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A Bicentennial contrast: Hopewell vs. Massachusetts

By J. STRYKER MEYER
Staff Writer

Hopewell Township's bad experiences so far with Bicentennial problems form an odd contrast to that of other small but famous spots.

Next year, four to six million people are going to visit the area where George Washington crossed the Delaware. But small towns like Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts have already faced the bulk of their Bicentennial problems with a lot less trauma than Hopewell expects.

Hopewell Committeeman Christopher F. Bannister notes with worry that New Jersey officials are advertising Washington's Crossing and the park named for it as a prime Bicentennial attraction.

By contrast, Concord and Lexington were able to convince their state government to de-emphasize the two famous small towns.

Paul J. Flynn, the town manager of Concord and Walter O'Connell the town manager of Lexington said that if Massachusetts had advertised their towns like New Jersey has done they would have had to declare their towns disaster areas, during their April 14th celebration.

They said the crowds would have overwhelmed them.

In Concord, Flynn hired 200 regular police officers and 500 volunteers to handle 125,000 people for the April celebration of "The Shot Heard Round The World", which President Gerald Ford attended.

On December 26, 1976 the N.J. Bicentennial Commission is estimating that 200,000 people, including Ford, will visit the reenactment of Washington Crossing the Delaware.

At Lexington they had a crowd of 60,000 April 19 and 400 National Guard troops controlling traffic. Without the Guard, O'Connell said, the policing would have cost Lexington \$300,000 for the one day.

Lexington's population is 30,000 and their budget is \$8 million for 1976, compared to Hopewell Township's \$1.8 million budget and a population of 12,000.

Both Flynn and O'Connell said they had "excellent working relations with the state" though they had to work for more than three years to get that cooperation.

In nine months the Bicentennial hordes will begin to traips into Hopewell Township. The cost for police, traffic control, emergency medical

and sanitation facilities runs from \$750,000 to \$1 million, according to Hopewell police chief Mathew J. Maloney.

Federal, state and county Bicentennial officials say it's the responsibility of Hopewell Township officials to find and define the problems.

Hopewell Township officials don't want to tax residents to pay for problems that are going to arise from a state park area.

And it only seems to make matters worse that all of this is happening in an election year.

For example, Assemblyman Karl Weidel who is running for reelection in November, said, on July 29, that it was ridiculous for township officials to expect any money from the state.

Eleven days later he introduced a bill to give \$500,000 to "Bicentennial impacted" areas.

Township Mayor Michael Arcieri, who is running for Weidel's seat, is wondering aloud about Weidel's proposed bill. He said that he's going to go to Washington Sept. 9 to talk to

Rep. Helen Meyner and others to get whatever money he can.

Publicly, the township committee has threatened to sue federal and state governments for financial aid, yet privately Arcieri has told township attorneys such a suit would be used only if nothing else works, according to sources.

H. David Earling, assistant director of the N.J. Bicentennial Celebration Commission said, "I wish they'd sit down and settle the problems, with our help, rather than stand up and throw around wild rhetoric."

The township committee has called for a bicentennial problems meeting Monday night. Earling said he hasn't been invited to it.

He also said that no one from Hopewell Township ever approached the Bicentennial office asking for help or aid until last week when Phyllis D'Autrehey, a newly appointed temporary director of the Hopewell Township Bicentennial commission, talked to him last week.

Rep. Thompson lauds new Anne Thompson role

When Rep. Frank Thompson, D-Trenton, first met Anne Thompson in the early '60s she was just finished Howard Law School in Washington, D.C.

Although she hadn't even begun her career, many of her professors were already predicting she would go far. Rep. Thompson was also impressed and he helped her get a job with the National Labor Relations Board in Chicago.

Metal detector nabs armed man

Police arrested a 24-year-old Trenton man yesterday after he tried to enter the Mercer County Jail carrying a concealed meat cleaver and a set of wooden sticks used by karate fighters.

Robert Neal, of the 500 block of Mercer Street, was taken into custody after he touched off the metal detector at the county jail yesterday morning, police said.

Neal was searched by sheriff's officers and was found carrying a six-by-four inch meat cleaver and a set of nonchocka sticks. Police said they were unsure of what Neal was going to do with the items.

She did "a spectacular job" in Chicago, Thompson said, "and then low and behold she meets and marries my old friend Dr. William Thompson and moves to Trenton."

She also moved a step closer to a new job Thursday when Gov. Brendan T. Byrne nominated her for the post of Mercer County Prosecutor. If she is confirmed by the Senate she will be the first black woman to hold such a position in the state.

There is little doubt about how the congressman feels about this constituent of his. "She's probably the greatest import we've ever had..."

"I give Gov. Byrne a major plus on this appointment," Thompson added.

Both Byrne and Anne Thompson, who is currently a municipal judge, have received some attention over the appointment because of the rarity of a black woman being appointed to such a position.

However, while some newspapers and radio stations were quick to label her the "first" black woman prosecutor, it should be noted that she is not quite the only one.

Almeta A. Johnson, also a black woman, was appointed Cleveland's city police prosecutor on March 1. However, her job is only to screen possible felony cases. The county prosecutors office handles the court cases.

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