



Susan M. Dougherty for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
"GO THE DISTANCE"...Senior choir members of the class of 2019 sing this inspirational song from the movie *Hercules* at the 2019 commencement of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on June 20. They are accompanied by Sarah Gorman on keyboard and led by music teacher Jan Allen.

SPFHS Graduation

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graduating class after 17 years serving the school district. In her address to the class, she stressed the value in seeing things from another's perspective.

Graduate Michael Dieu, both valedictorian and president of the SPFHS Class of 2019, gave one final speech to his classmates. His words combined both the typically academic nature of a valedictorian's speech with the traditionally more lighthearted qualities of a class president's address.

In speaking to academics, Mr. Dieu said that keeping an open mind allowed him to grow as both a classmate and a student, and that being able to laugh and make other people laugh allowed him to succeed.

He gave his fellow graduates some simple advice. "Don't forget the people who were there for you from the very beginning," he said. "Re-

member to be a good person and be yourself," he continued.

Mr. Dieu told his classmates that while SPFHS is a foundation for what comes ahead, to not let high school define them. "If you want to reinvent yourself, don't be afraid to do so," he said.

"It's weird to think how a group of people who happen to live near you and be born around the same time, can become such influential people in your life," Mr. Dieu said. "We spent so much of our daily lives together, it'll be different not seeing those familiar faces in the halls every day. But hopefully, this means we are on to bigger and better things, which will entail new faces, nervousness, and most of all, excitement." Cheers followed Mr. Dieu's speech, and the Class of 2019 began their recession into the next chapter of their lives.



Fred T. Rossi for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
PARTY IN THE PARK...Before the evening's movie, Fanwood residents enjoy Tuesday's Party in the Park at LaGrande Park, which included rides and games for children.

Planning Board Backs Rezoning Ordinances

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The planning board on Monday gave its unanimous endorsement to three proposed ordinances that will rezone properties and allow them to be developed into multi-family housing units as part of the township's affordable-housing settlement reached last year with developers.

At last week's township council meeting, two ordinances were introduced that will rezone the Amberg garden center property on Lamberts Mill Road, as well as a tract of land on North Avenue adjacent to the Charlie Brown's restaurant to allow multi-family housing to be built.

In advance of the council's Tuesday, July 16, public hearing on the ordinances, the planning board this week was provided with background information and conceptual renderings of how the two properties could be developed. Planner Michael Mistretta said it's envisioned that the 5.6-acre Amberg tract will include five buildings housing 125 units, 19 of which will be set aside as affordable housing. He showed the board a rendering where the five buildings are located around the perimeter of the property, with a centrally-located park-like area and gazebo in the center. He said the developer will be required to install new curbs and sidewalks as well as street trees along Lamberts Mill Road.

The North Avenue property, presently a heavily-wooded area, will include 12 units—five townhomes and a

seven-unit apartment building—and two of them will be designated as affordable. Mr. Mistretta's conceptual drawing showed the townhomes being located along the western edge of the lot, with the apartment building closer to North Avenue and a garage for those tenants located at the rear of the property and abutting the railroad corridor.

A third ordinance to be considered will rezone an adjacent lot to the west from a residential zone to a conservation zone and combined with a sliver of township-owned land to create a buffer between the new development and the single-family houses on North Avenue.

Approval of the three ordinances by the council next month will mean the township has met its court-mandated July 31 deadline to rezone all properties earmarked for housing development. Earlier, the properties at Bowcraft Amusement Park and the Parker Garden Center were addressed along with tracts of land along Jerusalem and Beryllium Roads and Waldheim Avenue. The township still faces a separate deadline of June 30, 2020 to decide on rezoning properties located within the several phases of planned downtown redevelopment.

The planning board was set to consider on Monday an application seeking approval to raze an existing two-family house on Front Street and construct three townhomes, but Board Chairman Joseph Doyle said the application will be heard at the board's Monday, July 8, meeting.

Mountainside BOE Thanks Retiring CSA Lubarsky

By KATE BROWNE

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — The board of education during its Tuesday meeting thanked retiring Chief School Administrator (CSA) Nancy Lubarsky, Ed.D., for her energy, commitment and devotion to the children of Mountainside. Ms. Lubarsky is retiring after eight years of service to the district.

Board of Education President James Ruban detailed the many legacy challenges that CSA Lubarsky faced when she took the position and commended her for significant improvements that occurred during her tenure, including the implementation of the social and emotional learning curriculum, major renovations to school facilities including the Deerfield Elementary School Media Center, and the growth in the music and arts programs.

The board reviewed the status of

three major projects that will be done over the summer. These include the installation of a canopy at the Beechwood School, a major renovation of the science room at Deerfield School and the installation of state-of-the-art projection systems at both schools. According to Technology Coordinator Jason Whitaker, all classrooms will be equipped with hi-definition 4K projectors and stereo speakers. All of these infrastructure improvement projects are on schedule to be completed prior to the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

Board member Dante Gioia congratulated all of the recent graduates from Governor Livingston High School. He noted that 111 Mountainside residents received awards and recognitions for outstanding performance in academics, sports, service and the arts. He also thanked all of the parents, teachers and volunteers who made the eighth-grade dance a success.

The board accepted a \$25,000 donation from the Mountainside PTO. Twenty thousand dollars will be allocated for district-wide technology upgrades, while the remaining \$5,000 will be spent on capital improvements at Deerfield and Beechwood Schools. The board also accepted a \$200 donation from the Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield, which will be used for the outdoor learning center at Deerfield School.

The board appointed Kim Richards and Suzanne Jenks as the Affirmative Action officers and Paula Pontoriero as the gender equity and ADA officer. It also voted to approve new policies for service animals and administration of opioid antidotes and new procurement policies for school nutrition programs.

The board presented Deerfield student Katama O'Donnell with a certificate acknowledging her winning the New Jersey Literary Association's writing contest. Katama's essay will be published on the Association's website. The board's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 23.



Susan M. Dougherty for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
LEADERS OF THE PAST AND FUTURE.... At the 2019 Commencement for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, class officers gather for one last picture. Pictured, from left to right, are: Secretary Morgan Wilson, Treasurer Rae Mikala, Vice-President Julia Lomonte, Salutatorian Melanie Litwin and President/Valedictorian Michael Dieu.

WPD Thanked for Efforts In Tamaques School Incident

By JESSE WINTER

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — The Union County Freeholders last week thanked the Westfield Police Department for its efforts in handling the June 13 arrest of a man with a .45-caliber handgun and numerous rounds of hollow-point ammunition on his person, including 130 additional rounds of ammunition in the trunk of his SUV that was parked in the Tamaques Elementary School parking lot.

The suspect, Thomas J. Wilkie, of Delaware, has been charged with second-degree unlawful possession of a weapon, fourth-degree possession of hollow-point bullets, fourth-degree trespassing on school grounds and fourth-degree trespassing.

"I'd like to recognize the Westfield Police Department. There was an incident at Tamaques Elementary School last week," said Freeholder Kimberly Palmieri-Moude, a Westfield resident, at last Thursday's Freeholder meeting. "They were able to act efficiently and avert something that could have been a potentially dangerous situation. I wanted to commend their efforts."

Westfield Police arrested the suspect after a report relayed from the New Castle County Police Department in Delaware.

In the wake of what could have been a tragedy, and Governor Phil Murphy's visit to Westfield on June 19, Freeholder Chair Bette Jane Kowalski, who attended and spoke at the press conference, shared her thoughts and feelings on gun violence and gun control.

"Governor Murphy has introduced a number of new laws to increase gun safety; we already have some of the strongest gun laws in the country, but with 2,000 plus shootings in New Jersey every year, there's still more to do," Freeholder Chair Kowalski said. "Our Governor and legislators have responded to the public demand, and of course it won't end gun violence, but they are steps in the right direction."

"We support our legislators, our local officials, our law enforcement officers and grassroots organizations," she said. "One day I hope we will eliminate gun violence and have an environment where our children won't live in fear of a stray bullet."

In other business, the Freeholders reflected on their involvement with Pride Month, a celebration of the LGBTQ community, and the Juneteenth events celebrating the emancipation of the last African-American slaves from the surrendered Confederate states following the conclusion of the American Civil War.

Freeholder Angela R. Garretson shared her sentiment regarding the county's communities embracing both Pride Month and the Juneteenth celebrations.

"We look forward to continuing to support our county events such as the Pride Picnic and also the Juneteenth festivities," said Freeholder Garretson. "I saw so many amazing celebrations truly understanding the spirit of Juneteenth. It's about freedom and being inclusive in society. It's not just African-American history, it's American history."

At the start of the meeting the board honored Son's Collision, an automotive repair shop in Garwood, with a resolution lauding the business' charitable donations of restored cars for veterans in need.

There to receive the honor was the general manager of Son's Collision, Paul Brenda, who, along with Chair Kowalski and Vice-Chair Alexander Mirabella, spoke to the impact this charitable endeavor has on the nation's veterans, including the personal freedom which comes with returning veterans having their own vehicle when they come home.

"We feel very strongly about helping our veterans whenever we can," Mr. Brenda said. "The owner, Justin Branning, and myself both have had past family members in the military. We understand the sacrifice our veterans and their families go through, especially when they get back from service."

Mr. Brenda shared how everything went into motion. Son's partnered with Michael D. Boll and the New Jersey Veterans Network, who found veterans in need of reliable transportation. Sons then partnered with Geico, which provided heavily-damaged cars that the Son's team repaired and titled with the New Jersey Division of Motor Vehicles before donating them to military vets.

"They were able to get to work and do normal aspects of daily life a lot of us take for granted," he said. "We're happy to be in a position to do this and we have two more scheduled in August and more next year."

Freeholder Mirabella added, "I can't thank you enough for going out of your way to fix these vehicles and have you donate them. There's not enough we can do to repay them, to thank them, but this goes a long way in helping our veterans."

Wilkie

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father looked on from the far end of the courtroom as Wilkie was the first person to be heard by Judge Daniel in the Courthouse Tower courtroom. Wilkie was represented by public defender Janice Massaro. The Union County Prosecutor's Office was represented by Assistant Prosecutor James C. Brady.

Wilkie's detention hearing comes after the Westfield community and many of the surrounding suburban municipalities breathed a collective sigh of relief as Wilkie was apprehended without incident. The school entered a lock-down phase during his apprehension, with the arrest occurring at approximately 3:55 p.m. when Tamaques' after-school activities were in progress.

Roundtable

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JoAnn Gemenden, recycling coordinator for Union County, called it "a really difficult time for recycling," noting that China is no longer accepting American recyclables, a development that has caused recycling prices to escalate in recent years. One main factor in China's refusal to accept recycling is that it is often tainted with non-recyclable waste, which renders it unusable. Ms. Gemenden joined Deputy Township Manager Margaret Heisey in urging schools to become more involved in educating students about recycling issues, which could then be passed on to their parents, who often are not as well-versed in what is and is not eligible for recycling.



LEADER IN SANTA FE...Julie Nestor of Brooks, Ga. and Honey Corbin of Peachtree City, Ga., pictured right, stand in front of the Native-American Museum of Art in Museum Hill, Santa Fe, N.M., holding *The Westfield Leader*. They lunched at the museum cafe that overlooks the botanical gardens featuring flora indigenous to the area complemented by a spectacular sculpture garden, which they toured after lunch.

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