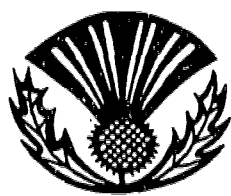


**Deaths
Dying**

Parts 1 and 2
pages 12 and 13.

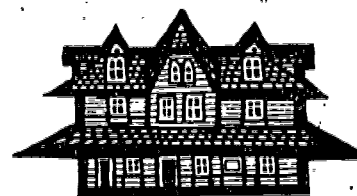
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From Editor



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THE TIMES



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20 CENTS

School staff to get layoff notices tonite

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education will meet in special session tonight at Terrill Junior High School to act on personnel reductions which may be required before the end of the current school year. Dr. Robert Howlett, Superintendent of Schools, has written letters to 114 employees, alerting them to the possibility that their jobs could be affected.

Tonight's action is necessary in order to meet the requirements of 60-day advance layoff notices, written into contracts of some staff members. By acting tonight, the Board of Education would be in a position to legally eliminate some or all of the 114 positions by April 1, if such action should eventually be necessary.

At issue is the \$572,616 budget cut, still in appeal before the New Jersey Commissioner of Education in Trenton. Last year, voters rejected the proposed school budget, the combined governing bodies of Scotch Plains

and Fanwood mandated the \$572,616 cut, and the Board of Education appealed the cut to Trenton. Although district officials and Board members have expected some word on the disposition of the hearing officer appointed to the case by Commissioner of Education Fred Burke, none had been forthcoming as of Tuesday of this week. Until the budget cut question is resolved, the local district must live within the framework of a reduced budget.

Money for items such as all new and replacement equipment and supplies, although much needed, has been frozen since the beginning of the school year, Dr. Howlett noted. Programs to meet needs of the gifted students, staff training and improved supervision, built into this year's budget, have not been implemented. "Because the appeal is still not resolved and in the unlikely possibility that the budget restoration is not received,

the Board must proceed to further reduce expenditures," he said.

Board action tonight terminates some 40 teaching staff members and 74 full and part-time non-teaching staff members effective April 3. At the same time, all differential positions for after school activities, including all athletics, clubs and similar programs would also cease.

"The Board sincerely hopes that this action will be recinded as a result of a favorable Commissioner's ruling which would permit them to retain the personnel reduced and program eliminated," Dr. Howlett stated. Even if the entire \$572,616 were restored, the Board would still be unable to implement the 1978-79 budget exactly as proposed, since the district has experienced a shortfall in revenues from state aid and tuition. The lack of anticipated revenue would first have to be made up, Howlett explained, before release of any restored funds. However, he felt that with a fully restored budget, the revenue shortfall could be made up within areas other than personnel reductions.

When word is received from the Trenton hearing officer, the Commissioner must approve the decision. The governing bodies

have the option of filing their own appeal within 18 days. An appeal by the governing bodies would necessitate continuation of the school district operation on a reduced scale, until resolved.

Determining where to make staff cuts has been under study at the administration for some time. Dr. Howlett was questioned as to where the impact would be felt. Reduction of 40 professional and 74 non-professional staff members would reduce direct contact with teachers, specifically within areas such as art, music, Physical Education, library, nurse, guidance, etc., the Superintendent explained. Guidance, spring sports would be eliminated districtwide, and specialized teachers greatly reduced.

"We first identified programs hitting heavily the support services we consider absolutely basic but less devastating than the classroom teacher," Howlett said. In determining the positions which might be eliminated, attention had to be directed to the seniority list and to categories addressed by statute to insure legality. As an example, he cited situations wherein a specialized teacher may hold certificates in music and in elemen-

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Orchestra tours elementary schools



On February 8th, the Scotch Plains Fanwood High School Orchestra will conduct the first part of their "Elementary Schools Tour". The orchestra will perform at Brunner and Evergreen elementary schools. Later in the year, the orchestra will perform at Coles and Shackmaxon elementary schools.

The main purpose is to promote string interest in the elementary schools and to expand the string program in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School System. Also during the month of February the High School Orchestra is combining with the string students from Terrill and Park Junior High Schools to prepare for their annual nite of music on March 2nd. The students will be given up their free time to rehearse for this concert. This will also give the junior high student a high school orchestral experience.

Resolve raises \$9,600 here

Resolve, Inc., the Scotch Plains-Fanwood youth and family counseling agency, received more than \$9,600 in contributions from local sources in 1978.

Of the total, \$2,060 came from individuals, mostly as a result of the agency's drive for funds last fall. The rest came from the local governments, service organizations, businesses and school and church groups.

"While the bulk of our funds still comes from federal grants and fees," Resolve president Tina Jackson said, "local contributions account for about 15 per cent of our current budget and they are vital to our future. We thank everyone who gave last year."

Contributors to Resolve, Inc. in 1978: Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League-\$2,150, Individuals (including \$280 proceeds from September tennis party)-\$2,060, Borough of Fanwood-\$1,000, Fanwood Presbyterian Church-\$700, Township of Scotch Plains-\$550, Allstate Foundation-\$500, Scotch Plains Lions Club-\$500, Fanwood-Scotch Plains Ministerial Association-\$479.56, Scotch Plains Community Fund-\$315, Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Youth Fund-\$300, Fanwood-Scotch Plains Jaycee Foundation-\$200, New Departure-Hyatt Bearings division, General Motors Corp.-\$150, Scotch Plains Junior Women's Club-\$120, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Kiwanis Club-\$100, Fanwood-Scotch Plains Jaycee-Ettes-\$100, Fanwood Women's Club-\$100, Prudential Insurance Co.-\$50, Elizabethtown Water Co.-\$50, Junior Woman's Club of Fanwood-\$40, Women's Club of Fanwood-\$35, Learning Disabilities Association, Fanwood-\$35, Scotch Plains Women's Club-\$30, Abraham Clark School PTA-\$25, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School PTA-\$25 and National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Westfield Section-\$25--Totaling \$9,639.56.

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Budget surplus is explained

In response to inquiries to The Times, Scotch Plains Township Manager James Hauser was requested to explain the \$1.6 million surplus reported at year's end, from the Scotch Plains municipal budget. Basic to an understanding of the Scotch Plains financial picture is identification of the difference between an "operating" surplus and a "cash flow" surplus, Hauser explained.

At year's end, Scotch Plains had a surplus of \$1.6 million. In the cash flow reporting system mandated for use by municipalities, the \$1.6 million figure did, in fact, appear as cash flow surplus. However, on the other side of the ledger books in Scotch Plains was a liability of about \$700,000 - owed by Scotch Plains to the Board of Education on January 1, 1979. Therefore, within a day or two, a major portion of the reported "cash flow" surplus had been paid out.

The "operating" surplus realized by Scotch Plains was \$155,000 at the end of 1978. This operating surplus represented monies realized from property sales, investments, underruns in budgeted expenditures, etc. The township does not keep any contingency fund or uncommitted surplus, Hauser explained. The \$155,000 operating

surplus is immediately turned back at year's end, applied to the next year's budget to reduce taxes.

Two major components of the township cash flow total appear on the balance sheet as liabilities, Hauser said. One is the monthly Board of Education payment, payable on January 2. The second is the reserve for uncollected taxes. The reserve is retained at around a \$600,000 figure year after year. It represents "insurance" that the township, as tax collector, can fully pay its bills to the county and the Board of Education, regardless of the tax collection rate.

There are instances wherein major developers may challenge their assessments by appealing them to the county tax board. Such appeals can take several years, progressing through the court systems, before a final determination is realized, Hauser noted. He also cited instances wherein parcels of land are taxes, but no property owner can be found, and taxes can therefore not be collected. Some residents are delinquent in their tax payments, he noted. The reserve for uncollected taxes permits the township to pay its bills at a 100 percent level regardless of the actual tax collection percentage.

Thespians teach drama in S.P.



Photo by Louise A.

Sue Dunie and James Beard prepare for a theatrical production (to be offered by students at Stage 3, a new acting studio in Scotch Plains. (See story, page 3.)