

Culture Shock



Staff Photo by Joe Epstein
Ol-away-from-school, Hunterdon
loser and Erik Langjahr.

of Commerce representatives
taught them the history of the
county courthouse and other local
sites. Manhattan is their next
destination.

The exchange program is
sponsored by the German-
American Partnership Program,
which is subsidized by the West
German government and
Lufthansa Airlines and is associ-
ated with the Goethehouse in
New York City, a cultural center
that promotes the German lan-
guage.

Crowded Meeting Discusses Solberg Airport Expansion

By Marie Mandic

A standing-room-only crowd of residents, township committee members, and legislative representatives filled the Readington Township municipal building Saturday morning to discuss airport matters, particularly as they relate to the township's Solberg Airport.

Assemblyman William Schluter attended, along with representatives from the offices of Congressman Jim Courter, state senator Richard Zimmer and assemblyman Richard Kamin.

"Basically, we went over the issues and everyone aired their feelings," said committeeman Ronald Monaco.

A number of residents commented that they are concerned about the potential expansion of Solberg. Monaco said, a fear sparked by a paving project underway at the airport, and by speculation that Linden Airport to the east of Readington will close, sending many of its aircraft to Solberg.

The township has filed suit against the Federal Aviation Administration to block the agency from allowing Linden Airport to close, and has asked to be informed of any public hearings regarding the closure and the designation of Solberg as an alternate site.

Although a plan to allow Linden to close its airport and develop a hotel and conference center on the 188-acre site has been in the works since February, neither the FAA, the city of Linden, nor the state Department of Transportation has notified Readington of the possibility that Solberg may be named an alternate site. Monaco said.

Other items on Saturday's agenda included the state's Airport Safety and Hazardous Zoning Act of 1983, which the township opposes. The township committee has petitioned the state for an exemption from the law, which restricts a municipality's power to zone near airports, and has allocated \$7,500 for a lobbyist to fight for its repeal or amendment.

The area surrounding Solberg is zoned for rural residential, and homeowners have complained that their rights have been stripped by the law, which restricts residential zoning within 3,000 feet of a runway.

Some progress was made last week when the state senate adopted amendments to the 1983 law, sponsored by Senator Zimmer, that would ensure that the DOT consider local zoning ordinances and existing land uses around airports before issuing licenses for new or expanded airport facilities.

In a separate attempt to gain control over the improvement project at Solberg, funded by a \$500,000 state DOT grant, the township committee recently passed a resolution requiring the airport to present a site plan before paving beyond 3,000 feet. The plans on file with the DOT call for paving the runway to 3,733 feet, with an additional 315-foot buffer to be paved for safety.

Monaco said that Thor Solberg, co-owner of the family-owned airport appeared at a workshop meeting of the planning board Monday "to ask what he needs for site plan approval." Solberg will present a site plan application to the planning board in November, Monaco said.

Cocaine Charge Nets Jail Term

Jan Murphy, 29, of Somerville was sentenced Friday to two weeks in the county jail for possessing cocaine in Raritan Township April 11.

He was also ordered to perform 100 hours of community service and to pay fines and penalties of \$1,080.

Murphy pleaded guilty in August to a grand jury indictment charging him with the offense.

Superior Court Judge Roger Mahon explained that a person who surrenders to the jail Friday evening and stays until Monday morning gets credit for four days. And after six days' credit an inmate is entitled to one day off for "good behavior." Murphy could complete his nine-day sentence in two weeks, Mahon said.

Murphy was charged with possessing cocaine after he made a "furtive movement" when a policeman stopped him for a motor vehicle violation, and in a "pat-down" search the officer found cocaine in his pocket, Mahon said.

The judge said that three years ago, Murphy was put on probation in Somerset County for possessing cocaine with intent to distribute. Mahon put him on probation for two years, and ordered him to continue with substance abuse treatment.

Drug Indictment

Franklin S. Gerdes, 38, of Olive Court, Raritan Township, has been charged in a grand jury indictment with possessing cocaine.

He allegedly had the drug in the township June 14. He is scheduled to answer the indictment in Superior Court Nov. 3.

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