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'A Voice for All, an Echo for None'

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## Possibility of closing Brewer School causes concern among many residents

By R. R. Faszczewski

Citing the in-migration and out-migration of students since October of last year, when it adopted the school district re-organization plan for the new 1983-1984 school year, and the possible number of pupils in each class at the Frank K. Hehny School going as high as 23 and the number in each class at the Charles H. Brewer School dropping to 14 or 15, under the 1982 proposal, the Board of Education on Feb. 15 announced it was considering a contingency plan which would probably close the Brewer School beginning with the 1983-1984 school year.

Under the original re-organization plan, adopted on Oct. 12 of last year, all sixth, seventh and eighth-grade students would be going to the Carl H. Kumpf School, students in kindergarten to fifth grade would attend the Valley Road and Hehny Schools, and the remainder of the pupils in preschool to the fifth grade would go to the Brewer School.

At a hearing at the Hehny School on the contin-

gency plan, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. John T. Farinella said he had been instructed by the Board to research an alternative to the original re-organization plan keeping in mind the school body wished to maintain Kumpf as the middle school.

In a report handed out at the hearing, Dr. Farinella noted the pupil populations in the single classes in the first and fifth grades projected for the Brewer School had grown to 28 and 29; in the first grade the number of students projected for Hehny had dropped from 41 to 37; the projected number of students in the Hehny fifth grade had dropped from 51 to 46, and class sizes projected were such that Hehny would have classes of 23, while Brewer would have classes of 14 and 15.

The superintendent added, "These losses and gains are normal in any school year. What has made the situation critical has been the impact on the plan which had been approved for the 1983-1984 school year. A complete re-assessment of that plan is in order

at this time."

The report gave the following reasons for the contingency plan: Instead of singleton classes at Brewer with no leeway for adjustments for increase or decrease in student enrollment there would be three or more classes at each grade level in the two lower schools (Valley Road and Hehny), allowing for better balanced distributions of students; teachers scheduled to travel between schools such as librarians and art instructors would be scheduled, and have the responsibility for a full building; physical-education teacher time could be scheduled so an additional half-teacher could be provided for the Kumpf School to better meet the requirements in the sixth to eighth grades; a half physical education teacher would be divided between the two other schools, strengthening the program in those schools, and having more classes at each grade level would provide better opportunities for teacher co-ordination of activities, exchange of teaching ideas, control of educational progress and the meeting of

learning needs.

The schools head added that under the contingency plan the district lines would remain essentially as they are for the 1982-1983 school year, with the Valley Road School remaining intact and no pupils moved and the Hehny School pupils intact.

After Dr. Farinella pointed out the full capacity of the Hehny School was 400 pupils, and it now has 273 pupils, Board member, Marie Soyka, said there would be 210 pupils coming to Hehny from Brewer if Brewer was closed.

Board president, Mrs. Eileen Mezzo, explained there would be about 363 pupils at Hehny under the contingency plan.

However, Board member, James Kehoe, who wanted to know why Brewer was selected to be closed, said he had seen no significant change in the number of pupils since 1982.

The schools superintendent responded the school plans were based on the outer limits, the administration and Board members were against class sizes over 25 and the contingency plan

would give the district better control over in-and-out-migration.

Board member, Edward Raslofsky, pointed out there were more reasons than those cited above for the contingency plan.

Dr. Farinella replied there would be five empty classrooms at Brewer under the original re-organization plan, less than half the school would be used, and there would be much empty space at Hehny.

He added, however, the contingency plan would do nothing to change the state aid coming to the Clark schools.

Asked by Board member, Mrs. Thelma Purdy, whether Hehny and Valley Road would be crowded under the contingency plan, the schools head said the first year of the plan there would be little empty space and the later years some empty space.

Cost estimates for the contingency plan ran to a minimum of \$34,000, including the conversion of an industrial building to a kindergarten and the realigning of gas equipment and

drains to accommodate an upper-grade science program.

Mr. Kehoe, who said projections showed the pupil population in the township leveling off at about 1,000 in three years, said the contingency proposal was no better than a plan proposed by Rutgers University experts about five years ago, and rejected.

Mrs. Mezzo replied Mr. Kehoe had not discussed the retention of Kumpf as the middle school, a factor the majority of the Board felt very strongly about.

She added Brewer had been chosen as the school to be closed because it was the least desirable school to remain open, and Kumpf had the most space, the best educational facilities and the most fields.

Board members and Dr. Farinella emphasized the educational character of Brewer would be maintained after it was closed.

They said if the Union County Educational Services Commission, which is negotiating a lease for space at Brewer now, were to pull out the Board might con-

sider moving its offices to the site.

In any event, according to Mrs. Mezzo, the school system would still use the gymnasium at Brewer for school sporting events and to stage concerts with groups outside the township district.

Dr. Farinella was quick to point out the contingency plan was only being considered for education purposes, and there would be virtually no cost savings, with perhaps one less janitor, one less secretary and a cut in the amount of time worked by the school nurse.

He emphasized there would be no cut in the teaching staff beyond that already contemplated.

Board member, Edward Dreyfus, said he wasn't convinced the new plan was justified now, and he would need more data, especially on the employment of the administrative staff under the new plan.

A resident of 24 Jupiter St. said he couldn't figure out how a plan proposed 16 weeks ago could be changed so suddenly, especially since when Hehny parents had

complained about 29 pupils in a class at that time the Board had "made excuses."

He added with mortgage rates coming down and the possibility of young couples with school-age children moving into Clark there was no reason to close another school.

Another resident, Marie Kaiser, said six months ago she had been opposed to closing another school. However, she had since decided Brewer would not really be a school next year with only 200 students.

She added there would be no flexibility in the educational system, and she desired an equal education for students in all the township's schools.

However, Mrs. Kaiser added she hoped there would be no increase projected in class size above 20 a month from now.

Mike Kodak of Kaplan St. said he was tired of seeing his children moved around. They had been moved when the Abraham Clark School was closed about three years ago, and he didn't want them to be moved again.

He also wanted to know

if the cost of vandalism done to the Abraham Clark School before the sale was finalized had been computed into the final selling price.

Mrs. Mezzo replied Abraham Clark was no longer the Clark Board of Education's building since it had been sold three years ago, and the sale was now final.

Replying to questions about what would be done with the extra teachers coming from the Brewer School if it was closed, Mrs. Mezzo said the Board was eliminating 10 classroom teaching positions through a Reduction in Force this year.

One parent suggested the Board send a questionnaire to every parent affected by the proposed change before it voted on the final plan.

The school body president said it was the Board's decision to be made for the good of the entire district, and just as in the case of the Abraham Clark School closing it had to do what it thought best.

The Board was expected to vote on Tuesday on whether or not to implement the contingency plan.



ENCOURAGING ARTISTS OF FUTURE - With Clark Mayor Bernard G. Yarusavage, left, as he declared March as "Youth Art Month" in the township, left to right, are: First row, Vince Gagliardi, a student from Clark's Carl H. Kumpf School; Tiffany Kitchen, a student from St. John the Apostle School in Clark-Linden; Donna LaSpata, a student from the Kumpf School; Donna

Kolaletis, a student from Arthur L. Johnson Regional High School in Clark, and Emy M. Yeckel, the project administrator-co-ordinator for the Clark Teenarts Festival and Reception; second row, Jo Ann Juzefyk and Wendy Gillman, students from Johnson, and Sandy Hasselman, an art teacher from Johnson.

### Mayor declares March 'Youth Art Month'

Clark Mayor Bernard G. Yarusavage declared March as "Youth Art Month" in the township. As a part of this month-long celebration, Mrs. Emy M. Yeckel, a well-known local artist, and the mayor's representative to the Union County Cultural and Heritage Advisory Board, is again project administrator-co-ordinator of the Annual Teenarts Festival and Reception to be held at the Clark Public Library on Monday, March 7, from 7 to 9 p.m.

Young people from various schools in the township will exhibit their art work. Schools participating will be Arthur L. Johnson Regional High School, Charles H. Brewer and Carl H. Kumpf Schools, all in Clark, and St. John the Apostle, St. Agnes

Schools, and Mother Seton Regional High School, all in Clark, as well as students from the special education classes at the regional high school.

The Rev. Joseph P. Rice of St. John the Apostle R. C. Church will give the invocation at the reception. Music activities are planned by Mrs. Evelyn Bleeke's Choral Dept. at Johnson.

"This annual festival gives young people an opportunity to share their knowledge and talent with each other and with the community. All entrants are "participants" rather than "contestants" and, in recognition of his or her contribution, a certificate of appreciation will be presented to each participant," the mayor announced.

Both Mayor Yarusavage and Mrs. Yeckel urged Clark residents to attend the festival and reception on March 7 at the library to encourage the interest and growth of art among young citizens.

Mrs. Yeckel, who has been planning this exhibition for the past several months, stated Clark's young artists will also attend the Teenage Arts Festival at Rutgers University in June of this year.

"As we look back in history we take pride in the contributions our nation has made to the vitality of the arts in painting, sculpture, music, literature and the performing arts. These contributions must continue, and they must be supported in their very earliest

stages if we are to further enrich our cultural heritage and the individual self-fulfillment of future generations. In this spirit, I commend those who participate in this worthwhile observance—students, parents and teachers alike," the mayor stated.

The Clark Teenarts Festival and Reception is made possible through the support of the mayor, the Dept. of Recreation, The Summit and Elizabeth Trust Co. and Mrs. Yeckel.

#### Meeting moved

The regular meeting of the Clark Township Planning Board, originally scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 8 p.m. in the Township Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, was re-scheduled to Tuesday, March 1, at the same time and the same place due to a conflict with a Council meeting, reports a Board spokesman.



TAKING A BIG STEP - High school registration procedures were completed by Sidney Hochman, a guidance counselor at the Charles H. Brewer School in Clark. In special sessions, Mr. Hochman met with eighth-grade students, their parents and counselors from Arthur L. Johnson Regional High School in Clark to plan schedules of courses for next year. Helping students choose these courses best suited to their individual abilities and future goals is a main objective of this program. Parents, pupils, and counselors have conferred to review test data and teacher recommendations in order to complete final course selection. Going over registration materials, shown, left to right, are: Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Sabath reviewing the courses their daughter, Cynthia, right, will be taking in high school next year. Guidance counselor, Mr. Hochman discusses the courses with them, and offers his advice and suggestions.

### Scholarship Fund slates square dance

The Clark Scholarship Fund will launch its 30th year with its Annual Square Dance Party on Friday, March 4. The dance will be held at the Mother Seton Regional High School in Clark.

In five previous outings, the square dance has established itself as one of the outstanding social events of the early spring, reports a spokesman.

All proceeds from the evening's festivities will go toward funding future awards by the fund. In its 29 years the fund has assisted more than 70 young people in continuing their education with

scholarship awards of more than \$40,000.

For this year's dance, the group has obtained the music and calling of "The Beams."

Instruction will be provided. At the same time, a wide variety of dances will keep experienced club dancers occupied at their favorite pursuit, the spokesman added. As in the past, the number of tickets to be sold will be limited so as to avoid overcrowding on the dance floor.

In addition to the dancing, there will be numerous other surprises for the folks on hand. There will be games and contests.

### Library offers free tax aid

Free tax counseling for the elderly and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance programs have been available at the Clark Public Library since Feb. 14.

Both of these services are provided by volunteers trained by the Internal Revenue Service. To take advantage of either of these free services, please telephone the library at 388-5999 or Joseph Dunn at 388-8068 to set up an appointment.

Tickets are \$5.50 (tax deductible) per person. This includes a full evening's fun and refreshments. For tickets and information, please telephone 388-9209 or 382-7582.



IT'S SO GOOD - Learning to follow directions can taste good! Mrs. Eileen Sanchez's class at Clark's Frank K. Hehny School learned the importance of reading and following directions when you want to make a cake. A lesson encouraging the reading skills and listening skills of the class started by gathering the necessary equipment and ingredients. Next they had to follow the mixing directions and the baking directions. Of course, no one needed lessons on how to eat the end product. Mrs. Sanchez helps Anthony Shandra sample the finished product.

### Board offers petitions for hopefuls

Nominating petitions for candidates for the Union County Regional High School District No. 1 Board of Education, which includes Clark, must be completed and returned to the Board secretary by 4 p.m. on Thursday, March 3, announced Dr. Donald Merachnik, the district superintendent.

Representatives are need-

ed to fill three-year term vacancies from Berkeley Heights, Clark and Springfield.

The elections will be held on Tuesday, April 12.

Petition blanks may be obtained from 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. from Monday to Friday from the office of the Board Secretary at Jonathan Dayton Regional High School in Springfield.

The Union County Regional High School District No. 1 serves Berkeley Heights, Clark, Garwood, Kenton, Mountainside and Springfield.