

SUNDAY PRESS

SINCE 1879

WEATHER

Today, sunny and breezy, with highs in the 40s. Partly cloudy, warmer on Monday. **A2**

TEMPERATURES

BREAKFAST **31°** LUNCH **39°** DINNER **38°**

LOCAL FRONT

ST. PATRICK'S MASS PRELUDE TO PARADE.
AA1

LOCAL FRONT

SOME DRIVERS SKEPTICAL OF PARKWAY SLOWDOWN.
AA1

IMPACT

NEEDLE PROGRAM TARGETS HIV/AIDS.
C1

SPORTS

REGION 6 WRESTLING.
H1

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COUPONS
\$87.45
INSIDE

SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 2008

A GANNETT NEWSPAPER

PRICE \$1.75

Assailants are free, but not the victim

Bar owner lost all in robbery

By ED JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

Hans Letsche sits in his motorized wheelchair waiting to die, he says. Time passes slowly for a man who is doing a life sentence, he adds.

Letsche is already 22 years into that sentence, but he is not a criminal; he is the victim of a crime that is long relegated to the past.

It is a case whose aftermath raises questions of whether the criminal justice system and the civil courts can truly achieve justice, or what justice is, many involved with the case said.

The case that condemned Letsche to life in an extended care facility was adjudicated years ago. The men who attacked and robbed him finished their prison terms and now go about their lives. One of them is in Asbury Park, the other may be in Ohio, records show. Each is free to move about. Their lives are, again, their own.

But for Letsche, time hangs heavy, a mix of tedium and monotony. He said his days now blend together on the first floor of the John L. Montgomery Care Center in Freehold Township. It is world where wheelchairs glide the halls and the TV room is one of the social centers. It is a place of routine, Letsche said. A place where there is little to differentiate one day from the next.

He has now accepted that he will never leave

See **Victim**, Page A8



Hans Letsche, 75, sits in his wheelchair at the John L. Montgomery Care Center in Freehold Township.
(STAFF PHOTO: ED JOHNSON)



Tamara Brown (below) hugs Angel, now 8, a child she is in the process of adopting. Above, Angel's necklace has an angel and a ring, given to her by Brown. The ring's three stones have a special meaning, Brown says: "Her past is gone, her present is secure and her future is bright." Angel, who had been in foster care, enjoys her teddy bear and writing letters (right). (STAFF PHOTOS: MICHAEL SYPNIEWSKI)

Fostering love and care

The Heart Gallery of New Jersey is a nonprofit group dedicated to raising awareness about foster children available for adoption by using a traveling photo gallery of portraits of the children. The Asbury Park Press is publishing five photos and short biographies today (see page A3) and then will publish a photo every day from the gallery in hopes of finding the children adoptive parents.



By ALEX BIESE
STAFF WRITER

EATONTOWN — This past April, Tamara Brown received a very special surprise for her birthday: a 7-year-old, bright-eyed girl named Angel, looking for a place to call home.

Angel, who had been in the state child care system for half of her life, was the ideal present for Brown, who was seeking to adopt.

"It feels great," said Angel, with a big smile, on having her own home, bedroom and fam-

ily. "I just can't stand myself. That's all I have to say."

Brown, 42, is a design engineer for New Jersey Natural Gas Co. in Wall and has worked for the company for nearly 20 years. Although she

"knew, obviously, that there were kids out there for adoption," she was moved to act, she said, after learning about the Heart Gallery of New Jersey in 2005, when she saw an exhibit set up at

See **Adoptions**, Page A3

APP.com ON THE WEB: Visit our Web site, www.app.com, and click on this story for a link to: Heart Gallery of New Jersey.



A display at New Jersey Natural Gas in Wall features photos provided by the Heart Gallery of New Jersey of children awaiting adoption. The program was started in 2005.

Cops warned to give more traffic tickets

PBA, in contract dispute, says action is prohibited

By ERIK LARSEN
COASTAL MONMOUTH BUREAU

Some Ocean Township police officers have been challenged to increase the number of traffic tickets they write per month and admonished when specific goals are not met, a practice the local PBA contends is a quota system prohibited under New Jersey law.

Last week, Police Benevolent Association Local 57 filed a grievance with Police Chief Antonio V. Amodio Jr. over one of two warnings — issued Jan. 31 and Feb. 6 — that department supervisors had placed in the personnel files of two patrolmen.

The grievance comes amid hostile negotiations between the police union and township management over a new 3- to 4-year labor contract for rank-and-file officers. The

union has been without a contract since Jan. 31.

In virtually identical "performance notices," veteran Patrolmen Les Laffan and Doug Willms were reminded that motor vehicle stops are an integral part of police work and in many instances serve to expose more serious crimes.

Laffan had issued 43 summonses in 2006 and 47 in 2007. Willms had issued 35 summonses in 2006 and 49 in 2007.

"Everything from parking violations on up, these officers were only writing an average of 3½ summonses per month, 40-some summonses per year, which we felt was completely unacceptable," Amodio said. "The standard — and I specify standard; it's not a quota — the standard currently

See **Tickets**, Page A5

SEA LEVEL RISING: OUR COAST AT RISK



Erosion following a coastal storm threatens homes in the Brant Beach section of Long Beach Township, in this view from two years ago. (PRESS FILE PHOTO)

Report: Barrier islands imperiled

By TODD B. BATES
ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER

Imagine some barrier islands in the region disintegrating and bird populations at the Jersey Shore in serious trouble.

Both could happen eventually if sea-level rise accelerates, which is expected, according to a draft federal report.

"I would say definitely, the water's rising," said George R. Dempsey Jr., a decades-long Manasquan resident and now mayor of the low-lying borough.

"If we get a hurricane within 80 miles offshore, it could do quite a bit of erosion," and "I wouldn't even want to think what a direct hit would do," he said.

Stephen P. Leatherman, a well-known coastal scientist, largely criticized

the report.

"It is a lot speculation and very little data, and this whole thing about barrier islands disintegrating — I don't see any data, I don't see models. It's just pure speculation," said Leatherman, a professor who directs the International Hurricane Research Center at Florida International University in Miami.

The draft report, "Coastal Sensitivity to Sea

See **Sea level**, Page A9

Access advocates decry beach plan

Approval of five homes would mean loss of bathhouse

By TRISTAN J. SCHWEIGER
TOMS RIVER BUREAU

POINT PLEASANT BEACH — As developments go, this would be a small one: just five single-family homes.

But to some local residents, a proposal to subdivide a portion of the Ris-

den's Beach property into five residential lots is the latest chapter in a battle that's been fought for decades up and down the Jersey Shore. To these advocates of beach access, the potential loss of a parking lot, bathhouse and snack bar on the property would

mean one more threat to the public's ability to enjoy sand and surf.

"Our main concern is that we're once again being put in a position where we're losing a very historical area of the Jer-

See **Risden's**, Page A6



The bathhouse and snack bar at Risden's Beach in Point Pleasant Beach would be demolished if a five-lot subdivision is approved. (STAFF PHOTO: BOB BIELK)

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