

Holiday Party, tree lighting, Santa's ride are among the traditions that make Fanwood's December special



Santa had the spot of honor on the front of the Fanwood Fire's Ladder One as he made his rounds last December.

Fanwood's holiday season officially begins when Santa Claus visits to talk with the children on Sunday, Dec. 6, starting at 3 p.m.

Everyone is invited to meet Santa at the Holiday Party under the big tent on the lawn in front of the North Avenue Train Station and enjoy an afternoon of seasonal music, holiday crafts and refreshments — all for free.

Children who stop by to say hello to Santa will get a free photograph of their visit with him.

And, children can also enter contests and win prizes.

The celebration concludes at 5 p.m. when Mayor Colleen Mahr lights the Fanwood town tree on the train station lawn.

This event is sponsored by the Fanwood Recreation Commission.

It's a busy time in December as several groups help borough residents celebrate the holidays.

Escorted by the Fanwood Fire Dept., Rescue Squad and Fanwood Police PBA 123, Santa Claus will

make his annual ride through the borough Saturday, Dec. 12, starting at 11 a.m., distributing gifts.

Santa's elves will accept packages at the Fire House behind Borough Hall for a week, beginning Monday, Nov. 30, and ending Sunday, Dec. 6. Drop-off times are 5-9 p.m. during that week. Packages may not be dropped off at the Police Dept.

Since Santa has to make his list and check it twice, late gifts

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The Fanwoodian

Published quarterly by the
Fanwood Communications Committee

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FROM PAGE ONE

Traditions (cont'd)

cannot be accepted. All packages must include name, address and phone number. **Gifts must be no larger than a typical shoe box and only one gift per child is permitted.**

Packages for the same address must be bundled together. The rain/snow date is Saturday, Dec. 19. For more information, check the fire department's website at fanwoodfd.com.



Mike Venezia, right, of the Lions Club helps customers with their tree last year. The Lions Club has been selling Christmas trees in Fanwood for more than 65 years.

Other traditions going on in the borough include:

Holiday Giving Tree For the fifth year, the Fanwood Police Dept. and PBA Local 123 are coordinating a holiday gift donation for the Parents as Teachers program in Union County. A giving tree with ornaments for each child is located outside of Borough Hall. Take an ornament and return the unwrapped gift (with the tag attached) by Dec. 11 to the Police Dept. during business hours, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Parents as Teachers home visitation program provides a wide variety of services to 60 families in Union County to improve child health and development, increased parent involvement in children's care and education and prevention of child abuse.

Christmas Tree Sale Begins Thursday, Dec. 3. The Lions Club and Fanwood Fire Dept. are teaming up for this year's sale at LaGrande Park. The lot will be open Thursdays and Fridays, 6:30-9 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. All profits are donated to charities, including for the blind, and local schools for scholarships. Plain and decorated wreaths and garlands will also be available for purchase.

Tiny Tim Carol Night Leave your porch light on Thursday, Dec. 3, from 4-9 p.m., so carolers from the Tiny Tim Fund will know they are welcome. For more than 30 years, the fund has provided financial assistance to medically needy local children. Carolers can drop off their proceeds and enjoy refreshments at the Stage House Inn in Scotch Plains. If you would like to participate, contact Flavia Blechinger at (908) 753-4228 or Barbara Anilo at (908) 322-4472.

Rotary Club Luminary Sale Begins Saturday, Dec. 5. Luminaries will also be sold Dec. 12, 13, 19 and 20, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Dec. 24, 9 a.m. to noon. Luminary kits (candle, bag, and sand) will be sold at the Fanwood Municipal Garage, 270 North Ave. All proceeds will be donated to charities. Please bring canned food to donate.



mayor's message

by Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr

Thank you all for electing me to serve as your Mayor for a fourth term. I take great pride in the strides Fanwood has made and will continue to work for progress.

A fond farewell to outgoing Councilman Daniel Levine! Dan's savvy managerial skills have helped to streamline borough operations, serve you better and maximize tax dollars. His expertise has made the borough a better place.

Congratulations to Councilman Jack Molenaar on reelection. Jack will continue to bring his clear thinking, expertise and long experience as a professional transportation planner to our service. And we welcome incoming Councilwoman Erin McElroy-Barker. Erin's background is in social work and program development, and we look forward to working together to continually revive community life in Fanwood.

I was first elected on a platform of downtown redevelopment and every day we continue to move projects forward. We are currently in talks with the owners of the two remaining open parcels on our downtown block; I'm optimistic the block will be fully developed over the next several years. Although the work has not been speedy, we've worked hard to avoid the use of eminent domain and will continue to adhere to that philosophy with property owners as we proceed.

As construction downtown nears completion, we are turning our gaze to the westerly end of South Avenue. With this area recently rezoned for residential and commercial, we've already heard from several developers.

I am in contact with the owners of the A&P property and am confident we can work together to improve the entire block. For now, we must await the A&P bankruptcy process to conclude. As of November, there existed the possibility for another supermarket to pick up the lease. The A&P has been a part of the Fanwood landscape for decades and I will do everything in my power to ensure that the property is improved and brings useful service to Fanwoodians.

As the council gears up for a new year, I am proud to announce receipt of several grants that will help our budgeting in 2016, including: \$50,000 for improvements at Forest Road Park; \$20,000 for maintenance of the Historic Train Station; \$20,000 for Recreational Opportunities for the disabled; and \$200,000 to improve pedestrian safety near Park Middle School. We are always seeking the best "bang" from your tax dollar; that's why we seek grant monies so aggressively.

Similarly, we've examined the fiscal operations of the North Avenue Recycling Center. Unfortunately, there has been a downturn in the market for recyclables and the Borough

has had to subsidize operations since 2014. We have a legal obligation to provide recycling and the Council is currently studying the economies of the current program vs. curbside pickup.

The decision is unlikely to be based simply on dollars. I am a supporter of the Recycling Center as a symbol of Fanwood's commitment to a healthy environment and as a shared community value and would hate to see the program end. Before any decisions are made, we will consider every option and speak to the community. I look forward to hearing from you on this issue.

Another of my mayoral duties is to promote civic life. I invite you all to consider becoming a community volunteer. We have a wide range of boards and committees staffed by people just like you, who wish to share their interests and abilities and work together to make Fanwood a wonderful place to live. Please visit fanwoodnj.org/departments and take a look at the types of boards and committees that are available. If you don't see your area of interest, let's talk. I am always interested in hearing from you, so please reach out to me at mayor@fanwoodnj.org or (908)322-8236 x124.

You'll also have an opportunity to sign up for volunteer spots when you attend the Dec. 6 Holiday Celebration at the train station. We will have a visit from Santa, music, seasonal arts and crafts and, of course, a tree-lighting at dusk.

Speaking of volunteers, thanks to Fanny Wood Day Chairman Bruce Zakarin and his beautiful daughters for all their help in staging another wonderful event. Once again, we had a good turnout and it was great to see so many of our neighbors enjoying a lovely day together.

Congratulations as well to our local "Green Team," led by Margaret Chowdhury. Their success at meeting the requirements of "Sustainable Jersey" puts Fanwood in a great position to earn further grants to promote local sustainable activities. We are very grateful for their efforts to meet these exacting standards.

Thanks as well to Brian Horton, leaving us in January. Brian has been editor of the Fanwoodian, photographer for all things Fanwood, webmaster and communications genius. Our association with Brian has been a delight and we are sorry to see him go. All the best to Brian and Marilyn as they head down the shore!

I look forward to seeing you all at the Dec. 6 Holiday Celebration and invite you to attend the Jan. 1 reorganization meeting at noon in the Borough Hall Council Chambers.



FANWOOD'S YEAR IN PHOTOS 2015



From the never-ending snows of a brutal winter to the hot summer and the lingering fall, it was a year to remember in Fanwood.

Clockwise, from upper left: goats made quick work of invasive plants at the Nature Center, Boy Scouts presented the colors at Fanny Wood Day, a North Avenue resident cleared the way after a snowstorm, the veterans' color guard led the Memorial Day parade and edible plants were checked out at Borough Hall.



Photos by Brian Horton
For more photos: fanwoodnj.org/news/photos/



Clockwise: a toast was raised at the St. Patrick's Day celebration, parents and kids teamed up at the Easter egg hunt, good crowds turned out this summer for the series of movies in the park, the dunk tank was busy at National Night Out, a Fire Prevention Week ceremony was cut short by a dispatch for the Fire Dept., kids said the Pledge at the Martin Luther King Day of Service and dads took the kids for a run in the Fanwood 5K.

Schedule set for seniors' winter rec programs

Fanwood Recreation announces its winter program schedule for Fanwood seniors. Most programs begin the week of Jan. 4 and run weekly through the week of March 28.

Aerobics	Tuesdays, 9–10 a.m.
Tai Chi	Tuesdays, 10:15–11:15 a.m.
Water Exercise	Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.–noon
Zumba Gold section 1	Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
Gentle Yoga	Thursdays, 9:30–10:30 a.m.
Line, Ballroom, Latin Dancing	Thursdays, noon–1 p.m.
Zumba Gold section 2	Fridays, 9:15–10 a.m.

All classes will be held in the recreation building at Forest Road Park with the exception of Water Exercise, which will be held at the JCC of Central NJ Wilf Jewish Community Campus indoor pool. The fee is \$15 per program for Fanwood and Scotch Plains residents, \$30 for all others. To

register online and pay by credit card, please go to fanwoodrecreation.org. Or, if you prefer to pick up a paper schedule and registration form and pay by check, please go to Fanwood Borough Hall.

Full slate of after-school programs on tap

Fanwood Recreation is offering a wide selection of after-school programs this winter. Coming back are LEGO Club, String Orchestra, Junior Scientists, Electronic Game Design: Medieval Tower Defense, Babysitting Certification, and Child's Play Challenge Course.

Plus, for our youngest athletes, US Sports Institute offers Soccer Squirts (indoors at the Forest Road Park building) on Wednesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. Also, in partnership with Fanwood Recreation,

Mad Science invites aspiring astronauts to come aboard its brand-new NASA Journey Into Outer Space program.

Most of these programs will begin in late January (String Orchestra winter session begins Dec. 21). For more information about them, including detailed descriptions, dates, times, prices, and age group, go to fanwoodrecreation.org, where you can also register and pay for these programs.

Recreation jobs available for winter, summer programs

Fanwood Recreation is now accepting job applications for ice skating rink attendant at the LaGrande Park rink and for counselor positions for its 2016 Summer Park Recreation Program and Tweens & Teens Travel Camp.

The Park Recreation Program, which begins on June 27 and runs for eight weeks from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday–Friday at LaGrande Park, provides children ages 5–12 with structured, fun-filled activities under the supervision of experienced counselors. The Summer Travel Camp will run for two or three weeks in July from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday–Friday.

To apply for an attendant or counselor job, go to fanwoodrecreation.org and click on the “Job Applications” button to download an application. Submission of an application does not guarantee an interview or a response.

Registration for the summer programs will start in February or March.

Skateboard Park set to open by mid-December



Mayor Colleen Mahr and Union County Freeholders Bruce Bergen and Al Mirabella join local skateboarders at the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the new Forest Road Park skateboard park. Construction is expected to be completed in December.

County grants will help build, refurbish Recreation facilities

The Union County Kids Recreation Trust Fund awarded a grant of \$50,000 in October to the Recreation Dept. Together with matching funds provided by Fanwood Recreation, the Forest Road Park tennis courts will be replaced with a combination of a paddleball/handball court, playground equipment and an open-air shade structure. The project is expected to last into 2017.

Meanwhile, using grant money that Fanwood Recreation received in 2014, repairs of the LaGrande Park tennis courts

are expected to begin in May of 2016. Extensive repairs will include milling and repainting the surface, and repairing the areas around the courts.

Volunteers sought for MLK Day

Volunteers are being sought for the 6th Annual Scotch Plains Fanwood Martin Luther King Day of Service, to be held Monday, Jan. 18, 2016.

The day will kick off with an opening ceremony at the Scotch Plains JCC at 10 a.m., followed immediately by a number of volunteer activities to be held throughout the two towns, continuing until 5 p.m.

For information on hosting an activity or volunteering, visit spfmlday.com. Volunteer registration for activities will open in late December.

You can also email spfdayservice@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to help with the organization of the day's events.



Recreation Commissioners Mike Szuch, left, and Anthony Carter with Freeholder Al Mirabella, right.



Coming up

JANUARY

1 - Borough Council re-organization meeting

18 - Martin Luther King Day of Service

31 - Dog and cat licenses due

FEBRUARY

Registration begins for spring after-school and seniors' recreation programs

1 - Borough property taxes due

MARCH

13 - Daylight Saving Time begins, "Spring Forward"

19 - Fanwood Easter Egg Hunt

Local pantry in need of food, items, paper goods to aid less fortunate in area

The Community Food Pantry operating out of St. Bartholomew's Church in Scotch Plains is in need of food and paper goods to replenish the inventory that has been diminished because of a "lean summer" and many losses from the Aug. 19 storm which flooded the church basement.

Current needs are for the following food items: jarred tomato sauce; canned fruit; taco dinner kits; Hamburger Helper dinner kits; cereal; peanut butter; jelly; and canned tuna

The Food Bank also needs napkins, individually wrapped toilet paper and paper towels.

Donations are accepted at the Fanwood Library and Fanwood Borough Hall or at the St. Bartholomew's Church Rectory, 2032 Westfield Ave. in Scotch Plains, during business hours.

Anyone in need may email the church at contact@stbartholomewchurch.org or phone at (908) 322-5192 for a registration letter. Items are dispensed at the Rectory to approved registrants from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

**Be ready for winter storms,
sign up now at fanwoodnj.org for email alerts**

Mahr gets fourth term; Molenaar re-elected, McElroy-Barker wins seat



Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr, left, was elected to an unprecedented fourth term in the November General Election and Councilman Jack Molenaar won re-election. Erin McElroy-Barker, center, won a seat on Council in her first race. The trio was unopposed. They'll be sworn in Jan. 1 during the annual borough reorganization meeting.

Property tax relief available for disabled, vets, seniors

Seniors, disabled persons and veterans may be eligible for property tax relief programs.

If you are over 65, or a disabled person, with annual income of less than \$10,000 (not including Social Security), you may qualify for a \$250 deduction on your property taxes.

If you are over 65 and your combined income, including all sources, does not exceed a certain threshold (in 2014, it was \$70,000), you may qualify to have your taxes frozen.

If you are a veteran who served during active wartime, you also may qualify for a \$250 property tax deduction. In addition, veterans who are 100% disabled as a result of service-related injuries may be entitled to be 100% exempt from property taxes.

For more information on these and other state programs, and to obtain applications, contact the borough Tax Collector at (908) 322-8236 x126.

AROUND FANWOOD A postcard from our town



The streets were wet from a lingering overnight rain, but it didn't dampen the spirits of the runners in the sixth annual Fanwood 5K and the Family Fun Run in October. More than 200 runners competed in the 5K. Fanwood runners made a good showing in their hometown event. Kyle Mahoney was second overall while Robert Lynn (4th), Daniel Jablon (5th), Patrick D'amico (7th) and Jonathon Koseoglu (9th) were among the top ten overall. Mary Susan Wingate was the top female Fanwood finisher, ending the race in the 33rd spot overall, fourth among the women runners. Other Fanwood women finishing in the top ten in their division included Andrea Baglien (8th) and Karen Hofmann (10th).