



SCOTCH PLAINS



FANWOOD

THE TIMES

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Scotch Plains - Fanwood

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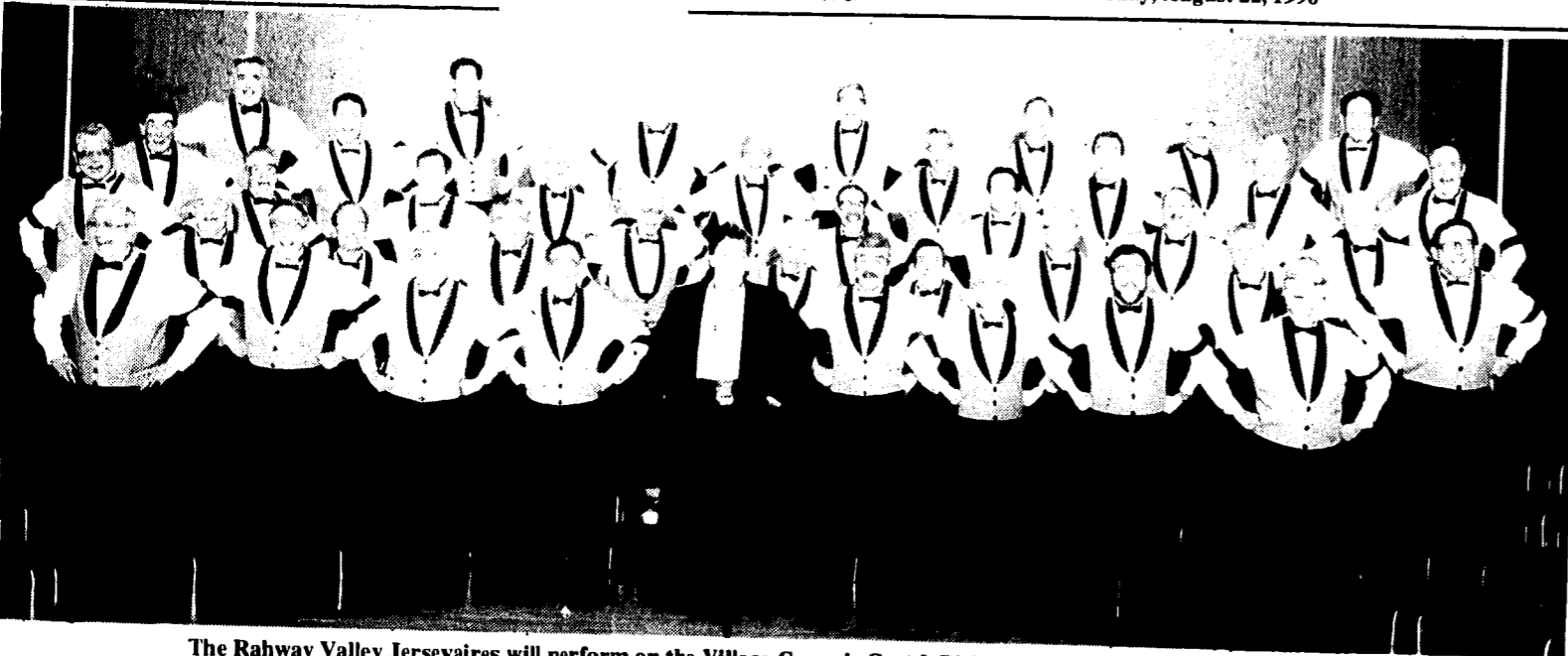
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FIFTY CENTS



The Rahway Valley Jerseyaires will perform on the Village Green in Scotch Plains tonight at 7:30 p.m. See story on Page 3.

Conversion of Mansion Hotel Into Facility For Assisted Living Begins With Model Units

Full Occupancy of South Avenue Structure, Re-Named The Chelsea, Expected by Year's End

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The multi-million dollar conversion of the Mansion Hotel at 295 South Avenue in Fanwood into an assisted living facility currently is underway, it was announced during the regular meeting of the Fanwood Borough Council last Wednesday, with construction having begun on three model units. The entire building is expected to be ready for occupancy by the end of the year.

Soon to be known as The Chelsea at Fanwood, the four-story building is being developed by Roseland Property Company and Fanwood Assisted Living, Limited Partnership, of Roseland as living quarters for senior citizens aged 55 and older who are no longer capable of living independently but do not require nursing home care.

Seventy-one existing rooms on the hotel's second, third and fourth floors will be modified into 68 handicapped-accessible private apartments, both studios and two-room suites, with a total of 80 beds, according to Project Manager Rocco Palmieri of Schoor, Depalma & Canger, the Manalapan-based firm which designed the site plan. Each residential floor will have a medical station staffed by nurses and equipped with examining rooms and lounges.

The first floor will feature common areas for dining and recreation, a tea room, card room and library, as well as a kitchen for on-site food preparation. Other provisions and amenities expected to be

offered include transportation for residents to doctor appointments; linen and laundry service and a hair salon, according to a recent statement issued by the developers.

Councilwoman Karen M. Schurtz, Chairwoman of the governing body's Building and Zoning Committee and a member of the Fanwood Planning Board, reported that Fanwood Building Inspector and Construction Official James Silance is monitoring construction of the three sample units to ensure all aspects of the work conform to state guidelines.

She explained that building these units prior to renovation of the entire complex enables the construction official to inspect the materials being used, and to determine if any modifications need to be made, before the bulk of the work is done. The units must also pass electrical, plumbing and fire safety inspections.

The planning board approved preliminary and final site plan applications for the facility in March, as well as conditional use of the building, following an agreement from the developers that all safety requirements would be addressed, among them the widening of one driveway to allow easier access for emergency vehicles.

The developers also were expected to work in conjunction with the Fanwood Rescue Squad regarding the prospect of widening the hotel elevator to better accommodate patient gurneys, which currently can only be placed in the

elevator diagonally, leaving minimal extra room for additional personnel or equipment. They also have been discussing with borough officials the safest way to handle a mass evacuation of elderly people in the event of a fire.

A public auction held July 30 of all furnishings and fixtures in the hotel, built in the early 1980s, drew more than 500 people, including several hundred bidders, according to Seymour Stein, President of Design Concepts of New Jersey, Inc. in Scotch Plains. The company con-

ducted the auction in conjunction with Investment Valuation Service, Inc. of Massachusetts.

Mr. Stein reported there was a "100 percent sell-out" of merchandise during the all-day event, including built-in kitchenettes, upholstered love seats and chairs, free-standing bars, sofa beds, tables, lamps, closet racks, televisions, chandeliers, china, kitchen flatware, hairdryers and 70 bedroom sets. "There were absolutely fantastic buys that were made by people," he remarked.

Fact-Finder's Report Submitted To School Board, Teachers Union

Both Sides to Meet Wednesday Night to Discuss Settlement Proposal

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Times

Negotiation teams representing the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association (SPFEA) and the Board of Education will meet at 7 p.m. this Wednesday, August 28, to discuss the fact-finder's report which has been submitted to both sides of the labor dispute which has left the school district as the only one in Union County without a settlement.

The SPFEA represents some 427 teachers, aides and secretaries. The union's previous contract expired June 30 of 1994. The fact-finder, Daniel Brent, was brought into the negotiations after the two sides were unsuccessful in hammering out an agreement with the help of state me-

diator Scott Buccheit. The last two settlements have each been for two years.

Mr. Brent is employed by the state Public Employee Relations Committee (PERC). He was introduced to the school board and the union representatives at the May 22 meeting.

The main sticking points in the negotiations have been salaries and fringe benefits. This past school year union members staged several job actions including picketing outside the school district's administration offices prior to the September 21, 1995 Board of Education meeting.

Teachers also refused to work most of the Back to School Nights. In addition, union members used their legal option to take Election Day last year

as a paid legal holiday. As a result, schools closed that day.

In an open letter issued yesterday to the residents of Scotch Plains and Fanwood, Mrs. Barbara McGuane, President of the SPFEA, asked residents to urge the school board to work out a "reasonable settlement" with the union.

"The citizens of the towns can play an important part in making certain that the people they employ are able to give their best in a positive work climate," she said.

Mrs. McGuane accused the board of allowing the negotiations to become a "protracted affair."

When reached last week prior to the arrival of the fact-finder's report, Dr. Donald E. Sheldon, Board of Education President, said the report was originally expected to be delivered over a month ago. He was also eager to review the recommendations made by Mr. Brent with the school board.

Since the fact-finder's report is non-binding, neither is obligated to accept the proposed settlement. Mrs. McGuane has indicated a strike was a possibility if a settlement is not reached by the start of the new school year on Wednesday, September 4.

The last time teachers called a strike

Republicans Say Convention Has Changed Course of 1996 Presidential Campaign

Editor's Note: The following story was written exclusively for The Times and The Westfield Leader by former Westfield Mayor Ronald Frigerio who attended the Republican National Convention last month along with his wife, Mrs. Janet Frigerio, who was a delegate to the convention. Union County Freeholder Carol I. Cohen, also of Westfield, will be attending the Democratic National Convention

next week in Chicago. A story on her views of that convention will appear in the Thursday, September 5, issue of The Times.

More than 500 enthusiastic Republicans from New Jersey departed Newark International Airport on August 10 bound to San Diego, where the 36th Republican National Convention was being held. New Jersey

had the second largest delegation at the convention.

Westfield's own delegate, Mrs. Janet Frigerio, wife of former Mayor Ronald Frigerio, along with Frank X. McDermott, Union County Republican Chairman, were aboard the first flight to San Diego. Other prominent Union County delegates aboard the flight included: State Senate President Donald T. DiFrancesco of Scotch Plains, Senator C. Louis Bassano, Freeholder Linda Di Giovanni and State Committeeman Gabe Spera.

New Jersey was represented by 47 delegates and 47 alternates. During the flight, the mood of the delegation was upbeat and confident that a Dole/Kemp ticket would provide the proper momentum to be victorious in November.

When the delegates arrived in San Diego, they were confronted with a power failure that affected more than seven states from Canada to Mexico. Fortunately, within 2 1/2 hours, power was restored and the delegates embarked on the business at hand.

Mrs. Frigerio stated, "The speakers during the first couple of nights showcased what we are all about." She continued, "The program included dozens of everyday heroes from America's neighborhoods who reflect the views and experiences beyond our nation's capital."

Former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell, Congresswoman Susan Mollinari of Staten Island and New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, to name a few, began laying out the plans to create more opportunities, promote stronger and safer families and enact smaller and smarter government.

Mr. McDermott stated, "To sum up my reaction, I need only say the convention changed the course of the campaign."

The speech by Mrs. Elizabeth Dole on August 14 captivated the audience with her style and very impressive delivery.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



HEADING HOME... Westfield's delegate to the Republican National Convention, Mrs. Janet Frigerio, boards motor coach along with Chairman of the Republican Committee of Union County, Frank X. McDermott, to start their trip home from San Diego on August 16.

REPLACEMENT OF SUCCESSOR PENDING

Dr. Faith Spitz Named Schools Superintendent In Readington District

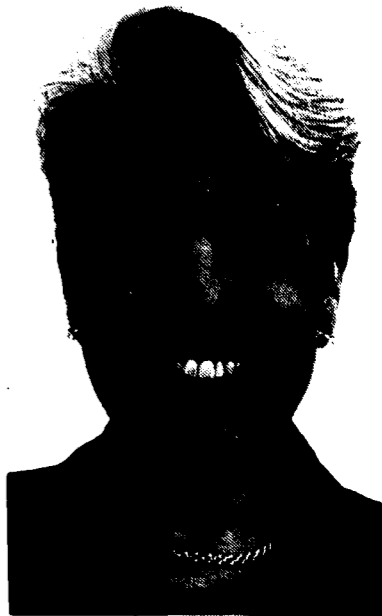
Assistant Superintendent Leaving Local District After Three Years

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Dr. Faith Spitz, who has served the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district as Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for the past three years, will bid farewell to her colleagues and many others next week before beginning her new position, effective Sunday, September 1, as Superintendent of Schools in Readington Township in Hunterdon County.

The official announcement of Dr. Spitz's appointment came August 14 at a meeting of the Readington Township Board of Education, attended by about 25 people, during which her acceptance of the school superintendent's position was the lone item on the agenda.

"Everyone should have one night in their life like that," Dr. Spitz remarked enthusiastically of the warm reception given her by the board, along with Readington Mayor Stephanie Stevens, members of the municipality's parent-teacher Home School Association and its Citizens Advisory Committee, as well as district teachers who turned out to welcome her. "They put the pedestal up so high, I was afraid I was going to fall off," she said.



Dr. Faith Spitz

She is replacing former Readington Superintendent of Schools Thomas Gannon, who left the district at the end of April to accept a position as an Associate Professor and Chairman of the Education Department at Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio.

"It's a wonderful district. It's growing in leaps and bounds. There are lots of opportunities and challenges," the longtime educator observed, noting that Readington residents will vote on Tuesday, October 15, regarding the proposed building of a fourth school in the district to address increasing enrollment. Readington currently enrolls 1,775 students in Kindergarten through grade 8.

The district currently has two elementary schools for Kindergarten through fourth grade, and a middle school for grades 5 through 8. Under the proposed new arrangement, the two elementary schools would include Kindergarten through grade 2; the new intermediate school would enroll grades 3 through 5, and the existing middle school would be for grades 6 through 8.

Although excited about her new responsibilities, Dr. Spitz acknowledged having "very mixed emotions about leaving Scotch Plains-Fanwood," and credited her successful rapport with the Board of Education, fellow administrators, staff, parents and students for allowing her job to be "a wonderful experience."

"I have been very fortunate in that everyone I have worked with, whether they are paid staff or parent volunteers, have been wonderful," she com-



SPLASHY DEBUT... The Scotch Plains Fire Department helped visitors keep cool last Saturday during their "Task Force Wet Down" to christen their two brand new Pierce 1,500 GMP pumps, along with the department's newly refurbished 75-foot tower ladder. The event, which also featured refreshments, games and souvenirs for visitors, was held at the fire house at the corner of Martine Avenue and Raritan Road.