

Father Kills Son, 11, Self In Murder-Suicide in Scotch Plains

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Law enforcement officials said a 48-year-old father killed his 11-year-old son last week, then attempted without success to set his Jerusalem Road house on fire before killing himself.

Township police arrived at the home on Saturday morning after receiving a telephone call from the boy's mother, who was involved in a custody dispute with the father and had not been in contact with her son in several days. When officers approached the Cape Cod-style home located a block from Mountain Avenue, they could hear the carbon monoxide alarms beeping inside.

After forcibly entering the premises, they found the bodies of Jens Eberling and his son, Thomas Eberling. Acting county prosecutor Grace Park said a joint investigation by her office's homicide task force and the township police department revealed that both died from gunshots from a rifle found at the premises.

It was surmised that after shooting his son late last week, the father, in an attempt to burn down the house, then stuffed clothing into the kitchen oven and laid out more clothing in a trail leading from the oven through the kitchen and living room and into a bedroom in hopes of igniting a larger fire.

Police Chief Brian Mahoney told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that the oven did ignite the clothes and parts of the home were burned, but said a larger fire did not result; most of the clothes, he said, were merely smoldering when police arrived. The fire department responded to extinguish the lingering effects of the fire.

Chief Mahoney told *The Times* the scene was "one of the worst I've ever seen. Who takes the life of an 11-year-old child?"

In the days after the bodies were discovered, there were rumors that the two individuals had died in a fire and questions that perhaps a third person had committed the killings.

For most of the day last Saturday, police cars and a crime-scene van from the Union County Sheriff's Office were parked on Jerusalem Road, a segment of which was blocked off to cars. Officers and other law enforcement personnel could be seen entering and exiting the home at 330 Jerusalem Road while others examined the home's exterior and its yard.

According to a NJ Advance Media report for nj.com, the father and son had lived in the house less than a month.

The report said Thomas Eberling was a gifted chess player, ranked fifth in the country in his age group, and that the Elberlings were members at the Chessmates chess club in Rahway. *The Times* archives show that Thomas had been a member of the Westfield Chess Club.

NJ Advance Media reported that Thomas had been a student at Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child in Summit.

Jens Eberling's wife, Kate Chou, had filed for divorce from her husband in May, according to the report.

According to Mr. Eberling's LinkedIn account, he was a project manager for TKJ International, a market developer company for new

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FAN ZONE...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School fans cheer on the boys varsity soccer team during its 5-0 victory over the Brearley Bears at Wexler Field in Scotch Plains on September 8. See story page 16.

David B. Corbin for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

Zoning Board to Continue Hearing on Blue Star Sign

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The zoning board of adjustment will continue a hearing next month on an application seeking to upgrade the sign that identifies Blue Star shopping center so it can evaluate information on how much additional lighting will be produced from the revamped sign.

At its meeting last Thursday, the board heard from several witnesses, including an executive from the firm that manages Blue Star, the president of the sign company, an engineer and a planner. The refurbished sign will remain the same size but will include four additional panels to advertise businesses located at Blue Star. Robert Carson, an officer with Levin Management, Blue Star's management firm, told the board that a more visible sign — including new lighting — is important so that cars passing by on west-bound Route 22 will be better able

to see and read the sign. He noted that the segment of the highway where the sign is located, just east of the driveway into the shopping center, is a fast-moving area and offers "very limited visibility" for the sign.

A professional planner, Michael Tobia, supported the idea of a more visible sign, noting that the main buildings in Blue Star are 800 feet away from the highway and located beyond a hill and, thus, are not easily seen from the road. The sign, he said, is "perfectly situated" to entice passing cars to turn into the shopping center.

After the nearly hour-long presentations by the witnesses, Board Chairman Ken Anderson said he was "concerned" about the potential brightness of the refurbished sign, and wondered about any standards regarding light brightness that might exist and might apply to the sign. His board colleague, Rich

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CAMPAIGN TRAIL...Pictured, from left to right, Scotch Plains Deputy Mayor Mickey Marcus, Councilman Bo Vastine, Scotch Plains resident Tom Russo and Councilman Llewellyn Jones visit the Scotch Plains Public Library. The library returned to Sunday operating hours this week after having been closed on Sundays since last year due to budget cuts. Deputy Mayor Marcus and Councilmen Vastine and Jones were responsible for the township council's restoration of the library's funding to open on Sundays as well as on Monday mornings.

Freeholders to Vote on Capital Improvement Contracts

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — The Union County Freeholder Board is expected to vote tonight to approve a number of contracts for capital improvements.

Among the contracts are construction of a handicapped-accessible fishing dock to be located at Warinanco Park in Roselle. The \$24,680 contract to be awarded to Harbor Consultants, Inc. of Cranford is for engineering services.

USA Architects Planners and Interior Designers, of Somerville, is set to receive a \$146,000 contract for design and construction administration for renovations to Wheeler Pool in Linden. County Engineer Tom Mineo said a meeting and/or party room will be created in one of the buildings in the park and restrooms will be upgraded. Existing pool equipment will also be upgraded.

The freeholders will also vote to award a \$56,600 contract to Red Bank-based Maser Consulting for design, engineering and consulting services for bridge deck and beam replacement for the Mountain Avenue bridge in Springfield.

In addition, Hardesty & Hanover of West Trenton is set to receive a \$754,962 contract for consulting engineering design services and construction support for the replacement of the Gordon Street bridge, an out of service Conrail structure in Roselle and Roselle Park. Federal funds are being provided for the project through the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority for the full amount of the project.

The board will also vote on a \$17,965 contract with Mack Camera



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE...Area residents attended a candlelight 9/11 memorial service held at the Alan Augustine Village Green in Scotch Plains on September 11, 2011, at which time the township's 9/11 Memorial was dedicated on the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. The township will hold a service tonight at 7 p.m.

Brooks Crandall for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

Scotch Plains Seeking Other Ways To Get to Fanwood Train Station

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Township officials will look into alternative transportation options for commuters who park at the Fanwood train station in the wake of the Fanwood borough council's effort — since tabled — to raise the annual parking fee for non-Fanwood residents.

Fanwood's initial effort to increase the non-resident parking fee from \$650 per year to \$800 was met with protests from Scotch Plains commuters and township officials. The increase was then scaled back to \$700, and then tabled altogether.

At its conference workshop meeting last week, the township council

directed Township Manager Jerry Giaimis to look into other ways for Scotch Plains commuters to get to the train station. Councilman William Vastine mentioned a few ideas, including a jitney service and park-and-ride services from township-owned properties that are not being utilized. He called the proposed

parking fee hike "disheartening" given the variety of shared-service efforts undertaken between the two towns over the years.

Mayor Kevin Glover noted that he had met earlier with Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr about the proposed fee increase, after which the

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Rec. Commission Discusses Terry-Lou Zoo Property

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The recreation commission this week discussed the township council's deliberations over whether to take steps to declare the former Terry-Lou Zoo property as a recreation facility in perpetuity, with some commission members seeming to favor that approach.

At its meeting on Monday, the commission — during a discussion about clean-up efforts already under way at the zoo property — talked about the council's decision last week to reject a \$91,000 funding resolution that would have authorized environment evaluations and clean-up efforts at the property. The council's vote came after concerns were raised about provisions for state reimbursement of much of the

cost, one of which is that the township approve a deed restriction on the zoo property so that it remains as a recreation facility in perpetuity.

The township purchased the property in 1999, and over the years, halting starts have been made to clean up the six-acre property, which has some environmental hazards, and turn it into a passive park. But, as Recreation Director Ray Poerio noted on Monday, "over the years, no council wants to talk about the zoo property." Deputy Mayor Michael Marcus, the council's liaison to the commission, said the council faces a "pretty big decision" on whether to keep the property in township hands forever. He said council members will first look at all options before moving forth

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SNIFF TEST...Customers stop to smell the apples at the Cranford Farmers' Market held September 4 in the municipal parking lot on North Union Avenue.

Paul Lachenaer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

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