



LEADER IN MOROCCO...Westfield residents Janet and Bob Smith and Terry and Chris Spurlock enjoy *The Westfield Leader* while visiting Tangier, Morocco.

## Zoning Bd. Denies Request To Build Eight-Car Garage

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

SCOTCH PLAINS – The zoning board of adjustment last week rejected an application from south side homeowners seeking to build an eight-car detached garage on their property.

In April, the board had given Archana Parrmar and Chandra Sarkar of 1630 Raritan Road permission to keep 10 large storage containers on their property for one year to store automobiles and car parts collected by Mr. Sarkar, who described himself as an “auto enthusiast.” The proposal for a 3,600-square-foot one-story garage was met with skepticism by most board members as well as a neighbor.

John Schweitzer, who lives across the street, told the board he was concerned about “the incredible amount of space” that would be used to store cars and wondered what would prevent a new owner, years from now when the house was sold, from using the large garage to operate a business or rent to tenants. Board member Dan Sullivan, noting the dearth of protesting neighbors, favored including a deed restriction in the approval resolution forbidding current and future owners from using the garage for anything except storage.

Vice-chairman Rich Duthie asked whether the garage was appropriate for a suburban residential neighborhood or a better fit for an industrial area. Craig Peskin said the eight-car garage idea “seems excessive” while fellow board member John Laman noted that the garage’s 3,600-square-foot footprint would be twice the 1,800-square-foot footprint of the house itself. That led Mr. Peskin to wonder, to

the amusement of his colleagues, “If the footprint of the garage is bigger than the footprint of the house, is it even a garage?” Christine Thompson called the size of the garage “monstrous” and said it would “change the flavor of the neighborhood.”

After the hour-long hearing, to Mr. Sarkar’s obvious disappointment, the board voted 6 to 1 to deny the application, with Mr. Sullivan being the only vote in favor.

The board last Thursday also approved several other applications, including one by Alexis Ashbock who sought permission to install a six-foot high fence in her front yard at 2527 John Street. Naromie Louis-Baltazar was given permission to build a second-floor addition above an existing garage at 1975 Valley Avenue.

Ivan and Irini Belets were given permission to construct a two-story addition to the side of an existing home they had recently purchased at 426 Forest Road. There were some questions about whether the home, which now measures close to 1,900 square feet and would be about 2,500 square feet after the addition, was classified by tax records as a single- or two-family home.

Board planner Mary Moody said she had been told by Zoning Officer Robert LaCosta that it had been a two-family dwelling for about 50 years although township tax records show it to be a single-family house. Mr. Sullivan said he has always remembered it as being a two-family house. Mr. Belets, who plans to rent the upper portion of the expanded house, told the board that it had been listed as a two-family home when he purchased it.



Courtesy of Greg Roser  
GENEROUS DONATION...The Fanwood Police/P.B.A. Local 123 visited “Fanwood’s Famous Christmas House” on Sunday with a generous donation for NJ Institute for Disabilities. Pictured, from left to right, are: Officer Daniel Piccola, Greg “The Christmas Guy” Roser and Officer Dan Kranz. The two officers grew up in Fanwood.

## 29th Mayor’s Gala Honors Volunteers

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the Saint Bartholomew Church Outreach Team and assists the Hillside-based Community FoodBank of New Jersey and with the annual Fish Fry, programs for veterans, youth ministry, and charitable Thanksgiving baskets. She also serves with the Golden Agers Senior Group and is a member of the Union County Senior Citizens Council.

“Her main focus is on seniors who are not mobile or have given up their driving privileges and will pick up groceries or medication for another senior in need,” Mayor Smith said.

Ms. Price also is a Union County Nutrition Program weekly volunteer, stated Mayor Smith.

Kyle Brainard, Weston Fischer and Max Lebrun were honored as peer leaders who assist the Wolves Basketball Academy. The Academy provides a friendly and fun environment for children with special needs to learn basketball fundamentals.

The Wolves run middle-school and high-school inclusion leagues.

Every team has between one and three special-needs players, along with players without special needs.

“Weston, Kyle and Max’s dedication to the program is a shining example for peers and others in the community,” Mayor Smith said.

Patrick’s Downtown Race to Summer is an opening event to welcome summer to the Scotch Plains downtown, stated founder Frank Lettera. The race is open to all abilities and features a Fun Run for children. Proceeds support Camp Clover.

Camp Clover is a week-long summer day camp for children, ages 7 to 15, who have experienced bereavement in their family, stated Mr. Lettera. Clover offers traditional summer camp programs like swimming, sports, and arts and crafts, as well as educational and therapeutic activities designed to assist children in their grieving process.

“What I see here is everyone coming together. And that is a beautiful thing,” said Deanna Dell Bene, describing the night while encouraging those who did not attend to attend next year.

## Deer Hunt

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blood left from the slain animal.

Debora Bresch, a resident of Westfield, said that deer hunts only cause reproductive rates of deer to increase “tremendously.” She urged the council to “make sure this is an actual solution to the problem and not just killing.”

Brightwood Park spans about 40 acres of land and the Conservation Center is on about 20 acres of land. Town Administrator Jim Gildea said. The county deer-management program has in the past only held hunts in county parks that have hundreds of acres of land, resident Karen Langer noted.

Ms. Neylan and Mr. Stokes both felt more research should have been done by the town.

At the end of the meeting, Councilwoman Neylan, Councilman Stokes and Councilman Frank Arena were acknowledged by resolution read by Mayor Shelley Brindle for their time serving on the town council. Ms. Neylan served 16 years for Ward 2, Mr. Arena, 12 years for Ward 1, and Mr. Stokes, four years for Ward 4. Also, members of the public came up and thanked the three council people. Ms. Neylan and Mr. Arena chose not to seek another term on council. Mr. Stokes was defeated this election year.

Mr. Stokes told the council and audience that he has “always held true to what I believe in.” He urged his fellow council members to “continue to do what’s best for the town, and not what’s popular or what’s on the party line.”

Mr. Arena said, “Many towns across the communities have a vision of what they want to be...and that vision is Westfield. We have a very special thing here and special people. As long as we put the town first and politics aside, this will continue to be one of the great towns in the land.”

Councilwoman Neylan said her service to the town has “never been a sacrifice but only has been a privilege.”

In other business, the town council approved an ordinance on final reading that designates 1737 Nevada Street as a historic landmark. The council also adopted the salaries for the PBA, CWA and non-union town employees.

Four grants were received by the town that include a body armor replacement fund, a Greening Union County Grant, a Kids Recreation Grant for Sycamore playground, and the Federal Bulletproof Vest Program.

With the town celebrating its 300-year anniversary next year, the council approved the hiring of a fundraiser consultant for Westfield 300, with the consultant, Solarverve LLC of Plainfield, to receive a percentage of funds that are received in the fundraising effort. Additionally, the town is selling Westfield 300 merchandise on its website that will help fund the commemorative anniversary events.

On Tuesday, January 7, at 6:30 p.m. the town will hold its annual reorganization meeting.



Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
A HOLIDAY CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER...The Township of Scotch Plains hosted its annual hometown holiday celebration and tree-lighting ceremony on Sunday at the Alan Augustine Village Green on Park Avenue. The festive celebration included a petting zoo for kids.



Ken Zierler for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
MERRY CHRISTMAS...The Scotch Plains Christmas tree was lit Sunday night at a ceremony on Park Avenue next to the municipal building on the Alan Augustine Village Green.

## UCC Cell Tower Hearing Addresses Public Safety

By JENNIFER GLACKIN  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

CRANFORD — Improving safety communications for students and staff is a top priority for Joseph Hines, the director of public safety for Union County College (UCC)’s Cranford campus. Mr. Hines testified at Monday’s board of adjustment meeting that there are “major gaps in cell phone service” throughout the campus, including his office, which makes communication in an emergency situation difficult.

Mr. Hines said he and other security personnel have experienced dropped calls and text message failures as examples. However, other than his office, he was not able to pinpoint specific locations around campus or dates of these incidents when asked by residents.

A Wireless Communications Needs Assessment was done on May 9 and 17 of 2012 by RCC Consultants Inc., which found “outdoor service to be fair (-85 to -95 dBm)” and “indoor service to be marginal to poor for ground and basement levels of all buildings,” according to a UCC PowerPoint presentation offered as evidence of the “major gaps” referred to by Mr. Hines.

Mr. Hines said UCC recently installed an Indoor Digital Antennae System (IDAS), which has made cell service better for Verizon customers within school buildings. Verizon is the sole cell provider currently using the IDAS. Mr. Hines added that security personnel who have other carriers continue to have difficulty receiving messages and calls. When asked by a resident why Verizon was the only carrier allowed to use the IDAS system, Mr. Hines replied that he did not know. No assessment, like the one conducted in 2012, has been done since the installation of the IDAS.

Mr. Hines testified that UCC utilizes a system to electronically communicate with students via text, email or voicemail to alert them to a variety of situations, such as emergency school closings. He said that the system is tested annually, but had no data to present, nor did he know if data is collected on the percentage of people who did or did not receive the messages.

Along with Mr. Hines, Gregory Meese, attorney for the applicants, stated that the cell tower is meant to address the college’s requirements under the Clery Act. According to clerycenter.org, “The Clery Act requires colleges and universities that receive federal funding to disseminate a public annual security report (ASR) to employees and students every October 1. This ASR must include statistics of campus crime for the preceding three calendar years, plus details about efforts taken to improve campus safety.”

Board member Justin Quinn asked Mr. Hines, “What percentage (of people receiving the messages) is acceptable to meet requirements (of the Clery Act)?” Mr. Hines responded that there is no “hard percentage” to meet the federal guidelines, but that 100 percent is acceptable to him. Whether or not that is realistic is up to professionals in the technological sector to decide, said Mr. Hines.

Resident James Kutzer asked whether participation in the alert system is mandatory or optional for students and staff. Mr. Hines said that all students and staff are automatically enrolled in the system, but can opt-out. There also is an option for the public to opt-in to the system, if they wish to be updated. Mr. Hines did not have any data on the percentage rate of students and staff or local residents who could have opted in.

Regarding emergency responder communication and communication amongst the security team at UCC, Mr. Hines said they use radio and walkie-talkies as their main mode of communication, which does not rely on cell phone signals. More testimony will be heard at a special meeting of the board of adjustment on Monday, December 16, at 7:45 p.m., in the Cranford Municipal Building.

Monday’s meeting was the final one of the year. The planning board’s next meeting will be on Monday, January 13.



Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
SANTA COMES TO FANWOOD...Santa arrives on a Fanwood fire engine for the borough’s annual Holiday Celebration and Christmas Tree Lighting held Sunday afternoon.

## Freeholders

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continue to look for land adjacent to county parks in acquiring properties, “so that we can at least extend those areas a little bit.”

Mr. Nierstedt noted that the Garwood Green Team adopted Unami Park earlier this year, where they planted native species plants at the entranceway to the park from Garwood.

Garwood resident Bruce Paterson said the county’s surplus is continuing to grow. He said the recent closing of the juvenile detention center has been estimated to save another \$6 million while the closing of Runnells Specialized Hospital in 2014 likely is saving the county another \$13 million.

Mr. Paterson said the county’s “running fund balance” reached \$90 million last year. “You’re just not budgeting properly,” he told the board.

“I see a perfect case where you could have a zero tax increase,” he said. “You can’t hide this money any more. It’s

really busting out of its seams.” He said department heads in past years have given raises he estimated at 4 to 7 percent, which he called “amazing in this day and age.”

Freeholder Chris Hudak said the surplus that the county has achieved the past few years “is a sign of financial strength. Our (Aaa) bond rating is a sign of financial strength.” He said this has allowed the county to take on projects like county-wide EMS that saves towns money.

Mr. Hudak also noted that Berkeley Heights last week passed a resolution to become the 14th town to join the county’s 9-1-1 dispatching center. He said the county will be dispatching emergency calls for police, fire and EMS in the township.

“It truly is a good service that the county has continued to provide over the years. And it’s a good thing to see multiple agencies taking advantage (of the program),” he said.



Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
HI, ST. NICK...Santa and one of his trusty helpers greet a youngster during Fanwood’s annual Holiday Celebration and Christmas Tree lighting held last Sunday.

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**Subdivision**  
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