

Echo LEADER

Serving Springfield and Mountainside

SPRINGFIELD, N.J., VOL. 78, NO. 49

THURSDAY, JULY 13, 2006

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School hours OK'd but busing unsure

By Meave Sheehan
 Staff Writer

School board members voted on the new school time schedules and continued their discussion of the busing shortage at Springfield's special Board of Education meeting Monday night at Jonathan Dayton High School.

Of the five school time schedule options that board members presented to parents at last week's meeting, the fourth option was chosen. With this schedule, Jonathan Dayton High School will start at 7:40 a.m. and end at 2:31 p.m. Florence M. Gaudineer Middle School will start at 7:45 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. The James Caldwell and Sandmeier Schools will start at 8:40 a.m. and end at 3 p.m. Walton School will start at 8:50 a.m. and end at 3:10 p.m.

Drop-off times for Jonathan Dayton and Gaudineer begin 10 minutes before the start times. Caldwell, Sandmeier and Walton Schools' drop-off times begin 15 minutes before school starts.

Addressing the busing shortage, board members said they plan to stop subscription busing, which allows parents to purchase yearly seats for their children. The board will not be leasing more buses for the 2005-06 school year.

"The budget constraints we're under do not allow for additional bus purchases," said board member Irwin Sablosky. He cited additional costs, such as salaries for bus drivers and aides and maintenance and insurance fees.

Business Administrator Matthew Clarke said that the district currently owns five large and five small buses. One small bus is being replaced with a large bus. The five small buses seat less than 30 students each.

As with last week's meeting, board members suggested that parents who live within two miles of school and are

not eligible for busing should organize independently.

Clarke offered to help parents by sharing his knowledge of busing issues, but the board agreed that they did not want to be involved with such an effort on an official level. Superintendent of Schools Michael Davino said that the board cannot give the names of parents to bus companies.

Board member Jacqueline Shanes said that there were "different parameters" for the board when leasing a bus and that it would be easier for parents to take action because they did not have to take into account certain state laws.

Risa Yesowitz, a Springfield parent, said she was disappointed in the board and believed that they were "not representing the community." Regarding the board's suggestion to parents to independently organize, Yesowitz told the board, "If you decide that you're not willing to pitch in, well, then we'll do it."

Shanes said subscription busing is not, "a mandatory thing," and that the way that subscription busing has evolved over time has created expectations that it will be provided. In the past, routes have not been established solely for parents who pay a subscription. Shanes said she was surprised that "this year, there was a 100 percent subscription bus to Caldwell School."

In the past, empty seats on buses have been sold to children who live within two miles of school and are already on a bus route. These seats are sold depending on availability, since children who live more than two miles away from their school are entitled to seats on the buses whether they use them or not. Board members said they are not allowed by state law to sell these seats.

In addition to the cost of leasing a bus, Davino also said that if the board were to lease a bus, some parents

	EWG (Pre-K Only)	EW (Grades K-2)	FDHS (Grades 3-5)	FMG (Grades 6-7)	JDHS (Grades 8-12)
Drop off Time	All Buses 6:45 a.m.	6:45 a.m.	6:45 a.m.	6:45 a.m.	6:45 a.m.
Start time	8:50 a.m.	8:45 a.m.	8:40 a.m.	7:45 a.m.	7:40 a.m.
Dismissal	All Buses 11:25 a.m.				
Start time	PM Session 12:35 p.m.				
Dismissal	PM Session 3:10 p.m.	3:10 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	2:30 p.m.	
Effective September 2006					
Approved 7/12/06					

The Springfield Board of Education recently approved these new changes in the start and end times for each school in the district, starting in September.

might pull out of the arrangement and there might be future complaints from parents who are paying for a service that they do not use.

Board members said they were open to suggestions and comments from parents.

"We'll take what you say back to the table and figure out which options are available," said Sablosky.

He noted that there are usually only four or five parents at board meetings.

Board members said that they were trying to make the best out of a bad situation. When asked by parents why they had not realized that there would be a busing shortage months ago, board members blamed their budget and other variables, such as not knowing what enrollment at the Walton School would be.

"I can't roll back time," Sablosky said.

Parents re-iterated their concern about the lack of communication between the community and the school board. One parent, Alex Mezza called on the board to, "ask us for our feedback instead of assuming something can't be done."

Currently, the board has no means of communicating with parents. Unlike neighboring districts, their school board meetings are not televised. The board said that they stopped publishing their quarterly newsletter due to budget constraints and as a result of the recently defeated school budget. In addition, they have cut out mailing letters home to parents.

Parent Lori Hogge asked board members why there was no announcement of the special meeting on the town or school marquee or anywhere else. Hogge said she had found out about the meeting through the *Echo Leader*.

"I think you have to tell people," Hogge said.

Ilene Shewitz, another parent, told the board, "You keep giving us different answers."

Davino and board members said they are looking at other ways to communicate with the entire community. There will be an improved Board of Education Web site this fall.

Parents who rely on subscription busing have not been informed of the

board's decision yet.

The board has spoken of sending letters home to parents, despite their statements about budget constraints.

With the time schedule decided upon, Davino cautioned that the board will be waiting along with everyone else to see if their planning makes for a smooth start to the new school year on Sept. 8.

"Everything that's presented here is a maybe," said Davino.

Board President Patricia Venezia later confirmed that letters will be mailed to those parents who used subscription busing in 2004-05.

To get out the message about time changes, the board has started a PTA phone list and e-mail chain through the local community organization Springfield Cares.

Parents will also receive separate letters for their children's class assignments.

Springfield resident Risa Yesowitz would like interested parents to contact her about independent busing as soon as possible at ryesowitz@aol.com or by calling 973-885-4701.

Township anticipates land swap

By Meave Sheehan
 Staff Writer

The anticipated land swap between Union County and the Township of Springfield that will the township athletic fields surrounding Jonathan Dayton High School has not become official yet.

At its meeting Tuesday meeting, the Township Committee presented a resolution to award a professional services contract for \$7,600 to Keller & Kirkpatrick Inc. for a land survey of the parkland.

Mayor Sy Mullman said the land swap, "is a fantastic deal for us." For the price of the land survey, Springfield will be receiving \$1 million worth of land, Mullman said.

The initial proposal for a trade of parkland was made more than three years ago when the Township Committee met with the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders.

Union County currently owns 7 acres of land near Jonathan Dayton High School. Springfield is looking to acquire complete ownership of the property by giving up about 11 acres of parkland near the Springfield-Union border.

Since both pieces of land are classified as Green Acres property, state approval is necessary for the exchange and has not been granted yet.

The land, once it becomes township property, is going to be leased to the Board of Education for \$1 a year.

The township plans to help maintain the property with the Board of Education.

The county will look to tie the Morris Avenue property it would receive with other land along the Rahway River, extending trails and connections with waterways.

The land was previously used for Springfield recreational sports but, due to the muddy condition of the field, it eventually stopped being used. The parcel abuts the Rahway River.

The property line for the parkland next to the high school currently runs through the softball field adjacent to the tennis courts in front of the school. The township owns land on the other side of the courts.

The property line along the Rahway River on Morris Avenue is located at the Union border, with the county already owning about four acres adjacent to the parkland.

Recreation groups will have access to the land, along with the schools.

The school board proposed a multi-million-dollar bond referendum to improve athletic fields three years ago. Most of these fields are owned by the county but are used primarily by the local schools. Voters rejected the bond referendum and environmental tests at county-owned Meisel Avenue Park led to the ongoing million-dollar cleanup.

Residents near golf club get free PGA tickets

By Meave Sheehan
 Staff Writer

Local residents can expect to brave the crowds for the week of the PGA tournament at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, from Aug. 8 through Aug. 14.

Traffic and parking are two concerns for Baltusrol's neighbors. Springfield Chief of Police William Chisolm said that Shunpike Road will be closed the week of Aug. 8 through Aug. 14 from 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. by county ordinance. There will be limited access to Mountainview Avenue. Chief Chisolm said that Springfield police will set up 13 traffic posts and county police will be present.

Mountainside's Chief of Police James Debbie said the Police Department expects an "extremely large amount of traffic," and that six officers will be working each day of the tournament.

Summit Avenue will be closed during the

week of the tournament. One officer will be posted at the intersection of Summit Avenue and Charles Street from 5:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. each day. There will be no parking on Charles Street at all.

The following streets will be closed, except to local traffic: Garvey Lane, Linda Drive, Old Grove Road, Sunny Slope Drive, Sunny View Road, and Rolling Rock Road. There will be no parking on the west side of Linda Drive, Old Grove Road and Rolling Rock Road. Signs will be put up next week warning drivers that vehicles will be towed.

Chief Debbie said that he expected some people to try to park illegally. There will be an officer checking the side streets.

Ina Golub, a Mountainside resident who normally uses Summit Road to get to her house, said that she will have to take an alternate route that week. Golub plans to stock a refrigerator full of food, the week of the tournament. Golub said

that she plans to avoid the Summit area, traveling instead to Westfield when she has to drive.

In return for their cooperation and patience, neighbors of the golf course have received complimentary, week-long tickets.

About a month ago, Springfield and Mountainside residents whose homes border the golf club received an invitation to a wine and cheese event at Baltusrol. Shortly after, neighbors received two free tickets for each day of the practice and championship rounds through the mail.

In addition to the tickets, residents who live near the course have noticed some changes in their neighborhoods as a result of tournament preparations. A new service road to Baltusrol has been built off of Charles Street. Chief Debbie said that a police officer will be stationed at this entrance. A nearby swamp in the same area has been dredged.

Mountainside resident Fatima Tavares, who

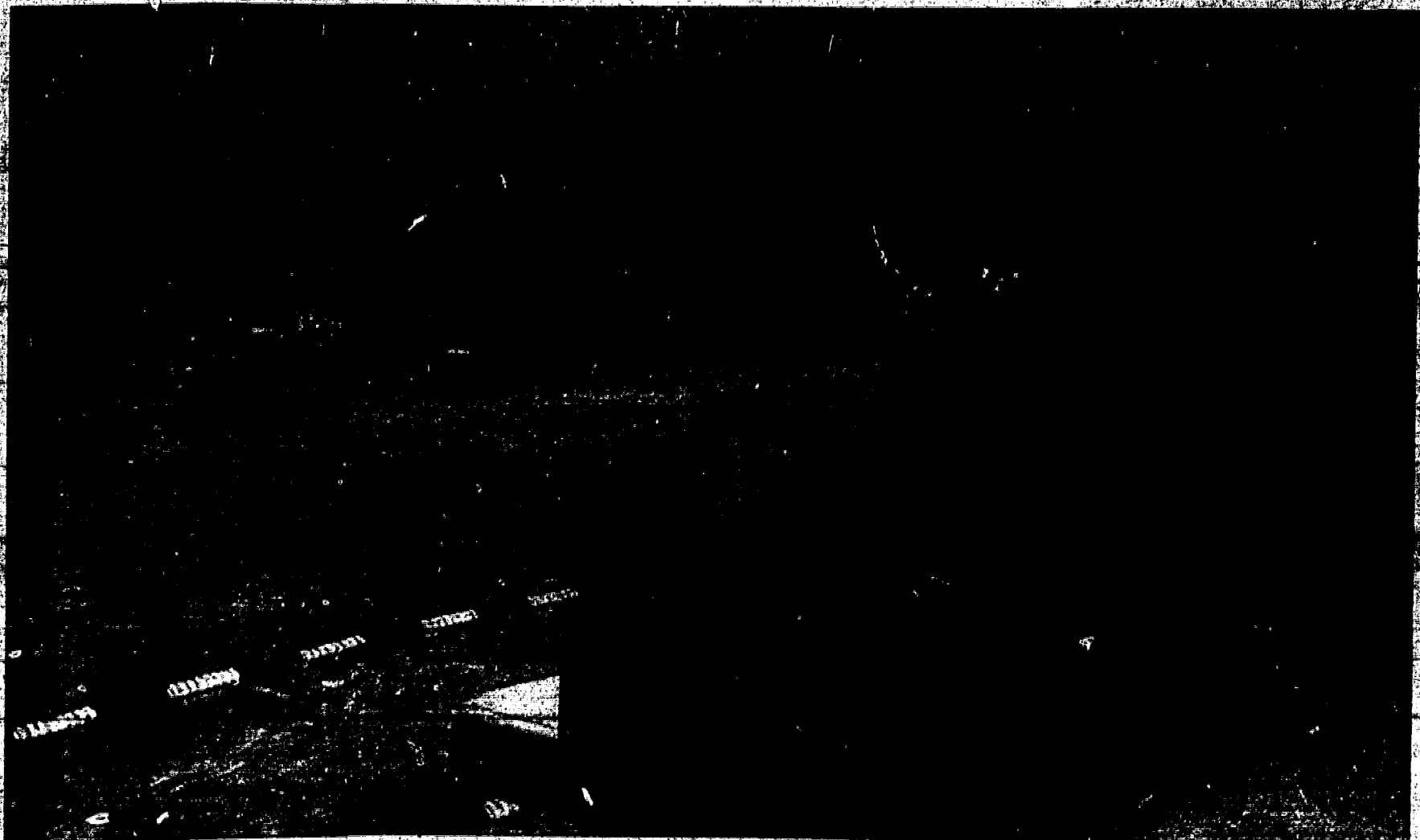
has lived next door to the golf course for two years, said that she has been too busy to take much notice of the planning for the tournament and did not attend the PGA's wine and cheese event or receive tickets.

Theresa Balazik, a Mountainside resident on Rolling Rock Road for 40 years, has a back yard that faces out to the Lower Course. Having been around for many golf events that Baltusrol has hosted, Balazik is used to special treatment from the golf course. Neighbors on Rolling Rock Road were also given free tickets when the U.S. Open came to Springfield in 1993.

Balazik said that she is willing to deal with any traffic inconveniences that might arise and believes that the tournament's positive effects for the town, local businesses and surrounding areas are worth it.

"People who complain are just complainers," Balazik said.

People pack into pool as temperatures rise



Mountainside Community Pool gets packed with swimmers as temperatures rise above 90 degrees during a sweltering summer afternoon. The barrier-free facility features a 50-meter pool, a separate diving tank, the zero-depth wading pool, a snack bar and picnic grove.

Mountainside district hires asst. principal

By Meave Sheehan
 Staff Writer

Mountainside's Beechwood School welcomes a new faculty member this fall. Michael Craver has recently been appointed as curriculum coordinator and assistant principal at the elementary school.

Craver's post becomes effective Monday, at a salary of \$81,200.

Prior to his appointment, Craver was a fifth-grade teacher at Jefferson Elementary School in Westfield. Having served on many committees in the district, Craver said that his background in strategic planning will serve him well in his new position.

Craver holds a bachelor's degree in education from Syracuse University and a master's degree in administration and supervision from Montclair State University.

Craver has experience with the Everyday Math program that Beechwood School is implementing this fall. With a handful of other teachers, he helped pilot Westfield's Everyday Math program, which is a discovery-based approach to learning mathematics that encourages students to be active learners.

Everyday Math uses different types of instruction. Along with the usual teacher to group instruction, students work alone, in small groups, or with a partner. The program seeks to make

mathematics more meaningful by using real life contexts and situations, and giving children the opportunity to become actively involved in learning.

This curriculum change required educating parents about the program.

"You had to reach out to the community," Craver said.

He hosted teacher/parent meetings and went through lesson plans with parents. Of Everyday Math, Craver said that, "kids are really thinking math."

"Everyday Math is a terrific program to make students math thinkers, not just doers."

Craver said that he hopes to be a resource for parents and teachers when Everyday Math is implemented this fall.

Having started a school-based television news program at Jefferson, Craver will now help Beechwood School start its own television news program.

At Jefferson, students delivered the news, which included information about school sports and events.

Craver said that he plans to involve students from each grade level at Beechwood.

Welcome to the ECHO LEADER

How to reach us: The Echo Leader is published every Thursday by Worrall Community Newspapers, an independent, family owned newspaper company...

Voice Mail: Our main phone number, 908-686-7700 is equipped with a voice mail system to better serve our customers.

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 \$269.00...

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.

News items: News releases of general interest must be in our office by Friday at noon to be considered for publication the following week.

Story reprints: For permission to reprint any item printed in the newspaper you must call Tom Canavan at 908-686-7700.

Letters to the Editor: The Echo Leader provides an open forum for opinions and welcome letters to the editor.

e-mail: The Echo Leader accepts news releases and opinion pieces by e-mail. Our e-mail address is Editorial@thelocalsource.com

To place a classified ad: The Echo Leader has a large, well read classified advertising section.

To place a public notice: Public Notices are notices which are required by state law to be printed in local weekly or daily newspapers.

Facsimile transmission: The Echo Leader is equipped to accept your ads, releases, etc. by fax.

Website: Visit our Web Site on the Internet at http://www.localsource.com

Postmaster Please Note: The ECHO LEADER (USPS 512-720) is published weekly by Worrall Community Newspapers, Inc., 1291 Stuyvesant Avenue, Union, N.J. 07083.

Police teamwork leads to arrest

When Mountaineer Police Officer Michael Perrotta responded to a burglary at an auto repair shop on Route 21, he didn't imagine teamwork would lead to an arrest and recovery of all the stolen property before his shift was over.

Mountaineer Police received a call from the owner of a repair shop who said his business was burglarized during the night.

Registration open for rec swim team

Springfield Recreation Department offers swim team 2005 registration.

To register, call 973-912-2227 or mail to: Sarah Bailey Civic Center, 30 Church Mill, Springfield, 07081.

Concert benefits local Junior League

Tickets are on sale now for "Cam Jansen," a new children's musical coming to Millburn Middle School on Oct. 2 at 3 p.m.

All proceeds from this event will benefit the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills, serving the community of Springfield.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Knaz joins Lackland Air Force team

Henry Knaz, 27, of Mountaineer, has joined the Air Force team as an airman at Lackland Air Force Base.

Following graduation, Knaz will be enrolled in a training program to learn the technical skills needed by the Air Force.

MOVING CLEARANCE Cash and Carry Items THE MATTRESS FACTORY MATTRESSES & BOX SPRINGS MADE ON THE PREMISES

"Central Air... Anywhere" SPACE PAK But a Spacepak remodelling doesn't require large metal ductwork.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

The Community Calendar is prepared by the Echo Leader to inform residents of various community activities and government meetings.

Today • Springfield Free Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., will begin its summer International Film Festival with "Motorcycle Diaries" at noon and 7 p.m.

Wednesday • The Springfield Planning Board will meet in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 100 Mountain Ave. at 8 p.m.

Springfield • On Saturday at 10:48 a.m., firefighters responded to a brush fire in Summit on a request from County Mutual Aid.

On Friday at 4:09 p.m., firefighters responded to Morris Avenue and Prospect Place for a motor-vehicle lock-out.

On July 21 at 11:21 p.m., firefighters responded to a fire alarm residence for an activated fire alarm.

On July 21 at 6:38 p.m., firefighters responded to a Twin Oaks Oval residence for a natural gas leak.

On July 21 at 11:15 a.m., firefighters responded to a Route 22 east business for an activated fire alarm.

On July 21 at 10:59 a.m., firefighters responded to a Fadem Road business for an activated fire alarm.

On July 21 at 10:52 a.m., a second Route 22 east business reported an odor of something burning and firefighters arrived on the scene.

On July 21 at 10:46 a.m., firefighters responded to a Shunpike Road residence for an illegal burning July 20 at 5:11 p.m.

BOE hopes Walton will be ready

By Meave Sheehan Staff Writer

The status of Edward V. Walton School is one major factor in the Springfield Board of Education's preparations for the upcoming school year.

The board is making plans, with the expectation that the Walton School construction project will be ready by the time school starts on Sept. 8.

Michael Davino, superintendent of schools, said the board does not know whether Walton will be completed in time.

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College for Kids

By Meave Sheehan Staff Writer

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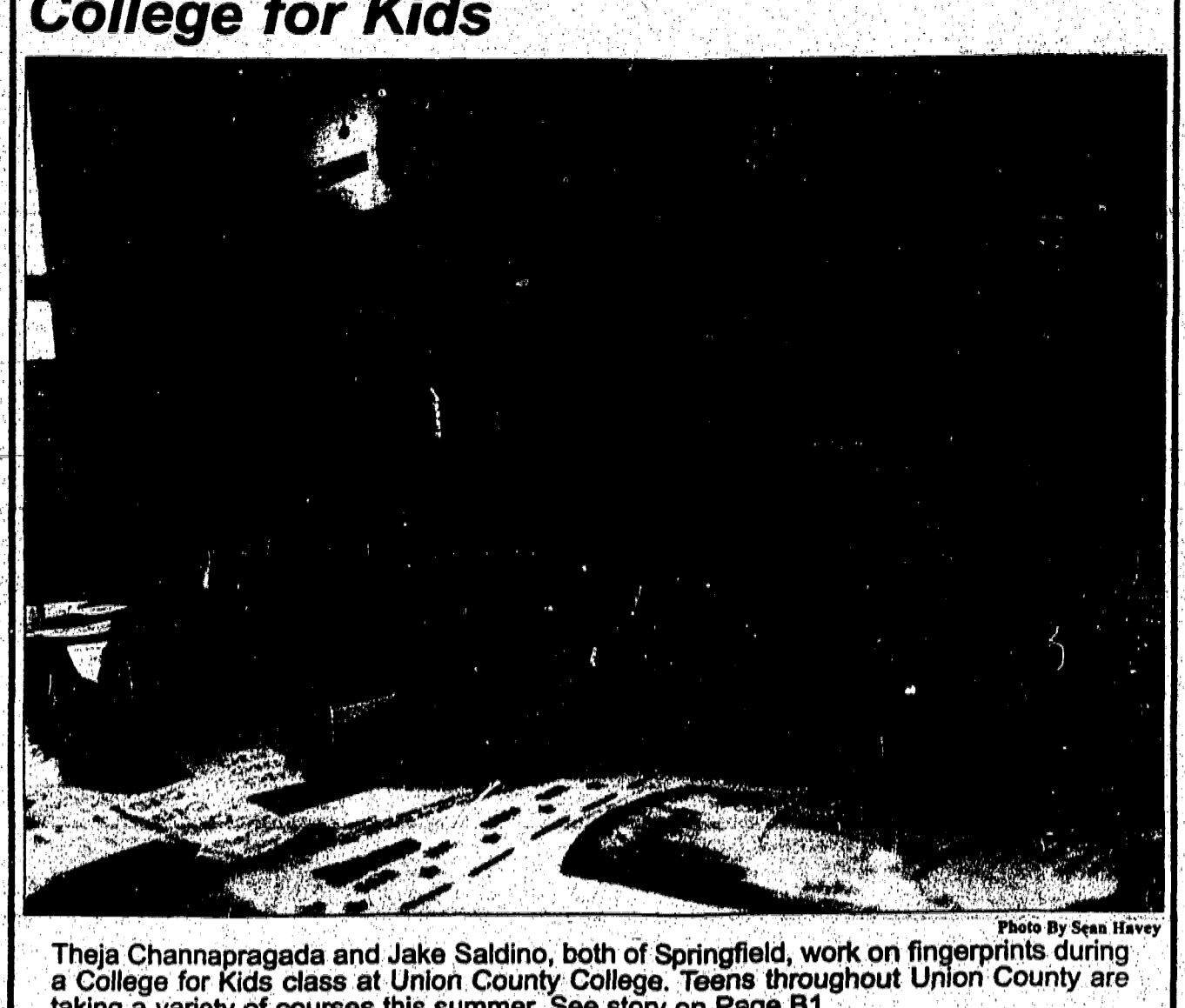
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Theja Channapragada and Jake Saldino, both of Springfield, work on fingerprints during a College for Kids class at Union County College.

'Women of Vision' sought by Jr. League

Nominations are now being accepted for the Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills' fourth annual Women of Vision Community Awards.

The Junior League of the Oranges and Short Hills serves Springfield as well as several other surrounding towns.

To obtain a nomination form, call 973-379-9655 or send an e-mail to JLOSH1913@aol.com.

The award recipients will be announced in early 2006 and honored at a luncheon in May.

Nominees should include individuals who have demonstrated excellence in their community work and share the Junior League mission to improve the quality of life within communities by embracing diverse perspectives, creating partnerships and inspiring shared solutions.

Real estate taxes due in August

Third quarter real estate taxes are due Aug. 17 for Mountaineer and Monday for Springfield.

Mail tax payments to Tax Collector's Office, 1385 Route 22, Mountaineer, NJ 07092 or 100 Mountain Ave., Springfield, NJ 07081.

MOVING CLEARANCE

Cash and Carry Items THE MATTRESS FACTORY MATTRESSES & BOX SPRINGS MADE ON THE PREMISES

Calling all square dancers

The summer square dance season has arrived and the local clubs have joined together to sponsor Saturday night dances in the Springfield YMCA.

The local clubs are Harmony Dancers, Y Squares, Bee Sharps, and Rutgers Promenaders.

For the prospective dancers, a free open house will be conducted on Sept. 10, at 7:30 p.m., in the YMCA/Chisolm Recreation Center at 100 S. Springfield Ave. in Springfield. This is an opportunity for all to try their hand at the New Jersey official folk dance. No reservations are needed at this time.

For information, call Leo at 973-379-3901.



The summer square dance season has arrived and the local clubs have joined together to sponsor Saturday night dances in the Springfield YMCA. The local clubs are Harmony Dancers, Y Squares, Bee Sharps, and Rutgers Promenaders. These dancers are enjoying a fun time at the recent Scotch Plains/Fanwood parade.

AT THE LIBRARY

Young orphans embark on quest in thriller

The Springfield Free Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., continues its Youth Film Festival on Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. In this thriller full of magic, dangerous escapes and special effects, two mysterious young orphans with supernatural powers escape from a ruthless millionaire in their efforts to reach Witch Mountain.

The film is 97 minutes and rated G.

For information, call 973-376-4930.

3-D film takes viewers through VR game

The Springfield Free Public Library concludes its Youth Film Festival on Aug. 9 at 10:30 a.m., 66 Mountain Ave.

This is a special showing with 3-D glasses. The third in the amazingly successful "Spy Kids" series takes viewers to the third dimension — literally.

This 3-D adventure has mini-spy Juni Cortez entering a dangerous virtual reality game that has captured his sister Carmen. The pair must stop the evil Toymaker's game before it takes over the world. 3-D glasses will be provided for viewing this film. The film is 72 minutes and rated PG.

The film will be shown in an air-conditioned room, and popcorn and soda will be served. For information, call 973-376-4930.

Shakespeare in the Park...ing Lot returns

"Shakespeare in the Park...ing Lot" returns to the Mountaintop Public Library this summer with the second outdoor production by the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey. "London Assurance" by Irish playwright Dion Boucicault will be presented on Aug. 5 at 7 p.m. on the library grounds.

In 1841, 21-year-old Dion Boucicault took the London box office by storm with his debut comedy, "London Assurance." Old Sir Harcourt Courly and his son Charles take a trip into the country that turns into a rollicking farce of mistaken identities when each finds himself secretly wooing the same young woman.

The Friends of the Mountaintop Public Library are sponsoring the play which is free and open to all and recommended for ages 12 and older.

Books for Babies

Mountaintop Public Library, Constitution Plaza, has started a new program to welcome newborns and their families to the wonderful world of reading.

"Books for Babies" is a special program expressly designed for the youngest members of the Mountaintop community. Parents of newborns and babies younger than one year of age are invited to pick up a free "Books for Babies" bag at the library.

Each kit is packaged in a sturdy "Born to Read" canvas bag which is perfect for library books and other errands. Inside are a "Read To Your Bunny" board book by Rosemary Wells; "Our Little Reader" photo magnet; "Read To Me" baby bib; "Reading: The Key to a Better Future" teaching keys; two bookmarks with recommended baby books and a library card application.

"Books for Babies" is supported through the generosity of the Friends of the Mountaintop Public Library.

To obtain a free kit, bring proof of Mountaintop residence to the Mountaintop Public Library or call the library at 908-233-0115.

Ice Cube stars in family comedy

The Springfield Free Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., continues its Youth Film Festival on Wednesday at 2:30 p.m.

Ice Cube stars in this family comedy as Nick Persons, a thirtysomething player with a new Lincoln Navigator, who checks out every fine lady who

passes by the window of the sports collectibles store where he works with pal Marty.

Decked out in all the latest clothes, Nick confidently approaches his latest attraction, Suzanne, only to learn that she is a recent divorcee with two kids.

The film is 96 minutes and rated PG.

The series will continue on Aug. 10. The films will be shown in an air-conditioned room, and popcorn and soda will be served. The event is free and open to the public.

For information, call 973-376-4930.

Approximate running time is one hour. Audience members are advised to bring a blanket or lawn chair for seating.

For information, call 908-233-0115 or visit the Mountaintop Public Library, Constitution Plaza, Mountaintop, during regular library hours. In case of rain, the production will be moved to the Community Room of Mountaintop Borough Hall.

Approximate running time is one hour. Audience members are advised to bring a blanket or lawn chair for seating.

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Library survey seeks info from patrons

The Springfield Free Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., is looking for help from residents of Springfield to help improve services.

The library asks that both users and non-users of the library fill out a patron survey online starting Monday through the library's Web site: www.springfieldpubliclibrary.com. Non-residents can also complete the survey.

The survey will be tallied in mid-October. Anyone who fills out the survey is entitled to a coupon for one free video rental from the library.

Part of the library's long-range planning process, the survey will help the library staff and Board of Trustees determine which services and hours will encourage people to use the library more. They intend to incorporate the survey results and suggestions into the long-range plan.

At Penn Federal

HURRY IN!

LIMITED TIME ONLY!

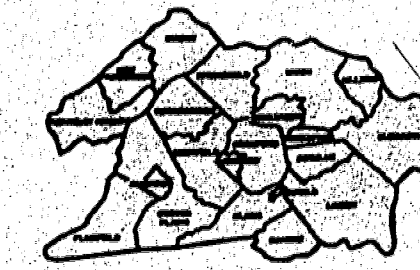
5 MONTH CD
3.7% APY

12 MONTH CD
4.0% APY

25 MONTH CD
4.2% APY

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In the matter of...

William Wright: Letter writer William Wright recently wrote "Frank Capece didn't bother to check with rail experts before he wrote about the restoration of the railway valley railroad." He added, "this line was never abandoned."

Actually the Third Circuit Federal Court of the District of Columbia including Supreme Court Nominee John Roberts ruled in the written opinion the line had in fact been "abandoned." To quote one of the attorneys for the railroad who argued the case, upon being read the letter, "This time Wright is wrong."

Left Out

Health insurance crisis: The report by the US Census Bureau, "Helping you make informed decisions" released last week hammers home the crisis in health insurance. They estimate that 68,444 Union County residents, including 57,000 adults, are uninsured. That equates out to 13.1 percent compared to the state average of 12.3 percent.

Kerry Kelly of the State Hospital Association said, "Lack of health insurance has a huge impact on people's quality of life, but also puts great pressure on hospitals because many of these patients depend on emergency rooms for routine primary care."

R. Bruce Johnson, the State ElderCare of Summit, who has just scored another spot on the Board of Bruce Johnson to their board. This guy has a record of community involvement that is outstanding. From zoning to computer-aided judicial decisions, improvements to the library, this industrial engineer has devoted himself to improving his community. He hobbies as a genealogist.

Municipal conflict of interest: In Union County, the 70 probation workers bring in \$54 million through collection work such as ensuring child support payments are made. A key point is that all sides support the child support payments via the probation officers.

Free fall at Merck: The most recent numbers regarding Merck & Co Inc. of Rahway aren't good. The record quarter financial report saw a numbing 59 percent drop in profits. Combined with the negative publicity at the trials regarding their product Vioxx, the company is going through rough times. Merrill Lynch concluded that the company had dropped to sixth in terms of drug company size being surpassed by AstraZeneca P.L.C.

In terms of the Vioxx case under way in Texas he revealed that Merck has reserved \$675 million for a legal defense fund. The future looks bleak for Merck. Even their profit-making anti-cholesterol Zocor drug will lose its patent-protected life next year.

New youth jail taking shape

By Lauren DeFilippo and Mark Hryvas

Director of Human Services Frank Guzzo will make a special presentation about the construction of a new juvenile detention center during tonight's regular meeting of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. The board meets at 7 p.m. on the sixth floor of the Administration Building, Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth.

The freeholders are expected to approve a \$30.1 million bond ordinance for the construction of the new facility in Linden.

Union County purchased the 4-acre property on Edwards Street, off Routes 1&9 near Linden's border with Rahway, last year for \$4.3 million. An 80,000-square-foot, two-story building on site was demolished last fall to make way for construction.

Guzzo gave a similar presentation at the July 20 meeting of the Union County Improvement Authority, which is overseeing the construction of the new center for the county.

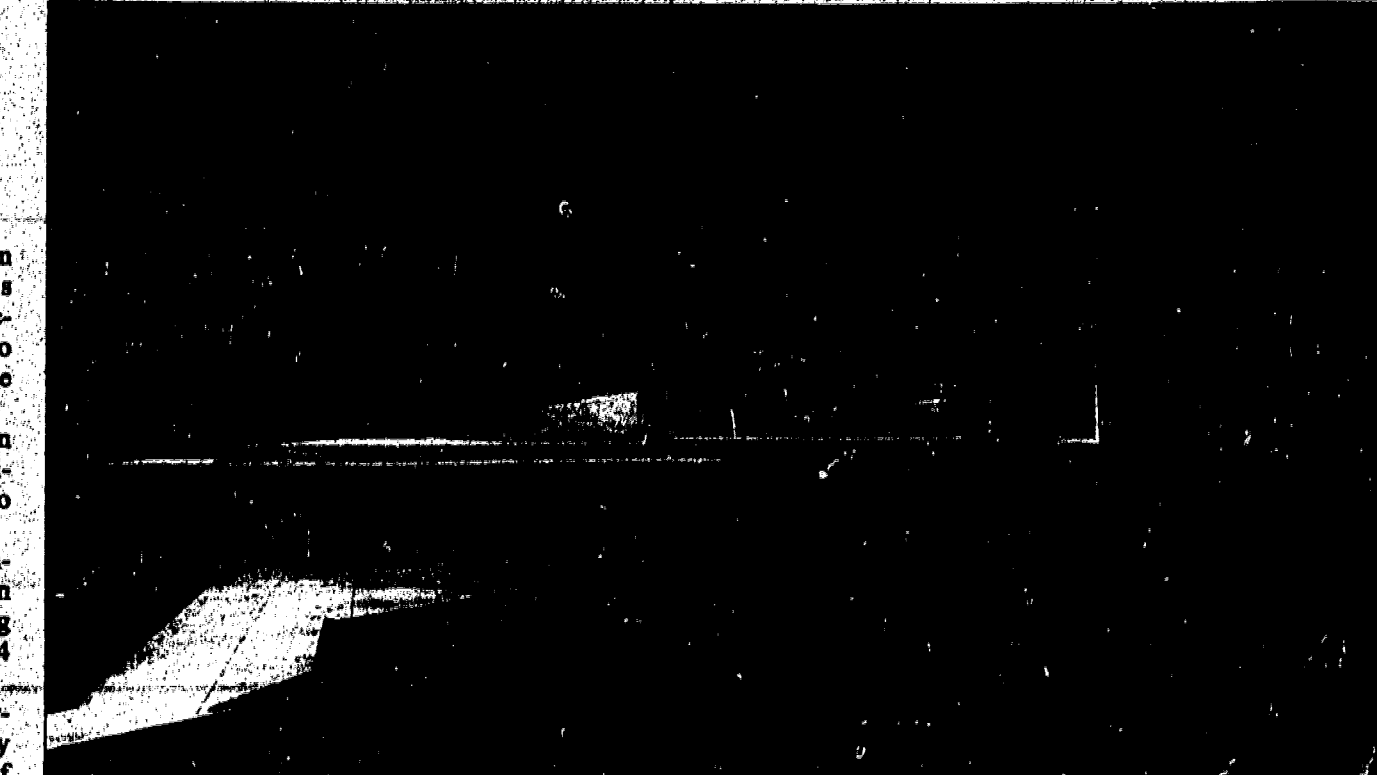
Though Guzzo has previously said that no official timetable has been established for the project, he is expecting a 16- to 18-month construction period. Bids will go out in two to three weeks and are expected back the last week of September.

When the center is completed in 2007, it will be able to house 80 residents, amid four 16-bed pods and two eight-bed pods.

The current juvenile detention center, which was constructed in 1968 on top of the seven-story county parking garage, is capped at a capacity of 34 juveniles.

UCIA Executive Director Charlotte DeFilippo said that if the facility is not full to capacity, then portions of the center will be able to be closed. The new facility, she added, would take into account the City of Linden's and the improvement authority board's request that the structure appear as aesthetically pleasing as possible. The facility will be totally encapitated, she said, and have no fence.

Any recreation will take place on



The new Union County juvenile detention center, to be constructed off Routes 1&9 in Linden, does not look like a typical jail — and it's not supposed to. The new facility looks more like a school, and there is an absence of barbed wire and fences.

The inner courtyard located at the center of the building, Guzzo said. The state has blessed everything done so far. The current roadway location has minimal recreation space for residents.

Overcrowding of up to 50 juveniles at the George W. Herlich Juvenile Detention Center in recent years drew concern from the state juvenile justice Commission, which last year capped the capacity, forcing the county to send juveniles to other facilities in the state.

May 2003's suicide ignited protests about the conditions at the facility after almost 10 years of studies find a site for a new center.

Second chance on the bench

By Lauren DeFilippo Staff Writer

After a dozen years of waiting, Marianne Espinosa will wear a judge's robe again as a member of the Superior Court of the state of New Jersey.

After serving as a temporary judge, she was appointed to the bench with both realism and some whimsy.

"I am very grateful to Senator Lesnik and Governor Codey," she said. "I'm just so grateful they have a sense of humor."

And, there is a long history there. In 1993, Espinosa, was ousted from her spot on the bench via senatorial courtesy. In New Jersey, state senators can block judicial nominations in their districts. In Espinosa's case, then-Morris County Sen. John Dorsey voted against granting her a lifetime tenure after her first seven-year term.

"I had to do what I thought was right," she said Friday. "I felt I owed to my father-in-law, and my fellow judges."

Espinosa's father-in-law is the late state Supreme Court Chief Justice Richard J. Hughes.

"During her address, she said that her own parents, who immigrated from Spain and Nicaragua, had a profound influence on her."

"They imbued in me the zeal of an immigrant as well as a deep and abiding pride in the heritage we shared," she said.

Espinosa grew up on Long Island



Marianne Espinosa is sworn in as the newest judge in the state Superior Court of Union County by Assignment Judge Walter Barsonek, while her daughters Meredith and Flannery hold the Bible.

Dorsey refused her appointment because he claimed she was too young. Heigan, who came into her courtroom.

After leaving the bench, Espinosa, now 55 and a mother of two, practiced civil law as an associate at the Newark law firm of Thompson, McGuire, Walsingham and Pary.

Said Sen. Lesnik, "The county school that she attended during that time, in conjunction with a life-long involvement in the community, has been through a lot of ups and downs. Marianne Espinosa is not like any other attorney I know."

Espinosa was nominated to the Superior Court in Union County after moving to Summit a year ago.

This time around, the state Senate confirmed her nomination by a vote of 34-2, last month. Superior Court judges are appointed first to seven-year terms and then must be reappointed to lifetime tenures. Judges earn an annual salary of \$74,000.

Espinosa spoke, in turn, about ideals and cynicism: "It is risky to line up with the ideals, but cynicism is just as constricting, she noted.

"I can't guarantee that I will deliver the highest level of justice every day," she said. "I promise, though, I will try."

Debt paid off at \$36M per year

By Lauren DeFilippo Staff Writer

Union County is in good financial health, as far as its debt service payments are concerned, officials said.

The county currently has a debt of \$348,543,435. Of that, \$261,236,000 is currently outstanding.

Freeholder Daniel Sullivan, the liaison to the Financial Review Committee, said debt service payments are similar to mortgage payments on a home.

"This year's debt service payment is \$36.8 million, slightly more than last year's payment of \$32.5 million.

"That total includes interest as well as the principal payment," Director of Finance Lawrence Caroselli said.

The county probably pays between \$30 million and \$36 million annually for debt service, Caroselli said.

"It fluctuates all the time," Sullivan said of the county's debt service. "We take on some debt, and we retire some."

"According to Caroselli, all of the county's outstanding debt is to be paid over the next 25 to 30 years.

"It's really just another line item, but one of the items we can control a little more closely than others, because we decide which projects go forward," Sullivan said.

By the same token, Caroselli said the county does not issue nearly as much debt as it's legally allowed to.

According to state statutes, the county can issue debt up to 2 percent of its total assessed valuation over a three-year period. The assessed value of all property in Union County is \$48,874,702,611. The county's debt is currently in the neighborhood of 0.71 percent of that figure.

"We're comfortable with that," Sullivan said.

Some capital projects that sit on the horizon, like the new juvenile detention center and expansion of the Vocational and Technical School in Scotch Plains, could impact the county's future payments, Caroselli said, but there is room to maneuver if need be.

"Usually, we do our best to keep our debt service level," he said.

However, a major change is slated to affect the county's 2008 payments.

In 2007, the county will make the last big payment on the Union County Jail. That last large lease payment, which is approximately \$5 million, Caroselli said, is for a project that was completed more than 15 years ago, financed through the Union County Improvement Authority.

In addition to steady debt payments, the county also takes advantage of the low-interest payments that it is offered based on its favorable bond ratings. Ratings services like Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Fitch, have given the county high bond ratings, and that, Caroselli said, attracts investors to come and help development projects along. In fact, Monday afternoon, the county accepted seven bids on a sale of notes, or temporary financing mechanisms.

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As attorney, Frank Capece is a resident of Cranford.

SUPER HERO FEVER — William Collum, left, tells classmates about his Fantastic Four mask and Jeremiah Olivo shows off his super hero attire during a new Super Heroes class for 4- to 7-year-olds at Union County College, part of the College for Kids program. Students learn about their favorite super heroes, learn about bats, spiders and the human body, and create their own super hero.

AUTOMOTIVE

Cobalt is a good ride, but lacks style

Jerry Garrett
Copley News Service

Cobalt is which of the following:
A) An ingredient in Vegemite, Australia's equivalent of peanut butter mixed with poi.
B) A radioactive metal found in meteorites.
C) A salt used to turn glass blue.
D) A vitamin-based flavoring in Marmite, the English sandwich spread.
E) The latest incarnation of Chevrolet's Cavalier.

The answer, interestingly enough, is all of the above.

When it came time for the next-generation Cavalier, people like GM's co-chairman Robert Lutz felt the new model shouldn't arrive loaded with Cavalier baggage. It deserved a fresh start.

Some in GM argued, "We sold 6 million Cavaliers, so this is a success we need to keep going."

But in its last years, the quality of trim pieces, construction and drivability all lagged the imports.

Wisely, GM decided to have a private graveside service for the Cavalier name, and before the body was even cold, they replaced it with the name Cobalt, a metallic chemical element said to be "lustrous."

After driving a Cobalt, we're not sure the name fits.

Lutz's strategy for GM seems to be emerging as a two-step process: fix the cars first, fix the styling after that. We've seen that strategy played out so far in new models such as the Buick LaCrosse, Pontiac G6 and Chevrolet Malibu.

They're vast improvements over the vehicles they are replacing, but with underwhelming new styling. And isn't that an ironic twist for Lutz, probably the auto industry's leading proponent of bold styling?

The first thing you need to know about Chevy's Cobalt, says a GM press release, is that it is the company's latest "no compromises" vehicle.

Chevrolet says the Cobalt development process started with a 150-point "wish list" that engineers drew up.

Not on that list, however, was a double wishbone rear suspension, six-speed manual or five-speed automatic transmissions and standard ABS on all models.

Want to compete head-to-head with the likes of the Honda Civic, Toyota Corolla, Ford Focus and Volkswagen Jetta? Those are the types of features the competition can showcase. Not all do.

In Cobalt's defense, it does offer a few things the other guys don't. Like, the most powerful base engine, with its 145-horse 2.2-liter Ecotec four.

An upgraded 2.0-liter supercharged version in the top-of-the-line SS coupe, with 205 horsepower, blows the competition away—especially with the 200 foot-pounds of torque that also come with it. That does come at an enveloping cost premium, however.

Cobalt, Chevy says, is the class leader in NVH, or noise, vibration and harshness measurements. Based on our test drive of it through California's serpentine but lovely central coast wine country, Chevy might be right. It's a surprisingly quiet ride, even in base trim.

"We aim to be the class leader in NVH, power, ride and handling," says Brent Dewar, Chevy's general manager.

Three out of four isn't bad. Not that the Cobalt handles all that badly. The coupes, some of which come with sport-tuned suspensions, stick to the road rather well. The coupes without that pricey option and all the sedans still have road-holding issues when pushed to the limit.

But all in all, the Cobalt is a significant leap, if not a quantum one, above the Cavalier.

Most-lasting impression of the Cobalt? The sense of quiet stability that comes with extensive use of laminated "quiet steel" panels, as in the recently introduced LaCrosse, and a lot more sound-deadening materials.

Interior treatments are generally higher quality than last year's Cavalier, but the fake wood trim in the up-rated luxury interior is not much of an enhancement.

The fabric-covered seats also seem more comfortable than the more expensive optional leather ones. The best seats, by the way, are the form-fitting Recaro buckets in the SS coupe.

Styling-wise, the Cobalt is pleasant looking, if not a knockout. The grille treatment is the most finely detailed Chevy nose job since the division's styling heydays ended circa 1966. The

SS is truly a stylish ride with its lowered stance, "show-n-shine" 18-inch wheels and sporty spoiler.

And finally, there's no faulting in the power of the counter-balanced Ecotec.

Even when mated to the not-exactly-cutting-edge four-speed automatic or five-speed manual, the delivery of power is smooth and the gearing logically placed. These transmissions, by the way, rate a tip of the cap for their industry-leading reliability.

The supercharged model is all kinds of fun, if pricey.

The entire Cobalt line advances up the pricing scale — another benefit of cutting the cord completely from the Cavalier.

— Gone is the blue-light special coupe that started at \$10,135. The lowest-priced model is the base coupe or sedan at \$14,190. The LS coupe or sedan is \$16,485; the LT sedan is \$18,760. The SS model starts at \$21,995.

The top-of-the-line Cavalier, the old SS sport, used to base out at \$17,525.

It remains to be seen how compelling the buying public will consider the Cobalt. But when they are offered the keys to one at Budget car rental, there's no longer a need to upgrade to a midsize.

2005 Chevrolet Cobalt
Body style: Compact, five-passenger, front-wheel drive coupe or sedan
Engine: 2.2-liter DOHC four-valve I-4, optional 2.0-liter supercharged DOHC four-valve I-4
Horsepower: 145 at 5,600 rpm, 2.0, 205 at 5,600
Torque: 155 foot-pounds at 4,000 rpm, 2.0, 200 at 4,400
Transmission: Four-speed automatic with overdrive, optional: five-speed manual with overdrive
EPA fuel economy estimates: 24 mpg city, 32 highway, automatic; manual, 25/34; SS, 23/29
Fuel capacity: 13.2 gallons; 87 octane
Cargo volume: 13.9 cubic feet
Front head/leg/shoulder room: 38.7/42/53 inches
Rear head/leg/shoulder room: 35.7/32.2/49 inches
Length: 180.5 inches
Wheelbase: 103.3 inches
Curb weight: 2,991 to 3,216 pounds

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<p>1997 NISSAN SENTRA GXE 4DR 4 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds/lcs, a/c, cass, a/s, radio. 78161 mi. Stk#50782A. VIN#1L035487.</p> <p>\$5928</p>	<p>2000 NISSAN SENTRA GXE 4DR 4 cyl, 5 spd conv, p/str/brks/lcs, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, tilt, lock, a/s, radio. 70,899 mi. Stk#50671A. VIN#YL311159.</p> <p>\$7728</p>	<p>2002 SATURN SC2 4DR 4 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, 46,413 mi. Stk#50847A. VIN#Z2170109.</p> <p>\$8928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, 46,413 mi. Stk#50847A. VIN#Z2170109.</p> <p>\$8928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET MALIBU LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, 46,413 mi. Stk#50847A. VIN#Z2170109.</p> <p>\$8928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, 46,413 mi. Stk#50847A. VIN#Z2170109.</p> <p>\$8928</p>					
<p>2002 CHEVROLET MALIBU 4DR 6 cyl, auto, a/c, p/str/brks/seats, am/fm/cd, cruise, tilt/m/def, 18,267 mi. Stk#6614. VIN#2M009390.</p> <p>\$10,528</p>	<p>2003 CHEVROLET MALIBU 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, a/c, cd, alum whls, 34,510 mi. Stk#6833. VIN#3A693113.</p> <p>\$11,928</p>	<p>2003 MITSUBISHI GALANT LS 4DR 4 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds/lcs/a/c, am/stereo, 14,316 mi. Stk#50842A. VIN#3E056675.</p> <p>\$11,928</p>	<p>2001 NISSAN ALTIMA GLX 4DR 4 cyl, auto, a/c, p/str/brks/seats, am/fm/cd, cruise, tilt, leather, 31,325 mi. Stk#50658A. VIN#5B118929.</p> <p>\$12,928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET CAMARCO 1500 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks, a/c, am/fm/cd, cruise, cruise/tilt, 8 bed, 37,215 mi. Stk#5075A. VIN#Z2199981.</p> <p>\$13,928</p>	<p>2000 FORD EXPEDITION XLT 4X4 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, a/c, alum whls, white tire tires, alarm sys, tilt, cruise, 8,738 mi. Stk#50681A. VIN#4K131001.</p> <p>\$13,928</p>	<p>2004 TOYOTA COROLLA LE 4DR 4 cyl, auto, a/c, p/str/brks, pwr winds/lcs/mirrs, cts, cass, tilt, wall trs, 15,231 mi. Stk#50242A. VIN#4C194264.</p> <p>\$13,928</p>	<p>2003 CHEVROLET BLAZER LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, p/str/brks/winds, a/c, cd, cruise, 34,508 mi. Stk#50552. VIN#3R105369.</p> <p>\$14,528</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, 46,413 mi. Stk#50847A. VIN#Z2170109.</p> <p>\$15,928</p>	<p>2002 FORD EXPLORER XLT 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, a/c, cd, lock, tilt, row seats, sunr, 30,495 mi. Stk#50683A. VIN#Z282287.</p> <p>\$16,728</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, alum whls, 17,163 mi. Stk#6538. VIN#Z2828714.</p> <p>\$17,728</p>
<p>2002 CHEVROLET S-10 LS CREW CAB 4X4 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, a/c, alum whls, white tire tires, alarm sys, tilt, cruise, 8,738 mi. Stk#50681A. VIN#4K131001.</p> <p>\$18,928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER EXT 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds/seats, a/c, alum whls, 3rd row seat, 53,563 mi. Stk#50718A. VIN#20134089.</p> <p>\$18,428</p>	<p>2003 CHEVROLET TAHOE LT 4X4 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, p/str/brks/winds, a/c, cd, whls, 3rd row seat, sec sys, alarm, 67,912 mi. Stk#50956A. VIN#3R106667.</p> <p>\$19,928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET TRAILBLAZER LS 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/brks/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, alloy, tilt, alum whls, 34,510 mi. Stk#6833. VIN#3A693113.</p> <p>\$21,928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET AVALANCHE 2500 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds, p/wind, sunr, a/c, cd, lock, alum whls, alarm sys, 41,660 mi. Stk#50549A. VIN#26300038.</p> <p>\$23,928</p>	<p>2002 CHEVROLET SUBURBAN LT 4DR 6 cyl, auto, p/str/ABS/winds/seats, a/c, cd, lock, lugg tr, alum whls, sec sys, 55,127 mi. Stk#50901A. VIN#26281165.</p> <p>\$24,928</p>					

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