

CROSS ROADS

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From The Building Department

The Oakland Building Department is located at the lower level in the rear of the Municipal Building. If you are planning to do any construction, please call this office to see if permits are required.

Sheds, decks and various work may require zoning and/or building permits. Please check with us first. New Jersey state law requires that you call 1-800-272-1000 before you dig anywhere. We will be happy to answer any of your questions at 201-337-1644.

We remind all residents that there is a Property Maintenance Code in the Borough. Experience and observations have shown that a lack of maintenance of real property may lead to progressive deterioration and loss of property value.

The posting of any signs, such as Garage Sale signs, on telephone poles, trees, light posts or staked in the ground is prohibited under Borough Ordinance 91-229N.(9). Persons will receive a summons for violating this ordinance.

Property maintenance will insure the desirability of residential and nonresidential uses, neighborhoods will be enhanced and the general health, safety and welfare of all residents will be protected.

Joseph Montemarano, Construction Official
Robert Porrino, Zoning Official
Gail Bowitz, Technical Assistant

THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE ... OAKLAND'S PROGRESS

It is hard to believe that the summer is just a memory and fall is here. School is in full swing and many of us are busy with soccer and football games, yard work and many other activities.

I am pleased to report that the Borough has received a significant grant award from the State of New Jersey in the amount of \$575,000 as part of the Borough's open space program. Although this may not seem like much, it was one of the largest single awards granted to any individual municipality. This award will be used in conjunction with our open space trust dollars and other public and private sources of funds to purchase properties to preserve the remaining significant tracts of undeveloped land that remain in our town. We are currently reviewing our draft open space plan that will help guide us in this endeavor.

I am also pleased to announce that



Mayor John Szabo

the State of New Jersey has also awarded the Borough \$45,000 to fund our downtown revitalization plan. This funding will enable us to proceed with the planning work necessary to address the redevelopment of our downtown business area. Work on this plan has commenced and will hopefully be completed by mid-2005. Once the planning work has been completed, the Borough will then be in a position to apply for numerous grants to help us implement the improvements needed to make our downtown a functional, aesthetically pleasing and vibrant part of our community.

In addition to the grant monies that we have received, the Borough has filed grant applications for various projects relating to public safety, recreational development, public improvements and the Borough Library, adding up to more than \$1 million dollars in aid. We are keeping our commitment to the taxpayers of this Borough that we will make every effort to seek outside funding opportunities whenever possible to help reduce the cost of local government for our residents.

The Oakland Library project is proceeding and nearing completion. We are looking forward to a full opening of the new facility within the next few months.

The Army Corps of Engineers Flood Control Project is continuing. Recently residents living in the area have

(Continued on page 2)

Oakland's Volunteer Fire Department On the Move

The Oakland Volunteer Fire Department would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Ms. Lillian Booth of Alpine, New Jersey for her generous donation. The Mayor and Council of Oakland unanimously voted to accept the donation of two new Assistant Chief vehicles, which were recently put in service by the Fire Department. The vehicles – two Ford Explorers – will be used by the Assistant Chief from each Fire House to transport them and their equipment to emergencies in the Borough of Oakland. An Assistant Chief vehicle also serves as a secondary Command Post if the Chief is out of town or committed to another incident. It also can serve as a secondary Command Post or Operations Post at larger incidents.

Prior to this donation, the Assistant Chiefs used their own personal vehicles to serve in this capacity and to respond to emergency incidents. The practice of using personal cars and trucks as emergency vehicles was unsafe and unfair to the Assistant Chief and his family, but it was necessary in order to perform the duties of the position. Some have asked why this is any different than all the other volunteers who drive their own cars everyday. The difference is that, when called, a volunteer firefighter or first aid squad member drops whatever they were doing and drives their vehicle to the building where he or she will get into a borough owned emergency vehicle. The Chief Officers of the Fire Department, when called, drive directly to the emergency in their vehicle to begin to perform their duties. Since past Assistant

Chiefs did this job with their own family car, each Chief drilled holes inside the car and mounted and wired the necessary radio and siren, as well as drilling holes outside for antennas. Red lights were attached to the car and most of the personal items removed so that the necessary equipment could be carried at all times. This gave past Assistant Chiefs the ability to respond to emergencies in Oakland, with all the wear and tear of response and operating at a scene, for an average of one of more hours, falling on his own personal property. Every few years an outgoing Chief Officer would take apart the items, which damaged his car, so they could be installed in the new Assistant Chief's family car.

Equipment installation, however, was not the only problem. Every officer in a police car, firefighter on a fire truck, or first aider in an ambulance is riding in a borough owned emergency vehicle to the site of any emergency incident. If an unfortunate event like a motor vehicle accident or damage resulting from the emergency should occur, the borough will repair or replace the town-owned vehicle, and borough insurance will cover damages. This is not true for Assistant Chiefs who transform their family car into emergency vehicles. In the past, through no fault of their own, Assistant Chiefs have been involved in traffic accidents while responding to or working at emergency scenes, or had the family car damaged by rising flood waters while the Assistant Chief was serving his community rescuing civilians from the flood. When these events

occurred, the town covers any liability but it is the Assistant Chief's own automobile insurance that pays for the damages, and the Assistant Chief's family who pays the price for the personal losses involved.

Another very serious problem with the use of family cars was that they were never designed for emergency service. In town, on our local streets, we could overlook the fact that an Assistant Chief's personal vehicle was not set up properly to be parked at an emergency incident. On the County Roads and on Route 287, however, we could not ignore the fact that an Assistant Chief's private vehicle is not properly marked, properly lit, or reflective-striped to be parked at an emergency scene. The Assistant Chiefs must respond in vehicles that meet NFPA, D.O.T., and State and Federally recognized standards for marking, striping, and lighting at an emergency incident.

The equipment that an Assistant Chief carried in his personal vehicle was always minimal. In the recently donated, Borough owned Assistant Chief vehicles each Chief is now properly equipped and always has access to the necessary equipment for handling most emergencies. Regarding radios and communication, a past Assistant Chief had only a low band radio in his personal vehicle. He did not have the ability to use high band to talk to firefighters operating inside our larger industrial buildings, where low band radios are ineffective. This was always a dangerous situation. He also never had the ability to talk to incoming Mutual Aid apparatus on high band or UHF, nor could he serve our Mutual Aid towns properly when he responded to emergencies in their towns with his own personal vehicle. The new Assistant Chief vehicles have all these radio capabilities and, in the near future, the required vehicle repeater system, which could not be installed in a family car.

Each Assistant Chief uses his vehicle for a minimum of 50 drills per year, 24 Mutual Aid meetings, an average of 150 or more fire calls per year and all fire department business conducted by the Assistant Chief.

The Fire Department has always

Mayor's Message

(Continued from page 1)

expressed concerns to the Mayor and Council regarding flood events that have occurred over the past few months. Know that the Administration and Borough Council are working closely with the Army Corps to address these concerns. We are all anxious to see this extremely important project fin-

ished so that our residents can receive the maximum protection the project was intended to convey.

In closing, please, school is back in session so be ever mindful of how fast you are driving. We need to slow things down in our residential neighborhoods and I call upon all residents to obey and respect speed limits. Remember, the life you save may be a child's.

believed that this should be done in a borough-owned vehicle. The reason the Fire Department had never made the requests for these vehicles before was simply that the cost of purchasing them initially would come from taxpayer money. Since these are new vehicles and have new vehicle warranties, initial maintenance will be minimal and after the warranty period is up the costs will all come out of the fire department's operating budget, rather than out of the pocket of the Volunteer Chief. Insurance is not a factor, because these two vehicles fall into the borough's current fleet without any cost increase. Fuel is not a factor because the borough has always supplied the fuel for the Assistant Chief's personal vehicles for fire department use.

Lillian Booth, the aunt of Oakland Fire

Department Captain James Vulgaris, has made it possible for the volunteer Chief Officers to stop using their own property to perform their selfless duties. Ms. Booth chose to give her generous gift to the same organization to which her nephew willingly volunteers his time and energy. Since the taxpayer burden of purchasing and equipping the vehicles was the only factor preventing their acquisition, the Fire Department welcomed the opportunity to obtain these two vehicles without any cost to the Borough of Oakland or to the taxpayers. Four wheel drive vehicles were chosen for their ability to maneuver through snow and ice on the hills of Oakland streets, and for their off-road capabilities, their ability to carry large amounts of equipment and to tow fire department trailers. Ford

Explorers were chosen because they were available at a very low cost through a New Jersey State contract. This meant that additional money could be used to make the necessary equipment purchases for both vehicles.

The Chief officers of the Oakland Fire Department are unpaid volunteers who perform a great service for the Borough and its citizens. They serve professionally every day and ask for nothing in return. These individuals have been elected to a position of authority and responsibility and should have, at their disposal, the necessary equipment to do that job safely and effectively.

The Fire Department sincerely thanks Lillian Booth for providing that for them and for all of us.

Reval Update from The Tax Assessor

The Borough of Oakland is in the process of conducting a municipal-wide revaluation of all real property. Revaluation is a periodic program undertaken in order to appraise all real estate in terms of its full and fair market value. Also known as tax equalization, revaluation insures that all property owners' pay their fair share of the tax burden based on the actual market value of the property they own.

Field inspectors from Appraisal Systems Inc. are currently gathering the necessary data needed to determine the value of your property by visiting each property throughout the Borough. Approximately 85% of the properties have been visited, and all the remaining inspections should be completed by the end of November. During the inspection phase of the program, the interior and exterior of each property is inspected and the exterior building dimensions are determined. It is important to point out that the valuation of your home will be based in large part on the total living area in terms of gross building square footage, rather than by an interior room count, although the inspector will list the total number of rooms for descriptive purposes. Aside from the square footage of living area, some other notable components that affect the valuation include bathrooms, kitchens, finished basements, central AC, decks and patios, fireplaces, pools and saunas, garages, and the overall condition.

All the information that is believed to have some bearing on the value of a property will be collected, reviewed and analyzed in order to make a proper determination of the market value of each property. Additionally, real estate market value trends are analyzed by conducting a sales study. This process includes an examination of all vacant and improved sales that have taken place within the past three years, and a delineation of homogeneous neighborhood boundaries. Commercial properties that are purchased for investment purposes are analyzed in terms of their income-producing potential. As a result of this

extensive research, common benchmarks are determined that can then be applied to all properties of similar nature, ultimately resulting in the establishment of the true market value for all property within the Borough. The culmination of information gathered will be used to establish the market value of your individual property. The market value determined for all properties will be effective as of October 1, 2004, regardless of when an individual property may have been inspected.

Upon completion of the valuation process, Appraisal Systems will provide property owners with a letter that identifies the preliminary assessment of their property. It is anticipated that these notifications will be mailed out by the end of the year. The letter you receive will provide a number to call in order to schedule an interview with the Revaluation firm should you deem it necessary. If you have any questions concerning the revaluation process, or if you disagree with the preliminary valuation determined for your property, you will have an opportunity to schedule an individual appointment with a representative of Appraisal Systems.

The interview process will be informal and will focus on a discussion of your property. It is important that all the information presented about your property is accurate. If you feel that there are conditions that diminish the market value of your property, the interview is your opportunity to bring those factors to bear. All appropriate comments will be reviewed and considered to determine if an adjustment is in order.

All property owners will be notified via First Class mail of the results of their informal hearing. If at that time you are dissatisfied with the results of your interview, you have the opportunity to file a formal tax appeal with the Bergen County Board of Taxation. All appeals of this nature must be filed prior to April 1, 2005.

Thank you for your cooperation during this ongoing process.

The State of Oakland Schools — 2004-05

The 2004-2005 school year opened smoothly. Our summer staff worked hard during July and August to make certain that schools were fully staffed; new students were registered; all students were appropriately scheduled into classes; supplies were in classrooms; and, the school buildings were impeccably clean. As a school community, each resident can share in the pride that was exhibited by staff upon the completion of the work.

Enrollment Growth Continues

Our school district continues to grow, and as of the close of September, 1,699 students were in our PreK-Grade 8 classrooms. One year ago, our schools had 1,641 students. That's 58 more students than a year ago.

Additionally, our kindergarten class now numbers 182 children. Our projection told us to expect 163 kindergartners; thus, the projection was exceeded by 19 students. In September, 2003 – just one year ago – our entering kindergarten class numbered 155. This year's class is 27 students higher than that of 2003.

Our first grade student population has also grown significantly. Last year, at this time, we had 164 students in first grade; this year, we have 202 students – an increase of 47 students. Because of these enrollment increases, we have had to add additional classes at both the kindergarten and first grade levels.

Space Shortages More Acute

As the demand for more classrooms increases, we are trying to use every square inch of instructional space in our buildings. This year, we have two small classes occurring in each of seven classrooms. Partitions separate the classes. Since the State requires each class to have a ded-

icated classroom, this dual use of classrooms requires State inspection and approval. If approval is granted, it is for a one-year period. We were fortunate this year that, after a visit from the State's Department of Education officials, permission for dual use of these classrooms was given, upon fulfillment of the condition that we install taller partitions.

The Teaching Staff is Changing

In addition to continued enrollment growth and a space shortage, our school district is also experiencing a transformation of our teaching staff. Last June, 22 veteran teachers retired from The Oakland Schools. As they left our schools to begin the next phase of their lives, they went with the gratitude and best wishes of the Oakland community.

What remained for us was the enormous job of finding replacements for the retired staff, for five other teachers who resigned, and for seven teachers on family leave. Literally, hundreds of applicants were interviewed by interviewing teams as we sought only the most capable teachers to work with Oakland's children. When the teachers new to Oakland assembled in late August for a four-day Orientation Program, the Board and the administration expressed satisfaction that the work of so many was done so well. We welcome our new teachers, and are working with each to help them achieve success.

Curriculum Is Being Revised

Last spring, the State Department of Education informed local school districts that the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards had been revised and strengthened. During July, our District began the process of revising our curricu-



*Dr. Richard Heflich,
Oakland Superintendent of Schools*

lum to assure alignment with the new Standards. Curriculum committees met to revise the mathematics, language arts, and vocal/general music curricula. That work was completed and during September staff members were instructed about the revisions and their implementation. This important curriculum work will continue in other subject areas next summer.

Remaining Current Is Important

Finally, a core group of teachers and administrators worked during the summer to develop Professional Development Seminars for teaching staff. This State-required inservice program assists teachers to remain current in content knowledge, as well as improving teaching methodology. These professional development opportunities ensure that teachers will be equipped to deliver an excellent – and a current – educational program to students.

All of this occurred as summer programs, such as Safetytown, Threshold, Preschool Disabled, and Summer Enrichment, offered students opportunities to learn.

I am pleased to report to you that, as we begin a new school year, our schools are strong and our students are achieving at a very high level. We continue to promise you that Oakland's schools and our students will make you proud!

With best wishes,

Dr. Richard G. Heflich

Survey

Survey responses must be received by November 1, 2004. Once you have completed the survey, please cut along the dotted line to the left of the survey. Next, follow the folding instructions on the back of the survey, tape it closed, and drop it in the mail. No postage is required. Note that all responses are anonymous unless you choose to provide us with your name. We appreciate your feedback!

1. Please select the category(ies) that best describe(s) you:

- ☐ I have children in preschool
- ☐ I have children in K-5
- ☐ I have middle school children
- ☐ I have high school children
- ☐ I have no school aged children
- ☐ I am retired and on a fixed income

2. How long have you been a resident of Oakland?

- ☐ 0-3 years ☐ 4-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years ☐ Over 20 years

3. Do you have children attending the Oakland K-8 public schools?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Where do you vote?

- ☐ Dogwood Hill
- ☐ Heights
- ☐ Manito
- ☐ Valley Middle

5. Did you vote in the September referendum on school facilities expansion/renovation?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey. If you would like to be involved with future referendum Development, please mail your name, address, and phone number to Superintendent's Office at 315 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland or email at martin@oakland.k12.nj.us

6. If you voted yes, what were your reasons for supporting the project?

- ☐ The plan was sound
- ☐ The proposed tax increase was reasonable
- ☐ The availability of the State's \$8.4 million grant
- ☐ The schools are overcrowded
- ☐ The existing school buildings are in need of repair/renovations
- ☐ Other _____

7. If you voted no or did not vote, what were your reasons?

- ☐ Not registered to vote
- ☐ The plan was sound, and I assumed passage
- ☐ The tax increase was too high
- ☐ The need for the project was unclear
- ☐ The district does not need another school
- ☐ The district should not have an intermediate school
- ☐ The intermediate school should be at a different location
- ☐ The voting ballot language was confusing
- ☐ The community had little input
- ☐ The reevaluation of property taxes currently underway made it unclear as to what the project's tax impact would be
- ☐ I had no opinion
- ☐ Other (e.g., weather, time conflict) _____

8. When we proceed with another referendum, how would you prefer to see it presented to voters?

- ☐ As a single proposal
- ☐ As two proposals

9. How can we best get information about the referendum to you in the future?

- ☐ District newsletters
- ☐ District web site ☐ Community forums
- ☐ Newspaper ☐ Cable access channel
- ☐ All of the above ☐ Other _____

The Oakland Public Schools

..... A learning community committed to excellence!

If you would like to be involved with future referendum development, please provide us with the following information:

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____



Optional

Your Feedback is Appreciated! Survey Enclosed



FOLD HERE 1ST



We want to hear from you!

Survey Enclosed

Survey responses must be received by November 1, 2004!



FOLD HERE 2ND



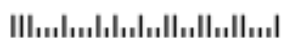
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Schools and DYFS Join To Protect Children

Oakland Public Schools are proud to renew their partnership with the Department of Human Services of the State of New Jersey in the protection of children from abuse and neglect. The Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) recently received harsh criticism due to tragic child abuse and neglect incidents. These unfortunate occurrences prompted DYFS to undergo an extensive review process as well as an agency restructuring.

To strengthen its efforts, DYFS asked school districts to select a District DYFS Liaison to be responsible for the training of faculty and staff. Dr. Heflich and the Board of Education appointed Glenn Clark, Principal at Dogwood Hill School, to be Oakland's DYFS Liaison.

In August, the Oakland Board of Education adopted an updated Child Abuse And/Or Neglect Policy. To effectively implement this policy, the Board also approved specific regulations for staff.

Staff training began in August when all new teachers were schooled in the identification of potential cases

of child abuse and neglect, as well as the referral process to the Division of Youth and Family Services.

Subsequently, returning staff received an update on child abuse and neglect by each building principal at Opening Staff Meetings. Additionally, all staff members were given a copy of the Board's policy with the accompanying regulations.

School district employees understand that anyone who has reasonable cause to suspect that a child may have been neglected or abused has the ethical and legal responsibility to inform DYFS. To make the referral process easy, the state has instituted a new reporting telephone number: 1-877-NJABUSE. This telephone line is operable 24 hours a day/seven days a week.

The laws governing the protection of children from abuse and neglect also ensure that those who report potential harm to children are protected from prosecution. Latest research figures show that in Bergen County the average is approximately

four children per 1000 who are victimized and could benefit from DYFS' services.

Training for Oakland School District's certificated staff continued this month as First Deputy Assistant Prosecutor, Julia McClure, of Middlesex County, will address the staff at Valley Middle School regarding the legal and ethical aspects of Child Abuse and Neglect.

The Oakland School District believes that the protection of children is everyone's business. Therefore, everyone is reminded that children need all of us. One does not need to have proof of victimization in order to contact DYFS. Proving victimization is DYFS' responsibility. However, citizens need to be the "eyes and ears" for children and for DYFS.

A referral may be anonymous. If someone suspects abuse or neglect, he/she should call 1-877-NJABUSE, and share with the intake worker, what you suspect and why. DYFS personnel will decide if follow-up is merited for the referral.

Learning from Cultural Exchanges

The Oakland School District has long had a commitment to teaching our students about the world and its people. Throughout a student's elementary school years, he or she participates in a yearly Global Education Unit. Third graders in Oakland are fortunate that their study of Japan and Japanese culture has the opportunity for enhancement by virtue of the location of the New Jersey Japanese School in Oakland.

This year, the children of the New Jersey Japanese School and of Dogwood Hill School will have the opportunity to learn more about each other and the cultures of Japan and America. A series of four exchanges are planned, during which the children in Dogwood Hill's third grade will visit the New Jersey Japanese School twice.

This month, third grade students will visit the New Jersey Japanese School to see a dress rehearsal of their school play, as well as visit classrooms. Students in both schools are writing letters of introduction that include a sharing of the writer's favorite activities and information about their families. At this first meeting, the students will exchange these letters with their pen pals.

On November 9, all of the students from the New Jersey Japanese School will visit their new friends at Dogwood Hill School. The visiting students will attend age-appropriate classes. Teachers are preparing informative lessons about America's Thanksgiving Day.

In January, the third grade students of Dogwood Hill will again visit the Japanese School. A program on the culture and geography of Japan will be presented. In February, students from the Japanese School will visit Dogwood for the final time, for a student production coinciding with both President's Week and Valentine's Day.

Each year a different elementary school in Oakland is host to the Japanese students and coordinates an exchange program. The Oakland School District, which has appreciation of diversity as one of its major goals, is pleased to practice the objective it teaches. A special thanks goes to third grade teachers at Dogwood Hill School, **Patricia Schlenker** and **Nancy Dziubinsky**, **Elizabeth Miggels**, librarian, and **Diane Daleo**, the music teacher, who are developing the cultural exchange program.

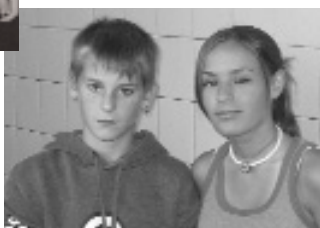
— Glenn Clark, Principal, Dogwood Hill School

New Student Orientation at Valley Middle School

On Wednesday, September 1, 2004 a New Student Open House was held at Valley Middle School. Students were given their schedules and allowed to try their lockers, walk the schedule and gain a familiarity with their new school. Parents and siblings were invited to attend the Open House and an exciting atmosphere prevailed. Pictured here are some of the new sixth grade students exploring the school with their older siblings who graduated from VMS.



Clockwise from above right: Danielle and Mathew Magi, Nicole and Stephanie Delgado, Zachery and Chellsea Gayle and Katherine and Joseph Wetzler



Watch For A New Episode of Exit 58 Live! in early November!!!

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