

UP TO \$675 IN COUPON SAVINGS TODAY

Morris Hills loses bid for state title

High School Football/B4

Daily Record

Mendham girls cross country advances to Meet of Champions. In Sports/B4



TOTAL TAO

East Hanover hosts Taoist ceremonies rarely seen outside confines of China

LORRAINE ASH @LORRAINEVASH

EAST HANOVER — Wu Cheng Zhen, the first female abbot of the famed Changchun Taoist Temple in Hubei Province, China, led ceremonies Saturday at the Ramada Conference Center that typically only take place in the mountains of Hubei Province, China.

At “The Living Tao” event, the sweet-tempered abbot and her disciple, Chi Wei, performed ornate ceremonies using a gong, ancient relics, multiple altars, fire and chanting.

Together, they invoked gods and evoked feelings of release and peace in the 75 people gathered there. Some were of Chinese ancestry. Others were not.

“I have prepared this for 10 years,” said Mei Jin Lu of East Hanover, a student of the abbot for 18 years and a teacher of the Eastern spiritual arts in Morris County. “I have been trying to find a way to help you — and I’m part of you — to get rid of stress and unhappiness and breathe goodness.”

“I have invited them to come here,” she added, “to provide the means, the magic, the ceremony for you to get rid of all the things that prevent you from moving forward.”

Lu, who is affiliated with the Mt. Tabor Healing Center, said that for all the complexity of the colorful ceremonies, the idea behind them is simple: We are all born with innate kindness. Unkind things happen to us and we forget our birthright. Through the ceremony and the teachings, the Tao reminds us of our true nature.

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PHOTOS BY BOB KARP/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
“The Living Tao,” presented by the Mount Tabor Healing Center, is a day devoted to ancient Taoist healing principles led by Wu Cheng Zhen, the first female abbot of the famed Changchun Taoist Temple.

Road dispute set for court

Neighbor: Official got preferred deal

PEGGY WRIGHT
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CHESTER TWP. — A dispute between the township attorney and his Mile Drive neighbor over repairs of potholes and crumbling pavement on their private road has led to accusations — which township officials say are untrue — that the attorney receives township-paid services to maintain his property.

Mayor William Cogger said the allegations against longtime Township Attorney John H. Suminski are “lies” being made in a lawsuit against himself as mayor and the Township Council by Mile Drive residents John and Marian West, who live two houses away from Suminski and his wife, Linda.

The Wests claim that Suminski has behaved in a bullying manner for the past two years about maintenance on the private road on which five houses are situated. They say they have video and photographic proof of township frontloaders and equipment on the cul-de-sac property that Suminski owns, and that a special township counsel and the Morris County Prosecutor’s Office declared their accusations unfounded or unsubstantiated without speaking to them.

“Who made Mr. Suminski commander-in-chief of the street?” Marian West said.

Her husband said: “If the township is going to extend a special courtesy to the township attorney, why not to all the residents on the street? And if there’s an investigation, how can it be completed without talking to the people who made the complaint?”

John Suminski said the allegations are false — even to the point of defamation — and that he is wondering what he did to deserve the “animus” of the Wests.

The mayor said: “Mr. West and Mr. Suminski are in what I would call a neighbor conflict. I believe that what Mr. West is saying in his lawsuit are lies. Mr. Suminski is one of the most ethical men I’ve ever met.”

In response to a complaint made in December 2013 by the Wests’ lawyer, Frederick Norton, who is Marian West’s father, the Prosecutor’s Office looked into an allegation that the Chester Township Road Department on Dec. 24, 2013, repaired the road in front of Suminski’s house and used a dump truck and other equipment to fill the cul-de-sac property that Suminski owns with finely chopped stone.

In a letter closing out the case this past June, Assistant Morris County Prosecutor John McNamara Jr. stated that no criminal

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PEGGY WRIGHT/STAFF PHOTO
John West, a resident of the private road Mile Drive in Chester Township, points to a depression in the road in front of his house. He is embroiled in a dispute with his neighbor, township attorney John Suminski, and the township council over maintenance of the road.

Help others enjoy the season by giving to Operation Holiday

MATT HARPER
SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

Each year it seems talk about the holidays begins earlier and earlier.

For many that means thoughts of happy times shared with family, generous gift giving and thankfulness for whom and what we have in our lives. For other families in Morris County, however, thoughts remain focused on stretching a paycheck, finding a first or second job, or hoping they will have a home to spend the holidays in.

For the 43rd year, Operation Holiday is here to bring attention to those families who are struggling the most and in the need of a helping hand, especially at this time of year.

For many years now, Daily Record readers have



played an essential role in the success of Operation Holiday. We’re hoping that Daily Record readers will continue to show their generosity in helping the needy, individuals and families who are victims of heart-rending circumstances, including illness, poverty, homelessness and domestic abuse.

Since 1971, Operation Holiday has raised more than \$2.8 million, and last year donations totaled more than \$132,000. As a result, with the help of local individ-

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