

ECHO LEADER

Serving Springfield and Mountainside

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000

TWO SECTIO

Voting goes forward despite blackout

By Kirsten Matthew
Managing Editor

"You don't fool Mother Nature."
That's what Union County Board of Elections Administrator Patricia Formato said Tuesday afternoon after high winds caused an early morning power outage townshipwide that threatened to disrupt voting protocol at Springfield School District's six polling stations.

Equipment failure at the township's Waverly Avenue substation caused the major electrical service interruption at 8:55 a.m., according to GPII spokesman Ron Morano. Shortly after, Springfield Fire Official David Maas, the top state-certified fire safety official in the township, received a call from the Board of Education, alerting him to potential problems that posed to undermine special school election voting, set for 2 to 9 p.m.

Fire code requirements, which prohibit public buildings without electricity and battery backup from being occupied, forced Maas to declare a weather-related safety emergency, closing schools and ultimately consolidating the township's 12 voting districts into two polling stations.

By the 2 p.m. polling start time, consultations between the state Attor-

ney General, the county elections board and the fire official had deemed it necessary to relocate the electronic polling machines via University Van Lines to Gaudineer and Sandmeier schools. All voter registry poll books and board workers had to be re-assigned to the two schools. Board of election workers braved the cold in front of James Caldwell and Edward V. Wallon schools, the Sarah Dalley Civic Center and the Presbyterian Parish House, redirecting would-be voters in those districts to the two sole polling stations.

"We had to do everything we could to make sure the election was going to take place," Formato said. "Our main concern was confusing the voters. There was no interruption to the voting process."

Equipped with 18-hour battery packs, voting machines peppered a dimly-lit gym inside Gaudineer School Tuesday afternoon as a fire-fighter stood on fire watch by the polling station's entrance. Gasoline-driven portable generators, provided by the Board of Education, kept lights and exit signs operative as voters sporadically filed in.

"This is going to cause confusion," said Springfield resident Rick Grimm,

who usually votes at James Caldwell. Seniors Ethel and Louis Zipkin echoed their sentiments that the freak election day blackout could affect the final vote tally. "I'm sure a lot of people didn't turn out because of the power outage," Ethel Zipkin said.

Springfield Board of Education attorney Vito Gagliardi said the relocation of the polling stations "was unusual, but not unheard of."

"None of the people involved have the authority to cancel the polling, so

the idea was to collaborate to see how it could go forward," Gagliardi said, noting that only Superior Court action could have led to the election's cancellation.

County Superintendent Frances Lobman said that in her tenure, she's never witnessed anything like the unique circumstances surrounding Tuesday's special referendum vote in Springfield. "We've had blizzards, tornadoes and floods, but I can't remember something like this ever happening on Election Day."

In and out of Fire Headquarters on various power-related calls, Maas pulled into the station's bay around 4 p.m. With dusk beginning to fall, the blackout still remained spotty throughout the township. "Timing couldn't have been worse," the heavily-clad fire official said.

Maas said his decision to downsize the district's polling locations Tuesday was spawned by a 1989 retrofit act that mandates that public buildings' exit signs and emergency lights

must be up and buildings are occupied. In the township, only code-compliant buildings, battery backup only feeds energy to the signs and lights for one hour.

"We had an unusual day," Superintendent of Schools Gary Friedland said Tuesday night after unofficial election votes determined the referendum's demise. "A lot of what happened today may have affected the outcome."

'Do-or-die' contract settlement reached

All-night negotiation session fruitful

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

It took over 12 hours, but it got done.

The Springfield Board of Education and the Springfield Education Association reached a contract settlement early Tuesday morning. The mediation session, which represented the 13th meeting between the two factions, began around 5 p.m. Monday and ended at 6:15 a.m. Tuesday.

According to Board of Education member Richard Falkin, the signed agreement now requires ratification by the school board and the union. Falkin, who did not attend the session, could not provide specifics as to what obstacles resulted in the marathon meeting. He confirmed, however, that a three-year agreement had been reached.

A townshipwide power outage Tuesday morning, caused by high winds, knocked out Board of Education phones. With power back on yesterday morning Superintendent Gary Friedland confirmed several details of the settlement. Regarding the 3-percent raise settlement mentioned in published reports, Friedland said, "We are not releasing the percentages. Salary guides have not been constructed yet. It is definitely not 3 percent. They're more in line with county averages, which are higher than that." Other contracts settled within the past year or two within Union County were around 4 percent.

Carrying signs reading "Fair Contract Dec. 11," "Negotiate Now" and "No Contract — Still Working, Still Caring," Springfield teachers

marched along the sidewalk in front of Jonathan Dayton High School Monday as negotiations got under way.

Marching across the school's two driveways, the educators were joined, in a show of unity, by members of the township's police and fire departments. Both emergency factions have been unsuccessful in negotiating their own new contracts with the township.

"Hopefully, the mediator will see us out here tonight, and realize that he has to get this done, which is his job," said Bob Burkhardt, president of the Springfield Education Association. Burkhardt said he expected to see the meeting result in either a settlement or a memorandum of agreement. Had neither been reached, an association meeting would have been scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

The association's negotiating team consists of about five teachers, along with a bookkeeper, a secretary and a pair of custodians. Burkhardt estimated membership at about 225.

Teachers, along with some marching parents, entered Dayton at 5 p.m., where they settled into the school's cafeteria as negotiations went on upstairs in the school's conference room. Food, snacks and soda were provided for what promised to be a long evening.

"We'll stay as long as we have to; we'll stay overnight if we have to," said Sue Satter, a physical education teacher at Florence M. Gaudineer Middle School, and a noticeable presence at the march. Satter described Monday's negotiations as "do-or-die."



Photo By Barbara Kukulski

Tenured Springfield School District teachers, from left, Ken Saggese, Sue Satter and Frank Sanchez join the picket lines Monday afternoon in front of Jonathan Dayton High School. After 13 negotiations, a teachers' contract settlement was reached Tuesday after an all-night negotiation.

Satter identified health benefits as "our main concern." She said the board had been trying to switch the teachers from Horizon/Blue Shield to New Jersey State Health Benefits.

"New Jersey State Health just doesn't offer the same plan," Satter said, pointing out that fertility treatments and "well baby care" were two of the key differences between the programs.

Satter also said the board had been asking for teachers to increase the number of periods taught "without compensation." Speaking on behalf of the middle school only, Satter said such a change would amount to an

increase in periods taught per week from 28 to 30.

Salary, Satter pointed out, hadn't "really been discussed." She described the board as having been "hung up on benefits."

"At the last meeting, there was discussion about issues other than benefits, but eventually it all came back to benefits again, and that's where the negotiations broke down," Satter said of the last mediation session on Nov. 13.

"The mediator realized that both sides wouldn't budge."

Friedland said yesterday the Board of Education had no intention of reducing teachers' benefits.

PBA and FMBA vie for new contracts

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

Unhappy with the state of their previous labor negotiations with the township, firefighters and police officers marched outside the Springfield Municipal Building prior to the Township Committee's regular meeting Tuesday night. The crowd then flooded into the building's courtroom and sat patiently, waiting for a chance to speak, as the committee ran through a short agenda.

Stephen Studlack, president of Policemen's Benevolent Association Local 76, approached the microphone with a prepared statement in which he called the township's Dec. 4 counter-proposal "cowardly, malicious, unprofessional, and an intentional act not to bargain in good faith."
The statement focused on the PBA's desire for a "four on/four off" work schedule. Describing the work schedule as a "priority," Studlack said Township Administrator Richard Sheola "indicated to us several times" that such a schedule would be implemented in January, and that the Township Committee had been advised of the fact.

Studlack referred to "tremendous progress" in the Nov. 22 negotiations between the PBA, the Superior Officers Association and Sheola, in which a revised copy of the original contract proposal — with the four/four work schedule included — was provided by the PBA. He said optimism existed on both sides for a Dec. 4 settlement.

Studlack did not refer specifically to the contents of the township's counter-proposal, but questioned the Township Committee's waiting as long as December to provide one in writing. The PBA's original proposal was submitted to the township in June. Studlack also questioned whether Sheola kept the Township Committee informed of the ongoing negotiations.

Stg. Steven Stockl, president of Superior Officers' Association Local 76, then read from his own statement. He claimed the township's Dec. 4 counter-offer "set negotiations back to the beginning," and said both the PBA and SOA had verbal agreements with Sheola "on nearly all issues."

Although he did not have a prepared statement, township firefighter James Beyer, president of the Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association Local 57, pointed toward a memo from the township, dated Dec. 1, inquiring whether the FMBA would be continuing negotiations. "The FMBA has been negotiating since September 1999," Beyer said. "When will the township negotiate?"

"Scare tactics I don't enjoy," Fire Official David Maas then told the committee. "When someone says that maybe they'll take your benefits away from your wife and children — that's not a good way to start." Maas referred to Marc Ruderman, the township's labor attorney, as a "hired gun."

Police Officer Scott Brokaw also was not keen on Ruderman. "We know who all the hired liners are. He's a bulldog, he's good at what he does. There's a long line of unhappy employees behind that man."

The majority of police and firefighters walked out immediately after making their statements, leaving the Township Committee with half an audience.

See MAYOR, Page 8

Software snafu stymies facilities plan's submission to state

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

It may be the state's problem, but it could also possibly turn into the Mountainside Board of Education's problem.

The board's hard-worked plan to reopen Beechwood School and make improvements to Deerfield School faces something of an obstacle from the state Department of Education's computer software.

The board's expansion and renovation plans may be held up due to a technological problem on the state's end, which would prevent the district's required five-year long-range facilities plan from reaching the state Department of Education by its deadline tomorrow. According to Board of Education president Pat Taeschler, "We can't move ahead on the Beechwood/Deerfield plan until this part is completed."

Taeschler pointed out, however, that the district considers the plan "as complete as the situation allows us to complete it," while adding, "Ideally, we're hoping the state isn't going to

hold us up. We started our process for this expansion before the long-range plan was required by the state."

The state Department of Education established the Dec. 15 deadline for each school district to submit its five-year plan. Required by the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, the five-year plan includes several components: an inventory of existing buildings, enrollment projections, school models, funded projects, facilities condition assessment, proposed rooms and a "scope of work" for those rooms. The facilities plan will be used by the state to assist with the awarding of state construction aid.

The district's Beechwood/Deerfield project is estimated to cost about \$3 million to \$6 million for renovations and additions to Beechwood, and a little more than \$1 million for renovations to Deerfield.

Architect John Kelemen, who accompanied the Board of Education as it made its presentation to the borough's Planning Board earlier this month, said at the time that "a good

percentage of this will be paid by the state, we hope." He emphasized that "the state has agreed to pay up to 40 percent for all new constructions and additions. Hopefully, those at the starting line will be the ones most

likely to get the closest to the 40 percent."

The district is expecting to put a referendum before voters by the end of March, but it must first know the amount of money the state will be

Newspaper publication dates, deadlines change

As the holidays approach, that means we'll be changing deadlines and newspaper publication dates for the last edition of the year and the first edition of the new year.

Those two editions will be published on Friday, Dec. 29, and Friday, Jan. 5, before we return to our regular publication dates on Thursday, Jan. 11.

For the convenience of readers and organizations wishing to submit news releases, letters to the editor and advertising, the following will be our schedule for the next several weeks.

Our offices will close at noon on Thursday, Dec. 21, and will remain closed until 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 26.

The newspaper will be published Friday, Dec. 29, and deadlines for that edition are as follows:

- Lifestyle, including church and club news, etc. — Dec. 21, noon.
- Letters to the editor — Dec. 26, 9 a.m.
- What's Going On — Dec. 26, 3:30 p.m.
- Display ads — Dec. 26 at noon for Section B and 5 p.m. for Section A.

- Sports news — Dec. 26, 9 a.m.

- General news — Dec. 27, 5 p.m.

- Classified advertising — Dec. 27, 3 p.m.

- Legal advertising — Dec. 26, 3 p.m.

Our offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day. We will publish on Friday, Jan. 5. Deadlines for that edition are as follows:

- Lifestyle, including church and club news, etc. — Dec. 29, noon.

- Letters to the editor — Jan. 2, 9 a.m.

- What's Going On — Jan. 2, 3:30 p.m.

- Display ads — Jan. 2 at noon for Section B and 5 p.m. for Section A.

- Sports news — Jan. 2, 9 a.m.

- General news — Jan. 3, 5 p.m.

- Classified advertising — Jan. 3, 3 p.m.

- Legal advertising — Jan. 2, 3 p.m.

Our offices will reopen Monday, Jan. 8, and we will publish the next edition on Thursday, Jan. 11.

We wish our readers and advertisers a happy holiday season.

Welcome to the ECHO LEADER

How to reach us:

The Echo Leader is published every Thursday by Worral Community Newspapers, an independent family owned newspaper entity. Our offices are located at 1291 Stuyvesant Avenue, Union, N.J. 07083. We are also from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every week. Call us at one of the telephone numbers listed below.

Voice mail:

Our main phone number 908-686-7700 is equipped with a voice mail system to better serve our customers. During regular business hours a receptionist will answer your call. During the evening or when the office is closed, your call will be answered by an automated receptionist.

To subscribe:

The Echo Leader is mailed to the homes of subscribers for delivery every Thursday. One year subscriptions in Union County are available for \$24.00. Two-year subscriptions for \$43.00. College and out-of-state subscriptions are available. You may subscribe by phone by calling 908-686-7700 and asking for the circulation department. Allow at least two weeks for processing your order. You may use Mastercard, Visa, American Express or Discover Card.

Missing newspaper:

If your Echo Leader did not get delivered please call 908-686-7700 and ask for circulation.

Back issues:

To purchase back issues of the Echo Leader please call 908-686-7700 and ask for circulation. Additional charges may apply.

News items:

News releases of general interest must be in our office by Friday at noon to be considered for publication the following week. Pictures must be black and white glossy prints. For further information call 908-686-7700 and ask for Editorial.

Story reprints:

For permission to reprint any item printed in the newspaper you must call Tom Caravan at 908-686-7700. All material is copyrighted.

Letters to the editor:

The Echo Leader provides an open forum for opinions and welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be typed double spaced, must be signed and should be accompanied by an address and day time phone number for verification. Letters and columns must be in our office by 9 a.m. Monday to be considered for publication that week. They are subject to editing for length and clarity.

e-mail:

The Echo Leader accepts opinion pieces by e-mail. Our address is Editorial@localsource.com. e-mail must be received by 9 a.m. Monday to be considered for publication that week. Advertising and news releases will not be accepted by e-mail.

To place a display ad:

Display advertising for placement in the general news section of the Echo Leader must be in our office by Monday at 5 p.m. for publication that week. Advertising for placement in the B section must be in our office by Monday at noon. An advertising representative will gladly assist you in preparing your message. Call 908-686-7700 for an appointment. Ask for the display advertising department.

To place a classified ad:

The Echo Leader has a large, well read classified advertising section. Advertisements must be in our office by Tuesday at 3 p.m. for publication that week. All classified ads are payable in advance. We accept Master Card, Visa, American Express or Discover Card. A classified representative will gladly assist you in preparing your message. Please stop by our office during regular business hours or call 1-800-564-8911, Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

To place a public notice:

Public Notices are notices which are required by state law to be printed in local weekly or daily newspapers. Public notices must be in our office by Tuesday at noon for publication that week. For more information, call 1-908-686-7700 and ask for the public notice advertising department.

Facsimile transmission:

The Echo Leader is equipped to accept your ads, releases, etc. by Fax. Our Fax lines are open 24 hours a day. For classified please dial 201-753-2557. For all other transmissions please dial 908-686-4169.

Web site:

Visit our Web Site on the Internet called Localsource online at <http://www.localsource.com>. Find all the latest news, classified, community information, real estate and hometown chat.

Postmaster please note:

The ECHO LEADER (USPS 512-720) is published weekly by Worral Community Newspapers, Inc. 1291 Stuyvesant Avenue, Union, N.J. 07083. Mail subscriptions \$24.00 per year in Union County, 50 cents per copy, non-refundable. Periodicals postage paid at Union, N.J., and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the ECHO LEADER, P.O. Box 3109, Union, N.J., 07083.

A gift that grows



Mayor Clara Harelik, left, shovels the final \$600 of earth over a new American Liberty Elm tree that the Union County Shade Tree Advisory Board recently gave as a gift to the Township of Springfield. Assisting in the tree's planting at Veteran's Park Thursday are, from left, county advisory board member Herbert Slote, Township Committee member Gregory Clarke and Robert Brennan of the Department of Public Works.

Photo By Jeff Grant

Registration to begin for public schools

Registration for the 2001-02 pre-kindergarten program in the Springfield Public Schools, as well as those children eligible for kindergarten in September 2001, not currently enrolled in the Walton School Early Childhood Center's pre-kindergarten program will be held on the following days:

- Jan. 11, last names A — E, 10 to 11 a.m.: 1 to 2 p.m.
- Jan. 12, last names F — K, 10 to 11 a.m.: 1 to 2 p.m.
- Jan. 16, last names L — Q, 10 to 11 a.m.: 1 to 2 p.m.
- Jan. 17, last names R — Z, 10 to 11 a.m.: 1 to 2 p.m.

Registration will be conducted at the Edward V. Walton 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 pre-kindergarten,

a child must be a resident of Springfield, and be four years old on or before Dec. 1, 2001.

For registration, residents should bring the following items: child's birth certificate; current immunization records; two proofs of residency; New Jersey driver's license; two utility bills, lease, contract, etc.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Community Calendar is prepared by the Echo Leader to inform residents of various community activities and government meetings. To give your community event the publicity it deserves, mail your schedule to Echo Leader, Attn: managing editor, P.O. Box 3109, Union, 07083.

Today

- The Springfield Chamber of Commerce hosts its annual holiday party at 8:30 a.m. at the high school with entertainment provided by the students.
- The Mountainside Planning Board meets for a regular monthly meeting at 8 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Borough Hall, 1385 Route 22 East.
- The Berkeley Heights Board of Education meets for an executive session at 7 p.m. followed by a combined conference and regular meeting at 8 p.m. in the multi-purpose room at Columbia Middle School, Berkeley Heights.

Saturday

- The Westfield/Mountainside Chapter of the American Red Cross conducts an adult CPR training course from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the chapter house, 321 Elm St., Westfield. The cost is \$30. For information and registration, call the Red Cross at (908) 232-7090.
- Temple Sha'arey Shalom's Outreach Committee hosts an outreach brunch at 10 a.m. at the temple's social hall, 78 S. Springfield Ave., Springfield. All interfaith families are invited to attend the free brunch and group discussion.

An RSVP is requested by calling Mark Hurwitz at (973) 379-5387.

Sunday

- Trailside Nature and Science Center, 452 New Providence Road, Mountainside, continues its Sunday family programs for children 4 years old and older with the holiday magic of Bob Conrad at 2 p.m. Conrad will mix a special blend of holiday entertainment that features puppetry, magic, music, ventriloquism and vaudeville fun.

Admission is \$3 per person.

Monday

- The Springfield Board of Education meets at 7 p.m. for an executive session followed by a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the board meeting room at Jonathan Dayton High School, 125 Mountain Ave.
- The Springfield Environmental Commission meets for a regular monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. in room 8 p.m. at the Municipal Annex Building, 20 N. Tuxett Ave.

Tuesday

- The Springfield Board of Adjustment meets for an

executive session at 7:30 p.m. followed by a regular monthly meeting at 8 p.m. in Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 100 Mountain Ave.

- The Mountainside Borough Council meets for a regular meeting at 8 p.m. in the Council Chambers at Borough Hall, 1385 Route 22 East.
- The Springfield Board of Education meets for an executive session at 7 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the board meeting room at Jonathan Dayton High School, 125 Mountain Ave.

- The Springfield Chapter of Jewish Women International hosts a meeting at 12:15 p.m. at the Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave. Springfield Mayor Clara Harelik will be the guest speaker. A min lunch will be served prior to the meeting. For information, call Lois Karsh at (973) 379-9402.

Upcoming events

Dec. 26

- The Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., will kick off its latest luncheon video series at noon with "Kramer vs. Kramer".
- Participants should bring a brown bag lunch to the performance. For information, call (973) 376-4930.
- The Springfield Township Committee will meet for an executive session at 7 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 8 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Building, 100 Mountain Ave.

Wednesday

- The Springfield Recreation Department will sponsor a family night at the New Jersey Devils/Washington Capitals 7:35 game at the Continental Airlines Arena. The bus departs at 6 p.m. from the Chisholm Community Center. The cost is \$44 per person. Interested residents can register with payment to "Township of Springfield" by Monday at the civic center, 30 Church Mall.

Limited registration is available. For more information, call the center at (973) 912-2227.


Jan. 1

- The Springfield Township Committee will meet for its reorganizational meeting at noon in the Council Chambers at the Municipal Building, 100 Mountain Ave.

Ongoing

- The Springfield Recreation Department conducts blood pressure screenings the second Wednesday of every month at the Sarah Bailey Civic Center, 30 Church Mall, from 1 to 2 p.m. It is open to all residents of Springfield. For more information, call (973) 912-2227.

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Is our water poisoned?

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

Some facts about Jack Branagan, he weighs 175 pounds. The water from his body alone would fill 60 quart-sized bottles. Water accounts for 120 pounds of his total body weight. With all the water drained from his body, he'd weigh only 55 pounds.

Branagan used himself as an example to illustrate the importance of water to human life — and the critical issue of keeping the Earth's water clean — to students at St. James the Apostle School in Springfield Dec. 7. The environmentalist has given more than 5,000 talks and performances on the subject of the Earth to students in more than 1,500 schools throughout New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Connecticut over the past 17 years.

"The planet Earth is considered to be a water planet," Branagan told an assembly of the school's pre-K through grade eight population, as he explained the difference between fresh and salt water, and ground and surface water.

"We drink fresh water," he said. "We can't live on salt water; the salt would dry up our insides." The environ-

mentalists described "almost all fresh usable water" or about 97 percent of all usable water, as ground water, but warned that "we're having a problem with both our ground and surface water now."

Branagan called the fresh water processes of evaporation, condensation and precipitation as "going on for millions — billions — of years. All water is recycled. The dinosaurs became extinct 65 million years ago, but they were drinking the same water we are today."

Using his own photographs, Branagan took the students on a slide tour of the Delaware River. Shads, turtles, salamanders, red-spotted newts and numerous odd insects filled the stage-wide screen on either side of Branagan as he explained their presence "as a sign that the water there is clean and healthy."

Images of septic tanks, sewage treatment plants and brownish contaminated water also popped up, serving as uncomfortable reminders of the tons of chemicals that are poured down household sinks every hour of the day. Even more chilling was the image of a sparkling brook, the clarity of which obscured another aspect of the same problem. "When you pour

chemicals into the water, you can't always see it," Branagan cautioned.

A photo of a number of household chemicals — of various kitchen cleaners, turpenitines and the like, taken in Branagan's own garage — also appeared. "People pour these down the drain everyday," Branagan said ruefully. "And the worst part is, so many different kinds of chemicals are being poured down and blending together, we have no idea exactly what we're putting into our water."

Branagan said he has since removed all such cleaning agents from his home, replacing them with an all-purpose environmentally-friendly cleaner produced from orange peels. He also encouraged students to inform their parents of Union County's own Hazardous Household Clean-Up Day, in which chemical leftovers, along with such hard-to-dispose-of waste as cooking grease, are collected.

"When you hurt the planet Earth, you hurt yourself," Branagan concluded. "Most of our waste is winding up in our oceans. When we poison our oceans, we poison ourselves. Tell your parents about what you learned today. Most people don't realize that what we pour down the sink goes back into our waters."



Photo By Jeff Granti

Environmentalist Jack Branagan concludes a Dec. 7 presentation at St. James the Apostle School with a puppet show about the effects of contaminated waters on marine life. Branagan told students, "most people don't realize that what we pour down the sink goes back into our waters."

Artist's work shares an affinity with the likes of famous predecessors

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

It doesn't look like a drawing technique, but it is.

"The drawing is critical; it determines the success," Kat Block, a Springfield-based artist, said of her work with collage.

Block's cut-paper pieces pulsate in the viewer's retina with their psychedelic pinks, reds and yellows. Her jazz musicians, dancers, flowers and "cultural icons" like Einstein grab a viewer's attention — and refuse to let go easily.

"I make an outline drawing on scrap paper — I use scrap paper so I can make all my mistakes there — then I remove that piece and trace it onto the kind of paper I'm using," Block said. "Traced onto either a colored paper called 'coloraid,' or watercolor paper painted by the artist, the outline is then cut out again and glued to another surface, which Block calls her "background color."

Like a kind of wild cut crystal, Block's images impress the viewer

Like a kind of wild cut crystal, Block's images impress the viewer with the dense effect of their angles.

with the dense effect of their angles. The effect is riotous, to say the least.

Block describes the process as "very rewarding. I get involved in it; I enjoy it. You know — time flies."

At one time a budding commercial artist, Block eventually abandoned the idea of textile design, calling it "too tedious. With collage, you see a very dramatic change every time you put down a new piece. It just appears — that's the only way I can describe it."

Influenced by Henri Matisse, who produced his collages in a similar manner by painting pieces of watercolor paper with the opaque water-based medium of gouache, and the paintings of the American cubist Stuart Davis,

Block's work also shares an affinity with her predecessors through the clear pleasure she takes in her subject matter. Describing herself as "a realist down the line," Block selects favorite material from her own experience and environment — jazz in memory of her father's life as a musician, her affection for dance, her scientist friends, her cats, her flowers.

"Every fall I do the leaves, every spring the blossoms," she said. "Your consciousness becomes saturated with the things you like."

Of both her collage and her continued work in traditional watercolor, Block said, "I like the work to be playful. Certain things come out about who you are. You wouldn't want to get rid of who you are. You'd be fighting."

As an instructor at the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts in Summit, Block teaches watercolor and basic drawing along with her collage technique. "I don't think people have a favorite color," she said of her method of getting her students started in the

process of collage making. "I think they have favorite colors they like to see together. I tell my students to take two color combinations they like and put them together."

Block acknowledges the potentially overwhelming effect of her own color palette, and uses fragments of light brown paper to rest the viewer's eye. "In a painting, you can change the values slowly," the artist pointed out. "But you can't make a collage anything but hard-edged. So I use the light brown because it's a softer color; it's easier

on the eye. You can't just have bright colors. You have to have something restful."

Although she produces her plant and flower subjects directly from life, Block relies on photographs for portraiture. A double portrait of her sister Holly and Holly's friend Harvey — each blasting away on a cigar with a kind of mischievous pleasure — has the feeling of both a candid photo and a commercial illustration. Block gives the fumes a stylized curl, emphasizing their staleness through the use of

olive-gold paper. Like a panel from a comic book, the image is simple, direct, and pleasurable.

Her image of Einstein, currently on exhibit at the New Jersey Center of Visual Arts' faculty show, demonstrates another aspect of the artist's collage technique: the use of shadow. "Shadows are something I consider very strongly," Block said. "My students sometimes worry about getting everything glued down flat, but I encourage them not to do that. The shadows and the edges of the paper are part of the design."

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COMMUNITY FORUM

EDITORIALS

After-effects could linger

A teachers' contract settlement was finally reached after factions burned the midnight candle into the early morning hours Tuesday. But the momentum that drove Springfield School District teachers to the picket lines this month may not be down quickly.

While we respect the homage these educators have obviously paid to their First Amendment freedom to assemble, we regret any ramifications such hold displays of dissonance may have caused to the students' educations.

The picture: teachers lining the sidewalks in the hour just before school begins, clad in hats, scarves, gloves, winter coats to brave the 30-something-degree average morning temperatures with signs held high above their heads. Some say "Negotiate now." "We want a contract." "Settle now."

The message: We don't have extra time to help any students who may need special assistance before school.

Long after these lines have disappeared and the signs are trashed, the implications of these job actions may still stain the sidewalks just below the windows of the Board of Education offices. As academic life returns to business-as-usual, we suggest that the after-effects could still linger.

Students may perceive that their educations lie in the hands of those who teach, not out of love for the job, but out of a "Show me the money" mentality. Perhaps some may feel that additional help with schoolwork is still unavailable to them, that their teachers are still discontent.

Superintendent of Schools Gary Friedland may not have intended to be prophetic when he told the *Echo Leader* last week, "Hopefully we can put the job actions and other things that have impeded us to the side, so we can resolve our open issues."

But, in the end, those words may carry an unintended stigma all their own. The recent discord within the Springfield School District may have grown roots that parallel those found in the deep annals of history books. Once snagged, these incidents usually take quite some time to repair themselves.

Let's get back into the classrooms and start focusing on making Springfield's schools the best that they can be.

The machine rolls on

If ever there was another example of the need for two-party representation in Union County, this is it. The Union County Improvement Authority's Board of Commissioners appointed Charlotte DeFilippo of Hillside, the county's Democratic chairwoman, as its new executive director.

During the Nov. 29 meeting, eight of the nine commissioners were present and approved a five-year contract with an annual salary of \$104,000 by a unanimous vote. Unanimous because one of the few remaining Republicans in all of Union County government was absent.

The GOP claims the position of executive director is a no-show job that is used simply to raise money for the Democratic Party. Wayne Smith, Plainfield's Republican chairman and the only GOP commissioner on the UCIA, called the six-figure salary for an executive director "unwarranted." Democrats defend the selection of their party chairwoman, at no surprise to anyone, citing her years of experience in government and with bonding issues.

Perhaps she is qualified, but the appointment smacks of patronage and reinforces the cynic's view of government. With Smith's term on the UCIA expiring in February, and only one Republican left on the Utilities Authority board, there might be no stopping the Democratic machine from doing what it wants.

There were no other candidates to replace the outgoing executive director who left to join the McGreevey for Governor campaign and is a former chief of staff for State Sen. Raymond Lesniak. Although it has six projects on tap, the UCIA seems to be a conduit for Democratic patronage as much as it is an economic development agency.

If ever there was an entity that operates completely below the public's radar, it is the Union County Improvement Authority. Ask 10 people on the street what the Improvement Authority is and you'd be hard-pressed to get a correct answer or an answer at all.

Democrats must stop making Union County government their own personal trough and using taxpayer money to do it.

—John Morley
English statesman
1877



Photo by Jeff Grant

TAINTED MEMORIES — Springfield American Legion Post 228 Past Commander Raymond Schramm recalls Pearl Harbor Day, during memorial services last week at Veteran's Memorial Park. The Japanese raid on the U.S. fleet in Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941 led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to ask Congress to declare war on Japan. Jeanette Rankin, R-Mont., the first woman elected to serve in Congress, was the only member to vote against the declaration of war.

We must remember that talent isn't morality

Joe's Place

By Joe Lugara
Staff Writer

I was puttering around Barnes and Noble recently looking for Christmas presents when I happened to run across a recent biography of Joe DiMaggio, "A Hero's Life." Like many Barnes and Noble shoppers, I sat on the nearest upholstered chair and played Reading Room.

Joe DiMaggio wouldn't have liked the book. As Woody Allen's character in "Manhattan" observed, "That book makes me look like Lee Harvey Oswald."

We admire people, obviously, for what they do. And that could mean anything. They could walk on the moon, rescue children from burning buildings, steal from large corporations, hit baseballs 475 feet, do heart surgery, commit murders or solve murders. Any activity, from the hideous to the saintly, has been cherished by someone, somewhere.

If something's done well, it deserves admiration. Morality shouldn't hold any role in the appreciation of talent.

I can hear what you're thinking: O.J. Simpson.

Sometimes you have to draw a line — or build the Hoover Dam — between a person's talent and their morality. If we look at the issue as objectively as we can, we can admit without a trace of guilt or disgust that Simpson's past ability to run with a football was rather extraordinary. If it's the desire of anyone reading this column to become a running back in the National Football League, then Simpson's natural athletic ability is a fine model. Of course, as a husband and human being, his talents are abject, and aren't likely to get any better.

But can we really build a wall between talent and morality with someone like this, especially when they exercise their skills in an area so alluring to kids?

Simpson, for some freakish media reason, became a kind of "hero" after his retirement from football, a reputation that's still in the process of being undone. Once that's gone, once the retired "hero" image finally fades away — which it will eventually, certainly to be supplanted by the lying murderer image — Simpson will be easier to divide. Then the person who wants to admire him for his physical talents will be able to admire that aspect easily, without remorse.

Kids aren't dummies. They're capable of understanding the fact that talent and character are different things, and they certainly don't need the strenuous explanation I just gave you in order to get the point. But better than dividing someone like Simpson, it's much better for them to turn their attentions to someone in the same field who's as good or better. And in Simpson's former profession, there are a fair number of those.

I invoked the miserable Simpson because he's an extreme example of the kind of thing I'm talking about. But there are examples of various

kinds everywhere. As a painter, I was fractured when I found out that one of my favorite watercolorists, Emil Nolde, had been a Nazi sympathizer. Absolutely ruined my week. But when I went back to look at his paintings again after hearing the bad news, they didn't appear one iota less dynamic. Emil Nolde the painter was — and is — Emil Nolde the painter as far as I'm concerned. His politics were skewed, but he didn't paint his politics.

Nolde, by the way, was later branded a "degenerate artist" by the very political party he supported. And the great DiMaggio, at his last public appearance at Yankee Stadium, is reported to have yelled at one of George Steinbrenner's secretaries until the woman burst into tears. And Ernest Hemingway is said to have made his wife do penance for having removed a shrub with troublesome roots from in front of the couple's home.

People are people. Sometimes with talent. But talent isn't morality.

Neighborhood policing can pave road to change

Point Of View

By Thomas Manahan

When I assumed the office of Union County Prosecutor three and one-half years ago, among my goals was to foster an environment where our citizens would feel safe in their homes, in our parks and on our streets. While positive strides to achieve these goals have been made due to the efforts of many within and without the law enforcement community, there is much more that needs to be accomplished.

For years, law-abiding members of crime-infested neighborhoods have been "waiting for justice." Even when these law-abiding citizens have been motivated to affect a positive change within their neighborhoods, they have found that they cannot do it alone. In order to ensure the public safety of all our citizens, there must be a substantial and sustained investment of financial and human resources combined with strategic intervention and programs that focus on prevention.

In early 1998, the Save A Life Today program was established by this office in the City of Plainfield as a collaborative effort to restore order, combat crime, protect our young and elderly and return neighborhoods plagued by crime to the law-abiding citizens.

A concentrated area within Plainfield was selected as the focus of the

SALT program. This one-square-mile area for a number of years has been a socioeconomically-distressed neighborhood with significantly high rates of crime, illegal drug activity and juvenile delinquency. The SALT program's primary purpose is to assist those who need help the most, those most exposed to the perils that arise with poor living conditions, those damaged by situations largely beyond their control, and those living right at the margin and left to live in the shadows.

Among those who have participated in this collaborative effort, none are more critical to its ultimate success than the members of law enforcement. Unfortunately, over the course of time, an estrangement has arisen between police officers and those whom they serve based in part on a method of policing that was meant to enable officers to respond rapidly to the needs of the citizens.

From "walking beats" and "call boxes," police officers began to utilize patrol vehicles and radios which increased response time and response calls but virtually eliminated all interactions with the community. In their book "Fixing Broken Windows," George L. Kelling and Catherine M. Coles noted the importance of police and citizens "connecting." The authors wrote, "Things happen when police officers get out of their cars and systematically interact with citizens, through foot patrol or some other tactic." Despite the recognition of the need for connecting and interaction between police and citizens and the enhanced efforts that have been made to bring this about, progress in this area, especially when compared to society's technological advancements, has been glacial.

It is for this reason that I will seek to initiate in appropriate communities within the county a concept known as "Neighborhood Policing." Neighborhood policing will call for officers to be assigned as their regular tour of duty to a particular neighborhood.

The officers, by their presence and interaction with the community, will be a visible sign that government is interested in the well-being of all citizens and will greatly assist in restoring the trust and confidence of those citizens.

This concept will have a positive influence as well upon the officers who participate by instilling a sense of pride and proprietorship in their adopted neighborhoods. The knowledge that they will gain about these neighborhoods will assist efforts to restore order and provide hope for those who feel as though their lives have fallen into despair.

Since this program will rely on these police officers to supplement traditional and necessary police efforts, funding will be required for additional officers. It is my intention to call upon funders of all types — private and public, national and local — to work in partnership in order to ensure this program's success. If fully funded and conscientiously implemented, neighborhood policing could pave the road toward longstanding change with the potential to enrich our citizens' lives both today and with each succeeding generation.

As Solon, the Greek statesman and poet, said almost 2,500 years ago, "There can be no justice until those who are unaffected by crime become as indignant as those who are." All our citizens deserve a full and fair chance to pursue a better life and a better destiny.

Thomas V. Manahan is the Union County Prosecutor.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rest area's removal under analysis

To the Editor:
Editor's note: The following letter was sent to Assemblyman Richard Bagger in response to a letter he wrote to the state Department of Transportation on behalf of Mountainside and Westfield.

Commissioner James Weinstein has asked me to respond to your letter concerning the closing of the Route 22 rest area in Mountainside.

Both Westfield and Mountainside have prepared written resolutions supporting the removal of the rest area. As this has the support of the local communities, copies of the resolutions have been forwarded to our Transportation Systems Planning Unit in Trenton. This unit will research and analyze the feasibility of removing the rest area. The New Jersey Department of Transportation will

notify you and the communities of Westfield and Mountainside when the analysis is complete.

I hope you find this information helpful and thank you for writing.
F. Rodney Roberson, assistant commissioner operations
New Jersey Department of Transportation

What's happening to government?

To the Editor:
Those Americans of 1776 will spin in their graves spiritually as they witness their fought for free America trending toward the type of government they fought to be free of.
Joseph Chieppa
Mountainside

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Alison Wellen

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Eleanor Weissman

"No, I am not traveling; we'll share the holidays with family at home."



Jack Deegan

"We will be traveling to visit family in both North Jersey and in Pennsylvania."

OBITUARIES

Ethelind C. Bunnell

Ethelind C. Bunnell, 87, of Ocean Grove, formerly of Union, wife of the late Robert Bunnell Sr., who had been active in businesses in Springfield, died Nov. 23 in the Manor by the Sea, Ocean Grove. Her husband had been president and treasurer of the Bunnell Brothers Real Estate and Insurance Co., Springfield, for more than 50 years. He had been the founder and past president of the First National Bank of Springfield, now the National State Bank of Elizabeth. The late Mr. Bunnell also founded and was treasurer of Battle Hill Loan Association, now the Investors Savings and Loan, Millburn. He also was a charter member of the Springfield Lions Club. Her late son, Robert Bunnell Jr., was in the family business for 30 years and was a member of the Springfield Elks Lodge 2004 and was president of the Millburn-Springfield Kiwanis Club.

Born in Newark, Mrs. Bunnell lived in Union for many years before moving to Ocean Grove 30 years ago. She was a member of the Salvation Army Citadel Corp., Asbury Park, the Atlas Chapter 99 of the Order of the Eastern Star of New Jersey in Westfield and Walpack Historical Society in the Walpack Center. Mrs. Bunnell also was a life member of the Historical Society of Ocean Grove.

Surviving are three daughters, Dorothy Palmer, June Richards and Catherine M.; 14 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and a great-great-grandchild.

Paul Richard Josloff

Paul Richard Josloff, 86, of Springfield, formerly of Hillside, died Dec. 7 at home.

Born in Newark, Mr. Josloff lived in Hillside before moving to Springfield.

field. He owned and operated Josloff Glass Co., Newark. Mr. Josloff was past president of the Young Men's Hebrew Club in Newark and Irvington.

Surviving are his wife, Ann; a son, Jerry; a daughter, Vivian Nadler; six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

Louis Bornstein

Louis Bornstein, 93, of Springfield, formerly of Union, died Dec. 5 in Union Hospital.

Born in Russia, Mr. Bornstein lived in Union before moving to Springfield 10 years ago. He owned Atlas Glass Co., Newark, for many years before retiring. Earlier, Mr. Bornstein was a glazier with Newark Glass Co. He was a 50-year member of the Glaziers Union Local 1095 in Bloomfield. Mr. Bornstein also was a member of Erste Bershadar, Hillside.

Surviving are a daughter, Elaine Nelkin; four grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and a great-great-grandchild.

James F. Ross

James F. Ross, 80, of Mountanside died Dec. 10 in Overlook Hospital, Summit.

Born in Elizabeth, Mr. Ross lived in Mountanside since 1958. He was a regional director for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in New York City for 25 years and retired in 1984.

Surviving are his wife, Edith M.; a daughter, Laura Bolyvar; four sons, Jeffrey A., James R., Alan R. and Matthew S., and four grandchildren.

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PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Mountain Side Local Assistance Board at Mountain Side Borough Hall, 1345 Route 20, Mountain Side, New Jersey, on Wednesday, January 3, 2001 at 1:00 P.M.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Contract #P-00-03
Sealed Bids for Contract SP-00-03: Replaced and repaired all exterior ramp and all associated work at the Springfield Municipal Building, 20 North Third Avenue, Springfield, NJ, shall be held by the Office of Public Works at the Municipal Building, 100 Mountain Avenue, Springfield, NJ, on Monday, Thursday, December 28, 2000 at which time they will be publicly read aloud.

The project generally consists of the reconstruction of the public pedestrian ramp and the addition of a new exterior ramp for handicap accessibility with all associated structural, mechanical, electrical and general construction work.

The instruction to Bidders, Form of Bid, Form of Contract, Plans, Specifications, and Form of Bid Bond, Performance and Payment Bond, and other contract documents may be examined at the Office of the Tige, Doty, Carrino, P.A., 171 Ridgedale Avenue, Suite 100, Florham Park, New Jersey at any time during regular business hours, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. Copies may be obtained from the State Township Engineering Office at 26 North Third Avenue, Springfield, NJ, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. upon payment of \$25.00 certified check, money order or cash payable to Tige, Doty, Carrino, P.A. One set of bid proposal must be accompanied by a certified check or bank draft of bid bond made payable to the Township of Springfield in the amount of 10% of the bid, but not in excess of \$20,000, accompanied by a bidder and a survey company authorized to do business in the State of New Jersey. Bidders will be advised as to the "Public Works Contractor Registration Act" (P.L. 1986, c.228) and must submit evidence with their bid of a completed and submitted registration application to establish eligibility for award.

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THE TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WAIVE OR REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS IF IT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE TOWNSHIP OF SPRINGFIELD TO DO SO.

Richard Sheela, Township Administrator
Township of Springfield
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City businesses hustle and bustle

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

Editor's note: This is the second part in a two-part series highlighting downtown businesses during the holiday shopping season.

Unlike many other communities of its size, Summit offers shoppers just about every shopping opportunity right in its own downtown district. At this vital time of year for them, large and small shops are experiencing the bustle of the shopping season in varying degrees.

Sealfons

Sealfons is the largest retail store in downtown Summit and sits on the corner of Springfield Avenue and Maple Street, with three floors of elegant and selective merchandise for the whole family and the home. A family-owned business, Jennifer Scher, nee Model, is a dedicated owner and manager. Her parents, the Model family, have been owners of Sealfons for 45 years, and as the third generation, she takes great pride in the place.

When asked how business was this year, Scher said quickly, "Business is very good and our customers understand the wonderful advantages of shopping here," she said. Referring to Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving and the supposed start of the holiday shopping season, the manager said, "That day we broke even, not great, but we have picked up since and I think shoppers are staying in town."

Sealfons is a specialty department store, with high-end clothing and accessories for all members of the family, with the first floor showing fine jewelry, bags, and gifts. "We always have a fresh face," said Scher, "and we are aware of the customer's

mindset in that everyone loves a sale. We always have things on sale, and we offer value as well."

Another unusual fact about Sealfons is the totally free gift wrapping service offered with any purchase. "We get busier as the season gets closer, and expect a wonderful year," the manager said.

The Willow Street Boutique

Across the street, a small specialty shop called The Willow Street Boutique was already full of customers. Owner Lezli Bradley reported, "We are very busy and I think it is because it is a new location for us and we offered a really strong sale because of that."

She was quick to note, "The Christmas season usually starts closer to the middle of December or even the end of the month for us, and men are our biggest customers." Asked why that was, Bradley replied, "Well, men usually wait until late in the season to buy gifts for their wives. Our computer system keeps exact records of sales, and we love to help them choose just the right gift."

Among the choices are high-end and contemporary clothing and accessories, like bags and jewelry. Bradley has been in business for seven years in Summit, and has four full-time and three part-time employees, a lot for a small shop. They have added Sundays for the shopper's benefit, and expect a great season with many repeat customers.

"People are very loyal in Summit and I think the people in this area want attention provided to them," the owner said. "They get that here — a personal touch."

Elephantales

Just a block away, at 26 Maple St.,

a toy store, Elephantales, looks like it could be Santa's workshop with toys of every type lining shelves from floor to ceiling all around the shop, as well as larger toys displayed in the aisles.

Owner Kathy Lovocare was as busy as Santa, too, as she was rushing out. She did say, however, "Business is very good, we do mail orders and sell toys for all ages of children. We have been here 15 plus years." And with that, she left.

However, sales clerk Lynn Stanger, who said she was new but loved the job, added, "We are busy because we give a lot of service here. We gift wrap and mail, free of charge. The people in this town support the downtown stores, and they are very nice."

Summit Furs

Close by, at 30 Maple St., is the beautiful store Summit Furs, where business is hopping, according to store manager Lynn Balarezo. "Business is good, and our only problem and complaint is the parking. Every single customer complains about the parking to me, which is only on one side of the street on Maple," said the manager.

Offering elegant furs, capes, hats, and many styles of coats from all over the world, Summit Furs also stores, cleans and glazes the garments on the premises. "In fact, our storage business is bigger than the retail business. We have 3,000 coats in storage every year for the people of the area," said Balarezo.

He is proud that many of his clientele are repeat customers. "The store also does trade-ins. Balarezo has been there on Maple for five years now; previously he had his business in New York City, but prefers Summit. "Summit is a beautiful town; peo-



Photo By Jeff Grant

Handmaids, 37 Maple St., has been offering a vast array of handmade gift items to its customers for a quarter of a century. Store owner Roberta Thornton says this is the store's busiest time of year, but added that the end result of holiday business is still too early to predict.

ple are really nice, and locals are faithful to their own city," Balarezo said. "Everybody knows everybody; I know most of the customers by name. We offer service that is very important."

Handmaids

Across the street, at 37 Maple, is a unique shop called Handmaids. "Everything is American, and handmade," said owner Roberta Thornton. "I have had the store for seven years, but it has been in Summit for 25 years, and now, I would say that business is just OK at this time."

The store is beautifully decorated with specialty gift items peppering

tables and shelves, and hung from the ceiling. Merchandise includes pottery, glass items, jewelry, wall art, metal art, painted items, some new and some antique, and all suitable as gifts.

"We are seasonal," said Thornton, "and we buy special items for the holidays, each pertaining to the specific celebration. This is our busiest time, of course, but it is too early to tell the end result."

She said there are some people who only shop there once a year, and others who come by every week. She, too, has many repeat customers. The store is open seven days a week during the holiday season. "It's hard to

say how the year will turn out, in general, it had been very strong, but the national events brought a slowdown."

Trost's Bakery

One busy, busy place that beckons steady business from its position in the center of the shopping district, is Trost's Bakery, on Springfield Avenue. Shoppers could be seen rushing in and out to buy specialty cookies and other delights along with coffee, to give them the energy for all this shopping.

Trost's management was just too busy to talk, which could be a good sign for the end result of this downtown holiday shopping season.

Festival of Lights celebrated at area houses of worship through Dec. 29

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

The worldwide holiday for Jewish people, Hanukkah, is upon us once again, beginning at sundown Dec. 21, when area temples and synagogues will observe this joyous event.

Also known as the "Festival of Lights," Hanukkah lasts eight days, or through Dec. 29 this year. The exact meaning of the word in English is "dedication," and it commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Hellenistic Syrians in a revolt which took place in 165 B.C.

This victory is considered a miracle in itself, as after the battle reclaiming the Temple Mount, the temple had to be rededicated. According to Jewish lore, only one jar of sacramental oil was found, enough for one day, but miraculously, the oil burned on for eight days, thus the eight days of Hanukkah.

The most important Hanukkah ritual, therefore, is the candle lighting. When Jews light eight candles in a special candle holder called a menorah — one per night for the eight days. The middle candle, called the shamash, is used to light each of the other candles, and it is lit every night. Therefore, on the first night of Hanukkah, two candles are lit, and by the last night, nine candles are burning. It is traditional to eat foods fried in oil during Hanukkah.

For the children, there is the dreidel game, a four-sided top. On each side of the dreidel is a different Hebrew letter, corresponding to words in a sentence which translates to "A great miracle happened here," meaning in Israel. Gifts of dreidels are given to children, as are gifts of money and presents, and the menorah is displayed in Jewish homes, and in windows, throughout the celebration. In Israel, it is especially festive, with parties and special events, and schools are closed there.

Local houses of worship also host events for children, as well as concerts and special music for the whole family.

• At the Summit Jewish Community Center there is a special Toys and Young

Children's Shabbat set for 6:30 p.m. tomorrow, the week preceding Hanukkah, in the sanctuary at 67 Kent Place Blvd. Shabbat is a prayer service, and this one will be especially geared for little ones as old as six years old and their families.

Cantor Janet Roth Krupnick will lead the service in prayer and songs. Families are encouraged to bring their children to hear the Hanukkah story, to meet a special mystery Hanukkah guest, and enjoy cookies, juice and other festive treats. Rabbi William B. Horn heads the Conservative synagogue.

On Saturday at 6 p.m., there will be a light Israeli supper for the adults, in Cafe Israel — an area within the community center — with both Israeli and American food served, as well as entertainment and Israeli folk dancing with Miriam Handler. Everyone will join in singing folksongs led by Cantor Krupnick. This last event will be \$12 per person for members 13 years old and older, \$6 for children 5 to 12 years old, and free for children 4 years old and younger. For non-members of the synagogue, the charge will be \$15.

• Summit's Reform temple, Temple Sinai, at 208 Summit Ave., is celebrating Hanukkah with a special family holiday concert at 7 p.m. Dec. 23, with the Robyn Helzner Trio. They will perform Jewish music with arrangements of Hebrew, Yiddish, Ladino, Russian and American Jewish songs. The concert will include Temple Sinai's own children's choir, called the Junior Jammers.

A dinner, set for 5:30 p.m., will precede the concert and reservations are required. For information or reservations, call the office at (908) 273-4921.

In Springfield, two Jewish congregations, one Conservative, Temple Sha'arey Shalom, and one Reform, Temple Beth Ahm, are planning special services for this joyous holiday.

On the Friday evening before Hanukkah children from babies to six years old and their families will gather for a Tot Shabbat at 8:30 p.m. tomorrow at Temple Sha'arey Shalom, 78 S. Springfield Ave.

Also relative to the coming holiday, the temple's Renaissance Group will take a trip to the New Jersey Performing Arts Center at 5 p.m. Tuesday to see

performances of Handel's Oratio "Judas Maccabeus" by the New Jersey Philharmonic Orchestra.

After these preparatory events, the first night candle lighting ceremony will be conducted at 5 p.m. Dec. 21. All are welcome to gather in the temple lobby with religious school students assembling for prayer and song.

The Hanukkah "Light-In" Shabbat service will be conducted at 7:30 p.m. for the second night of Hanukkah at the temple. Those attending are asked to bring their own menorah and light the candles together with the other families. Rabbi Joshua Goldstein described the annual event. "It is our night of 100 menorahs. What a great sight!"

• Temple Beth Ahm, a Reform congregation at 60 Temple Drive, Springfield, will start the holiday Sunday at 9 a.m. with a religious school program for the children. There will be dancing, crafts, music, jelly doughnuts, and gift bag making for those in need.

At 6 p.m. Tuesday, the temple will host its annual Hanukkah party for families, with hot dogs, latkes, and fun.

On Dec. 22 at 8:30 p.m., the first actual day of Hanukkah, the temple will conduct Shabbat services with the Temple Beth Ahm choir, and a sing-along of favorite Hanukkah songs.

Ticket orders for hockey night due by Friday

The New Jersey Devils will host a hockey night to benefit The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's North Jersey Affiliate of Summit Wednesday at the Continental Airlines Arena when the Devils face off against the Dallas Stars. Orders for tickets must be received by Friday.

Tickets for second-level seating in the 200s are available for \$32 and a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to the North Jersey Affiliate.

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Dissent shows its face on election day

(Continued from Page 1)
 aged athletic facilities were showing substantial signs of deterioration and pre-aging safety concerns and injury liabilities to the district.
 The five-year bond issue would have produced a tax impact of approximately \$21.25 per quarter — or \$85 per year for the average township homeowner.
 Last month, the district was pledged \$674,076.80 in state aid for the project under the auspices of the Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Act, ultimately reducing the issued amount of the bond to \$2,726,289.20. The county's \$425,000 verbal commitment earlier this month to loan and work on the track at Mersel could not be included in the bonded amount since no check had yet been received by either the township or the school district.
 Law suits in support of the referendum dotted lawns along Mersel, Hillsdale and Mountain avenues in the weeks preceding the special school election. Opposition to the project was scarcely seen or heard, Friedland claimed.
 "I haven't heard more than a dimple of opposition," Friedland said Friday morning before the election. "The opposition, if anything is coming from the

older residents in town through a couple of mouthpieces from a group that calls itself the Springfield Improvement Association."
 A lister distributed at random throughout the township last month by the group directed residents to tell their friends and neighbors to vote no on the referendum, suggesting the expenditure of more than \$1.6 million for rehabilitation work at the county-owned Mersel Park should not befall Springfield taxpayers.
 Louise Kobukowski, 73, did just that, casting her no vote on Tuesday after noon at Goodinger School. "How many taxes can we continue to pay? I'm trying on a fixed income off my Social Security," she said.
 Louis Weinstein also voted no. "The money could be put to better use."
 Currently, no New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Conference track and field events can be conducted at the Mersel track due to risk of injury. Approximately 80 percent of the bonded funds would have been used to upgrade the track, baseball, football and soccer fields used by Jonathan Dayton athletes.

Mayor: We didn't leave the bargaining table

(Continued from Page 1)
 "There were many unfair allegations made here tonight, and for those who felt it unfortunate," Mayor Clara Harelich began. "They don't want to hear our side."
 Harelich said a great deal of time had been put into thinking about and working with the proposed township schedule, but did not address the topic with specifics. She defended the committee's approach to the negotiations, insisting they had been fair, while stressing that they had not walked away, at any time, from the negotiations.
 "The key is to put every factor in," she said. "Dollars and cents, what does it

mean to taxpayers — you can't just say four and four. It's no secret that negotiations are give-and-take. We made certain concessions, had certain demands, but didn't leave the bargaining table. We stayed. I don't want people to think we're trying to shut down negotiations."
 Deputy Mayor Steven Goldstein called the mass exodus "completely rude and immature." He described his obligation as "to the taxpayers. If I see something that affects taxpayers dollar-wise, I have to say something. I think we all want the same thing — reasonable wages, good working conditions — but walking away from the table, disrespecting the mayor so blatantly, isn't the answer."

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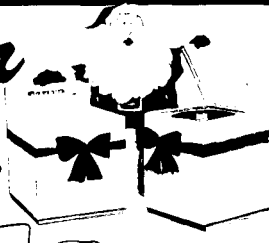
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Board of Ed expected to vote on school calendars for next two years tonight

By John Celock
Staff Writer

Summit students and teachers will soon know what days they will go to school for the next two years.

Superintendent of Schools Michael Knowlton recommended school calendars for 2001-02 and 2002-03 to the Board of Education at the board's Dec. 7 workshop meeting. The board is expected to take a final vote on the proposed calendars at its meeting tonight at 8 p.m. at Summit High School.

Knowlton revealed his proposals after several weeks of discussion and study, including meetings with parents, teachers and the Summit Interfaith Council. In addition, Knowlton conducted a study on the feasibility of allowing school closings on Election Day.

During the next two years, school will not be closed on Election Day. This year, the board permitted school to be closed due to security concerns with residents coming in and out of the schools to vote. The proposed calendars call for a return to the traditional schedule of allowing school to be open, with a half day for elemen-

tary school students in order to permit parent-teacher conferences. In addition, the days before and after the election will be half days for elementary school students.

Traditionally, the Thursday and Friday after Election Day are days off each year for the New Jersey Educational Association Convention. Knowlton said the district closes school since state law mandates that any teacher who wishes to may attend the convention, and many teachers do, he added.

Concern had been expressed with the schedule during election week this year, when schools were closed for three days with a half-day in the elementary schools on Wednesday. Knowlton confirmed that absenteeism increased that week.

"I was in several schools on Election Day and I could not see how we would have been successful in holding school," Knowlton said of the large crowds who turned out to vote in this year's presidential election.

The Knowlton plan does call for many other days off for the next two school years. In 2001-02, the first day of school will be Sept. 4, with the last

scheduled for June 28, contingent upon the number of snow days used. If none of the five snow days are used, school will close June 21. The graduation ceremony for the high school class of 2002 is set for June 26.

The 2002-03 school year will commence Sept. 4, with the last day tentatively scheduled for June 24. If none of the five snow days are used, school will close June 17. The graduation ceremony for the high school class of 2003 is set for June 23.

During the 2001-02 school year, Knowlton's calendar proposal calls for the traditional second-semester break periods. The week of Feb. 18 to Feb. 22 will be designated for winter break, with the week of April 15 to April 19 earmarked for spring break.

The Knowlton proposal calls for a change in the second-semester break times for the 2002-03 school year. This calendar calls for a long weekend from Feb. 14 to Feb. 17 with spring break scheduled from March 31 to April 4.

Knowlton said the change in second-semester break periods during the 2002-03 school year will bring Summit in line with other school dis-

tricts in Union County. He said the spring break period was scheduled to come about in the mid-point of the second semester.

In addition, Knowlton said the Interfaith Council urged him to avoid tying the spring break to the religious holiday calendar. The clergy have expressed concern that if school is scheduled off during this time, fewer residents will attend religious services.

"No calendar is ideal and these that I am recommending do not fit that either. It does shorten the calendar by a few days, though," Knowlton said.

Concern was expressed to board members regarding the days that the

school years end. Resident Maureen Kelly said she was concerned that weather conditions in June will not permit a learning-conducive environment. In addition, Kelly said that she would like to see school open on future election days.

"We have had school at every level and kids learn a lot. I don't think that it is out of control on Election Day. This is Summit and we are well-behaved on Election Day," she said.

Kelly also proposed to the board that school begin prior to Labor Day in September. She said that many school districts in the south and mid-west begin the school year in August

and end in either late May or early June.

Knowlton said an early start is not feasible in New Jersey due to the number of people on vacation at the shore and the power of the lobbying groups representing shore business interests. He said that districts which had studied a 12-month school year had received opposition from shore lobbyists over the idea.

Knowlton said the district closes school on Take Your Daughter to Work Day since statistics show an approximately 30 percent absentee rate on this day. In addition, Gov. Christine Whitman asks districts to allow this day off.

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