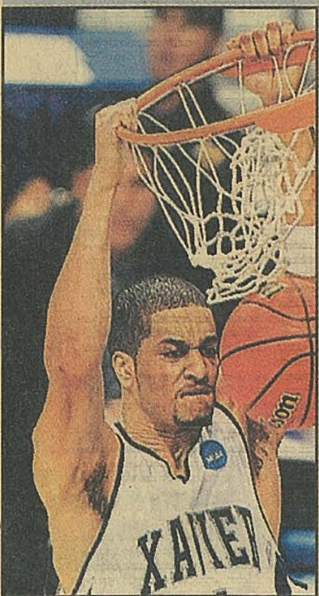


## Daily Break

Clinton, Obama  
both feel  
Democratic party  
will unify prior  
to election. A7



## SPORTS

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# NEW CASTLE NEWS

128th Year

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## Zambelli suing top designer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — In New Castle, the Fireworks Capital of America, one of the country's largest fireworks companies is accusing a top designer of breaking his contract to work for a cross-town competitor.

Zambelli Fireworks Internationale, which bills itself as the "First Family of Fireworks," and Pyrotecnico, which traces its history to 1889, have long been competitors.

Competition between the companies was always respectful, according

**FIREWORKS** Competition between the companies was always respectful, but Zambelli is now accusing Pyrotecnico and Matthew Wood of trying to destroy or damage its business.

to Zambelli's attorney, but Zambelli is now accusing Pyrotecnico and Matthew Wood of trying to destroy or damage its business.

The family-run Zambelli company offered Wood a job in 2001, taking him in "as a trusted trainee" and making him one of its "most creative pyrotechnicians and choreographers," according to the lawsuit filed Wednesday in U.S. District Court in Pittsburgh.

It accused Wood of exploiting trade secrets, saying he and Pyrotecnico cost it money, clients, market share and a loss of confidential information. The suit also alleges "Pyrotecnico

and Wood have acted ... with the intent of harming Zambelli and destroying and/or damaging Zambelli's business."

Wood did not return a phone message left yesterday at his Boca Raton, Fla., home. A message left for Pyrotecnico also wasn't returned.

According to Zambelli's suit, Wood choreographed Zambelli events

ZAMBELLI, PAGE A2

### CLOSER LOOK

STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN  
NEW CASTLE AND THE TRI-COUNTY YOUTH  
FOOTBALL LEAGUE FORCE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO STEP IN.

## TAKE OVER



## School district hires architect

**HIRED** The Neshannock school board sticks with its decision to hire a Hermitage firm to design renovations of the high school athletics department, library, windows and roof.

By DEBBIE WACHTER MORRIS  
dmorris@ncnewsonline.com

A Hermitage architectural firm was hired last night to design the Neshannock Township School District's sports complex and other improvements.

The school board voted 4-3 at a special meeting to hire the firm of HHSDB

# City workers face benefit changes

Non-union New Castle city employees will pay more for health insurance coverage under a proposed ordinance.

The increase is one of five initiatives directed at non-union personnel in the Act 47 recovery plan as a way to cut costs. City council introduced an ordinance last night to carry out the initiatives.

Ten employees, including the mayor and business administrator, will be affected. Union personnel are not affected by the changes because they are under contract.

Currently, personnel pay 5 percent for health insurance up to a certain maximum depending on the number of people covered by their policy. With the change, employees will pay 15 percent of the cost of their premium.

The other changes are:

- Reduction of paid holidays from 13 to 10. Holidays to be eliminated are Flag Day, the day after Thanksgiving and President's Day.

- Reduction of vacation to a

maximum of 20 days a year. Currently, employees are granted a maximum of 30 days after 25 or more years of service.

- Elimination of one personal day per year.

- A five-year freeze on longevity payments for current employees and elimination of longevity payments for anyone hired after the adoption by city council of the recovery plan, which was August 2008.

Council approved the hiring of Christian Hauser of Beaver County as a police officer, replacing patrolman Lawrence Herb who has resigned. Under the city's policy, Hauser must become a New Castle resident on or before Oct. 1.

Council also adopted an ordinance vacating a part of Market Street that lies directly south of the former Post Office Lunch. Paul Lynch, owner of the property, requested the change for a restaurant planning to open.

## City to refinance bond issue

New Castle City Council gave the green light last night to proceed with the refinancing of a bond issue.

Under resolutions approved by council, the city will hire the law firm of Cohen & Grigsby of Pittsburgh as bond counsel and Joe Muscatello as underwriter to refinance the 1997 pension bond issue of \$14.6 million.

The refinancing is being undertaken by the city to avoid a payment of approximately \$2.3 million to Lehman Brothers Special

Financing Inc. That's the amount the city would have to pay if it doesn't do the refinancing under a 1998 agreement between Lehman Brothers and the city.

The agreement allows Lehman Brothers to exercise an option to require the city to notify the firm as to whether it intends to refinance the bonds. The firm notified the city this month that it is exercising that option. Any savings realized by the city with the refinancing would be provided to Lehman Brothers.

## Architect

From page A1

meeting. He said Kimmel was not required to abstain from voting under the law, because neither she nor her immediate family will realize any financial gain from the firm's hiring.

"If I thought there was any kind of a conflict of interest I would not have voted," Kimmel said.

The board during the meeting also heard from John Pappas, a township resident of 33 years whose son has worked for Eckles. Pappas asked why an out-of-town firm was being hired when Eckles has done the district's projects for 30 years.

"I was shocked that the district, which had such a good relationship with Eckles ... would go out of town," he said. "I implore you to consider doing everything you can to keep the work in town, because we need it here."

The proposed renovations, expected to cost between \$6 million and \$8 million, call for complete revamping of the athletics facilities to include a new field house with restrooms, a weight room, concession stands and trainer's room.

It also would involve installation of artificial turf on the football field, resurfacing the track and upgrading bleachers, a new press box, and new practice, baseball and softball fields, scoreboards and sound system. Improvements also would be made to the high school gym, the library, roof and windows.

The project will be financed with the savings from refinancing the district's existing debt and a fund-raising initiative that would give donors naming rights to various parts of the renovation.

## Zambelli

From page A1

around the country, including a New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square.

Wood resigned in February saying, "At this point in my career, I feel there is a better direction for me to go," according to a copy of the letter filed with the suit.

He gave 11 days' notice, which violated an agreement he signed with Zambelli that he would give three months' notice, according to the suit. The agreement also said he would not work for a competitor for two years.

Zambelli warned Pyrotec-

nico about Wood's contract, but it pursued Wood anyway, the suit said.

Zambelli is asking the court to prevent Wood from working anywhere in the pyrotechnics business in the country for two years. Zambelli is seeking more than \$75,000 apiece from Wood and Pyrotecnico and unspecified lost revenue caused by the alleged contract breach.

Mark Willard, Zambelli's attorney, acknowledged the suit was unusual.

"The competition between these two companies has always been up-and-up," he said Thursday. "They're both good companies and are run by good people and this is out of character."

Last year, the Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency got the trademark for the "Fireworks Capital of America" from the U.S. Trademark Office because it is home to the two companies.

Zambelli, founded in 1893 by Italian immigrant Antonio Zambelli, has staged thousands of shows in the United States and abroad, including July Fourth celebrations, presidential inaugurations, Super Bowls, the Kentucky Derby, concerts and parades.

Pyrotecnico is about as old and similarly stages large fireworks shows around the country, including the 2004 Democratic National Convention, according to its Web site.

## Pee Wee

From page A1

resulted in a breakdown throughout the program. Among the problems included a lack of proper supervision; a shortage of quality coaches; inadequate funding; and on-field incidents. In addition, neither the district nor the school's coaching staff had a say in running the program.

"(Football is) taught from third grade to 12th grade," Bongivengo said. "It's a shock when they get into seventh grade, and all of the sudden it's totally different.

"It's consistency, and I think that's what we lack right now in our program."

An altercation at Taggart Stadium on Sept. 24, 2005, heightened discontent among the league's other teams. In a matchup of fifth- and sixth-grade teams from Laurel and New Castle Central, the contest was called in the fourth quarter with Laurel leading

26-0.

Police cited three Central coaches: Nelek Mitchell, Fred Smith and Corey Eggleston. Charges against Mitchell were dropped. Lawrence County District Attorney John Bongivengo declined to pursue charges against Smith. Eggleston pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct. The league then placed a lifetime ban on the three.

"It was an item of discussion among the league," Laurel coach Todd Fennick said. "I think it was a carryover from two years."

Bongivengo and board members Mark Kirkwood and Fred Mozzocio met with league officials to outline

concerns and solutions.

"I want to see the kids prosper," Bongivengo said. "I want to see them succeed. I want them to see what we do on the high school level."

If the school board approves the action during next month's regular meeting, Bongivengo will oversee the program. He will then assign a three-person committee to run daily operations.

Players will be held to the same standard as the high school program. Potential coaches must submit an application and supply clearances as outlined in the district's employment policy. The school board will approve all hirings.

## Public hearing scheduled

Area residents are invited to voice their opinions on Valley View Downs.

A public hearing has been scheduled for 9 a.m. on May 15 at the Mahoning Township Community Center on Route 224.

The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, who will award the license necessary to operate a local slots casino, will schedule a licensing hearing later this year in Harrisburg. The license is not expected to be awarded until this fall.

# Underage drinking crackdown on way

*Baldwin Borough to use \$11K grant for education, station officers in bars*

BY MARGARET HARDING  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

The newest decorator for Baldwin Borough's 15 bars is a seventh-grade girl.

The newest patrons will be two-man police teams working overtime



Winter

led by Kate Winter at Harrison Middle School and an enforcement effort by Baldwin police, Chief Michael Scott said.

to crack down on underage drinking.

The borough received a grant of a little more than \$11,000 to prevent underage drinking through an educational campaign

Winter's anti-drinking-and-driving poster design beat out more than 900 submissions from fellow Harrison students and will be displayed at Harrison, Baldwin High School and the borough's bars, Scott said.

"I was surprised because I didn't think I would win," said Winter, 12. The design also will appear on 2,000 mouse pads that will go to students at the high school.

"We just thought so many of the students have laptops — it would be a constant reminder to them," Scott said.

Winter's winning design features the slogan "Drink and drive and you won't survive" and a drawing of a tipped-over beer bottle.

The middle school's drug and alcohol prevention club selected 15 finalists, and school officials, including social worker Jean Williams, narrowed it down from there.

"I like the slogan," Williams said. "I think a rhyme sticks in your head."

The remainder of the grant, one of 72 distributed by the state Liquor

Control Board, will pay for officers to take license readers into bars and cite underage drinkers, Scott said.

About 60 people have been cited for underage drinking in the borough so far this year, up from 52 in 2009, Scott said.

"It's not a big problem," Scott said. "We think we should be more active in trying to educate the underagers."

Margaret Harding can be reached at mharding@tribweb.com or 412-380-8519.



SEAN STIPP | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

World War II veteran John Darr, along with other members of the Ligonier Valley Honor Guard, fires a rifle salute during a Veterans Day program on Thursday.

## Veterans touched by support

VETERANS • FROM B1

served as grand marshal.

"This is really is an amazing honor," said Lennon. 56 of



## Judge tosses suit over fireworks choreographer

He rules Zambelli didn't prove designer violated contract

BY BOBBY KERLIK  
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

A federal judge tossed out a lawsuit this week involving two rival New Castle fireworks companies feuding over a top fireworks choreographer.

Zambelli Fireworks Internationale claimed Matthew Wood violated a non-compete clause in his contract when he quit in 2008 to work for Pyrotecnico.

Although four customers left Zambelli for Pyrotecnico, including the Florida Marlins and the Hard Rock Cafe, U.S. District Judge Terrence F. McVerry on Tuesday ruled that did not prove Wood violated his contract.

"Zambelli has failed to introduce sufficient admissible evidence to enable a reasonable factfinder to

ful conduct by Wood, as opposed to the mere loss of his services or other competitive factors," McVerry wrote.

The judge also declined to award attorney fees to Zambelli.

Zambelli sued Wood and Pyrotecnico in March 2008, pitting two of the country's top-name pyrotechnic companies, both headquartered in New Castle, against each other. Pyrotecnico previously was dismissed from the lawsuit.

The lawsuit stated Zambelli hired Wood in 2001, and that he was one of the companies most creative pyrotechnicians and choreographers. Shows he conducted included a New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square and college football's Orange Bowl in Miami.

Bobby Kerlik can be reached at