

# THE TIMES



## Scotch Plains - Fanwood

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FIFTYCENTS

### St. Bar's Festival Marks Labor Day Weekend



COME CELEBRATE...Patrons enjoy a novelty booth at the 23rd Annual Italian Festival held throughout Labor Day weekend at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains. The event offers an array of Italian food, games of chance, souvenirs and a 50/50 raffle. It is sponsored by the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Chapter of UNICO National and the church.



FUN AT THE FESTIVAL...A family enjoys the rides at the Italian festival which was held throughout Labor Day weekend at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains. The colorful event traditionally marks the end of summer events with a combination of Italian culture, foods and entertainment for the whole family. Many parishioners take part in the celebration, helping to serve food, operate game booths and sell raffle tickets.

## Tony's Pharmacy Shuts Doors After 22 Years Of Business in Township; Prescriptions Go to CVS

By CANDACE WALLER  
Specially Written for The Times

After 22 years of business in Scotch Plains, Tony's Pharmacy closed its doors for good on August 26. The inventory and prescriptions will be transferred to the CVS pharmacy, which bought out Tony's.

It is not known at this time who will move into the now vacant store space on East Second Street. It has been speculated that a health store may be interested in the store front. "I just turned 65. The lease came up for renewal this year and I decided not

to renew," proprietor Tony Acocella told *The Times*.

"I felt 40 years in the business was enough," he stated.

Mr. Acocella said competition from the other stores, particularly from the CVS on Park Avenue, and managed health insurance packages that cut into profits are other reasons for the store closing.

The latter was blamed by the owners of the now defunct Westfield Drugs & Surgical for its closing in June. Reimbursement rates to fill prescriptions for these new health plans are

said to be too low for independent pharmacies to compete with the chain drug stores.

Many of Tony's customers were shocked when they learned that Tony's closed. Mr. Acocella said that he talked with customers about the closing when he could because people questioned the low stock on several items. Credit card customers were mailed letters.

But a clause in the contract sale forbade Mr. Acocella from divulging information before the deal became final August 26. This also was the

case with Revco's purchase of Westfield drug.

"Pharmacies are lucrative businesses. Large chains such as CVS and Drug Fair can offer lower prices for toiletries, food staples and prescriptions. Many of the 'mom and pop' owned businesses cannot compete with these prices due to their high overhead," said Mr. Acocella.

"I ran the store as a family place. It was a gathering place for customers," Mr. Acocella said. "The help

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OUT OF BUSINESS...Tony's Pharmacy, located on East Second Street, went out of business after 22 years of business. Prescriptions and inventory have been turned over to the CVS Pharmacy on Park Avenue.

### MERCHANTS' SUPPORT VITAL TO REDEVELOPMENT SUCCESS

## Fanwood Committee Anticipates Arrival of Benches and Banners In Downtown Area by End of Year

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Committee (FDRC), which has been steadily working toward implementation of a plan to rejuvenate the borough's downtown, may see the first fruits of its efforts by the end of this year.

Committee Chairman Jack Molenaar, who also sits on the borough's Board of Adjustment and the Fanwood Community Assessment Committee, said Tuesday that new benches and seasonal banners will soon be visible around the business district, to be followed by planters and street trees later on. Mr. Molenaar said he hoped the benches and banners will be part of the downtown landscape by late fall.

It is anticipated that these enhancements and amenities will encourage more people to patronize the downtown and give it an economic shot in the arm, according to Mr. Molenaar, who said his committee has been meeting monthly and sometimes twice monthly during the year to discuss proposals for the business district.

The Borough Council recently passed a resolution authorizing \$18,000 for the committee to proceed with its redevelopment plan. Officials had allocated a total of \$20,000 in capital funds for the project in their municipal budget.

During the council's July 2 agenda meeting, Mr. Molenaar made a presentation to the governing body in which he described the FDRC's proposals for the downtown, including the planned benches, banners, planters and trees. He suggested banners proclaiming "Welcome to Fanwood," as well as ones featuring "patriotic" and "fall" themes.

There are already brackets for banners along South Avenue. Mr.

Molenaar said that potential liability issues with utility companies must still be resolved before brackets can be installed on Martine Avenue poles.

He also discussed the FDRC's goal of getting local merchants more involved in the revitalization effort, which is ultimately expected to include improvements to the facades and rear entrances of commercial buildings in the downtown.

The participation of the merchants in the revitalization effort, according to members of the committee, is considered vital to its success. Mr. Molenaar said he hopes the committee can help the merchants strengthen their association for the overall betterment of the downtown.

"We're trying to encourage the merchants to act in their collective best interest," remarked committee member Peter Sayles. "We don't have millions of dollars like a developer would, so we have to figure out what our goals are and to communicate them to the merchants."

Mr. Sayles said that a study performed by the RBA Group, a Morristown firm hired by the borough to help develop proposals for the downtown, indicated that merchants are more likely to respond to specific facts and figures concerning downtown revitalization than they are to just a general call to get involved.

He cited as an example the company's assessment that merchants with both front and rear entrances to their stores experience 15 percent more business than those which only have front entrances, due to traffic from rear parking lots. It is this kind of incentive, according to the RBA study, which would encourage merchants to become more involved in improving the downtown.

"The hard part is working on the process of getting everyone involved

who needs to get involved," added Mr. Molenaar. "We're hoping that by putting in improvements, it will show that people care about the downtown and that there's a commitment there."

Mr. Molenaar said a key aspect of the downtown plan is the future development of the former Dean Oil site on La Grande Avenue and First Street, which was recently declared free of soil contamination by the state Department of Environmental Protection and is currently up for sale.

"The borough is in the process of rezoning it from general commercial to central commercial — allowing more square footage to be built on the property — which should help it to become more profitable," Mr. Molenaar stated.

He said the RBA Group has projected that improvements to the downtown, including the Dean Oil property, will make the borough more attractive to people looking to invest in the community in the future.

The FDRC hopes improvements to the downtown will also attract more shoppers to the business district. Mr. Sayles noted that extended business hours would encourage commuters, who often do not get home from work in time to patronize the downtown, to shop at their local stores.

"The goal of all of this is to build up a little civic pride, to attract some businesses and shoppers," he remarked. "For those people who commute, it is not an easily utilized town."

Mr. Molenaar said some of the FDRC's long-range goals will take time to realize, but they are confident the revitalization project will become a reality.

"We're not going anywhere," he commented. "As long as we keep moving in a positive direction, that's the key. As long as we're moving in the right direction, that's good."

## Fanwood Planning Board Okays Amended Subdivision on Fifth St.

By ALEXANDRA JELKES  
Specially Written for The Times

Bernie Fantini, owner of a residential property on Fifth Street in Fanwood, applied for and was

granted an amendment by the Fanwood Planning Board on August 27 for the subdivision he is building.

Mr. Fantini's site plan was also accepted as the board found that Mr. Fantini's lot conformed to borough codes. The main issue dealt with by the board was the width of his driveway. The applicant proposed to widen the driveway from 10 to 15 feet.

The board felt that the it would be better for the neighborhood if the driveway conforms to the standard size of 10 feet.

Board member Nancy Koederitz said her concern regarded the width of the driveway and if a variance was needed for more than 10 feet.

Mr. Fantini interjected and confirmed to Mrs. Koederitz and the board that the width of the driveway would be 10 feet, which would be 20 percent of the lot.

Borough Engineer, Richard Marsden said he was concerned about construction in the basement area of the subdivision. Mr. Fantini assured him that he had already obtained approval for that part of the house. The meeting was then opened to the public.

Jodie Frank, a La Grande Avenue resident, said she was interested in how many feet the street would be extended for the new house. Mr. Fantini explained that the size would be 15 feet on the left side of the street.

Her other concerns dealt with the maintenance of the borough's right-of-way. She explained to the board that she's been maintaining the right-of-way for 20 years. The board explained that it is the borough's responsibility to maintain the right-of-way and this issue needs to be addressed and resolved.

Mr. Fantini responded that the new owners will be involved in every aspect regarding the upkeep of the new home and will also cut the grass.

Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly stated that, all these years, Mrs. Frank has been paying a gardener to do this work.

"This is a job for (Department of) Public Works and we will

look further into this," she remarked.

Herman Stol, who resides at South Avenue and Fifth Street in Fanwood, was concerned about the street maintaining its dead end status. Mr. Fantini reassured him that there would be no through traffic on the street.

He also wondered if the street would be affected by flash flooding. The board explained that the applicant would put a more direct path for storm water to flow. Board members observed that while high intensity rains would back up any systems in the community, the new path would act as an outlet into La Grande Avenue.

The board motioned to approve the application and added to the resolution a driveway 10 feet to the street as accepted by ordinance. The motion was approved with all prior relief to be continued as to the previous resolution.

Mr. Fantini explained to the board that construction would commence as soon as a construction permit is obtained from the borough.

Another resolution was approved for Kathleen Daniele, who resides on La Grande Avenue. The board decided that she met all the requirements for a conditional use permit for home application as a cruise line booking agent.

The board felt that the applicant qualified for final approval for home use of a business. She said she will have no clients coming to her home, and that all business will be done by telephone and through the mail.

She said she maintains all her files in a book and file. Ms. Daniele is affiliated with a local travel agency and she does not provide the services of a travel agent. No members of the public came forward regarding this application.

The board's final issue of the evening dealt with a variance for the Florida Food Shop, which is located in Fanwood and has a neon sign.

The shop has a court date on Tuesday, September 16, regarding the sign, and the board wants to be updated regarding the status of the sign after the hearing is completed.

### 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 out 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.