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# THE TIMES



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## The Trees Are Lovely . . .



## But Oh, Those Pushy Roots!

Beautiful, large shade trees are a dime a dozen in Fanwood. Unfortunately, so are the enormous roots that go with them. Wherever there's a big tree, there's a big root . . . and in hundreds of cases, those roots are pushing away at the sidewalks, raising them unevenly, creating safety hazards and a lumpy appearance. The sidewalks belong to the homeowner, and it is the homeowner's responsibility to maintain them. Just lift the sidewalk and cut back the offending root, right? No, wrong. The minute he goes to replace or level out those sidewalks, the tree roots that create all the problems are a "touch-me-not."

The homeowner cannot trim or cut the roots of the town trees. This must be done by a certified tree expert, approved by the borough Shade Tree Commission. The problem of the roots and raised sidewalks is one which has plagued both the Commission and homeowners for years — the price the community pays for its lovely, shady appearance. Recently, the Commission wrote to Council, seeking a form letter which can be sent to all homeowners who ask for answers on the ticklish question. The Shade Tree Commis-

sion feels that a letter would spell out the areas of responsibility. Homeowners are primarily concerned with flattening sidewalks because of the threat of lawsuits in cases where there are enormous tilts. One homeowner recently told Council that he feared for both the very young and the very old. Senior citizens have difficulty walking along his frontage, he said, while small toddlers ride Big Wheels, and are very apt to have accidents on the sidewalk "bumps".

The sidewalk-tree root question is only one of the concerns  
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## S.P. Employees File Unfair Labor Suit

The Municipal Employees Union in Scotch Plains has filed an unfair labor practice charge against its employer, the township of Scotch Plains. Lillian Jones, the union representative acting in behalf of the 24 clerical employees in the Municipal Building, said that the union has found Township Manager James Hauser adamant in his refusal to negotiate in good faith, leading to the necessity for the filing.

"Mr. Hauser has been adamant in regard to employee seniority, grievance procedures, vacation and salary increases," Ms. Jones stated. She is with the New Jersey City office of the Municipal Employees Union. The onus is on the union to negotiate terms and conditions of employment, and to represent all employees without discrimination, arriving at a settlement within a reasonable time," Jones stated. She called Hauser's attitude "condescending." He tells us he knows what the women want, she said.

The new union was formed in March. At the time, clerical employees cited their low salaries as the triggering factor in the unionization effort. A total of 24 are now represented. All clerical people are included, except for recreation employees. When the union vote was taken, Hauser challenged the right of the recreation personnel to be included, on the basis that the Recreation Commission is an autonomous body. Police clerical people, as well as the secretary and clerks assigned to Hauser and to the finance officer are excerpted.

Last week, the Township Council voted to engage a labor relations attorney to represent the township in the case. The Council had already been aware of the filing of the suit.

Hauser called the suit "rather flippant." He noted that he had already met three times with the union representatives to negotiate. He has also had several telephone conversations, he said.

Months after the union certification was filed, Hauser said he had to initiate negotiations,

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## Residents Seek Stall On Nursing Home Hearing

Police chief from Scotch Plains and Fanwood will meet with high school administrators during the coming school year, for periodic workshop sessions on subjects of mutual concern. The two chiefs — Michael Rossi from Scotch Plains and Anthony Parenti from Fanwood — were invited to meet with the board members, following suggestions that the police were uninformed regarding incidents at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High. They appeared before a special session of the Board last Thursday evening.

Communication was the key word stressed by the two chiefs. "If something takes place in the schools of a serious nature, we should be there — not to make mass arrests, but to be able to answer the public who comment and ask us about many rumors," said Parenti. Parenti said there are many rumors circulated regarding discipline or events which take place in schools, and when police are knowledgeable, they can help squash unfounded rumors.

Parenti also strongly urged communication because, "we want to be aware of what our kids are doing in schools. Maybe it is not necessary to make criminals out of kids that age. Problem kids can be placed on

rehabilitation programs, so that the courts are not necessarily the only answer." He pledged the assistance of his department, noting that police have expertise in all areas of concern to teenage life — crime prevention, vandalism, drugs, etc.

That's not to say that the chiefs think the students at SPFHS are trouble-prone. To the extreme contrary. "I have an extremely high opinion of the students here," Rossi said. Rossi called the local teen citizenry very special. "Where else would you go and find 7,000 to 8,000 out to support the football team, as I saw in Clark four years ago?" he asked. He cited other  
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## Workshops Initiated For Police-School Personnel

Over 80 homeowners from the south side of Scotch Plains have signed a petition, asking a postponement of consideration of a nursing home application until late September. At issue is an application for a variance, which would permit construction of a nursing home on Terrill Road, across from Terrill Junior High.

The residents object strongly to the granting of any variance for a nursing home at the location, stating that there is no need for such a facility, that it would cause numerous problems in the area and would depreciate value of residential properties and require excessive municipal services.

The homeowners who have signed the petition are primarily from Cooper Road, Heritage Lane, Balfour Lane, Allenby Lane, Round Hill Road, and Terrill Road.

The nursing home variance application has been filed by a corporation, which is titled, Scotch Plains Manor, Inc. A certification of need has been received by the Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment, from the New Jersey Department of Health. The home would be a 120-bed facility, with nursing facilities in one two-story wing, and administrative services located in another two-story

wing perpendicular to the nursing area. The property would include provision for 61 parking spaces, and is 2.63 acres in size. The nursing home is not a permitted use, in the R-1, one-acre residential zone.

The nursing home would be a tax ratable, and would not share the tax-free status enjoyed by many other public facilities located along the southern end of Terrill Road.

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