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## Fanwood to Continue Fire Investigation

On October 31, three Fanwood residents died in a blaze which burned their home to a point of complete destruction. A lengthy investigation, involving the County Prosecutor's Office as well as several other agencies, was concluded formally last week. Yet, on the part of the Borough of Fanwood, the books have not been closed, and the investigation will continue for some time to come.

Police Safety Officer Sergeant Anthony Parenti, Fire Captain Henry Piekarski and Donald Springer, head of the borough Fire Prevention Bureau, plan to meet officially at least once a month, possibly oftener, to compare notes and to attempt to unearth information which may be valuable for Fanwood residents in the future.

In the view of Parenti, the house at 125 LaGrande Avenue didn't burn that quickly. However, its occupants, Mrs. Christine Hooper and her two children, died possibly within a ten minute period after the beginning of the blaze. Why? Parenti points out that an autopsy revealed that the three victims died of smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide poisoning. In other words, carbon monoxide, a lethal, colorless and odorless gas was carried by the smoke. "Something in that house was producing the gas as it burned," Parenti points out.

In any home, there are any number of materials and items which could produce such lethal vapors when they burn, he continues. However, if homeowners are familiar with the contents of furnishings, they can at least make an effort to insure that the number of such items is limited. In other words, if the rug would produce such vapors as it burned, a homeowner could make an effort to cut down on additional such vapor-producing items by not furnishing with a couch which would do the same thing.

The local authorities plan to try to establish an expertise in this area so that they will be in a position to advise residents and to test and evaluate causes of fires in regard to preventability. What is lacking now is not the knowledge, but the proper testing equipment, Parenti points out, and the borough is directing its attention to the enhancement of fire prevention.

Testing of materials from the

Hooper home is one area of the continuing investigation. The three investigatory agencies have tested and will continue to test samples of rugs, windows, air filter from the furnace, rubber mats, furniture, etc. They plan to actually burn carpeting samples in the Hooper house and other types of carpeting to establish their own combustibility standards, since they have received different reports of what constitutes fast burning from an expert in the field and the Federal Trade Commission.

The tests of materials are but one step in the continuing study. In addition, the preventability effort is centered upon: the Borough Fire and Rescue Squad Alarm Systems (i.e. should there be two differing sounds for Fire and Rescue Squad instead of different numbers of blasts of the same siren?); a study of emergency reporting by citizens (a survey indicates very few know the fire department number, and an effort may be made to establish a telephone number such as 322-FIRE); a study of the structure of the house in relation to emergency escape (do high windows and the location of doors and exits prevent escape?); a study of storage areas for cleaning supplies, hairsprays, furniture polishes, etc.

Eventually, it is hoped that all the conclusions and advice may be made available to citizens for their benefit in making their own homes less fire-prone. It is expected that the study will continue for some time, however, and to date there have been no definite recommendations made nor public advice given. Parenti points out that the Police Department is not giving out advice on types of carpeting to purchase, although several requests have been made of this nature. He also indicates that carpeting has not been established as a definite item contributing toward the fire at the present time.

## Yep! Donkeys On The Basketball Court

Can you imagine Miss Candy Pantano of the high school staff astride a donkey on the basketball court? Will her fellow teachers Miss Marino and Mr. Delaney draw fouls if their donkeys step out of bounds? Can high school students Gary Pellegrino, Mike Batts, Hank DiProspero and Bill McGraw keep their seats atop their donkeys longer than the faculty members? Who'll win the big game?

We have no inkling about winners . . . but we'd be willing to bet that a forthcoming sports event may well prove to be one of the funniest and most entertaining activities presented here in a long time! America's craziest and most unpredictable sport - Donkey Basketball - will be introduced here on February 16, when the DECA students at the high school meet the faculty in basketball - with everybody as a mule! The game will

take place in the high school gym at 8:00 p.m.

The old saying "stubborn as a mule," will be exemplified as our local players match wits with the donkeys of Diamond K Donkey Ball Company. The odds are that in most cases the donkeys will win.

Plenty of laughs for the entire family are promised. Donkey basketball is a bit different from the regular game, needless

## Vandalism Will Cost You \$100,000 Next Year

### Figure Is For Schools Only. Twelve To Seventeen Year Olds Are Chief Culprits

"If we maintain our status quo, vandalism will cost taxpayers \$100,000 next year," according to Michael Klick, Acting Superintendent of Business in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district. Klick and other civic leaders spoke last Wednesday at a vandalism forum called jointly by the Junior Women's Clubs of Scotch Plains and Fanwood. The program was undertaken to focus local attention upon the vandalism problems now facing the local community.



"Let's Give a Hoot - Give Vandalism a Boot" was the slogan which won a check for Paul Kujawski. Paul was chosen as the top winner in an Anti-Vandalism Slogan Contest sponsored by the Junior Women's Clubs of Scotch Plains and Fanwood last year.

### Anniversary Session For Listening Post

Senator Jerry Epstein of Scotch Plains will be the guest and observer on Saturday morning, as the Listening Post celebrates its second year of operation. The Saturday session will be held in the Municipal Building, Park Avenue, Scotch Plains from 10 a.m. till noon.

Listening Post is an informal forum which provides citizens with an opportunity for discussion and question. Three Scotch Plains Councilmen, Alan Augustine, Walter Grote and B. Lawrence Newcomb preside.

The public is invited to attend Saturday's session.

### Santo Salvo To Emcee Benefit For Children

The Montazzolesi Children's Foundation President, Paul Di-Francesco of Scotch Plains, has announced that the 17th Annual Dinner-Dance will be held on Saturday, March 24, 1973 at the Martinsville Inn. Chairman for the event is Philip Di Francesco, also of Scotch Plains.

The Foundation established and furnished the day care nursery and school, and has been its principal benefactor. Since its inception the nursery school has been supervised and administered by the Rev. Nicola Masculli. Master of Ceremonies for the evening is former Scotch Plains Mayor Thomas J. Santo Salvo. Honored guests will be Congressman Matthew J. Rinaldo, New Jersey State Assemblyman Peter J. McDonough III, Union County Sheriff Ralph Oriscello and Scotch Plains Mayor William Kitsz.

Music for dancing will be provided by the Continentals.

to say. Taking a shot at the basket when the donkey decides to go the other way, or decides you've been on his back too long, can be very difficult. And make no mistake - every shot must be taken while sitting on the donkey. If you're looking for a fun-filled evening for the family, come on out and watch Phillis Diller, Dynamite, Elvis, Mighty Mouse and the other donkeys attempt to unseat the faculty all-stars and the DECA team.

In future weeks, we'll be bringing you the final roster of players for both teams.

Proceeds will go toward the DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) chapter treasury and will ultimately be used for attendance at the state leadership conference (last year, the SPFHS chapter was tops in the state) and

On the dias in addition to Klick were Mayor Theodore Trumpp of Fanwood, former Mayor Albert Theurer of Scotch Plains, Fanwood Police Chief Joseph Gorsky and Scotch Plains Police Chief Joseph Powers.

Klick's figures of \$100,000 covered vandalism at schools only. The administrator pointed out that even this high total doesn't represent the whole picture. Many additional acts of vandalism go unreported - such things as thefts from lockers, tacks in tires, slashing of tires, etc. He's convinced that the community will never find a solution when we deal with it as "a problem of the schools."

That kind of approach has been proven unsuccessful, Klick pointed out. In other school districts in the nation, guard dogs, security guards, and other means of vandalism prevention have been tried to no avail. Klick said the community at large must recognize the problem as everyone's, as a failing somewhere in society.

As elementary children, our children don't generally create acts of vandalism. Them, around 12 to 14 years of age, "bang, they take off," Klick said. The vandalism levels off again around 17 years old.

His suggestion is a community wide approach.

What are the problems elsewhere in the community?

Chief Gorsky stated that Fanwood is a "unique" community with relatively little problem with vandalism. He cited community size as a factor. Last year, the following complaints were received: none in Jan., none in Feb., two in March, eight in April, one in May, six in June, 15 in July, 17 in August, 13 in September, four during the month of

October and 25 related to Halloween, four in November, two in December. A total of 72 - with a heavy emphasis on the two summer months of July and August.

Why the July-August highs? Gorsky felt that these reflected the push of the Junior Womens Clubs last summer in obtaining vandalism reports and arranging publication in The TIMES. "Kids wanted to know if their acts appeared, so culprits tried vandalism and then waited to read his accomplishment," Gorsky said.

Unfortunately, Scotch Plains is not unique, Chief Powers said. Last year, his department received 477 calls. The cost factor only in the final three months represented a \$4,800 cost to property owners.

Mayor Trumpp, who noted he has personally been a vandalism victim often, and has paid for many pairs of replacement sneakers, agreed that the Fanwood situation is fortunate, but taxpayers do suffer monetary losses, mainly through the school system. In Fanwood, there are instances of vandalism primarily to public property, Trumpp pointed out, noting that signs have been spray painted, goal posts torn down, and vandalism-proof fountains installed to replace non-vandalism proof ones, which were replaced nine times at \$100 each time.

Fanwood taxpayers support a litter truck which patrols every Monday, requiring two employees to clean up the litter which, while perhaps not actual vandalism, represents a disrespect for private property, Trumpp said.

Theurer has worked closely with the clubs and students on

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