

RAHWAY News Record

New Jersey's Oldest Weekly Newspaper--Established 1822

VOL. 167 NO. 16

RAHWAY, NEW JERSEY, THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 1989

USPS 454-160

25 CENTS

Residents seek resumption of courtesy busing Meeting organizer critical of board actions

by Pat DiMaggio
Parochial school parents, who have been affected by the Rahway Board of Education's decision to eliminate "courtesy busing" for non-public school children, met last week to discuss ways in which they could force the board to reconsider their decision.

More than 50 parents attended the meeting held at St. John Vianney School, in Colonia, to voice their displeasure over the board's actions. St. Mary's in Rahway, St. Agnes and St. John the Apostle in Clark and St. John Vianney School were represented at the meeting.

Before adopting their 1989-90 school budget, the board decided to eliminate "courtesy busing" for non-public school children. Present board policy for public and non-public students offers busing for students in grades K-6 who live more than 1 mile from school, busing for students in grades 7 and 8 who live more than 2 miles from school and busing for grades 9-12 for students who live more than 2 1/2 miles from school.

Starting in September, busing will stay the same for public school children. The change will be in busing non-public school children in grades K-6 who fall below the state guidelines in living less than 2 miles from their school.

Busing for grades K-6 under 2 miles began in the late 1960's as part of the district's desegregation plan, according to Superintendent of Schools Frank Brunette. In order to achieve racial equality, public school students who had to travel across town to attend schools were bused.

The board then offered the same service to those non-public school students who lived less than the state-mandated 2-mile limit from their schools. The practice, known as "courtesy busing," has continued until this year.

The board's decision to eliminate this part of their transportation account resulted from a financial crisis, according to former Board Member Robert Munsey. At last month's meeting of the board, several parochial school parents asked it to reconsider their decision, citing safety hazards if their children were forced to walk to school.

The budget was ultimately defeated by voters in the April 4 election. A letter circulated to voters at the time asking them to defeat the budget may have had an adverse effect on the non-public school parents in that the budget must now be cut further by Rahway's City Council.

Karen Pribush, who organized last week's meeting, thanked those who voted against the budget. She said parochial school parents must organize to keep an eye on Board of Education expenditures in the future. Pribush said legally the board could discontinue their "courtesy busing" policy and cited a court decision allowing such an example in Morris Township.

Pribush also said she was unhappy with the treatment parents received when they approached the board last month. She said Board President Lillie Henderson did not allow all the parents to speak and removed the microphone at one point to end the discussion.

Pribush also charged Board Member Munsey with "intimidation." Munsey told parents that if they did not support the budget, "they would not see courtesy busing again," said Pribush. "I was shocked at the treatment we received," she said. "The statement the board made that courtesy busing was eliminated because of a budgetary crisis was outrageous," continued Pribush. "Not only does the board ignore the safety of

our own children, but by not allocating money for the improvement of their curriculum they are ignoring their own students."

"We must form an active organization to have representation at every board meeting," noted Pribush.

"We will also be representing the children of Rahway who need quality education."

"The Board of Education is sneering at us; they are answerable to no one. No

one begrudges money spent on education, but we do begrudge the \$90,000 salary for the superintendent," said Pribush.

The N.J. Catholic Council, in Cherry Hill, has suggested that parents undertake a letter-writing campaign to force the Senate to hear Bill S-1905, which would force school districts who provide busing under the state guideline for public schools to extend the same

transportation to non-public school children, said Pribush.

"The safety of our children is our prime concern," continued Pribush. "We must vote for caring, qualified board candidates. I hope the budget will be cut drastically by the council so they will see we are making a statement. The only education we are getting from this Board of Education is how to soak a city."

Hartnett announces appointment of Williams as general counsel to UCUA

Joseph M. Hartnett, Chairman of the Union County Utilities Authority (UCUA), has announced the appointment of Jonathan L. Williams of the law firm of Fitzpatrick & Israel of Secaucus, as General Counsel to the Authority. "We are extremely proud to be retaining such a distinguished attorney as Jonathan Williams and such a competent law firm as Fitzpatrick & Israel to serve the people of Union County," Hartnett said.

Williams comes to the Authority directly from the state Attorney General's office, where he has been a Deputy Attorney General since 1980. For the past three-and-a-half years, he has been the Deputy Attorney General in Charge of Litigation, a major post in the Attorney General's Office responsible for supervising all litigation for the Division of Law.

Williams has personally handled many noteworthy cases for the State, most recently his successful action against New York City in the famous "ocean dumping" case regarding pollution of N.J. beaches by New York City garbage. He has personally represented Governor Kean, the Chief Justice of New Jersey, the Superintendent of State Police, and members of the Governor's cabinet in a variety of significant matters.

Fitzpatrick & Israel has served numerous public bodies in New Jersey, including nine utilities authorities other than Union County. The firm has an extensive background in public finance, and, in 1988, was ranked 4th among all N.J. law firms in volume of public financings represented.

Attorneys of the firm are also experienced in legal services for solid waste financings, having provided such services for a \$137 million financing for Bergen County, a \$30 million financing for Hudson County, a \$320 million financing for Palm Beach County in Florida, and other solid waste projects.

Hartnett said that "hiring one of the top attorneys from the highest law enforcement office in the State should give the people

of Union County full confidence that this Authority means to move forward, adhering to the highest standards of ethics and integrity." "Additionally," he said, "the wealth of experience of the Fitzpatrick & Israel firm, particularly in financial areas, will help us to operate at peak efficiency."

"Our aim," Hartnett said, "is to have an Authority that the citizens of Union County can be proud of — a public agency which functions professionally, with integrity, and always in the public interest. With this appointment, we show that we mean what we say."

"I'm especially proud of the process which led to this hiring," Hartnett said. "It was highly professional and a sharp contrast to the last time this Authority hired its general counsel."

He explained that the position was advertised statewide, formal specifications were used, and 17 law firms submitted proposals. "Only after careful review and consideration of these proposals and in-depth interviews did we decide on a finalist," Hartnett said, adding "and that's the way it should be done."

The firm will be paid an annual fee of \$60,000 for performing the basic General Counsel duties, which was the lowest of the 17 proposals submitted, which ranged up to \$260,000. "The icing on the cake," the Chairman concluded, "is that this firm also had the lowest bid, so we got a great law firm at the lowest price."

The triumphal return of General Washington

Most Americans are aware that 200 years ago, George Washington was inaugurated as this nation's 1st President. In commemoration of that event, his journey from Mount Vernon, VA to New York City is being re-enacted this week.

In 1789, Washington embarked on a two-week journey that included stops in Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey and New York. This Sunday, April 23, the Rahway Historical Society will host

General Washington at the Merchants and Drovers Tavern on St. George Avenue from 7:30 to 9 a.m. The State Constitutional Bicentennial Commission of N.J. is coordinating the entire event in New Jersey and has scheduled all stops, including Rahway, to be historically accurate as to time and location.

Although George's stop in Rahway will be short in duration, he will be very busy. As he enters Rahway, Church bells will be rung and he will be greeted at the Tavern by local officials. He will then walk to the adjacent Rahway Cemetery to visit the grave of Abraham Clark, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. A tree will be planted on the Tavern grounds to commemorate the occasion.

Lastly, a private breakfast will be served to General Washington in the Drovers, which will be open for tours after General Washington departs for Elizabeth.

As a lead-in to the Washington visit, the Rahway Historical Society will also conduct an open house on Saturday, April 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The special event will include:

- Costumed singers and balladeers performing 18th Century folk songs and music.
- Open hearth cooking in the kitchen.
- Open bar serving cider, mead and colonial wine.
- Gift Shop (Terrill Tavern)
- Refreshments
- House tours

All citizens are urged to fly American flags on both Saturday and Sunday in honor of the occasion.

Merchants & Drovers Tavern, 1632 St. Georges Ave., Rahway, will host George Washington and company for breakfast the morning of April 23.



POSTHUMOUS HONOR... Accepting a commendation from Mayor Martin in honor of Richard Gritschke are his brothers and sister, Robert Gritschke, Helen Gehring and Ralph Gritschke.

Gritschke remembered

By Pat DiMaggio
Long-time City employee Richard Gritschke was memorialized by Rahway's City Council last week for his dedication in serving the youth of the community.

Gritschke, who passed away on March 3, served for more than 32 years as a dedicated public employee of the City and for the past ten years as director and

superintendent of Rahway's Recreation Department.

"Mr. Gritschke set in his career an example of the very highest standards of integrity, dedication and effort on the public's behalf," said Mayor Daniel L. Martin. "His life and public career will forever serve as a good example for future generations and will always reflect honor on the City of Rahway and public service."



Kindness Kennels retrieves animal warden slot 'Garbage patrols' suggested to combat illegal dumping

by Pat DiMaggio
Rahway's Municipal Council approved a new contract for animal warden services at its regular meeting last week, and listened to a complaint from a City resident about "atrocious" conditions on a baseball field.

The council approved an agreement between the City and the Corporation of N.J. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Union County Branch, also known as Kindness Kennels. The contract, for \$15,600 per year, will provide animal warden services for residents of Rahway.

Kindness Kennels acted as warden for several years before the City contracted with Garden State Kennels, Stirling, for the past two years, according to Francis Senkowsky, City Clerk. Residents have complained about Garden State's hours of operation and poor service.

The contract with Kindness Kennels, located on St. Georges Avenue, was approved as the low bidder.

Betty Burnette, speaking on behalf of the Citizen's Youth Recreation Committee (CYRC) organization, asked the council for their help in alleviating conditions at the Madden Park baseball field. She said trash was "atrocious" at the field, bordered by Capobianca Plaza and a wooded area.

These woods have become a dumping ground," Burnette said. "It is a health hazard to the children on the field. Children have been withdrawn from the baseball program because of this accumulation."

Burnette said people have voluntarily cleaned the field, but the garbage lining the stream and the woods has grown worse.

Council President Walter McLeod said a ball-

would be needed to clean all the accumulated trash in the area. Calling the woods an "unsightly dumping ground," McLeod agreed the City had some responsibility for clean-up, but stressed that most of the property was privately owned.

Business Administrator Joseph Hartnett said the county has tentatively agreed to fund field inspectors. He also suggested involving the local police and emergency management coordinator in what he termed "garbage patrols."

In other business, the

council approved an amendment to the lease agreement with Suburban Cablevision. The annual rent charged to Suburban will be raised from \$4,000 to \$8,000 and shall be increased by the greater of either the percentage of Suburban's basic service rate increase over the prior year, or by the percentage increase in the most recent 12-month Consumer Price Index for the Northern New Jersey/New York Metropolitan area as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, effective as of the 1990 lease year.

Rahway downtown property owners up in arms

Property owners in the downtown area of Rahway are up in arms over the astounding values that Certified Valuations have placed on their properties, considering the further deterioration of already difficult retail conditions.

In most cases, the owners would be overjoyed if they could sell at anywhere near the figures submitted. Some owners spoke of valuations over two times the reasonable selling price for the property. Sam Shafran, a property owner and member of

the Rahway Chamber of Commerce, is spearheading the committee which has tried to inform the public of their rights and remedies if they have been unfairly treated in their revaluation.

Appeals can be made to the Union County Board of Taxation and ultimately to the Tax Court. The "Real" and "Cheap" way to resolve the problem is to negotiate fair valuations with the Tax Assessor's office.

Shafran said, we must eliminate the inequities in downtown that are a hindrance to its growth and its potential as a business and residential area. We must get the downtown area back on its feet and make it a place where people want to live and work.

Note:
The 24-hour
NARCOTIC
INFORMATION TIP LINE
for Rahway is
392-1553

CORRECTION
A mention in the 4-19-89 issue of the News Record that the City of Rahway had a 24-hour NARCOTIC INFORMATION TIP LINE for Rahway is 392-1553. The correct number is 392-1553.

Former News Record, Clark Patriot publisher to chair Courter campaign



Loretta "Rip" Collins

At a press conference called by Jim Courter, candidate for Governor, in Union Township this week, Loretta "Rip" Collins, former publisher of the Rahway News Record and founding Publisher of the Clark Patriot, was named Campaign Chairman of Union County and Co-Chairman of Jim Courter's statewide campaign for Governor.

Collins was a former Union County GOP Chairman and a former Assemblyman. At the same time Barbara Curran, who was editor of the Rahway News Record and first editor of the Clark Patriot, endorsed and introduced the candidate.

Curran is a former Assemblywoman and a past President of the Public Utilities Commission. Collins said, "We have to have a candidate who can win in November. We have to have a candidate who will not be blamed for the major problems the State is facing. We have to have a candidate with the charisma to win the election and then the stature to govern."

Barbara Curran introduced the candidate and in doing so remarked that she had endorsed Jim Courter before and does so again for the man who should be Governor of the State of New Jersey.