



ROTARY GROUP EXCHANGE visitors from the Flemish and French-speaking portions of Belgium had the opportunity to tour educational, commercial and agricultural sites in Tompkins and Cayuga County last week as guests of the Aurora Rotary. Our visitors are pictured with club vice-president Jeff Clark. Rotarian Joe Wargo coordinated the day's activities.

Lansing Central School District Tax Rate Up 3.9% From \$17.50 To \$18.18

(Continued from page 1)

ing project instead of a 5 percent hike.

Staffing Requests

The School Board received 14 requests to create new or increase existing teaching and support staff positions totalling \$283,000 in additional expenses. Virtually all of these were recommended by the shared decision making teams of parents, faculty, students & administrators in each of the schools. If the School board had approved all 14 requests, the total rate increase would have been 5.3 percent.

Though each position was sent to the Board with an individualized justification, the overriding themes were (1) the huge jump in the number of students in the high school following the replacement of this year's graduating class of 38 with an incoming freshman class of 91 current 8th graders and (2) the steadily increasing numbers of new students being enrolled in the district. [For example, kindergarten enrollments for next year are already within 4 slots of the projected class size and neither the kindergarten open house nor public enrollment days have been announced.]

Both the 7:00 pm Thursday "Open Forum" on the budget and the School Board's formal pre-vote discussion that saw animated discussion about whether to accept all, none or some of the proposed staffing positions. Though this discussion was reported elsewhere in terms of the School Board's "waffling" on the budget, it appeared otherwise to this reporter.

As School Board members reviewed each position, the consensus was that all are needed. The focus of the discussion was on the rate of tax increase that the voters would accept as justifiable. To help the Board reach

its decision, the administration prioritized the requests and indicated the cumulative effect of each request on the tax hike.

One view expressed at the meetings was that the total 5.3 percent package with all positions was "a bargain," given that the voters had expected to absorb 5 percent for the building project alone. Another view was that the Board had an obligation to keep the tax increase as low as possible and that choices had to be made on which positions to fill.

As Board President Andy LaVigne asked each member for his or her input on what tax rate voters would support, the response "under 4 percent" kept recurring. The Board's intent, according to Elementary Principal Shari Dempsey, was not to "waffle", but to build consensus that all Board members and the public could live with.

Based on these discussions, the Board voted a \$14.86 million budget that is expected to raise the tax rate by 3.9 percent. The actual tax rate is still to be affected by determination of the district's property value assessment base, equalization rates and the state budget process which will define state aid to education.

If these factors improve the budget's revenue side, said several members, it's the Board's hope to favorably review some of the other staffing requests. In the meantime, Lansing has its building project, operating budget increases and five staffing additions for less than a 4 percent tax increase.

The next step is for the School Board to defend its position with the public prior to the Wednesday, May 21 budget vote from 12-9 at the Middle School. The final decision rests with the voters.

Editorial Corner

- The "editorial corner" is available to all community members for the courteous expression of varying points of view and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Lansing Community News.

Correction

Whenever we write a substantive story, we always read or fax the final draft to those we've interviewed, quoted or cited in advance of publication to provide an additional opportunity to catch errors of fact. Despite having done this on last week's story on a proposed change in the town's water surcharge rate structure, a misphrased line crept in. Unfortunately, this wasn't brought to our attention until after the newspaper had been printed on Wednesday. The error, however, was entirely ours.

The incorrect statement was that NYSEG had requested the town to alter the surcharge structure from a graduated to a flat tax basis.

In fact, NYSEG had asked the Town Board for special surcharge rate consideration due to NYSEG's having borne the entire capital cost of the water line extension to Milliken Station. The proposal to shift from a graduated to a flat rate surcharge was developed by the town.

M.S.

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Share Your Love For Your Mom

Mother's Day



Submit a photo, drawing, poem, or story up to 250 words about your mom for our May 7th Mothers' Day issue. We'll print as many as possible. All entries are eligible to win a \$30 gift certificate at any Lansing, Cayuga Heights, or So. Cayuga restaurant or a chance to win a bottle of Apple Mystique from Treleaven Winery.

Entries must include the author's name, address and phone number and become the property of the Lansing Community News. Wine may only be awarded to authors over 21 years of age.

Heard Around Town

North Lansing: Lorraine Groat 533-4156 **Lansing Station:** Donna Scott 533-7228
King Ferry: Joan Neill (315) 364-7784 **Lansingville:** Ruby Ferris 533-4969
Lake Ridge: Tricia Torney 533-7269 **Central Fire Station:** Jake
Woodsedge: Marian Thompson 533-7824
Ludlowville: Wanda Brink (533-4672) and Katrina Greenly (533-8892)

If you're from Cayuga Heights, the Village of Lansing, Myers or Genoa and would like to share local news, please call Matthew at 533-7963.

Lansing Seniors

One hundred Lansing Seniors were treated at their April meeting to a well planned and executed program, "The Parade of Nations".

Starting with a meal of ethnic foods, all were in the mood for that "Foreign Flair", and ready to greet the pretty French maid, in her cocktail dress. Twenty-six people represented 16 countries, each had ties to, or came directly from, the country he or she represented.

The dress was authentic from countries in South America, Asia and Europe. As the parade progressed, a resume was read about the country represented, the person wearing it and how the dress and outfit came to this country. A very regal "Queen Mum" brought a humorous English dignity to the scene.

The USA was the Grand Finale and featured local residents with Native American and pioneer backgrounds. Ann Nedrow wore a handmade, traditional native American outfit and Ina Boda wore pioneer garb and toted a long rifle that had actually been carried from Missouri to California by her ancestors. Kathy Wadell wore nineteenth century farm wear Ruby Ferris wore a native Hawaiian muu-muu.

The afternoon ended with Eileen Cundy dressed as the "The Statue of Liberty" and and Arlene Doty waving the flag as everyone sang "God Bless America." An inspirational program for all.

The next meeting for this group will be May 14.

- Ruby Ferris

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