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DANCING THE HULA...Evangel Day School Kindergartners practice their Hula and Chicken Dancing for residents and staff of Ashbrook Nursing and Rehabilitation Center during a recent Hawaiian luau summer picnic. The children enjoyed hot dogs and hamburgers supplied by Ashbrook's Dietary Department and entertainment by D & E Karaoke. Ashbrook, located in Scotch Plains, is an affiliate of the Saint Barnabas Health Care System.

OFFICERS SAY CHANGE COULD DEplete VOLUNTEER UNITS

Borough's Rescue Squad Seeks Support in Opposing Proposed EMT Training Changes by State

Mrs. Schurtz Calls Legislation to Privatize Municipal Tax Collections an 'Intriguing Idea'

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

An appeal for support was made to the Fanwood Borough Council during its July 3 agenda session on behalf of the Fanwood Rescue Squad, which has joined other volunteer chapters in opposing proposed state changes in training procedures for emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

The recommended changes, detailed in two proposals published July 1 by the New Jersey Department of Health, address EMT training and the training of technicians in the use of a cardiac defibrillator which restores the rhythm of the heart.

Fanwood Rescue Squad Captain and Training Officer Susan Davis and fellow squad member William Crosby discussed how the proposed

changes, while aimed at setting uniform standards for emergency response units throughout the state, could actually wind up depleting the volunteer squads.

The proposed revisions call for all squad headquarters to be approved as certified training agencies, operated under new regulations governing registration of these facilities, size of training area and availability of a licensed registered faculty to conduct programs, according to Mrs. Davis.

The squad captain maintained that the Fanwood Rescue Squad, along with most other units in New Jersey, would be unable to meet the revised state Department of Health requirements as currently proposed for approval as a training site.

She added that if the squad was no longer able to offer recertification courses for EMTs through the Continuing Education Program, members would lose the flexibility which she emphasized is integral to the success of a volunteer organization.

"We'll lose a lot of members. It's not that they won't want to do it, but that they won't be able to do it because of time constraints," she said.

Mrs. Davis argued the squad's only alternative would be to hold training courses at such locations as Union County College. She maintained this format would be insufficient for meeting the recertification needs of approximately 20,000 current EMTs throughout the state, as well as initial training for new members.

"We feel they are the latest in a series of unilateral directives from the New Jersey Department of Health that will make it increasingly difficult for us as a volunteer squad to attract new members, retain those we have and therefore continue to provide free emergency care to the community," Mrs. Davis wrote of the proposals in a formal letter to the council which accompanied her discussion.

"If this trend is not reversed, the volunteer squad will become an entry into the history book and the added financial costs will be borne by the

residents of our community by increases in local taxes and increases in medical insurance," she continued in the letter, noting that a paid Emergency Medical Service unit charges approximately \$400 for a basic response call.

The proposed state changes concerning training of EMTs in the cardiac defibrillation program include requiring each participating agency to have a medical director oversee the program — a service currently provided by the Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

"Had these regulations been in place at the time of our decision to become an EMT-D agency, we would have been unlikely to be able to participate. As you are aware, we have one resident in our community who has directly benefited from our participation in this program," Mrs. Davis stated in her letter.

She was referring to a January 17 call during which the Fanwood Rescue Squad, aided by members of the Fanwood Police Department, resuscitated 72-year-old Shalom Sorkin of Fanwood, who had suffered cardiac arrest, using a portable cardiac defibrillator purchased by the borough with a matching grant from the Prudential Insurance Company's Helping Hearts program.

The New Jersey First Aid Council, which oversees municipal Emergency Medical Service agencies, has encouraged local chapters to contact state officials urging that the proposals in their current form be withdrawn, according to Mrs. Davis. She requested the Borough Council also lend its support, which the governing body indicated it would.

"The more voices we have, the better," she remarked.

Mrs. Davis added that while "we all recognize the state's concern that people all receive the same standard of care," training programs must continue in a manner which will not jeopardize the existence of the volunteer organizations.

In other matters, Councilwoman Karen M. Schurtz briefly discussed a

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Township Police Chief Robert Luce Appointed Director of John H. Stamler Police Academy

He Will Oversee \$5 Million Improvement Plan for Union County Facility

By GLENN R. KAPLINSKY
Specially Written for The Times

Robert A. Luce will retire as Chief of the Scotch Plains Police Department at the end of this month. He will take up the duties of his new position as the Director of the John H. Stamler Police Academy on August 1. He will be succeeded as Chief of Police by Police Captain Thomas O'Brien.

During an interview granted to *The Times* on Monday, Chief Luce said he has lived in Scotch Plains all his life except for a stint in the United States Marine Corps from 1953 to 1956. He is a graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Chief Luce joined the force in 1958, running through the ranks until his appointment as Police Chief to the Scotch Plains force in 1983.

In his current position as Chief, he directs the administration of, and sets policies for, the 45 full-time and 14 part-time member department. This is in addition to his planning, budget and training functions. Chief Luce also selects, evaluates and recommends for promotion, police and civilian personnel within the ranks of the police department.

Chief Luce is a member of numerous professional associations including the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police, the Union County Police Chiefs Association, of which he is Executive Secretary and a Past President, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the New Jersey Narcotic Enforcement Association. He also is an Associate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy.

Chief Luce told *The Times* that among the accomplishments he is most proud of during his tenure at the

top post of Scotch Plains is community policing. He recently established a two-officer bicycle patrol.

Chief Luce is strongly oriented to training the individual and department.

The Chief researched, modified, and initiated a productivity standard which, in effect, gives his officers guidelines regarding their daily work ethic, he said.

In effect, "a day's work for a day's pay" concept.

This concept, he said, was difficult to develop and execute. With the consent of the sitting Union County Juvenile Court Judge, he initiated the first Juvenile Contract and Community Service Program in Union County.

He instituted the first Adopt-A-Cop program in Union County.

"This allowed our law enforcement officers, in uniform, to visit local schools and develop a positive relationship with the students," the Chief explained.

Chief Luce participated in a state trained six-member team comprised of leaders from the police department, the community at-large and the education community which developed a leadership program for high school students.

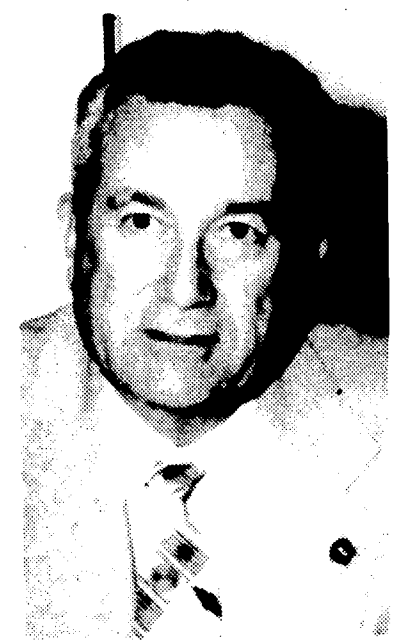
The team was formally recognized by the New Jersey State Senate for its high degree of success.

Chief Luce completely rewrote the department's rules and regulations and updated numerous policies.

He appointed the department's first training officer.

The Scotch Plains Police Department was the first to be on-line with the Law Enforcement Television Network (LETN) in Union County.

The Chief has received commendations from the United States Treasury Department for the investigation and apprehension of counterfeiters, the New Jersey State Police for inter-county narcotics investigation which resulted in 46 arrests, the Union County Prosecutor for helping to eradicate an inter-state gambling organization and the Policemen's Benevolent Association (PBA) for the deten-



Police Chief Robert A. Luce

tion, identification and apprehension of a burglary suspect.

Speaking of his new job Chief Luce said "the academy has a good reputation in the state and with the prosecutor's office."

The academy has even caught the attention of the Los Angeles Police Department and the United States

Military Academy who are attracted to its various programs.

The academy conducts two classes for new recruits. One is from January to June and the other from July to December. There is no charge to Union County municipalities, Chief Luce explained.

The new Director will oversee a \$5 million improvement program which will see the construction of a new 1800 rifle and pistol range, the construction of more classrooms and the installation of interactive television.

On a personal note Chief Luce is married. A son, Patrolman David Luce, has been on the Scotch Plains force for the last two-and-a-half years. Prior to this the younger Luce was a police officer in Westfield.

Chief Luce faced two other contenders for the academy job.

Captain Thomas O'Brien to Assume Post Of Scotch Plains Police Chief August 1

New Assignment Comes on 32nd Anniversary of His Appointment to Township Force

By GLENN R. KAPLINSKY
Specially Written for The Times

Captain Thomas O'Brien will assume the duties and responsibilities of Chief of Police of the Township on Thursday, August 1, it was announced Monday.

Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins introduced Captain O'Brien at a press conference held in the Municipal Building. Mr. Atkins spoke briefly, and had nothing but praise for the departing Chief of Police Robert A. Luce who, on the same day will become the head of the John H. Stamler Police Academy, also located in Scotch Plains. The Township Manager said, "there is no finer man than Chief Luce."

He went on to add, however, that the township has a lot of confidence in Captain O'Brien and are certain he will do a good job.

"We have a fine tradition of police service," added Mr. Atkins. "Chief O'Brien will maintain this fine standard for our taxpayers."

Mr. Atkins called the Scotch Plains force "probably the best trained in the entire county."

The Township Manager speculated that the incoming Chief will stress education and maintain the fine rapport the department has with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school system.

The police have been well received by the educational community, Mr. Atkins said, noting that Chief Luce created the post of Juvenile Officer 11 years ago in order to interact with the school community.

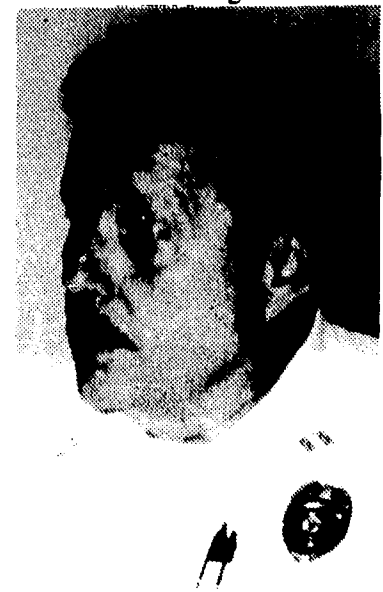
The local Police Athletic League (PAL) was revived three years ago and now is "flourishing," Mr. Atkins said.

He said the new chief will face an expanded use of the Law Enforce-

ment Television Network (LETN) which the department went on-line with some four or five years ago. At the time, the Scotch Plains department was the first police department in Union County to obtain the new technology. As of this date very few departments have this capability for training, officials noted.

Captain O'Brien is a life-long resident of Scotch Plains. He was appointed to the Scotch Plains Police Department on August 1, 1964. Thirty-two years to the day after his appointment he will be installed as Police Chief.

He was appointed to the rank of Sergeant on December 21, 1971; promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on January 23, 1978, and on December 18, 1987, he graduated from the Federal Bureau of Investigation National



Captain Thomas O'Brien

Academy in Quantico, Virginia, after an 11-week course.

Captain O'Brien was appointed to the rank of Captain on March 1, 1993, and was named Commander of the Uniform Patrol Division of the Police Department.

The new Chief was born in Bayonne on September 29, 1941 and moved to Scotch Plains at the age of 5 with his family.

He is a 1960 graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Captain O'Brien and his wife, Mrs. JoAnn O'Brien, have been married for 33 years and have five children and four grandchildren.

Captain O'Brien forecasts, "no drastic changes" for the department. He hopes to enlarge the recently formed bicycle patrol. One goal of Captain O'Brien's is to see that police department members undergo periodic training, with approximately three or four training sessions per officer per year.

The new Police Chief said the department has hired 14 or 15 police officers over the last three to four years and plans to hire three or four more officers within one year.

Mr. Atkins pointed out that the police force has a good mix of older and younger officers.

Captain O'Brien mentioned the use of camera video taping in squad cars. This innovation, he said, has helped to curtail complaints against police while furnishing a "safety net" so that individual complaints get checked out. This feature will be expanded and placed in more squad cars.

Mr. Atkins then commented on Chief Luce's "sudden and unexpected" departure. He said the Scotch Plains Police Department has a

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Fanwood Memorial Library Recipient Of \$6,848 State Technology Grant

Two Multimedia Centers to Be Established for Adult, Children's Libraries

Modern technology is coming to the Fanwood Memorial Library. The state Department of Education has awarded the Fanwood Library a \$6,848 grant for multimedia audio and visual services which will be used to purchase new computers with CD ROM capabilities.

Two multimedia centers will be established: One in the Children's Library and one in the Adult Library, a library spokesman said.

"This is the first step in the library's technology initiative to better serve the residents of Fanwood," stated Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly.

Library President Steven Clark established a Technology Task Force in 1995 that has been busy developing a plan to modernize the library.

"The goal is to improve the library management systems and to take advantage of the explosion of information resources that are now found on computers," Mr. Clark said. The equipment for the multimedia center will be purchased this fall, and will be

available for patrons to use by the end of the year. The larger effort to computerize the library systems is planned to follow in 1997, the spokesman explained.

The Fanwood Borough Council's approval of capital funds from this year's budget was the first installment in the plan to expand the use of technology at the library. A bequest from Ms. Mary Gault, a former local school teacher, will also be dedicated to the technology initiative. The Friends of the Fanwood Library have raised funds to purchase a number of CD ROMs and other software for the multimedia centers. Councilwoman Karen M. Schurtz, Mayor Connelly's liaison to the library, commented that "This will provide Fanwood residents with a new world of information resources that can only be accessed by computers."

To ensure that the new multimedia centers offer the most popular and useful software programs and CD ROMs, residents are encouraged to

contact the Library Director Bruce Buckmaster at 322-6400 with their suggestions.

DEADLINES HELP PAPER SERVE YOU

Those preparing press releases for submission to *The Times* are reminded all copy should be in the hands of the Editor at 50 Elm Street, Westfield, by 4 p.m. on the Friday before the Thursday on which they wish it to appear.

Times releases also may be mailed to Post Office Box 368, Scotch Plains, 07076 to meet the above requirements.

For events which happen the weekend prior to publication, press releases should reach the Editor by Monday of the week of publication at 10 a.m.

Obituaries will be taken until Tuesday at 5 p.m.

For events which are planned weeks or months in advance, we encourage submission of stories as early as possible prior to the event.

The above deadlines are meant to enable us to prepare your copy carefully.