

N.J. officials say they can handle Crossing crowds

New Jersey's historic reenactments and special events to honor the "10 Crucial Days" of the American Revolution starting Christmas Day are expected to draw crowds but state officials say they can handle them.

The state Bicentennial Commission yesterday announced detailed plans for the commemoration of the events that climaxed in the Battles of Trenton and Princeton.

Former Gov. Robert B. Meyner and Walter T. Peters, chairmen of the Bicentennial Commission, reassured officials and residents of Hopewell Township and the Washington Crossing area that state and local officials would have no difficulty in accommodating the crowds. People in the area had complained that they would be overwhelmed by visitors and traffic problems.

Meyner said special parking areas and shuttle bus service to the major events are to be included in crowd-handling plans.

HE WAS ASKED if there might not be a reverse problem — small crowds because people might be weary of the Bicentennial year. "I'm afraid I'm not in touch with the masses," Meyner answered, but he added that the history buffs he knows are very interested.

The events will start at 2 p.m. Christmas Day at Washington Crossing Park, with showman St. John Terrell leading 500 troops across the Delaware in a reenactment of Washington's Crossing. Terrell and a few friends have staged the crossing every Christmas for 32 years, with Terrell portraying George Washington.

Normally, crowds for Terrell's reenactment have been rather small, but this year are expected to be much larger.

President Gerald Ford, President-elect Jimmy Carter and the governors of the 13 original states have been invited. Some governors have accepted, but Ford and Carter have not answered.

Peters and Meyner said the combination of cold weather and the Christmas holiday season probably would keep the crowds well below the huge throngs that watched reenactments of the battles of Lexington and Concord near Boston in April.

PETERS SAID the state has readied a series of contingency plans with the state police and involved municipalities.

Gov. Brendan T. Byrne said he was sure the program here would help people appreciate New Jersey's contribution to the winning of the Revolution.

"The paperwork of the Revolution was done in Phila-

delphia, the critical fighting was done in New Jersey," Byrne said.

Peters said close to 1,500 people from as far away as Wisconsin and Florida will take part in the military reenactments. He said the 10-day program will cost about \$140,000, most of it paid with federal grants.

In addition to the historic recreations, the program will include a series of films, plays, concerts, ballet and opera performances in the Trenton War Memorial Building, State Museum Auditorium and Inn of Trenton.

AMONG THE EVENTS following the Crossing itself on Christmas Day:

On Dec. 26, from 8 a.m. to noon, 600 troops will follow the nine-mile route from Washington Crossing to Trenton which will end at the State House with a noon commemoration on the First Battle of Trenton and a review of troops.

From Dec. 27 to Jan. 3, there will be military exhibits and restaged encampments at Washington Crossing, Trenton and Princeton. They'll be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On Jan. 2 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., the Second Battle of Trenton will be restaged along a route from Lawrenceville to Mill Hill Park in Trenton.

The Battle of Princeton will be recreated Jan. 3 at 8 a.m. by more than 1,200 British and American "troops" at the Princeton Battlefield.

Among the major cultural events planned are:

Dec. 26: Greater Trenton Symphony Orchestra concert of Battle of Trenton Symphony by James Hewitt, 8 p.m., War Memorial Building.

Dec. 27: The Newark Boys Chorus will present a special program, 8 p.m., War Memorial Building.

Dec. 28: The Princeton Ballet Company in a Program of six dances, 8 p.m., War Memorial Building.

Dec. 29: The George Street Playhouse will perform the choral work "Ballad for Americans," 8 p.m., State Museum Auditorium.

Dec. 30: The Cherry Hill Wind Symphony will present "Musical Americana," 8 p.m., Inn of Trenton.

Jan. 1: The Pro Arte Chorale will present a concert, including a special work commissioned for the celebration called "Crossing" by Larry Widdoes, 8 p.m., War Memorial Building.

Jan. 2: The New Jersey Opera will present "Fidelio," 8 p.m., War Memorial Building.

Jan. 3: The New Jersey Ballet Company will perform "Off to the Sea Once More," celebrating the state's maritime heritage, 8 p.m., War Memorial Building.



An industrial warehouse fire at Oakland Street sent clouds of heavy, black smoke billowing into the sky over the western section of Trenton this morning.

Spectacular dawn fire destroys city warehouse

By ED CHELLAND
And LEE PASTERNAK
Staff Writers

Exploding chemicals fed a spectacular dawn warehouse fire today at the rear of 102 Oakland Street in the western section of Trenton.

Steel girders twisted as the flames roared through the roof and the length of the L-shaped, 120x50-foot brick and corrugated metal storage building owned by the Cheney Flashing Company of 623 Prospect Street.

Chemicals burned and accelerated the 6:30 a.m. fire that also charred a truck, a towing motor and a station wagon.

Trenton and suburban residents saw a black column of smoke about 200 feet high laced with bright flames rise from the scene before some 30 firemen led by Battalion Chief Ralph Capria brought the blaze under control at 7:30 a.m.

Firemen were on the scene until afternoon as Deputy Fire Chief Vincent Pompei sought the cause of the blaze. No estimate of damage was available.

The warehouse, located on Cheney's 1.4-acre property off Prospect Street, is leased to the Novagard Company of 835 New York Avenue. The firm manufactures sealants and adhesives for insulated glass used in the building trades and also hotmelt products.

Novagard now trades as Norton Sealants, since its sale Oct. 29 to the Norton Company of Worcester, Mass.

Two employees had been in the warehouse at 6 a.m., a fire department spokesman said. Less than a half hour later, thick smoke rose over the building as the roof ignited. An alarm was turned in by Russell Pickens, 49, of 480 West State Street, who spotted the smoke as he arrived to work at the nearby Community Guidance Center's Crossroads project building.

The fire consumed bags of pigments, fillers and plasticizers in powder form in 50-pound bags on pallets, said Edward F. Kutch, who founded Novagard 13 years ago.

The New York Avenue plant will continue manufacturing with replaced ingredients, Kutch said.

One of the plant employees, John Lanning, had left the warehouse at 6 a.m. with a truckload of products to be delivered to a customer. Lanning had parked his new station wagon in-

side the warehouse. It was destroyed in the blaze.

Another employee, Frank Jefferson, who was with Lanning, had driven to the New York Avenue plant to report the two had discovered a door to the warehouse had been forced during the night.

The two structures that make up the warehouse, built 30 years ago, total some 30,000 square feet. The building's assessment was \$30,500, according to the city tax assessor.



Landlord J.A. Peterson has turned on the heat in his property at 214 Academy Street . . . but the front door still is broken.

Two officials chided for use of state cars

By RAMONA SMITH
Staff Writer

The state official responsible for keeping stateworkers from commuting to their jobs at taxpayers' expense is himself driving to work in a state car, governmental gadfly Dr. Oscar Sussman charged yesterday.

And the man empowered to investigate the complaint should let someone else do it because he, too, drives a state car to work, Sussman claimed.

Sussman, the feisty director of state consumer health services, has been complaining about commuting in state cars ever since his own state

car was taken away from him.

He said he will ask the state Executive Commission on Ethical Standards today to investigate Edward A. Hofgesang, the state budget director.

HOFGESANG, Sussman charged, is in a "conflict of interest" because

he is assigned to enforce a ban on commuting in state cars which he himself fails to observe.

The chairman of the ethical standards commission John A. Waddington, should disqualify himself from the case because he also commutes in a state car, Sussman said.

Robert Atkins, chief of the state motor pool, confirmed that state cars are issued to both Hofgesang and Waddington, the state motor vehicle director. The two men are allowed full discretion in use of the cars, Atkins said.

Sussman suggested the ethics commission also might want to consider Gov. Brendan T. Byrne's use of a state helicopter to pick up a paddle tennis partner in West Orange and fly to Connecticut for a game. Top officials aren't setting a good example for other state workers, Sussman charged.

Atkins said Waddington, who lives in Salem County, averages 4,000-4,500 miles a month in his state car, which he used to inspect motor vehicle stations.

Hofgesang, who lives in Princeton, drives 700-750 miles a month in his state car, which he takes to speaking engagements and other functions, Atkins said. The motor pool chief said he had no information on whether the two officials sometimes use the state cars purely to commute.

Dugan blames Byrne for delay in appointing Thornton to post

By JIM GOODMAN
Staff Writer

Is Gov. Brendan T. Byrne, not Sen. Joseph P. Merlino, the reason why Eileen Thornton's appointment to head the state Division on Women is being held up?

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman James Dugan put the blame on Byrne's office yesterday. Dugan read a note from a Byrne administration official that he claimed backed him up.

On Monday, members of the Judiciary Committee, the Byrne administration and others familiar with the controversy all said Merlino was using senatorial courtesy to delay the Thornton appointment.

Dugan yesterday read a note that he said was dated Sept. 13 and said John Degnan, Byrne's

executive secretary, had asked Dugan to delay Senate confirmation.

Dugan said the note was signed by Jacob Toporek, Byrne's appointments secretary. Both Degnan and Toporek said they never recall authorizing or writing such a note.

"I'd like to see the note if there is one," said Toporek.

Meanwhile, Merlino met briefly with Mrs. Thornton, a resident of the Mercerville section of Hamilton township, and reportedly told her the appointment would be confirmed next month.

Jerry English, Byrne's assistant counsel, and other administration officials, said the Thornton appointment was delayed briefly while routine security investigations were carried out but those investigations are complete.

Landlord gets 'heat' from city, summons

By DAVID BITTAN
Staff Writer

The city put the heat on the landlord and he responded by turning on the heat.

City housing inspectors, answering a tenant complaint, issued a summons to J.A. Peterson of the 200 block of Bellevue Avenue. P charged that Peterson had failed to provide heat for eight or nine tenants in the apartment building at 214 Academy Street.

He was supposed to appear in Municipal Court tomorrow afternoon if the heat wasn't turned on.

A CHECK at the building this morning showed that Peterson had responded to the summons. The heat was turned on yesterday.

And, this morning, Peterson showed up at the building with a carpenter.

"They (the tenants) tear apart the place as soon as I fix it up," Peterson said.

But his tenants tell a different story.

The heat didn't come soon enough for Cynthia Black, a tenant who complained her heat has been turned off since last month. And she has a 10-month-old baby and is four months pregnant with a second child.

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