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Scotch Plains - Fanwood

OUR 38th YEAR - ISSUE NO. 38-97

THE TIMES

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Scotch Plains - Fanwood



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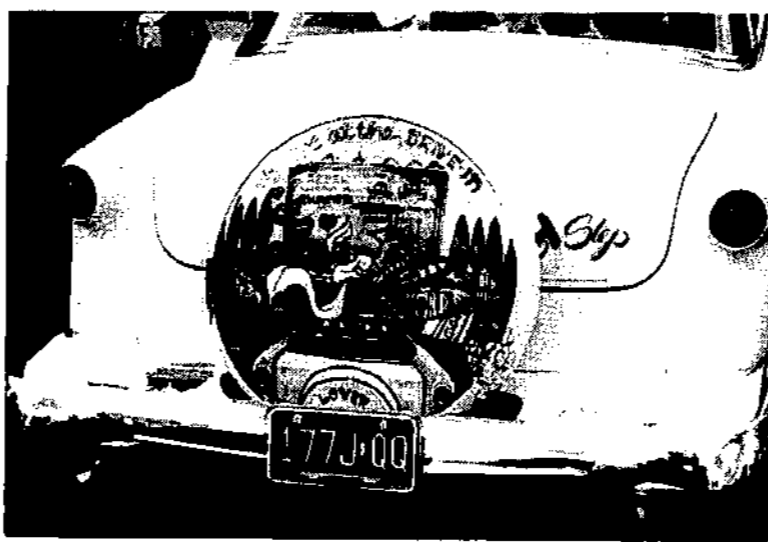
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A GREAT VIEW OF "COOL 32"... This beautiful, bright orange 1932 Ford coupe "street rod" with a 327 Chevy engine was on display at the car show at La Grande Park in Fanwood on September 14. "Cool 32" is owned by Bruce and Cindy MacKinnon of New Providence.



NO LUCK FOR PEPP... Although he may be a "Rebel Without a Cause," Peppi continues to try. This masterpiece appeared on the back of a yellow flathead V-8 1953 Ford Club Coupe, named Step-by-Step, owned by George and Dottie Gribas of Scotch Plains.

FORMER MAYOR REMEMBERED

Fanwood Council Names New Judge With Vote of 4-3

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Writes for The Times

The Fanwood Borough Council last Thursday appointed Susan MacMullen as the borough's new Municipal Judge. She will complete the unexpired term of former Judge Jacqueline Drakeford, who resigned to accept a position as Assistant Union County Counsel. Judge MacMullen's term expires December 31, 1998.

Members of the governing body were split 3-3 along party lines concerning Judge MacMullen's appointment, with Democrats Bruce H. Walsh, Karen M. Schurtz and William E. Populus, Jr., voting in favor of the new magistrate and Republicans Louis C. Jung, Dr. Chester R. Lindsey and Stuart S. Kline voting in opposition.

Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly, a Democrat, cast the tie-breaking vote in support of the appointment, which was effective immediately.

The judge is a graduate of the Seton Hall University School of Law. She has served as a Judicial Clerk and as Assistant Prosecutor with the Union County Prosecutor's Office for nine years. During her tenure with the Prosecutor's Office, she worked in the Violent Crimes, Trial Unit, Juvenile and Family Court, and Appellate Division.

She is married to Union County Manager Michael J. Lapolla. The couple have an eight-month-old son. After last week's meeting, Councilman Jung told *The Times* that while he had no reservations about Judge MacMullen's professional qualifications, he felt the council should have selected someone who lives closer to Fanwood. Her resumé gives an Elizabeth address, but she and her family will be moving to Westfield, according to the Mayor.

Similar sentiments were expressed during the meeting by Joel Whitaker, one of two Republican candidates for Borough Council this year, who also voiced concern over whether someone coming directly from the Prosecutor's Office would be able to bring a "balanced approach" to a municipal court setting, where there is no jury deciding cases.

The Mayor, who described the judge as being "extremely well-qualified," said that of the three applicants who were interviewed for the position, Judge MacMullen was the only one who was able to serve Fanwood exclusively. Mayor Connelly explained that this would give the judge the "flexibility" to work with the Fanwood Police Department and others involved in the local judicial process.

Under other business, the governing body adopted a resolution approving special traffic regulations for the south side of Madison Avenue, between Hunter and Martine Avenues. The regulations, which affect the area near Elementary School One on Willow Avenue, prohibits parking, stopping or standing between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and again between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m.

Neighbors on Madison recently expressed concern to the council's Public Safety Committee regarding people who park or turn around on the residential street while dropping off and picking up their children at School One.

As anticipated, officials adopted on second reading an ordinance authorizing a capital surplus appropriation of \$12,400 to purchase a used support utility vehicle for the Fanwood Fire Department. In con-

junction with this, the council re-adopted a resolution supporting funding for the vehicle, which had been approved last month. The vehicle will allow firefighters to transport all their necessary gear to the scene of an emergency in a single trip.

Also adopted on second reading was an ordinance to amend the borough's property maintenance code. The measure, which gives the council authority to have immediate action taken in the event of an emergency, was prompted by a recent incident in which a large tree was uprooted and toppled across a local street.

Officials approved a resolution awarding a bid of \$2,000 to Nancy L. Zerbe of Historic Preservation Consulting, Inc., for a preliminary historic assessment of the area surrounding the Fanwood train station, to determine whether it is eligible to be designated as a historic district.

During her report as Chairwoman of the council's Building and Zoning Committee, Councilwoman Schurtz reported that revisions to the borough's Zoning Ordinance are "90 to 95 percent" complete.

Charles H. Brandt, the attorney for the Fanwood Board of Adjustment, is expected to review the updated ordinance for members of the Fanwood Planning Board at its Wednesday, September 24, meeting.

Councilwoman Schurtz also discussed the pending arrival of benches and banners for the borough's downtown, which represent the first phase of an effort to reinvigorate the community's business district. These enhancements are expected to be followed by additional trees and planters for the area. The Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Committee (FDRC) is still discussing how these planters would be maintained, according to the councilwoman.

Earlier in the evening, Robert Sommerich, President of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Recycling Association, presented a check for \$3,550 to FDRC Chairman Jack Molenaar toward the purchase of the benches, which officials noted will be constructed from recyclable materials.

The Mayor also made a presentation of \$25,000 to the Fanwood Volunteer Rescue Squad to help with the purchase of a new ambulance, which the squad hopes to have in time for its 50th anniversary celebration next year.

Officials renewed their discussion of a proposal to merge the Fanwood Planning Board and the Fanwood Board of Adjustment. The concept would require a council resolution, which would subsequently be decided by a public referendum. Borough Attorney Dennis Estis informed the board that the deadline for putting the proposed merger on the ballot for this November had already passed, and added the earliest they could begin the process would be in January. The proposed merging of the two boards would not go before voters, however, until November of next year, Mr. Estis confirmed.

An additional appointment and several resolutions were made during the meeting. Patricia Nering, a Russell Road resident, was named to the Fanwood Board of Health. Her term expires on January 31, 2000.

The late Roland Beetham, who served as Mayor of Fanwood from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

TOWNSHIP COUNCIL TO INTRODUCE SCAVENGER ORDINANCE

Township Council to Seek Further Support For Green Brook Flood Control Project

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Writes for The Times

During its Tuesday night agenda session, the Scotch Plains Township Council renewed discussion of the proposed Green Brook Flood Control Project, concurring that cooperation among all the affected municipalities is vital if it is to succeed.

The \$362 million project, developed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, is designed to alleviate flooding in the Upper and Lower portions of the Green Brook sub-basin, which includes parts of Union, Somerset and Middlesex counties.

The project has been put on hold until the United States Congress, which has just reconvened, decides whether to support the project with

federal funds and, if so, how much money will be spent.

Seven major storms, along with smaller ones, have wrecked havoc in the region since the turn of the century, causing injury, loss of life and substantial property damage, according to members of the Green Brook Flood Control Commission.

A conflict has arisen concerning the Upper Portion of the project, which calls for the creation of two detention basins within the county-owned Watchung Reservation.

These basins, created in natural depressions, would collect flood water and gradually release it to prevent it from washing down the mountain into communities such as Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Plainfield.

The Township of Berkeley

Heights has been opposed to the planned detention basins. An independent task force comprised of municipal and county officials was recently established with the goal of resolving the controversy over the upper portion of the project.

Members of the governing body watched a seven-minute video presented by Flood Control Commission Treasurer Frank Meeks, 3rd, of Plainfield and Theodore J. Bassman, Jr., one of Scotch Plains' representatives to the Green Brook Task Force.

The video, produced by the Army Corps of Engineers, outlined the history of flood problems in the Green Brook sub-basin and gave an overview of how the proposed project would control flooding in both the Upper and Lower Por-

tions. During a subsequent discussion of the issue, Mr. Meeks recommended the township and the City of Plainfield strongly emphasize to county officials the need for the project to remedy flood problems in the region.

Councilman Martin Marks recommended that officials also pursue further dialogue with Berkeley Heights regarding that community's opposition to the proposed detention basins.

He advised telling Berkeley Heights officials that "we need your participation. We're willing to listen to your alternatives as long as they'll help us. If you don't participate you're really leaving your neighbors in the lurch."

Under other business, Finance Director Al Steinberg briefly discussed the Aflac insurance company's proposed "Cafeteria Plan," which would allow township employees to acquire supplemental disability coverage through payroll deductions from pre-tax rather than post-tax dollars.

The program would be voluntary for employees, according to Mr. Steinberg.

Finally, the council is expected to introduce on first reading next Tuesday its proposed scavenger ordinance. The measure, which would amend and supplement the township's Solid Waste and Recycling Code, would prohibit people from rummaging through items which have been placed outside during Residential Clean-up Month.

Last month, Councilman Marks urged that an ordinance be created to outlaw scavenging, citing traffic, safety and liability concerns. To emphasize the safety aspect, he described how a large mirror had fallen off of a scavenger truck and shattered in the roadway.

Reiterating these concerns during the agenda meeting, the councilman remarked that "all too many times, governments - municipal, county, state and federal - write laws in response to a tragedy. This is an opportunity to respond before a tragedy occurs."

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 golsider@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.

STAR-LEDGER SURVEY FEATURED 58 HIGH SCHOOLS IN STATE

SP-F High School's 50th Ranking In Paper 'Not As Bad As It Looks'

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Writes for The Times

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District, Dr. John Crews, responded last Thursday at a Board of Education agenda meeting to a recent *Star-Ledger* newspaper survey that ranked the district high school 50 (with 1 being highest) out of a group of 58 similar area district high schools in the state by saying, "It's a lot better than it looks in the paper."

Dr. Crews went on to explain that an optional "zero" period of 43 minutes before the regular high school day was not factored into the total instruction time for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School in the *Star-Ledger* report, which may account for the low ranking.

He said instructional time per day is actually equivalent to Westfield High School's day of 344 minutes when the optional period is included. Westfield High School was ranked 17 out of 58 in the same survey.

"Thirty percent of kids take the 'zero' period," board member August A. Ruggiero pointed out.

Board member Richard R. Meade expressed concern for "the other 70 percent of our kids who have a 301-minute day. I think that's something we should look at."

Dr. Crews continued, saying that, "There's a real correlation between the number of minutes spent in class and achievement. We'll be looking to maximize our instruction period."

Dr. Crews pointed out that many high schools are changing to longer class periods so teachers can cover subjects in more depth. Ridgewood High School, where Dr. Crews was Principal before coming to Scotch Plains-Fanwood this year, ranked sixth in the same *Star-Ledger* survey, with 60-minute classes.

In September of last year, a similar *New Jersey Monthly* report ranked the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School 74 out of 309 public high schools surveyed, calling it one of the "top 75 public high schools in the state."

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Student Assessment Test (SAT) combined average score was 1,195 in the most recent report,

which is six points higher than last year's score as reported in the *New Jersey Monthly* 1996 report.

The average SAT score at Westfield High School is reported as 1,267 this year, while Ridgewood's average is 1,303, according to the *Star-Ledger* article.

On a different matter, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Principal Dr. Terry Riegel proposed a schedule of courses to drop, add and change to this year's high school class offerings.

Mr. Ruggiero called the proposed additions "very good."

Two marketing classes and one accelerated science research course would be added. An accelerated United States history course would change to Advanced Placement (AP) level. A social studies course called "You and the Law" would change from a semester-long course to a full-year course by next year.

A total of 22 courses would be dropped from six departments including Art, Industrial and Technical Education, Business, Family and Consumer Sciences, English and Social Studies courses.

Evergreen Elementary School Principal Dr. Beverlee Kaminetzky urged the board to consider instituting a "peer mediation" program for third-, fourth- and fifth-graders.

The program provides a two-day training period for students to serve as "conflict managers" among other students.

Dr. Kaminetzky claimed, "This program is working in Anchorage, New Orleans, a district in California and South Orange-Maplewood. It greatly reduced discipline referrals."

District Substance Awareness Coordinator and Student Assistance Counselor Liz Knodel-Gordon identified the program's mediation steps as gaining cooperation, introducing ground rules and mediating with win-win guidelines.

Ms. Knodel-Gordon indicated that students selected for the program should have characteristics of "being good listeners, trusted by peers and committed to living in a peaceful environment."

Board member Edward J. Saridaki, Jr. questioned the safety of such a program for a student mediator.

"It's a dangerous situation that

we could be putting some good children in," he said.

Ms. Knodel-Gordon explained that an adult is required to be present during a peer mediation session. He insisted parents be notified when a child is selected for training.

Board member Jessica D. Simpson said she would like to see such a program in the middle and high schools.

Board member Thomas Russo initially questioned the need for peer mediation in the elementary schools and said he saw a greater need for it at the high school and middle schools.

Dr. Kaminetzky said peer programs such as safety patrol and reading aloud have been successful in the school.

"It has been a wonder to observe," she said.

In other business, the Board of Education heard a thorough curriculum summary from district Mathematics Supervisor and Business teacher Don Williams. "Progress indicators" or "proficiencies" are identified for every department class.

"I think we are ahead of the game as a district," stated Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams said that in the elementary grades, "we want to make sure that every student can do mental and paper-and-pencil arithmetic."

He also indicated that for the older grades there has been improvement, saying, "We found a way that every child takes Algebra I in the ninth grade. It gives me chills."

The emphasis overall will be to move students beyond memorization and "into a world of reasoning and problem solving."

The district decided to move ahead in creating five-and-a-half "tech team" positions to advise colleagues on the use of computers throughout the district. Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye said, "It's something the teachers have asked for."

Each teacher chosen for the job will get a \$1,600 annual "stipend." Director of Instructional Technology Jeff Ross will head the program.

The board also agreed to hire for one year a technology troubleshooter at about \$30,000 a year to facilitate the increased use of computers in the district.



CLASS OF 2001...Freshmen at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School had a chance to find their way around the school on August 29 when the Student Government Association hosted 220 freshmen for a three-hour orientation led by volunteer upper classmen.