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**BRISK SALES...**A shopper passes racks of clothes at a shop along Park Avenue in downtown Scotch Plains during last week's Scotch Plains Sidewalk Sale Days. Downtown merchants reported brisk sales during the annual summer event, sponsored by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA).



**MOVING TO NEW LOCATION...**Ray Pardon, proprietor of Nuts 'n' Plenty and President of the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA), partially pictured at left, used the Sidewalk Sale Days to sell off merchandise from Greetings, a store on Park Avenue which recently closed. Mr. Pardon has purchased the space and the existing merchandise. Nuts 'n' Plenty is moving from its Bartle Avenue location.

### ALL GEAR CARRIED IN ONE TRIP

## Fire Chief Urges Council to Okay '88 Utility Vehicle

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Borough Council is expected to vote during its regular meeting tonight, August 14, on whether to purchase a used support utility vehicle for the Fanwood Fire Department. The vehicle would allow firefighters to transport all their necessary equipment in a single trip, enhancing their ability to do their job, local fire officials explained last week.

During the governing body's agenda session last Wednesday, Fire Chief Daniel Librandy made a detailed presentation to the council about the need for the utility vehicle, which is currently available for sale from a Summit vendor. The 1988, one-ton, ambulance-style unit has 45,000 miles and is the ideal weight and design for transporting air cylinders, foam, 50-foot rolled hoses, hand tools and other gear, Chief Librandy said.

Last month, the council adopted a resolution authorizing Borough Clerk Eleanor McGovern to receive bids for the vehicle if necessary. According to the Fire Chief, the cost of the vehicle itself is \$11,200, which falls slightly below the threshold after

which bids would have to be received. The Fire Chief reported, however, that additional expenditures would be required to get the vehicle "road ready," bringing the total cost to \$21,900.

These expenditures, the cost of which the Chief described as "negotiable," would include installation of a generator and a radio, plus brackets to hold air cylinders which are installed in firefighters' backpacks. In addition, the vehicle will require a paint job and new lettering. He confirmed that the vehicle had been inspected and test-driven, noting that a transmission seal on it was the only thing which appeared in need of repair.

In breaking down the approximate costs of the work to be done on the utility vehicle, the chief estimated the paint job would be \$5,500; new 117-kilowatt generator, \$3,000; radio installation, \$1,200, and \$500 apiece for placement of the air cylinder brackets and lettering on the vehicle. He also showed the governing body a computer composite illustration of what the utility vehicle would look like.

During its July 12 meeting, the Chief confirmed that the department currently has a main engine and a backup pumper, both purchased in 1983, which carry firefighters, hoses and water tanks. He noted last week that "every area we store equipment in is very overloaded. We have absolutely no more room to carry anything."

There is also a 1965 engine, currently serving as a backup unit, which the chief said he expects will be sold within the next couple of years. A new engine will be purchased by the municipality, and one of the 1983 models will be then be assigned as a backup vehicle, according to the Chief.

The Chief stated that both 1983 vehicles are expected to be refurbished in accordance with updated National Fire Protection Agency standards, including enclosing the currently open areas to provide greater protection for firefighters.

Chief Librandy maintained that the utility vehicle is needed to meet the department's ever-increasing equipment needs, which he said have doubled in the past 14 years. He noted that firefighters have had to return to headquarters from a fire scene to get additional equipment, or else have had to transport gear in their own cars. "Time is of the essence when we do anything," he emphasized.

Among other advantages to having the vehicle, according to the Chief, would be a greater ability to transport people during an evacuation. He said the unit would also be able to deliver equipment such as the jaws of life, which he hopes the department will acquire soon, and the multiple pieces of equipment which go with it.

Chief Librandy reported that borough fire personnel are frequently called upon to assist the Fanwood

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## Scotch Plains Baptist Church Marks Its 250th Year; Founded by Parishioners From Piscataway

By JUSTIN BRIDGE  
Specially Written for The Times

Over a week ago, on August 5, the Scotch Plains Baptist Church turned 250 years old, making it one of the oldest churches in the state. The church even pre-dates Union County.

The Reverend Charles "Chaz" Hutchinson, the Minister of Education at the church for the past seven years, relates the history of the church.

"Two hundred and fifty years ago a group of men and women from the Piscataway Baptist Church asked for a letter of dismissal so that they could form a church here in Scotch Plains," he explained. Seventeen parishioners founded the Baptist Church in Scotch Plains because the trip to Piscataway was, in those days, a very long trip.

"And not all of the women were a Mrs. So-and-so. They were women on their own. That was very unusual for that day and age," added Reverend Hutchinson.

The Baptist church is a mid-size church, as far as Baptist churches go, with an average Sunday worship of 100 people.

In the church's early history, several groups split off in order to form Baptist churches in other areas. Five of these splinter churches are the First Baptist Church of New York (established 1762), Mount Bethel Baptist Church (established 1767), the Lyons Farm Baptist (established 1769), the Sampson Baptist Church (established 1792), and the May's Lick Baptist Church (established 1789) in Kentucky.

"A lot of the early founders of Scotch Plains were members of the church. Families such as Darby, Lambert and Osborn, that are still names in Scotch Plains," according to Reverend Hutchinson.

"The first Baptist Church building in Scotch Plains stood until the win-

ter of 1816-1817, when it burned to the ground. In 1817, the church decided to construct the "Old Meeting House." This building served as the church until 1871, when it was moved, with the help of oxen, down Grand Street. It then served as District Fourteen School until 1890, the year that School One opened. Since 1947, the Grand Street YMCA has run the building.

Another treasure relating to the church's history is its cemetery. William Darby, the owner of the property in 1743 marked off the west corner of his farm in order to have a place to bury the dead. The oldest grave in the cemetery belongs to Sarah Frazee and is marked 1754.

Reverend Hutchinson speaks of one gravestone in particular, that of Caesar. Caesar was a slave who had fought in the Revolutionary War and was also a teamster. (In the late 1700s, a teamster was someone who drove a wagon pulled by a team of horses.) Caesar was originally a slave here in Scotch Plains until his owner, Deacon Drake, freed him. However, despite having been a slave, he had been a member of the church for over 50 years, until his death on February 7, 1806, at the age of 104.

"In the day before the civil rights movement, this was an integrated church where a man like Caesar could be a member," he noted.

Another grave of mention belongs to the Reverend Benjamin Miller, the first minister of the Scotch Plains Baptist Church, who served from 1748 to 1781.

Despite being a haven to all men and women, the church has seen its share of strife.

"It's seen loyalists and revolutionaries, families that had men on both sides of the Revolutionary War. During the Civil War, there were feelings that ran for both the North and the South," said Reverend Hutchinson.

"However, the church stayed together, despite those tensions," he said pointing out that this is impressive for Baptists because in some areas, the Baptist churches split over "the littlest things."

"You'll have your First Baptist Church here, a Community Baptist Church there and so on, all in the same area. But this church hasn't done that," he said.

Just across the street from the church is the Old Baptist Parsonage. This sandstone building has been standing for the past 197 years. The building was also the site of the township's first library, with the books having been stored on the second floor landing. The parsonage has been the home for 23 persons and their families.

The pastors who lived in the parsonage lived off whatever they could grow on 15 acres of the parsonage farm in addition to a small salary and firewood. In 1868, the church trustees sold off the parsonage farm in order to pay for the new church.

Reverend Hutchinson has been the Minister of Education at the church for the last seven years. His responsibilities include, but are not restricted to, marriage and burials, youth work, and preaching when the pastor is unable to preach. He lives in North Plainfield with his wife, Carol, and his daughter, Ashley.

The church plans to celebrate its 250th birthday with a big celebration on Sunday, October 12. Dr. Tony Campolo, from Eastern Col-

lege, will be speaking at the church. According to Reverend Hutchinson, "It's going to be a big heritage day service."

The following Saturday, October 18, there will be a dinner at The Chanticleer in Short Hills. On Sunday, October 19, there will be a service held in the spirit of the Colonial era, complete with Colonial costumes. The church is holding these events in October so that more people will be home to celebrate along with the church.



**ROOM FOR EVERYTHING...**The utility vehicle pictured above, currently available from a Summit vendor, would be able to transport all necessary firefighting gear in a single trip, according to Fanwood Fire Chief Daniel Librandy. The Chief has maintained that the unit would enhance firefighters' ability to do their job and also would allow room for such equipment as the "jaws of life."

### NEW OFFICERS FILL VACANCIES LEFT BY RETIREMENTS

## Officers Hernandez, Fugett Join Scotch Plains Police Department

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Police Department added its top two recruitment picks to the department last week after losing two officers to retirement earlier this year. Chief of Police Thomas O'Brien gave his stamp of approval to the new hires at an August 5 Township Council meeting before Clerk Barbara Riepe swore in the new recruits.

Patrolman Ernesto "Ernie" Hernandez, 30, is a June graduate of the John H. Stabler Union County Police Academy in Scotch Plains. He served six months with the Union County Police Department when the township identified Mr. Hernandez as its first choice from a state civil service list and offered him a spot on the force. He is a 1984 Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School graduate.

Officer Matthew "Luke" Fugett, 28, is a West Virginia native and the department's number two pick. He served eight years in the United States Navy and nine months on an aircraft carrier in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Officer Fugett joined the Police Academy in July.

Officer Fugett's wife, Michelle Murallo Fugett, is a Scotch Plains native. The couple reside in the township.

Both officers began working for the township on July 21, according to Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins.

Officer Hernandez served six years in the United States Air Force with the Security Police, rising to the rank of "Buck" Sergeant. He is also a licensed practical nurse.

Born in Panama of Cuban parents, Officer Hernandez has lived in the township nearly all his life. He volun-

teered at the age of 16 with the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad.

His fiancée is an elementary school teacher from North Plainfield. They have planned a December wedding.

Officer Hernandez said he enjoys cartooning and is also fluent in Spanish. He said he likes the idea of serving on the police force in his hometown.

Officer Fugett, the father of two young children, indicated he wanted to work in law enforcement after numerous tours of duty in the Navy, where he rose to the rank of Petty Officer, Second Class. He most recently was stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

Officer Fugett said he will finish training with a class of about 50 officers at the Police Academy in early December and hopes to start work with the township shortly thereafter.

Graduation from the Academy requires five months of study, tests and physical workouts. The days can be 10 hours long, according to recent graduates, starting at 5:30 a.m. Uniform shoes have to sparkle every day.

According to schedules, Academy classes include, among others, stress management, the history of law enforcement and firearm training.

Recruits also field interviews with the township police department's top brass and must pass rigorous psychological exams. Salaries for recruits in training is a rate of \$25,000 annually and \$30,000-a-year for the first year of service.

Township Mayor Irene T. Schmidt welcomed the new officers to the township.

"It's nice to have such fine young men interested in serving our community," the Mayor remarked. She

advised them to follow in the footsteps of seasoned township officers.

The police department vacancies were the result of the retirements of Patrolman Kevin Wethely's retirement in January and Sergeant Richard Grauso's in May, according to officials.

In an unrelated matter, Scotch Plains Township officials recently took a look at the state of township parks and here is what they found: Green Forest Park at the corner of Westfield Road and Evergreen Avenue is scheduled for \$78,000 worth of improvements this fall as a result of a Community Development grant.

Farley Park, the township's oldest and first official park, got new playground equipment in May. Basketball courts were repaved and a path was built to the playground area.

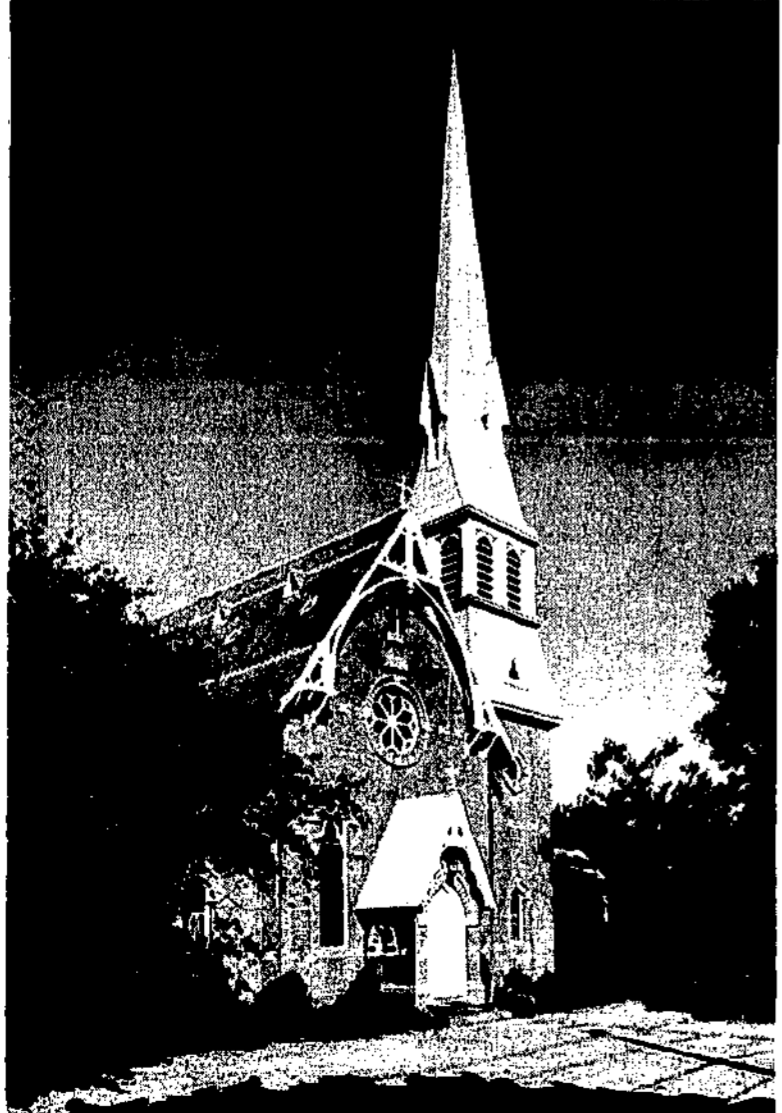
Greenside Park at the corner of Westfield Road and Greenside Place, is probably the most heavily used park in the township. Last year, the park saw new playground equipment installed.

Haven Park is part of a cul-de-sac in the 300 block of Haven Avenue. It is primarily used by younger neighborhood children. Two half basketball courts were recently created there.

Other parks to be looked at are Kramer Park, Jerseyland and the southside ball field.

Councilman Martin Marks is the Township Council Liaison to the Recreation Commission. Laura Sanson Botto is the township Director of Parks and Recreation.

The Mayor and Township Council are planning a fall bus tour around the township with administrators to inspect the parks and other physical improvements made in the township over the year.



**A PART OF HISTORY...**The Scotch Plains Baptist Church, pictured above, turned 250 years old on August 5. The Reverend Charles "Chaz" Hutchinson this week recalled the church's rich history, from the Colonial era to the present. Commemorative events honoring the milestones are planned for October.

### 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 golenader@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 materials.

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.

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