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**TIMES**

OUR 48TH YEAR – ISSUE NO. 21-2007

USPS 485200  
Periodical – Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, N.J.

Thursday, May 24, 2007

Published Every Thursday Since 1959  
www.timesnj.com

(908) 232-4407  
press@goleader.com

SIXTY CENTS

## Report on FW Station Mews Wall Collapse Could Take Weeks

By JENNA NIERSTEDT  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — The borough has issued a stop-work order on all construction work on the Station Mews redevelopment project pending an investigation into last Tuesday's collapse of a concrete firewall at The Mews redevelopment project onto an adjacent building on South Avenue, officials said this week.

Two employees and a customer of the Livingston Wilbor Corporation on South Avenue were trapped inside its offices when part of the firewall fell on top of and collapsed Livingston Wilbor's roof on those inside.

Mayor Colleen Mahr said the site is under investigation and it could take up to a month for a final report to be produced on the cause of the accident. She said the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is the "lead agency in determining the cause."

"While they finished (the) field inspection, it is still an ongoing investigation," she said.

Mayor Mahr said borough building inspector Bruce Helmstetter placed a stop-work order on the construction site. She also said the site is secure in that fencing has been put

around the Wilbor site and fencing was already present at Station Mews. "The jurisdiction of the site is in our building official's hands," Mayor Mahr said. "He will work with the contractor and the owner to ensure a safe working environment is there for all."



Wayne Baker for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
DEMOLITION DEVELOPMENTS...Garry Wilbor, owner of the Livingston Wilbor Corporation, has applied for a demolition permit for the South Avenue building that had housed the business until the adjacent wall of the Station Mews development collapsed onto the building last Tuesday.

Fanwood Police Lieutenant Richard Trigo told *The Times* last week that it was not known when Mr. Helmstetter last inspected the Mews project. Mr. Helmstetter was out of town when *The Times* called his office Tuesday.

Garry Wilbor, owner of the Livingston Wilbor Corporation, has

applied for a demolition permit, according to Fanwood Planning Board Chairman Greg Cummings.

Although Mr. Wilbor told *The Times* last week that he expected to return to business within a few days, Mr. Cummings said he believed the demolition permit would be for the entire building, located at 238 South Avenue.

"We owe a huge thank you to all of our first responders," Mayor Mahr said. "They worked seamlessly and professionally in an incident that we have not seen before in town. It's not until tragedy strikes that you really get to see how well the responders work together."

Firefighters and emergency personnel from as far away as Hoboken, Jersey City, Bayonne and Elizabeth responded to the scene along with local towns, including Westfield and Scotch Plains.

Helen and Jeff Ling, proprietor of Enchantments gift shop on South Avenue, are developing the Mews.

"The investigation has been going on, and I think that with the causes of it, it's in professionals' hands in order to find out, and everything will go from there. Hopefully, we'll move forward. Right now, we should leave all those (decisions) in professionals' hands," said Helen Ling.

"I [would] think that the longer the delay, then we will have financial consequences. When we started the project, there was a schedule, and you're hoping that you'll stick to the schedule and for good weather so that people will be working there. In that sense, [any] delay will be a financial cost," Ms. Ling said.

"It's a very stressful time for me right now, but I was very thankful that nobody was seriously injured. That was my primary concern regarding the incident," she said.

A message left with the general contractor of The Mews development, Richard Buontempo of Buontempo Development in Westfield, was not returned by press time.



A HISTORIC DAY...Members of the Fanwood Historic Preservation Commission stand in front of the museum during Sunday's grand opening. The museum is located at the historic Fanwood train station.

## U.S. Marine Corps Band Set For Memorial Parade, SPFHS Concert

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Memorial Day Parade will be held on Monday and will feature the Marine Corps Band, which will march from downtown Scotch Plains into Fanwood and also perform a concert on Sunday evening at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

The day's activities, laid out at the township council's meeting on Tuesday, will begin at the American Legion building on Park Avenue at 8 a.m. with a wreath-laying ceremony and prayers, followed by a similar ceremony at the Fanwood Memorial Library at 9 a.m. The parade will step off at about 10:45 a.m., preceded by speeches and other ceremonies at Alan Augustine Park at the corner of Park Avenue and Front Street that will start at 10 a.m.

In other business, the council approved an ordinance appropriating \$140,000 from the state Department

of Transportation to resurface the portion of Westfield Road between Mountain Avenue and Westfield Avenue. The council also approved a \$140,000 bond ordinance to finance the purchase of a new police department communications center.

Township Manager Thomas Atkins said the residential spring cleanup will get underway on Monday, June 4, and asked residents interested in participating to submit permit applications as soon as possible. Permits are available for \$65 and allow up to 750 pounds of household materials to be placed at curbside for pickup. Per-

mits and a schedule of pick-up times for certain areas of town are available at the municipal building on Park Avenue and the Public Works building on Plainfield Avenue.

At the start of its meeting, the council formally honored attorney Robert Kraus. Two weeks ago, the mayor had proclaimed May 10 as Robert Kraus Day in honor of Mr. Kraus' years of civic and philanthropic contributions to Scotch Plains. Mr. Kraus, who attended Tuesday's meeting, received the proclamation, as well as accolades from the mayor, Councilwoman Nancy

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## Assistant Rec. Dir. Resigns As FW Programs Grow

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

FANWOOD — Recreation Director Robert Budiansky's agenda for Tuesday night's monthly Recreation Commission meeting listed a "surprise announcement," which turned out to be just that: the pending resignation of Assistant Recreation Director Mary Pembridge.

Ms. Pembridge, who just began the part-time job last fall, said, "I have a full-time job and [the assistant director position] is a much bigger commitment than I figured."

She said she would, however, remain in the position through the summer so she can supervise the borough's revised "Summer Park" program.

The announcement caught commission members off-guard and led to a full discussion about the changing nature of Fanwood's growing recreation program.

Of Ms. Pembridge's job, commission member Willie Green said, "This is not a part-time position."

Pointing to the new recreation programs added during the past year for children and seniors and increased program enrollment, Mr. Budiansky — also a part-time employee hired last year — said, "Mary is a victim of our success...the clock is ticking on me, as well, as long as the job is structured the way it is."

Mr. Budiansky said Fanwood's programs now draw more participants from Scotch Plains, which has about 10 full-time recreation employees and a budget of \$1 million. By comparison, Fanwood's recreation budget is less than \$40,000.

Commission member Russell Wells noted that the borough has added new recreation services and special events. "That doesn't come for free," he said,

adding that "it's too much work" for part-time employees.

"I don't know if a town this small can sustain a recreation program at the size we're now doing," said Mr. Budiansky, who said Mayor Colleen Mahr has already contacted him about this issue.

Mr. Budiansky said Mayor Mahr wants to schedule a meeting with him, commission Chairman Pam Sayles and Borough Council Liaison Joseph Higgins, possibly having the commis-

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GOT MILK?...Left, Fanwood's last known dairy farmers, Walter and Gladdis Essex, display a bottle from a dairy product produced at their facility during Sunday's grand opening of the Fanwood Museum. Prior to construction on Station Mews, workers found the bottle, which contained the Essex name. The Essex family tradition of dairy farming goes back several generations. GRAND OPENING...Right, Mayor Colleen Mahr, far right, addresses spectators at the museum opening.

## Opening of Fanwood Museum Gives Residents Look Into Borough's History

By LIZA KATZ and SARAH QUELLER  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — Spectators gathered at the Fanwood Train Station last Sunday to celebrate the opening of the new Fanwood Museum, which

displays artifacts that document the borough's history.

Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr and the borough council designated the museum's space, which the mayor said is an appropriate location because it is a historic site and a "destination point for Fanwood."

Mayor Mahr, who made a speech to officially establish the new museum, said it is a "wonderful testament to our history...and our ties to the railroad."

The museum features photos of historic homes in the Fanwood Park Historic District, which includes parts of North and North Martine Avenues. Local artists' work, a history of the train station and old Fanwood maps are also on display. Other pieces, such as a black potbelly stove, are original to the railway station building.

The museum will open again on Tuesday, August 7, for National Night Out, which according to nationalnightout.org is designed to "heighten crime and drug prevention awareness" and strengthen "police-community partnerships." The Fanwood Museum will then be open to the general public about once or twice a month starting in September, according to Fanwood Historic Preservation Commission (FHPC) member Margaret McIntyre.

The museum's collection was originally housed in the basement of the Fanwood Memorial Library until both the library and the museum needed more space. A little more than a year ago, the FHPC began assembling the current museum in what was formerly a meeting room in the Fanwood Train Station. Officials said they chose the train station because it is registered as a historic site on the local, state and national levels and because it belongs to the borough.

FHPC Chairman Dolores O'Brien said the commission welcomes the continuous stream of "hidden treasures" Fanwood residents are donating. According to Ms. O'Brien, the commission's goal is to protect and preserve valuable historic memorabilia. Ms. McIntyre said the FHPC hopes to coordinate opening the museum with the Cannonball House in Springfield.

The FHPC also plans to install a Central Jersey Railway caboose, which provided Fanwood with coal after the Civil War.

"Do we value when we look back in time what we see now? I think it's a resounding, 'Yes,'" Mayor Mahr said.

"What's a better use for this building than a museum?" Ms. O'Brien asked. For more information, see visitfanwood.com.

## Search for SP-F High School Parking Solution Continues

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council on Tuesday gave the police department the authority to temporarily restrict parking on two streets near Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, while Mayor Martin Marks suggested that a more permanent on-street student parking solution is in the offing.

At its regular meeting, the mayor said the police department "is drawing up plans for a more uniform and safe parking scheme" on all the streets in the vicinity of the high school that would involve giving student drivers the opportunity to secure permits that would allow them to park in certain sections of those streets.

He said, "In the coming weeks, we will have something finalized" that will take effect at the start of the 2007-2008 school year.

In March, after a four-hour public hearing, the council passed an ordinance restricting student parking on eight streets around the high school. It approved an amendment that pushed back the effective date of the ordinance to September 1 so that representatives from the board of education, along with Scotch Plains and Fanwood, could meet and come up with a more permanent solution to a problem that has led neighborhood residents to complain for years about streets crowded with students' cars.

Since then, a shared-services committee has met to seek a solution. Already, the BOE has said there will be about 60 additional on-site parking spaces at the high school in September, and board officials are also discussing the possible use of some parking spaces in the lot behind St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church on Westfield Avenue. Students parking there would be able to walk through Green Forest Park and then two blocks up Westfield Road to the school.

Beyond the permits the mayor mentioned on Tuesday, he did not offer any other specifics about the possible on-street parking solution, except to say that he felt it will "be agreeable to most — not everyone — but most."

Temporary power given to the police department allows it to restrict parking on the north side of Church Street between Watching View Terrace and Portland Avenue and along the entire length of West Court for the next three months, although it will primarily affect student drivers in the final weeks of the school year. Police officials requested the authority after a recent daytime fire on Church Street during which emergency vehicles experienced difficulty maneuvering through Church Street, where cars were parked on both sides of the street. "This is purely a safety measure," said Councilwoman Nancy Malool.



IT'S BIGGER THAN ME... Evan Rossi of Scotch Plains stands next to the trunk of tree that came down during the May 16 storm. The tree, which has since been removed by the township's Department of Public Works, lifted the sidewalk.

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## Local Communities Plan Memorial Day Events

**Westfield:** Opening ceremonies will begin at 9 a.m. at the World War I monument at the North Avenue and East Broad Street plaza. The parade will travel along East Broad Street and end with closing ceremonies at Fairview Cemetery.

**Garwood:** The borough's annual service will begin at noon at the Knights of Columbus Hall at 43 South Avenue.

**Mountainside:** The Mountainside VFW co-sponsors the Westfield parade. Its veterans will participate in the opening ceremony at the WWI monument and at the closing ceremony at Fairview cemetery and will march in the parade.

**Scotch Plains-Fanwood:** The Albany Marine Band will perform a patriotic concert at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School at 8 p.m. on Sunday.

On Monday, a memorial service will begin at 8 a.m. at American Legion Post No. 209, located at Park Avenue and Sunset Place in Scotch Plains. A wreath-laying ceremony will begin at 9 a.m. at the Fanwood Memorial Library, with a

presentation to follow at Veterans Monument in Scotch Plains. The parade will begin at 10:45 a.m. at the Scotch Plains Municipal Building, proceeding down Park and Martine Avenues into Fanwood and will conclude at LaGrande Park.

**Cranford:** The parade will begin at 9 a.m. at the Cranford Community Center, at 220 Walnut Avenue, and finish at Memorial Park on Springfield Avenue. A ceremony at Memorial Park is set to start around 10 a.m., led by Grand Marshal of Ceremonies Lt. Cornel George Frank Jr., a member of the U.S. Army. In case of inclement weather, the services will move to the Presbyterian Church on North Union and Springfield Avenue, Bates Hall.

**Clark:** A parade will kick off at 9:30 a.m. on the corner of Westfield Avenue and Nassau Street. Members will march to Arthur L. Johnson High School, and immediately following the parade's conclusion, the American Legion will hold a memorial service. See pages 6 and 7 for details.