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ON THE WEB



Local news, sports and more, only a click away.

Wednesday



Photos By Daniel Freel/New Jersey Herald

Phil Samuel-Siegel casts a vote in the Newton school board elections at the District 5 polling station inside the firehouse in Newton on Tuesday. For complete results district-by-district, see Pages A4 and A5.

Hardyston's Boffa recalled

School board president is 2nd member to be ousted in N.J. history

By **ROBERTA FUGATE**
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HARDYSTON — Hardyston school board President Marbeth Boffa lost 75 percent of the vote and her seat, making her only the second school board member recalled in New Jersey history.

"This recall, though an arduous process, serves to remind all elected officials that the will of their constituency must be a prime consideration in their decision making," said Sue Murdock, a member of the recall committee.

Newcomer Anita Collins was elected by a similar margin to fill the vacancy left by Boffa. "I'm so looking forward to beginning on the board and to be part of this new future of Hardyston for the



BOFFA
Recalled by Hardyston voters

children. They are what counts." "We would like to thank all the Hardyston residents who supported the petition and ultimately voted for the recall," Murdock said.

"We would like to thank Mrs. Boffa for all the positive contributions she has made to our school district, as both a teacher and school board member."

Boffa became the target of residents' disapproval because she was school board president when the board voted to rescind a popular school principal's contract, just a month after it gave him a contract extension.

In June 2007, board members voted 6-3 to rescind the contract of Dominic Festante, principal of Hardyston Elementary School. The month before, the board voted 8-0, with one abstention, to

See **HARDYSTON**, Page A4

Fredon OKs \$5M in school projects

By **BRUCE A. SCRUTON**
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FREDON — By a thin, 26-vote margin, residents in Fredon approved a \$5 million bond resolution on Tuesday that will add four classrooms and make major renovations to the school.

The district's proposed \$4.78

million budget was approved by a wider margin, 319 in favor to 239 against. The vote on the referendum was 296 in favor to 270 against.

Tuesday's approval was good news to Superintendent Sal Constantino, who said many people worked hard to gain

See **FREDON**, Page A4



A Sparta parent casts a vote during a school board election at the polling station inside Mohawk Avenue School.

Sparta votes for change

By **SETH AUGENSTEIN**
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SPARTA — The election of three newcomers to the Board of Education on Tuesday will swing its majority — and ostensibly change the way the board is run.

Jennifer Dericks, Adam Dempsey and Philip Guarraia were elected in a strong showing in the contentious, eight-way race on Tuesday night, and the budget passed with more than 60 percent of the vote. Dericks was the leader with 1,844 votes, followed by Dempsey at 1,819 and Guarraia at 1,616, according to unofficial results.

Incumbents Michael Schiavoni, who finished last in the race, and Richard Sullivan were removed after only one term on the board. Marina

McBain, Gunter Frauenpreis and Christine Thomas were the other losing candidates. McBain, who finished fourth, received 1,349 votes — but she still finished 267 votes behind Guarraia.

Dericks, Dempsey and Guarraia were endorsed by the grassroots group founded late last year called Citizens for a Quality Sparta Education. The group launched a successful public campaign against the incumbents: Schiavoni, the board president, and Sullivan, the vice president. The group said the six-member majority headed by the two caused recent chaos in the Board of Education, by undermining Superintendent Dr. Thomas Morton through a drawn-out campaign of "harassment." Board meetings over the last

few months have ended with outburst, such as a de-facto "filibuster" by a member of the public, accusations of "stalking" between Morton and a school board member, and the revelation of ethics charges filed against several members of the board — all of which was witnessed by a consistent crowd of more than 100 at board meetings. The controversy even entered the legal system when, just weeks before the election, Schiavoni sued Citizens for a Quality Education founder Dr. George Thompson and two of the candidates running against Schiavoni, accusing them of "extortion" and "harassment."

But the results of the vote were a public mandate on the direction the board was heading, said the winners. All three

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Check mailbox for 'stimulus payments' starting in May

By **BRUCE A. SCRUTON**
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Now that tax deadline day has passed, sit back, relax and let the IRS pay you.

This is not about your refund check but the one-time, "stimulus payments," government checks that Congress approved and meant to stimulate a lagging economy.

The first of the checks will go out May 2 and, if you filed electronically; asked for your refund to be direct deposit; and, if the last two digits of your Social Security num-

ber are low, you could be seeing the check pop into your account within a day or two.

Gregg Semanick, a regional spokesman for the Internal Revenue Service, said further "checks" will go out on May 9 and 16. Those who asked for a paper check for their refund, or had to pay additional income taxes, will get checks beginning May 16. The last of those paper checks will go out on July 11.

This, of course, is all premised on having your income tax return processed by April 15. If you filed

On the Web

Instructions on how to file and answers to questions about the stimulus payments are available on the IRS Web site, www.irs.gov.

electronically, and met Tuesday's deadline, you got through the window.

Semanick said for those who filed paper returns it takes at least a few days for IRS employees to manually go over the forms and, if

they are in order, another four to six weeks for the refund checks to be processed. At that point, the names go into the hopper for the stimulus payments to be processed.

Anyone who had an adjusted gross income of under \$87,000 — \$174,000 if filing jointly — will get some sort of stimulus payment. Semanick said that includes the vast majority of people.

If you were not required to file a tax return this year, you can still qualify for the stimulus payment by filing a simple tax return.

Semanick said more people are filing electronically and are getting their tax refunds back quicker.

While those are good advantages, he noted that the error rate for those who do electronic returns is only about 1 percent while one in five people who use pen and paper have a mistake on their return.

And, he noted, 70 percent of all filers could qualify to file free online. That cutoff is an adjusted gross income of \$54,000 or less.

See **TAXES**, Page A5