



Merry Christmas!

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SIXTY CENTS

SP-F Would See 10-Percent Ed.-Aid Hike; WF Would See 2-Percent Jump

By PAUL J. PEYTON... AREA - The Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district would see a jump in state education aid in 2008-2009 of \$451,000, or 10 percent, while Westfield would see the minimum hike of 2 percent, or \$100,000...

come and property value," according to Governor's press release. The report showed that Westfield's student population rose by 806 from 2000 to 2007 to a current total of 6,250...

Westfield Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan said the district is analyzing why it received the minimum increase. "[Aid] hasn't increased much since 2001-2002," she said. While agreeing with Governor Jon Corzine's efforts to help lower property taxes, she said the new formula "is certainly not going to help the taxpayers in Westfield."



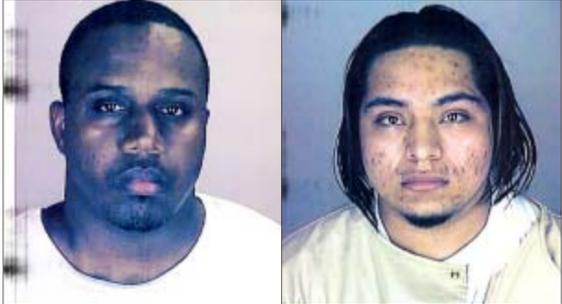
MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT...The Fanwood rescue squad, fire department and police officers of PBA Local 123 sponsor an annual door-to-door visit by Santa, who delivers more than 500 presents to children throughout the borough. Above, the Lynch family turns the Santa visit into a larger event, with more than 100 friends and family members and a spread of food.

SP Council Asks for Further Details Re. Scotch Hills Community Center

By FRED T. ROSSI... SCOTCH PLAINS - The township council is submitting questions to the architect who submitted preliminary renderings for a new senior citizens' and community center at the Scotch Hills Country Club. Earlier this month, council members got their first look at the drawings, which include multiple exterior renditions and an interior floor plan for the proposed three-story facility...

would cost \$3.6 million to construct. At the council's December 4 conference meeting, Parks and Recreation Director Ray Paoerio said that in preparing the drawings, RBA had received input from the township's senior advisory committee and the John Shippen Foundation on what they wanted included in a new facility.

existing facility so that the rear of the building would offer what he called "a spectacular view" of the eighth fairway. There would also be the option of installing a patio outside the building with picnic tables for events and wedding photographs.



ON THE RUN...Otis Blunt, 32, left, of Toms River and Jose Espinosa, 20, of Elizabeth escaped from the Union County jail in Elizabeth on Saturday. Espinosa, a member of Bloods gang, was to have been sentenced next month to 17 years in jail for a drive-by shooting in January 2005, while Blunt was awaiting trial for robbery and weapons charges.

Manhunt Continues for Union County Jail Escapees

ELIZABETH - Two inmates escaped from the Union County jail in Elizabeth at around 5 p.m. Saturday night by removing two cinder blocks in a jail wall and then jumping 25 feet from a rooftop over a barbed wired fence, according to Union County Prosecutor Ted Romankow.

the two cells. Magazine photos of bikini-clad women had hidden the holes in the walls. "Blunt evidently squeezed through that small opening into Espinosa's cell," Mr. Romankow said. "Espinosa, meanwhile had removed a similarly-sized block and the surrounding mortar on the outside wall, next to a window. It is believed that the two men squeezed through the outside wall and jumped to a rooftop just below. From there they jumped over a metal fence topped with razor wire, which was about 25 feet from the roof's edge. The fence top was approximately 25 feet high."



A GAME TO REMEMBER...Jubilant PAL players from Irvington perform at halftime of the Giants-Redskins football game last Sunday night. The Westfield PAL, Irvington PAL and the Giants public relations department arranged the event. See story on page 12.

SP-F Considers New Testing Option for 3rd, 5th Graders

By JESSICA E. JASKULA... SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD - Madeline Meyer began Thursday's Scotch Plains Fanwood Board of Education agenda-setting meeting with a presentation on the Cogate testing option, which would replace the Otis-Lennon Ability Test the district's second and fifth graders currently take in the spring.



STOP! GAVELTIME...Fanwood recreation commission chairman Pamela Sayles makes good use of the gavel Bob Budnick awarded to her "on behalf of the people of Fanwood, for all of your hard work and effort." See story on page 12.



THE OLD RUGGED CROSS... "Til my trophies at last I lay down... And exchange it someday for a crown." People locally and from around the country pay tribute to legendary Westfield football coach, mentor and friend Gary Kehler during services at the Presbyterian Church last Friday, December 14. Coach Kehler passed away December 7 and was interred at the Revolutionary Cemetery in Westfield.

Table with 3 columns: Page Index, Education, Real Estate, etc.

Scotch Plains to Participate In Deer-Management Programs

By FRED T. ROSSI... SCOTCH PLAINS - The township council wrapped up its business for 2007 Tuesday night and prepared for a new year that will bring changes to the municipal government. At its meeting, the council - besides taking care of some routine business like approving a resolution transferring funds between departments and canceling some unexpended balances in certain capital-improvement ordinances - addressed two deer-management issues.

municipalities bordering the reservation, it can apply to the state Division of Fish and Wildlife for a permit to conduct deer-management activities. In other business, local entities will submit three separate applications for federal community-development block grants. One grant would fund a handyman program for low- and moderate-income senior citizens, another would fund renovations to the senior-housing facility on Martine Avenue and the third would help fund renovations to the Frazer House the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club is overseeing.



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