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RAHWAY
News Record

New Jersey's Oldest Weekly Newspaper--Established 1822

VOL. 170 NO. 16 | RAHWAY, N.J., THURSDAY, MAY 14, 1992 | USPS 454-160 | 25 CENTS

Firemen – 15, Police – 0

Rahway's Finest Working Without Contract

by Pat DiMaggio

So far, it's FMBA-15; PBA-zip.

On Monday night, Rahway's Municipal Council approved a three-year contract with the City's Fire Department and heard comments from police officers, members of the Honorary PBA and community leaders on stalled negotiations between the City and the Police Department.

The council unanimously approved the contract with FMBA Local 33 for a total increase of 15 percent. Terms of the contract include a 0-percent increase from January 1, 1992, to June 30, 1992; a 4.75-percent increase for July 1, 1992, to June 30, 1993; a 5-percent increase for July 1, 1993, to June 30, 1994, and a 5.25-percent increase for July 1, 1994, to June 30, 1995. The FMBA received a 6.5-percent increase in 1991 under negotiations with former City Business Administrator Hartnett. Negotiations continue for the superior officer's bargaining unit.

Rahway's PBA Local 31 has been working without a contract since June 30, 1991. According to PBA President Gene DeCarlo, negotiations have broken down because of the City's insistence on a one-year wage freeze.

"The morale is very low," noted DeCarlo. "We've been working without a contract for a year."

DeCarlo said Rahway's Police Department went on a 4-days-on/4-days-off work schedule in 1978 which has actually saved the City money. He noted that police overtime in 1977 amounted to $87,000 at $12.50 per hour compared to 1991's overtime total of $82,000 at $30 per hour worked. In 1977, 632 sick days were used compared to 119 sick days used in 1991.

"We don't want to negotiate in the press, but facts and figures have been misconstrued," said DeCarlo. "We are only asking only what's fair for us."

Honorary PBA President Marty Spangle said the organization voted unanimously last week to support the efforts of the PBA in its negotiations for a new contract. "They do their job and do it well," said Spangle. "Going this long without a contract breaks down morale. The Honorary PBA helps cops all year long, and we're here to help them again."

The discontent felt by the department's rank and file membership was evident when Lt. Kevin White accused Mayor Jim Kennedy of breaking his promise to negotiate in good faith. "Mayor Kennedy appealed to us for our cooperation and support," said White. "He promised us that if we cooperated, we would be rewarded. The membership voluntarily waited, and we were met by a hired gun, which forced the PBA to hire a negotiator. We came to the bargaining table – not demanding and not begging but willing to bargain. The membership now states that we've filled our part of the bargain. Can you say the same?"

Ray Mikell, president of Rahway's Tavern Owners Association, called upon the council to support the Police Department. "Let's not fight against them," said Mikell. "They put their lives on the line for us every day."

Rahway's administration is currently in negotiations with clerical workers, public works and water utility employees and FMBA superior officers. Business Administrator Peter Pelissier said the City already has spent over $26,000 in legal fees on contractual negotiations.

Kennedy said that although negotiations were difficult, they would continue for a multi-year contract. He rejected the need for a wage freeze, citing the City's fiscal difficulties. "Fiscal responsibility is a part of this administration," noted Kennedy. "But it takes more than one year to stabilize municipal government."

Delayed Study Called 'Outdated'

by Pat DiMaggio

The results of a long-delayed study of school management and administrative operations were released by Rahway's Board of Education at a press conference held last week. The management operations review, compiled by Ernst and Young, Iselin, was commissioned jointly by Rahway's Municipal Council and the board in 1990, and contains some cost-savings recommendations that present board members call "outdated."

The study, requested by former Mayor Daniel Martin, was to be completed by December 1990, but was delayed because of questions of data pertinency and validity which have since been clarified, according to Board President Peter Karavites.

"Because of these delays, the report contains information that is unfortunately dated," said Karavites at last week's press conference, attended by former Board Presidents John Ludington and Mario Kurylak, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Anthony Cavanna and council liaison Dennis Hemenway. "Therefore, as a result of certain board actions and administrative personnel changes, parts of the report have either been addressed or are not pertinent."

The study recommended improvements in the coordination of inter-district communication, an improved budget development process, the implementation of a centralized curriculum library, the transfer of sixth grade students into the Intermediate School, increased teaching periods for area supervisors, reductions of vice principal positions and a reduction in the superintendent's office.

Karavites explained that even before the study was completed, the board had moved to reduce expenses and streamline operations. He noted that the position of assistant superintendent was eliminated two years ago at a savings of $80,000 per year, one vice principal was reduced from the district last year at a savings of $50,000 per year, and area supervisors were put back to teaching at a savings of $150,000 per year. He also noted that a committee has been studying the possible move of sixth grade students into the Intermediate School after the 1993-94 school year.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Anthony Cavanna noted that the reorganization of the central office is under way, and said plans are being discussed to move computers into the High School for a curriculum library. He also expressed a desire to raise money from outside sources, and mentioned the possibility of hiring a grant writer.

"The board has already taken care of 80 to 90 percent of these recommendations," said Karavites. "It shows the board has been doing its job. And under Dr. Cavanna, we will continue to make this district the best in the state."

Copies of the Ernst and Young report will be available at school libraries, in the superintendent's office, at City Hall and at Rahway's Free Public Library.

FIRST DONATION ... Mayor Jim Kennedy, center, is first to donate to Annual Poppy Drive of American Legion Post 5 and Auxiliary Unit 5, which gets underway tomorrow. Proceeds help disabled and hospitalized veterans and their families. With Kennedy are Jean Durbin, Auxiliary Poppy Chairperson, and Tommy Durbin, Post Co-Chairperson.

Challengers Endorsed; Lions To Hold Debate

Prominent Republican and longtime Rahway businessman Anthony Cicatiello has issued a statement endorsing the Regular Republican Organization of Union County, chaired by Andrew Voros, which is challenging the GOP Organization led by James Falcomer in the Republican Primary election, June 2.

"I want to express my support for Andrew Voros for Rahway City Council in the Republican primary and for Municipal Chairman of the Rahway Republican Party," "It is time for a change in party Leadership in the city, and I am confident that Andy Voros can provide the needed vitality for that change."

Cicatiello, a close advisor to former Gov. Thomas H. Kean, having managed his campaigns for Governor is 1977 and 1981, was head of Governor's transition team, assembling his Cabinet officers. Cicatiello also served as Executive Director for President Gerald Ford's 1976 presidential campaign, and is currently Chairman of CN Communications International, a public relations and advertising firm based in Rahway.

In an additional development, the Rahway Lions Club has sponsored a forum debate between the competing GOP primary slates.

Lions Club President [illegible] said the Lions [illegible] organization and would not take sides in the debate, but that the Club was simply encouraging a discussion of issues in the community.

"The RRO welcomes the opportunity to present Rahway citizens with the issues affecting the city in a public forum, sponsored by a prominent, non-partisan civic group, of which Mr. Falcomer is himself a member," Voros said.

"As long as it's a mutually-convenient time for all of our people to be there, we'll make it," said Falcomer, who is being opposed by Voros for the Republican nomination for Council in the Sixth Ward.

Eugene Warga

Warga Winds Down

As the 1991-92 school year comes to a close, Eugene M. Warga will conclude his distinguished 42-year career in education.

Warga, a lifelong resident of Rahway, will bid farewell to Roosevelt School and to the Rahway School District.

Warga's pursuit in education began in December 1950, when he replaced an Eighth Grade teacher leaving Roosevelt School to serve in the army. In 1955, he became the school's Assistant Principal, and in 1956, became its Principal, the position he has served in up to the present time.

Warga will be honored by his colleagues and friends on Friday, May 29, at the Landmark Inn, Routes 1 & 9, Woodbridge. Anyone wishing to join them can obtain information about the event by calling 396-1057.

Georgia Hartnett

Hartnett Promoted

Georgia Hartnett of Rahway has been promoted to Director of Government, Consumer and External Affairs at Elizabethtown Gas Co.

In her new position, Hartnett continues to act as Elizabethtown's official lobbying agent with the state and federal governments. She is responsible for representing the company in Trenton and Washington in matters of legislative reform and related activities. She also retains overall responsibility for the development of the company's Energy Conservation Plan.

Hartnett joined Elizabethtown Gas in 1985 as Manager of Regulatory and Government Affairs. She added the energy conservation area to her responsibilities in 1987. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Kean College, and she is a graduate of Rutgers University School of Law.

NAACP Meeting

The NAACP's Rahway Branch will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, May 18, at 8 p.m. at Second Baptist Church, 378 Milton Ave.

Featured speakers this month will be Sgt. Alonzo Evans, the Newark Police Department Public Information Officer, and Ralph Dunham of the Rahway Recreation Department. All are invited to come and be a part of this discussion.

'Camp Superkids'

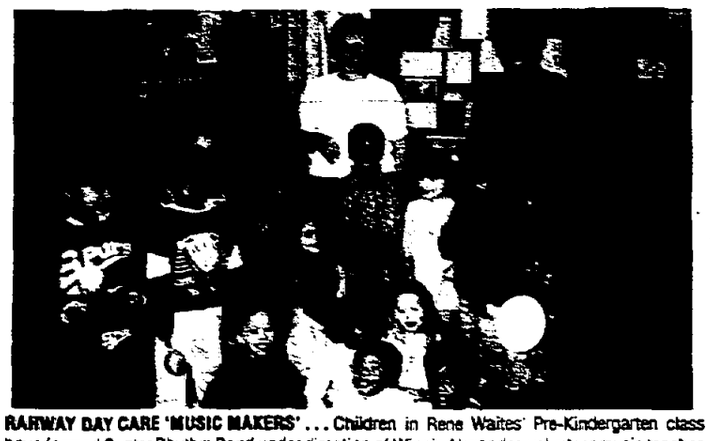
"Camp Superkids" is good medicine for children with asthma!

The American Lung Association of New Jersey – The Christmas Seal People – is now accepting applications for "Camp Superkids," its camping program for children with asthma, it was announced by Roscoe Conklin, Association President.

The Program, entering its 11th year, is open to youngsters ages seven to 15, and is conducted in cooperation with Children's Hospital of New Jersey and Frost Valley YMCA.

Two-seek resident programs are scheduled July 5-17 and Aug. 16-28 at Frost Valley YMCA Camp, Claryville, NY (in the Catskill Mountains), where children with asthma are mainstreamed into the regular camp population.

To obtain registration information, call 388-4556. Registration deadline is Sunday, May 31.



RAHWAY DAY CARE 'MUSIC MAKERS' ... Children in Rene Waites' Pre-Kindergarten class have formed Center Rhythm Band under direction of Winnie Alexander, volunteer music teacher. Shown here with Band members are, from left, Teacher's Aide Jackie Wilson, Ms. Alexander and Miss Waites.

Veterans' Flags Will Be Placed

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Mulvey-Dittmars Post 681, Rahway, will be placing flags on the graves of all veterans at the historic Rahway Cemetery as a Memorial Day Tribute. These flags will remain for July 4, also.

If you know of a deceased veteran who has not been honored with a flag, call 381-3104 or 499-9163.

– Kennedy On Cable –

Join Mayor Jim Kennedy on Suburban Cablevision's TV3 program, "Downtown: A Talk With You Mayor," on Wednesday, May 27, at 6:30 p.m.

"Downtown," a live call-in show with host Rich Leonard, allows viewers to call in their questions and gives Mayor Kennedy an opportunity to address issues of concern affecting residents of Rahway.

The call-in phone number is 636-5333.

This program will be repeated on TV3 on Sunday, May 31, at 5 p.m.

CERAMICS WINNERS ... These Rahway Intermediate School students are shown with their artwork, which was entered in 18th Annual Ceramic Leagues Hobby Show and Exhibit held recently in Cranford. In Hand Modeling Category, places were created in Mrs. Hynes' art classes. Ribbon winners were, from left, Angel Torres (First Place and $10 gift certificate), Jennifer Carson (Second Place), Cortnie La Saint (Honorable Mention), Curtis Willis (Honorable Mention), Nicole Williams (Third Place), and Mary Rose Ronquillo (Second Place and Honorable Mention).