

Head over heels for girls soccer? You'll flip for our high school preview. **INSIDE ▶****CROCODILE HUNTER A12**

Video shows Irwin pulled out ray's barb



MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS. B2

HERALD NEWS

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Wednesday, September 6, 2006

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An edition of The Record



Class acts

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PEACH GUY HOPES WORK WILL GROW ON YOU

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WEATHER Rain ends

Mostly cloudy, highs in the mid-70s. Bright and sunny today. Lows in the 50s. Sunny, highs in the 80s on Thursday. C16

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West Paterson, New Jersey

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ELMWOOD PARK

Feeling the noise



For more than 20 years, Janice and Dennis Icola have lived about 50 feet away from Interstate 80. In recent years, they say the noise from the highway has become unbearable. They have been requesting sound barriers to ease their plight.

Residents claim barriers just an empty promise

By HEATHER KAYS

Herald News

When the Icolas can't sleep, instead of counting sheep, they count the cars and trucks that pass by.

Dennis Icola said he has been complaining for the past five years about the high noise level coming from Interstate 80, which is dominating the quality of life on nearby Van Riper Avenue.

"You can't sleep at night with the windows open," the 44-year-old resident said. "You can count traffic instead of sheep."

Residents like Dennis and his wife, Janice, who live near the eastbound side of I-80 and the Garden State Parkway, have pleaded with state and borough officials for more than a decade to erect sound barriers along the heavily traveled highway, without any visible results. Yet with each passing year, the cost grows higher.

There are residents who say they have been promised by borough and state Department of Transportation officials that the massive concrete barriers would be built along the 1.5-mile stretch of I-80 from River Drive to the Garden State Parkway.

But many of the 182 affected residents now say officials have been less than candid about when the noise-shielding barriers would be put in, offering only empty promises, while the problem continues to increase.

Please see **BARRIERS, A4**

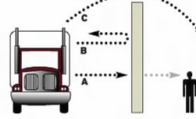
Sounds of silence

Proposed barrier would be located along a 1.5-mile stretch of I-80 from River Drive to the Garden State Parkway.



NOISE BARRIERS REDUCE SOUND BY:

- A. Absorbing some of the sound.
- B. Reflecting the sound back across the highway.
- C. Forcing the sound to travel a longer distance over and around the barrier.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Transportation

SAMUEL CEFUKA, WENDI SEBASTIAN/Herald News

EDUCATION

Digital divide still separates students

Internet use lower for blacks, Hispanics

By BEN FELLER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Many more white children use the Internet than do Hispanic and black stu-

dents, a reminder that going online is hardly a way of life for everyone.

Two of every three white students — 67 percent — use the Internet, but less than half of blacks and Hispanics do, according to federal data released Tuesday. For Hispanics the figure is 44 percent; for blacks it's 47 percent.

"This creates incredible barriers

for minorities," said Mark Lloyd, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and an analyst on how communications infrastructure affects civil rights.

Not using the Internet "narrows their ability to even think about the kind of work they can be doing," Lloyd said. "It doesn't prepare them for a world in which

they're going to be expected to know how to do these things."

The new data come from the National Center for Education Statistics, an arm of the Education Department. They are based on a national survey of households in 2005.

Please see **INTERNET, A4**

PASSAIC

Mayor's daughter no longer a cop

Resigns over having lied on application

By ALEXANDER MACINNES

Herald News

PASSAIC — The daughter of Mayor Samuel Rivera who lied on her state application to become a police officer has resigned, capping an embarrassing episode for the department that led to an investigation by the county prosecutor.

Passaic County Prosecutor James Arigliano said Tuesday that Alexandra Rivera, 21, submitted her resignation on Saturday, citing personal reasons, though he later added that she stepped down rather than face charges for falsifying a state application, a fourth-degree crime.

"If you look back on the history that we have had with police officers being charged with a crime, we have always given the police officer a chance to resign, and if they resign, that would be the end of the case," Arigliano said. "I'm not talking about a cop who murdered someone; I'm talking about a fourth-degree crime. She was given the opportunity, and she avoided it."

Arigliano said Mayor Rivera, who approved hiring his daughter even though she did not earn a high school degree, was not interviewed during his office's investigation, adding that his investigation focused mostly on paper trails.

"Conspiracy by definition is two or more people acting together to violate the law or circumvent the law," Arigliano said.

Here, who are you going to have testify in a case of that nature? The mayor? The mayor's daughter?"

Please see **RIVERA, A4**

SEPT. 11

'Cough' is taking its toll

Lifelong treatment likely for responders

By AMY WESTFLOTT

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The weekend after Sept. 11, John Graham was too winded to eat his lunch.

John Stenoz runs out of breath when he talks. He takes 20 medications a day for lung problems after spending 20 days where the Twin Towers once stood.

The two Ground Zero workers were among more than 9,000 patients in a groundbreaking Sept. 11 health study released Tuesday that concluded over 10,000 workers had breathing problems for more than two years after the attacks.

Doctors said the patients were likely to be chronically ill and need treatment for the rest of their lives.

Please see **HEALTH, A8**

A4 HERALD NEWS

CONTINUED FROM A1

Wednesday, September 6, 2006



FILE PHOTO

Sound barriers run along parts of Interstate 80 between Paterson and Hackensack. But residents in one section of Elmwood Park say their calls for help have gone unanswered. "Honestly, I don't think they have any intention of ever actually doing this," Dennis Iozia says.

Barriers: For Elmwood Park residents, traffic din is too much to bear

Continued from A1

Further complicating the issue, the mayor and Borough Council president have engaged in finger-pointing over reasons for the delay. The only thing certain is that residents will not see a sound barrier for years.

The solution

Instead of getting better, life for these residents has only become noisier and more frustrating.

"We know the highway was there when we bought the house, but it's gotten so much worse," Jenice Iozia said. "We didn't know it was going to be like this, 20 years later."

Residents say they can't have parties or barbecues in their backyards like most homeowners because of the noise and the need of exhaust fumes. On most days, they can't even have a normal telephone conversation.

"People constantly ask me if I am at a telephone booth or if I am in my car on a cell phone," Jenice Iozia said. "I say, 'Oh no, I am just sitting at my kitchen table.'"

The proposed concrete barriers would decrease the noise level in the neighborhood about 5 to 10 decibels, according to officials. Several years, which ranged in length, would be disrupted by the toll and 2.5-foot-wide walls that are built, effectively deflecting the highway noise. The height and depth of each wall is determined by how noisy the area is, state DOT officials said.

Officials respond

Even now, officials offer shadow explanations for the way the project has dragged on, and continuously attempt to quiet the road with vague promises of action.

"The bright spot is that we are moving forward despite the problems in the past," DOT spokesman Tim Greedy said last week.

Money for the noise barrier project has been allocated as early as 2001, he said. He could not offer an exact figure as to how much money was budgeted for the project at that time; however, the project was initially projected to cost \$5.5 million. Over time and accounting for inflation, the projected cost for the noise barriers has increased to \$8.5 million.

"It seems that going back about eight years or so, there had been some issues in solving the actual scope of the project," Greedy said.

The question for DOT officials was whether to have 14 miles of proposed noise barriers for Rochelle Park included in the Elmwood Park project.

"Originally we planned to do it separately," he explained. "Somewhere along the way the other project became grouped in with this one. That seems to be the reason this was held up for so long."

Borough officials say the noise barrier project is out of their hands and there was little they could have done to move it forward.

"It's something that's always been on the drawing board," Democratic Council President Joseph Mangilli said. "But it's a state project and is kind of out of our control."

Mangilli said the Borough Council was misled about when the noise barrier project would be completed, just as the residents were.

"We were told that the project was finally going to be done after all those years," Mangilli said. "They said we had to expect what was going to happen, and they even gave us a timetable. There was really nothing else for us to do at that point."

But Republican Mayor Richard Mola disagreed with Mangilli's assessment and adamantly claimed he has gone years attempting to have the barriers installed.

"I've been in favor of the barriers for a long time, and that's how long I've been fighting for them," Mola said. "It has been years of phone calls, letter writing and meeting with representatives from the DOT that has gotten us this far along in the process."

Mangilli said he doesn't believe that any borough official has applied pressure to the state in the hopes of propelling the project ahead.

"If the mayor has been pushing for that to be done for years, then it's pretty disappointing that this still hasn't happened," Mangilli said, adding that he has not seen a single letter or other correspondence from

the borough to the DOT regarding the proposed sound barriers.

"When you want something like that to happen, you make calls, write a letter campaign, get residents to write letters," Mangilli said. "I think that it probably would have helped."

Nevertheless, Mola maintained that what he has done over the years.

"Exactly what has Mr. Mangilli done in his five years on the council?" questioned Mola, who has been mayor since 1972, adding that Mangilli has never brought up the sound barrier project.

With drawing up all three plans, setting the noise levels, and getting as far as we have, the state must have been spending their money quite fruitfully if they didn't plan to complete this project," Mola said.

"You can't sleep at night with the windows open. You can count traffic instead of sheep."

DENNIS IOZIA, Elmwood Park resident

Empty promises

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When it comes to decision-making because of political infighting and constant squabbling among members.

Once the plans are agreed upon by the council, the DOT would take over the final design phase, which would also take about a year to complete. Then, finally, the Type II sound barriers would be constructed.

But Dennis Iozia says he will believe DOT officials only when he sees the sound barriers or, better yet, when he doesn't hear the traffic.

"They promised they'd put sound barriers up and cover this," Dennis Iozia said. "Honestly, I don't think they have any intention of ever actually doing this."

Reach Heather Rays at 973-589-7137 or hray@northjersey.com.

RHODE ISLAND NIGHT CLUB FIRE

Selecting jury may not be easy

By ERIC TICKER
The Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Jury selection began Tuesday for the highly anticipated trial of one of the owners of the nightclub where a fire killed 100 people three years ago.

Michael Derderian is the first person to stand trial for the Feb. 20, 2003, blaze at The Station, which began when sparks from stage pyrotechnics ignited nearby

proving fans on the club's walls and ceiling. It was the fourth deadliest nightclub fire in U.S. history, also also injured more than 200 people.

More than 200 prospective jurors filed out 32-page questionnaires aimed at gauging their knowledge of the fire and any attitudes or personal connections they might have to the case. More than 200 others were summoned to appear Wednesday.

"This case has engendered a tremendous public interest and will continue to do so," he said. Derderian, 45, and his brother, Jeffrey, the co-owners of the club, each face 200 counts of involuntary manslaughter — two counts for each person killed under applicable theories. No trial date has been set for Jeffrey Derderian.

A count of involuntary manslaughter in Rhode Island carries up to 30 years in prison.

One theory accuses them of constructing an inadequate — if not flammable — fire in violation of the state fire code that led to the victims' deaths; the other accuses them of opening their club with criminal negligence by maintaining unsafe conditions.

The trial is expected to last several months.

The large jury pool reflects the anticipated difficulty of selecting jurors to hear such a high-profile case in a state so tiny that many seemed to know someone who was killed or injured in the fire, or one of their relatives.

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Internet: Use at home up, yet some minorities lag

Digital divide

A study shows that 67 percent of white students use the Internet, while lower blacks and Hispanics do.

Percentage of students in nursery school through 12th grade who use the Internet, 2005

White 67%
Other 64%
Asian 68%
Black 60%
Hispanic 57%
American Indian 44%

More than one source.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

Overall, 91 percent of students in nursery school through 12th grade use computers; 59 percent use the Internet.

Within those numbers, the digital divide between groups is a racial concern.

Studies have shown that access and ability to use the Internet help improve people's learning, job prospects and daily living.

Schools have taken steps to close the gaps.

Almost all U.S. schools are connected to the Internet. The gaps in Internet usage between whites and minorities, though size-

able, are smaller during the school year.

That's not the case at home. Some 34 percent of white students use the Internet at home, compared with 26 percent of Hispanics and 27 percent of black youngsters.

Limited access at home can erode a student's ability to research assignments, explore college scholarships or just get comfortable going online.

Among other findings:

■ Household income, parent education and whether the home has two parents all correlate with high computer and Internet use.

■ Public school students are more likely than private school students to use both computers and the Internet.

■ The greater gap in computer use has all but disappeared; girls are as likely as boys to use the Internet.

■ Kids use the Internet most often for completing school assignments, the new study says. But they also count on it for e-mail, instant messaging and playing games.

■ The racial divide in computer usage is tied to broader problems, including poverty in black and Latino communities and even a

cultural reluctance to use the Internet, Lloyd said.

Among other students, 58 percent of Asian-American children and 47 percent of American Indian students use the Internet.

The numbers are growing for all groups of students — a bit of good news, Lloyd said.

"We should celebrate that, with caution," he said. "The sky is not falling. The numbers are improving. But there is still a gap, and we need to find a way to address it."

On the Net

National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov/>