

THE TIMES



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OUR 38th YEAR - ISSUE 1

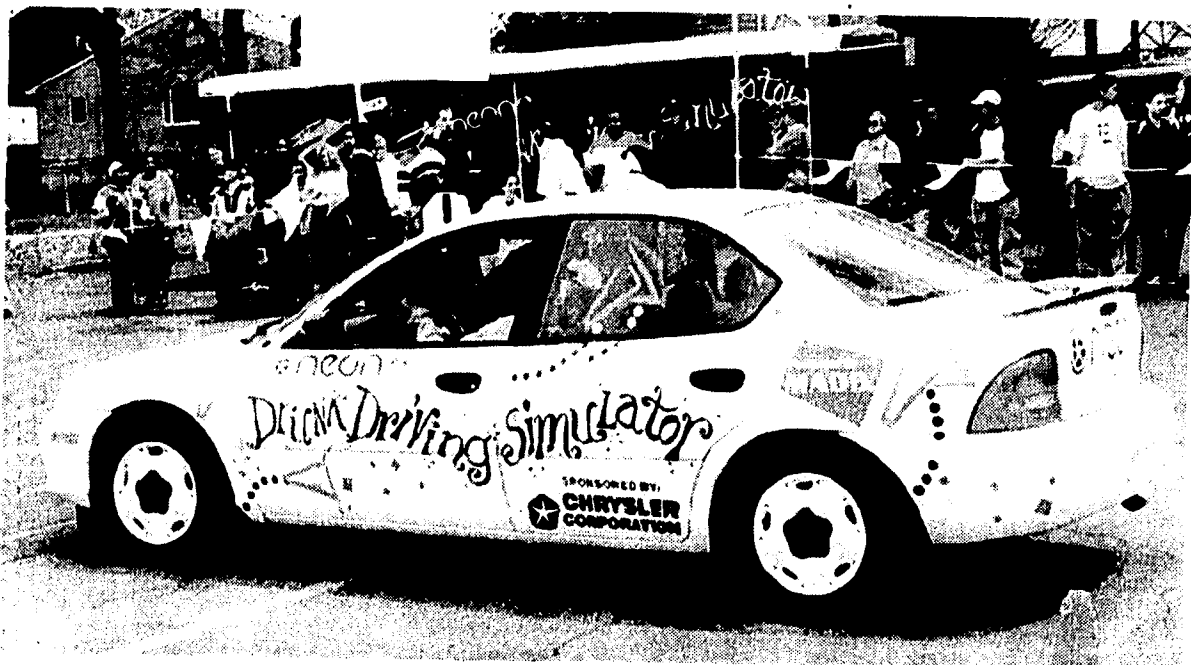
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AN EYE OPENER... Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School seniors were given an up close experience of the impact alcohol has on impairing a driver. Chrysler Corporation sponsored the Drunk Driving Simulator car for the program which was presented by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Seniors attended the program during their English classes on Monday. The car was parked on the rear of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Interparochial School in Scotch Plains.

William A. Burke for The Times



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DANGERS OF ALCOHOL... Kevin Regal takes his turn the wheel of the Drunk Driving Simulator. Each student's weight was typed into a lap top computer. As the blood alcohol numbers were increased, students saw first hand how they had less control over the car in terms of the amount of time needed to stop or in making turns. The program is aimed at giving the students advanced warning of the dangers of drinking and driving as they prepare for their senior prom and graduation.

Hearing Is Set for May Regarding Zoo Permits

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

An administrative hearing has been scheduled for next month concerning the state's recent decision not to renew operating permits for the Scotch Plains Zoo on Karitan Road, after the owners were cited for multiple violations related to public safety and animal welfare, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced on Tuesday.

Zoo owner Harold Kafka of Watchung is expected to appeal the state's denial of his animal exhibitor and zoological permits when the hearing takes place on Tuesday and

Wednesday, May 13 and 14, before Judge Edith Klinger at the Office of Administrative Law in Newark. The proceedings, scheduled to begin at 9 a.m., will be open to the public.

Mr. Kafka requested the hearing after the state Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, an arm of the DEP, declined to renew his permits for the 6.5-acre facility, which is home to approximately 150 animals, including some rare and endangered species. Mr. Kafka and his wife, Deborah, purchased the zoo three years ago from former owners Franklin and Louise Terry.

A statement issued by the DEP on Tuesday said that permits for the zoo were denied "based on a number of current and past failures of the owners to comply with state regulations governing the possession of wildlife. The failures include problems affecting public safety and animal welfare which were uncorrected despite repeated warnings, failure to file mandatory quarterly reports on animal deaths, births, acquisitions and disposals, and acquiring animals without a permit."

State officials have also charged the Kafkas with ignoring "numerous verbal and written directives by Fish, Game and Wildlife to correct violations involving caging, and have had 11 convictions or guilty pleas in municipal or superior court in the last two years concerning violation or wildlife possession regulations."

According to the DEP, state regulations prohibit the Fish, Game and Wildlife Division from issuing a permit "when there have been court convictions or guilty pleas within specified time frames."

Judge Frederick C. Kentz, Jr. in Superior Court in Elizabeth appointed Union Township Attorney Martin B. O'Connor, 2nd, as permanent custodian of the zoo on April 10 after the latter submitted a report on the financial status of the zoo as well as the condition of the animals there. Mr. O'Connor, who had been appointed as temporary custodian on March 5, had compiled his information between that date and April 10.

According to Mr. O'Connor's report, which included evaluations from several animal experts, there were "varying degrees of deficiencies with respect to the animals. However, it is

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was first-time candidate Thomas Russo. All three represent Scotch Plains. In both the township and Fanwood, voters approved the tax levy for the \$41.8 million school budget for 1997-1998, which represented an increase of 2.64 percent over the 1996-1997 spending plan.

The school board race this year featured eight candidates altogether, including outgoing Board Vice President Lillian M. Dettmar, who lost her bid for a sixth term, and newcomers Frances Gonzalez, Jean McAllister, Kristen Croag Paparella and Norman J. Ross.

Mr. Russo, a township attorney and a resident for more than 30 years, was the top vote getter in the school board race. He attributed his victory primarily to having lived in the community for so long and having been involved with a variety of local organizations.

The father of two young children said he also believes that his support for allowing more input by citizens and staff members in board decisions struck a chord with voters. During his campaign, he had advocated giving people with children currently enrolled in the school district a greater say in the shaping of district policies.

"My primary objective is to involve as many people as possible and to elicit as much input as possible from the public and staff regarding issues which come before the board, whether they be curriculum, budgetary or whatever," Mr. Russo stated, adding that he felt that greater accessibility will promote greater credibility for the board.

"I want citizens and staff to feel the board is accessible and that there are people on the board who want to listen, and that they will be treated with respect even if board members don't agree," Mr. Russo continued.

The newest member of the board said that he is "looking forward to

getting started," and reported that he has already received a batch of calls from people eager to discuss education concerns with him. "I hope to remain available to as many people as possible even if I may not agree with them on every issue," he said.

Among the issues Mr. Russo said he expects to concentrate on during his first term on the board are maintaining educational programs in light of reduced non-restricted state aid and other limitations. He described the task of controlling costs in order to preserve programs and services as one of the "primary challenges" which the board will be facing.

Mrs. Larkin said she believes that "people like what has been going on for three years and they want it to continue." The board member based her campaign platform on maintaining class size, providing high quality education at the lowest possible cost and keeping the lines of communication open between the board and the community.

Mrs. Larkin noted that, through her own family, she is personally involved in each level of education in the district. She has a son who will be a freshman at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School in September, a daughter who will be in the sixth grade at Terrill Middle School and another daughter who will be in the third grade at Coles Elementary School.

During her first term, Mrs. Larkin served on the board's negotiating team during contract talks last year with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association (SPFEA). She is also the board's Liaison to the district's Parent-Teacher Association Council and the Municipal Alliance Committee. She is also a member of the Coles Elementary School and Terrill Middle School PTAs and the Terrill School Music Boosters.

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Board Memorializes Church Resolution

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Board of Adjustment convened briefly last Thursday evening to memorialize one resolution and review correspondence concerning activities sponsored by New Jersey Planning Officials (NJPO), an organization of which the borough is a member. No new applications were scheduled for a public hearing by the board this month.

The resolution confirmed the board's March 20 approval of an application by the Fanwood Presbyterian Church at Martine and LaGrande Avenues for use variances for three signs on the property. George Zhelnik, a church representative and Elder, testified last month that the signs were necessary to identify the church and the Westminster Preschool program there.

Mr. Zhelnik told board members during the public hearing for the application that church administrators wanted to replace two old signs and install a new one in an effort to attract

new members to the parish and to designate its preschool program. The new sign, measuring 14.5 square feet, was approved for the church's front lawn. Its purpose is to identify the church for people traveling west on Martine Avenue.

Officials also gave the church the green light to enlarge an existing sign located on the corner of the property facing east which identifies the church and lists the weekly schedule of services and speakers. The church sought permission to enlarge the sign from 12.3 square feet to 16.3 square feet.

In addition, a sign designating the Westminster Preschool will be erected adjacent to the parking lot to replace the sign for the former Acorn School, which was the previous preschool program operated at the church. Last August, the Fanwood Planning Board gave conditional use approval for the new preschool program at the church as well as a permit for playground equipment.

The Westminster Preschool, a non-

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Terrill Road Baptist Church Marks 30th Anniversary With Ceremony

More than 200 people were on hand during the weekend of April 12 and 13, to mark the 30th anniversary of the Terrill Road Baptist Church in Scotch Plains. All five pastors from the church's earliest days to the present attended the celebration, along with members, former members, charter members and guests.

Scotch Plains Mayor Irene T. Schmidt and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye were among the officials attending. Both congratulated the church for the contribution it has made to the community over the last 30 years.

"I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the kind of foundation you are laying for the young people in this community," said Dr. Choye. "You send us wonderful children."

Mayor Schmidt read a resolution from the Scotch Plains Township Council, congratulating Pastor Michael Seaman and the church family on the anniversary and praising "the contribution that the church has made to the faith of the families of our community."

The Terrill Road Baptist Church can trace its roots as far back as 1963

when a small group of Southern Baptists began meeting in private homes. Soon, they met at the Frank K. Hehny School in Clark before purchasing the church's present property, 1340 Terrill Road in Scotch Plains, in 1964. The pastor in those earliest days was Dr. James Brooks, who returned for the 30th anniversary.

"We didn't have many people," he said. "But we trusted God, and you know the rest of the story," which led to the constitution of the Terrill Road Baptist Church in April of 1967.

The Reverend Kenneth King served as pastor from 1967 to 1974, a time that saw the construction and dedication of the current church building.

"We felt that God was in it, and God would provide," Reverend King told those at the celebration 30 years later. "And He will see you through whatever the future holds."

Reverend King was followed at Terrill Road Baptist Church by Dr. Ron Madison, who served as pastor from 1975 to 1980.

"Over the last 30 years, this church has become an integral part of this community," according to Dr. Madison.

Speaking at the anniversary celebration, he called the church "a living example of what biblically based faith can mean to a community."

Also returning for the anniversary weekend was Dr. David Buck, pastor from 1981 to 1991, who turned his attention to the year 2000 and beyond.

"Terrill Road Baptist Church can have a major impact as the millennium turns. People are looking for community. You can provide them with help, hope and a spiritual home," he noted.

The Reverend Seaman became the present pastor of the Terrill Road Baptist Church in 1992. He said he enjoyed meeting with the other four pastors and learning from them.

"It was a great time of sharing. I had the time of my life. This was a good celebration. But, now is the time to put the past in perspective, be passionate about the present and pursue God's promises. The past was great, but the future will be better."

Deadlines Told For Submittals To The Times

Those persons preparing press releases for submission to *The Times* are reminded that copy should be E-mailed or faxed by 4 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. *The Times'* E-mail address is goleader@aol.com. The fax number is 232-0473.

Releases, pictures, and letters to the editor can also be dropped off at our office located at 50 Elm Street or through our mail slot. To ensure that submittals reach our office prior to deadline we encourage E-mail or faxed material.

Sports stories which occur prior to the weekend should be in by the Friday deadline. Weekend sports events must be submitted by noon on the Monday prior to the publication date. Obituaries will be accepted up to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays.

All copy must be typed, double-spaced, no more than 500 words in length, and include a daytime telephone number where the submitter can be reached.

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

Please note that in addition to making our deadlines, the publication of submittals may be delayed due to space considerations. All submittals are subject to being cut due to length, edited for style and clarification at the discretion of the editor.

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PAST AND PRESENT... All five pastors of the Terrill Road Baptist Church in Scotch Plains met recently to celebrate the church's 30th anniversary. Pictured, left to right, are Reverend Kenneth King; Dr. Ron Madison; current Pastor, Reverend Michael Seaman; Dr. David Buck, and Dr. James Brooks.

Anti-Aircraft Noise Activists Seeks Action by the FAA

The New Jersey Coalition Against Aircraft Noise (NJCAAN) has urged the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to stand behind its pledge to work for regional aircraft noise relief by adopting the aircraft noise mitigation plan proposed by New Jersey and Staten Island officials and endorsed by NJCAAN.

Under Congressman Bob Franks' "Quiet Skies Aircraft Noise Correction Act," the FAA would be required to devise a plan for international airport arrival and departure routes that would reduce noise levels over 80 percent of the

affected bistate area. The plan has bipartisan support. Pamela Barsam-Brown, Executive Director for NJCAAN said,

"It is time for the FAA to stop playing their shell game with New Jersey and Staten Island by simply moving the noise from one area to another without proposing or supporting solutions that will benefit the entire bistate region," said NJCAAN President Kennedy Traeger.

Additional noise reduction strategies have been endorsed by New Jersey Congressmen Robert Menendez and Donald M. Payne which include increasing the

THREE VOICE COMMITMENT TO MAINTAINING QUALITY EDUCATION

School Board Winners Reflect On Success of Their Campaigns And Prepare to Address Issues

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The two incumbents and one newcomer elected April 15 to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education reflected this week on their campaigns, along with issues they felt would be particularly important to administrators, staff and parents in the district over the next three years. They also discussed some of their goals in maintaining quality education for the district's 4,254 students.

Board members August A. Ruggiero and Theresa Larkin were both reelected to three-year terms, as

was first-time candidate Thomas Russo. All three represent Scotch Plains. In both the township and Fanwood, voters approved the tax levy for the \$41.8 million school budget for 1997-1998, which represented an increase of 2.64 percent over the 1996-1997 spending plan.

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William A. Burke for The Times

MAKING WISHES COME TRUE... Students in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district's elementary Gifted and Talented Program held a fundraiser at Terrill Middle School last Thursday as part of their "Slices Make Wishes Come True" project. The project was held to raise funds for the Make-A-Wish Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing children who are facing life threatening illnesses with their wishes. They made lap quilts for display at the fundraiser. Pictured, left to right, are: Katie Donovan, Shannon Gallagher and Elena Goetz.