



ROCK AND ROLL MUSIC(FEST)...Chuck Berry displays some of his time-tested whimsical singsong moves during his performance at Nomahegan Park in Cranford Saturday afternoon. The musician appeared as part of Union County's annual MusicFest event. See related stories on page 22.

## FAA Adopts Redesign Plan, Draws Opposition From Air-Traffic Groups

By DEBBIE HOFFMAN  
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

AREA - Local opposition has responded to the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) recent adoption of a plan to reroute air traffic in the region. The FAA says the plan will significantly reduce delays at East Coast airports, including Newark Liberty International Airport, but some area residents have expressed fear it will increase noise over their communities.

As reported by The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times in May, FAA officials said at a spring hearing in Newark that the FAA's plan would "combine high-altitude and low-altitude airspace" to allow more flights in the area while maintaining safety and reducing noise levels for residents around the airport.

"I'm very upset about it," said Jerome Feder, a member of the New Jersey Coalition Against Aircraft Noise (NJCAAN) and a resident of Westfield. "They (the FAA) disregard environmental issues, and the gains are small to non-existent."

"The FAA states that the airspace redesign does not increase airport capacity," NJCAAN President Robert Belzer said in a statement. "However, the agency repeatedly states the exact opposite in promotional and aviation industry documents."

The City of Elizabeth immediately responded to the announcement with a lawsuit against Marion Blakely, administrator of the FAA, and the FAA itself, citing the increased air traffic over the city and the "significant" increase in aircraft noise. The suit states that additional departure headings over Elizabeth for flights taking off from Newark Liberty "will sig-

nificantly and adversely increase aircraft noise levels for the City of Elizabeth and its residents above their current levels," according to a copy of the Elizabeth lawsuit obtained by The Times.

"The FAA's EIS (Environmental

Westfield and Cranford.

"The FAA adopted the worst alternative," she said. "The county has opposed the plan and continues to oppose it."

With more planes flying directly over Union County municipalities, Ms. Ward said there is "more risk of injury or death in the event of a crash" to people on the ground.

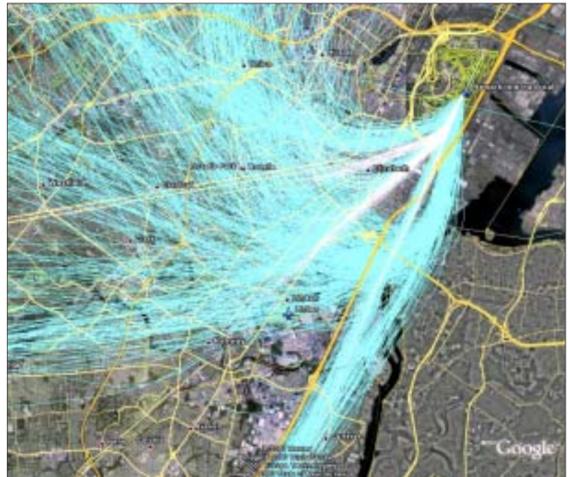
The Union County Aircraft Noise Advisory Committee (UCANAC), chaired by Mr. Feder, is encouraging all towns in Union County to join forces to fight the plan.

"If this plan goes into effect, it will decrease the quality of life of the people in Union County," said Ms. Ward, freeholder liaison to the UCANAC.

At a meeting of the committee last week, a formal request was made that the county and its municipalities join to oppose the plan and consider litigation.

Ms. Ward suggested that the FAA consider building another airport in a less densely populated area like the Poconos "instead of spending all this money on redesign."

The FAA and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey did not return calls seeking comment.



AIR TRAFFIC...The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has approved changes it had proposed to air traffic patterns in the area for landings and departures at Newark Airport. Pictured above is the web of flights, rearranged to pass over the region surrounding the New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia hub. See goleader.com/features to download detailed FAA reports.

Impact Statement) fails to provide an effective disclosure of the noise impacts to the City of Elizabeth and its residents," the lawsuit alleges.

NJCAAN has also hired a law firm and filed suit.

According to Union County Freeholder Nancy Ward, the noise increase would affect not only Elizabeth but also many other communities in Union County, including

## Stender Won't Support Cuts In Aid to 'Wealthy Districts'

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD - Assemblywoman Linda Stender (LD-22, Fanwood), who is running for re-election to a fourth term in the Assembly, said last week that she would oppose a new state school-aid formula that would harm so-called "wealthy districts" like Scotch Plains-Fanwood and Westfield.

During an interview at the Westfield offices of The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times last Friday, the former freeholder, Fanwood mayor and councilwoman said she has "long supported" a constitutional convention on property taxes.

"I really think we have to make a structural change in how we fund education. That's the problem with property taxes, in my mind," she said. "We have to create better incentives for [the] regionalizing of services for cost-efficient delivery of services."

Mrs. Stender said while residents in other states "are not paying high property taxes, they are also not getting the level of services that we get. It costs money to provide services. People never say to me, 'could you cut my services?' They always say, 'could you cut my taxes?'"

She said this year's state-rebate program equates to "20 percent off the (property-tax) bill. That could

mean as much as \$2,000 depending on the household value."

"[Property taxes are] a very real issue, and costs continue to escalate," Mrs. Stender said. "We have big challenges here in the state...A lot of our budgetary issues are the result of decisions that were made in the last 15 years about how we structure our debt and how we used our money and what we bought and paid for."

On the issue of changing the school formula to calculate school aid, Mrs. Stender said, "Clearly, our formula needs to be addressed because - certainly for towns like Westfield, like Fanwood-Scotch Plains - we are on a high-end socioeconomic path. What that means is that we get less money from the state."

She said the 22nd district, which encompasses Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Clark, Plainfield, Linden, North Plainfield, Rahway, Green Brook, Dunellen, Middlesex and Winfield, crosses all socioeconomic areas.

"I am looking for a [school-aid] formula that is going to acknowledge the needs of areas that have real poverty and also that doesn't punish areas that educate their children well like Fanwood-Scotch Plains, like Westfield," Mrs. Stender said. She said the new formula must include

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## Firms, Rec. Committee to Review Scotch Hills Renovation Proposals

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

SCOTCH PLAINS - Two architecture firms will meet later this week with a subcommittee of the township's recreation commission to discuss proposals for potential improvements to Scotch Hills Country Club before the full commission discusses the matter early next month with the township council.

At the council's conference meeting on Tuesday, Recreation Director Ray Poerio said the recreation commission's facilities subcommittee had chosen two firms - RBA of Morristown and The Musial Group of Mountainside - to take part in interviews about the project, which centers around a new senior citizens and community center at the club. It is not certain whether the existing facility will be razed and rebuilt or whether it will receive an extensive renovation.

Mr. Poerio said the subcommittee had received proposals from six different firms and evaluated them in the

past week. The subcommittee selected RBA and Musial because they best met what Mr. Poerio said were his two top criteria: cost and experience with recreation facilities.

After the interviews this week, Mr. Poerio said, the subcommittee will speak with the full recreation commission next Monday. Mayor Martin Marks said he would like the commission to meet with the council at its Tuesday, October 2 conference meeting to fully discuss the project.

In other business, the council met with representatives of Jersey Cable Access Group (JCAG), a consortium of more than 100 public-access television stations in New Jersey, to discuss ways to structure the management of Scotch Plains Television now that the council has decided to bring the station's management back under the auspices of the municipal government.

For the past few years, the township has jointly operated the station with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood

Board of Education, but a formal agreement on the management of TV-34 has never been established.

JCAG operates as a sort of networking group in which stations can discuss ideas and problems and share programs, technology, equipment and even staff, if necessary.

Mayor Marks said the station could not be operated by a small group of volunteers, as it was until two years ago.

"There is going to have to be an investment of some sort," he said, meaning that a professional person or a private group must be hired to manage the station.

He said it would be preferable to hire someone from Scotch Plains, or at least from the area, because that individual would have a more thorough knowledge of the township.



NORTHERN EXPOSURE...Canadian Vietnam Veterans ride from Quebec to Warinanco Park in Roselle to join the Rolling Thunder motorcycle procession on Sunday to the PNC Art Center to honor and remember the POWs.

## FW Board OKs Renovations To Farley Avenue Property

By MARIA WOEHRE  
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD - Fanwood's planning board on Monday night approved renovations to a home located at 126 Farley Avenue. The area is in a flood zone, and the board granted permission to JMG Properties, LLC of Scotch Plains to renovate it. Michael Galbraith of JMG owns the land.

"The rear of the property is within that flood hazard area. The detention of the design goes across adjacent properties and other properties. The proposed building is smaller and would cause the drainage of the properties to be improved," Borough Engineer Joseph Pryor said.

"We have calculated the property with the roof drains. The house has two side-yard variances. The net effect will be different, and in addition

to the detention box the driveway will drain the water into the street, which should improve things," Mr. Galbraith said. "Everything in the adjacent properties has worked out well."

Board Chairman Greg Cummings favored the change to the structure.

"It should be a benefit for the entire neighborhood," Mr. Cummings said.

The renovations will improve the drainage and the size of the property, including the use of a graveled driveway as opposed to one made of asphalt, a representative for JMG said.

"Gravel is a better runoff. Plus if a driveway is paved it doesn't require any variance," said Robert Sullivan, the Berkeley Heights attorney representing the owner of the property.

The board will next meet on Wednesday, September 26.

## Asw. Stender Holds Seminar About Property Tax Relief

By DEBBIE HOFFMAN  
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD - Addressing the ongoing confusion regarding property-tax relief, Assemblywoman Linda Stender (LD-22, Fanwood) held her second seminar this month on the topic in Fanwood Tuesday night. She held an earlier program the same day in Rahway.

The informal seminar was designed to help local residents navigate the maze of property-tax relief rules, including a measure that calls for a direct reduction on property-tax bills Governor Jon Corzine signed into law this past April.

"We try to make it as easy as we possibly can," said Jennifer Mancuso, Mrs. Stender's legislative aide. "Many people aren't aware of the rebates available."

Much of the session was spent talking about the property tax reimbursement program that is more commonly known as the Senior Freeze (Property Tax Reimbursement Program.)

Ms. Mancuso explained that the "freeze" is available to qualifying seniors so that their property taxes are "frozen" the year they first become eligible for the program.

Participants were also reminded that the deadline for property tax relief application forms was extended to Wednesday, October 31, of this year.

"Senior citizens are guaranteed to receive as much as they did from last year's rebate program," she said.

Margarite Petro, a Fanwood resident, asked if there were any other ways a person could reduce their property taxes. The simple answer, Ms.

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KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE GRAND OLE FLAG...Students from kindergarten through fourth grade gather in the Evergreen Elementary School gymnasium in Scotch Plains to remember Patriots' Day on September 11. The school commemorates the anniversary every year. After students unfurl the flag, people read poems about the flag's significance while students sing patriotic songs. The school invites students' parents to join in the day, which focuses on the patriotism and heroism displayed that day.



CAMPAIGN TRAIL...Assemblywoman Linda Stender (LD-22, Fanwood) greets supporters at the Fanwood Democratic Committee's campaign kick-off and fundraiser at the Sun Tavern on Tuesday night. Mrs. Stender last week sat down with The Times for an exclusive campaign interview. See that interview and more at goleader.com/07election and goleader.com/video.

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