

Sheriff Ralph Froehlich Dies At 83; Had Served In Post Since 1978

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

COUNTY — Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich died Sunday at the age of 83 after a short illness. He was in his 13th term as Union County Sheriff, having been re-elected to a three-year term this past November.

He was first elected Sheriff of Union County in 1977, replacing Ralph Oriscello. He had won a seat on the Elizabeth City Council in 1976. He held the distinction of being the longest-serving county sheriff in New Jersey history.

Assemblyman Joseph Cryan (D-20th, Union), who was serving as undersheriff, will be acting sheriff. "Sheriff Froehlich will be deeply

missed by all who knew him," Union County Freeholder Chairman Chris Hudak on behalf of the freeholder Board. "He truly embodied the very best in public service. He was a role model to all of us for his highest standards of professionalism, his constant search for new ways to innovate and improve, and above all for his compassion. His heart always had room for everyone he encountered, and he will always hold a place in our hearts as well."

Undersheriffs Joseph Cryan, Vincent De Trolio and Gerald Green, Jr. released a joint statement, saying, "There are a lot of tears and sadness in our office today, from all of us who had the opportunity to work for such a great

man. On behalf of our office, we will miss him greatly, and all of us were honored to work with him."

Sheriff Froehlich was born and raised in Elizabeth. He attended local schools and graduated from St. Mary's High School in 1949.

He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1951 and served as an infantryman, member of an amphibious tractor crew and drill instructor until his release from active duty. He continued in the active reserves until his release in 1959 when he was honorably discharged with the rank of sergeant.

A career law enforcement officer, he was a member of the Elizabeth Police Department for almost 20 years, attaining the rank of lieutenant.

A 1975 graduate of Kean College, now Kean University, he attended the Northwestern University Traffic Institute in 1968 and was a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society. He was a member of the Governor's Commission on Terrorism.

During his tenure as sheriff, he instituted a fingerprinting program for children and an automated photography laboratory, and established the Missing Persons Unit and Domestic Violence Unit as well as the K-9 Search and Rescue Unit. He developed and published the "Play It Safe" booklet for children as well as the "You Are Not Alone" booklet for victims of domestic violence, and implemented gun-safety programs for children and teens. The sheriff also assisted with a state-sponsored gun buyback program for Union County residents.

Each summer, Sheriff Froehlich hosted the Union County Sheriff's Youth Academy, offering students the opportunity to acquire firsthand knowledge about law enforcement.

Sheriff Froehlich launched the Sheriff's Labor Assistance Program (SLAP), an alternative to incarceration for non-violent offenders, and

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County Hires Attorneys In Detention Center Suit

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

COUNTY — The Union County Freeholder Board last Thursday approved the hiring of outside attorneys to represent 10 defendants in the case brought by the family of a teenager who was sexually assaulted by a juvenile detention officer while detained at the Union County Juvenile Detention Center in 2012. The freeholders approved \$100,000 in funding at \$10,000 each per defendant.

The Union County Prosecutor's Office arrested Sherrie Brown-Braswell, 37, of Raleigh, N.C., in June and charged her with engaging in a sexual relationship with the teenager.

According to the allegations in the lawsuit, the teenager was placed at the detention center in Linden in March 2012 and the sexual assault began the next month. The suit alleges that the male teenager, who was 17 at the time, was threatened by Brown-Braswell with physical assault if he did not comply. The family is seeking compensatory and punitive damages as well as fees for the cost of the lawsuit and attorney's fees.

As a result of the assault, Greg Lyons, superintendent of the detention center, retired on July 1, and Assistant Director Tina Matlock resigned. Both were named defendants in the lawsuit. The county is funding the defense for Mr. Lyons, but not Ms. Matlock.

George Blaskiewicz, assistant director of the county's Department of Corrections, has been assisting Human Services Director Frank Guzzo in the running of the detention center in the interim.

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TAKING THE STAGE...The Ed Palermo Big Band belts out a song on July 16 at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside as part of the summer concert series sponsored by the Union County Freeholders.

Capital Bond Ordinance Appears Dead After Second Failure to Pass

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council for a second time failed to pass the \$1.5-million capital bond ordinance, leaving the fate of a number of projects and purchases up in the air.

Repeating an exercise from late May, the council on Tuesday voted 3 to 2 along party lines in favor of the ordinance, but — again — it was not enough to formally enact it because the bond ordinance requires a two-thirds, or 67 percent, supermajority affirmative vote. The three votes in favor represented just 60 percent; a fourth vote would have passed the ordinance with 80 percent.

"I would say this ordinance is dead," Township Manager Jerry Giaimis told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "and as long as the minority continues

to obstruct, there will be no bond ordinance passed this year."

The two Democrats on the governing body, Mayor Kevin Glover and Councilwoman Colleen Gialanella, voted against the ordinance but not before the mayor listed several items in the ordinance that he favored moving forward on, including requests from the police and fire departments, a new

air-conditioning system at the library, soil remediation efforts at the former zoo property, clean-up efforts at the Brookside Park pond, purchase of a pothole-repair machine by the department of public works and roof repair and other efforts at the Shady Rest Clubhouse.

The mayor said the cost of his fa-

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Holt Responds to Questions At Town Hall Meeting

By DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FRANKLIN — Rep. Rush Holt (D-12th) held a two-hour Town Hall meeting on July 12 at the Franklin Township municipal building for constituents of the 12th Congressional District. The Congressman answered questions submitted by some 100 constituents in attendance.

The crowd was greeted by Mayor Brian Levine and councilpersons. Deputy Mayor Brian Regan served as master of ceremonies and walked around with a microphone to allow questions by audience members to be heard. Before turning the microphone over to the deputy mayor, Mayor Levine called Rep. Holt "a good guy, one who really cares."

The first question came from Gloria Smith, a senior citizen and Franklin Township resident. She asked about

getting rides to doctors' offices and shopping. The Congressman replied that there is now a bill pending, but "hung up," which would fund highway improvements and provide some funding for better public transportation on a federal, state and county level.

Another question was about jobs. The Congressman responded by saying, "We get undercut. We let businesses operate as they wish. All sorts of jobs are down, not just due to foreign manufacturing." He added that there is a number of legislative initiatives in Congress right now to encourage companies, such as tax benefits, incentives for transportation and shipping. They fall under the rubric of "Made in America," he said, but as with so much legislation, they are not ready for hearings, no less for a vote.

"The idea that government shouldn't

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FAREWELL...Union County Sheriff Ralph Froehlich, center, died Sunday at the age of 83 after a short illness. He was in his 13th term as Union County Sheriff, having been re-elected to a three-year term this past November.

Fanwood Rec. to Seek Grant To Upgrade Tennis Courts

By LISA HAGEN
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — The recreation commission voted Tuesday night to apply for this year's Union County Kids Recreation Grant in order to help repair or replace the LaGrande Park tennis courts.

T&M Associates, an engineering consulting firm, estimated that the cost of repairing the LaGrande tennis courts would be around \$120,000. These upgrades would include repairs to the cracks and a color coat of the entire surface.

If the commission decides to use T&M's estimate and receives the grant, Director Bob Budiansky said \$60,000 would come from Union County and the other half would come from the \$75,000 the borough council set aside for tennis court upgrades.

"I think [the tennis court upgrades] have been on and off our agendas for three years," said board member Tracy Fletcher, who started the motion to apply for the grant, which is due on Monday, August 18.

If the commission moves forward with the tennis court renovations, Mr.

Budiansky said the repairs would wait until November 2015 so they would not conflict with the high-school varsity team's schedule.

The LaGrande tennis courts were recently power washed, a project completed over two-and-a-half days that cost \$1,200. Funding for the power washing came from the borough council's \$75,000 for court upgrades.

"By the high-school tennis coach's standards, he was really happy with [the power washing] despite the fact it made the cracks more prominent," Mr. Budiansky said. "It seems like we got a very good deal and did a good job."

After receiving approval from the borough council last month, the bid opening for the Forest Road Skateboard Park will begin this morning, Thursday, July 24, in the council chambers. Mr. Budiansky said five bids have been purchased and engineers at Adams, Rehmann & Heggan (ARH) will make recommendations about the bids a week after the opening.

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SUMMER SOUNDS...The Ed Palermo Big Band entertains the audience on July 16 at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside as part of the summer concert series sponsored by the Union County Freeholders.



MEET AND GREET...Scotch Plains Mayor Kevin Glover shakes hands with a woman at the Village Green Summer Concert Series on July 17. The series continues tonight, Thursday, July 24, at the Alan Augustine Village Green.

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