

Political Whirl



PETER WEISS

Dirty trick time

Plots, plots and more plots: ■ Burgeoning use of the Internet is being blamed for a lot of things these days. In Hoboken, Mayor Anthony Russo says someone is using the Internet to try to besmirch him.

Accounts of a recent fight which left a young man in a coma are being circulated by someone on the Internet as part of a series of "yuppie bashing" in the city.

"These people have absolutely no facts. It is political people putting things in the Internet for their own political benefit," the mayor fumed at a recent City Council meeting.

"These statements (alleging yuppie bashing) are irresponsible and self-serving and designed to embarrass the city," Police Chief Carmen LaBruno added.

City officials contend the incident in question was a one-punch fight between two individuals, not an assault by several people on the victim. A juvenile has been charged with the attack.

■ A pamphlet circulating in Jersey City offers "courses" for employees taught by the Management Review Team.

Among the "courses" offered are "Buying Property For Far More Than It Is Worth," taught by City Council President Tom DeGise. It refers to the city allegedly paying more for the public school headquarters building than even its owners say it's worth.

There's a course titled "How To Run A Police Department," taught by Police Director Michael Moriarty. It promises to show how to deploy most of the force to one shift and hope that all crimes are committed during those hours.

Business Administrator Rob Lombard and Chief of Staff Nick Fargo Jr. will be the instructors for "How To Succeed In Government Without Really Trying."

And Mayor Bret Schundler will be teaching "How To Sell City Assets And Still Not Balance The Budget."

■ If you wondered what happened to those old KGB agents after the fall of the Soviet Union, maybe you have to look no further than Guttenberg.

Mayor Peter LaVilla is blaming a blitz of phony parking tickets on "communist infiltration."

The tickets, which closely resemble real summonses, are actually attacks on the administration.

■ A \$100,000 contract renewal to the firm of Stull and Benoit was awarded last month by the Hudson County Board of Freeholders for consulting services in connection with the dissolution of the Hudson County Utilities Authority. The principals of the firm used to be HCUA employees.

At the rate the dissolution is going, it will last longer and cost more than it did operate the agency.

Does that mean the county will have to wait several more years for the "History of the HCUA," for which the agency's former public relations man, Anthony Amabile, was paid \$25,000 several years ago to prepare?

■ Several community leaders will be honored Sunday at the annual Christmas party for children hosted by William J. Wolfe of Jersey City, state superintendent of weights and measures and a former Hudson County sheriff.

The party takes place at School 28, 167 Hancock Ave., at 2 p.m.

Clowns, magicians, cartoon characters and sports figures, including former heavyweight champion Joe Frazier and heavyweight contender Chuck Wepner of Bayonne will join Santa Claus to entertain kids and adults.

Those being honored for community activity are Helen Gilson, a Democratic committeewoman for 40 years; Ward D Democratic leader Donald Daly; Frank Turner, county weights and measures superintendent; School 28 principal Mark Hayes; Harvey Zucker, sports editor of the Jersey Journal; Vince Caruso, president of the Washington Park Little League; and North Bergen Deputy Mayor Jim Connolly.

HUDSON Report

Linda Hervieux, City editor, 217-2511, fax 653-1414

Critics slam Schundler on 'Mizzigate'

By Brian Donohue
Journal staff writer

The Jersey City Rent Leveling director who took thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from landlords whose cases she oversees has come under fire again from critics who demand she be removed from office.

Charlotte Haley-Mizzi has denied that her acceptance of contributions for her ill-fated campaign for county executive has influenced her decisions as head of the agency that handles tenant rent complaints.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, tenant advocates blasted Haley-Mizzi, saying tenants won't get a fair shake at a division headed by someone who took money from landlords.

"Nixon had Watergate, Reagan had Iran-Contra and now (Mayor Bret) Schundler has Mizzigate," said Lee Barile, former chairwoman of the Rent Leveling Board.

Barile was one of several speakers who demanded Haley-Mizzi be removed

Rent Leveling director attacked anew on campaign contributions

The controversy is being investigated by the city Law Department.

Haley-Mizzi yesterday requested from Department of Housing Economic Development Director Irvin Haynes a "formal administrative hearing" on the matter, challenging her accusers, including Councilman Jaime Vazquez, to submit "names, dates, and specifics" about the alleged wrongdoing.

She said the controversy was a political attempt by Vazquez to gain tenant support for his mayoral bid and called herself a victim of a smear campaign by Vazquez's brother and Rent Leveling hearing officer Carlos Vazquez.

"This is a political cheap shot by Vazquez," she said, adding, "My whole office is disrupted" by the controversy.

The issue erupted two weeks ago

when Councilman Vazquez accused Haley-Mizzi of interceding in landlord-tenant disputes involving contributors who later gave or had given to her campaign.

Vazquez presented records showing Haley-Mizzi collected thousands in contributions from landlords, property managers and real estate agents before the June 6 primary.

"It is not against the law for Charlotte Haley-Mizzi to take campaign contributions from landlords," Vazquez said. "But she intrudes herself into the process on behalf of people who have given."

On Wednesday, Vazquez presented additional reports showing Haley-Mizzi borrowed thousands of dollars more than was previously alleged.

Campaign finance reports show Haley-Mizzi received a \$3,000 loan from



HALEY-MIZZI

landlord Arthur Pronti; \$2,000 from the real estate management company Jasco Management, \$3,000 from Danforth Realty and other sums from several others.

Haley-Mizzi denied she still

has outstanding debts to the landlords, saying she took out a \$50,000 mortgage on her home to pay off the loans.

As director of the Division of Rent Leveling, Haley-Mizzi decides cases filed by tenants and landlords on issues such as rent increases and capital improvement costs.

But Mizzi said she has little influence on the outcome of disputes brought before the board, saying they go from the hearing officer to the board for settlement.



Journal photo by M. Kathleen Kelly

A forest in Hudson County?

Students from Hudson County Community College look at the array of pines, firs, and balsams at the Dairy Queen tree lot on West Side Avenue in Jersey City. The girls were looking for decorations for a Christmas play they will be doing at their church.

New bill prompted by football death

By Stan H. Eason
Journal staff writer

The death of a Jersey City high school football captain injured during a game earlier this year has prompted legislation requiring emergency medical personnel and equipment be present at all high school football games.

Assembly Minority Leader Joseph V. Doria Jr., D-Bayonne, and Assemblyman Joseph Charles Jr., D-Jersey City, yesterday introduced the bill, drafted in response to concerns raised by the death of Tahid Ramsey. The 17-year-old Snyder High School senior collapsed on the field after lowering his head and shoulders to block a Ferris High School rival during a Sept. 20 game.

The exact cause of Ramsey's death has not been determined. But in the aftermath of his death, emergency medi-



TAHID RAMSEY

cal technicians reported delays in reaching him and getting him to the hospital, although an ambulance was at the field for the game.

"I realize that Tahid Ramsey's life may not have been saved by this legislation because emergency personnel were present at his fateful football game, and they worked hard to save his life," Doria said. "But it would be a tragedy in itself to let Tahid Ramsey's death fade from memory without making some attempt to clearly define what school districts should do to ensure the presence of ambulances or other safety transportation at scholastic football games."

The measure, A-2571, mandates that each school district hosting a football game be required to adopt procedures to ensure the on-site availability of emergency medical transportation and corresponding trained personnel at each and every game.

The measure also requires that the state Commissioner of Education, in conjunction with the Commissioner of Health and Senior Services, adopt rules and regulations so local school districts will have emergency vehicles present at football games.

The bill also includes a \$90,000 appropriation to reimburse school districts for costs they may encounter in developing procedures to ensure the presence of emergency medical transportation.

John Doe found shot in Square identified

By Stan H. Eason
Journal staff writer

The man found shot dead on a Journal Square street Wednesday morning has been identified.

Family members confirmed that the body found at the corner of Sip and Garrison avenues is that of Edwin Rodriguez, 35, of Academy Street, said Hudson County Prosecutor Carmen Messano.

Rodriguez died of a single gunshot wound to the upper left chest and shoulder area, officials said. He was found face down about 5:50 a.m. by a pedestrian. No identification was found on Rodriguez but officials will not call the shooting robbery-related.

berry-related.

"We still can't say what the motive may have been, but nothing is being ruled out," Messano said.

People in the neighborhood and a firefighter from the nearby firehouse told investigators they thought they heard gunshots about an hour before Rodriguez was found. No one called police or went to search for source of the sounds.

Rodriguez was pronounced dead at the Jersey City Medical Center 18 minutes after he was taken there by EMTs.

Messano urged anyone with information about the shooting or anyone who spent time with Rodriguez in his final hours to call the Homicide Squad at 915-1345.

Conviction of Jarvis, 80, upheld

By Gilbert D. Martinez
Journal staff writer

A West Virginia appeals court yesterday upheld the murder conviction of an 80-year-old Jersey City man found guilty of drowning his daughter-in-law more than three years ago.

But the ruling by the West Virginia Supreme Court doesn't mean Leeman Jarvis, of Kennedy Boulevard, immediately goes back to jail.

He has remained under house arrest on a \$100,000 property bond since September 1995 when the court granted a motion to release him pending the resolution of his appeal to overturn his April 1995 conviction. In June 1995, he was sentenced to 5 to 18 years in prison.

The Braxton County (W. Va.) Prosecutor's Office can file court papers to have Jarvis' bond revoked and returned to jail, Braxton County Prosecutor William Martin said. But Jarvis will remain out on bond for another 30 days — the length of time a defendant can request a hearing to appeal the appellate ruling before it becomes permanent, Martin said.

"It would be our office to do that (file for bond revocation) — we could do that," Martin said.

"But I've been working on another case that goes to trial on Monday and I honestly hadn't thought about it."

However, Martin said, it's "very rare" for the West Virginia Supreme Court to grant hearings in cases like these. He said he expects the court's ruling to become permanent in a month, and that Jarvis will be returned to the West Virginia State Penitentiary in Mount Olive to serve his time.

Deborah Meissner Jarvis, 42, was found dead in a pond near her home in Sutton, W. Va., on Oct. 25, 1993. In May 1994, authorities arrested Leeman Jarvis, the father of her husband, Richard, a Trust Company vice president who runs the bank's Secaucus branch.

Mrs. Jarvis' family indicated there was bitterness over a pending divorce between Deborah and Richard Jarvis, and that relations between Deborah Jarvis and her father-in-law were strained.

"It's a hollow victory for us to get the conviction — which was only a second degree murder conviction — and know that he's free," said the victim's sister, Judy Weisser.

"Why should he be out free, living in my sister's house in Sutton, sleeping in her bed, when she's six feet under? He stole her life. He should be behind bars."

Leeman Jarvis' attorney, James Wilson Douglas, was on vacation this week and could not be reached for comment, a paralegal in his law office in Sutton, W. Va., said.

Richard Jarvis did not return a call seeking comment yesterday.

Deborah and Richard Jarvis, both New Jersey natives, moved to West Virginia in 1982, but Richard Jarvis moved back to New Jersey in 1991, and currently resides in Secaucus with their daughter.