

# THE TIMES



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## Scotch Plains - Fanwood

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YOUR HONOR...Scotch Plains attorney Scott J. Moynihan takes oath of office to become a State Superior Court Judge during a swearing-in ceremony held in the chambers of Union County Superior Court Assignment Judge Edwin W. Beglin, Jr. Holding the Holy Bible are his three children and wife, Michelle. A story on the new judge appeared in last week's issue of *The Times*.

### BOROUGH CITED FOR TREE PRESERVATION

## Fanwood Council Recognizes Community Members; Reviews Pending Infrastructure Work

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The Fanwood Borough Council offered a round of kudos last Thursday to several individuals for their contributions to the community, and accepted the community's fourth Tree City USA Award for work done on behalf of tree preservation. Manning the camera for Channel 35's live broadcast of the council's regular meeting was feature film editor Jeffrey Solomon, a Fanwood resident whose credits include *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Deliverance*. Michael D'Errico, a forester with the New Jersey Forest Service, presented Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly and the governing body with a commemorative Tree City USA flag in recognition of the borough having received the award from the National

Arbor Day Foundation. Mr. D'Errico assisted the community last year when it was determined that the 332-year-old Fanwood Oak, which had become diseased, would have to be cut down. The forester also presented Mayor Connelly with two pressed leaves from the Fanwood Oak, saying "we think trees are our link back to our historic past." The Mayor, who reported that attempts are being made to graft tips of the Fanwood Oak onto root stock in a bid to give it new life, thanked Mr. D'Errico, along with Shade Tree Commission Chairman William L. Crosby, for their help during the difficult decision to have the tree cut down.

The Mayor read resolutions honoring Sister Geraldine Contento upon completion of her sixth and final year as Principal of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Interparochial School; Patrick Bellone, a foreman with the Department of Public Works, on his 40th anniversary with the department June 1, and in recognition of June 14 as Flag Day.

A presentation was made welcoming Patricia Scarlato, the owner of Earth's Bounty, Inc. on South Avenue, formerly Florida Fruit, to the community. A proclamation was issued honoring Joseph P. Keeton on having recently achieved Eagle Scout status, the highest honor bestowed by the Boy Scouts of America. The Mayor also announced the appointment of Jack Molenaar as a member of the Board of Adjustment to fill the unexpired term of the late Edward Ryan. Mr. Ryan, who died May 7, was Vice Chairman of the Board.

During committee reports, Councilman William E. Populus, Jr., announced that the municipality had purchased three meters and a camera to monitor water infiltration caused by cracks in certain areas of the borough sewer system. Mr. Populus, the

council's representative to the Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority (PARSA), said the borough is currently paying for water which is entering the system through infiltration and that PARSA is willing to assist Fanwood in resolving the problem.

Councilwoman Karen M. Schurtz, the governing body's representative to the Municipal Alliance Committee, discussed several programs which were designed to educate young people about the dangers of substance abuse. Among them are Project Graduation, the annual drug- and alcohol-free party for graduating high school seniors which will be held tonight, Thursday, June 19, at the Mendham Health and Racquet Club beginning at 10 p.m.

The councilwoman also described the Drunk Driving Simulator car which was demonstrated April 21 at St. Bartholomew the Apostle School, sponsored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which simulated the gradual effects of intoxication on a person's ability to operate a motor vehicle. She said local students also recently met the "Winston Man," a cancer survivor and stunt man for actor Harrison Ford, who discussed with them the hazardous effects of cigarette smoking.

Mrs. Schurtz reported that the 1997 Mayor's Charity Gala to benefit the Municipal Alliance Committee will be held on Friday, November 7, at the Shackamaxon Country Club in Scotch Plains beginning at 7 p.m. The event, which honors local volunteers-of-the-year, benefits "early warning" and drug prevention education programs sponsored by the committee.

Nominations for volunteers-of-the-year must be submitted by the end of June, according to the councilwoman.

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## Developer Gets Green Light To Build Woodlands Estates

By JUSTIN BRIDGE  
Specially Written for *The Times*

This past Monday's meeting of the Scotch Plains Planning Board finally ended the issue of the Woodlands Estates development. The proposed development, which is located on Woodland Avenue and straddles the border of Scotch Plains and Plainfield, has been an issue since 1985.

That was the year that the Supreme Court handed down its Mount Laurel ruling, which called for every municipality in New Jersey to allow for the allotment of land on which to develop low to moderate income housing.

The developer, K. Hovnanian, was represented by Robert Krause, an attorney representing the township. Mr. Krause brought with him John Dupont, one of the engineers for the developers. Mr. Dupont presented a new plan for the development that dealt with certain questions that arose at the last board meeting earlier this month. The new plan addressed the concern over drainage for the development and the grading of the road.

Mr. Dupont announced that, under the new plan, drainage would be handled by the Plainfield system. This means that no storm retention system would be built on the development, which was originally suggested by the developers. Mr. Dupont added that the developers would pay for the surveying and study of the Plainfield drainage system.

Another change over the previous plan was the elimination of a "switchback" style entrance into the development in favor of a slightly curved road straight down to Woodland Avenue. Responding to concerns over the steepness of the hill, Mr. Dupont explained that the first 50 feet from Woodland Avenue would be set at a 5 percent grade while the rest of the way up the hill, the grade would be set at 12.5 percent.

In his testimony to the board, Paul Ferriero, an engineer employed by Scotch Plains, said that the new plan was much more balanced. He pointed

out that there would now be less ground removed due to the fact that drainage will now be carried off by the Plainfield system. However, Mr. Ferriero said that he would like to see the 5 percent graded roadway extend further into the development. This would allow for a safer distance for cars to slow down before reaching the intersection at Woodland Avenue. Mr. Ferriero offered the suggestion that the 12.5 percent grade be raised to a 13 percent grade, allowing the longer length of roadway at a 5 percent grade.

Doug Kimball, a planner retained by the board, claimed that the new plan is an improvement over the old one. Mr. Kimball also expressed that

he "wants to see as many trees surrounding the perimeter that can be retained by the developer as possible."

Mr. Kimball is employed by Kimball and Kimball Professional Planners of Mendham.

After letting the engineer and the planner have their say, the board opened up the floor to comments by residents.

Marcia Anderson, representing the Scotch Plains Environmental Commission, raised questions over the welfare of certain trees on the development site. In a letter to the board, she noted that over 11 trees ought to be protected by the developers.

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## Former Scotch Plains Zoo Owners Reject Pact Calling for Development of Property

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The former owners of the Scotch Plains Zoo have rejected a purchase agreement between a Warren Township real estate developer and the facility's current owners calling for the zoo to be shut down and the property developed, their attorney said this week. Although the establishment has been closed to the public since May 28, the future remains uncertain for the property itself, which for more than 40 years supported one of the community's most popular attractions.

Robert Kraus, whose Scotch Plains law office is representing Frank and Louise Terry, confirmed that they "have not accepted" a proposal by Mitchell Berlant, the President of New Jersey Realty, who signed a pact with Harold and Deborah Kafka May 28 to acquire the 6.5-acre site, which is bordered by Raritan and Terrill Roads and Clover Lane. A condition of the sale was that it be approved by the Terrys, who still hold the mortgage

on the property. Mr. Kraus said that Mr. Berlant "didn't offer anything" to his clients, now living in Florida, who operated the facility as the Terry Lou Zoo for four decades before selling it to the Kafkas in 1993. He said the Terrys would like to have kept it as a zoo "forever and ever," but since the Kafkas' operating permits were not renewed, they are now primarily interested in finding suitable homes for the many animals which are housed at the site.

Officials with the state Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife confirmed last Friday that plans were expected to be completed by the end of the week to relocate approximately 70 animals at the embattled zoo to other qualified facilities. In January, the division opted not to renew the Kafkas' permits after citing them for multiple violations related to public

safety and animal welfare. Spokeswoman Sharon Southard said the division has been working with Union Township attorney Martin B. O'Connor, 2nd, the court-appointed custodian for the zoo, to find new homes for the wildlife, which includes elephants, giraffes, several species of large cats, reptiles and primates. A male lion and a female peccary, a pig-like mammal indigenous to North, Central and South America, have already been relocated to the Space Farm and Museum in Beemerville, a village in Wantage.

Fred Space, whose parents founded Space Farm 70 years ago, said Tuesday that the lion and the peccary are both "doing fine" in their new home. He reported that the lion, which he acquired for breeding purposes, has been introduced to three lionesses, while the peccary also has settled in with others at the facility.

The Space Farm complex occupies a total of 450 acres, of which 100 are used for the zoo and museum, featuring a vast collection of 19th century memorabilia. Mr. Space, who operates the facility with his son, Parker, explained that there are currently 500 animals housed at Space Farm, and that food for the livestock is grown right on the property.

"They were in nice shape, well-cared for, and the condition was 100 percent for both animals," Mr. Space commented of the two new arrivals from the Scotch Plains Zoo. "I've known Mr. Kafka for a long time and Mr. Terry before that, so we're like neighbors, being in the same business. We talked about it before (the animals being transferred to Space Farm) and Harold thought it was a good idea."

Lawrence Herrightly, Supervising

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### Board Reviews Long-Range Plan Methods

By SUZANNE MARKERT  
Specially Written for *The Times*

A recurring theme at Tuesday evening's Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education meeting was "improving teaching and learning." The board, which did not take any action during the public session, met to discuss new methods of budget and long-range planning, as well as participation of board members in the annual evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye.

Before the board meeting began, members adopted a resolution to congratulate the 16 members of the Broadway Terrill Munchkin Choir, a group of Terrill Middle School and Coles Elementary School students who performed in *The Wizard of Oz* at The Theater at Madison Square Garden in New York City from May 7 to June 8.

They auditioned along with a dozen other schools to perform three shows a week opposite Roseanne, who starred as the Wicked Witch of the West. The ensemble members, who were in grades 4 through 7 at Terrill and Coles, were Eric Ajuluchukwu, Joseph Bartolotta, Anisha Bhasin, Gina Cangialosi, Justin Day, Cristina Fabiano, Elizabeth Gassler, Naotoma Gibson, John Heinz, Samantha Hershey, Yuneey Lio, Jasmine Pagan, Chrystal Reddersen, James Scalfaro, Sarah VanWagner and Robert Walden.

Wearing their stage costumes of black shorts, socks and shoes, and sporting knee-length *Wizard of Oz* T-shirts with the slogan, "The Wonders of Oz Await You," the students performed several of their songs, including "Ding Dong the Witch is Dead!" and "Over the Rainbow." They were then awarded certificates by the board.

"If you need any more reasons to keep music in our schools, just

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## SP-F School Administrators Give Support To Weight Training Class for Varsity Athletes

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education heard from Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School administrators for the first time last week about a weight training physical education class offered to varsity athletes that includes one period per week of study hall.

The board was alerted to the new physical education option for team members last month when Scotch Plains parent Steven Schwartz suggested that the weight training class, which includes four periods per week of physical exercise and one period of study, was discriminating against students who were ineligible for the program because they were not on teams and therefore must take five classes of physical activity per week.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol B. Choye said, "Frankly, I congratulate the athletic department for looking to address the needs of athletes. I'd like to hear a year from now, how it (the weight training program) worked?"

Last month, when the board first learned of the new gym offering, Mr. Schwartz asked whether it required board approval.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Principal Dr. Terry Riegel told the board that state law requires the equivalent of four days of gym class per week, while the state Department of Education code requires the equivalent of five days a week. District Physical Education Supervisor, Gene Schiller, made the case for the weight training course in saying it was a five-day-a-week gym class because gym teachers supervised the fifth-day study hall period.

High school physical education teacher and varsity Head Football Coach Stephen Ciccotelli endorsed the combined gym and study hall elective saying, "Feedback from parents is that 'my son made the honor roll. He never did his homework before. He was too tired.'"

Mr. Ciccotelli claimed that being on a team, "physically and mentally does take its toll."

Administrators said the course was

open to 144 students — female and male — each grading period. The sport must be in-season for a varsity team member to be eligible for the special class, officials said, and if space permits, non-varsity and out-of-season team members may enroll.

A student may choose the course for only two of the three sports seasons, officials said. There are four grading periods per year.

Several board members asked whether the schedule of four classes and one study period could be applied to other subjects.

"I know what you're asking. 'What about the music or science student who needs more time to study?' I don't think it's quid pro quo. It's not the same," Dr. Choye responded.

A Fanwood parent who said she was a member of the athletic boosters organization told the board that the weight training elective is "long overdue."

In other business, the board said it would be deciding whether to purchase a team, "25 more textbooks with old copyrights to handle in-

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### 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](mailto: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.

## Ted Bessman to Serve On Flood Commission

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specially Written for *The Times*

The Scotch Plains Township Council said Tuesday it will appoint long-time resident Ted Bessman to the Green Brook Flood Control Commission to succeed the late Boyd Lawrence "Larry" Newcomb, a charter member and Vice Chairman of the commission, who died on June 3.

Mr. Bessman, an engineer and retired Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Corps of Engineers, was township alternate to the commission for several years. The township is searching for another alternate, officials added.

Mr. Bessman told the council that a Union County task force was being formed in an effort to resolve objections to proposed storm water detention basins in the Watchung Reservation that are part of a \$362 million Army Corps of Engineers flood control project that the commission endorses.

"I don't know where the task force is going to go with this," Mr. Bessman said.

Councilman Robert E. Johnston

indicated, however, that he was optimistic about solutions to the so-called upper portion of the project in Union County, saying, "I think that will be worked out."

Earlier this year, Congressman Bob Franks brokered a deal to delay Union County's decision on the detention basins for one year while moving ahead to secure federal funding for the middle and lower portions of the massive flood control project.

The two proposed basins in portions of Berkeley Heights, Scotch Plains and the Borough of Watchung are part of a three-pronged tactic to control flooding in lower lying areas, including Middlesex and Somerset Counties.

Berkeley Heights in particular, a community that no longer sends delegates to the 13-member Flood Control Commission, has objected to the proposed basins. The commission was created in 1974 in response to severe flooding a year earlier that killed six area residents, injured 34 others and caused thousands of dollars worth of damage.

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