

Glen Ridge Year in Review: Part Two

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It was an eventful year for Glen Ridge in 2015. Last week's issue looked at newsworthy items from January through June. This week's issue continues with July through December.

July

- Glen Ridge residents are presented with an intriguing month-long treasure hunt: "The Great Gnome Hunt." The hunt's organizers hide a series of miniature plaster gnomes - one a day - at different locations around town and then post clues on Facebook.
- Glen Ridge decides not to go ahead with a planned redevelopment study for four residential properties on the west end of Baldwin Street. The study had been sought by a Morris County-based development firm, which was interested in building a 59-unit apartment complex there. The idea is met with a great deal of backlash from the public, including two petitions.



ERIN ROLL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

In July, Alice Roberts prepares to present a petition to the council opposing a redevelopment study and possible apartment complex on Baldwin Avenue.

- The schools begin considering implementing an International Baccalaureate program.

- During the summer, the borough and the shade tree commission try an experiment to get residents more involved in tree care: the newest trees to be planted have QR tags on them, which residents can scan with their smartphones in order to access the tree care page on the borough website. Each tree's tag also contains a description about what kind of tree it is.

August

- Glen Ridge High School Principal Dirk Phillips is officially chosen as the new superintendent of schools on Aug. 1. The district indicates that a total of 38 candidates had applied for the position.
- Residents on Laurel Place have concerns about levels of traffic on that street. The subject comes up for frequent discussion during council meetings, especially in light of HackensackUMC Mountainside's planned construction of a medical office building.
- Glen Ridge's longtime police chaplain, Thomas Bulgia, dies on Aug. 9 at the age of 70.
- James and Margaret "Marty" Lacey, a longtime married couple known for their prominent involvement with the Glen Ridge Congregational Church, die within days of each other: Jim Lacey on Aug. 8 at age 87, and Marty Lacey on Aug. 10 at age 83.
- Tim Liddy, the director of student activities at Glen Ridge High School, is selected to serve as the school's interim principal, following Dirk Phillips' promotion to district superintendent.

September

- Authorities urge residents to moderate their outdoor water usage following an especially dry summer in northeastern New Jersey. The Montclair Water Bureau - which is also Glen Ridge's water supplier - sends out a notice encouraging residents to water their lawns and gardens only when necessary.

• A long-running campaign to turn the former Boonton Line into a rail-with-trail picks up some additional momentum after the New Jersey Bike Walk Coalition takes notice of the project. The project has stalled in recent years due to resistance from the tracks' current owner, Norfolk Southern. The new goal is to turn the line into the Ice and Iron Greenway, which would then hook up with the New Jersey section of the East Coast Greenway.

- Glen Ridge and the nation mark the 14th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

- At a board of education meeting, parents raise concerns about the size of some of Forest Avenue School's kindergarten classes; some of the classes have about 25 students. The discussions are part of a long-running series of concerns that Glen Ridge has about classrooms being packed to capacity because of increasing student enrollment.

October

- A drought watch is officially declared for Glen Ridge, and the rest of North Jersey, following a dry start to fall.

- Vincent Ascolese, Bloomfield's animal control officer, is charged with 14 counts of animal cruelty on Oct. 1, stemming from allegations that Ascolese improperly euthanized a baby deer. Bloomfield has a contract to provide animal control services to Glen Ridge.

- Glen Ridge resident John Muller V, 26, is killed in a fiery car crash on the Garden State Parkway in Paramus on Oct. 18; his vehicle apparently crashed and flipped over near the Exit 165 toll plaza. The English department at Rutgers University-Newark, where Muller had been a graduate student and instructor, makes plans to pay tribute to him later in the fall.

- The Rotary and Kiwanis clubs report that they have raised the \$15,000 needed to buy and install new lights in the borough's designated holiday tree in front of the municipal building.

November

- The Glen Ridge High School marching band tops off a trophy-filled season with a second-place win at the U.S. Bands National Competition in Dover, Del. on Nov. 8.

- Louis Melchor is announced as the new principal of Glen Ridge High School during the Nov. 16 board of education meeting. Melchor, at the time the principal of the North Warren Regional High School in Blairstown, is scheduled to start in Glen Ridge on Jan. 19.

- The Glen Ridge High School girls' soccer team enjoys a strong season, with a series of victories that include the team's fourth North 2, Group I section championship title. The team makes it to the Group I championship finals at Kean University on Nov. 21, but loses to Shore Regional High School.

- Due to ongoing concerns about class sizes and student enrollment, Glen Ridge considers the possibility of buying back the former Central School and using it as an educational facility. The building closed as a school in 1985 and was sold off; it is currently owned by Wells Fargo.
- The annual Ashenfelter 8K Classic takes place on Thanksgiving Day. The road race is a fundraiser for the Glen Ridge Educational Foundation; this year, the main race and the shorter Tom Fleming Mile draw a total of 3,990 registered runners.

December

- The Glen Ridge Police Department's No Shave November project comes to an end on Nov. 30 with several officers appearing on "Today" for the show's "Shave-Off." No Shave November is a widespread effort to raise awareness about cancer; the GRPD had been doing their No Shave project in memory of the late Sgt. Robert Zeuner.
- The week of Dec. 7 marks the 10th and 20th anniversaries, respectively, of two unsolved slayings in Glen Ridge. Ethel Duryea, 59, was shot near her home on Midland Avenue on the evening of Dec. 11, 1995. Joan Galligan, 58, was found dead at her home on Astor Place on the morning of Dec. 7, 2005, after she did not show up for work in New York.
- Glen Ridge hosts two public meetings on Dec. 15 for residents to ask about the proposed medical office building at HackensackUMC Mountainside. The hospital intends to build the office suite on the site of the former School of Nursing on Bay Avenue; it will become the workplace for doctors and medical staff rotating in from other hospitals in the HUMC network. Residents attending the meeting indicate that they have concerns about issues including traffic congestion, delivery trucks, noise and the proposed design of the building.
- The police department receives a \$9,000 grant from the state to buy 18 body cameras for its officers to use. The subject of body cameras for police officers has come up for discussion over the past two years, especially in light of some high-profile police-related deaths around the country.

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