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Managing Editors

Upon arrival each fall, the same common sights can be seen by those returning to Marist. Students playing Frisbee on the green, freshmen trying to find their way around campus, and a constant flow of upperclassmen across Route 9 are routine scenes.

This year students were greeted with a new sight: protestors.

On the opening weekend of school, demonstrators could be seen patrolling the intersection across Route 9 between Lowell Thomas and Beck Parking Lot.

The protestors represent "Fairness for Fairview," a local advocacy group coordinated by Fairview residents Kurt Hornick and Virginia Buechele. According to Hornick and Buechele, the goal of the campaign is to "raise awareness of the issues facing Marist's students and Fairview neighbors including, but not limited to, the resident

to fire district personnel ratio."

"Students live in danger based on the resident to fire district personnel ratio," Buechele and Hornick said in an email.

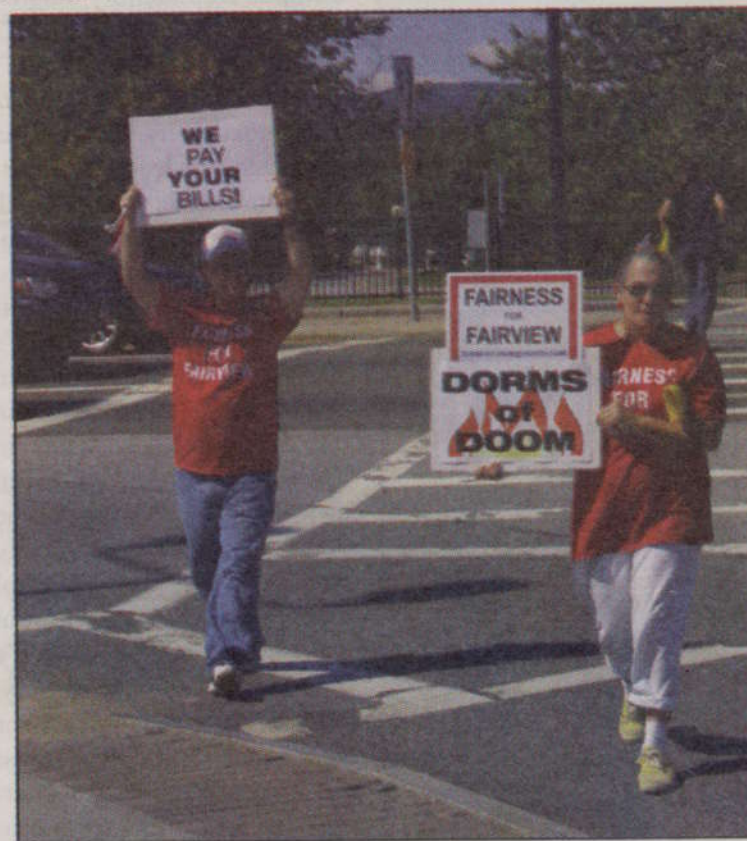
Buechele and Hornick said that as more people are added to the district, the greater financial pressure the Fairview residents are under.

"The adding of personnel...would only add to the already unsustainable burden local taxpaying residents and Marist's neighbors face."

Tim Massie, Marist's Chief Public Affairs Officer, acknowledged that Marist is aware of the Fairview residents' concerns and recognizing the fact that the high Fairview taxes have been an issue for years.

The Fairview fire district is an area of about 4 ½ miles that stretches from the Hyde Park Memorial Fields on the northern edge of Poughkeepsie to Marist.

One reason that the taxes in Fairview are so high is because of the number of tax-exempt properties in the dis-



BILLIE DEAN/DUTCHESS BEAT

Fairness for Fairview members Ginny Buechele and Kurt Hornick protest increased taxes outside Marist College on Aug. 31.

trict. In addition to Marist, there are a number of tax-exempt properties, including Dutchess Community College

and St. Francis.

Buechele and Hornick said that the group has voiced its

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From News

Fairview Residents: New Fulton increases tax burden

concerns "with the extremely high number of tax-exempt properties" in the Fairview fire district, but Massie said that the Fairness for Fairview group has singled out Marist.

"This group wants to use Marist as a scapegoat," he said, "and force Marist, particularly Marist students, to pay an additional tax for fire control, when no other school in the country asks their students or parents to pay such a tax."

Marist makes an annual donation to the Fairview Fire Department, with this year's contribution in the range of \$115,000. The school has been donating money to the fire department for years, but Massie said that the Fairview residents want Marist to pay a much more substantial amount.

"This group wants Marist to give \$1 million a year," he said. "They want every student at Marist to pay out of his or her own pocket, or get their parents to pay, about \$300 a semester, just to go to the Fairview fire department."

That scenario would be damaging to Marist, according to Massie.

"If that happens [Marist paying \$1 million a year], it would put Marist in an incredibly uncompetitive position with our peer institutions nationwide, because no other school is doing this. If we had to add an addition million dollar cost to the operation of the school every year, that would mean tuition increases or cutbacks for the school."

Although the Fairview taxes have been a concern for residents for years, the issue came to the forefront in the past year, with the addition of Marist's new Fulton Townhouses and Dutchess Community College's proposed dorms, which would result in another

major increase in taxes for Fairview residents.

In February of this past year, the Fairview Fire District sent a letter to the Dutchess County Legislature stating that, "we cannot handle the burden of additional incidents that Student housing presents us as we are already struggling to meet current service demands."

Hornick and Buchele said that the addition of the New Fulton townhouses only increased this burden. The campaign has taken to calling the new townhouses, "Dorms of Doom."

Members of the Fairness for Fairview group were out voicing their concerns on the first days of school this fall, picketing by the Route 9 intersection by Lowell Thomas. Sporting shirts with their message and holding signs that conveyed their opinions, the protestors attempted to raise students' awareness of the Fairview issue.

"Reactions varied from positive to negative to no reaction at all," Buechele and Hornick said. "Some reacted with grave concerns the same as ours. There was little time to explain the issues other than through our fliers and disseminating our web site and email contact for referral for further information."

While the demonstrators may have seen nothing wrong with their actions, Massie was anything but pleased.

"The picketers were telling students and their parents on move-in weekend that their dorms were unsafe," he said, "that they were physically constructed to be unsafe. Absolute lie, and they should be ashamed of themselves."

Massie condemned the picketers' behavior, describing it as "despicable."

"It's a renegade group that

goes after the Fairview fire department and Marist College and others," he said, "using tactics that call into question their own integrity. They have no credibility whatsoever and they should be ashamed of themselves."

John Gildard, Director of Safety and Security at Marist, said that the college generally accounts for about 16 percent of the Fairview Fire Department's yearly calls. Last year Marist only accounted for 13.5 percent of the department's calls.

Gildard and Massie both acknowledged that the majority of calls are not actual fires, but rather minor incidences such as burnt popcorn. Chief Tory Gallante of the Fairview Fire Department was unable to be reached for comment on the subject.

Students can play an important role in cutting down on the number of fire department calls to Marist, by taking more precautions and being more careful in the kitchen and in their living areas.

"I think as a community if we could be a little more careful, particularly in the kitchen, and reduce the number of false alarm calls, I think that would help in our relationship with Fairview," Massie said.

Buechele and Hornick said that they recently made an attempt to meet with Marist officials but were denied that opportunity. While Massie was not asked about that claim, he did say that Marist officials would be willing to work with the group in the future to work out a solution that satisfies all parties.

The Fairness for Fairview group is undecided about its future course of action.