

**Sports dome hearing tonight**

Recreation center in Wayne would have pool, fields. **A12**

**Action needed in Paterson**

It's time to find schools superintendent. **EDITORIAL, A13**

## FEMA rejects appeal of new flood map

By VIRGIL DICKSON  
Herald News

### Affected homeowners will have to buy insurance

**LITTLE FALLS** – Homeowners living near the Peckman River have lost their fight to be left off an updated federal flood zone map, and soon scores of households will be forced to spend as much as \$1,000 annually for flood insurance.

The homeowners had disputed the inclusion of their properties on

the map, the first update of the flood zone in 20 years. They argued that if not for a bridge collapse in 1999 at the height of Tropical Storm Floyd, their land would never have flooded.

Township officials organized an appeal of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's updated flood map on behalf of affected

residents, but the agency rejected the township's measurements in the flood zone and late last month denied the appeal.

With the appeal lost, up to 100 homeowners will be required to obtain flood insurance at a cost of \$400 to \$1,000 annually.

That puts residents such as Margaret Kachur, 83, in a financial bind. "I can't afford (flood in-

urance). I'm a senior citizen and a widow. I'm just about making it on my pension," she said last week.

Residents said parts of their neighborhood flooded when Tropical Storm Floyd caused the collapse of the Route 46 bridge over the Peckman River, which pushed water and debris into the area. Had that not happened, residents

said, their area never would have flooded.

Kachur, who has lived in her Harrison Street house for 50 years, said even with the Route 46 bridge collapse, her home was not flooded during Floyd.

"My street never got flooded. Why should I pay?" she asked.

Some neighbors shared her complaint.

"I'm not happy about paying for something that may not happen again," said Rosemarie Opalka, 60, of Willow Avenue.

Mortgage companies are obligated by the federal government to ensure that borrowers secure flood insurance if their homes are determined to be located in flood zones.

"If they submit an appeal and FEMA said 'no,' we don't have a

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## Crowning moment



Photos by ALDO MARTINEZ JR./Special to the Herald News

Master of P.A.P.I. (Performing Arts Filipino Inc.) 2007 John Gayan, right, of Bergenfield, and his mother, Melinde, left, help his sister Michaela, center, Miss P.A.P.I. 2007, put her crown on before the 21st annual Philippine Day Parade and Festival in Passaic on Sunday. Patrick Yabut, of Teaneck, below, holds a Philippine flag before the start of the parade, which began at the Passaic City Hall.

### Filipino pride on display during 21st annual parade, festival

By DENISA R. SUPERVILLE  
Herald News

**PASSAIC** – Dozens of Filipinos walked, marched and rode along Passaic Street and Passaic Avenue on Sunday, waving small Philippines and U.S. flags as they celebrated the 110th anniversary of the country's independence from Spain.

The annual parade also paid tribute to the nation's veterans who fought in World War 11.

"This is one of the only times that we get to come out and show what we're really made of," said Marcia Roska, as she stood near the municipal building. Roska's 10-year-old son, Mateo, was dressed in his Boy Scouts uniform and ready to join in the festivities.

"We're very excited," said Roska, a special education teacher at Grant School 7 who was born in Cebu,

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### TIMEPIECE

## Gang violence at crisis level in '80s

By JENNIFER H. CUNNINGHAM  
Herald News

Many today say local gangs are a blight on communities and corrode the quality of life.

But in the 1970s and 1980s, North Jersey's gang problem reached crisis levels, and neither police nor school officials knew quite how to stop the violence.

Anyone and any place could become a target for a gang's fury. No community, no matter how affluent, was safe, it seemed. In 1978 at the West Belt Mall in Wayne, a gang wielding baseball bats, chains and pipes beat and clubbed four

teenagers. Police said there was no motive in the beating, and mall retailers said they had never seen anything like it there.

"We were surprised," Kishin Kusum, a mall merchant, said of the gang attack, according to news reports. "It could happen anywhere; it just happened here."

Local officials said their hands were tied.

In 1978, Little Falls Mayor Fred De Furia blamed an up-tick in gang harassment of residents on bad parenting and lax penalties for youth offenders.

But teens themselves said a lack of recreation activities lured them

into criminal mischief.

"Totowa's got an ice rink. Wayne's got roller skating," one Little Falls youth, from a gang called "The Refugees," said in a news report. "We got zip. What do they expect us to do? Stay home every night?"

Clifton was also a site for gang skirmishes. In July 1980, police needed four squad cars to diffuse a fight on Vreeland Avenue between rival gangs armed with bats, hatchets and tire irons. The fight stemmed from earlier in the day when one teen allegedly made rude comments to Debbie Degan, 22. The fight set off a summer of vi-

olence in the city between the gangs from Valley Road and Van Houten Avenue. Nightly "rumblings" would occur at Clifton Plaza Shopping Center on Van Houten Avenue. Police added extra patrols, and two gang members were arrested. One man was hospitalized.

At Paterson's Eastside High School in November 1981, officials closed the school early because of rumors that a gang from Barringer High School in Newark was coming to the school to fight. Police later clashed with 200

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File photo

Gangs, like this one in the Sunset Park area of Brooklyn in 1983, terrorized North Jersey. They are still a problem today, with authorities estimating there are about 70 active gangs.