

Letters to the Editor

Why Not Review 1998 Efforts to Rid Birds on Street Before Spraying?

**Editor's Note:** The following letter was addressed Scotch Plains Health Department and the Township Council with a copy sent to *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood*.

I attended the first neighborhood meeting the so called "bird problem" at the Scotch Plains Municipal Building because I was new to the neighborhood (I was not new to Scotch Plains).

At this meeting, I listened to a few families speak of their own properties as the birds fell out of the trees by the bucketful. I heard them say they were removing trees from their properties because they could not live through another summer such as the previous one (1997).

It saddened me that they chose to do that because the reason my family chose to live in this neighborhood was the nature-like beauty that existed back here, but that was an individual choice which I respected.

When the talk that came out of the original committee was for the Township Council to authorize the pyrotechnics program under the direction of the United States Department of Agriculture, it seemed like a low cost way to try and alleviate this concern of the neighbors who were impacted by the bird roost.

So 1998 was the year of the "big bang." For a few weeks we listened to fireworks as the town tried to move the birds.

Before, during and after this exercise my wife and I took notes on what impact this had on our property. The before was fairly easy because as I had intimated at the original meeting, we never had birds falling out of the trees in 1997 or 1998.

When the pyrotechnics were utilized we did notice some of the birds roosting in our trees, but again, none of them were dying and convulsing as the Wood Road residents were describing the previous year. I never saw or heard any of my neighbors complaining of dead birds on their property during 1998.

After the fireworks stopped, I again am pleased to report that we had no birds die on our property.

Since my wife is an avid jogger, and utilizes our wonderful neighborhood for her daily jaunts, she observed very few dead birds during the entire 1998 summer as well as the summer that is approaching here in 1999.

I was assuming that the concern had not reached the 1997 levels in 1998 because no one in my immediate area seemed to be talking about it as they had the previous summer, other than the noise associated with the fireworks.

Then we received your letter of June 9. It was quite disturbing to us that the township was now looking to permanently relocate all the birds from the entire neighborhood by spraying an agent called Re-Jex It TP40. This agent is made from grapes, oranges and gardenia blossoms.

Obviously, the Township Council has supporting documentation that shows this concern has escalated to the point that they feel it is necessary to permanently relocate anything in our neighborhood.

We are no longer talking about just the blackbirds, grackles and starlings. We are including the cardinals, goldfinches, woodpeckers and all other species that make this neighborhood the special place that it is.

We would like to go on record saying we in no way, shape or form want our property, or any property in our surrounding area, sprayed to permanently disperse the natures that exist here.

If someone feels that strongly about their personal property, then we again respect their choice to spray their own property. All we ask is that the township not make that decision for us.

My family has never appreciated nature as much as it does now that we have had the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of our neighborhood and if these decisions were being made because you only heard the few who were being affected, then we apologize for not speaking up sooner.

Unless you can figure out a way to cover our property, we do not want you to institute this program. For this fogging to be effective, the information you provided explains it takes several exposures for the birds to learn to leave the area completely for the season.

Since this roosting seems to be a few week concentrated concern, are you telling us that we will be exposed to this "fogging" on multiple occasions during a short period of time? And if you are "successful" in ridding our neighborhood of all the birds, are you prepared to do this next year to someone else's neighborhood when nature settles elsewhere?

Why don't we access this year what the efforts of last year had on our neighborhood before we go and destroy the reason we live back here? Has anyone addressed what caused these birds to die in the first place a few years ago?

These are just a few of the questions that came out of your "Official Township" letter that came to us through our Health Department. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Ed and Ida Zazzali  
Scotch Plains

More American Flags Should Be Displayed

It would be so nice to see more American flags displayed on our national holidays. There are many flags hanging from homes (i.e. soccer, Ireland, etc.) and I think that's great, but how about hanging one for the U.S.A as well — the greatest country in the world.

Doris M. Molowa  
Westfield



CLOCK CONTRIBUTION...Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly of Fanwood recently received a contribution from Barbara Hausleiter, Branch Manager of Sovereign Bank in Scotch Plains, toward the purchase of a Millennium Clock which is planned for the corner of South and Martine Avenues in the borough.

Congressman Franks Calls For New Bus Safety Laws

JACKSON — Noting that the vast majority of bus accidents are caused by human error, Congressman Bob Franks, Vice Chairman of House Subcommittee on Ground Transportation, has called for new regulations to help root out drivers with bad records or serious medical conditions.

At a press conference at the bus safety inspection faculty at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, Congressman Franks (R-7th District) said, "There is a gaping hole in the current regulations governing the incensing of bus drivers and the reporting of traffic violations involving commercial drivers. As a result, it's extremely difficult — if not impossible — for a motor coach company to obtain an accurate history of a driver's record behind the wheel."

Mr. Franks has called for the establishment of a National Commercial Driver Registry. The registry would provide law enforcement, state motor vehicle agencies and motor carriers with accurate, up-to-date information on the driving record and medical condition of bus drivers.

"Critical information on traffic violations and accidents is being hidden from states when they issue commercial driver licenses and from bus companies when they interview applicants for driving positions. In today's high tech information age, there is no excuse for this dangerous breakdown in communications," Congressman Franks added.

"State motor vehicle agencies and bus companies must have accurate, up-to-date information on the driving history of every individual entrusted

with the responsibility of transporting passengers in motor coaches," he said. The Congressman has also called for the certification of physicians who are responsible for examining drivers to determine if they are qualified to operate a bus.

Mr. Franks said that following the Mother's Day bus crash in Louisiana, which killed 22 people, it was discovered that a doctor certified the driver as fit to operate a bus even though he had congestive heart failure. Under Federal regulations, congestive heart failure automatically disqualifies an individual from obtaining a license to drive a bus.

"The Federal Aviation Administration requires the certification of any medical provider who performs physical exams on pilots and airplane crews. We should expect no less of the physicians who exam individuals who operate commercial buses," the Congressman pointed out.

"We must ensure that these doctors have a thorough understanding of all the regulations governing the physical requirements of commercial drivers and are held accountable for their actions," he noted. New Jersey has been the scene of a string of serious bus accidents - including a fatal Christmas Eve crash last year on the Garden State Parkway that killed eight passengers.

Mayor's Charity Gala Planned in Scotch Plains

SCOTCH PLAINS — The 1999 Scotch Plains Mayor's Charity Gala will be held Sunday, November 7, beginning at 5 p.m. at the Twin Brooks Country Club in Watchung. This will be the 9th annual event and will be hosted by Mayor Geri M. Samuel.

The gala committee is currently accepting nominations for men, women, or an organization which deserves the honor of special recognition as Volunteers of the Year.

Nomination forms are available from the Scotch Plains Recreation Department. For more information, please call (908) 322-6700. Nominations may also be sent in the form of a letter with the nominee's name, address, list of volunteer organizations and activities, and the reason that the nominee's service has been outstanding.

Nominations must be received at the Scotch Plains Recreation Department by Friday, June 25.

Fanwood Democrats to Honor Candidates at June Reception

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Democratic Committee and Union County Freeholder Linda D. Stender will host a reception honoring this year's Democratic candidates for Mayor and Borough Council on Monday, June 28, at the Sun Tavern from 6 to 8 p.m.

Accompanying Freeholder Stender at the fundraising reception will be Fanwood Borough Council President William E. Populus, Jr., the Democratic candidate for Mayor of Fanwood, and Adele Kenny and Patricia Plante, the Democratic candidates for the Fanwood Borough Council.

Freeholder Stender, a former Mayor of Fanwood, also serves as Chairwoman of the Fanwood Democratic Committee. She is running for re-election to the

Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders in the November 2 election, along with her Democratic running mate Nicholas P. Scutari of Linden, the current Chairman of the Freeholder Board and Angel Estrada of Elizabeth.

A suggested donation of \$35 for this fundraising event will include pizza, wine, beer and soft drinks. Proceeds from the evening will support the Fanwood Democratic Committee's campaign on behalf of Mr. Populus, Ms. Plante and Ms. Kenny.

The Sun Tavern is located on South Avenue in Fanwood, near Terrill Road.

For more information, please call Tom Plante at (908) 889-5298, or write to the Fanwood Democratic Committee, P.O. Box 163, Fanwood, 07023.



CADETS COMMENDED...During the recent Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) awards ceremony at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post No. 10122 presented VFW medals and certificates to two outstanding cadets. This year's recipients were Erik Van Hoesen and Mustafa Denny. Pictured, left to right, are: Cadet Van Hoesen, Cadet Denny, and Pat Masi, Past Commander of Post No. 10122.

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