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TWO SECT



Photo By Barbara Kokkalis

Mayor Robert Vigilanti gets sworn in at the annual reorganization meeting of the Borough Council Tuesday to begin his fourth term as mayor of Mountainside. Re-elected councilmen Paul Mirabelli and Keith Turner also were sworn in to continue their posts.

Mayor, council return to posts

Vigilanti urges participation, volunteerism, attendance

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

Three familiar faces returned to familiar roles at the Mountainside reorganization meeting Tuesday night.

Mayor Robert Vigilanti, along with Councilmen Paul Mirabelli and Keith Turner, were sworn in by Municipal Judge Robert A. Ruggiero. The three were re-elected Nov. 2, keeping the borough's all-Republican council intact.

Vigilanti is beginning his fourth term as mayor. Mirabelli is beginning his second term on the council, and Turner his fourth. Terms for council members are three years. Mayoral terms are four.

Another familiar face, Glenn Mortimer, took on a new role. Mortimer, elected to the council in 1998, was appointed council president, replacing Thomas Perrotta.

In his address to the large crowd in attendance, Vigilanti began by calling Mountainside "one of the better communities in New Jersey."

The mayor cited the borough's various improvements, including the restoration of its downtown, changes to the Route 22/New Providence Road intersection, the expansion and modernization of the rescue squad building, modernization of the community pool, the new police headquarters and the community room.

"Criticism of the community room is totally off base," Vigilanti said, adding that the room is in use "25 to

30 times per month. In fact, we can't use it this evening for the reception that follows this meeting since another group reserved it some time ago."

Vigilanti pointed toward the establishment of the Loew's Theater, Brighton Gardens and the new storage facilities and office building on Route 22 as examples of recent community growth. The cellular towers behind Borough Hall were highlighted for their importance to Mountainside's emergency services, as well as their earning potential.

According to Vigilanti, "The annual rental fees will soon reach \$100,000 per year with no installation or maintenance cost to the borough."

The borough's new contract with Comcast will "result in our own full-time TV Channel 35," Vigilanti said, adding, for the benefit of the contract's critics that, "Our 15-year franchise agreement is not exclusive, and that this administration will discuss with any new provider a similar agreement (and) when the opportunity arises."

The mayor also touched upon the new commuter parking facility at the library and Hotfield House, reminding those in attendance that 95 percent of the cost was funded by the Department of Transportation. Other changes mentioned include renovations and improvements to the library and fire house.

Vigilanti announced the impending report, compiled by borough engineer

Michael Disko, detailing a five-to 10-year maintenance program covering the borough's roads, storm and sanitary sewers. The mayor estimated that the completed program will cost between \$5 million and \$10 million dollars.

In encouraging residents to volunteer for both the rescue squad and the fire department, Vigilanti pointed out that the borough has increased the clothing allowance for the fire department, in addition to paying for training drills. Rescue squad members are now paid a per-call stipend.

In closing, Vigilanti expressed his displeasure with the "may says." Although respecting "the right to express your views," he encouraged borough residents to attend council meetings. "Yelling that the sky is falling serves no one's interest," he said.

Just prior to the mayor's address, members of the borough's police department received commendations from Police Chief James Debbie. Detective Sgt. Todd Turner, Detective Lt. Richard Ojeda, Corporal Richard Laugia and Patrolman Jeffrey Stinner, Michael Jackson, Richard A. Huber, Stephen DeVito, Kevin Beyerman and Richard Antonacci were honored for their work in various incidents throughout the borough. A new member of the department, Michael Pasquale, was sworn in by Debbie and Councilman Ronald Romak.

The borough also welcomed a new temporary municipal judge, Bart A. Barre.

Springfield officials set Harelik appointed mayor during annual reorganization.

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

Although not exactly Times Square, it was packed.

Springfield had its annual reorganization meeting Sunday afternoon to a standing-room-only crowd. Clara Harelik took her seat as the township's new mayor, with Steven Goldstein becoming the new deputy mayor. Harelik and Goldstein, both Democrats, unseated Republicans Judith Blitzer and William Rocco in the November 1998 General Election.

Committeeman Sy Mullman, re-elected to his position on the committee in November, was sworn in by Township Clerk Kathleen Wisniewski.

In her first address as mayor, Harelik, who identified herself as "Springfield's first mayor of the 21st century, the New Millennium Mayor, the Y2K Mayor," listed a number of short- and long-term goals for the township, among them:

- The establishment of a new Public Works facility at the recently acquired, Hershey property.

- The construction of a new fire house, along with the renovation of the old fire house for use by the Police Department.

- Increased programming at the Chisholm Community Center.
- Modernization of the Springfield Municipal Pool.

- The "robust" addition of new streets for roadway resurfacing, to the Road Improvement Program.

- Reconstruction of the storm and sanitary sewer system infrastructure.

- Encouraging new businesses to the township and helping already-existing businesses to flourish by working jointly with the Chamber of Commerce.

- The seeking of additional grant monies for improvements to the township and for the rebuilding from Tropical Storm Floyd.

- The making of ongoing aesthetic changes to the township.

- To "strive" not to raise taxes. Harelik also looked back to 1999, citing the Jiney service, the police bike patrol, the acquisition of the Fire Department's new thermal



Photo By Jeff Grani

Newly-appointed Mayor Clara Harelik delivers her state of the township address at the Springfield Township Committee's reorganization meeting Sunday. Harelik was elected to serve on the committee in November 1998.

imaging cameras, the opening of the teen center at the Chisholm Recreation Center and the "Take Pride in Springfield" celebration as among the significant achievements of the century's last year.

"I believe in the power of a well-informed citizenry and in the importance of communication at every level," Harelik said, as she encouraged the township's residents to attend the Township Committee's meetings.

"As mayor, I recognize the need to communicate with other towns, the county and the state for problem solving, brainstorming and shared services," she said.

Mullman, who was re-elected to a three-year term, expressed his interest in the Chisholm Center, on which \$1.9 million was spent on renovations. "Almost \$2 million was spent on it, so we should build it up the way it should be, to get 100 percent out of it."

In looking back on 1999, Mullman cited the importance of the township's battles in keeping outside interests — Royal Ahold, CVS and the Suburban Treatment Associates — from gaining footholds in the township.

In his first address since leaving his mayoral seat, Clarke looked back on his efforts of the past year.

"The past year, I've been studying bills that have come before the state congressmen, especially those affecting local government," he said.



Photo By Jeff Grani

Sy Mullman gets sworn in to the Springfield Township Committee at the annual reorganization meeting Sunday. He was re-elected in November and is beginning his third term in office.

Bomb threat sparks crisis protocols

By Pamela Isaacson
Managing Editor

Rather than return to their classrooms after winter vacation, students in Springfield's public schools waited outside for about two hours while police and school administrators investigated the threat of a bomb Monday.

"A phone call came in the early morning. The caller indicated there was a bomb in one of the schools," said Superintendent Gary Friedland, adding that each school principal was made aware of the emergency by 8:45 a.m.

Friedland said a specific school was not mentioned, requiring the evacuation of each building. "We activated our crisis team and implemented the protocols we use for a bomb threat," he said.

To evacuate the students, Friedland said, administrators used a staging process. One area of each building was examined for a hazard while perimeter outside the schools also were secured. The students were housed in the one inside area until the outside vicinity had been determined safe to occupy.

The students returned to their classes at about 10:30 a.m.

"These are very unusual circumstances," Friedland said. "In my 14 years this is the first bomb threat that we've had to deal with."

There is an ongoing investigation to determine who placed the call. "My belief is that this was not made by a member of the student body of any one of our schools," Friedland said.

The Springfield Board of Education adopted a Crisis Management Plan during the last school year. Over the summer and in the early fall, staff was trained to learn various protocols. "We were going to have a safety drill this month," Friedland said.

Township's Fire Department signaled for new radio system

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

A new building is on the horizon for the Springfield Fire Department. But, until then, the department must continue to make due with its present 1921 facility.

A new door, recently installed on the South Trivett Avenue side of the building, will eventually lead to a room housing a new radio system. "We'll be changing over from VHF, Very High Frequency, to UHF, or Ultra High Frequency," said Fire Chief William Gras.

The changeover, according to Gras, will enable the department's communications equipment to operate more efficiently by preventing potential "dead spots."

Part of the system will include a repeater on Summit Road in Mountainside, a piece of technology that picks up all messages, transmitting them back to fire headquarters.

"We've had dead spots," Gras said in regard to the department's VHF transmissions. "Especially up on Route 78, we've had some trouble getting out messages. Our current VHF system is antiquated. It's not worth keeping up. We've been keeping it together with Band-aids. The changeover to UHF will make the difference."

The base equipment, which includes a nine-foot-long console, is considerably larger than the present VHF technology. The current VHF equipment is located in a small area in the front corner of the South Trivett side of the facility. The new technology, Gras said, cannot be subjected to the "current conditions up front," a reference to the proximity of the department's garage door, which could subject the equipment to exposure to the elements.

Gras described an "eight-by-10-foot box" installed on pilings against the outside of the building. "It's a box-type trailer, climate-controlled," Gras said. The only entry will be through the fire house itself, using the newly-established door. Gras referred to the construction as "a temporary set-up."

According to Gras, the total cost of the new area and equipment is about \$140,000 — about \$30,000 of which has been acquired through the fundraising efforts of the township's volunteer fire department. The balance is being funded through a capital bonding ordinance.

The eventual departure of the department to its new location — the Schiablo Oil building near the Post Office on Mountain Avenue has been mentioned as a site — will leave the trailer "available for use," in Gras' words, to whomever might require its services. The "new" door can then serve as an exit door for the building's next occupant, the Police Department.

In her first speech Sunday as Springfield's new mayor, Clara Harelik listed the construction of the new fire house, and the renovation of the old building for police use, as two of the township's goals for the year.

Township Administrator Richard Shoels said the township is "in the final stages of hammering out a contract" in regard to the new location for the fire house.

First lady meets with resident

Springfield resident and seventh-grader Jill Kurzner celebrated "Miracle Day" Dec. 7 with First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Once a year, all trading and brokerage commissions for that day in every CIBC World Markets office are donated to organizations that benefit children. This year the firm enlisted Clinton to start off the event. Last year, "Miracle Day" raised more than \$4 million for 150 United States children's charities which are selected by CIBC employees.



Springfield seventh-grader Jill Kurzner speaks with first lady Hillary Clinton at the CIBC World Markets' "Miracle Day."

When the selections were being made for the "Miracle Day" participants Kurzner's father, Keith Kurzner, an executive director of sales and trading at CIBC, submitted the Healing Heart Foundation. The foundation then was chosen to be the recipient of a donation from CIBC and Jill Kurzner was invited to attend the event.

During the event, Jill Kurzner was introduced to the first lady and spent a few minutes talking to her about the

foundation. Clinton agreed to sign a card with Kurzner's design on it.

Kurzner said the whole experience was "very exciting and it felt great to represent my friend, David." She also said Clinton was very friendly and "looks great in person."

Kurzner kept her autographed card as a memento, but cards can be purchased for \$5 by calling Lisa Nehmer at (973) 564-8827. All profits go to the Healing Heart Foundation.

House burns before tenants move in

A fire Monday in a new, as-yet unoccupied house is under investigation.

Springfield firefighters arrived at the house, located at Laurel Avenue and Redwood Road, at about 9 p.m. The fire, which may have started in the basement, required Mutual Aid services from Union, Mountaintop and Westfield. Department personnel remained on the scene until about 2:30 a.m.

The 45,000-square-foot structure, estimated value at about \$1 million, was still in the process of receiving finishing touches at the time of the fire, said Union Township Fire Lt. Vincent Amato.

FIRE BLOTTER

The cause is being investigated. No injuries were reported.

- One electrical problem, two activated alarms and two medical service calls were the business of the day Friday.

- Two activated alarms and one medical service call were handled by the department Dec. 30.

- An activated carbon monoxide detector at a Leik Avenue residence, one water condition and eight medical service calls were answered by the department Dec. 29.
- A pumper was sent to Union Fire

Headquarters on a request from Union County Mutual Aid at 5:32 p.m.

- The department responded to a westbound Route 22 business on a report of a child locked in a car Dec. 28.

- Four medical service calls also were answered.
- A report of a brush fire on Tooker Avenue, a motor vehicle accident on eastbound Route 24 and three medical service calls kept the department busy Dec. 27.

- Calls for a gas leak at a Ronald Terrace residence, a water condition at a Temple Drive residence and one activated alarm were answered Dec. 26.

Sharp citizen solves borough burglary

POLICE BLOTTER

The Mountaintop Police Department solved a Cherry Hill Road burglary Dec. 27 with the help of an alert and eagle-eyed resident.

According to Detective Sgt. Todd Turner, the owners of the Cherry Hill residence, who were away at the time of the incident, left a relative to watch the house. The relative invited a number of guests, one of whom, a Piscataway resident, deliberately left the rear door open as he left the following morning, police said.

After enlisting the help of a neighbor, both suspects reportedly returned to the house and allegedly removed numerous items, including a large bottle containing approximately \$1,000 in change.

Police officers canvased the neighborhood. One neighbor, who wished to remain anonymous, supplied officers with the license plate number and detailed physical descriptions of two individuals he saw removing the large bottle, among other items, from the house.

Police processed the plate number through the computer, which led them to Piscataway. "We had already interviewed the guests, and we had their

addresses," Turner said. "When we got to Piscataway, we found that the license plate number we had belonged to someone whose house was next door to one of the other guests."

Jamin Smith, 18, and Shaunnessy Walks, 27, willingly came to Mountaintop for questioning, Turner said. Both provided statements acknowledging their roles in the burglary, and were arrested and charged. Neither had a previous record. They were released on bail, pending a court appearance.

The case was handled by Turner and Detective Lt. Richard Ostaja. Turner, however, credits the resident for solving the case.

"The citizen really deserves the credit for this one," Turner said. "Without him, it would have been much tougher." Turner said the resident was inspired to report what he saw after reading a story about burglary in Mountaintop in the Dec. 22 edition of the *Echo Leader*.

- Allen Bass, 37, of Irvington, and

Kim Hedgepeth, 39, of Edison, were both arrested on eastbound Route 22 Monday. Hedgepeth was charged for operating a stolen vehicle and Bass for being a passenger.

- Shonda Naylor of Brooklyn was arrested on eastbound Route 22 Monday and charged with being a suspended driver. She also was charged with obstruction of justice for allegedly providing police with a false identity.

- Marco Linares of Pennington was arrested on eastbound Route 22 on New Year's Day and charged with having a suspended license.

- George Moser of Madison was Mountaintop's only driver to be charged with driving while intoxicated on New Year's Eve.

- Old Bridge resident Jose Amoroso was arrested on eastbound Route 22 and charged with having a suspended license Dec. 29.

- Everett Coleman was arrested at a Sheffield Street address for allegedly violating an Essex County restraining order.

Towns not bitten by Y2K bugs

By Joe Lugara Staff Writer

No planes fell out of the sky, and no Y2K problems, not even small ones, beset either Mountaintop or Springfield as the century turned over last week.

"We had no problems at all," said Mountaintop Police Chief and Bor-

Share goods left over from Y2K stockpiles

Now that the Y2K scare is over, residents have the opportunity to share the food that has been stockpiled with those who are hungry.

Anyone with extra cans of food that can be given to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey can drop them off at the Springfield Emanuel United Methodist Church, 40 Church Mall, Springfield.

Office hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

ough Administrator James Debbie.

The only potential problem, as Debbie viewed it, was solved in December when the police department received its new in-house computer system.

As for expenses incurred by the big holiday, Debbie estimated the borough's cost for all the preparations at "around \$900." The money was spent for police officer overtime pay. Seven officers on stand-by for New Year's Eve each received four hours of compensation time.

As for the borough's schools, Chief School Administrator Gerard Schaller reported "no problems at all. We're Y2K compliant."

In Springfield, likewise, there was quiet. Fire Chief William Gray reported "nothing."

On the school front, Superintendent Gary Friedland and members of the Board of Education spent "a year updating our records — our alarms, heating systems, everything. We wrote to all our vendors, and they

assured us we were compliant."

On Sunday, the schools' custodians "came in and did a sweep and everything checked out okay. Even our personal computers were fine," Friedland said.

"It's hard to assess the best of a thing like this," he added. "The labor involved, going through all the checklists, sending out letters to all the vendors — that's part of the general operation, and it's hard to put a dollar amount on that."

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EDITORIALS

Remember the past, look to the future

Anyone researching the Revolutionary War would be hard-pressed to find details without reading about the town of Springfield. The Battle of Springfield, the Cannonball House — historians are in their element when they drive along Morris Avenue.

While history must be treasured, now it is time to look forward.

The annual reorganization meeting of the Springfield Township Committee Sunday was the place to start, as Clara Hareluk was appointed mayor and Steve Goldstein deputy mayor. The pair of Democrats were elected in the November 1998 election. It takes time to adjust to a new position. Now they have had a full year to warm up. Hareluk and Goldstein can now bring the enthusiasm they had during their campaigns and apply it to township affairs.

"I think the people of Springfield were ready for a change, and we are that change," Hareluk said on election night, Nov. 3, 1998.

Let the change begin.

For better or worse, out-of-court settlements have been reached between Springfield Police Capt. Vernon Pedersen and Lt. Ivan Shapow, Sgt. Peter Davis and Officer Walter Brooks. The discrimination lawsuits had plagued the township for more than a year.

Although there remains talk of sensitivity training for all government employees, the heavy weight of these lawsuits — draining for all involved — has been lifted.

For better or worse, Superintendent of Schools Gary Friedland will leave the district this year after 14 years. The Board of Education will have a fresh face with new ideas and new policies.

With these changes, now is the time for Springfield officials and Springfield residents to look toward the future. Officials should begin televising meetings of the Township Committee and the Board of Education. This action alone will make it that much easier for interested voters and taxpayers to become and remain aware of community issues and decisions. Residents who want to attend meetings but find themselves unable to do so would have another chance to get involved.

On Mountaineers' Borough Council, no faces changed with Tuesday's reorganization, as Keith Turner and Paul Mirabelli were again sworn in as councilmen and as Robert Vigilanti again assumed his position as mayor. This new year, however, gives members of the council and the mayor another chance to listen to residents.

In both municipalities, partnerships should be formed between officials and voters. Residents do not set policy or raise or lower taxes. They do not design new curricula for the schools or implement new technology. But they do have opinions and they need to have a voice.

Residents must begin attending meetings to hold their officials accountable for their actions or inactions. Voters must realize the strength of their voices and use them effectively at the local level of government and in the school system.

In Springfield, let Board of Education members know what qualities are crucial in the next superintendent. Make sure Hareluk's promise of "change" is the correct change for Springfield. Guarantee that this change takes place.

In Mountaineers, residents should continue sharing thoughts on salaries for council members and the mayor. They should speak for or against uniforms for students at Deerfield School. They should attend Board of Education meetings and listen to projected enrollment figures and become part of the solution.

The year 2000 should be a year marked by leadership that purely benefits the residents. It can be easy for politicians to put their own agendas before the priorities set by those who elected them. Officials are encouraged to listen. They should create additional opportunities for residents to share their thoughts and goals for the year.

It is time to stop resting on the laurels of the past and start creating the future for both towns. This responsibility lies with everyone in the community — from students to parents to government officials to senior citizens.

"It is not the role of the press to provide us good news, but neither is it to compound our bad news."

James Nuechterlein
First Things journal editor
1997



WELL-PROVIDED FOR — Mountaineers residents, from left, Gloria Dickerson, Thanksgiving basket chairman; Lisa Cassidy, senior citizen coordinator for the borough; and Thomas Root, a member of the Mountaineers Department of Public Works provided four Thanksgiving baskets for families in Mountaineers.

Borough Board of Education seeks input

In August 1999, the Mountaineers Board of Education, in conjunction with the district's administration and staff, began the process of reviewing the district's facilities, enrollment data and potential enrollment projections.

The projections, to date, extend to the 2004-05 school year. In addition, administration and staff have reviewed the district's curricula and program offerings and have presented program changes for students in grades kindergarten through eighth. This process is part of the long-range planning as outlined in the district's strategic plan.

In the beginning of the long-range planning process, short-term issues were brought to the attention of the board. Ample and adequate classroom space for all academic and special area subjects is a concern.

For example, I indicated to the board that general music would be held in the All-Purpose Room for the 1999-2000 school year which resulted in eliminating the intramural athletics program.

In 2000-01, the APR must be used as a classroom to house an additional fourth grade. After a careful review of the Deerfield School facility, it was determined that a feasibility study and demographic analysis were needed to assist the board and administration in planning for immediate and future needs.

Superintendent's Report

By Gerard Schaller

Considering the future, one must keep in mind the expansion and modernization of education programs consistent with changes that are caused by new educational approaches, curriculum initiatives and the technology revolution.

To assist the district in determining future needs, the architectural firm of Jordan, Pease, Andrycyk and Kelen was commissioned to provide an analysis of the Deerfield and Beechwood schools. Additionally, Whitehall Associates, Inc., Educational Facilities Planning Consultants, provided an in-depth demographic study projecting enrollment to the 2004-05 school year.

The Mountaineers School District has been experiencing a steady increase in enrollment during the last five years and will most likely increase by another 40 students, 7 percent, by the 2004-05 school year. These additional students would require two additional classrooms; however, not knowing the ages and grade levels of the 40 students hinders detailed planning.

Another area which must be con-

sidered is that of turnover in home ownership. The cycling of housing from older to younger families would most likely bring about unforeseen increases in the enrollment. The increase in students coupled with the expanded requirements of the state-mandated core curriculum have created a strain on the Deerfield facility.

The facility currently is functioning beyond capacity and will be increasingly challenged within the next five years. A long-range planning survey has been mailed to each homeowner in Mountaineers.

The information gathered from the returns will further assist in projecting the number of students who will enter school, the grade level and the year of entry. Further, it will attempt to ascertain future plans of homeowners who may plan to relocate in the next five years.

As the board and administration continue to review options, time will be devoted to developing various scenarios as to how the district should proceed in planning for student enrollment, curriculum initiatives, meeting the needs of the core content standards and providing appropriate classroom space.

To date, the following two options have been presented.

The first involves the continued concentration of all enrollment at the

Deerfield School. The second approach involves reopening the Beechwood School as a kindergarten through third grade facility.

The second approach is the more costly when reviewed in conjunction with adjusted associated costs over a five-year period. A third approach might be reopening Beechwood as a kindergarten through second grade school, however, this is the most costly option.

A citizen's advisory committee will be developed for the purpose of studying the findings and formulating suggestions for the Board of Education. The professional planners will work with the citizens' advisory committee to develop the best solution.

If anyone is interested in serving as a member of the citizen's advisory committee, please submit your name, address, and phone number in writing to the Board of Education on Woodcres Drive, Mountaineers.

As the board proceeds with their discussions, information will be publicized, and your input will be valued. The Board of Education and administration will continue to work simultaneously on short- and long-term objectives.

Gerard Schaller is the chief school administrator for the Mountaineers School District.

Finding war and peace on Christmas Eve

War and peace on Christmas Eve. The peace part was orchestrated by the Mountaineers Police Department.

Heading home on Route 22 West after conducting an interview for the Echo Leader, I somehow managed to wind up as what I felt was the unwarranted target of a road rage incident when another driver had the notion of sharing my lane. The other guy — how can I say this? — had difficulty controlling his temper. He expressed his opinion by cutting in front of me, driving progressively slower in heavy Christmas Eve traffic, eventually stopping in the center of the right-hand lane, forcing me to stop behind him. Cars, trucks, motorcycles, small aircraft and chuck wagons piled up behind us as the guy got out of his truck and stormed over to my window, bellowing.

I didn't acknowledge him. I looked straight ahead. As he screamed, I just waited for him to have a stroke.

He was just dying for me to get out of my car or at least roll down the window. I refused to do either. I wanted to see how long it would be before he realized that his sorry end was positioned on the center line of 22.

Joe's Place

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

West, exposed to sharing Christmas traffic.

Finally he gave up. But on his way back to his vehicle, he kicked my fender. A good kick. Solid.

Before he had the chance to get his truck back into gear, I scribbled his plate number and vehicle make on the back of my notebook. Warning to potential road rage persons: The driver you challenge may be worse than crazy. They might be a reporter.

We both turned at New Providence Road. For anyone who knows that turn, it's shorter than the turn most of us make to get to our bathrooms. The truck guy went left, intending to cross Route 22. I exited right, like I often do when there's a pile-up of cars waiting to make the turn there, in order to turn around and come back to the intersec-

tion. As we waited to make our turns, we glanced at each other. I raised my pen and made a cursive pantomime for his consideration. As I approached the intersection again after turning around, I saw him heading down New Providence Road.

I crossed Route 22 and took my notebook to the Mountaineers Police Department. I felt entitled. After all, this guy: A) Put my safety in jeopardy by stopping in the right lane of Route 22 West in Christmas Eve traffic; and B) Physically assaulted my vehicle.

No one wants to be in a police station at any time, least of all on Christmas Eve. Of course, neither did the officers. But these two guys I spoke to — one a corporal, one an officer — were great. They were patient and concise in describing the procedure I'd have to follow in seeing my complaint through to the end. They ran the license plate number, called the guy, and mediated the situation perfectly.

We ended up shaking hands. All I wanted the guy to do was admit, without prompting, that he kicked my car. He did, and there was no damage, so that was that.

The officers would be the first to say that they were only doing their jobs. That's true, but they did them uncommonly well — and that's especially important in road incidents, where any mediation, even a small one like this, prevents the anger from smoldering, and possibly flaring again in a worse way elsewhere. Route 22 barrels through Mountaineers. Opportunities for mediation and cool-headness in these little driving matters are all over the place.

I didn't mention these officers' names because one of them insisted on remaining anonymous, and I won't name one without naming the other. But I called their chief and let him know who they were.

Our policy on letters and columns

The Echo Leader welcomes submissions from its readers. Either letters to the editor or opinion pieces on any subject will be considered for publication on the opinion pages.

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Making progress, setting goals

Editor's note: The following remarks were delivered Sunday at the annual reorganization meeting of the Springfield Township Committee.

My fellow members of the Township Committee, township administrator, township attorney, madam clerk, members of the clergy, family and friends,



ballfield backstops, playground surfacing, park tables, benches and bike racks.

9. The Y2K Emergency Committee, it appears thus far, made Springfield's 2000 compliant.

10. 1999 marked the first year in Springfield's 205-year history that this town employed a full-time township administrator, Richard Shoela. Having a full-time administrator has improved the internal workings of our municipal government, creating a more efficient and modernized form of government.

I am proud to say Springfield has made much progress in the last year and that much more progress over the course of the last century. Do not worry, the next section of my speech is not titled "Springfield, A Century in Review," but at the turn of the century how can I not make a few comparisons between Springfield today and Springfield a century ago?

For example, in 1900, Springfield's population was approximately 1,200 people with approximately 250 households, as compared to today where the population is approximately 15,000 people with approximately 500 households.

In 1900, the average property was assessed at \$1,000. In 1999, the average property is assessed at \$155,000. And, in 1900, the taxes on the average home were about \$21 per year while the taxes on the average home today are about \$5,200 per year.

As you can see, I believe in the power of a well-informed citizenry and in the importance of communication at every level. I encourage all

residents of Springfield to attend the Township Committee meetings.

I want the employees of this town to know my door is always open for discussion. And, as mayor, I recognize the need to communicate with other towns, the county and the state for problem solving, brainstorming and shared services.

This town requires and has strong leadership. I am proud to call Springfield my home. I am even more proud and privileged to serve as its mayor. I only hope that as mayor I can give back to my town some of what my town has already given to me.

In closing, I would like to thank my husband, Jay Mavorah, for his love, support and, especially, understanding. Jay, I know I am frequently out of the house attending meetings, but perhaps you are finding some comfort in knowing that I truly believe a woman's place is in the House and the Senate or, in this case, the Township Committee.

To my son, Cole, for his love and understanding and for always greeting me with his energetic "Hello, Ma" no matter how late I get home. To my parents, Lee and Mel Harelak, for instilling in me the skills needed for this job.

And to Gregory Clarke, Sy Mullman, Roy Hirschfeld, Steven Goldstein, Richard Shoela, Bruce Bergen and Kathleen Wisniewski, for all I have learned from you to date and for all you will continue to teach me. We make a good team and together we can bring many more positive changes to Springfield.

I am honored to serve with each one of you and look forward to a productive year. And to those of you in the audience who have volunteered for the various boards and committees — thank you for giving so freely of your time.

Finally, to all I wish a happy and healthy New Year. Thank you!

Clara Harelak is mayor of Springfield.

It is no easy feat to create a plan for Springfield that combines its past successes with its current workings and its future goals all within a limited monetary framework, but this is our mission. It is our responsibility to ensure that Springfield and its residents are prepared for the new century, the new millennium and beyond. Toward this end, I wish to share with you just some of Springfield's short- and long-term goals.

1. Create a new Public Works facility at the Hershey property, recently acquired by the township.

2. Build a new firehouse and renovate the old firehouse for use by the Police Department and, of course, continue to upgrade fire and police equipment to state of the art.

3. Increase programming at the Chisholm Community Center.

4. Modernize the Springfield Municipal Pool.

5. Routinely add new streets to the Road Improvement Program for road-way resurfacing.

6. Reconstruct the infrastructure of the storm and sanitary sewer systems.

7. Work with the Chamber of Commerce to entice new businesses and help stabilize existing businesses in town to flourish.

8. Seek additional grant monies for various improvements to Springfield and to rebuild from Tropical Storm Floyd.

9. Make ongoing aesthetic changes to Springfield which beautify the community and enhance property values.

10. Strive not to raise taxes.

This is Springfield's future direction as it embarks upon the new century, the 21st century. At this juncture, it is also appropriate to look at Springfield's accomplishments over the last year of the 20th century, the year 1999.

1. Jersey service began in Springfield, taking passengers from Duffy's Corner to the Short Hills Train Station and back.

2. A bicycle patrol unit was started by the Police Department to make our town safer.

3. The Fire Department, in a cooperative venture with the Springfield Volunteer Fire Aid Squad, advanced its First Responder Service which dispatches medically trained fire personnel to a scene in less than three minutes. The Fire Department also obtained two thermal imaging cameras to help better fight fires and save lives.

4. A teen center was started at the Chisholm Community Center.

5. At the Springfield Municipal Pool, a bathroom was created that is in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

6. Specifications were completed for a new Senior Citizen Bus.

7. Springfield had its first "Take Pride in Springfield" July 4 celebration, which proved quite successful. Part of the monies raised from the event went toward the purchase of walkie-talkie radios for the town's five public schools to make the schools safer for our children.

8. Grant monies were used in several parks for improvements including

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

New tax would only be misused

To the Editor: A recent story would be tolerated better if it were closer to April Fool's Day. Specifically, a panel set up by the League of Municipalities is reconsidering instituting a local income tax to cover public school costs. Besides the obvious, what is the goal of such an idea?

That should be obvious as well: to ease the burden of local property taxes. Now there's genuine doublethink: ease one tax by imposing another. This from those whom we trust to provide governing leadership.

A few issues: If imposed, how many times will the tax be raised? How long before it goes to funds for purposes other than education? What assurance is there? Probably none, that the municipalities will slow down the increases in property taxes due to a local income tax?

Watch this one carefully. Cost-cutting was given token lip service but we know the focus: increased revenue. And there's only one place that revenue comes from — our personal budgets.

Frank Marchese
Mountainside

Public schools hold registration

Registration for the 2000-01 pre-kindergarten program in the Springfield Public Schools, as well as for children eligible for kindergarten in September 2000 who are not currently enrolled in the Wallon School Early Childhood Center Prekindergarten Program, will be held on the following days:

Jan. 13: Last names beginning with A-E, 10 to 11 a.m. or 1 to 2 p.m.

Jan. 14: F-K, 10 to 11 a.m. or 1 to 2 p.m.

Jan. 18: L-Q, 10 to 11 a.m. or 1 to 2 p.m.

Jan. 19: R-Z, 10 to 11 a.m. or 1 to 2 p.m.

Registration will be held at the Edward V. Wallon School Early Childhood Center. Parents are requested to call the school at (973) 376-1304 to confirm a date and time or, if necessary, to schedule an alternate registration session.

To be eligible for the prekindergarten program, a child must be a resident of Springfield and be 4 years old on or before Dec. 1, 2000.

Children entering kindergarten must reach their fifth birthday on or before Dec. 1, 2000. Parents are requested to bring the following materials to the registration:

1. Child's birth certificate.
2. Current immunization records.
3. Two proofs of residency — New Jersey driver's license, utility bill, lease, etc.

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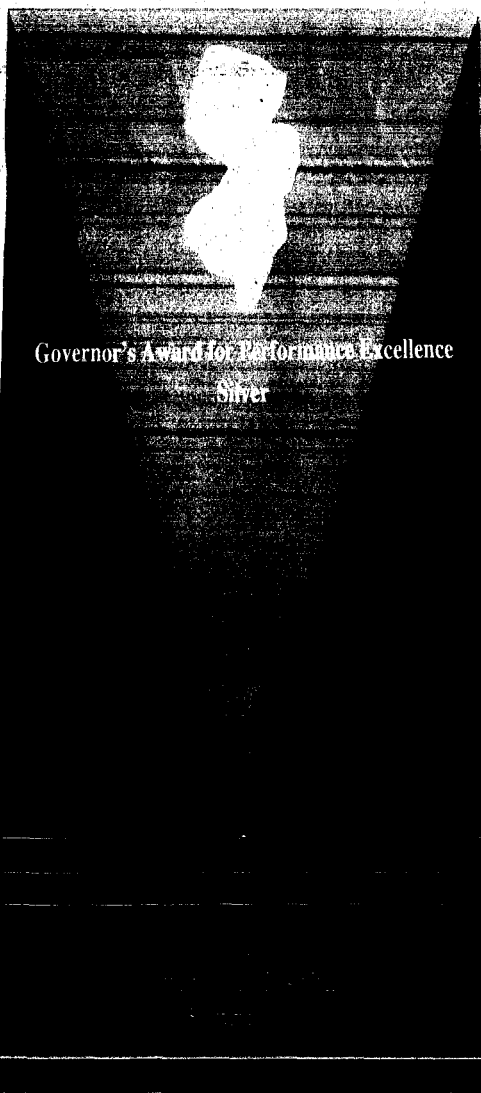
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 Union: 908-686-7700, ext. 319
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Dayton boys' hoops wins Rahway event Girls' third in Panther Pride

By J.R. Parachini
 Sports Editor

The Dayton High School boys' basketball team capped a sensational start to the 1999-2000 season by topping Rahway 49-45 in the championship game of last week's Rahway Holiday Tournament.

Dayton, which improved to 4-0 with the victory, defeated the host Group 3 school which now resides in the Mountain Division of the Mountain Valley Conference.

One of the top teams in the Valley Division, Dayton scored the final four points of the game against Rahway after the score was tied at 45-45 in the final minute.

Tournament MVP Chad Freundlich scored the winning basket for Dayton as his layup with 43 seconds remaining gave the Bulldogs the lead for good at 47-45.

Freundlich scored a game-high 23 points against Rahway, making nine baskets and five free throws. He scored a game-high 14 points in Dayton's 53-26 opening round win over Union Catholic.

Prior to Tuesday's home game against Bound Brook, Freundlich had scored 78 points in four games.

Jeff Stapher scored 12 points and Dave Woodruff 11 against Union Catholic. Dario Ruggiero scored 10 against Rahway, which suffered its first loss of the year after getting out to a 4-0 start of its own.

Dayton handled Bound Brook rather easily last year, posting a 70-54 win at Bound Brook followed by a 72-43 win at home.

Dayton is scheduled to host Oratory tomorrow night at 7, another team it swept last year in Valley Division play.

Dayton and St. Mary's of Elizabeth began the week with four wins and were undefeated in Valley Division play. St. Mary's won two of three games in the Jack Reilly Memorial Tournament held in Fort Lee.

Dayton is scheduled to play at St. Mary's Tuesday night, Jan. 18 at 7 and then host the Elizabeth-parochial school on Tuesday night, Feb. 15 at 7. Dayton won the Valley Division two years ago and St. Mary's captured the crown last year.

Dayton's girls' team defeated Roselle 42-25 in the consolation game of last week's Panther Pride Tournament at Roselle Park.

Esther Aizenberg scored 14 points, Tara Listowski 12 and Linda Agostinelli nine.

Agostinelli had seven points in Dayton's opening 42-23 loss to Westfield. The Blue Devils won the tournament by defeating Roselle Park 55-47 in the championship game.

Dayton took a 2-2 record into Tuesday's scheduled game at Bound Brook.



Photo by Jeff Gruch

Dayton High School girls' basketball player Linda Agostinelli (No. 15) attempts to block a shot that will be taken by Roselle's Lucil Custis during the consolation game of last week's Panther Pride Tournament in Roselle Park. Agostinelli scored nine points to help the Bulldogs to a 42-25 win and third-place tourney finish. Dayton began the week with a 2-2 record.



Photo by Jeff Gruch

Dayton High School girls' basketball player Esther Aizenberg (No. 13) scored a game-high 14 points to help lift the Bulldogs past Roselle 42-25 in last week's Panther Pride Tournament consolation game at Roselle Park. Aizenberg scored two points in a 42-23 loss to Westfield in the first round, giving her 16 points in the tournament.

Summit girls' basketball on top

By John Zucal
 Staff Writer

The Summit High School girls' basketball team does not have a player who can shoot the lights out every night or pull down a lot of rebounds.

However, head coach Dana Farnella does not mind that in the end. In fact, she's pleased with what her team has to offer.

"We don't have one superstar, but you're going to have to stop all five players on the court," said the Hilltopper coach about what she feels is a very balanced squad.

Summit improved to 5-0 last Thursday when it defeated Madison 63-20 to capture the Suburban Classic championship at Summit.

Dana Proper came off the bench to lead Summit with 12 points. While the senior was the only player scoring in double figures for the hosts, many of her teammates made their contributions.

Freshman Karen Jann posted seven of her nine points during a 22-6 second quarter which boosted Summit to a 34-12 halftime lead. Jann added four assists.

Another freshman, Ashley Holmes, added seven points, nine rebounds and four steals.

Stephanie Bruce and Katie Tully added to the Hilltoppers' even attack with eight points apiece.

"Our defense was pretty extraordinary," Farnella said. "We were not playing our best basketball in the first quarter, but the team stepped it up a notch. Our intensity grew in the second quarter."

The Hilltoppers reached the Suburban Classic final after posting a 52-39 victory over visiting Chatham. Danielle Proper, Dana's twin, led Summit with 13 points, six assists and two steals. Sophomore teammate Liz Sheridan added 11

points in the victory.

Jann scored eight points, but Farnella said her best contribution came on defense, as she held Chatham's Janie Wise and her high double-digit average to just eight points.

The Hilltoppers trailed 11-10 after one quarter but took command with a 14-3 second quarter.

Farnella said her squad's intensity in its press defense was a key in Summit pulling away by halftime.

Summit lost six players from last season's 23-3 squad due to graduation. But while most coaches would wonder how to replace that many players, Farnella said the 5-0 record means her team is where they should be.

"It definitely is where we expected to be," Farnella said, adding she believed Chatham was her team's toughest opponent yet the girls put together a strong performance to gain the win.

Summit was scheduled to host Mendham Tuesday night, putting its unbeaten record on the line against another unbeaten team. Mendham was the only team to beat Summit last year, twice in Iron Hills Conference-Hills Division play and again in the North Jersey, Section 2, Group 2 final.

Mendham, which defeated St. John Vianney of Holmdel this year, has captured the past two Group 2 state championships and has appeared in the past two Tournament of Champions title games, winning in 1998 against Columbia and losing in 1999 to St. John Vianney.

The Hilltoppers will have a Youth Night promotion tomorrow when they host Mount Olive at 7. Students from pre-school to 8th grade will be admitted free for tomorrow's contest and postgame activities.

Summit swept the Raiders in IHC-Hills Division competition last year.

Summit boys' hoops second in Suburban

By John Zucal
 Staff Writer

After a slightly rough start with another new coach, Summit High School's boys' basketball program gained some momentum last week

when the Hilltoppers split two games to finish second in its Suburban Classic Holiday Tournament.

Senior forward Kurt Forsyth posted 22 of his game-high 28 points after halftime as a 12-3 third quarter run

allowed Summit to pull away from Chatham 67-50 in its tournament opener Dec. 28. The co-captain then drained four three-point field goals in a 20-point performance two nights later, but a 21-8 second quarter started a decline which led to a 63-53 loss in the final at Hanover Park.

"Kurt's probably our best all-around player and he plays both ends of the floor very well," said Eugene Maxwell, who is the Hilltoppers' second head coach of the young season.

Among the season as an assistant to new coach John Theis, who resigned after one game for personal reasons.

This is Maxwell's first basketball coaching position. He previously served as a volunteer track coach at Millburn High School.

Against Chatham, Maxwell credited the Hilltoppers' aggressiveness in moving to a man-to-man defense as a key to their success. Another senior co-captain, 6-foot-4 center Jon Campagna, added 16 points. He was held to eight points in the championship game.

"Jon's pretty consistent," Maxwell said. "He's our inside presence and is very intense on the defensive end. Most nights he has to play against centers bigger than him."

In the final, Summit trailed 27-14 at halftime. The deficit grew to 42-22 after three quarters before the Hilltoppers mounted a comeback attempt. They would cut the margin to six points during a 31-point final quarter.

"Hanover Park controlled the inside and we didn't shoot the ball well," Maxwell said about his squad's misfortune in the second quarter.

"They were able to exploit us on the

inside."

Junior guard Ryan Carey, whom Maxwell said, "probably is our best outside shooter," added 10 points for Summit, which fell to 2-3.

Also in the starting lineup are senior guard Jason Holmes and junior forward Lamar Freeman.

"Jason's our point guard," Maxwell said. "He orchestrates the offense and he's a good defender. As for Lamar, he may eventually be our best defensive player. He's also a fine-outside shooter."

Among the first players off the bench are seniors John Marini and Orenzo Tan, whom Maxwell said are "both very intense guys," with Marini's strength in rebounding and Tan being a strong shooter.

Also on the Hilltopper bench are sophomores Dan Dugan, junior Chris Jones and senior Ted Schraft.

Maxwell, who had interviewed for the head coaching position last year, credited Theis with giving him a chance to learn before Theis left.

"It came down to me and John Theis, but this gave me an opportunity to learn from him about running the program," Maxwell said. "I wanted to evolve into this position, but it happened a lot sooner than I anticipated."

Maxwell, who realizes the Hills Division of the Iron Hills Conference — which includes Parsippany Hills, Mendham and Hanover Park — can produce a rough schedule, is optimistic Summit can improve from last season.

"Our goal is to make the states," Maxwell said. "We can be better than we were last year. For us to be at least .500 can be a positive sign."



Photo by Bill Allen/NJ SportAction

Summit High School sophomore center Katie Tully (No. 32) scored eight points in the Hilltoppers' 62-30 win over Madison last week in the Suburban Classic championship game at Summit.

Summit High School athletes earn All-Conference honors from IHC-Hills

The following are Summit's fall 1999 Iron Hills Conference-Hills Division All-Conference athletes:

Girls' Tennis: First Team: Jessica Arnold, Emily Gamble, Erika Mitry, Allison Johnson, Erin Arnold Megan Lyons and Liz Hodson. Honorable Mention: Lindsay Kellogg.

Girls' Soccer: First Team: Stephanie Bruce, Shanie Coffield, Rachel Krom, Mesner. Honorable Mention: Steve Diome.

Boys' Cross Country: Second Team: Doug Williams and Dave Webster. Honorable Mention: Matt Williams.

Girls' Cross Country: First Team: Sally Smith. Honorable Mention: Jillian Dempsey.

Girls' Volleyball: Honorable Mention: Megan Hatfield.

Field Hockey: First Team: Libby Getzandanner and Meredith Foster. Second Team: Heather Theis. Honorable Mention: Alison Ballantyne.

Football: First Team: Sean Kerr. Second Team: Keith Schroeder and Bill Wheeler. Honorable Mention: John Marini and Jon Campagna.

Mountainside Youth Baseball registration Saturday, Monday

Mountainside Youth Baseball registrations will be held on the following dates: Saturday, Jan. 8 from 9 a.m. to noon; Monday, Jan. 10 from 7-9 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 15 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Children registering after the above dates will be placed on a team if space is available. All registrations will be held at Deerfield School. Children from the ages of 6-14 as of Aug. 1, 2000 are eligible to sign up. Registration fees are as follows: \$85 first child; \$65 each additional child in a family; \$35 T-Ball; \$25 introduction to baseball.



Photo by Bill Allen/NJ SportAction

The Summit High School boys' basketball team finished second in the Suburban Classic, falling to Hanover Park 63-53 in last week's championship game in Summit. Here, senior co-captains Jon Campagna (No. 25) and Kurt Forsyth (No. 21) pose with the second-place trophy in front of head coach Eugene Maxwell. Summit, which received eight points from Campagna and 20 from Forsyth, took a 2-3 record into Tuesday's scheduled game at Mendham. The Minutemen's assistant coach this year is former Summit head coach Mackey Pendergrast, a Mendham graduate.

