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Serving Springfield and Mountainside

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TWO SECTIONS

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Mountainside due more from school break

Supreme Court says schools entitled to \$2 million

By Mark Hrywna
and Steve Grbic

A state Supreme Court ruling last week ordered two districts within the former Union County Regional School District to receive a more equitable share of the former district's liquid assets. The decision reverses the amendments to the distribution made by the state Department of Education and reinstates a plan outlined by former Union County Superintendent Leonard Fitts.

The next step is for the state Board of Education to develop a payment schedule for Berkeley Heights, Clark, Kenilworth and Springfield to repay Garwood and Mountainside.

Garwood and Mountainside, which both sent its students to high schools in other towns under the regional system, originally were slated to receive 24 percent and 76 percent, respectively, of the regional district's \$3.3 million in liquid assets under the original arrangement.

The state had amended Fitts' recommendations because there was no provision in the public question as to the distribution. It was Garwood and Mountainside which appealed the state's amendments. Mountainside Mayor Robert Vignanti declined to speak with this newspaper.

The money "should be earmarked for taxpayers," said Mountainside Chief School Administrator Gerard Schaller, either through tax relief or through the referendum to reopen the Beechwood School. The Mountainside school board

has scheduled a \$6.8-million referendum next month to expand Deerfield School and reopen Beechwood in an effort to address increasing enrollment.

Under the original recommendation by the state Department of Education, Mountainside was to receive \$483,973 in "liquid assets" but last week's ruling calls for the district to get more than \$2 million instead. The argument is that Mountainside, which sent its students to Jonathan Dayton Regional High School, and Garwood, whose students went to Arthur L. Johnson High School, did not receive tangible assets, after the regional breakup as the other four towns did.

Mountainside now sends students to Governor Livingston High School in Berkeley Heights and ALJ continues to receive Garwood's students, however, both sending towns now pay tuition.

Deregionalization, approved by a majority of voters in the six municipalities in 1994, took effect July 1, 1997. Only voters in Clark and Garwood voted against dissolution. After the breakup, districts in Berkeley Heights, Kenilworth, Springfield and Clark took ownership of the high school buildings within their borders.

David Brearley High School in Kenilworth was closed in 1993 due to decreasing enrollment, and the fight to reopen it was a driving force in the historic dissolution of the regional district.

"I don't think it will financially hurt us," Kenilworth Board of Education member Janet Glynos said of the high court's ruling. Glynos was a founder of

Concerned Parents, a Kenilworth group that pushed for re-opening Beechwood. "I think we all knew it might happen some day. We'll do without hurting programs."

"If I had to pay \$3.2 million," Glynos said, "it was a big deal." Clark Superintendent of Schools Paul Ortenzio was surprised by the court's reversal. "We followed all the requirements of the board of review, state Board of Education...and now it is reversed by the Supreme Court."

"I think it is a decision not fully based on what transpired," Ortenzio said, noting it is based more on the emotion of the two school districts. "We used that money to put into the high school to fix it. Now they want it back? We were not simply getting a windfall."

He said Clark received a school that was valued at more than \$30 million, but needs \$13 million in repairs. School officials were unaware of the deficiencies because the state Department of Education was handling everything. It was not until the district conducted its own study that school officials were aware of the dire need of repairs.

"Among the districts, there could be some resolution to this Supreme Court decision. We could substitute services for payment," Ortenzio said. He also said maybe an agreement could be reached where the money could be paid over a period of time.

"The voters in this town voted 8 to 1 against it," Ortenzio said of deregionalization. "The people were outvoted. The Board of Education took a lot of heat from the public because it did not take a position on the subject."

"They did take a position — let the voters decide. You can't criticize the Clark Board of Education. The people decided 8 to 1 against it."

Lourdes mulls expansion

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

Editor's note: This is the fourth part in a series highlighting the various houses of worship in Mountainside and Springfield.

Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Mountainside sits high and beautiful off Central Avenue; the only Roman Catholic church in Mountainside, accommodating about 1,250 families, according to the pastor, The Rev. Patrick Leonard.

Gothic in style, the inside of the church, the sanctuary, is amazing for its spectacular stained-glass windows. They reach almost from floor to ceiling on both sides of the entire sanctuary, with modern yet distinguishable depictions of the life of Christ, and other Biblical scenes. It is the colors that captivate: soft blues and violets that allow the outside sun to shine through, even when the lights are off.

In the balcony where the choir sits, is the most beautiful window of all; it literally spans the entire back wall upstairs, and this window is the story of creation, with a sweeping hand of God design. It is in darker, more vibrant reds and blues in big swirls. Leonard said this was his favorite.

The artist who created all of the inspiring stained-glass windows is Benoit Gilsoul, a Belgian who came to America in 1960 and had at least 25 shows winning critical acclaim. He is best known for his windows for the United Nations Interfaith Chapel in New York City, and numerous others. He is quoted as saying, "Art without spirituality will never be art. The artist, rich or poor, stands before a blank canvas; as for stained glass, there is nothing but pure light."

There is a story for each window which Leonard has in his files, but anyone can stand in awe at the first exposure to the glowing colors sur-

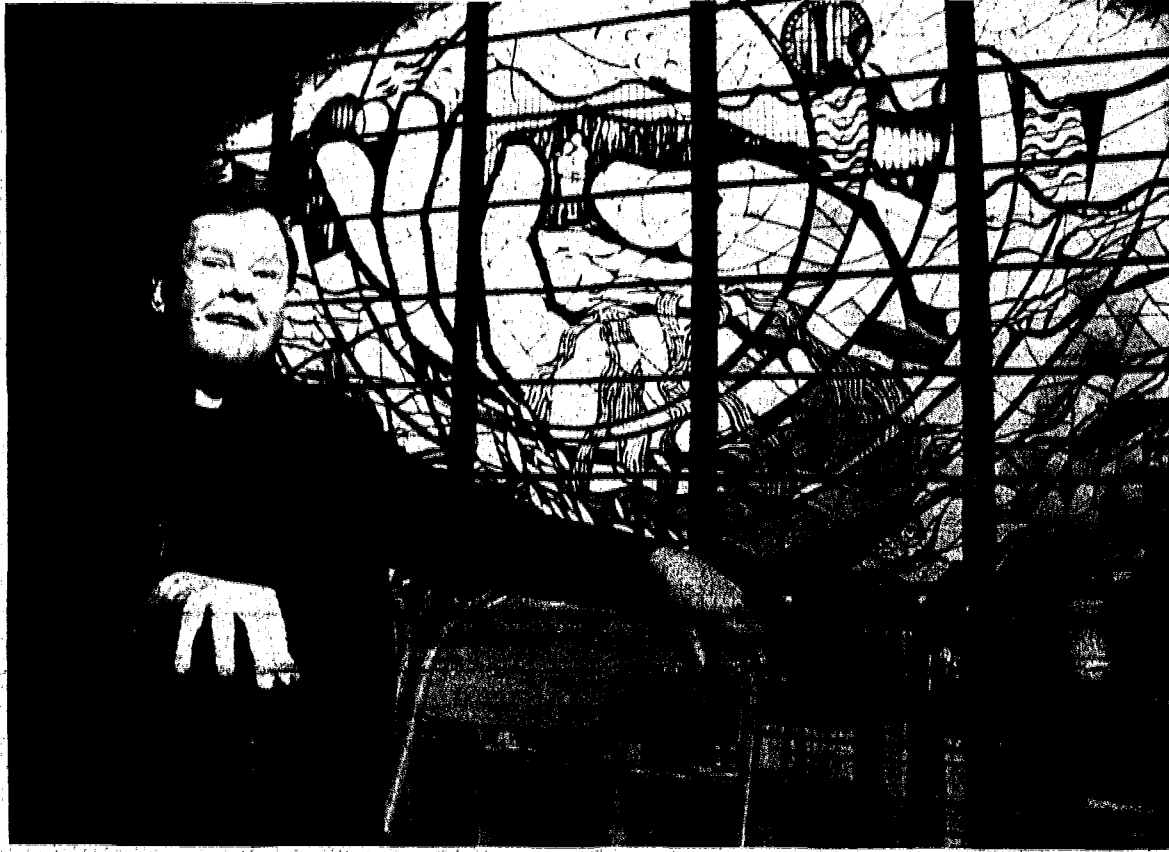


Photo by Jeff Grant

The Rev. Patrick Leonard, pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Mountainside, sits in the sanctuary where the stained-glass windows were created by Belgian artist Benoit Gilsoul, who also created windows for the United Nations Interfaith Chapel.

rounding the sanctuary, which give warmth and beauty to all who worship there.

In the center of the church sanctuary is a massive crucifix looming above the main altar, made of hand-carved lindenwood. The sanctuary was completed in 1961, although the actual parish was founded in 1959.

The church school, which is connected in an L-shaped building, is behind the church. The pastor said it was closed in 1991. "Enrollment was down. However, we are in the process of discussing reopening now, as a secondary campus."

Currently the children share school with two other parishes. Holy Trinity Parish School in Westfield, is the host church, and St. Helen's Church in Westfield also participates, and it is called an inter-parochial school since the three parishes are running one school.

Now because of the recent increased population of Mountainside families, the school board — representing all three parishes — is meeting and seriously considering reopening Our Lady of Lourdes school for preschool and kindergarten children, according to the priest. It is complex, as it must be approved by the Newark Archdiocese.

"This will take through 2002 to reopen, as most schools within the Newark Diocese have to be registered during the month of January, so next January is the earliest timeframe for reopening," said Leonard.

Leonard has been a priest for 38 years, having been ordained in 1963. Prior to coming to Mountainside, he served as associate pastor at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Oakland for 13 years.

He was also part of a church experiment, when he served at Epiphany

Roman Catholic Church in Cliffside Park, with two other priests. "It was called a team ministry, in that responsibility and authority rested equally with three priests."

Epiphany was such a large congregation that it could accommodate all three clergymen, and the team was there from 1975 to 1988. "Things have changed drastically now because of the shortage of priests, although personally, I think it could work in some instances."

After all his experience in these varied posts, what did he think about the parish in Mountainside? "This parish and these people are fantastic. The parish is growing with new incoming families all the time now."

To prove the growth, he laughed and said, "Now we even have a coffee and bagels hour after the 9:30 a.m. Mass. Every week we are buying more bagels."

Storm downs wires

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

Mountainside Fire Chief Gary Cantagallo reported all under control Tuesday morning after the big snowstorm, with minor damage during the night.

"We had about a half-dozen downed wires, from about 5 p.m. until about 8 p.m.," he said. "What we do is go and make sure the area is safe and wait for PSE&G. There was a brief power outage during the night from a downed transformer in Scotch Plains; this was about midnight," he estimated, "and one hour later it was okay. Just a portion of Mountainside was affected."

There were no fires, and all roads were reported open as of Tuesday morning, including Route 22 which Cantagallo said had been plowed. All schools were closed on Tuesday.

In Springfield, Deputy Fire Chief Donald Schwerdt reported everything up and running by Tuesday morning. "However, about 5 p.m. on Monday, we had one power line down while the storm was really moving in. It is repaired, and other than branches down in various places, all is okay," added Schwerdt. Schools in Springfield had a delayed opening Tuesday.

Two meetings in Springfield were affected by the storm that hit the area with almost a half-foot of snow. The Township Committee had scheduled a budget hearing on Monday at 6:30 p.m. which was cancelled. The Board of Education postponed its 7:30 p.m. meeting on Monday to last night at 7:30 p.m., after this newspaper went to press.

Route 22, which cuts through Mountainside and Springfield, was plowed and running from early morning Tuesday, according to both fire departments. For a period of time during Monday evening at the height of the storm, Shunpike Road had to be closed because of a downed wire, but was reopened Tuesday after GPU had made emergency repairs, according to Springfield Police Sgt. George Geisinger.

School district starts advertising for post

By Mark Hrywna
Regional Editor

The Springfield Board of Education has started advertising for a successor to Superintendent of Schools Gary Friedland with a deadline of March 12 for interested candidates to submit a resume and letter of inquiry.

The board hopes to name a new superintendent in July for a Sept. 1 start, the date Friedland's retirement will officially take effect.

The district advertised for the position of superintendent in the Jan. 21 and Feb. 4 editions of *The Star-Ledger* and in *Education Weekly* the week of Jan. 24.

According to the advertisement, the district is in search of a candidate who has:

- Experience as an assistant chief school administrator, although super-

intendent experience will be preferred, in a quality district, K-12 preferred.

- Served as a principal and as a classroom teacher.

- Evidence of continued professional growth, with a doctorate preferred.

- Exemplary interpersonal skills necessary to lead an active, involved district with high standards and expectations, and;

- Certification as a New Jersey Chief School Administrator or a Certificate of Eligibility.

Springfield is not the only district looking for a new superintendent. Hillside might name a new superintendent next week and Cranford hired Lawrence Feinsod, superintendent of the Madison public schools for many years, in December.

Green thumbs



Working with live plant materials at Edward V. Walton School in Springfield are, from left, back row, Master Gardener volunteers Grace Kingsbury, Jeanne Fitzgerald, pre-kindergartners Danielle Ferrigno and Thomas Garrigan and volunteer Grace Salomon. Master Gardener volunteers recently worked with the children for eight weeks.

School board ties up loose ends

Mountainside hires architect for expansion project

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

In an effort facilitate a \$6.8-million referendum next month for school expansion, the Mountainside Board of Education approved contracts totalling for than \$400,000 to a local architectural firm during a brief meeting at Beechwood School Tuesday night.

Because of the previous day's snowstorm, all members could not attend, but there was a quorum of the seven-member board, so both contracts were approved at the brief meeting by attending members.

The hasty meeting was called, according to Board of Education President Patricia Taeschler, "to facilitate everything before getting the New Jersey Department of Education's allocation towards the \$6.8 million referendum amount. We must tie up loose ends."

First the issues: the first item moved to approve Chief School Administrator Gerard Schaller's awarding of the architectural contract for the Beechwood/Deerfield schools expansion project to The Musial Group, a Mountainside-based architectural firm.

The amounts to be paid to The Musial Group are \$91,000 for Deerfield School and \$304,000 for the Beechwood School.

The referendum is planned for March 27. The final day

to register to vote in order to be eligible by the election is Feb. 15.

The second issue that was approved was Schaller's recommendation to discontinue the architectural services from the firm of Jordan, Pease, Andreychik & Kelemen Architects, effective Jan. 23. Schaller said, "We had no contract with them; they had been hired on an hourly basis. They will be replaced by The Musial Group."

The approvals were unanimous from the four members present: Taeschler, John Perrin, Peter Goggi and Sally Rivieccio.

Regarding this Beechwood/Deerfield project, Schaller told the other board members present, "We are back in the business of working with the five-year plan, a requirement of the state, which has to do with projected enrollment. We had to make a choice, and the plan will be hand-delivered to Trenton when completed shortly."

With that announcement, the public meeting was over. Taeschler then called a closed session which she revealed would be about forthcoming negotiations with the teacher's union.

"Their three-year contract expires on June 30 this year and we must prepare for it," she said. All else was then discussed only in closed session.

Springfield Township Committee to tackle underage drinking

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

The Springfield Township Committee may soon following other neighboring towns in amending its ordinances to prohibit the drinking of alcohol by underage individuals, even on private property.

The Summit Common Council last week introduced a measure that would amend the city's Police Regulations Ordinance regarding underage alcohol consumption to include the ban.

"This amendment does two things," said Councilwoman Cynthia Martin, chairwoman of the Safety Committee. "It slightly reorganizes regulations we already have by placing a penalty for any person under the legal age to purchase alcoholic beverages and who knowingly possesses or knowingly consumes any alcohol on private property." The fine could be \$250 for a first offense and \$350 for any subsequent offense. Driving privileges also may be suspended.

The second part of the amendment deals with young drivers: "Upon the conviction of any person and the suspension or postponement of that person's driver's license, the court shall forward a report to the Division of Motor Vehicles, stating the suspension time period. If the person is less than 17 years of age, the period of license postponement — including the suspension of the privilege of operating a motorized bicycle — would commence on the day the sentence is imposed and run for at least

six months after the person reaches the age of 17."

The amendment gets even tougher. Another section states clearly, "It shall be unlawful for any person under the legal age — 21 — to have, possess, carry, distribute, transport or consume any alcoholic beverages in any public or quasi-public place, or on any street, highway, avenue, road or alley within the City of Summit."

"It has always been a problem, in every town," said Springfield Police Chief William Chisholm. "The amendment ordinance that Summit is working on is the same one our township attorney Bruce Bergen is working on right now," said the chief. He had no doubt it would be passed, and soon.

The father of three teen-agers, Chisholm personally feels much of the burden of the problem lies with the parents. "Parents go away and leave their kids at home alone and they run wild. An adult should always be there for them. This new ordinance will give us an extra tool."

Mountainside Police Chief James Debbie, also the father of teenage children, is in full agreement with his Springfield counterpart. He added another thought on the subject: "We have experienced problems particularly around graduating time, such as parties that get out of control. Project Graduation, the alcohol-free parties that are now so popular, have helped tremendously on this point."

When asked his opinion on the amended ordinance Summit has

passed, and soon to be law, he said, "It gives us another tool and of course I am in favor of it. Once it is a law, it will affect all the towns in New Jersey."

Debbie also spoke about the department's "Cops in Shops" program. "We have applied to the Alcoholic Beverage Control of New Jersey for permission to participate in this new idea."

"Other communities, such as Ber-

nardsville, Verona and Bedminster, have already enacted this ordinance," Martin said. "The Safety Committee feels this ordinance should be adopted here in our community. The truth is, underage drinking is a problem in Summit and having such an ordinance supports the efforts of the Police Department."

Summit Common Councilman Eric Munoz, who chairs the law committee, gave his opinion. "By and large, it

is a very good law; if we save even one teen-ager from an accident, it overcomes objections."

Agreeing was Councilman William Rosen. "I support strongly this ordinance; it sends a message to the community that underage drinking is a harmful thing to do."

A vote passed the amendment unanimously by the Common Council, after which Caroline Lindabury, head of the Summit Municipal

Alliance, addressed the meeting. "I want to thank the council for passing the amended ordinance. What it does is close a loophole about drinking on private property. I look forward to it passing into law, and thank you for your support."

The problem of teenage drinking is not limited to any one area, it seems. Statewide statistics indicate that the more affluent the community is, the more pervasive is the problem.

Borough hopes to start Cops in Shops program

By Joan M. Devlin
Staff Writer

Mountainside Police Chief James Debbie is enthusiastic about a new state program called "Cops in Shops," and he has applied for permission to activate the idea in Mountainside.

"Simply stated, Cops in Shops is where the state pays for a police officer to work undercover as a clerk in a liquor store, or retail establishment that sells alcohol, to weed out underage kids coming in to buy alcohol." Debbie noted that it would be effective because all police officers, right from the academy, are highly trained to pick out phony ID's very quickly.

The program is sponsored by the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control in cooperation with the Division of Highway Traffic Safety in a statewide program to curtail underage drinking. The program will not only allow local retail establishments to deter the sale of alcohol to underage children, but it will help to stop adults from attempting to purchase alcohol for people under the legal age.

The way it works is like a scene from a police show. A team of two undercover officers will be assigned to work two evenings a week, in four-hour shifts each night. Usually, but not necessarily, this includes Fridays and Saturdays.

Both officers are in civilian clothes. One is inside the store as an employee, and checks the identification presented by anyone deemed

underage. The second officer, also in civilian clothes, will serve as back-up outside the establishment to determine if alcoholic beverages have been purchased by an adult and then passed off to an underage drinker.

State Police ABC detectives will participate at selected locations. The cooperating liquor stores will allow police officers to be there, and will post signs about the program.

The first phase of the pilot program began Feb. 7, 1996 and targeted municipalities with significant numbers of college students. The second phase was launched this past May with a focus on resort areas, especially those along the Jersey shore. It is paid for by a \$67,000 federal grant secured by the DHTS.

The results were so successful, it was agreed between DHTS and ABC that other municipalities would be permitted to use a portion of its "Drunk Driving Enforcement Fund" to pay for overtime of local police officers involved in the program. It must be used only after express authorization is received from DHTS and members of the particular local police department have received the required special training.

Debbie is hoping he receives authorization soon, and the two retail liquor establishments within the borough have already agreed to work with him on this.

"We are just like the other surrounding towns here; there is a problem with underage drinking, and if we can save lives with any idea, I am all for it."

STUDENT UPDATE

Filippis on honor roll

Springfield resident Kathryn Filippis has been named to the honor roll for the first quarter of the 2000-01 school year at The Academy of Saint Elizabeth in Convent Station.

A sophomore, Filippis received honorable mention.

Lieb makes dean's list

Adam Michael Lieb, son of Martin and Linda Lieb of Springfield, was named to the dean's list at Brandeis University for his academic achievement for the fall semester.

Rider U. dean's list includes Rosenbaum

Scott Rosenbaum, son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rosenbaum of Springfield, has been named to the dean's

list for the fall semester at Rider University, Lawrenceville.

He is serving his second year as treasurer of Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity and is a third-year member of the Crew Program, an elite business program whose members are selected by the professors at Rider University.

He also is the owner of an Internet start-up company called Trading-Tix.com.

Mountainside residents earn Bucknell dean's list

Kristin L. Csaszar, daughter of Edward and Randy Csaszar, and Denise R. Rosenhaft, daughter of Ed and Eileen Rosenhaft, both of Mountainside, were named to the Bucknell University dean's list for outstanding academic achievement during the fall

semester of the 2000-01 academic year.

A student must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a scale of 4.0 to receive dean's list recognition.

Schnakenberg earns Rutgers dean's list

Christopher Schnakenberg of Mountainside, a sophomore at Rutgers College, has been named to the dean's list for the fall 2000 semester.

Barocas achieves dean's list at Lehigh

Jillian Barocas, daughter of Pamela and Jack Barocas of Springfield, achieved dean's list for the fall 2000 semester at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa.

Born to fly



Fourth-graders at James Caldwell School in Springfield, clockwise from front left, Jillian Torzewski, Billy Kirk, Quinn Curtis and Max Chcherbakov illustrate complete metamorphosis. Students in Karen Hagen's science class are learning about metamorphosis by observing mealworms change into beetles.

McGrath graduates as Navy medical doctor

Navy Lt. Sean F. McGrath, son of Marie A. McGrath of Mountainside, recently graduated as a medical doctor from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Bethesda, Md.

Upon graduation, McGrath was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and will begin a family practice internship at Naval Hospital, Jacksonville, Fla.

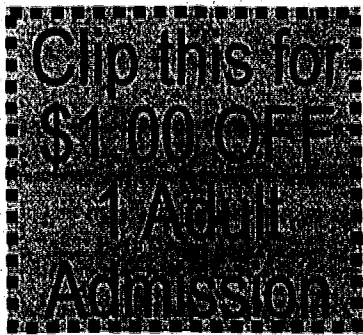
The university was established by Congress under the Department of Defense in 1972. With a worldwide reputation as a center of excellence for military medical education and research, it is the nation's only fully accredited federal school of medicine and graduate school of nursing.

McGrath is a 1992 graduate of Jonathan Dayton Regional High School in Springfield and joined the Navy in July 1992.

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COMMUNITY FORUM

EDITORIALS

A reminder to register

A reminder to Mountainside residents who may have changed their address since the last time they voted, or have not voted in the last four years, that Feb. 15 is the deadline to register to vote in the Mountainside school referendum scheduled for March 27.

Voting is the bedrock of our democracy and borough residents will have the opportunity to express their opinion on the referendum that will fund the reopening of Beechwood School on Woodacres Drive as well as renovations at Deerfield School on Central Avenue. Do not let your opportunity go to waste.

If you know you will be out of town on March 27, make sure to secure an absentee ballot and let your voice be heard even if you are not here.

The March referendum will be an important one as school officials hope to address the increasing enrollment within the district by taking back Beechwood School for Mountainside's use. Whether you have children in the school district or not, the vote will be of vital importance.

The referendum will ask voters to approve a bond for approximately \$3 million that will be used to upgrade Beechwood to meet the standards and codes of a regular school facility. The school has been closed for nearly two decades and has been rented for use by the Morris-Union Jointure Commission for some time.

For more information on how to register to vote, call the Union County Clerk's Office at (908) 527-4360.

Fair is fair

Deregionalization of the Union County Regional High School District officially occurred nearly four years ago. The dissolution process actually started gaining steam almost a decade ago during the early 1990s.

Despite the number of years that have elapsed since the historic breakup, the chapter on deregionalization still has not officially come to a close.

The state Supreme Court last week unanimously ruled that Mountainside and Garwood are due more money than originally given by the state Department of Education following the breakup; to the tune of more than \$2 million. That money will come from the other towns that were a part of the regional district: Springfield, Berkeley Heights, Kenilworth and Clark.

Since the two hamlets never had a high school, the Union County superintendent at the time of the breakup, Leonard Fitts, initially recommended Mountainside get more than three-quarters of the liquid assets and Garwood the remaining quarter of the \$3.3 million. After all, Clark, Kenilworth, Springfield and Berkeley Heights each had their own high school following deregionalization while Garwood and Mountainside had nothing tangible after years of paying into the system.

The state Department of Education, however, amended the superintendent's decision, charging that the public question to dissolve the regional district never presented to voters how the assets would be divided. Now the task is for the state Board of Education to develop a timeline and payment structure and schedule for the monies.

While last week's decision comes as a boon to taxpayers in Mountainside and Garwood, the news is not nearly as welcome in other towns from the former regional district, especially Clark. Every time school officials in Clark turn around, they're getting hurt by deregionalization.

The state Supreme Court decision to reinstate the original recommendations creates yet another hardship for the Clark School District, which continues to reel from the numerous physical deficiencies of Arthur L. Johnson High School, inherited after the dissolution of the regional district.

Unlike Garwood and Mountainside, Clark took ownership of the high school in 1997. Looking back, had school officials there had a choice, they might have given it away instead. The maintenance and upkeep of Arthur L. Johnson High School throughout the years must have been dismal under the regional district considering the massive upgrades now required to keep it going.

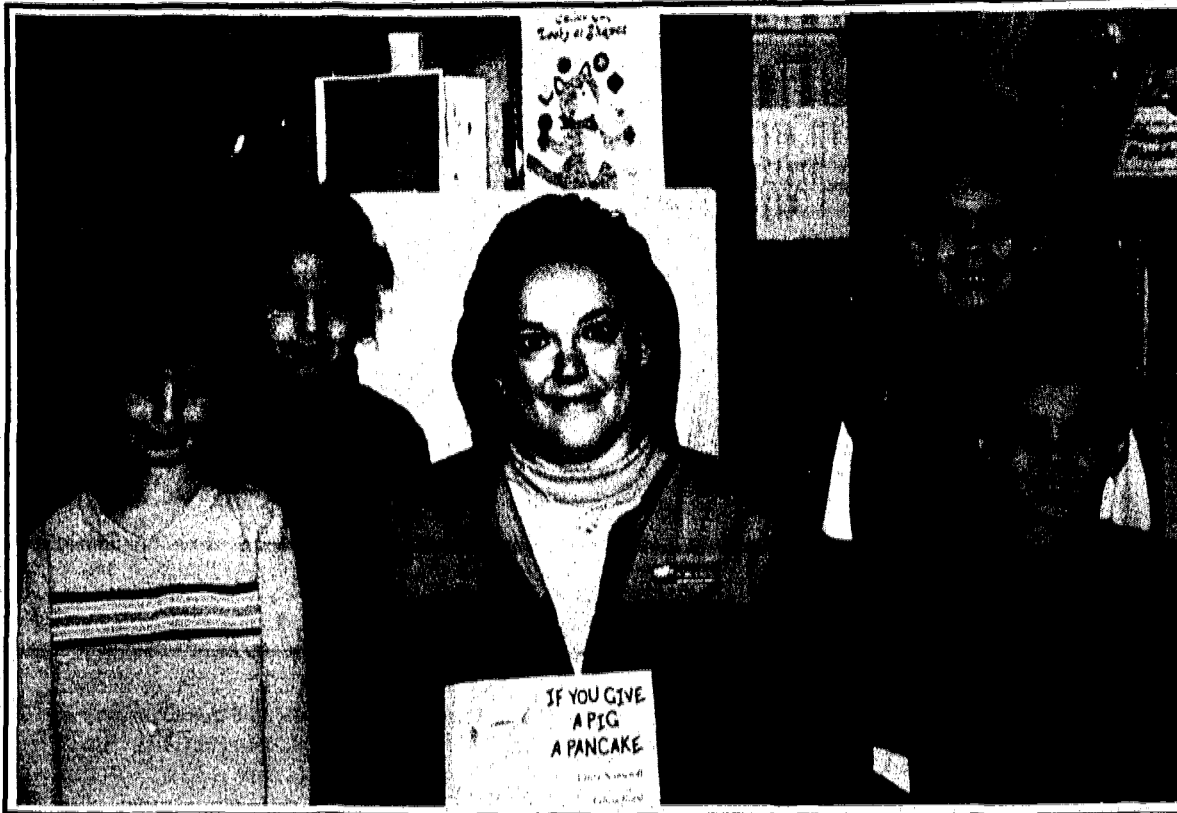
Other districts such as Kenilworth have thrived following the historic breakup. The borough fought to reopen David Brearley and has since taken control of the high school. In addition, Brearley has begun taking students from Winfield Park as well as being the choice district for Union County in the state's pilot program.

The court's reversal of the state's decision is fair but Garwood would do well to use its share of assets — more than three-quarters of a million dollars — to help with the rehabilitation of the crumbling Arthur L. Johnson High School.

Next week will be last for letters

The Feb. 15 edition of the *Echo Leader* will be the final issue for publishing letters of endorsement regarding the Springfield School District's Feb. 27 bond referendum on rehabilitating athletic fields.

No letters of endorsement will be published in the Feb. 22 edition.



PANCAKES FOR PIGS? — Gathering to hear the story 'If You Give a Pig a Pancake' are Edward V. Walton School students, from left, back row, Tamara Vega, Zachary Samansky, and front row, Jessica Farber, First Union Bank representative Suzanne Stanziale and Michael Saladino. Each week, the bank donates a book to the school library after a bank employee reads the story to the students.

Hark, dissenters among freeholder board

Who says the all-Democratic, nine-member freeholder board votes in lock step every week on each item brought before it? Already within the first month of 2001, there have been dissenting votes cast on at least five different resolutions — all within the same meeting. Unfortunately, I was at a Hillside school board meeting the fateful evening of Jan. 25 when the semi-historic event occurred.

Freeholder Nicholas Scutari of Linden prides himself on being an independent thinker who won't rubber-stamp items and simply go along with the majority. Of the five dissenting votes, he owns four of them.

The four nay votes he cast dealt with topics he has railed against in the past, including his year as chairman in 1999: the requirement that county employees reside within the county, and the amount of money the county spends annually on parking, specifically leasing parking spaces for county employees.

Scutari actually voted in favor of a waiver to the county's residency requirement at the board's Jan. 18 regular meeting, but asked that the item be considered for a re-vote Jan. 25. So instead of a 9-0 acceptance on the residency waiver for a parks employee, it was officially an 8-1 vote.

On the matter of parking, there were three resolutions on the Jan. 25 agenda for three different areas: 35 parking spaces at the Farley Towers lot which the county would lease from the Elizabeth Housing Authority for

County Seat

By Mark Hrywna
Regional Editor

\$3 per car, \$27,400 annually; a total of 300 parking spaces on Commerce Place for varying daily amounts not to exceed \$401,510 to the Elizabeth Parking Authority, and 30 spaces from the City of Elizabeth at Mahon Playground for \$4 per space per day, or \$35,000 annually.

For those counting at home, that's a tab of \$463,910 for 2001, slightly more than the approximately \$451,000 authorized in 2000 for approximately the same spaces.

"We've been leasing and we just continue leasing. It's not like we're employing less people," Scutari said.

"I want us to come up with a long-term plan to address parking," Scutari said, whether through acquiring property or building a parking deck. The board seems to renew these parking agreements each year out of habit more than anything. The agreement with the Elizabeth Housing Authority for the Farley Towers spaces started in 1989.

As for the residency requirement, Scutari said he only approves waivers in "extreme circumstances," and in this case he didn't believe it was extreme.

But Scutari wasn't the lone dissenter on Jan. 25. Freeholder Linda Stender voted against a resolution authorizing \$70,000 to enter into an agreement with West Group of St. Paul, Minn., for the "provision of books and compact disc legal reference material for the inmate Law Library" for 2001.

New Jersey's dissenters

While we're on the topic of dissenters, New Jersey's U.S. Senators, Summit resident Jon Corzine and Bob Torricelli of Englewood, were among those who cast dissenting votes against two of President George W. Bush's more controversial appointments.

Corzine and Torricelli, both Democrats, were among the 42 senators who voted against the nomination of John Ashcroft for attorney general in one of the closest votes in history, confirming him 58-42.

Gail Norton had a little less trouble earning confirmation as Secretary of the Interior, but Torricelli and Corzine again were among the dissenters in the 75-24 tally.

Former Gov. Christine Whitman had a much easier time gaining the director of the Environmental Protection Agency post, with 99 senators in favor and none against.

Muddying a good idea

Revelations that a part owner of the land in Linden where a proposed transfer station for New York City's household trash is planned allegedly having ties to organized crime would not have affected the freeholders' acceptance of the facility into the

county's solid waste management plan.

Scutari, the only freeholder from Linden, said the board "was not ignorant in not asking who the owners were," they were just under the assumption that they knew. Linden Mayor John Gregorio's son-in-law Domenick Puccillo was regularly mentioned as a principal in Tremley Point Marine Terminals, owner of the 32-acre site, but no one else seemed to be.

The "silent" partners included Donald Weiner, law partner of State Sen. Raymond Lesniak, whose name always seems to be preceded by the phrase, "Union County power broker." The Weiner Lesniak firm also was attorney for Woodbridge, which had joined a lawsuit against the facility and has since been asked to resign by Woodbridge Mayor James McGreevey.

"Everyone was quite surprised," Scutari said, although, "I don't think it would have made a difference in the vote."

"It's not something that would have worried the freeholders," he said, but added, "it muddies a good idea."

"It's not important to me who owned the land, Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella said. "It's something I thought took a significant amount of trucks off the road."

"It's good for Union County. If we'd known who the owners were before, it wouldn't have affected the decision."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Referendum about more than sports

To the Editor:

The referendum scheduled for the Feb. 27 vote is of vital importance to our community. It will improve existing fields and add facilities to meet the growing needs of our school, recreation and adult sports programs.

This referendum is about more than just sports. It's about improving the safety of our fields and facilities. It's about improving our community's pride and desirability, with increased property values as a result. It's all about improving the future for our children, to keep them involved in our various programs, and positively impact their social and physical development. These programs teach our children about self-confidence and pride in their community.

These should be issues we can all agree upon. These improvements are an investment in Springfield's future that will pay dividends for years to come.

A "yes" vote on Feb. 27 is truly a vote for real improvements for Springfield.
George Pallis
Springfield Committee On Recreation and Education

Invest in a better Springfield for all

To the Editor:

On Feb. 27 Springfield residents should vote to support a referendum to improve track and field facilities in town. The Springfield community and its students deserve quality athletic and recreational facilities. Anyone who does not support this project should consider that for less than a quarter a day per household you can improve the quality of life for all residents, as well as school and township athletic programs.

Springfield students are our future. I am not an athlete in our community, and by the time many of the improvements are finished, I will be away from Springfield and in college.

When you are part of a community, you must look at the bigger picture and realize that the quality of schools, community programs, parks and open spaces are important to any resident whether you will use those facilities yourself or not.

The current fields pose a severe safety hazard and many times home events and practices are cancelled due to safety problems. Students and teachers are reluctant to use the track for gym class because of the poor conditions. It is sad that the recreational facilities in the fictional Springfield on "The Simpsons" TV show are probably just as useful as the current conditions on our township's facilities.

If you are not a student or parent of a student, consider this. Wouldn't it be nice to take a walk on a perfect spring day on a quality track where you can enjoy yourself and take pride in your community? As Mayor Sy Mullman is trying to re-establish Springfield Center, wouldn't it be a benefit to all Springfield residents, young and old, to have a destination to take a walk and see friends in town?

If you doubt the importance of this, when the weather improves, take a short ride to Livingston High School and see students and residents enjoying the oval in front of the school. It is the unofficial center of the community. The high school has its games, township programs take place and senior citizens are taking walks and enjoying themselves right along with the younger people.

The facilities improvements are an important community investment and will be an asset to every resident in Springfield.

Kevin Murphy, the assistant principal and athletic director at Jonathan Dayton High School, is enthusiastic to improve academic, athletic and social programs for the school and the greater community.

Please support the referendum on Feb. 27 and invest in a better Springfield for all.

Zach Links
Springfield

Was proper procedure followed?

To the Editor:

I would like to call your attention to this matter and question the proper procedure concerning the calling of a special school board election on Feb. 27 by the members of the Springfield Board of Education.

The sequence of events is as follows:

On Page 38 of Section One of *The Star-Ledger* issue of Jan. 7, there appeared an advertisement for an absentee ballot announcing the special school board election for a \$3.4-million referendum to be held on Feb. 27. This advertisement together with a sample absentee voting ballot was signed by the Union County Clerk's office in Elizabeth. Just when was the vote to hold this election taken?

Was a vote taken at the board's working agenda meeting on Jan. 8, the day after the Jan. 7 publication in *The Star-Ledger*? Can such a vote be taken without public notification?

At the prior regular public meeting of the Springfield Board of Education on Dec. 18, there was no vote by its members to have a referendum election on Feb. 27.

Is this the proper procedure or is it illegal? How about investigating and publishing the facts of this matter in the next issue of your newspaper?

Gail Brenner
Springfield

Echo Leader

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and Mountainside Echo

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ENTER SELECTION 8011

Merchandise purchased with stolen check

Springfield

Nearly \$2,500 worth of merchandise was reported stolen from Guitar Center on Route 22 by means of a stolen check on Jan. 27.

The check from Investors Savings Bank bore the name Douglas Gaffney and the suspect purchased four items valued at approximately \$2,400.

A Short Hills resident reported that \$15,000 was taken "by fraudulent means" from a Summit Bank along the 500 block of Morris Avenue on Jan. 27.

A Meisel Avenue resident reported a black cellular phone and several pieces of jewelry stolen on Feb. 1.

An Amoco gas station at the corner of Morris and Meisel avenues was robbed of \$9 on Friday at 5:52 p.m.

A Nutley resident reported she found eggs smashed on the front hood, windshield and front passenger door of her 2001 Infiniti on Feb. 1 along the 400 block of Morris Avenue.

Mountainside

Failure to answer warrants, or judicial contempt, as well as driving while intoxicated were several of the offenses that kept the Mountainside Police Department busy this past week.

At 3:43 p.m. on Jan. 30, Choice Phillips III, 21, of Piscataway, also

known as Tamba Foyah, was apprehended for giving false information to a police officer, a fake driver's license and disorderly conduct when stopped, and driving with a suspended license.

Dana S. Kearney, 19, of Plainfield was arrested for contempt of a judicial order, an outstanding traffic warrant for \$134, at 3 p.m. on Jan. 31.

At 11:40 p.m. on Feb. 1, Alberto L. Ruiz, 24, of Westfield, was arrested in Mountainside for contempt of a judicial order and outstanding warrants in another district.

At 12:30 p.m. on Friday, Anthony M. Brown, 36, of East Orange, was arrested for theft by deception,

forgeries at the Summit Bank.

John Edward Betts, 61, of Plainfield was arrested for allegedly driving while intoxicated at 3:09 a.m. Saturday on Route 22 East. Police initially was stopped for failure to maintain the lane.

A similar arrest for allegedly operating motor vehicles while under the influence of intoxicants was made at 4:59 p.m. Saturday, of Alex Mazariegos, 36, of Plainfield. The arrest was on Route 22 East in Mountainside.

James Stephen Russo, 20, of Mountainside, was arrested at 4:30 a.m. on Sunday for allegedly driving while intoxicated on Route 22 East in Mountainside.

Variety of calls bring out the Fire Department

Springfield Feb. 3

The Fire Department responded to a Morris Avenue business for an odor in the building and also responded to Town Hall for an activated fire alarm.

Feb. 2

Firefighters responded to a Troy Drive apartment complex and a Center Street business for medical service calls.

At 5:04 p.m., the department responded to Route 78 East for an overturned vehicle and all units responded to a North Derby residence for an oven fire at 9:24 p.m.

Jan. 31

The Fire Department responded to a Stonehill Road apartment complex at 12:20 a.m. for a medical service call.

Jan. 30

A utility pole fire brought the department to Springfield Avenue and Main Street at 12:53 p.m. before responding to a Morris Avenue business at 12:58 p.m. for an elevator rescue.

Medical service calls were handled at a Milltown Road residence, a Short Hills Avenue apartment complex, a

Mountain Avenue business and a Jade Meadow residence.

At 7:45 a.m., firefighters responded to Route 22 East near Farm Road for a motor vehicle accident with injuries and another one on Route 22 East at 10:30 a.m.

Jan. 29

An activated fire alarm at an Independence Way residence at 9:25 a.m. started the day for firefighters before a furnace problem brought them to a Caldwell Place residence at 5:05 p.m. At 9:14 p.m., the department responded to a Shunpike Road business for a brush fire.

Feb. 1

Medical service calls were handled at a Linden Avenue apartment complex, a Brown Avenue business and a Battlehill Avenue residence.

An activated fire alarm was handled at 11:32 a.m. at an Ashwood Road residence and at 7:43 p.m. at Town Hall.

A motor vehicle accident with injuries was reported on Mountain Avenue at 2:11 p.m.

Jan. 28

Firefighters responded to a Victory Road business for an activated fire alarm at 4:17 p.m.

AT THE LIBRARY

Children's programs

The Mountainside Public Library, Constitution Plaza, announces its children's programs for the winter:

Storytime Theatre for Kindergarten, Tuesdays, 3:30 to 4:15 p.m., to March 6. Stories are combined with acting, movement, props, costumes and lots of imagination. The program lasts approximately 45 minutes.

Toddler Time for 2-year-olds, Fridays, 10:30 a.m. until March 9. Stories and nursery rhymes for children, accompanied by parent or caregiver. The program lasts approximately 30 minutes.

Preschool Storytime for 3 and 4-year-olds, Thursdays, 2 p.m. to March 8. Stories and simple crafts for children ages 3 and 4. Parents must remain in the library during the program. The program lasts approximately 30 minutes.

Registration is required for all programs and for Mountainside Library card holders only. Visit the library or call (908) 233-0115 to sign up.

Great books discussion

The Great Books Reading and Discussion Group will meet at the Springfield Public Library on Feb. 22 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. when the Book of Job from the Bible will be discussed. The discussion leader will be Arlene Blaumeiser.

Great Books Discussion Programs for the next five months include the following selections: "Utilitarianism" by Mill in March, "Caesar and Cleopatra" by Shaw in April, "The City of God" by St. Augustine in May, "Symposium" by Plato in June, and "Of Experience" by Montaigne in July. There will be no meeting in August. The programs will resume in September.

The Great Books Reading and Discussion Group meets each month on third Thursday at 10 a.m. at the Springfield Public Library. Copies of the Great Books Series are available for a fee at the Springfield Library Circulation Desk.

All are welcome. No advanced registration is required.

The Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave., is handicapped-accessible.

For more information call (973) 376-4930.

'New Jersey Fall'

Sculpture and paintings combine to create "New Jersey Fall," an exhibit that will appear at The Donald B. Palmer Museum of the Springfield Free Public Library through Feb. 22.

The exhibition includes oil paintings by Ludmila Mishina, a Russian artist from St. Petersburg. Mishina, a Union resident, has participated in exhibitions as far-flung as Russia, France, Germany and Finland.

The sculpture of Gladys Reimers also draws its inspiration from the natural world. The pieces in stone, wood and metal depict endangered animals from around the world. Reimers, of Westfield, received the "Woman of Achievement" Award from the State Assembly for her work, which has appeared in shows throughout New York and New Jersey, including at the Newark Museum and the State Museum in Trenton.

The Donald B. Palmer Museum is located in the Springfield Public

Library, 66 Mountain Ave., Springfield. Hours of the exhibit are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Tuesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday hours are from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

For information call (973) 376-4930.

Tax help for seniors

From early February until April 13, AARP is offering free tax assistance to low and moderate income taxpayers, with special attention to people 60 years of age and over at the Mountainside Public Library, Constitution Plaza, and the Springfield Public Library, 66 Mountain Ave. This includes fed-

eral and New Jersey state income tax returns, homestead rebates and property tax reimbursement applications.

More than 70 AARP volunteer counselors, trained and sponsored by U.S. Internal Revenue Service and state Division of Taxation will be providing services at community and senior centers throughout Union County.

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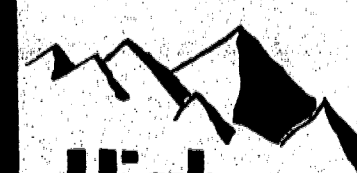
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RELIGION

Brunch to welcome new church members

A light brunch will be served Sunday at 11:15 a.m. for those interested in joining Calvary Episcopal Church, 31 Woodland Ave., Summit. For more information call Calvary Episcopal Church at 277-1814.

Tot, Family Service

Temple Sinai, 208 Summit Ave., will conduct its monthly Tot Shabbat and Family Service on Friday. The Tot Shabbat Service will begin at 6:30 p.m. and the Family Service will begin at 7:30 p.m.

The Tot Shabbat Service is a participatory service designed for preschool children, but children in kindergarten through second grade may enjoy it as well. It features a half-hour service of singing, Torah, stories and a craft or special art project. A snack/kiddush will follow the service. To be on the Shabbat Mailing List

call the temple at 273-4921. The Family Service is geared for children ages 6 to 13 years old. Its service features recognition for all children who have birthdays that month as well as a special children's story as told by the rabbi. Temple Sinai is a Reform Jewish congregation that welcomes all people interested in associating with the Jewish faith, including interfaith families and those interested in becoming Jews.

SJCC adventure series

The Summit Jewish Community Center Religious School invites preschoolers to register for its Jewish Adventure Series.

Children 4 years old will experience an enriching, appropriate program to learn about Jewish holidays and the religious school. Activities will consist of music, arts and crafts, dance, cooking and creative fun.

Upcoming events include a Purim costume party on Feb. 25, a Passover celebration on March 25, and Israel's birthday on April 22. All sessions will take place from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the SJCC, 67

Kent Place Blvd. Pre-registration is required. The cost is \$10 per session, per child for members; \$15 for non-members. For more information call Stacey David at 273-2800.

Free Alzheimer's seminar at Overlook tonight

Atlantic Health System's Overlook Hospital and Marriott's Brighton Gardens will host a free Alzheimer's caregiving seminar tonight from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Overlook Hospital's Wallace Auditorium.

The seminar, presented by Dr. Peter Rabins, director of Geriatrics and Neuropsychiatry at Johns Hopkins Department of Medicine, will cover treatment, care and options aimed at maintaining the quality of life for Alzheimer's patients and their families.

"Caring for a person with Alzheimer's or related memory disorders is a difficult and heartbreaking experience," said Rabins. "Caregivers are often not aware of the information, resources and tips that can ease their caregiving responsibilities."

Rabins is the co-author of more than 100 articles on the subject of Alzheimer's disease. His seminar is being co-sponsored by Atlantic Health System's Senior Contact and Community Health Departments at Overlook Hospital and Marriott's Brighton Gardens.

The program is free and open to the public. Seating is limited and advance is required. To register or for more information call (973) 966-8999.

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EDUCATION

Deadline to register for referendum Feb. 15

The deadline to register to vote in the March 27 Mountainside school referendum is Feb. 15.

If you haven't voted in the last four years or if you have changed addresses, you must register.

To obtain forms for voter registration or absentee ballot requests call Cara Greeley of the Deerfield School PTA at (908) 598-1334.

Pasta for Pennies

Students at Deerfield School in Mountainside will be bringing in their spare change from their home, their family, their friends and relatives to their classroom during February to

donate to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. The campaign, Pasta for Pennies, is sponsored by Olive Garden Italian restaurants to raise funds for families with leukemia in the northern New Jersey area.

Did you know that leukemia claims the lives of more children than any other disease? It is estimated that leukemia and related cancers will strike over 100,000 adults and children this year and take the lives of approximately 57,500.

Monies raised through Pasta for Pennies will be used to support the society's programs of research, patient services and education.

For more information call the chapter at (973) 376-9559.

First aid, CPR classes

The Westfield/Mountainside Chapter of the American Red Cross, 321 Elm St., Westfield, has released its winter schedule for first aid and CPR classes.

Community First Aid & Safety — infant, child, adult CPR and first aid — will be offered on Feb. 17 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On March 10, the Red Cross will offer Standard First Aid & Safety — adult CPR and first aid — from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CPR courses teach how to recognize and care for breathing and cardiac emergencies. First Aid classes teach how to care for life-threatening injuries and illnesses.

Participants who pass the course will receive a certification card at the end of the class. The training will be at the Red Cross Chapter House, 321 Elm St., Westfield. Advance registration is required and space is limited.

Interested individuals should call Linda Johnson at (908) 232-7090, or e-mail johnsonl@crossnet.org, or stop by the chapter house.

Deerfield registration

Deerfield School announces its registration for 2001-02 kindergarten classes. Registration and screening will be conducted by appointment March 5, 6, 8 and 9. Appointments for registration and screening will begin at 8:45 a.m.

Parents are requested to call Susan Nugent to make an appointment for the screening that will be conducted by kindergarten teachers, a speech therapist and an occupational therapist. Barbara Komoroski, Deerfield's guidance counselor, will assist with screening.

Parents should call Deerfield School at (908) 232-8828, Ext. 213, to receive forms that should be completed and returned at registration.

Police reports for duty

Marine Corps Pfc. Alexander J. Polce, son of Geri D. and Richard D. Polce of Mountainside, recently reported for duty with Marine Corps Security Force Company, Naval Submarine Base Bangor, Silverdale, Wash.

Polce is a 1999 graduate of Governor Livingston High School of Berkeley Heights, and joined the Marine Corps in June 1999.



GOING IN CIRCLES — Students in David Campbell's third-grade class at James Caldwell School in Springfield, from left, Jessica Ridella, Danielle DeFronzo and Ryan Zahn, explore the relationship between the diameter and circumference of a circle.

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Then, follow signs to **Downtown Paterson**. Continue straight to 5th traffic light. Left onto Memorial Drive and go to 3rd traffic light. Left onto College Blvd. Go 1/4 blocks, park in blue municipal parking lot on right. Then cross street, go right, then left around corner to 101 Washington Street. 973-279-3000.
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