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NEWLY INDUCTED... New members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School French National Honor Society were inducted on April 17 during a candlelight ceremony. Please see story on Page 7.

BOARD VOTES 8-1 TO ELIMINATE FIRST-GRADE IOWA TESTS

Dr. Choye Awarded 3.6 Percent Salary Hike As School Board Okays Five-Year Contract

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

In an 8-1 vote, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol B. Choye received a 3.6 percent salary increase to \$138,778 starting July 1, from the Board of Education last Thursday. The move includes a new five-year contract through June 2002. Dr. Choye's current three-year contract runs out June 30 of this year.

Board members indicated the action should be seen as a vote of confidence for Dr. Choye's work in the district over the past three years. According to officials, the board has the option to offer a three-, four- or five-year contract to a superintendent. Board member Albert J. Syvertsen, casting the only nay vote, said that while he fully supported Dr. Choye he felt three-year contracts should be the norm. "I wouldn't want Dr. Choye to stay if she didn't want to," Mr. Syvertsen said. Dr. Choye expressed pleasure over the five-year contract offer and indicated she was in for the long haul. "We're going to continue to struggle with the changes in the world around us to give our children the very best education," Dr. Choye said.

The move to renew the contract follows on the heels of an annual review of the Superintendent's work. A superintendent's salary is determined each year as part of the annual budget, officials noted.

On a separate matter, Assistant Superintendent Dr. John R. Crews told the board that the New Jersey State Department of Education was looking to toughen up its continuing education requirements for licensed teachers. New Jersey is the only state

in the country that does not require continuing education to maintain a teaching license. "I find that interesting," Dr. Crews said. Dr. Crews said, however, that New Jersey's standards for initial licensing of teachers are looked upon as a model for many states. Dr. Crews described the latest

state proposals as "weak" in identifying essential knowledge and skills for the continuing education of teachers. "It's not clearly defined," he said.

In light of the awaited state proposals, Dr. Crews encouraged the board to reinstate a Professional Development Committee to evaluate teacher performance and recommend possible training programs. "As an example," he said, "is technology. Some teachers use it and integrate it. Others are afraid of it. This is something we need to look at." Computers are an example of technology.

In other business, the board voted, 8-1, to eliminate the Iowa standardized Test of Basic Skills for all first graders on the advice of the district's first grade planning team and replace it with a year-end assessment of student progress.

Board President Donald E. Sheldon said, "This is not unique here." Neighboring towns of Westfield, Summit, South Orange-Maplewood and others have followed suit, he said.

Mr. Syvertsen was outvoted in his objection to eliminating the Iowa tests.

"I think these kinds of tests are important when we go to compare our district to others in the state and the country," Mr. Syvertsen said.

Dr. Choye said the current Iowa test is "out-of-date" — 10 years old — and does not accurately test the district's first graders on what they currently are being taught.

"For example," Dr. Choye said, "when we moved into using the University of Chicago math, what we're teaching is not what is tested by the Iowa test."

The board said it also would decide whether to eliminate the fourth grade Iowa standardized tests for this school year only. The notion came under consideration after Dr. Crews explained that fourth graders would be subject to an additional 10 hours of field testing by the state during May and June. Officials described the state's Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) as "a test of the test" since no scores would be sent back to the districts this year. It is expected that test scores would be returned to the district in subsequent years.

Newly reelected long-time board member August Ruggiero questioned whether the district was required to

participate in the statewide ESPA testing on such short notice. Board member Jessica D. Simpson responded that, "We should look at this testing as a learning experience. This is really where the rubber meets the road, if you want to know how our children are doing, you have to look at standards."

An unidentified district parent urged the board to drop the Iowa test to lessen the exam load and restore classroom learning time to the students.

"I don't think the district will fall apart if we don't have a 10-year old, outdated test for fourth graders this one year," she said.

At the same time, the board approved a Kindergarten through fifth grade science program on the advice of the Science Cyclical Review Committee that may require a longer science period during the school day. Dr. Choye pointed out that the new program has a "hands on" element to it.

Explaining her vote for a new curriculum, recently reelected two-term board member Theresa Larkin said, "It was a science program that really needed overhauling." The board agreed to adopt the 1995 Harcourt-Brace "Science Anytime" program, officials said.

The board unanimously agreed to a \$180,000 special education program for 3 to 6 year olds diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD). In older children the condition is often described as autistic, according to Suzanne Flannery, Special Education Supervisor for elementary school age children. Currently, according to officials, these district children are being sent to private schools out-of-district at a cost of about \$50,000 per pupil. Ms. Flannery said there are six students identified for the proposed program in the district and expects a total of 15 to 17. The PDD program will be in Coles Elementary School by this fall if all goes according to schedule.

Ms. Flannery said she and Susan Tillis, Director of Special Services, observed a rise in recent years of children identified with PDD but had no explanation as to why this was the case. The district's program is modeled on the town of Cranford's program, officials added. One teacher,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Planning Board Rejects Proposed Development of Fifth Street Lots

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

The Borough of Fanwood Planning Board last week voted down the proposed development of two lots on Fifth Street when property owner Ernest Fantini failed twice to appear before the board to discuss changes to the site plan.

Fifth Street neighbors said they also objected to the development proposals and resident Joseph Devico testified that adjacent property owned by the borough is ill-kept. He said petitions for cleaning it up have yielded no results.

"The town dumped a pile of dirt at the end of Fifth Street to keep cars from going through there. Weeds grow there and trash from businesses on South Avenue collect there," Mr. Devico said. "We've been through it for several years now, and nothing's been done." He also said there is inadequate drainage in the area of the proposed development.

Mayor Mary Anne Connelly, who is also a member of the Planning Board, said "I'll be responsible for checking with the Public Works Director to see what we can do."

The board said it rejected Mr. Fantini's plans for safety reasons since the proposals show a driveway of a corner lot entering on Fifth Street instead of on the other side. Board members also said the plan appeared "incomplete" since Mr. Fantini has not provided additional information to the board as he promised in February.

Board member Jack Molenaar said a site plan from 1985 that does not require variances from the borough may be used at any time by Mr. Fantini to build on the lots.

On a separate matter, the board said it would be ready to discuss a review of the borough Master Plan by the next agenda meeting, Monday, May 19. Committee member Mr. Molenaar said, "We've made a lot of progress. We don't have much further to go." The review and updating process of the borough's

Master Plan for planning and development has been ongoing for several years.

The board also indicated its interest in a state legislature bill sponsored by Assemblyman Richard Bagger called The Intermunicipal Development Review Act. According to Mr. Molenaar, the bill arose from the ShopRite case in the towns of Westfield and Garwood where development on the border of one town may affect a neighboring town.

The proposed bill would seek to set up temporary or "ad hoc" planning boards made up of members from affected towns and county officials to decide these kinds of cases. In the ShopRite case, for example, Westfield residents have claimed that commercial development along North Avenue in

Garwood at the Westfield border will adversely impact their property and increase traffic along residential streets. At this time, there is no legal recourse for the Westfield residents through the Garwood Planning Board.

In other business, Mayor Connelly appointed Mr. Molenaar to represent the borough at statewide planning meetings to be held over the next two years. Mr. Molenaar said according to the state Office of Planning "cross acceptance" will come into use by this summer, whereby municipal, county and state planning decisions and goals will be compared.

Board officials indicated that Cottman Transmissions was preparing to submit a site plan.

The next regular board meeting is Wednesday, May 28.

Council Contemplates Potential Impact of Higher Recycling Costs

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

Increased recycling costs hit home Tuesday as the Scotch Plains Township Council held off on a decision over house-to-house recycling bids that are more than double last year's. Officials said twice-a-month residential curbside recycling services with an Essex County company that cost the township \$125,000 this year has gone up to almost \$276,000 from the coming year. An alternate bid from a Newark firm came in at \$145,528, officials said. Officials noted that the lowest bid is still a 15.2 percent increase.

Mayor Irene T. Schmidt attributes increased recycling costs across the board to coming deregulation in an industry where tax credits and state subsidies have been the norm over the past 10 years. Towns can no longer expect \$8 million from the state to defray costs after funding expired at the end of last year. "It's a house of cards that had to collapse eventually," Mayor Schmidt said.

Mayor Schmidt also noted recent court decisions on "waste-flow directives" that allows haulers to take trash outside of county resource recovery plants. "These facilities have a lot of debt attached to them — from when they were built," she said.

New Jersey has been recognized in the past for its high — 60 percent — garbage recycling rate. The state Department of Environmental Protection has recently proposed a 65 percent recycle goal by the year 2000.

Some have said that the higher costs of recycling may lead to abandonment of recycling altogether. It will be cheaper to throw it away, officials added.

Township officials said they would delay a decision while they "study" the recycling bids.

On a separate matter, the council came down hard against a state legislature bill that would, according to the council, "dismantle the system of land use regulation." The Land Use Regulatory Reform Act, or LURRA, said to be developed by the New Jersey Builders' Association, would create a Permit Review Official (PRO) to decide on local land use and development.

According to the council, the move would "relegate the Planning Board to a position of simply conceptual review without the benefit of detailed plans." Councilwoman Joan Papan added, "We don't think it's right. We will always fight to make sure residents have the right to have a say on development in our town and neighborhoods."

The township Construction Board of Appeals was reorganized by the council with Bob Roberts as Chair-

man and Bruce Bond as Vice Chairman. Other members are James Bell, Art Coon, Robert Van Horn, Paul Malool, Anthony Saccaro and Pat Bartels. If there is no local board, appeals go to a county board, officials said.

The council unanimously voted to get behind the Green Brook Flood Control Plan while leaving the door open for modifications to the original plan. However, Councilman William F. McClintock emphasized the need for flood protection that was in line with proposals by the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

"We realize that some communities object — particularly Berkeley Heights — to the upper portion of the plan. But we're telling them (legislators), don't forget this part. This is where it all starts," Mr. McClintock said.

The Corps' original plans included 11 acres of detention basins in the Watchung Reservation that would hold storm water for slow release into areas that include Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Plainfield. A decision on the upper portion was delayed for a year after some Union County residents objected.

The Green Brook project came about after severe local flooding in August 1973 killed six people and caused thousands of dollars worth of property damage.

On a different matter, Sycamore Avenue residents complained to the council about employees from a Second Street cleaning service, who the residents said have been parking 10 hours a day in front of their houses. For the past two years, residents said it has been nearly impossible to use their driveways, have the streets swept and plowed or have leaves collected.

One man said an employee was actually parking in his driveway until he alerted police. The council suggested considering a two-hour parking limit on the avenue. Residents were particularly angered, they said, because the employer appears to have 10 employees and a parking lot with at least 20 unused spaces.

Residents of Jefferson Avenue complained of the neighborhood being overrun with stray cats. Councilman Robert E. Johnston recommended getting animal traps from the township Health Department in the Municipal Building. He said when animals are caught, a township animal control service will pick them up.

In other business, the council approved \$10,000 in engineering services for improvements at Brookside Park pond. Officials said work will not be done until the fall. The council has said it would like to see a walking path around the pond.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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.



REMEMBERING ARBOR DAY... The Fanwood Shade Tree Commission celebrated Arbor Day last week by planting a tree near the Fanwood Volunteer Rescue Squad building. Pictured, left to right, are: Back row, Jan Van Haasteren, Michelle Durney, Freeholder Linda d. Stender, a Fanwood resident, and William Crosby; middle row, Melanie Lee, and Mandy Lipetz; and bottom row, Sarah Boffa, Meaghan Kelly, Yvonne Chen, Marisa Bianco, Katie Van Haasteren, Brianca Falco, Gaby Falco and Kella Guzman.

Sewerage Authority Looks at Co-Generation

The Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) could realize significant savings in utility bills under a proposal to allow a private company to set up a co-generation facility on Authority grounds, RVSA officials revealed last week.

The 10-member Board of Commissioners is expected to receive proposals by today, Thursday, May 1, from three companies given Request for Proposals (RFP) forms who are interested in establishing the co-generation facility. Authority Executive Director Richard Tokarski said that the RVSA could realize a \$90,000 to \$100,000 annual reduction in utility bills.

Co-generation is the process by which gas is converted into electricity. Mr. Tokarski said that the company that eventually constructs, operates and maintains the facility at the RVSA will bill them for power at lower rates, as compared to current rates being charged to the RVSA. He also said that the co-generation facility will enable the authority to use more efficient electric motors for its operation.

To ensure that co-generation is the way in which the authority wants to go, the commissioners have instructed Consulting Engineer Michael Brinker to release to Public Service Electric & Gas Company (PSE&G) the data and specifications contained in the RFP. Mr. Brinker said that PSE&G has a computer model that can evaluate how efficient and economical co-generation could be for the Authority.

"This model could be used as an evaluating tool for the Authority," Mr. Brinker said.

Authority Chairman Frank Mazzarella said that the agency is "covering all the bases" by seeking the PSE&G computer model.

"Co-generation can provide a very viable option to the Authority if done right," Mr. Mazzarella said.

He explained that is why the RVSA is seeking the opinion of electricity experts before approving a contract for the facility.

Mr. Tokarski said that if the authority opts to contract for a co-generation facility, it would result in one or two small generators being constructed on site. He added that the generators will be constructed in an enclosed facility.

The RVSA is an autonomous waste water treatment agency serving more than 300,000 residential and 3,500 industrial and commercial customers in Clark, Cranford, Garwood, Kenilworth, Mountainside, Rahway, Roselle Park, Scotch Plains, Springfield, Westfield, Winfield and Woodbridge.