



Staff photos by Michael Plunkett

State police say nearly \$4,000 was on this dice table when they raided a game on North Broad Street yesterday. The raid resulted in 13 arrests.

Dice game rolls snake eyes

By IAN T. SHEARN
Staff Writer

Reputed organized crime figure Anthony Tassone of Ewing Township, his two sons and 10 other people were arrested last night as the result of a raid by state police on a North Broad Street gambling operation reportedly run by Tassone.

As part of an ongoing state police investigation into organized crime activity, about 25 state agents, assisted by members of the FBI, Mercer County Selective Investigation Unit and Trenton Vice Enforcement Unit, broke up a dice game yesterday in the 200 block of North Broad Street, police said. They said the raiders found nearly \$4,000 on the table.

The operation, which had allegedly been netting about \$15,000 per day, was the second gambling raid in three days spearheaded by state police.

Shortly before 7 p.m., a white van-type truck with the words High Tech General Contractors on its side pulled up to the shabby, three-story building. Some 30 agents alit from the van and rushed the back room, ending a standing-room-only dice session, police said.

ABOUT 20 players were "cut loose," as authorities were interested only in the 10 principals at the scene, police said. The principals included Anthony Jr., 21, and James Tassone, 30, said State Police Capt. Joseph Flynn.

The senior Tassone, who has been linked by law enforcement officials to the Gambino family in New York, was charged and placed under police custody in his Helene Fuld Medical Center room, where he reportedly is recovering from injuries sustained in a recent auto accident, police said.

Col. Clinton Pagano, State Police superintendent, praised the efforts of the Mercer County prosecutor's office, the Trenton FBI office and the city's Vice Enforcement Unit, all of whom helped in the investigation and the raid.

Tassone Sr., 56, and the 10 others were charged with promoting gambling and maintaining a gambling resort. Tassone is being guarded by state troopers around the clock, police said. His bail was preset at \$75,000.

THE OTHERS, including Tassone's sons, who live with their father on Nursery Road in Ewing Township, were lodged in the Mercer County Detention Center last night in lieu of \$15,000 bail each. Their bails also were preset by Superior court Judge A. Jerome Moore. They include Nicholas Foldetta, 44, of Bayard Street; Dario R. D'Allessandro, 28, of Lopatcong Drive; David Archie, 38, of Hoffman Avenue; Gaston W. Ingram Jr., 22, of Parkside Avenue; Cleveland Gaines Jr., 62, of Burton Avenue; Charles Owens, 49, of Stuyvesant Avenue and Willie Alexander, 42, of Southard Street.

Marvin Leonard, 26, of Taylor Street, was one player who wasn't released. Police learned there was an active county warrant on him for narcotics offenses. He was remanded to the county jail without bail.

On Monday, state, federal and local police raided a Bordentown gambling operation believed to be one of many such outfits under the supervision of another reputed organized crime figure who was reared in Trenton — Pasquale Spirito, who was slain gangland style in South Philadelphia last month.

Cops nab alleged mobster in raid

State police yesterday continued their blitz on organized crime activity, busting up a \$5 million gambling operation and charging reputed area mobster Anthony "Tass" Tassone as its ringleader.

Knowledgeable sources allege that the operation, on North Broad Street, was part of the recently busted North Trenton Social Club on Princeton Avenue, which was reported to have handled at least \$1 million annually. Those sources rank the busts as one of the larger gambling crackdowns in Mercer County history.

Anthony "Pushy" Pulcinello, the 71-year-old Dexter Street resident known as Mr. Untouchable, was arrested in the May 2 raid on the social club and awaits trial.

The social club is owned by Tassone and the two men have been working together for some time, the source said.

Tassone, commonly known among law enforcement authorities, has been linked directly to the Carlo Gambino organized crime family in New York.

TASSONE, WHO WAS charged while lying in his Helen Fuld Medical Center bed last night, has a long history of criminal convictions. He is confined for injuries sustained in an automobile accident Tuesday.

His operations over the years have included numbers, loansharking, racetrack fixing and narcotic trafficking.

In 1980, he was found guilty of fixing races in Detroit in 1973. Before that, he was convicted as a co-conspirator in a widely-publicized 1972 robbery-kidnap case involving Dr. Arnold Gordon, in which Gordon's wife and teen-age daughter were kidnapped from their Hiltonia home.

Also arrested yesterday were Tassone's two sons — Anthony Jr. who is serving a suspended sentence for a weapons violation and James who was arrested in 1979 for gambling charges.

Law enforcement sources say the investigation into organized crime will continue.

— IAN T. SHEARN



Anthony Tassone Jr., left, is led away by a state trooper after his arrest.

No job loss seen at TPH

By JILL POLLACK
Staff Writer

The phasedown of Trenton Psychiatric Hospital is not expected to leave anyone jobless, according to the head of the Department of Human Services.

Commissioner George Albanese told the Joint Appropriations Committee Tuesday that over the next nine to 18 months, the Trenton Psychiatric Hospital will lose about one-third of its 800 staff members through attrition. The state will attempt to place the remaining staff members at other psychiatric hospitals in the state.

Trenton Senator Gerald Stockman yesterday discussed with Albanese plans to introduce a bill that would assist those employees of shut-down state institutions with transportation and relocation costs.

"We've got to make some effort to

help these people," Stockman said. "My bill would address those marginal employees, those making \$12-14,000 a year, who otherwise are most assuredly going to go on unemployment or welfare."

THE COMMISSIONER assured Stockman that his department would help draft the bill which would be introduced long before the phasedown at TPH begins.

Albanese also suggested changes in the civil service laws that would make it easier for these hospital employees to transfer to other departments, such as the Health Department, where their expertise could be utilized.

Three units — a forensics lab, a geriatrics ward and an adolescent psychiatric ward — will remain open at the hospital on Sullivan Way after the rest of the operations are discontinued.

Hamilton school board wrestles with overcrowding situation

By PAT R. GILBERT
Staff Writer

HAMILTON — School board members and the school administration last night came out from behind closed doors to discuss a middle-school overcrowding problem that one board member said "shocked" him.

The topic of overcrowding was originally intended for a closed session last week until another board member, H. Roy Breth, challenged the action.

Breth had said the board slipped "too many items into the agenda without making any sound judgment on whether they belong before the public." He also advised his fellow board members they would have violated the

New Jersey Sunshine law if they had discussed five items as planned in a closed session.

Last night, the board discussed one of those items in public. After going over seven alternatives to solve the overcrowding problem in the middle schools, the administration recommended a continuation of the status quo.

IN ADDITION, the administration recommended that two additional "relocatable" classrooms be considered for the next two years to maintain class size at the 1982-83 level, and recommended getting the help of a child study team teaching consultant and extra supervisory personnel if needed.

Robert Callahan, assistant superintendent of instructional services, explained the reasons for the overcrowding problem at Reynolds.

"Part of the problem is by design because of the school boundaries. And part results from an increase in enrollment at Alexander (elementary school)," he said. He said an increase in new housing in that area is a factor.

The enrollment bulge, administrators say, is in the current seventh grade classes at both Grice and Reynolds and will exist for no more than two years.

The board informally voted 7-0 in favor of the administration's recommendation after almost an hour of sometimes heated questions from board members. Board members Carol Francis and Carmela DeMarco did not attend the workshop session.

"In going out to the schools, I saw the conditions in the halls and in the cafeteria," said board member John Lauricella. "I never

saw such crowded conditions in the lunchroom ... and I was really shocked.

"I thought we could do better."

Superintendent Albert DeMartin Jr. responded, "The dilemma was caused here in 1983 when these phenomena occurred, and as much as you try to plan (for a new influx of people) you have to guide your plans by the criteria you have in front of you," he said. "We may warrant a new school or an additional to a school if enrollment increases." he added.

ENROLLMENT at Reynolds Middle School — the more crowded of the two — has reached 1,805 students, against a "functional capacity" of 1,280, according to figures supplied by

Callahan. At Grice, the enrollment this year is 1,172 with a functional capacity of 1,250.

Breth said: "We're getting caught up with numbers and missing the point. In 1978, we had an overcrowding problem. All we've done is shift it from the high schools to the middle schools."

He added, "Now we're considering shifting it to change boundaries and add relocatables. If we need a third middle school, then put it before the voters."

Board member Pete Brescia asked the board whether it would be better to continue in the same vein or discuss the possibility of a third middle school. "This would create our utopia," he said.

Lawrence: We've got to market schools

By STEVE MARSH
Staff Writer

LAWRENCE — Township school board members realize there is nothing they can do to stem the regional trend of decline in the number of school-age children. The key to preserving the district's quality in the face of that trend, they have decided, is to get and keep students in the public schools.

The board met with a citizen's committee last night as part of a series of sessions to deal with the district's problems of declining enrollment. They worked on a laundry list of ideas for keeping students in the district and for making the township's educational system work more effectively.

Some 500 school-age township residents attend private schools, according to Assist-

ant Superintendent Larry Kszanznak. "There must be a reason why parents take their children out" of the schools their taxes pay for, he said.

That rate is far from alarming, Kszanznak said, but getting some of the children back into public schools is important to effectively use the district's facilities.

District administrators want to know why some parents choose to send their children to other schools. To begin to figure that out, Superintendent Joseph C. Farinola will send a letter to the parents of those 500 children this summer. The three-page letter includes a simple questionnaire for parents to fill out and return.

THEIR ANSWERS, along with plans for so-called exit interviews with students

and parents who choose to use private schools, will give the district some data to begin a marketing campaign to keep more students in the public schools.

Declining enrollments also raise the specter of closing schools and reorganizing grade alignments. Farinola wants to make sure important decisions like that aren't made in "stress" situations. That's why the board is beginning now to look to the future, he said.

The board agreed last night to come up with a clear-cut plan of action for possible grade alignment by the end of June. The board, working with the citizen committee, will decide whether to leave the existing four-level grade groupings alone, or replace that setup with another one.

Hightstown off in right direction

By JOHN COVALESKI
Staff Writer

HIGHTSTOWN — Gov. Thomas A. Kean's announcement this week of funding for a road to divert traffic from downtown Hightstown may have taken away the cause of a committee appointed to urge that the highway be built, but the group met anyway last night to discuss what problems will remain if the proposal fails.

"Events have changed our plans," said Chairman David Coates. "We had seen ourselves in a lobbying role but now, fortunately, we're in a different situation. But we'll remain active."

Assemblyman Joseph Patera, D-Hamilton, told the committee he is sure the Route 92 project, a \$103 million freeway that will run from Route 33 east of Hightstown, loop through Middlesex and Somerset counties and terminate on Route 206 in Princeton Township, will be completed. But he said he'll pass along the group's comments to other legislators to give them a sense of its urgency.

The committee listed 23 traffic problems, including reduced property values in town; rush-hour jams for local drivers and emergency vehicles; reluctance of businesses to locate in Hightstown; deterioration of general living conditions because of vehicle exhaust, noise and vibration, and traffic casualties.

The problems are considered worst on Stockton, Main and Franklin streets but the whole town is affected by the problem, members said.

Among the many personal accounts given was one from Phyllis Deal, a member of the East Windsor Rescue Squad 1, who said she has had trouble driving to emergencies in the traffic despite using a warning siren on her car.

BARBARA FOX of Stockton Road said the one of the worst things is a "moral problem" caused by the traffic. She said residents are so discouraged that they don't want to improve their properties. "We've seen other towns where people only want to move away. Hightstown may be headed that way," she said.

Hightstown Mayor Richard W. Aughenbaugh told the gathering that work on the highway will probably not begin until 1985 at the earliest. However, he also praised Kean's action and noted the town has been seeking a highway such as this one since the 1950s.



Staff photo by Herman Laesker

HISTORIC MOMENT — Harry Kels Swan, left, handles a sword which is part of the Swan Collection of the American Revolution as Gov. Thomas Kean and Helen Feisler, assistant commissioner for Natural Resources, look on. Swan donated the collection to the Washington Crossing State Park yesterday.

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