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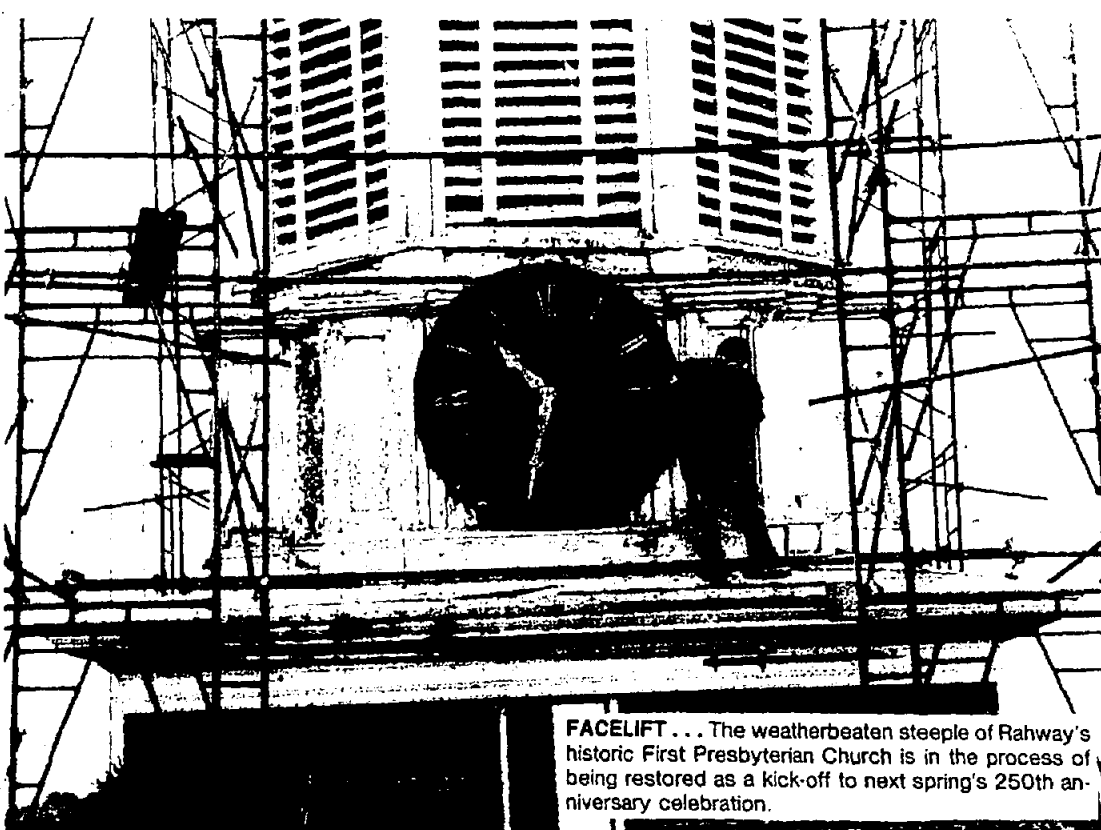
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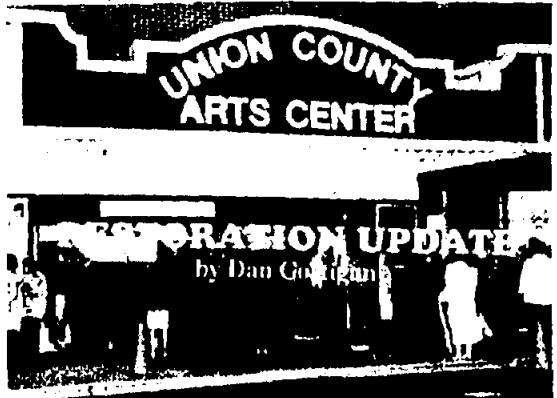


Restoration of steeple kicks off 250th for historic '1st church'

The historic First Presbyterian Church on Grand Avenue in Rahway will be celebrating its 250th Anniversary in May of 1991.



CURTAIN CALL? ... No, that comes later. And the artistic achievement being applauded will be a sparkling new interior for the Union County Arts Center's auditorium, complete with plaster repairs, subtle colorations and gold leafing. Except for seat restoration, this is the crew that will have pulled it off. In the foreground, painter-decorators Al Thullen (left) and Mel Hulse, and standing (l-r), plasterer Andy Palotta, painter-decorator Joe Sullivan and Bob Berzito, and plasterer Mike Palotta. (Arts Center photo by P. Szabocsk.)



In The 'Cast'
Every production that takes place within a theater has its cast of characters. In the one that's been ongoing at Rahway's Union County Arts Center since the 1st

week of June, the "cast" consists not of actors, but craftsmen, and the "boards" they read are not the stage, but rather the immense scaffolding platform that covers the length and

breadth of the arts center's spacious auditorium. One other big difference between this and a more conventional theatrical production is that, for this one, the curtain doesn't go up until it's over.

Those who'll take their bows at that time include a crew chief who hails from America's heartland, but grew up less than 75 miles from here; a fellow professional decorator who's spent most of his life on the shores of Lake Michigan; an uncle-nephew plastering team from America's "2nd City"; and a pair of local painters who've known each other since their parochial school boyhoods here in Union County.

Mel Hulse, 54 is the project's working supervisor. He moved to Waukegan, Wis., in 1958 after a stint in the U.S. Navy, and went to work seven years ago for Conrad Schmitt Studios in New Berlin (Wisconsin), the decorating contractor for

the arts center job. Prior to that, he had developed his painting/decorating skills through jobs in private residences.

Al Thullen, 47, was born and raised in Manitowish, Wis., about 75 miles due north of Milwaukee on Lake Michigan's West bank. He was a painting/decorating contractor and sign painter in his own right before joining Conrad Schmitt about three years ago. Despite having taken some electives in creative design at the University of Wisconsin, he, like Mel Hulse, maintains that specialized decorating skills are something you develop mostly by instinct and experience.

Andy and Mike Palotta are the Conrad Schmitt plastering specialists on this job. Andy, who is going on 67, has been at the craft for about 50 years. His nephew Mike, 26 has been doing it for about nine. They're both Chicagoans and have been with Conrad Schmitt for the past seven years.

Gran Centurion breakfast

The Grand Centurion Country Club on Madison Hill Rd., Clark, has scheduled a weekend breakfast to be held at the club on Sunday, July 29 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$5.50 per adult, \$2.50 per child.

Sullivan, both 35, are painter-decorators hired locally through Painter's Local 121 in Linden. They grew up together in Elizabeth, where both attended St. Patrick's Grammar School.

The four Conrad Schmitt artisans all have extensive interior restoration experience in old churches, theaters and various other historic buildings — places like New York's Marble Collegiate Church and Chicago's far famed Art Institute.

Plasterer Andy Palotta, oldest of the crew, told us he learned his plastering craft on the G.I. Bill after serving under General Patton in World War II. Of his nephew Mike, he says, "I used to tell him what to do, now he tells me ... and I listen."

The scaffolding contractor for the arts center job is Frank DeLuca, Inc. of North Plainfield. Pictures for this series are by arts center staff photographer Paul Szabocsk.

by taxes of \$13,440,134. The amended budget rose 4.9 percent, or \$946,106, from last year's budget amount of \$19,158,477.

According to Business Administrator Joseph Hartnett, the increase in the budget will result in an additional 6 tax points for homeowners. On a home assessed at \$147,000, homeowners can expect to pay an additional \$88 per year for municipal government.

The municipal purposes tax rate will increase 7 percent, from \$2 in 1989 to \$2.14 in 1990, said Hartnett.

Council amends budget to reflect added \$610,000 from state New budget represents 4.9% increase over '89

By Pat DiMaggio
At a special meeting last week, Rahway's Municipal Council voted to amend its 1990 budget to reflect increased state aid.

The City's allocation of state aid has increased from \$500,000 to \$1,110,000 with the addition of \$610,000 earmarked for the Supplemental Safe Neighborhoods Program. The City was originally notified that it would receive only \$300,000 in Municipal Revitalization Aid. The current total of \$1,110,000 still falls short of the anticipated amount of \$1,675,386 in state aid.

The 1990 municipal budget totals \$20,104,583 with an amount to be raised

by taxes of \$13,440,134. The amended budget rose 4.9 percent, or \$946,106, from last year's budget amount of \$19,158,477.

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Major items of increase in the 1990 budget included health insurance costs of \$221,811; sewerage author-

ity costs of \$149,933; garbage collection, \$128,000; cash deficit, late taxes, \$177,959; and police and fire salary costs of \$20,185. Without these combined increases of \$967,886, the 1990 budget would show a decrease of \$21,790, said Hartnett.

The City Council also approved the following items of revenue to be included in the budget:

- \$3,344 from the Police Dept. Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund
- \$5,000 in additional funds from the Uniform Fire Salary Act
- \$14,400 from the Housing Authority in lieu of taxes for 1989, and \$15,000 in lieu

- of taxes for 1990.
- \$165,200 from the Union County Regional Environmental Health Commission
- \$37,500 from a Union County Utilities Authority Grant

The amendments to the budget were approved on a vote of five in favor with Councilmembers Michael Esposito, William Wenzel and Katherine Fulcomer opposed. Councilman Dennis Henzenway was absent.

A public hearing on the amendments to the budget and possible final adoption of the 1990 municipal spending plan is scheduled for July 31, at 8 p.m. in council chambers at City Hall.

Madison School has new principal
Vice principal Mauriello promoted to replace retiring Dykes, Jan. 1

By Pat DiMaggio
A new principal was appointed for Madison School by Rahway's Board of Education at its July 17 meeting.

Frank Mauriello, currently serving as Madison School vice principal, will begin his tenure as chief administrator of the school on January 1, 1991, for the balance of the 1990-91 school year at an annual compensation of \$66,550. He will replace Principal Edwin Dykes who will retire on December 31, 1990, after 35 years in the district.

The board also recognized Christine Olejar, primary grade level, and Theo Fendleton, intermediate grade level, for their achievements in winning the Rahway Community Action Organization Poster Contest.

Robert McNulty was appointed as a science teacher at the Intermediate School at \$24,770. Marjorie Burns was appointed as a special education teacher, \$21,470. Edith Riederer to reflect their attainment of Masters degrees.

Approved Michelle Blair, Lawrence Bodine, Bob Sica and Lori Sigley as subs.

Approved the voluntary transfer of Loretta Matulis from central administration to the High School library.

Applied to the county superintendent for approval to hire Douglas Wynn and Bob Sica as asst. football coaches.

Appointed Linda Kuzma as clerk typed at the High School at \$13,356.

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