

Ceremonies Planned For Veterans Day In SP and Fanwood

SCOTCH PLAINS - The two local veterans organization, American Legion Post 209 and Veterans of Foreign Wars 10122, will conduct ceremonies on Thursday, November 11, in observance of Veterans Day.

The services will begin at 11 a.m. with the laying of wreaths at the Veterans Monument at Park Avenue and Front Street in Scotch Plains. At 11:30 a.m., there will be a presentation of wreaths at the Fanwood Memorial Library at North Avenue and Tillotson Road.

Members of the community are invited to attend these programs to recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by all former members of the armed forces of the United States.



FAMILY AFFAIR... Barry and Donna Merer of Scotch Plains joined their daughter, Allyson, at the Matheny Medical and Educational Center's annual Halloween Costume Parade. Thirteen-year-old Allyson is a resident at Matheny, a Peapack-based facility for children and adults with developmental disabilities.

SP-FW Board of Education Updated On Recent High School Racial Discrimination

By MATT MARINO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

At their meeting held last Thursday evening, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education updated the public on a racial discrimination incident that surfaced at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School a few weeks ago. The board also heard a presentation from Dr. Margaret Hayes detailing the Quality Assurance Assessment Report (QAAR).

Dr. Carol Choye, Superintendent of Schools, stated that a meeting was held with members of the Black Student Union at the high school. Parents were also present at the meeting, along with Board President Linda Nelson and faculty members of the school.

According to Dr. Choye, the group discussed whether the students realized

the importance of respect of diversity. Dr. David Heisey, principal at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, put forth the idea of a "diversity council" that would be composed of members from various groups - faculty, students, parents and possibly members of the public. Ms. Nelson and Dr. Choye would also serve on the council. The council would discuss a variety of issues focusing on diversity across all boundaries - race, gender, and so forth.

Dr. Choye also followed up on the issue of comments written on a wall within the high school. She stated that according to Dr. Heisey, writing reappeared in several other areas. This time, the targets were administrators in charge of discipline. During removal of the writing, the administration also examined whether a student suspended or in some kind of disciplinary trouble may have been the perpetrator. Apparently, the handwriting was the same in multiple areas.

"It underlines the real need to address diversity and for us to be able to see what it is that we can do to help students and everybody understand the importance of recognizing the strengths of diversity and the importance of treating others with respect," Dr. Choye said.

The board also heard a detailed presentation involving the QAAR goals and objectives for the previous school year, as well as looking forward to this year. Dr. Hayes gave a detailed explanation that the QAAR involves first setting a series of goals with relation to raising test scores, then administering the tests and determining whether the goals have been met. She noted that the goals set for students in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school system are known as "challenge goals," which basically means the schools are meeting all of the test score requirements necessary on the state level.

Each year, the board approves a set of goals for both the elementary schools and the high school. The first goal established last year for the elementary schools was for 85 percent of third graders to demonstrate 90 percent accuracy in application of grade-appropriate math vocabulary. The measurement comes in the end-of-the-year district assessment.

"I am happy to report to you that three of our five schools met this goal - Brunner, Coles and Evergreen," Dr. Hayes announced.

She added that while McGinn and School One did not meet the goal, they were close to the mark. McGinn missed the goal by 1 percent, while School One had a larger deficit but also had tested a number of special education students. Had the regular education scores at School One been singled out, said Dr. Hayes, School One would have met their goal as well.

The second goal within the elementary schools focused on improving students' writing skills. The hope was that 85 percent of the students would score three or higher on the five-point New Jersey registered holistic scoring.

Four of the elementary schools met the goal, with Brunner being the only school not to reach the goal.

Park Middle School also had two goals it sought to meet. The first goal from last year was the first year of a two-year goal to improve math scores on standardized tests. The goal was to have 83 percent of the students score "proficient or above" in mathematics on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), and that goal was exceeded with 85 percent scoring "proficient or above."

The second goal at Park dealt with improving reading skills and raising the percentage of students scoring above the 80th percentile on the TerraNova, from 41.7 percent to 65 percent. Dr. Hayes pointed out that such an increase poses an extreme challenge, and that the board spread this goal out over two years. However, Park failed to significantly raise the percentage, with an increase of only approximately 1.2 percent.

The results have been solid at Terrill Middle School, which had a goal of increasing from 85.8 percent to 90 percent of the students scoring "proficient or above" on the GEPA. After one year, the level of proficiency stands at 88.9 percent, and the ultimate goal is to get them back to the 94 percent passing rate they had a few years ago. Terrill also has focused on the reading portion of the TerraNova, and their results have been slightly better than those at Park. Though the benchmark goal was not met, they did increase from 48.9 percent to 52.2 percent.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School focused on expository writing on an essay, with the goal to score a 4 on the 6-point New Jersey registered holistic scoring test. This goal was achieved.

The second high school goal involved the TerraNova reading portion, and there was a 5.7 percent increase in overall scores, the highest increase of any of the groups working with the TerraNova.

"We're making progress, and we expect that progress will continue," commented Dr. Hayes.

Dr. Hayes added that each school will continue to focus on goals for the upcoming year, with many schools looking to improve upon already improved test scores.

In other board business, the members approved the implementation of the "Play Attention" program which was first detailed two weeks ago. This program is designed to help students classified with ADD and ADHD.

Fanwood Planning Board Approves Site Plan for New Doggie Day-Care and Kennel Facility On South Avenue

By DEBORAH MEDISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

K-9 Guardians, described as an upscale, doggie day-care and kennel facility was granted site plan approval by the Fanwood Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments at their meeting of October 28.

Principal owner of the kennel, Steven Parker, testified before the board that his plans for the facility, to be located at 43 South Avenue, include state of the art accommodations and hi-tech sanitation methods, which will keep his guests happy, healthy and odor-free. Plasma screen TV's, ergonomically-designed mattresses and the latest scientific advances in odor-resistant flooring will be just some of the luxuries enjoyed by his canine clientele, Mr. Parker told the board.

A resident of Scotch Plains, Mr. Parker related that he has been oper-

ating a dog-walking business in the area for the past five years. In order to research the best procedures and methods of operation for his proposed kennel, Mr. Parker said that he has traveled all over the country visiting similar facilities.

The Fanwood day-care and kennel will be able to accommodate approximately 20 overnight guests and 15 day-care clients, Mr. Parker told the board. The dogs will have their own rooms as the facility is cage-free.

"There will be two, indoor play areas, where dogs will be grouped according to age and size, and kept active and happy. An outdoor run is not being proposed at this time and is not necessary for a facility of this type," Mr. Parker added. There is room for a dog-run alongside the building, which may be added at a later date, he said.

Hours of operation will be from 7

a.m. to 7 p.m., when staff will be on site. During the night, Mr. Parker will monitor the facility from his home, by video-relay. Registration of canines would be done by phone and mail before boarding or day-care, making drop-off times a quick process, Mr. Parker told the board.

Also testifying on behalf of the applicant, Robin Bennett, a kennel and day-care consultant, told the board that Mr. Parker intends on implementing the highest industry standards in every aspect of his facility.

"These types of facilities are becoming very mainstream and are springing up all over the country," Ms. Bennett said.

The board grilled Mr. Parker regarding concerns over potential odors created by the large amounts of dog-waste that the facility will generate. Mr. Parker assured the board that the methods which he intends on employing to dispose of the dog-waste would not cause any noticeable odor in the area. Using double-bags, specifically designed for dog-waste, would not leak odor, even when placed in an outdoor dumpster for several

days in the summer, Mr. Parker told the board.

Also of concern to board members was the possibility of audible barking late at night, coming from the kennel. Mr. Parker explained that because the guests would be exercised and kept active throughout the day, they would be quiet and sleep through the night.

Board members discussed other concerns regarding daily operations, including drop-off times, parking, lighting and walkways. The issue of several easements, which run through the property, would have to be cleared up with the easement holders, the board told the applicant.

Several customers of Mr. Parker's dog walking business also testified before the board expressing their need and desire for this type of business in the community and confirming Mr. Parker's professionalism.

Board members agreed that a business investment revitalizing this part of the Borough was welcome and needed.

Mr. Parker told The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times that he hopes to be up and running by Christmas.

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