

## Hokie, SP Mayor Martin Marks 'Wears VA Tech on His Sleeve'

By LINDA B. CONDRILLO  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — Visiting a number of campuses in search of the right school can be an arduous task for both teenagers and their parents. For Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks, however, the decision to attend Virginia Tech was a no-brainer.

In a telephone interview over the weekend with *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, Mayor Marks, Class of 1984, recalled his experience at Virginia Tech and reacted to the recent tragedy.

Remembering his college experience as nothing but positive, Mayor Marks said, "While I did visit other colleges with my parents, Virginia Tech was the only school I applied to.

I asked for early decision, and it was my first choice." He added, "To this day, Virginia Tech is a big part of my life."

Mr. Marks was practicing dentistry in his office when he heard the news of the shootings. He told the newspaper, "There's a TV in the waiting room, and as soon as I hear 'anything Virginia Tech,' my ears perk up. I just sat there with my staff, astonished."

Mayor Marks regards his college career as the best four years of his life, and said, "When I saw the images coming over the TV of such familiar places, hearing the names of the buildings and describing the campus of what once were places I remembered so fondly — and now de-

scribed to me so horribly — it is staggering. In some way I feel those great memories are tarnished. And I don't look at it the same way anymore."

He said news of the shootings added a difficult component to the week. In the process of looking at colleges with his own daughter, a junior at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, Mayor Marks noted that while "we're not putting any pressure on her," he would be happy should she choose to attend his alma mater.

He also said, "In light of what happened, Virginia Tech may wind up being one of the safest schools you can go to."

Mayor Marks said that his own parents are equally upset about the catastrophe. "They know how much I enjoyed it there, still enjoy it today, and are emotionally invested in the school as well," he said.

He also noted how his experience at Virginia Tech was different from others. "For a lot of people, going to college is a stepping stone. But with me, it was such a big part of my life in so many ways. It still is. There's a lot of enjoyment getting involved — whether it's the bumper sticker I put on my car, or following a sports team, or wearing a Virginia Tech sweatshirt, ball cap or wristwatch." Metaphorically speaking, he said, "I wear it on my sleeve."

He added, "I'm not going to claim that Virginia Tech is the only school that has that special combination of pride and enthusiasm that follows you long after you receive your diploma, but it is evident that this spirit is as strong as ever today, and will go a long way towards healing what has come to be known as Hokie Nation."



Linda B. Condrillo for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*  
**UNITED WE STAND...** Safe and sound and back home in Mountainside after the shootings at Virginia Tech, Kaitlyn Moore, left, stands alongside her mom, Corinne Moore, at Mountainside Borough Hall.

## 'Hokie Pride' Survives Mass Murder on VA Tech Campus

By LINDA B. CONDRILLO  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

MOUNTAINSIDE — Before April 16, "Hokie" wasn't exactly a household word. Only a fanatical college sports fan or an alumnus of Virginia Tech would know that Hokie is the official name given to the college of engineering's sports teams, fans, students and alumni.

Kaitlyn Moore of Mountainside is a Hokie. Last week, everyone became Hokies.

After graduating in 2004 from Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights, Kaitlyn fell in love with Virginia Tech. She told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "When I first went down there to check it out with my parents, I remember saying to myself, 'this is the school for me.' The drill field is just so pretty, and Blacksburg is beautiful."

Kaitlyn, a junior on the Virginia Tech Dean's List, plans to become a teacher. Her mom, Corinne, works for Mountainside's chief of police, James Debbie, volunteers her time with the Mountainside Drug Alliance and serves on the rescue squad. Corinne and her husband, Brian, have

three other children and have lived in Mountainside since Kaitlyn was in first grade at the Deerfield School.

In an exclusive interview with *The Times*, mother and daughter recalled the day no one could have predicted or stopped Cho Seung-Hui, a 23-year-old student, from taking the lives of 32 people before turning his gun on himself.

Kaitlyn had been asleep in her off-campus apartment when the phone rang. She told the newspaper, "I almost didn't pick up because the night before, we had some very strong winds; it was so loud that I was awake most of the night. Since I don't have class on Mondays, I slept in and had no idea what was happening until my mom woke me up."

Mrs. Moore said, "We have a television here at work, and when I saw the news report, I thought to myself, 'Oh, no, not Virginia Tech again.' I raced down the hall to a phone and called her right away. It was a relief to hear her groggy voice. I told her there was a shooting at the school and to stay right where she was."

In addition to a recent string of bomb threats, Kaitlyn told the news-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Linda B. Condrillo for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*  
**LEARNING TO MULCH...** Environmental Club members of Park Middle School mulch trees in Carriage House Park in Fanwood. Pictured, from left to right, are: Amy Palumbo, Kayli Elsie and Eve Zhubinski.

### PAGE INDEX

Regional .....	2-3	Education .....	8-9	Real Estate ....	13-23
Editorial .....	4-5	Obituary .....	10	Classifieds ....	22
Community ...	6-7, 11	Sports .....	13-19	A&E .....	24-26



Victoria McCabe for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*  
**GOOD MEWS...** Construction of the Station Mews, a three-story mixed-use redevelopment project at 234 South Avenue, continues during Tuesday's 70-degree weather. The building, on which construction began last October, will house retail stores on its ground floor and condominium units on the second and third floors when it is completed.

## SP Council OKs \$23.3-Mil. Budget With Tax Increase of \$500,000

By FRED T. ROSSI  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — After nearly a dozen residents spoke for 90 minutes, the township council on Tuesday evening adopted by a 4-1 vote the \$23.3-million municipal budget that will be financed in part by a five-point, or 3.6 percent, increase in municipal property taxes. The budget is \$1.3 million over last year, with the amount to be raised in taxes up \$500,000.

The increase would average \$61 on

the average assessed home of \$121,000 with a market value between \$450,000 and \$550,000.

With officials citing an uncertain economy and with the township already facing at least \$1.1 million in increased mandated expenditures next year, the council — with the exception of Councilman Kevin Glover, who voted against the budget and favored using more expansive revenue projections and more of the record \$3.6-million surplus to lower the tax increase to two points — felt it was too financially risky to assume that the high levels of revenue seen in 2006 would be replicated this year. A tax point equals \$100,000 in spending in the township.

"We have a bear of a year coming up next year," said Councilman Jef-

frey Strauss. He said he was "a little concerned" about whether a five-point tax increase, which will boost the municipal tax rate from \$1.39 per \$100 of assessed value to \$1.44 per \$100, would be adequate in advance of 2008, when the township will see its state pension contributions increase by \$310,000, fees paid to the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) rise by nearly \$500,000, health insurance premiums increase by \$164,000 and salaries paid to police officers increase by \$176,000.

"We have to be prudent," Mr. Strauss said. Speaking of conserving the surplus, he said, "If we have more [in 2008], it's better for the taxpayers next year."

Deputy Mayor Paulette Coronato

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Rec. Comm. Plans LaGrande Ballfield Dedication for May 5

By TED RITTER  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

FANWOOD — The borough's recreation commission met Tuesday night, focusing discussion on the LaGrande Park project, spring program participation and plans to purchase a new outdoor speaker system.

Regarding LaGrande Park, Borough Council Liaison Joseph Higgins said sports teams are now using the

new ballfield, although officials are "still waiting" for recently ordered player benches and bleachers to arrive. Mr. Higgins said an opening ceremony to dedicate the Dorris Terry softball diamond is planned for May 5, once the new equipment arrives.

Mr. Higgins also said Mayor Colleen Mahr and Borough Engineer Joseph Pryor are exploring options for adding some fencing and/or landscaping "treatment" around a water and electric utility box at the new field.

"I think it would look a lot nicer if it was landscaped," said Recreation Director Bob Budiansky.

Noting that there have been some complaints about the box's location and appearance, Mr. Higgins said it was installed "in the logical place to put it" to connect with water and electric lines. Relocating the box, he said, would have added \$75,000 to the project's price tag.

"I'm pretty impressed [with the LaGrande project] in the end...even though it's seven months late," said Mr. Higgins, referencing a series of delays by the contractor in completing the job.

Mr. Higgins also announced that an "exploratory meeting" would be held by the borough council before its agenda meeting on Tuesday, May 1, to review "possible upgrades" at Forest Road Park. He said the borough already plans to improve the park's irrigation system but wants to develop a "more comprehensive plan."

Mr. Budiansky said the borough's spring recreation programs — except for senior classes and special events — have "not done nearly as well as we had hoped," adding multiple sessions were cancelled due to low registration. He said, "The interest is just not there."

Commission Chairman Pam Sayles recommended the borough "fish or cut bait" and consider only offering programs that have proven consistently popular with residents.

Mr. Budiansky said the commission still intends to finalize and distribute a recreation survey "to see what people want."

The commission voted to pursue plans to purchase a new outdoor speaker system, at an estimated cost

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Fred Rossi for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*  
**PRACTICING FOR THE TOUR...** A youngster grooves his swing while playing miniature golf at Scotch Hills golf course in Scotch Plains last Sunday.

## U.S. Marine Corps Band to Highlight SP-F Memorial Day Ceremonies

By FRED T. ROSSI  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — Next month's Memorial Day Parade in Scotch Plains and Fanwood promises to be one to remember. Besides the usual complement of local school bands, civic organizations, youth athletes, floats, performers and a politician or two, the U.S. Marine Corps Band, known as "The President's Own," will march down Martine Avenue from Scotch Plains into Fanwood.

Established in 1798, the Marine Corps Band, whose mission is to provide music for the President and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, is the nation's oldest professional musical organization. It performs at White House events, including state dinners and other formal receptions, military and patriotic ceremonies in Washington, D.C.; funerals at Arlington National Cemetery and at public concerts in the nation's capital and throughout the country each fall.

Joe McCourt, who heads the local committee tasked with arranging the Memorial Day parade each year, told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that a group of local veterans drove the effort to get the Marine Corps Band to take part in the Monday, May 28 parade. The theme of this year's parade is "Semper Paratus — A Special Salute to the U.S. Marine Corps," and the group late last year thought it would be a perfect fit to include the band in the day's events, which will kick off with a service at 10 a.m. at the Scotch Plains Veterans Monument at the corner of Park Avenue and Front

Street. The parade will step off from that location at 10:45 a.m. and end with ceremonies at LaGrande Park in Fanwood.

In addition to taking part in the parade, the band will play a free concert on Sunday, May 27, at 8 p.m. in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School auditorium. Tickets for the concert are free but required, since the auditorium has limited seating.

Mr. McCourt said the committee submitted an application to the Marines in early January and received approval the following month. There are presently 10 to 12 ceremonial Marine Corps bands in the United States, with two always in Washington, D.C. The band that will march in the parade is a 40-to-50-man unit

based in Albany, Ga.

Mr. McCourt said the band was already scheduled to play in Stamford, Conn., earlier in the weekend, so it was not too difficult logistically for them to come down to New Jersey for the Sunday concert and Monday parade.

The band will stay in the area overnight, and a committee seeks donations to help defray the cost of housing and feeding the band members. Mr. McCourt said checks can be sent (and made payable to) to the Committee Honoring the USMC, P.O. Box 128, Scotch Plains, NJ, 07076.

He said the public has "been generous so far" with donations. For further information on donating or securing a ticket for the Sunday night concert, call (908) 322-4388.



Fred Rossi for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*  
**HERE COME THE MARINES...** The Albany Marine Band will march in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day Parade on Monday, May 28. The theme for this year's parade is "Semper Paratus — A Special Salute to the United States Marine Corps."