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Inaugural Speech Delivered By President Passes Muster

By FRED ROSSI

For someone not known as an inspiring orator, President George W. Bush passed the test in his maiden speech to the country on Inauguration Day.

His address sounded less like a rehearsed campaign speech than an earnest attempt at unification by someone who assumed the presidency under unusual circumstances. Whoever wrote the speech deserves kudos, for it showed President Bush can effectively deliver words of import that sound like they come from his heart.

Meanwhile, television coverage provided images that undoubtedly led to lots of armchair mind-reading. What were the Bushes and Clintons thinking throughout the day? What was going through Al Gore's mind? What, besides suppressing tears of pride, was George Bush the elder thinking as he watched his son go through the day's rituals? What do President Bush's twin daughters think of all this?

The overly-helpful, often verbose net-

work anchors did their best to guide us through the day, even feeling the need to tell us who those familiar faces on our screen were, as if we might not recognize Jimmy Carter or Newt Gingrich or even the new president. The networks narrate too much instead of letting us simply observe; that's why I like C-SPAN.

The cameras did catch some Kodak moments. The embrace between the two George Bushes was touching, as was the new president's teary eyes after he was sworn in. It was nice to see ex-vice president Dan Quayle on the inaugural platform — as a guest and not an oath-taker! The greeting between Quayle and his former boss was a handshake as perfunctory as any between a boss and a former employee from years ago who just hadn't worked out all that well.

Funniest image: Those poor women, who likely spent lavishly on outfits for the big day, forced to don those clear plastic ponchos to protect them from the elements.

So, the Bill Clinton rollercoaster, with all of its thrills and chills, is over and we now enter the Bush years.

Fred Rossi covers Scotch Plains government.



ETIQUETTE

etiquette - Most of the rules that govern social relations between people are drummed into children by parents and teachers. These laws of behavior are called etiquette, defined as "the practices and forms prescribed by social convention or by authority."

The French, in the 16th century, coined the word etiquette which describes "the rules or notes that were stuck on a wall or post" (posted notices). To prove the point, the source of etiquette is the Latin word *etiqua*, "to stick."

The English word, ticket, is derived from *etiquette*, and to this day the idiom, that's the ticket, still means "quite correct." But if you violate the rules of etiquette, or worse yet the rules of the road, a policeman will probably stick it to YOU with a traffic ticket.

Fanwood PBA Thanks All Who Supported Annual Gift Drive

The Fanwood Policemen's Benevolent Association Local No. 123, the Fanwood Rescue Squad and the Fanwood Fire Department assisted Santa in delivering gifts to local Fanwood children on December 23, 2000.

This was the 26th year volunteers from all three organizations worked together to organize, package and deliver gifts to Fanwood residents. The event has been a great success in the past years and this year was no exception. Santa stopped at approximately 335 homes and delivered approximately 800 gifts to anxiously awaiting boys and girls.

The Fanwood P.B.A. Local No. 123 would like to extend its thanks and gratitude to Irma's Hallmark, A&P, Graphic Research and Qualco Inc. for their generous donations to help with this event.

The P.B.A. would also like to thank and support the Fanwood Rescue Squad, Fire Department, and all the volunteers who took the time to put a smile on the faces of some Fanwood children.

Marc Gottlick
Vice President
 Fanwood P.B.A. Local No. 123

Letters to the Editor

What Does Saving One Million Acres Really Mean In Terms of Open Space?

Governor Whitman speaks of saving one million acres as her legacy for New Jersey. But what does this really mean in terms of the big picture of saving open space and farmland in the State of New Jersey?

Fitzgerald's Legislative Manual states that there are 7,493 square miles of land area in New Jersey. Since there are 640 acres in a square mile of land area in New Jersey, since there are 640 acres in a square mile, that leaves us with about 4,795,520 acres of land area for the entire state.

It seems to me that the land for open space and farming should always exceed the land for development. But if one million acres is to be set aside for open space and farmland, that leaves 3,795,520 for development, hardly a legacy of open space and farmland preservation.

It seems to me that for every six acres there must be five acres put aside for open space for development. This means that a genuine legacy of preservation requires that about four million acres be set aside for open space and farmland.

To date, Governor Whitman claims

200,000 acres have been secured. This amounts to 5 percent of four million acres. Not so good.

If New Jersey amounted to a six-acre tract, Governor Whitman is saving 1 and 1/5 acres for open space and farmland and 4 and 4/5 acres for development. Not so good.

It is time for everybody to open their eyes to what's really going on in this state, before it is too late.

Ray Kalainikas
Manalapan

Reader Says Appointments In Westfield Were Based On 'Whim of Partisan Forces'

Since Mayor McDermott took office, Westfield has returned to a system of government according to the whim of partisan forces with little consideration for what is right or best for the residents of this town. Although as a candidate, Mayor McDermott indicated that he would not let his decisions be dictated by partisan politics, this is ap-

parently untrue.

The recent replacement of Michael Diamond, our Public Defender who previously served under both political parties, and Bill Jeremiah, our Town Attorney who was recently praised by the Mayor for his service, are inexplicable.

Clearly, these were not dismissals for cause. The only apparent explanation is that Mayor McDermott felt a need to make space for his political cronies: Bob Cockren, a longtime Republican chairman and, Christine Nugent, a Republican activist.

Anytime a politician bases decisions upon partisan politics and the need to reward political buddies, the public loses. It is a shame that our new Mayor has already begun to compromise the interests of Westfield residents to promote his own interests within the Republican political arena.

Deborah Young
Westfield

Donation of Aluminum Cans Goes Directly to Burn Foundation

The Westfield Fire Department Firemen's Mutual Benevolent Association (F.M.B.A.) Local No. 30, with the help of the people of Westfield, have been collecting aluminum cans for the St. Barnabas Burn Foundation now for 10 years. In that time span, monies from cans collected are in excess of \$25,000.

Your support, though, is still needed. St. Barnabas Burn Center operates the only certified burn treatment center in New Jersey. A 12-bed intensive care center unit that treats approximately 300 patients each year.

Twenty five percent of the patients are under the age of 18, and 15 percent are under the age of 2.

The Westfield Fire Department, or the F.M.B.A., does not profit from the collection of aluminum cans, as all of the monies collected go directly to St. Barnabas Burn Foundation. The monies from the collection are used for burn prevention education as well as patients' parent boarding and nursing training in burn care.

Since the program's inception in 1986, the total amount collected just from aluminum cans throughout the state of New Jersey exceeds one million dollars.

The collection of aluminum beverage

Women's Guild Plans Black History Tribute Saturday at St. John's

SCOTCH PLAINS - In recognition of Black History Month, the Women's Guild of St. John's Baptist Church will sponsor a Black Expo this Saturday, February 3, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the church.

Admission is free and the public is invited to attend. The church is located at 2387 Morse Avenue in Scotch Plains.

forts to bring e-government to New Jersey. Some of this has to go for capital improvements like better hardware and the latest software. Some must also be invested in human capital: we must pay competitive salaries to hire smart, aggressive and creative information technology managers.

And there's something else that Governor DiFrancesco can do, I will ask him to convene a Governor's Task Force on State Technology, led personally by a senior member of his staff. This task force should do several things, not the least of which is to have a report on his desk in 60 days on the state of the State's e-government capabilities. The task force should inventory the most advanced programs the State has in place, tell him what is working and what is not, advise him what can be replicated across agency lines, and what gaps the State cannot fill from existing programs.

In the private sector, productivity is measured in the bottom line. The bottom line about public agencies is that very few think critically about the nuts and bolts, bits and bytes that make any organization efficient, with customer convenience and service as its goal. This is a reality we can no longer accept.

Bringing e-government to New Jersey state agencies will improve efficiency — saving taxpayers money — and enhance customer service — restoring public confidence in government. I can think of no better way for our new Governor to begin his administration.

 Richard H. Bagger of Westfield represents the 22nd Legislative District in the State Assembly.

State Needs to Earmark Funds to Upgrade Technology As It Relates to E-Government

RICHARD H. BAGGER

The prolonged conflict over Florida's electoral votes compelled countless Americans to debate whose votes should be counted. Dimpled, hanging and swinging chads gave late night comedians endless fodder. The election, without ever intending to, dramatized a deeply frustrating problem that afflicts not only Florida election boards, but New Jersey state government.

The problem is simple. Government technology is often ancient, inefficient and unsatisfactory. We would not have been watching the drama unfold as it did in Florida if every county there had voting machines. While almost all New Jersey counties do use voting machines, very few governments in New Jersey have the technology they need to operate efficiently or to serve their customers — the taxpayers who foot the bills — properly.

Here is a true life story. There is an agency that issues licenses to about 100,000 of our citizens. Its "database" consists of index cards, and its "search engines" are staff people. One does not have to work for Microsoft to appreciate how ludicrously low-tech this is. Information is not stored on the basis of names, last or first. It is not stored using dates of birth. It is not stored using Social Security numbers. It is stored according to the number on the application that the original applicant filled out. No rhyme. No reason. Nonsense.

This may be extreme, but my experience is that there are many stories like this in New Jersey state government. It does not have to be this way. In Georgia, citizens can apply for permits or licenses through the state's Web page. They can pay for them with a credit card.

In Kansas, business owners can take care of taxes on-line and e-mail messages to revenue department staff. In Utah, by next year the state will be allowing its residents to use their computers to pay taxes, renew driver's licenses, and download applications for unemployment, welfare and health benefits. We could be like these states; we should be better than these states, but our steps towards e-government have been inadequate.

Last year, the Legislature voted to allow citizens to pay court fines with credit cards. The credit card was created nearly a half century ago; the Division of Motor Vehicles is just now allowing people to use them to renew driver's licenses.

People for Animals Seeks Homes for Cats

SCOTCH PLAINS - People for Animals, a local animal rescue group, has announced that loving homes are being sought for more than 80 cats which were found living in deplorable conditions in a Scotch Plains home last week. All the cats are under two years of age.

In addition to homes, monetary contributions are requested to help care for the animals, which were discovered malnourished and in need of medical care. For further information, please call People for Animals at (908) 964-6887 or (908) 688-1073.



Each one of this devoted Westfield

High Tech Task Force Aims to Attack And Prosecute On-Line Criminals

As we embark upon this new century, law enforcement continues to face significant challenges, not the least of which is the investigation and prosecution of individuals responsible for committing crimes through the use of computers.

Today, the same electronic marketplace that offers members of the public unprecedented access to a global market also presents the challenge for law enforcement to ensure that this marketplace is safe and secure.

In order to meet this challenge, law enforcement must recognize that computers are utilized in a variety of roles to facilitate crime and that each of these roles raises novel investigative and prosecutorial issues thus making it of particular concern to law enforcement administrators that those engaged in the detection and apprehension of computer criminals receive appropriate training.

Also, since computer crime renders conventional law enforcement boundaries virtually meaningless, emphasis must be placed, as well, on effective coordination of effort. Absent such meaningful coordination, law enforcement agencies are likely to conduct redundant

investigations or disrupt undercover operations of other agencies.

It is for these reasons, among others, that the Union County Police Chiefs and I have agreed to establish the High Tech Task Force ("Task Force"). The principal goal of the Task Force will be to coordinate the efforts of Union County law enforcement to protect our citizens against "on-line outlaws" who engage in a variety of criminal activity including: illegal sales of guns and controlled dangerous substances, promotion of gambling, Internet fraud, cyberstalking, pornography and child sexual exploitation. In this venture, the Task Force will apply time-tested investigative techniques to the realm of cyberspace in order to better detect, arrest and prosecute those involved in the illegitimate utilization of computers.

The Task Force will also participate in the education of our citizens to prevent or minimize the risk of their victimization.

Thomas V. Manahan
Prosecutor
 Union County