



ON THE TRAIL...Fanwood Councilman Bill Populus, left, Mayor Colleen Mahr, center, and Council President Kathy Mitchell take time out from the campaign trail to visit the LaGrande Park tennis courts.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

*Fanwood Democrats
Candidates for Re-Election*

Borough Mayor Colleen Mahr kicked off her door-to-door re-election campaign earlier this month, accompanied by her Democratic running-mates, Council President Kathy Mitchell and Councilman Bill Populus.

Taking advantage of the nice weather, the Democratic trio took a break from its doorbell-ringing to watch some teenage tennis players enjoying the renovated tennis courts in LaGrande Park.

First elected in 2003, Mayor Mahr is seeking her second four-year term as mayor in the November 6 General Election.

Councilwoman Mitchell was first

County to Observe

POW/MIA Day, Sept. 21

COUNTY - The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders invites all veterans and residents of Union County to attend and participate in the annual POW/MIA Remembrance Day Ceremony. This year's ceremony will take place tomorrow at 11:15 a.m. in the rotunda of the Union County Courthouse, located at 2 Broad Street in Elizabeth.

Members of veterans' organizations, all county public officials and the public are all invited to attend.

For more information, call the freeholders' office at (908) 527-4107.

Westfield Regional Health Department Blotter

Statistics for Westfield, August 2007

Vital Statistics	
Births	31
Deaths	18
Marriages	13
Civil Unions	0
Domestic Partnerships	0

Communicable / Reportable Diseases

Salmonella	1
Hepatitis A	0
Hepatitis B	3
Hepatitis C	8
Influenza	0
Lyme Disease	2
Disease Outbreaks	0
Pertussis	1

Retail Food Inspections

Excellent	0
Passed	31
Conditionally Satisfactory	1
Unsatisfactory	0
Total Initial/Re-inspections	36
Walk-In Inspections	11
Preoperational Inspections	1

Environmental

Garbage	2
Rodent	1
Animal Control	1
Nuisance	1
Air, Water, Noise Complaints	3

Health Screenings/Programs

Blood Pressure	0
Diabetes	0
Stroke	0
Health Education	0
Body-Fat Screening	1
Flu/Pneumonia Vaccinations	0

Child Health Services

Child Health Clinics	3
# of Children Attending	4
# of Vaccinations Given	5
Physicals	3

Nursing

Home Visits	0
School Audits	0
Other	0

Other Inspections

Pools	4
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Enforcement

Court Summons	1
Board Hearings	0

Assemblywoman Stender

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increased accountability and oversight.

"What we have to get to is a formula that's not going to require that when a district like Westfield or Scotch Plains-Fanwood increases [its] cost that that doesn't automatically trigger an increase in what the state gives to the Abbott-District student as long as the Abbott-District student is actually getting the level that adequately funds [his or her] education," she said.

Mrs. Stender said she would not support a formula that results in a loss of aid to wealthy districts like Westfield and Scotch Plains-Fanwood.

The legislator said special-education aid is not being properly funded at the federal level, which "creates additional stress" for school districts. While mandated to pay 40 percent of special-education costs, the federal government currently pays half that amount, she said.

"But when you have an administration that is flushing money in the Middle East, then [it] turns around and says 'we have no money for these things,' I think that is wrong. Our priorities are wrong in terms of what we have been doing in Washington," she said.

Mrs. Stender said she voted in favor of legislation signed by Governor Jon Corzine that bans legislators from holding other elected offices. The ban, which goes into effect next year, excludes incumbents.

"So, while it is not the outright ban, I think that it accomplishes the goal...If the purpose of the dual-office-holding legislation ban was to spread power amongst more people, as op-

posed to having it concentrated in a very few, I think [the ban] gets us to that point," Mrs. Stender said.

When asked if she would support switching from a pension to a 401-K system for legislators, Mrs. Stender said, "I think the idea of legislators being able to earn a pension is an acceptable one, but I'd be willing to consider reforms to how it's been done."

Mrs. Stender believes there has been a "rush" to 401-K retirement systems in the country. "Sadly, I think we are in a climate where people no longer are able to work towards retiring with dignity."

While she believes there are problems having a part-time legislature, Mrs. Stender said if the legislature was changed to a full-time body, at the current \$49,000 annual salary, it would not attract as many qualified people to run for office. However, she supports changing a part-time legislature, noting a full-time legislator in New York State earns "well over \$100,000."

"I don't think the public really wants to support that kind of pay scale right now," she said.

Mrs. Stender said she would be supportive of legislation allowing trade associations to create health-insurance pools with better premiums and coverage plans for self-employed individuals and small companies.

"I support that notion because I think we have a health-care system that is so horribly broken," she said. "I think we do have to allow more flexibility within the system, so that we can get people to be able to afford a level of coverage."

To improve residents' views of state government, she said she accepts invitations to speak to schoolchildren "to try to excite kids" about government.

"It always matters who you elect at the local level, the state level and the federal level because every decision affects you," Mrs. Stender said.

One of the legislator's biggest pieces of legislation is the Global Warming Response Act. She said the new law requires a rollback of Green House emissions in New Jersey to 1990 levels by 2020, with additional reductions by 2050.

"We've got a very serious problem on this globe that threatens our very existence," she said. "We really need a national solution. I think it's a matter of leadership...I think we should be taking care of the mess that we have made."

She called it "abysmal" and a "travesty" that President George W. Bush and Congress have only reacted recently to the issue.

"We know the sea level is rising. We know the Arctic is melting. We're a coastal state. If we were a nation, we'd be the 37th-largest country in the world in terms of what we emit (into the atmosphere). So while we can't fix everything, we can start to fix our own house," she said.

Mrs. Stender said she has also worked on legislation supporting stem-cell research and pedestrian safety, noting she feels motorists should be required to stop - not simply yield - to pedestrians. She said improving pedestrian safety would entice people to walk, thus reducing traffic and emissions while helping "people reduce their waistlines."

In terms of future offices, Mrs. Stender is raising money for another run next year against Rep. Mike Ferguson (R-7th, New Providence). She said while she is considered a candidate based on setting up an account to raise money, she has yet to begin campaigning for that office.

"I'm focused on the Assembly. My Assembly [seat] is my immediate priority. I take it very seriously, and I feel very strongly about the work that we are doing and that I am doing," she said.

Watch the full exclusive interview online at goleader.com/video and goleader.com/07election.

Tax Seminar

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Mancuso said, was "no." But, responding to another participant's question, she did remind the audience that veterans are eligible for deductions and said they should contact their individual municipalities.

The Homestead Rebate program is open to tenants and homeowners. Homeowners are eligible for 20 percent of the first \$10,000 paid in property taxes with a maximum of \$2,000. The program is based on total income, with those under \$100,000 receiving the maximum and those with salaries between \$150,000 and \$250,000 receiving the lowest amount or 10 percent. Tenants who earn under \$100,000 are eligible for the program.

A handful of residents attended the Fanwood seminar. Mrs. Stender attended part of the seminar but left for another engagement. Plans are in the works for future seminars before the October deadline.

Information on the rebates is available at state.nj.us/treasury.

SPFHS Class of '87 To Hold 20th Reunion

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Class of 1987 will hold its 20th reunion on Saturday, September 29, from 7 to 11 p.m. at Pantagis Renaissance, located at Park and Mountain Avenues in Scotch Plains. For details, please call New England Reunions at (877) 600-6694 or visit newenglandreunions.com.



BEAUTY AND CHROME...Members from the National Chapter of Rolling Thunder prepare to ride last Sunday at Warnaco Park. Pictured, left to right, are: Mike O'Conner, Sheryl O'Conner, Richard Trignano and Jo Greco.

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Friday, September 14, Erick Lewis, 35, of Cranford was arrested at Cranford police headquarters on an outstanding contempt-of-court warrant issued by Westfield, with bail of \$100. He was committed to the Union County jail on default of bail.

Friday, September 14, Jessie Stromer, 18, of Westfield was arrested at the Westfield train station after he allegedly attempted to use a fake rail pass aboard a NJ Transit train. He was charged with forgery and released with a summons.

Saturday, September 15, Antoinette O'Hare, 46, of Westfield was arrested at her residence on outstanding contempt-of-court warrants issued by Woodbridge Township and Clark Township. Bail amounts on the warrants were \$2,500 and \$165, respectively. She was turned over to the Woodbridge Police Department.

Saturday, September 15, after being stopped for motor-vehicle violations, Clarence Jans, 46, of Westfield was arrested on the 300 block of South Avenue, East, and charged with driving while intoxicated. He was issued a summons and released to a responsible individual.

Saturday, September 15, Demetrio Linares, 54, of Westfield was arrested on five outstanding contempt-of-court warrants, all from Elizabeth, after turning himself in at Westfield police headquarters. He was released after posting a total of \$500 bail.

Scotch Plains

Monday, September 10, a resident of Duncan Drive reported that someone stole his bicycle, valued at approximately \$150, from his back yard.

Tuesday, September 11, Thomas Fortunato, 19, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with making terroristic threats.

According to police, they received at headquarters a letter demanding changes to the way the government is run. Authorities said the letter threatened that looting would occur if the changes were not made. Police said the letter was traced to Fortunato, and he was arrested and transported to the Union County jail where he is being held because he was unable to post bail.

Friday, September 14, Christopher Agwu, 44, of Fanwood was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor-vehicle stop for a violation.

Saturday, September 15, Adolph Bellizeare, 54, of Scotch Plains was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor-vehicle stop for a violation.

Saturday, September 15, a resident of Black Birch Road reported that someone removed jewelry from the inside of her house. According to police, the victim is having work done on the house, but it is unknown if the workers were responsible.

Saturday, September 15, a resident of Hunter Avenue reported being the victim of terroristic threats after asking guests at a party to leave. According to police, one of the guests threatened her with violence.

Mountainside

Tuesday, September 11, an employee at a Route 22 nursing home reported that a visitor assaulted her after an argument ensued regarding the care of a patient.

Wednesday, September 12, a patron of a private club reported that while inside the club's building at a meeting someone released the air in two tires on his vehicle.

Wednesday, September 12, Raafiah S. Simpson, 22, of Stroudsburg, Pa. was arrested for outstanding warrants

out of Mountainside, Irvington, East Orange, and Allamuchy Township.

Wednesday, September 12, Jeremiah A. Carter, 24, of Hillside was arrested at the Essex County jail for outstanding Mountainside warrants totaling \$800.

Wednesday, September 13, an employee at a Route 22 gas station reported that someone received a full tank of gas totaling \$30 and drove off without paying. According to police, the suspect is a tall, white male, and the vehicle is described as a green, four-door sedan, possibly a Cadillac.

Fanwood

Saturday, September 8, a resident of Midway Avenue reported that someone made unauthorized charges to her credit card, totaling \$982. According to police, the items were shipped to an address in Miami, Fla. The incident is under investigation, police said.

Tuesday, September 11, Marení C. Gomez, 51, of Plainfield was arrested for numerous South Plainfield warrants after a motor-vehicle stop in the 100 block of South Avenue.

Tuesday, September 11, Keith J. Furlong, 44, of Longbranch was arrested on an outstanding Tinton Falls warrant after a motor-vehicle stop on Vinton Circle.

Thursday, September 13, David K. Barker, 46, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding Scotch Plains warrant after a motor-vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Thursday, September 13, Donald W. Balevre, 37, of Fanwood was arrested for an outstanding Clark warrant after a motor-vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Saturday, September 15, Pamela K. Washington, 42, of Plainfield was arrested on multiple Fanwood warrants and a warrant out of Elizabeth following a motor-vehicle stop in the 100 block of Midway Avenue.

Monday, September 17, Kevin L. Belvin, 27, of Elizabeth was arrested on an outstanding Roselle warrant after a motor-vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Monday, September 17, a resident of Ridge Way reported that someone made unauthorized charges to her credit card, totaling \$800.

Fanwood Parking Permits Go on Sale

FANWOOD - Fanwood parking permits for 2008 will go on sale October 1 for Fanwood residents only, the Fanwood Police Department has announced.

Permits for all other residents will be available starting Thursday, November 1. Permits can be purchased at the Fanwood Police Department, located at 75 North Martine Avenue. Permits can be obtained 24 hours a day, seven days a week after the dates listed above.

Cash or money orders will be accepted, although credit cards will not. The cost is \$240 per permit for Fanwood residents and \$504 for all other residents.

For more information, call Sergeant Howard Jarvis at the Fanwood Police Department at (908) 322-5000, extension 153.

Mountainside Debuts

New School Website

MOUNTAINSIDE - The Mountainside School District website has moved to mountainsideschools.org.

The website provides updates and information on events and activities in the schools.



Debbie Hoffman for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

GETTING SOME (TAX) RELIEF...Jennifer Mancuso, right, legislative aide to Assemblywoman Linda Stender (I.D.-22, Fanwood), helps Fanwood resident Magarita Petro navigate through the paperwork necessary to file for property-tax relief. The deadline to file for the Homestead Relief program is October 31.

Merchants Seek Relief During WF Parking-Lot Renovations

By WAYNE BAKER
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD - Monday night's meeting of the Downtown Westfield Corporation began with a discussion of ongoing renovations to parking lots one and eight, between Elm and Prospect Streets, in front of Trader Joe's. A group of about 20 business owners questioned Town Administrator Jim Gildea about the town's plans for the lots.

"Last Saturday was a mess," Maria Iacono, owner of Maria Candida Hair Salon, said concerning Saturday's closing of both lots.

Ms. Iacono requested some type of relief, noting that some of her clients are elderly. She represented one of four Prospect Street business owners who voiced their displeasure with what they viewed as impediments to business they have faced over the last 18 months.

Anna Mastroianni of Sole Shoes said, "Our street is closed with no warning."

Mr. Gildea said many of the closures were the result of the Savannah age-restricted development under construction on Prospect Street, over which the town had little control.

Ms. Mastroianni also requested better signage; Mr. Gildea said the town had arranged to borrow two large lighted signs from the county.

"You really are hurting us," said Scott Edmunds of Flower Zone. He, along with other business owners, asked for the town to exhibit some flexibility during the construction.

Councilman Sal Caruana said he would speak to Police Lieutenant Ken Norton, who heads the traffic division at the Westfield Police Department.

Susan Rauer of Brunner Opticians said it "might help if the parking-enforcement officers treated people with respect," said.

Mr. Gildea said three of the town's five parking-enforcement officers had recently been replaced and noted that

customer service was a key reason. He commented that people encountering the officers could expect a more service-oriented attitude.

Describing aspects of the parking-lot renovation project, Mr. Gildea said the project would be executed in phases; with lot one (bordering Prospect Street) being worked first, followed by lot eight.

"One side will always be open," said DW Chairmen David Martone.

Mr. Gildea said there might be "infrequent" times when it would be necessary to close both lots.

He described changes affecting permit parkers using those lots. He described "underutilized" meter spaces on Elm Street, near Stop and Shop and on Ferris Place and Orchard Street, as being "bagged" for permit parkers.

Officials said they would encourage permit parkers to use parking lot nine behind Blockbuster Video on North Avenue. Mr. Gildea said moving the permit parkers would result in more spaces being available for shoppers during the project than prior to it. He said changes to permit locations would continue after the project, creating "a large increase" in available shopper parking in downtown lots.

Mr. Gildea also commented that the project would interconnect lots one and eight and reduce on-street traffic, as drivers would no longer have to return to the streets, circling the block or cutting through Trader Joe's lot.

He said the planned schedule has the work completed by the end of October, though weather or problems might delay the project.

Shop owners expressed concerns about impact on the holiday season, which begins early in November.

The DW announced that tomorrow, September 21, the town will show *Monsters, Inc.* at the Elm Street Field at 8 p.m.



Fred Rossi for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

CROWD CONTROL...Sebastian D'Elia, director of the Union County Office of Public Information, estimates that 50,000 people attended the county's annual MusicFest event held Saturday in Cranford's Nomahegan Park from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. See related stories on page 22.



Benjamin B. Corbin for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FUTURE FIREFIGHTERS...Children receive firefighters' helmets at Sunday's pancake fundraiser for the Fanwood Fire Department held at The Chelsea at Fanwood.