES - DECKS
WINDOWS - CARPET CLEANING TILE AND GROUT
TRUCK-MOUNTED EQUIPMENT
Tel: 908-754-0149
 Fully Insured Bonded

JMR LANDSCAPING
 Landscape Design
 Year Long Plantings
 Lawn Maintenance
 Patio • Walks • Masonry
 Retaining Walls
NOW'S THE TIME... IT'S NEVER TOO LATE
908-654-5296

Residential • Commercial
INSIDE OUT "The Painting Professionals"
 Interior / Exterior Painting & Stain
 Deck Sealing & Staining
 Complete Powerwashing Services
 Free Estimates • Fully Insured
 Visa & Mastercard Accepted
732-382-3922
1-800-525-6481

A. PLAIA & SON
All Types of Fence
 Expertly Installed
"Year Round"
 New & Repairs
 Free Estimates
(908) 654-5222

ELM STREET SERVICE CENTER
 Complete Auto Repair
 Foreign & Domestic
 NJ State Inspection
 • Emission Repair Facility
 • Tune-ups & Batteries
 • A/C Service
 • Tires & Brakes
 • Road Service
 138 Elm St • Westfield
908-232-1937

The "Handyman"
 Painting, Wallpapering, Repairs,
 Light Carpentry, & Much Much More.
 Careful, dependable and neat.
 Best of all - your call will be returned.
 Ask for Gary
908-868-9420

Custom & Unique Landscape For Your Home
 Designing & Building All Your Walkway & Patio Needs
(5 Year Guarantee)
AQUATECH
 Irrigation Systems
 Drip Systems • Lawn Sprinklers • Planting Beds
908-791-1820
 Annual Contracts for Start-Ups & Shut-Offs • Guaranteed Immediate Response • Fully Licensed & Insured