

THURSDAY
March 10,
2011

JOINT EFFORT

Local Vietnam vet early recipient of 'Power Knee.' PEOPLE, A-6



BUCKET LIST

Gloucester Catholic 2 points short in title game. SPORTS, B-1



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Woodbury, N.J. http://www.nj.com/gloucester

GOP freeholders lay out reform plan

■ The two Republicans' ideas include salary freezes and benefits contributions

By Rob Scott

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Last week, Democratic Freeholder Heather Simmons rolled out a series of reforms intended to save the county hundreds of thousands of dollars.

This week, it was the Republicans' turn.

GOP freeholders Larry Wallace and Vince Nestore have proposed their own set of reforms – some of them expansions of the measures introduced by Simmons.

The Republicans want to impose

a freeze on salary increases on non-union county employees making \$50,000 or more. Simmons' plan suspends increases for those making \$100,000 or more annually, affecting 16 county workers.

Simmons' reform package also (See REFORMS, Page A-5)



Larry Wallace (far left) and Vince Nestore have proposed reforms that in some cases go even further on other ideas.

It's a dog's life – in book form



Staff photo by Tim Hawk

Kushka, the main character in the children's book 'Kushka, The Dog Named Cat,' does a few tricks for second-graders at Dorothy Bullock School in Glassboro after owner and author Eli Kowalski read his book to the students on Wednesday. Story, Page A-3.

Aide faces child porn charges

■ The Deptford man was employed at the Bankbridge Development Center

By Joe Green

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DEPTFORD TWP. — A teacher's aide who worked with young children was arrested early Wednesday morning on charges of possession and distribution of child pornography.

Robert Nines, 26, of Deptford Township, was taken into custody by police around 6:30 a.m. at his Highland Avenue home. He was employed at the Bankbridge Development Center – a county-run school for special needs students – on Salina Road in Sewell.

According to a statement released by Gloucester County Prosecutor's Office spokesman Bernie Weisenfeld, Nines worked with a teacher on classroom activities for children ages 6 to 9.

Nines posted \$10,000 bail, set by Superior Court Judge Walter A. Marshall Jr. and was released.

"The second-degree distribution and fourth-degree possession charges involved numerous still pictures and videos of children engaged in sex acts," said the statement from the prosecutor's office.

The statement added that "there has been no indication to date that the acts alleged involved the school where Nines was employed."

Authorities said the arrest resulted from a peer-to-peer file-sharing investigation by the county prosecutor's High Tech Crimes Unit, an investigation that is ongoing.

On a visit to Nines' home, a man who said he was his brother answered the door and said Nines wouldn't comment on the accusations at the time.

The Times was unable to immediately reach Weisenfeld. (See CHARGED, Page A-11)

2010 total shatters record for state NJEA spends \$6.8M on lobbying

By Matt Friedman

Times Statehouse Bureau

The New Jersey Education Association pushed back so hard against Gov. Chris Christie last year that it set a record.

The state's largest teachers union spent \$6.8 million on lobbying last year, most of it going to an ad campaign against Christie and his cuts to education in the

state budget, according to a report released Wednesday by the Election Law Enforcement Commission. That's the most a special interest group has spent on New Jersey lobbying in one year, according to the commission.

"We spent that money. We felt we had to," said NJEA spokesman Steve Wollmer. "The governor

was putting out a lot of what we feel was misinformation on education and our members demanded we set the record straight."

The NJEA shelled out so much on lobbying that its total was seven times more than the second-highest spender, Verizon, at \$935,000. It also beat the previous spending record, set by Verizon in 2006, by

more than \$2 million.

Christie spokesman Kevin Roberts called the union a "special interest that is bent on protecting a failed status quo in our schools."

"They talk like a special interest and they certainly spend like a special interest by funding millions upon millions of dollars in (See NJEA, Page A-11)

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

\$150,000 cut from defeated fire budget

By Jessica Beym

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WASHINGTON TWP. — After the fire budget failed at the polls last month by a matter of 171 votes, the township council decided Wednesday night to cut the budget by the exact amount it was set to increase – \$150,000.

Council President Chris Del Borrello said he and Councilman Scott Newman met last week with the fire commissioner to discuss the \$5.7 million spending plan for the Washington Township Fire District.

The budget was \$150,000 more than the previous year. However, the amount that taxpayers were being asked to fund was slightly less – about \$4.9 million total. It would have decreased

the tax rate .2 cents to 19.4 cents per \$100 of assessed property value.

The district was able to decrease the levy by using additional surplus funds of about \$550,000. But it was defeated in a vote of 675 to 504.

Del Borrello and Newman said the council members felt it would be fair to cut the budget so that it would keep spending exactly the same as the previous year, and decrease the tax rate even more for property owners.

"I want to make this clear that no safety issue is at risk here," Newman said.

Fire Commissioner Chairman Sam Micklus, who looked at the council chambers packed with fire-

Computers sold by state may still hold sensitive info

By Salvador Rizzo

Times Statehouse Bureau

Thousands of state computers auctioned off to the public may have been sold with confidential data – from Social Security numbers to names and addresses of children under foster care – still on their hard drives, state officials disclosed Wednesday.

A report released by the state comptroller describes how four agencies also left child-abuse reports, tax returns and memos between government officials on discarded comput-

ers at the state's surplus warehouse in Hamilton that were about to be auctioned.

"To say that the system was dysfunctional is putting it mildly," said State Comptroller Matthew Boxer. "The record-keeping that we found at the warehouse was in some instances simply nonexistent and where it did exist generally inadequate, making any tracing of auctioned equipment either exceedingly difficult or impossible."

The auctions were halted when Boxer stepped in (See COMPUTERS, Page A-7)



Associated Press photo

An Afghan boy eats snow as his friends look on while they play on snow covered slope in the old part of Kabul.

The day in Afghanistan

■ NATO forces have seized 48 Iranian-made rockets intended to aid the Taliban, the most powerful illicit weapons intercepted en route from the neighboring state, officials said.

■ An intelligence official said a high-level Afghan Taliban leader had traveled to Iran to meet with a top Iranian Revolutionary Guard leader to ask for more powerful weapons.



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WEATHER

Heavy rain, highs in the mid 50s, lows in the mid 40s.