



THE BEFORE AND THE AFTER is shown here as (on left) the boys sit happily on their "clubhouse", and (on right) results of complaints are dramatically shown in pile of rubble. What's a kid to do?

PLAYHOUSE RAZED

'We Don't Understand Adults' Say 18 'Evicted' Builders

BY BEATRICE STULTZ
Managing Editor

"We don't understand grown-ups anymore," dejectedly stated Mickey Natale, 12, after telling your reporter of the plight of his two-story clubhouse. "They say don't play in the streets and then they don't let you play in your backyard," he said.

Mickey, along with four of the eighteen boys who made his boyhood dream come true by building the playhouse in the sideyard or the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Dominick Natale of 538 Dona Lane, appeared in Scotch Plains Municipal Court, apprehensively but promptly at 10 A.M. on April 24 to aid Mrs. Natale plead their case and save the structure. Their day in court was denied them however for Magistrate George W. Jackson adjourned the case because the defendant, Dominick Natale was not in court.

Building Inspector Joseph Durkin had signed a complaint against Natale because the clubhouse doesn't comply with building and zoning codes. The neighborhood children who had built it in three months of spare time had neglected to request a building permit, submit applications, sketches and plot plans, or even appear before the Planning or Adjustment Board. Instead they had simply utilized their inherent talents of ingenuity and creativity to make every boy's dream come true by building an unusual clubhouse which they christened "Pops Hideaway".

Mrs. Natale said the original complaint about the clubhouse came from her neighbor, Mrs. Edith Rapaono of 532 Dona Lane. "She wasn't concerned about their welfare or safety," stated Mrs. Natale, "she just wanted to get a zoning on it."

Although the Natales realized once the building progressed that they were violating the law, they felt that because it was on a dead piece of ground in their sideyard and was a temporary structure that "people would have a little sympathy towards children's creativity" and allow them to use it for awhile. Later although it caused stress and dissension in the house, reported Mrs. Natale they decided to try and save the clubhouse.

"I thought perhaps even if my own child would not benefit, maybe some other child in the future would benefit," explained Mrs. Natale. "I know the officials are touched by this story and are ordering it taken down only because they have their duty to perform -- but maybe they could make some stipulation in the building code to allow for the human element -- for other children who endeavor to build huts in the future."

Mrs. Natale asked if the original complainant, Mrs. Rapaono could be requested to appear in court when the summons for her husband was delivered. She had hoped to "reach her heart". Appearing in place of her husband, Mrs. Natale felt that as the property is in both their names and as neither one of them built the structure in question, her appearance at the legal hearing would suffice. Actually, she added "I didn't want any more trouble as my husband is quick tempered."

Although the case was adjourned, Magistrate Jackson spoke to Mrs. Natale in the privacy of his chambers for over an hour during which the four boys depicted but stayed glued to their seats. During this period of waiting, your reporter questioned Mickey, Lucio Novello, 9; David Long, 9; and Anthony Defeo, 11; about their clubhouse and their plans.

Mickey, a seventh grader at the Scotch-

Plains-Fanwood Junior High School reported he plans on being a veterinarian when he grows up. He disclosed they had started Pops Hideaway with wood from an old fort his big brother Dennis had built near School One. Future carpenter Anthony had scrounged for most of the wood, aided by fellow classmate David of School One. Perhaps David acquired some skills he can put to work when he becomes an engineer later in life. Another engineer, Lucio is in the fourth grade at School One and he described in detail for us their clubhouse.

The ground floor of the building is a carpeted room with couch and chairs while the boy's office is located on the second floor. The carpet they reported cost them \$6.98 of their hard-earned money and dues. Acting as scavengers, the group had rescued rattan furniture, pictures and mirrors during the recent Township clean-up week. An abandoned car seat was pressed into service as another couch. Means of entering the building were through the front door, a ladder and a trapdoor -- it was topped by a look-out tower. It had everything to stimulate the imagination of a boy or girl (the girls were allowed to use the building on Sundays) at play including some features playground specialists might emulate.

"It's hard for me to have so many children in the yard," said Mrs. Natale. "I'm responsible for them -- but no one else wants them." So the two-story clubhouse grew and the list of members grew to eighteen neighborhood children. Included in the chart in Mickey's office are some of the first names of the town: Mauro Appezato, Mike Matusik, Bill Filicello, Mark Checchio, Jim McDeed, John Messemer, Paul Montalbano, Chris Shrupzel, Ronnie Fantini, Lenny and Greg Checchio, Walter Lestarechick, and Jim Polon.

After her conversation with the Magistrate in which she reported trying to explain how much the clubhouse means to the boys while being continually reminded that the point here is that you are violating the zoning ordinance, Mrs. Natale returned to the courtroom to inform the boys the clubhouse would have to be torn down. With haggard looks, the boys approached Judge Jackson who spoke to them in a fatherly manner in the privacy of his office. When they came out the group was heartbroken, downcast, and manly fighting back the tears.

Later in the day, Mrs. Natale learned from the Building Inspector they had just five days to comply with the order to tear it down. On Saturday, Mickey asked by the members started to rip off the top floor although Mrs. Natale wanted them to wait for his father to supervise the work. "No Mommy," Mickey said, "I have caused enough trouble and made you nervous and I want to do it now." He added, "We didn't even get to sleep in it once."

The Natales feel the boys will be too bitter and discouraged after tearing down their clubhouse alone with their boyhood hopes and dreams to build another even though officials say they may -- provided they go through proper procedures. If the boys decide to build another one someday, Mrs. Natale reports, "They would need one permit, 3 applications, 3 sketches and 2 plot plans and so before a planning board."

"I feel that people should be more concerned with concentrating their efforts on getting a dangerous condition like the unsightly open brook in my front yard taken care of instead of bothering with children's play and discouraging creativity," summed up Mrs. Natale.

William Mason Named President Of Jaycees Here

At their regular monthly meeting on April 28th, the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Jaycees elected the officers and directors who will lead the Club for the coming year. William Mason of 2430 Allwood Road was elected President.

Mason has been a resident of Scotch Plains since 1960 and a member of the organization since 1961. He is married to the former Roberta Hunt of Summit, and has two sons. Mason is an insurance salesman and is currently situated in Clark.

Community service has been the new Jaycees President's prime concern. Active in the Scotch Plains Community Fund, he was Campaign Chairman in 1961 and 1962. President in 1963 and is currently serving as a Trustee of the Fund.

The other elected officers and directors are as follows: Internal Vice President, Ronald Erccolini; External Vice President, Ronald Brown; Secretary, Reading Pollitt; Treasurer, Burrill M. Getman Jr.; Directors, Donald Carey, Wayne Gunzenhauser, Robert Schildt, Fred Chemidlin and Van Dyke Pollitt.

According to Mason, "The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Jaycees have always been a dynamic group of young men with leadership training and community service as their constant goal. In the past, they have sponsored in our community such worthwhile projects as: Operation Toy Time, Santa's Visit, Candidate Night, Scholarship Fund, and Essay Contest."

'STATE MONEY OURS, TOO'

Westfield Rd. Paving Costs Hit By 31 Citizens At Committee

"We must not forget that the state money is also our tax dollars," Mrs. Robert Brearley of 4 Heather Lane admonished the Scotch Plains Township Committee at Tuesday night's meeting. "So would you please try to accomplish some of these factors without getting state or federal aid."

Mrs. Brearley, one of the 31 interested residents in attendance at the meeting, was referring to the ordinance passed appropriating \$36,000 out of capital improvement funds for the paving of Westfield Road to Highway 22. When the public hearing on the ordinance had been opened, Committeeman Russell P. Patterson had informed the group, "The \$36,000 is a maximum estimate but no matter what it costs, \$10,000

of it will be reimbursed by the state."

The adoption of "Report of Assessments for the Installation of Sanitary Sewers in Portion of Fenimore Drive and Mohawk Lane as Authorized by Ordinance 29-61," was tabled until the next meeting after it came under attack by two of the three residents of the Brandywine section. One gentleman charged the figures for advertising and the amount paid to the Township engineer were too high. Mayor Edward H. Peterson reported it had been necessary as required by law to insert the lengthy ordinance in the newspaper and Committeeman George Johnston noted the engineers fee is set by the state. The Township Committee agreed to check the itemized

figures before the next meeting date, after noting the assessment cost is high because "there are only three houses involved not fifty."

The low bid of \$12,518.90 for a street sweeper for the use of the Department of Public Properties by Tuffibre Corp. was accepted.

Charles F. Lauxman Jr., of 1819 Chapel Road was appointed a member of the Volunteer Fire Department, Southside Firehouse. In announcing the appointment Committee member Johnston took the opportunity to appeal for more volunteers thusly, "We're two men short on the Southside so if any of you have strong minds and strong bodies, and like to move a little hose, I call for volunteers." Another way of being repre-

ented at the Township Committee meeting was utilized by almost one hundred residents this week--they put their opinions, wants, and presented a good case for themselves via letter and petition.

Mr. Spence presented a petition signed by over 60 people living in the area adjacent to the Westfield Town Yard which requested the Committee to file an appeal on their behalf with the Town of Westfield and to "register a formal protest with the Town of Westfield against their continuing to fail to have police protect the area around the Tomacos property." They want anyone violating the no dumping ordinance arrested and prosecuted. The Committee passed a resolution authorizing the Township attorney to take the necessary actions "to protect the interest of Scotch Plains and its residents."

A letter received from the Hunter Avenue Neighborhood Association regarding the condition of their street was referred to the Supervisor of Public Properties but one received from the Scotchwood Civic Association concerning the drainage problems on Cushing Road was filed.

The Township Committee was publicly thanked at this time by Virginia Dekle of 1 Blamoral Lane, spokesman for the owners of Armon Homes, for their assistance in solving a problem with the level of the installation of two fire hydrants, the moving of a third and the installation of four fire hydrants was authorized.

A moment of levity was supplied by Mrs. Brearley who inquired if anything had been done about the sidewalks on the main thoroughfare while she had been out of town on vacation. Noting that women shoppers couldn't walk in their high heels on the sidewalks and that it is bad for local business she persisted in knowing if something hadn't been done, when were they going to do something about it?

"It's one of those vicious circles," remarked Committeeman Johnston pointing out if the people don't shop locally the businessmen can't afford to fix their walks and if they fail to maintain their walks the people will shop elsewhere

Suburban Club Buys Books

For the fourth consecutive year, the Suburban Club of Scotch Plains and Fanwood has presented checks for the purchase of books to the public libraries in the two communities.

The presentations were made Monday (April 27) at a tea in the home of the club president, Mrs. Eugene Staehle, 183 King Street. Mrs. Arthur Taylor, civic chairman, presented the checks to Mrs. Paul J. Montgomery, Fanwood Librarian, and Mrs. Charles Darway, Scotch Plains Librarian. Mrs. Montgomery stated that this year's gift money is underwriting the cost of a new encyclopedia. Mrs. Darway is planning the purchase of needed reference tools and picture books for her children's department.

Support of the libraries has been the club's civic project since its organization, as an outgrowth of the local Newcomers' Club, five years ago. This year, the fund raising was accomplished through bridge parties held in members' homes during the winter months, with every member participating as a hostess or co-hostess.

Members of Mrs. Taylor's committee arranging the parties were: Mrs. Joseph Interdonato, Mrs. Douglas Lisk, Mrs. James Nelson, Mrs. Stanley Ostrander, Mrs. Norman Orth, Mrs. Bernard Scafer, Mrs. Robert Steinbruch, Mrs. Charles Sweet, and Mrs. Edward Warner.

James Bells To Lead Mental Health Drive

Mr. and Mrs. James S. Bell, 2424 Richelieu Pl., have been appointed chairman of the 1964 Better Mental Health Fund Campaign for Scotch Plains, it was announced today by the Honorable Mildred Barry Hughes, Fund Chairman of the

Union County Association for Mental Health.

The campaign starts officially on May 10, which has been designated as Mental Health Sunday by Mrs. Hughes, the Fund Chairman. Mr. and Mrs. Bell will lead a contingent of 500 volunteers in the largest campaign ever undertaken in the county. The volunteers have responded to the call of the Union County Association for Mental Health because of their awareness of the extent of mental illness.

In accepting these appointments, Mr. and Mrs. Bell pointed out that the program of the Union County Association for Mental Health is being extended to include all segments of our population.

They pointed to the importance of the Willow School for emotionally disturbed children which is sponsored by the Union County Association for Mental Health, and which is the only program of its kind in Union County. Another very important program activity which is being developed is the Bridgeway House of Union County, a new rehabilitation center for patients leaving the State Hospital.

Bell is the Second Vice President of the Union County Association for Mental Health and has served as Fund Chairman for Scotch Plains for the last six years.

'Cough' Offender Fined \$250 Here

Charles Gamba of Newark was fined a total of \$250 on April 29 by Magistrate George W. Jackson of Scotch Plains Municipal Court as the result of the seemingly innocent action of going into a drugstore in nearby Westfield to purchase some cough medicine. Westfield police alerted the Scotch Plains police department that he had fallen in his attempt to secure the medicine and was heading for that area.

At 9 p.m. on April 18, Patrolman Donnelly stopped a vehicle containing three young men and discovered Gamba had been driving while under the influence of a barbiturate and had some in his possession. He was then charged with unlawful use and possession of barbiturates and subsequently fined on both counts.

Magistrate Jackson fined James Anderson of 445 W. Third Street, Plainfield, a total of \$240 for careless driving, driving with an expired driver's license, and driving while on

the revoked list. Three motorists fined \$20 each for careless driving were Carol Stiller of Lebanon, John Outler of 904 E. Front Street, Plainfield, and Calvin Saxon of 212 Plainfield Avenue, Plainfield. Two motorists were fined \$15 each for defective lights; they were John Sorrente of Brooklyn and David Belek of Kenilworth.

William Wessel of 306 Cooke Avenue was fined \$50 for assault in a case involving his wife.

A \$30 fine was levied against motorist Liam Coonan of 83 LaGrande Avenue, Fanwood for two counts, passing on the right and failing to sign his driver's license. Motorists were fined \$20 each as follows: Joan Callaway of 244 N. Jackson Avenue, North Plainfield, failing to stop for a red flashing light; Gerald Hut of 1040 Field Avenue, Plainfield, riding on the shoulder of the road; Demco Motor Company of 337 E. Fifth Street, Plainfield, failing to display 1964 inserts; and Daniel Frisch of Union, delinquent inspection.



BARBARA AULT, center-front, Miss Little League of Scotch Plains-Fanwood, reigns at opening day ceremonies of the youth league last weekend, flanked by players, parents and town officials.