

## Fanwood Committee Eyes Ways To Handle Possible Y2K Glitches

By SUZETTE F. STALKER  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD — Although still rebounding from the effects of Hurricane Floyd, members of Fanwood's Emergency Management Planning Committee convened last week to discuss another potential hurdle — Y2K.

With the turn of the century just three months away, there is widespread concern that automated systems may fail on January 1, 2000 if they are not programmed to recognize the new date.

Particular attention has been focused on how the "Y2K problem" could impact communication, utilities, food distribution, emergency services, fuel availability and other critical areas, all of which were reviewed by the committee at its meeting September 21 at Fanwood police headquarters.

Police Chief Robert Carboy, who serves as Emergency Management Coordinator for the borough, and more than a dozen committee members also discussed segments of the population which could be particularly vulnerable in the event of a systems shutdown.

The committee, which first met last spring, represents a cross section of the community. Its membership includes police, fire and rescue squad personnel; elected officials and municipal department heads, representatives of The Chelsea at Fanwood and Children's Specialized Hospital (CSH), the Fanwood

Senior Citizens and local media, including TV-35 and The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood.

Chief Carboy said he does not expect serious fallout from Y2K, noting that utility companies have told him their systems are set to switch over to the new date "without a glitch." The borough's own systems, as well as those serving The Chelsea and CSH, are also reported to be Y2K-compliant.

Nevertheless, he said he believes the borough should be prepared for any possible problems. He pointed out that, unlike a local emergency, Y2K would impact the entire area, forcing individual towns to rely on their own resources.

Several concerns related to Y2K — such as a potential power outage or water shortage — were heightened by both Hurricane Floyd and the Labor Day storm of 1998.

The latter event left parts of the community without power for several days, and a brief power outage occurred in Fanwood last Friday after a line that feeds the borough came down while Public Service Electric and Gas was attempting to restore power in neighboring Scotch Plains.

Chief Carboy has asked committee members to make recommendations for dealing with prospective Y2K effects that will be included in the borough's Wednesday, November 17, newsletter.

At last week's meeting, he also made several recommendations for helping to minimize problems should a Y2K emergency unfold.

He suggested residents not travel outside their neighborhoods on New Year's Eve, noting that a power outage would be particularly dangerous for revelers returning home from far away. The Chief also observed that large groups of people caught in a power outage could lead to crowd control problems.

Chief Carboy proposed that extra police patrols be assigned to each quadrant of the borough in the event of a power loss on New Year's Eve, adding that Fire Department and Rescue Squad personnel could possibly serve as backup for dealing with any problems that night.

The Chief also advised residents to remain in their own homes should a power outage occur instead of seeking shelter elsewhere, since such a problem would affect the entire area.

By staying home, he said, residents would have their own clothes and extra blankets right there with them. The Chief also recommended that people make sure their homes

have adequate ventilation if they are going to utilize alternate heat sources.

Several committee members, including the Chief, Public Works Director Raymond Manfra and long-time Fanwood Rescue Squad member Ruth Wegmann, offered suggestions for what supplies to have on hand in the event of a Y2K emergency.

Among their recommendations were a battery-operated radio, flashlight batteries, extra non-perishable food and enough bottled water for both people and pets, in the event food distribution to supermarkets was interrupted.

It was also suggested that residents make sure their prescriptions are up to date and that the gas tanks of their cars are filled prior to midnight on New Year's Eve. Committee members observed, however, that residents should not store fuel in their homes.

In terms of banking, the Chief proposed that people take out the same amount of cash they would normally need for a long weekend. If they require more, he urged that they opt instead for traveler's or cashier's checks, rather than keeping a lot of cash around the house.

Susan Davis of the Fanwood Rescue Squad suggested that residents be encouraged to check on their elderly neighbors, "particularly those living alone," to see if they are in need of anything.

She followed that up with a proposal for individual neighborhood care programs, in which residents would look out for each other in their immediate areas. Mrs. Wegmann said the Fanwood Senior Citizens might be able to coordinate such a program.

The Chief said an effort will be made to identify individuals in Fanwood with special needs and to make recommendations for ensuring that those needs are met during a possible Y2K crisis through discussions with local emergency service units.

Another topic discussed by the committee last week was how to best disseminate information to the public ahead of time regarding potential Y2K problems.

In addition to the upcoming newsletter, it was suggested that Y2K information could be released to the community via TV-35, local newspapers, church bulletins, flyers and the borough's recently-inaugurated Internet site, www.fanwoodnj.com.

It was also proposed that information could be distributed at polling places on Tuesday, November 2, during the General Election.

## State Standardized Test Results Discussed by Mountainside BOE

By SONIA V. OVCHARIV  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — During its Tuesday night meeting, the Mountainside Board of Education actively discussed the results of the IOWA, ESPA (Elementary School Proficiency Assessment) and GEPA (Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment) tests and whether they paint an accurate picture of the district's academic strengths and weaknesses.

The IOWA Test of Basic Skills was administered in April to all students in grades 2 through 8. By reviewing the results Tuesday, board members hoped to get an overview of students' basic skills levels.

The standardized tests which make up the IOWA provide a comprehensive measurement of skills in a number of significant areas, including vocabulary, reading, spelling, capitalization, work-study skills and mathematics concepts, as well as problem-solving and computation.

The test provides information about basic skills to parents, pupils and the public in terms of how well a program or curricula is benefiting students and where improvements may need to be made.

Standardized testing, for the most part, is a diagnostic tool, according to Dr. Gerard Schaller, Chief School Administrator.

Some board members expressed concerns about the IOWA testing and felt they needed more information about students' performances.

"The test has outlived itself," Board Vice President Sally Riveccio said. Most of her fellow board members agreed that the test is not a practical measure of students' skills. They felt it does not give teachers additional information in regards to students' aptitude and what direction to take in the classroom.

"We need to know what we are strong in and what we are weak in," Dr. Schaller said.

The composite scores for vocabulary, reading, language and mathematics for grades 2 through 8 individually ranged anywhere from 89 to 99, according to the district's report.

The ESPA serves as a primary indicator for identifying those students who may need instructional intervention.

Among 62 regular education students in the fourth grade at Deerfield School, the 1999 ESPA revealed that eight, or 12.9 percent, were advanced proficient.

Forty-five students, or 72.6 percent, were found to be proficient, while the remaining nine, or 14.5 percent, were deemed partially proficient.

Test results in mathematics showed that 38 percent of the fourth graders were partially proficient, 43 percent were proficient and 19 percent were advanced proficient.

In the area of Language Arts Literacy, results identified 59 percent of the students as partially proficient, 41 percent as proficient and less than 1 percent as advanced proficient.

Results in science indicated that 14 percent of the fourth graders were partially proficient, 52 percent were proficient and 34 percent were advanced proficient, according to the report.

The GEPA test was given to all eighth-grade students in March. In Mountainside, test results reflected the scores of 50 regular education students in the eighth grade at Deerfield School.

The mathematics scores proved that 21 students, or 42 percent, were advanced proficient; 28 students, or 56 percent, were proficient and one student, or 2 percent, was partially proficient.

For the Language Arts Literacy portion of the test, which involved students reading passages from published books, newspapers and magazines, test questions were broken down into categories like writing, reading, working with text and analyzing/critiquing text.

Ten students, or 20 percent, were determined to be advanced proficient, while 80 students, or 40 percent, were proficient. No students were categorized as partially proficient.

The results showed that all of Deerfield's eighth graders scored above the state standards in Language Arts Literacy.



CAMPAIGN KICK-OFF...The United Fund of Westfield kicked off its 1999 Campaign with a celebration hosted at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Pinkin on September 18. The celebration saluted the members of the Pillars Club, the campaign volunteers and the start of a campaign year. Pictured, left to right, are: Raymond DeRosa, owner and President of J & M Market in Mountainside, who catered the event free of charge, Lois Pinkin and James Pinkin. Please see another picture on Page 19.

### Foothill Club Makes Donations; Sets Events

MOUNTAINSIDE — The Foothill Club recently presented its annual donations at The Hetfield House on Constitution Plaza.

Accepting the checks from club President Ruth Goense were members of the volunteer firefighters, the rescue squad and the Hetfield House. A donation was also given to the Mountainside Lions Club for Christmas tree lights.

The club also will prepare Thanksgiving food baskets for needy families in Mountainside for its community service project.

The club's next regular monthly meeting will be held on Thursday, October 7, at noon at B.G. Fields Restaurant in Westfield. The program will feature a jewelry demonstration. Guests are welcome.

For more information about the Foothill Club or reservations, please call Genevieve Kaczka at (908) 232-3626.

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