

LOCAL BRIEFS

Monster garage sale will be Sept. 25

FRANKLIN — The New Jersey Herald is hosting a Monster of a Garage Sale Sunday Sept. 25, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Littell Community Center in Franklin.

Booths are \$30 for an 8-by-10 spot. Call 973-303-1047 or reserve a booth online.

The sale will include more than 7,000 square feet of garage-sale space for the savvy shopper to find treasures. Admission is \$1.

Concert will honor Kittatinny conductor

NEWTON — On Friday and Saturday, Kittatinny Regional High School will present a festival weekend of concerts honoring 36 years of musical excellence under the leadership of conductor Joseph H. Mello. In celebration of his retirement this past spring, 150 alumni musicians from 17 states return to the hallowed halls of their alma mater to perform in two events: the Alumni Solo Concert, Sept. 23 at 7 p.m. and the Alumni Festival Choir Concert, Sept. 24, 6 p.m.

Tickets are available in advance online at <http://krh-schoiralmnifestival.eventbrite.com/> (\$12, credit/debit card) or at the door (\$15, cash or check).

Both performances are open to the public and will take place at the Peter A. Mahler Performing Arts Center, Kittatinny Regional High School. All proceeds will benefit the newly established Joseph H. Mello Music Scholarship Fund.

Chicken and chips to be served Friday

BRANCHVILLE — The First Presbyterian Church of Branchville will host a chicken and chip fundraiser presented by Tastefully British on Friday. Takeouts are at 4:30; dinner is 5 to 6:30. Call the church, 973-948-3495 for advanced reservations. Reservations are required. Tickets are \$12.

County may change bus 'loop'

By BRUCE A. SCRUTON
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NEWTON — Eliminating "The Loop" bus service operated by Skylands Ride with a route that operates back-and-forth along one corridor, along with other changes, could double the number of scheduled bus stops in Sussex County, according to a mass transit study given to the Board of Chosen Freeholders this week.

Since buses wouldn't run in a loop anymore, the consultant, Nelson Nygaard, suggests the name of the regular bus runs be advertised as Skylands Connect while the on-demand bus service pick up the name of Skylands Request. "This would allow both services to be identified as part of the Skylands Ride family, while also reflecting the unique role of each," notes the report.

In his appearance before the freeholders, company senior associate Boris Palchik said the recommendation to cut The Loop is based on very low ridership on the western side of the route between the Wal-Mart in Newton and Sussex Borough.

That section, he said, picks up just 2 percent of the total ridership yet consumes 20 minutes of time for the circuit.

Among other recommendations are a change in scheduling between drivers and buses.

Currently, a driver is assigned to a specific bus for the entire shift so, according to Palchik "when the drivers goes to lunch, the bus goes to lunch, too," leaving gaps in the bus runs.

The suggested change would keep the bus on the road all day by switching drivers.

Eliminating the Newton-Sussex leg and the change in driver assignments will allow Skylands to double the number of trips as well as add on a leg of the route to include Carlton Village and the YMCA in Hardyston.

Since the transit garage and headquarters have been moved to the county's new building on Wheatsthorn Road in Hardyston, that portion of the route won't add any time.

With a dozen bus trips a day, each stop will see a bus every 75 minutes.

The report notes that those few passengers on the western side of the loop can still get service when needed by the on-demand bus service provided by Skylands Ride.

Stephen Gruchacz, who heads the county's Department of Human Services, which includes Skylands Ride, said, "Our plan is to meet beginning next week to evaluate the recommendations."

Some changes can be adopted without formal approval by the freeholders.

There is no timetable for adopting the recommendations or when the route changes will go into effect, although officials said earlier this summer they would like to adopt some of the changes this fall.

Palchik said the county appears to be doing a good job of seeking out available federal and state grants to help fund the transit system but there are still ways to increase ridership and awareness.

The report notes that the changes to routes and schedules opens up the possibility of changing marketing and informational materials relating to the routes.

"In the modern era, it is important to design passenger schedules that are as easy to read online as they are in hard copy," the report notes.

And the county should take advantage of online services available, such as Google Transit, which gives transit users the same type of trip-planning tools as drivers of private vehicles. The free service can also be accessed by hand-held mobile devices.

The report also recommends extending some kind of bus service through to the existing NJTransit station in Netcong.

Although that station is already served by private companies, those runs are designed for commuters heading to work east of Sussex.

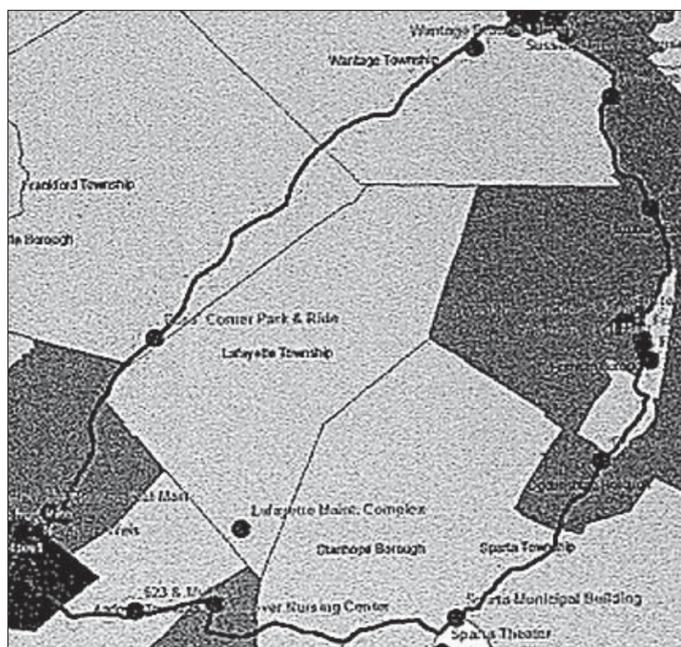
"No service is available for 'reverse commuters' wishing to travel to jobs in Sussex County via public transportation," the report notes using the demand-responsive service.

Over time, as passenger requests warrant, a fixed-schedule service could be provided.

The report also recommended that the buses image, or "branding," be upgraded.

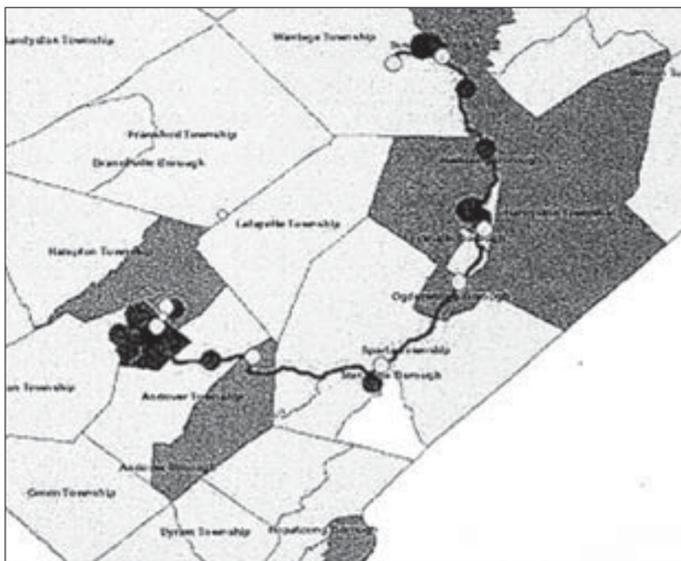
"Consistent and highly visible vehicle branding can raise awareness of transit service in a community, while also improving its image," the report noted.

The Sussex County Transit Citizens Advisory Council has already given its approval to the report and recommendations.



Graphics courtesy of County of Sussex

The county has received a recommendation to restructure its bus loop, shown above, to the route shown below, which would allow for more frequent trips to the majority of users. People in the area no longer serviced by the loop could use the "on demand" bus service. There is no time frame for putting the new route in place.



Smithsonian exhibit opens today in Newton

By JEFF SISTRUNK
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Zydeco, blues and gospel may have wildly different sounds, but the genres have one thing in common — they're all part of a concept that's become known as American roots music.

Starting today, a full range of American musical traditions will be on display at the Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council's gallery on Spring Street in Newton, as the Smithsonian's "New Harmonies" exhibit takes up residency. The traveling exhibit, which is free to the public and will remain at the gallery through Oct. 30, comes to Newton on the tail end of a six-stop tour through the Garden State. New Harmonies is part of the "Museum on Main Street" project, which is a partnership between the Smithsonian, the Federation of State Humanities Councils and state humanities councils that brings educational exhibits to small towns nationwide.

"The exhibit is about the effect different cultures have on our music, from the Irish to Cajuns," said Mary Jo Mathias, executive director of the Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council.

New Harmonies includes a wide selection of photos documenting the many movements that comprise American roots music, along with listening stations and arti-

facts such as a Native American flute and a Cajun accordion. Popular rock, country and blues musicians like Joan Baez, Woody Guthrie, Muddy Waters and Robert Johnson share the gallery space equally with representations of lesser-known genres, such as the early gospel of the Shakers.

The Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council is the only organization in northern New Jersey that was selected to host the exhibit. Last year, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities sent a notice out to organizations across the state seeking exhibitors to present New Harmonies, Mathias said, and the local council was one of six hosts chosen.

The council received a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation to help in presenting New Harmonies, Mathias said.

An exhibit of music-centric photos entitled "Photos with a Beat," which features the work of local photographer Trevor Hodgson, will run alongside New Harmonies at the gallery through Oct. 1. Hodgson's photos are mostly of subjects and venues from around the Sussex County music scene, Mathias said. On Oct. 8, an "All-Woman Show" multimedia exhibit about women in music will debut at the gallery and run through Nov. 12.

While New Harmonies has content to appeal to all age groups,



Photo by Tracy Klimek/New Jersey Herald

Mary Jo Mathias, the executive director for the Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council hangs a banner at the Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council Gallery on Spring Street in Newton, for the traveling Smithsonian photo exhibit called "New Harmonies" that opens today.

Mathias said, it's been designed especially for the youth.

"It's a great show for younger people to see where their music came from," she said.

Several musical performances are scheduled to run in conjunction with New Harmonies. During the exhibit's run, artists will set up shop across from the gallery for concerts every Friday from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. The Zephyr Ensemble will play a selection of "very early American music" at

the council's "Evening with the Stars" fundraiser on Saturday at Lake Mohawk Golf Club, and local musician Steve Chapin is slated to perform on consecutive Saturdays at Salt Gastro Pub in Byram, on Oct. 16 and Oct. 24.

Mathias said her council's hosting of a Smithsonian exhibit is a great privilege.

"This is a very unique opportunity for us," she said. "People don't have to go all the way to New York City to see a great exhibition."

Exhibition schedule

Where: Sussex County Arts and Heritage Council Gallery
133 Spring Street, Newton
(973) 383-0027
www.scahc.org
When: Sunday: 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wednesday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Thursday: 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Saturday: 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Benefit to assist Fredon family dealing with tragedy

By KATIE BRENZEL
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Prognosis: Terminal illness. The call: There's been an accident.

These two nightmares — feared by many parents — are a reality for one Fredon family.

On June 5, Tierney Veliz, 22, was nearly killed in a car crash five minutes from her home. She broke her spine in 16 places, broke her neck, pelvis, collarbone, hip and crushed her cervical spinal nerve 6 (C6). Her brother, Chase, 20, suffers from Hunter Syndrome. He's been bedridden for the last four years and requires 24-hour medical care.

To help offset the Veliz's existing and mounting medical expenses, community members and friends are hosting a "Coming

Home" benefit on Saturday at Lodestar Park in Fredon.

The accident came two weeks after Tierney graduated from Manhattan College in the top 5 percent of her class. She'd recently been accepted into a fall doctorate program in psychology at Seton Hall University. Her mother, Rosemarie, said they are still unsure what caused the crash, which occurred near Marksboro Deli in Blairstown. Tierney's eyes were off the road for a moment — her vehicle became airborne, flipped and rolled twice, leaving her quadriplegic.

Her family was told that she'd irreparably severed her C6. She'd never walk again and would rely on a feeding tube and a tracheostomy for the rest of her life.

The Veliz family, however, has a history of

defying expectations in face of tragedy.

Though told that Chase wasn't going to live into double digits, he is now 20 years old.

Similarly, a few prognoses have been overturned in Tierney's case. After five weeks at Morristown Memorial ICU Trauma Department, doctors discovered that Tierney's C6 wasn't severed as originally believed. "That was the second miracle," said Rosemarie Veliz. "The first is that she survived." Tierney no longer relies on a feeding tube, and the tracheostomy was recently removed. Her right arm is functioning, and she can now lift her left arm. Tierney's mother said that many priests have come to the hospital to pray for her daughter. She credits the family's strong Catholic faith and the number of people praying for her daughter

for these small "miracles."

"There are so many people praying for this kid," she said. "I try to keep her positive. I just keep telling her 'this is all temporary, miracles do happen.'"

Tierney is now at Kessler Rehabilitation Center in West Orange, undergoing various therapies. She is determined to walk again, her mother said, but her dreams of pursuing a higher degree and opening her own practice as a clinical psychologist are temporarily on hold. She wants to wait until she can walk again.

"We tell her every day, 'you will walk,' and she repeats 'I will walk, I will walk,'" Rosemarie Veliz said.

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