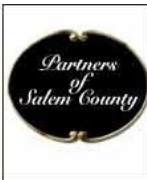


Truck collides with school bus carrying elementary students, killing girl of state trooper.

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TODAY'S SUNBEAM nj.com

190th Year, No. 137 USPS No. 358940 SERVING SALEM COUNTY, N.J., SINCE 1819, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2012 © 2012 Today's Sunbeam 75¢

Mannington union rejected

Workers vote down plan by margin of more than 2 to 1

By Bill Gallo Jr.
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MANNINGTON TWP — Workers at Mannington Mills voted by a margin of more than 2 to 1 here

Thursday to reject being represented by a union. Officials said the results of the election were: 204 votes against the union; 70 votes for the union and 25 challenged ballots.

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 94 was seeking to be the bargaining representative for the workers with Mannington Mills management. The election here was overseen by the National Labor Relations Board. "This vote is not only a vote for a union-free work-

place, but it is a vote of confidence in Mannington," said Keith Campbell, Chairman of the Board of Mannington Mills, after the tally was announced. While there have been at least a dozen previous attempts by unions to gain a foothold at the flooring manufacturer during its 87-year history —

last about 30 years ago — none have been successful, including the latest attempt. Chip Gerrity, president and business manager for IBEW Local 94, said the 70 votes cast in favor of the union showed that some workers at Mannington Mills are not happy. "I'm happy with what we

did," Gerrity said Thursday evening. "The employees are at a point where they needed to say something, whether the vote turned out large or not, they did take a stand. They are just looking for fairness." Gerrity said the union will remain in contact with workers at Mannington Mills. (See MILLS, Page A-5)

Harris declines C.P. seat

By Michael Williams
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CARNEYS POINT TWP. — A vacant seat on township committee will remain empty for at least a bit longer, as a recent candidate for the seat declined township committee's nomination.

Ralph "Bud" Harris was nominated for the open seat — vacated on Feb. 1 by former Committeeman Robert Hayes — last week, but declined the position on township committee.

Harris is a former planning board member and former zoning officer for the township.

A letter from Harris declining the nomination was received by township committee, and read into public record here Wednesday.

In the letter, Harris cited health concerns from a 2010 motor vehicle accident as the reason for declining the appointment.

"I want to thank you for appointing me to township committee...I did not serve this year on township planning board, because I am still recovering from injuries I received in an automobile accident last year," Harris' letter states. "After careful consideration with my wife and family,

(See C.P., Page A-5)



HARRIS

Net gains at Oldmans fundraiser



Staff photo by Doremy Lilly

Above, Oldmans Township School students from fifth through eighth grades kick-off their Hoops for Heart fundraiser Thursday afternoon at Oldmans Township School. All proceeds will go to the American Heart Association. Below left, fifth-grader Alyson Pelura participates in the dribbling relay. Below right, eighth-grade student Michael Rebyak lines up his shot. For a gallery of more photos from the event, visit www.nj.com/sunbeam and scroll down on the left to "Local Photos."



State Assembly OKs gay marriage

By MaryAnn Spoto
Statehouse Bureau

TRENTON — Even as Gov. Chris Christie's threat of a "swift" veto looms, gay rights activists basked Thursday after the state Assembly took final action on a bill to legalize same-sex marriage in New Jersey.

With supporters imploring lawmakers to make history, the lower house passed the bill after hours of debate on a day that began with protests and prayer vigils under gloomy skies outside the Statehouse.

"Without question, this is a historic day in the state of New Jersey," said Assembly Speaker Sheila Oliver, D-Essex, who, along with Senate President Steve Sweeney, D-3, of West Deptford, made the measure a top priority.

The Senate, which failed to pass a gay marriage bill two years ago, easily approved it Monday. The governor's office Thursday night would not say when Christie would respond.

(See STATE, Page A-5)

Elmer council vacancy filled by Williams

By Brittany M. Wehner
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ELMER — A vacancy on the Elmer Borough Council was filled during a special meeting.

Republican Andrew M. Williams was sworn-in by borough Clerk Beverly S. Richards on Wednesday night while Williams' wife, Susan Bostwick-Williams, and his son, Andrew, held the Bible.

Immediately after being sworn-in, he took his seat on the council for the remainder of the meeting. Williams has been a resident of Elmer for 26 years and a member of Elmer Presbyterian Church.

In addition to working for E.W. Bostwick, Inc., Williams served on the Elmer Planning Board for two years.

Williams said council was a good next move to make.

"I always wanted to get into politics and this was a great opportunity," Williams said.

Williams was one of three nominees for filling the open seat after (See ELMER, Page A-5)

Five recognized at Black History event

By Phil Dunn
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SALEM — Five of Salem County's unsung heroes were honored here Thursday night at the Old Courthouse to com-

memorate and celebrate Black History Month.

This event was coordinated by the Salem County Prosecutor's Office and the Salem County Human Relations Advisory Board.

The five individuals recognized included Gregory T. Wright, Stacy L. Shorter-Carney, Mike Brown, Joseph B. Cherry Jr. and Joseph E. Saunders Jr.

These individuals (See EVENT, Page A-5)



Staff photo by Phil Dunn

Recognized at Thursday's event were, from left, Joseph E. Saunders Jr., Joseph Cherry Jr., Mike Brown, Stacy L. Shorter-Carney and Gregory T. Wright.



The 30-MINUTES-OR-LESS E.R. Service Pledge. The Memorial Hospital OF SALEM COUNTY. MHSHealth.com/faster