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COOLING OFF... Karen Halleck, Media Specialist at the McGinn Elementary School in Scotch Plains, gets her students' summer off to a good start by distributing the district's summer reading lists to them along with an ice pop treat and a reminder to "keep reading this summer." Miss Halleck turned her "story well" into a temporary tidal basin decorated with shells and sea creatures and added assorted beach paraphernalia along with the recorded sounds of sea gulls and the crashing surf, to dramatize her message that reading is a "cool way" to pass the time while school is out. Reading lists were distributed to all district students and summer reading incentive programs have been planned and promoted for every grade level.

Carolyn Sorge Making History as First Woman To Join Scotch Plains Volunteer Fire Department

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

"The best never rest," is the Scotch Plains Township Volunteer Fire Department motto. Newly-appointed firefighter Carolyn Sorge, 24, will spend the next year discovering what that company motto means for her.

Like the other 36 firefighters under the direction of township Fire Chief Jonathan P. Ellis, Ms. Sorge will be on call seven days a week, 24 hours a day. She is the only female firefighter in the department's 128-year history. How do you become a volunteer firefighter? By volunteering, said Ms. Sorge.

"I grew up in a house where my parents volunteered. My father was on the rescue squad for 15 years and President for 13," she said.

Ms. Sorge was only 16 years old when she herself trained as an Emergency Medical Technician and began non-stop volunteering with the Scotch Plains Volunteer Rescue Squad, following the death of her father. A younger brother is also on the squad.

"I like helping people and helping the town," Ms. Sorge said.

So earlier this year, Ms. Sorge approached Chief Ellis and told him she was interested in volunteering as a firefighter. The Township Council appointed her on February 3.

Ms. Sorge spent four months at Union County Fire Science Training Academy in Linden and graduated with a class of 30 others that included fellow township resident Michael Cuccurullo, 25. Mr. Cuccurullo joined the south side firehouse. There was one other female student in the class, according to Ms. Sorge.

Firefighter Sorge also works full-time as a secretary to Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins in an office across the street from the north side fire station.

Now, when an alarm comes over her electronic pager, Firefighter Sorge — No. 55 — hurries over to the firehouse, steps into overalls, boots, jacket, gloves and hat and climbs aboard an engine.

These days, firefighters ride inside hi-tech fire engines on seats with oxygen tanks for backs that snap out onto the backs of firefighters as they descend from the truck. They always team up using "the buddy system" and every firefighter wears a personal alarm that sounds after 30 seconds if no motion registers.

So far, Firefighter Sorge has answered two calls in the township that involved burning houses.

"I was working outside," she said.

One of the academy training requirements, however, is fighting an actual fire at the "burn building," according to Ms. Sorge. What is it like? "It's very hot," she said, "and you get very close to the fire."

"I'm not afraid. But you think about your first real fire and what's really going to happen. When everyone is going out, we are going in," she explained.

Fortunately, a good number of township calls for the fire department are false alarms from security systems. The department, however, also participates in the Mutual Aid Agreement to back up and assist neighboring fire departments on calls.

"It's important to work as a team," Miss Sorge said, "and everyone has been very helpful."



ALWAYS ON CALL... Carolyn Sorge stands in front of a Scotch Plains fire truck. Ms. Sorge was recently appointed as the first woman to join the department in its 128-year history.

But she has ended up with a private bathroom at the firehouse, at least until another female joins the department. "There are no sleeping quarters, since it's volunteer," she said, "but there is a lounge with a television. You need to unwind after a call."

Does her family worry about her work as a firefighter? "They are very supportive of what I do," she said. "I think I'm here to stay for awhile."

Firefighter Sorge, a lifelong township resident, said she recently joined the professional organization of Fire Service Women of New Jersey. She reports there is a woman Fire Chief from a southern New Jersey town and two women firefighters from the New Providence Department.

"I'm a firefighter like anyone else. As long as you can do it, that's

what's important. That's why you do these things, because you want to help," she concluded.

Fireworks, Entertainment To Mark July 4th Holiday

Having a family barbecue this weekend but looking for some family entertainment? Eight municipalities in Union County will feature fireworks displays with several of these towns also providing entertainment for children and adults alike.

Local residents will not have to venture far tomorrow night to catch a glimpse of fireworks displays, as Mountainside, Cranford and Clark, as well as other Union County communities, will be shooting off rockets. There will also be plenty of family entertainment.

Mountainside's display will begin at dusk outside Deerfield Elementary School on Central Avenue, located off Route 22. Cranford's events will be held at Nomahegan Park beginning at 9 p.m.

Clark's display will be Saturday night, July 5, on the athletic field at Arthur L. Johnson High School on Westfield Avenue.

A full night of festivities has been planned for Springfield, as well. The Independence Day Festival, to be held at Meisel Avenue Park on Meisel Avenue, is being sponsored by the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Office of Emergency Management and Recreation Department.

Springfield's festivities will kick off at 5 p.m. with fireworks to begin at 9:15 p.m. A donation of \$2 will be requested for park maintenance.

The New Jersey Pops Orchestra will entertain during Summit's festivities at Memorial Park, which will include games, rides and refreshments. Fireworks will follow the performance.

Union Township's celebrations will be held July 4 at Biertumpfel Park. The day's events, from 1 to 4 p.m., will include kiddie rides, a pony,

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.

Township Post Office Expansion To Begin This Saturday, July 5

Temporary Trailer to Be Situated in Parking Lot

The United States Postal Service today has announced plans to expand the Scotch Plains Post Office, located at 536 Park Avenue. Extensive renovation work will begin this Saturday, July 5, and continue throughout the rest of the year.

Commenting on the planned expansion, Scotch Plains Postmaster Elvoird Christmas said, "This post office was built in 1961, and we feel that expansion is necessary to better serve the needs of postal customers in our community."

In addition to an expanded post office box section with over 200 new units available for rental, the renovation will include a "Postal Store," the newest concept in retail postal products.

"Our customers will be amazed at our new look when they walk into our lobby and see stamps, packaging supplies and stamp gift items on open display," said Postmaster Christmas.

Current box and retail services will continue in a temporary trailer sta-

tioned in the post office's parking lot.

Postmaster Christmas added, "We apologize for any inconvenience which may result from the renovation. However, we're confident that our patrons will appreciate the expanded range of services available to them when the work is complete."



SLATED FOR EXPANSION... The Scotch Plains United States Post Office will be expanded to include a post office box section along with a "postal store" for retail postal products. Construction, which is set to begin this Saturday, July 5, will continue through the remainder of the year.

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Marlene VerPlanck and Trio To Perform on the Green

The Scotch Plains Cultural Arts Committee will host Marlene VerPlanck and the Jim McNeely Trio, performing pop jazz on Thursday, July 10. Part of the committee's 18th Annual Village Green Summer Series, the concert will be held on the Village Green at the Scotch Plains Municipal Building, located at 430 Park Avenue. In case of rain, the concert will be moved indoors to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Auditorium on Westfield Road.

Upcoming Thursday concerts in the Village Green Series include:

- July 17, "Eternally Elvis," re-creation of an Elvis Presley concert.
- July 24, Jerry O'Toole, country music.
- July 31, Lord Observer, reggae/calypso.
- August 7, The Infernos, doo wop to disco.
- August 14, New York Classical Strings, seven-piece ensemble.
- August 21, Walrus Band, tribute to the Beatles.
- August 28, Tony Corbisello Orchestra, 17-piece big band.

For additional information, please call the Recreation Department at 322-6700, Extension No. 220.

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