

Freeport • Baldwin

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RICH AMATO, AIDS activist in front of the closed Lydia Hall Hospital on West Merrick Road with a group of protesters surrounding the wreath which was later placed at the tomb of Robert Deschino, who died of AIDS.

AIDS activists picket empty Lydia Hall

by Maurice Forge

Several dozen pickets circled on the sidewalk in front of the former Lydia Hall Hospital at the corner of West Merrick Road and Bayview Avenue last Saturday to protest what they called Nassau County government's refusal to deal effectively with the issue of the homeless with AIDS.

"This thoroughly useful facility is an example of the neglect by Nassau County of utilizing resources to alleviate the plight of people with AIDS who are homeless," said Rich Amato, one of the activists for ACT-UP, the Long Island AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, who managed the demonstration.

One of the young demonstrators who gave his name as "Fred" told the Leader that he was diagnosed with the virus about five months ago. "Since then I have been out of work," he said, "and if it wasn't for my family's support I'd be one of the homeless. I have had no help from the county, state or federal government yet."

Before starting the demonstration the pickets placed a wreath on the lawn of the closed hospital in memory of Robert Deschino, and will later remove it to his grave in Holy Rood Cemetery in Westbury. Mr. Deschino was an example of the PWA (People with AIDS) who, according to Gary Konecky, a spokesman for ACT-UP/LI, was warehoused at the Nassau County Medical Center for two years because he was refused admission to 21 Long Island nursing homes.

Mr. Konecky asserted that Lydia Hall and other possible sites could be taken over by the County and converted to AIDS care facilities. "In the long run, this would actually save tax payers' money," said Mr. Konecky. "At present, PWA's with no place to live are being warehoused in hospitals at four to five times the expense as would cost alternative housing."

According to the AIDS Coalition "more than 1,000 AIDS cases have already been diagnosed on Long Island" and that it ranks number one in suburban centers in AIDS cases.

"A dollar invested today" by preparing facilities like Lydia Hall, Mr. Konecky said, "will save ten down the road, because the number of cases will increase fourfold in just five years."

The ACT-UP/LI people spoke somewhat bitterly about Nassau County officials who have not even started to develop an AIDS policy, in contrast to Suffolk County "where, under the new administration, plans are being implemented to develop the facilities that this crisis demands."

Freeport police were on hand to make sure the demonstration was orderly and an attorney from the Nassau County branch of the American Civil Liberty Union acted as an observer in the event of claims of civil rights violations.

Lydia Hall has been held by a Rochester bank for a number of years with an asking price of \$8 million, Mayor Dorothy Storm told The Leader. She said the building is expected to be marketed by the bank by next month, and that the Village's preference would be to see resumption of a medical facility which would serve the entire Freeport community.

Baldwin students quiz board

by Joan Delaney

The Baldwin Board of Education held its first meeting of the new school year on Wednesday, September 13. Unlike most of the meetings, on this occasion the audience was filled with students who are part of the "Participation in Government" class and they asked questions on such topics as the lack of student parking, the quality of cafeteria food and the condition of the tennis courts. The Board answered their questions in detail, giving them the history behind decisions, and explaining the Board of Education process and background on agenda topics.

During the Personnel Actions Report, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Lorraine Poppe as Assistant Principal at the high school. A former Dean and English teacher, Miss Poppe's appointment leaves a vacancy for the position of Dean which has been advertised.

Superintendent of Schools Gene Lanzaro noted that Baldwin schools opened with 4462 students, 117 fewer than last year. Although the final numbers reflect a stability relative to significant declining enrollment, there

is quite a bit of mobility in the numbers, with new students coming from nine states and numerous foreign countries and over 100 new students entering the system from private and religious schools.

Mr. Lanzaro also announced that Baldwin received a \$75,000 grant from the State for its teacher mentoring program, one of only three districts on Long Island to receive the grant and with only five in the State receiving more money. This program provides a sharing between the experienced mentor teacher and the new teacher and provides for a more personalized exchange of experience to acclimate the new teacher and to pass on the expertise of the professional teacher. It is a program supported by both staff and administration.

Lou Fernandez was appointed chairperson of the pre-school education committee. In the past, Family Court was responsible for the special education of three and four year old children but that responsibility as well as its costs has been passed on to school districts.

It was announced that the school district will be spending \$11,475 to remove contaminated soil at the high school which resulted from a pipe leak. Assistant Superintendent Lee Chapman said that when this occurs, representatives from the D.E.C. as well as the Department of Health are present to monitor the situation.

In other business, Board

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Bierwirth: Freeport SAT scores way up

by Katherine Kuckens

At the first school board meeting of the 1989-1990 school year last week, Superintendent of Schools Dr. John Bierwirth announced that the most recent Freeport High School S.A.T. scores rose substantially.

The nationally administered Scholastic Achievement Tests are widely used by colleges and universities to judge high school juniors and seniors applying for admission. The test consists of two parts, verbal and mathematics, with a score of 800 possible in each part.

While recent scores across Long Island showed decreases or little improvement, Freeport scores averaged 31 points higher in the verbal portion of the test and 19 points higher in mathematics over the previous year. Freeport High School scores are now the highest since the early 1970s.

Dr. Bierwirth attributes the improvement to increased effort on the part of students and parents, who are taking the testing process more seri-

ously. Also, although there were several unusually bright students with total scores over 1500 points, Dr. Bierwirth pointed out that the most important gains were in the 500 to 600 point range. "I believe that the extra 50 to 75 points are in any student" who works for it, said Dr. Bierwirth. Assistant Superintendent Doris Selub noted that the increased scores correlate to the increase in New York State Regents Scholarships awarded to Freeport seniors.

President's speech

In his report to the board, Dr. Bierwirth also discussed his decision not to tune in to President George Bush's anti-drug speech which was broadcast to all American school children September 12. While respecting the importance of the President's message, Dr. Bierwirth noted that the Freeport Schools, as well as many others, were notified of the speech barely 24 hours before the broadcast.

While appropriate for stu-

dents to listen, it was not appropriate for the entire school system's schedule to be disrupted," said Dr. Bierwirth, adding that it would have been difficult to notify all the teachers and administrators involved on such short notice. "The U.S. Education Department must have known for some time that the speech was planned, and if they were really serious about it, they would have notified everyone sooner."

Upcoming 100th

Dr. Bierwirth then discussed the upcoming 100th anniversary of the Freeport Schools. The first school building in Freeport was erected in 1820, and October 7, 1890 was the date that the Freeport Union Free School District Board was established. It has been operating continuously ever since. Volunteers from the community are invited to suggest creative ideas and fun activities to celebrate. Interested Freeporters are urged to call the Superintendent's office to join the committee.

Fashion Flashback
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