



SCOTCH

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FANWOOD

## Scotch Plains - Fanwood

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A MEMORABLE OCCASION... These students from Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School prepare, in both pictures, to enter their senior prom at the Berkeley Plaza in Berkeley Heights. While gathering on the grounds of the Plaza, a group



of seniors and their dates pose for *The Times* photographer. The Class of 1997 will graduate on Wednesday, June 18, at 6 p.m. at the high school. Following the ceremony, seniors will enjoy a post graduation party, Bash '97, starting at 10 p.m.

### FUTURE USE OF 6.5-ACRE PROPERTY ON RARITAN ROAD REMAINS UNCERTAIN

## Developer Signs Pact to Purchase Troubled Scotch Plains Zoo; Kafkas Face Stiff Fines for Failure to Meet State's Deadline

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specialty Writer for *The Times*

A Warren Township real estate developer confirmed that he has entered into an agreement with the owners of the Scotch Plains Zoo to purchase the troubled facility, but declined to elaborate on his plans for the site pending a response from the zoo's former owners, who still hold the mortgage on the property.

Mitchell Berlant, President of New Jersey Realty, signed the pact last Thursday with Harold and Deborah Kafka. The Kafkas bought the zoo three years ago from Frank and Louise Terry, now living in Florida, who operated it for more than four decades as the Terry Lou Zoo. Describing himself as "an animal lover and activist," Mr. Berlant said he became interested in the zoo after visiting it for many years with his own children.

Richard Cohen, the Scotch Plains attorney representing the Terrys, said that he received Mr. Berlant's proposal last Friday to pay the Kafkas' mortgage debt to his clients. Mr. Cohen reported, however, that the proposal was "totally ambiguous"

regarding future use of the property, and added that the document did not indicate that the site would remain as a zoo.

The state Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife, an arm of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, ordered the zoo closed last Thursday after the Kafkas failed to notify authorities by May 28 of their plans for relocating approximately 60 exotic animals at the zoo. The Kafkas were given 15 days to submit a report to the state after withdrawing their appeal May 13 of the division's ruling not to renew their operating permits.

In January, the division opted not to renew the Kafkas' permits for housing and exhibiting wildlife, claiming the couple failed to correct multiple violations related to public safety and animal welfare. The Kafkas had planned to appeal the ruling during a hearing in the Office of Administrative Law in Newark, but ultimately decided to accept the state's decision on the advice of their attorney, who felt the Kafkas faced too many legal obstacles in their quest to get their permits reinstated.

Division spokeswoman Sharon Southard said the state actually gave the Kafkas an extra day beyond the deadline before closing the zoo to the public. The zoo has been periodically picketed by animal activists protesting what they claim are unsatisfactory conditions there, while supporters of the couple argue that they have done the best they could for the zoo with limited financial resources.

Ms. Southard reported that last Friday, six summonses were issued to the Kafkas, including citations for "failure to protect the public from injury from potentially dangerous animals" and failure to provide the Department of Environmental Protection with a report of how they planned to dispose of the animals within 15 days after withdrawing their appeal.

The Kafkas were also issued summonses for "possession of non-game and exotic animals without a proper permit," which carry potential fines of between \$250 and \$5,000 for each day the Kafkas fail to correct the situation, and for "possession of game animals without proper permits," which carry potential fines of between \$50 and \$250 per day. "We hope he will proceed immediately to remove the wildlife from the zoo," Ms. Southard commented.

The spokeswoman said the division had received a letter from Mr. Berlant stating that he and the Kafkas had entered into a purchase agreement which carried several conditions, one of which was that the Terrys would have to approve the pact. She said she did not know what the other conditions of the agreement were, but remarked that the division "did not have anything concrete" regarding a transfer of ownership.

"As far as we know, Mr. Kafka is still in possession of the animals, as far as we know, he's still the official owner," Ms. Southard remarked, adding that Mr. Berlant has not submitted an application for a permit for the zoo. "We don't have a final agreement, but even if it is finalized, the new buyer will still have to get the appropriate permits, and all the wildlife must be removed."

Mr. Cohen noted that the Terrys and the Kafkas had not yet come to an agreement concerning where the animals would be relocated. He said the Terrys wanted to transfer them to an animal broker in the midwest "who would make sure the animals got to proper licensed facilities," while the Kafkas wanted to send them to another place in Virginia, which the attorney said did not have the proper permits to accept them.

Mr. Berlant blamed the Terrys for the Kafkas' recent troubles, charging that they prompted investigations of the zoo by state and federal authorities and then "buried their heads in the sand," while the current owners were left to deal with the problems and penalties.

In February, Judge Frederick C. Kentz, Jr. in Superior Court in Elizabeth granted an injunction at the request of the Terrys after the Kafkas fell behind in their mortgage payments. The judge later appointed Union Township attorney Martin B. O'Connor, 2nd, as custodian of the zoo. Mr. Connor presented a report in April which included evaluations by several animal experts. The report found there were deficiencies but did not indicate any evidence of willful or gross negligence on Mr. Kafka's part.

Ms. Southard acknowledged that

"less than 100" animals, including both exotic and domestic varieties, are now in residence at the zoo, but may not be exhibited. She defined exotic animals as those which are not native to New Jersey. The facility formerly housed approximately 150 animals, including some rare and endangered species of wildlife.

She said that on May 22, the division had supervised the relocation of migratory birds owned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service from the zoo to other licensed establishments in New Jersey. The birds included bald eagles, hawks, cranes and owls, which are native to North

America. An orangutan was also recently transferred from the zoo to a facility in another state. Ms. Southard confirmed.

The Kafkas have faced a continual uphill battle in their struggle to keep the zoo open. In addition to mounting bills, the couple has been cited by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), as well as the state, for failure to correct violations. The USDA issued a complaint dated April 4 against the zoo based on nine inspections which took place between December 12, 1995 and January 17, 1997. The Kafkas have refuted the federal allegations.

## County Democrats Give Edge to Mr. McGreevey

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specialty Writer for *The Times*

Union County voters played a major role in the close 8,000-vote victory of State Senator and Woodbridge Mayor James McGreevey over Congressman Robert E. Andrews, 144,000 to 136,300, in Tuesday's Democratic Party gubernatorial primary race. With Mr. McGreevey holding a slight lead, the vote came down to Camden and Union Counties.

With 99 percent of the vote counted, Senator McGreevey had captured 64 percent of the Union County vote, for a victory margin of just under 13,000 votes of the 25,000 votes tallied, compared to Michael Murphy, 21 percent; and Congressman Andrews, 13 percent. Congressman Andrews captured 86 percent of the vote in his home county of Camden, a whopping 32,000 tallies over Mr. McGreevey.

Mr. Murphy, who also finished second in Camden County, received

21 percent of the vote or 77,826 tallies. Senator McGreevey won in the mostly urban areas of central and northern New Jersey while Congressman Andrews took the southern counties in addition to a big win in Hudson County.

On the local front, the three Regular Union County Democratic Organization endorsed candidates easily staged off a challenge by candidate slates running outside the organization line in the race for the nomination for the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Deborah Scanlon of Union, former Rahway City Councilman and Union County Utilities Authority Commissioner Chester Holmes, and former Roselle Park Councilman Alexander Mirabella won by some 11,000 votes over the next closest challengers, the Elizabeth slate of Mary L. Varona, Paul P. Pickton and James E. Garvin, running under the party line Stop Corruption and Profiteering in Government.

Mr. Mirabella was the top vote-getter with 15,495 tallies followed by Mr. Holmes at 15,427 and Ms. Scanlon with 15,051; Ms. Varona, 4,681; Mr. Garvin, 4,279, and Mr. Pickton, 4,041. The Plainfield ticket, running under the line Democratic Progress, had a weak showing. Their top vote-getter was Marie Davis, 1,246, followed by Craig Montgomery, 1,094, and Bryan Askew, 928.

The winning slate will now face Republican Freeholders Edwin H. Force, Henry W. Kurz and Frank H. Lehr in the fall election. The Democrats hold a 6-3 majority on the board. The Republicans were unopposed in their bids for the party's nod in November.

### Scotch Plains Reveals Recycling Changes

Beginning Tuesday, July 1, Scotch Plains will change over to northside/southside recycling collections. The north side of town is composed of Sections 1 and 2 and the south side is Sections 3 and 4. Because collection dates may have changed, residents are advised to review the following schedule:

Northside — Sections 1 and 2: Tuesdays, July 1, 15 and 29; August 12 and 26, and September 9 and 23.  
Southside — Sections 3 and 4: Wednesdays, July 2, 16 and 30; August 13 and 27, and September 10 and 24.

## Woodland Estates Back Before Planning Board On Issue of Variances

By JUSTIN BRIDGE  
Specialty Writer for *The Times*

A housing development, discussed over the past few years, was once again before the Scotch Plains Planning Board Monday night. The proposed development is located off Woodland Avenue, straddling the border between Scotch Plains and Plainfield. The topic of this week's Planning Board meeting was to determine if the board should grant several variances to the developers, The Woodland Estates Partnership.

Duggan A. Kimball of Kimball and Kimball Professional Planners of Mendham, retained by the board to determine the feasibility of granting these variances, described the site as being 9.5 acres, with 6.4 acres in Scotch Plains and 3.1 acres in Plainfield. The site also contains a hill in addition to two small wetland areas and several large trees.

The site is being developed by The Woodland Partnership. The proposed site will consist of 32 single-family dwellings on lots between the sizes of 7,500 square feet to 15,000 square feet. There are already three houses on the site. The developers said that they will keep two of the houses and that the third would be eliminated.

The developers are seeking approval for subdivisions in two municipal jurisdictions (Scotch Plains and Plainfield) and variances for a steep entrance grade of 10 percent, an "eyebrow loop" extension to the entrance drive, an underground storm retention system and a use-density variance because the development is in a R2-D zone, an area designated for residential single-family and for two-family houses.

Robert H. Krause, an attorney representing the developers,



OLYMPIAN ENDEAVOR... Law enforcement officers make their way along South Avenue in Scotch Plains last Friday during the Torch Relay for the Law Enforcement Special Olympics to benefit handicapped children.

## Fanwood Junior Women Give \$2,000 to Groups

The Fanwood Junior Women's Club has concluded another year of fundraising. More than \$2,000 in cash, equipment, food and clothing has been donated to local organizations.

Two special projects this year included the purchase of a bullet-proof vest for the Fanwood Police Department and the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Scholarship, given to a senior student based on need, academics and community service who is continuing his or her education after graduation.

The local organizations benefiting from money raised include: the Fanwood Volunteer Rescue Squad,

the Fanwood Memorial Library, the Welfare Department, a battered women's shelter, the Special Wishes Foundation, Parks Renewal Fund and the Historical Preservation Committee.

The club, which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary, raises money through events such as recycling, pictures with Santa, movies in the park, a home shopping spree and assisting local organizations with the collection and distribution of donated toys, food, clothing and furniture.

For information on the club, please call 322-1673.

### 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 must 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.

## Third Classic Car Show, Craft Fair Sunday in Town

The Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) has once again planned for a day of activities, food and entertainment for the whole family in Downtown Scotch Plains on Sunday, June 8.

The day's events will include an Antique and Classic Car Show in the parking lots behind the stores on Park Avenue, a craft fair on the Village Green to benefit the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation, a disk jockey, prizes, raffles, food and sidewalk sales.

"The SPBPA would especially like to thank Union County Buick and Crown Cadillac for their contribution to this year's event and the many other members who have contributed to making this year's show even bigger and better than last year," said a spokesman for the association.

In the event of rain the show will be held two weeks later on Sunday, June 22. Given the response to the show the past two years, the SPBPA expects at least 100 participants this year.

Anyone interested in registering for the car show may call Steve Hoeckele, of DeCu Manufacturing, at 233-3344 or pick up a registration form at Nuts 'n' Plenty, 1906 Bartle Avenue. Advance registration is \$8 and registration on the day of the show is \$10. Those interested in registering for the craft fair may call Kelly Deegan of the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation at 322-4323.