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Can it be done? The freeholders look into merging the County Police and Sheriff's Department. See Page B1.

Happy Passover

Need a new home? In this week's supplement, find tips on home repair, remodeling. See 'Home Improvement.'

RAHWAY PROGRES

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A WORRALL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER RAHWAY, N.J., VOL. 7 NO. 28 THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1997 TWO SECTIONS 25 CENTS

City Highlights

Blanket on sale

Due to popular demand, the Rahway Public Library is reordering more of the Historic Sites blanket which has sold out twice since last November. The third weaving of the blanket will be in cream and navy blue. Anyone interested in buying one or more of the blankets should stop by the library at the corner of Central and St. Georges Avenues. The blankets are $50 and a deposit of $10 is required. The order will be placed in early April and delivery is expected for mid to late May. For more information call 388-0761.

Tree planting

Mayor James Kennedy and the Department of Public Works announced the second city-sponsored tree planting program to take place this spring. The program is designed to encourage the planting of trees, enhancing the beauty and quality of life in the community. Applications are available for Willow Oaks, Tupelos, and Silver Linders. The DPW is offering trees for half of wholesale price. Applications are available at City Hall near the bulletin board in the lobby. There are also pictures of these types of trees available.

Tax program

The AARP, with the cooperation of the Division of Parks and Recreation, will conduct a free income tax and program for Rahway seniors on a limited income. The tax assistance program will be on an appointment-only basis and will be held in the Rahway Senior Center on Esterbrooke Avenue on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The program will last through April Tuesday. For an appointment, call the Rahway Division of Parks and Recreation at 827-2045.

Stamp services

Several stamp-buying services that help postal customers year-round are particularly handy. Stamp services enable customers to receive their stamps via delivery within a few days by filling out a form that can be obtained from mail carriers. The service is at no extra charge more than the face value of the stamps. Credit cards can also be used for telephone orders by calling 1800 STAMP-24 as Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

Blood screening

A free blood pressure screening will be offered for residents of Rahway at the Rahway Public Library every month. For further information contact the Department of Health, Welfare and Recreation at 827-2085.

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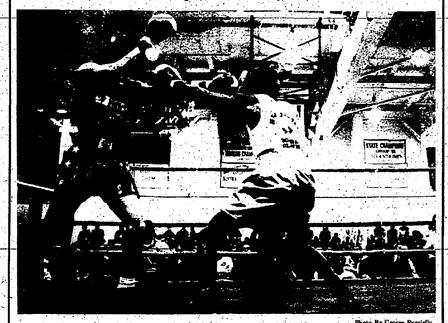

Photo By George Pucciello

Jose Batres of Elizabeth mixes it up with Naleem River of Newark during one of the Golden Gloves Finals bouts at the Rahway High School gymnasium. See Page 5.

Voters defeat budget, elect board members

By Chris Suswal
Managing Editor

The 1997-98 school budget will have to be retooled.

On Tuesday, Rahway voters defeated the proposed school budget with 610 votes against and 553 votes in favor of the budget. The budget, worth $31,563,320, would have carried a local tax levy of $20,934,803, which would have meant a decrease of $213,836 from last year's debt service levy.

Also on Tuesday, 1,195 voters turned out to support the three candidates to fill three open seats on the Rahway Board of Education. Theresa Mikajlo will retain her seat on the Rahway Board of Education while Antonio Garay and Paul Hassen will join the realigned school board. Incumbent Mikajlo received 856 votes while 769 supported Garay and 809 backed Hassen.

Certainly, the main focus on this year's election was that of the budget vote. Superintendent Bill Petrino was on hand at Rahway City Hall when the budget results were tallied.

"That's the democratic process," Petrino said. "I thought we had done pretty good to present a zero tax increase while still satisfying a complex set of demands. Now, we'll have to sharpen our pencils and sit down with City Council."

"We are hopeful that they won't have to look for a lot to extrapolate," Mikajlo said. "The council members will have to look at the close vote when they examine how many adjustments will be made."

Hassen said there was a lot of work to do in the coming summer months concerning both the budget and the teachers' contract which is currently undergoing a negotiation process.

"We have to find a way to balance the needs of the teaching staff while still considering the taxpayers," Hassen said. "That is the job of the school board but there is just so much money available."

Although he has only lived in Rahway for four years, he said he has a genuine concern for the education in Rahway because he has three children in the school system.

"I thought the former Superintendent Anthony Cavanna was going in the right direction and we need to get that momentum back after all of the changes. These kids deserve a great school system."

Man on the street

Shooting escalates tenants' woes

By Sean Daily
Staff Writer

The *Rahway Progress* recently spent a day in the Glen Denning/Scott/Kennedy housing complex on Capobianco Plaza, speaking to the residents there.

Maintenance and security are two of the biggest complaints that residents of the complex, which is run by the Housing Authority, have.

Some of the complaints about security stem from a shooting in the complex in February, a shooting that left no injuries. The complex has two officers on duty six hours a day, but residents have complained about the response time of these officers.

According to Timiea White, this incident occurred on a side street near her house and the lawn where her three children play. According to White, police did not show up when the first round of gunfire occurred and only showed up at the scene when a car came by and started firing again.

"When I asked the police officer why he came, he said he didn't see a car, which is besides the point. When you hear shots, you should come," she said.

"I've seen people, like the night of the shooting, ready to fight and they just stood on the porch," she said.

Captain Kevin White of the Rahway police said he was surprised to hear complaints about this incident.

"I'm surprised that this has become an issue once again," he said. "We discussed this at a March 11 meeting. They seemed satisfied."

At this meeting, Rahway police met with members of the City Council, Housing Authority and the complex's Tenants Association.

He said that, at the time, there had been "some discrepancy" as to the initial shots and whether the police had been called in the first place.

"We're trying to open channels of communication and they're rehashing something that happened two months ago," he said.

The police, through a federal grant, maintain an office in the housing complex, where the two officers are based. These two officers are supposed to take regular walking patrols of the complex.

"It's hard to cover that area. Two officers dedicated to that area can't cover that area in that time," he said.

The officers are there for six hours a day, after which the complex receives the same coverage with police patrols as the rest of Rahway.

"It's hard for the Police Department to cover 24 hours of service in six hours," said White.

Another complaint of residents is the fact that the police do not break up groups of people congregating in the complex. This reporter had a run-in with one of these groups at about 2 p.m. on Sunday.

I had been warned about one group of five or six youths, who were grouped around one of the buildings in the complex, by a visitor there.

"Don't go there!" he said. "They'll try to rob you, man!"

As I was asking this group if they had complaints about the security, one said, "You got any money?"

"I hope you didn't come in here with money on you," he said.

As I was walking away, one of the youths said, "Hey! He's got a wallet in his back pocket!" A few more steps, and a rock skipped by about three feet to my left; someone had thrown it at me.

When asked to comment about this incident, White said, "If you were down there at night; unannounced, it isn't safe."

"They don't know who you are," he added. "There are elements down there who will want to remove you."

White said the police cannot go in and break up these groups because "basically, this is their backyard. There isn't loitering per se. They're waiting for friends."

Another complaint that residents have is about the maintenance of the apartments and grounds.

On Sunday, much of the grounds were strewn with litter and at least one apartment had its screen door hanging from one hinge and banging in the wind.

One resident, who did not want her name published, had a number of complaints about repairs to her apartment.

Tilton will serve on Housing Authority

By Chris Suswal
Managing Editor

The most recent appointment to the Housing Authority may increase tension between the Tenants Association and the Housing Authority.

Despite pleas from members of the Rahway branch of the NAACP and the Tenants Association on Monday, the City Council appointed Rahway Police Captain Edward Tilton to Rahway's Housing Authority. The appointment was finalized in a 6-2 vote after Republican Councilman Frank Janusz's motion to postpone the appointment did not pass. Councilwoman Diana Tilton, the wife of Edward Tilton, abstained on the votes while Democrat Dave Brown, liaison to the Housing Authority, supported the appointment.

The appointment resolution, AR-11-97, allows Edward Tilton to fill a vacant Housing Authority term which will expire on Aug. 15, 1999. Although the Tenants Association and the Housing Authority met last week to discuss problems at the Capobianco Plaza-based housing complex, several residents expressed concern over the appointment during the public meeting's public portion.

"I find it quite odd that the appointment at this time would be someone involved with the Police Department," NAACP Rahway Branch President Lori Caughman said. "This might send a message that it is not the tenants you are listening to."

Some of the tenants' grievances focus on the abandoned units of the complex, the repair and maintenance of individual units, and lack of timely response from the Housing Authority. Other complaints suggest the police allow groups of people to congregate within the complex. It was these concerns about police foot patrol and existence of drug selling which led to opposition of the Tilton appointment.

Council President Jim Jones and Janusz were the only council members to oppose the appointment.

"There are advantages of having someone from the Police Department on the authority," Janusz said. "But I've committed myself to listening to what the people want."

Tilton said he would serve the authority in the same manner as he serves the Police Department — "with honesty and integrity."

"I promise I will do my job in the same way I have served the City of Rahway, and if I can't do that, I will resign," he said.

Photo By George Pucciello

During the street dedication, General Alfred Gray addresses the color guard and crowd during a ceremony to honor him. Gray, a Rahway resident and former commandant of the Marine Corps, is the only man to go from buck private to four-star general.

City renames street after war hero Gray

By Sean Daily
Staff Writer

If you happen to be going to Lindenwald St. Georges Avenue, look at the sign on the corner of St. Georges Avenue and Grant Avenue.

You will find a third sign, a new one, naming part of St. Georges Avenue after Rahway resident Alfred Gray.

The sign went up officially on Saturday in a ceremony at the war memorial on St. Georges Avenue on a cold Saturday morning to honor Gray, former commandant of the Marine Corps and the only man to go from buck private to four-star general.

Mayor James Kennedy, members of the City Council and representatives from Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts throughout the area, were on hand at the ceremony.

"General Gray is a great man. General Gray is a very good person," said John Graziosi of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

"It's a tribute to a man who deserves it — especially a Rahway boy," said Joseph Dietz. "Heck of a fine man."

Gray had a career in the Marines spanning more than 40 years, which he only recently retired from in 1991.

He was born in Rahway on June 22, 1926, the son of Alfred Gray Sr. and Emily Zutt. He was raised in Point Pleasant and enlisted in the Marines, serving with the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific in Korea.

Gray made it to sergeant when he was commissioned as a first officer in 1952. By 1965, he was a major and spent the first of many years in Vietnam, serving as a regimental communications officer, a regimental training officer and an aerial observer for artillery. He took command of the Composite Artillery Battalion and United States Free World Force at Gio Linh in April 1967.

After a brief tour in 1969, he was

See HONOR, Page 2