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Kids get a look at the working world



Photo by Daniel Freel/New Jersey Herald

Children of staff members at Newton Medical Center take a tour of Atlantic Health System's Air Three helicopter during Take Your Child to Work Day on Thursday in Newton.

Vernon school board's \$250K settlement staves off suit

High school assistant principal alleged hostile work environment

By ERIC OBERNAUER
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VERNON — An assistant principal of Vernon Township High School is about to be paid \$250,000 to settle claims that she was subjected to a hostile work environment by Schools Superintendent Art DiBenedetto, marking the second payout in six months to a former Board of Education employee.

Nancy LoPresti, who has held the assistant principal's title for the last seven years, agreed to the settlement earlier this month after what were said to be intense negotiations between her attorney and the board aimed at staying off a lawsuit she had planned to file against the district and DiBenedetto personally.

With the Board of Education having since voted unanimously on April 12 to accept the terms of the proposed settlement, all that is left for the agreement to take effect is for the document to be signed by all parties — a final step that was expected to occur at Thursday night's board meeting.

The settlement stipulates that LoPresti, who told high school staff members March 29 that she was going on an academic sabbatical for the remainder of the school year, will resign from the district

and be paid \$50,000 from school district funds plus another \$3,200 as reimbursement for a college course she currently is taking. The \$200,000 balance of the settlement will be paid by the district's liability insurer.

DiBenedetto and Board President Bradley Sparta both declined to comment to the New Jersey Herald on the settlement, saying it was a legal matter they could not discuss.

Sparta, however, indicated that any opinion held by members of the board regarding LoPresti's claims was superseded once the district's insurer reviewed them and agreed to assume the lion's share of the proposed payout. Under those circumstances, he said, settling became a strictly "business decision" to avoid the potentially greater costs of going to trial and losing.

The settlement with LoPresti comes a year after she and several other district administrators accused DiBenedetto of engaging in flagrantly unprofessional conduct that was said to have included explosive temper tantrums, rampant use of profanity, cronyism in his hiring decisions, and several instances of interfering with

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Trucking company discusses plans for Byram quarry

By KATIE MOEN
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BYRAM — The owner of a trucking and rigging company could be facing a unique set of challenges in trying to re-purpose a vacated tract of the old Tilcon Quarry, Planning Board officials say. Dominick Antonucci, president of Anty Trucking and Rigging, said during a recent meeting of the Planning Board that he would like to turn the lower part of the quarry — located on Lake Lackawanna Road just east of Route 206 — into a functional workspace for his

company. Daily operations at Anty Trucking and Rigging, Antonucci said, include packaging, warehousing, shipping and delivery of industrial products ranging from boilers to HVAC units. The 24.56-acre property, Antonucci said in his original site plan application, "is particularly well-suited for the proposed purpose." Planning Board Chairman George Shivas said the problem in developing the property may not lie in plans of future use, but rather in its history. Though the lower part of

the quarry has not been used for some time, Tilcon, a division of Tilcon New York Inc., still holds a valid township license for quarry operations on the upper tract. The property, owned by Byram Land Development, LLC., is also home to a large gravel easement driveway that leads to the quarry on the upper level and a fenced-in area that serves as the base of operations for Nordic Construction, township engineer Corey Stoner said. "The last of the quarry equipment that was down there (on the lower property) — an old scale house —

was removed within the last year," Stoner said. Now that quarry operations on the lower tract have ceased, however, a section of the township code that pertains to natural regrowth and reclamation could start to come into play. "My understanding is that when you quarry a property, it has to eventually be brought back to its natural state once quarrying operations have ceased," Shivas said, noting that restoration efforts could include re-introducing topsoil into areas of

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Convicted of indecent assault, Cosby could die in prison

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and CLAUDIA LAUER
Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. — After decades of whispers, lawsuits, investigations and close calls — and a multitude of women who lost hope anyone would ever believe their word against that of America's Dad — Bill Cosby could be headed to prison at age 80 for the remainder of his life. The comedian was convicted Thursday of drugging and molesting Temple University employee Andrea Constand at his suburban Philadelphia mansion 14 years ago in a verdict women's advocates called a turning point in the #MeToo movement that proved what Cosby's accusers had been saying all along — his nice-guy image was a sham. Lili Bernard, who said Cosby sexually assaulted her

before giving her a one-time role on "The Cosby Show" in 1992, became so emotional in the courtroom gallery that she accidentally banged her forehead on the bench in front of her. "I'm overcome with gratitude," Bernard, sobbing, said outside the courthouse. "I feel like I have to pinch myself. Am I awake? It's a miracle." The verdict, in the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era, sealed the spectacular late-in-life downfall of an entertainer who broke racial barriers in Hollywood on his way to TV superstardom as sweater-wearing, wisdom-dispensing Dr. Cliff Huxtable. It was the only criminal case to arise from a barrage of allegations from more than 60 women who said Cosby drugged and molested them over five decades but whose stories were often disbelieved

or ignored years before #MeToo put a spotlight on sexual misconduct by powerful men. The jury of seven men and five women deliberated 14 hours over two days before convicting Cosby of violating Constand in 2004. Constand, a 45-year-old Temple University women's basketball administrator, said Cosby knocked her out with three blue pills he called "your friends" and then penetrated her with his fingers as she lay immobilized, unable to resist or say no. Cosby claimed the encounter was consensual, saying he gave her the cold and allergy medicine Benadryl to relax. Cosby stared straight ahead as the verdict was read but moments later lashed out loudly at District Attorney Kevin Steele after

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AP Photo/Corey Perrine

Bill Cosby looks around before he leaves the Montgomery County Courthouse Thursday in Norristown, Pa. Cosby was convicted Thursday of drugging and molesting a woman in the first big celebrity trial of the #MeToo era.

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