



# A bolder backyard



STAFF PHOTOS BY BETH BALBIERZ

Workers from Cipriano Landscape Design positioning a massive slab of sandstone into place Wednesday for a poolside waterfall at an Allendale home.

## Allendale family adds 22-ton rock to their oasis

By EUNNIE PARK  
STAFF WRITER

Some people go on tropical vacations in pursuit of that perfect oasis.

Peter Elfers is building one in his backyard — with a 44,000-pound rock fountain cascading water into a 900-square-foot swimming pool and hot tub.

“We didn’t really set out to do anything extreme,” said the Allendale resident. “Although that rock looks pretty extreme.”

To build the Elfers family an “extreme oasis,” a massive piece of sandstone was handpicked, blasted, split and transported from a quarry in Pennsylvania’s Susquehanna Valley. It traveled four hours on a flatbed truck to the Allendale home, where 10 men and a 150-ton crane helped perch the 22-ton stone on the edge of an empty pool.

It will take about four months to build the backyard oasis, said Chris Cipriano, owner of Cipriano Landscape Design in Ramsey. The company works on similar projects around North Jersey, although this is the first time they have cut such a massive rock, Cipriano said.

Building a pool with Cipriano’s company can cost anywhere from \$300,000 to \$2.5 million. Cipriano and Elfers were reluctant to reveal the price of the 44,000-pound rock fountain, but Elfers said it cost “a lot.”



The 44,000-pound rock will be part of the Elfers family’s new swimming pool.

Cipriano said he is working on about six other projects that can be considered “extreme.” Such designs are growing in popularity among homeowners in North Jersey. It helps that a lot of people living in this area can afford them, he said.

“I think with the climate today and the world situation the way it is, people are looking to stay more close to home,” Cipriano added. “Instead of having to go to a water park, really you have your water park right at home.”

Justin Cave, landscaper and host of Ground Breakers on HGTV, said extreme landscaping is a trend nationwide. Advanced technology allows grander, more creative designs at a

more affordable cost. Still, they are expensive by most standards. Some people refinance their homes to pay for landscaping, he said.

“I think people trying to keep up with the Joneses is definitely one of the reasons,” said Cave, who owns Sierra Consulting in Atlanta. “But at the same time, I think a lot of people want to spend their time at home — your home is your abode, where you go to relax. What better way to do that than in your own yard?”

That is one reason Elfers, a commercial real estate builder, and his wife, Jane, wanted to build the oasis. With their busy schedules, they rarely have time to go away on weekends with

### Rock solid

A massive piece of sandstone was delivered to an Allendale home Wednesday morning. It will be used as a centerpiece in an “extreme oasis.”

**From:** A quarry in Susquehanna Valley, Pa.

**Weight:** About 22 tons.

**Dimensions:** 17 feet wide, 4 feet thick and 7 feet deep.

**Moving it:** A 150-ton crane lifted it into place.

**Manpower:** It took 10 men about an hour to balance the stone on its perch above the swimming pool.

their 10-year-old daughter Claire.

“We didn’t want to have to travel to get to someplace where we can enjoy and relax,” Elfers said. “It’s almost resort-like. We wanted a place where we could just spend the weekend here and enjoy.”

Elfers’ backyard also will include a pool house with a full kitchen and bathroom, an outdoor fireplace, barbecue and a patio, among other amenities.

“We’re trying to bring the home outside as well,” he said. “It’s not for anything other than a casual environment.”

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## Tainted topsoil ready for removal

Landfill-bound when Fair Lawn gets OK

By GIOVANNA FABIANO  
STAFF WRITER

FAIR LAWN — School officials are awaiting final approval from the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission to truck a mound of contaminated topsoil to the agency’s landfill.

Topsoil at the Lyncrest School, which contains contaminants slightly above state safety standards for residential neighborhoods, remains covered with a tarp and fenced off from the school playground on Morlot Avenue.

The district is working with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Meadowlands Commission on a plan to deliver the soil to the agency’s 1-E landfill in North Arlington, said Superintendent Bruce Watson.

“The case manager has reviewed everything and found everything acceptable,” Watson said. “We’re waiting for the landfill to give us final approval, but I’m hoping we get the soil out within

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### What’s next

**What:** Fair Lawn Superintendent of Schools Bruce Watson will hold two informal meetings next week to answer questions on topsoil at the Lyncrest School playground, which was found to contain contamination levels slightly above state safety guidelines. The meetings are open to the public.

**When:** Wednesday at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

**Where:** Lyncrest School Library/Media Center on Morlot Avenue, Fair Lawn

## Condo office in park revisited

Developers offer playground perks

By ERIC HSU  
STAFF WRITER

CLIFFSIDE PARK — A condo sales office in the middle of a public park might be a temporary eyesore, but it will pay off in the long run, borough officials argued Tuesday.

The officials presented their plan at a public hearing on the fate of the office, which takes up about a third of a small public park on Adolphus Avenue and Gorge Road.

The building is meant to serve as a sales office for a 131-unit condo tower slated to be built across the street on Adolphus Avenue.

In exchange for use of the parkland, the developers will pay rent of \$2,000 per month and will make about \$150,000 in renovations to the park’s playground equipment and walking paths.

The rent would be earmarked

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## A bittersweet celebration

Korean-Americans honor their past

By ELIZABETH LLORENTE  
STAFF WRITER

Nearly 100 Korean-Americans packed a small gathering hall in Palisades Park on Wednesday to mark the day 62 years ago that the Korean peninsula gained its independence from Japan.

The crowd, ranging from small children to seniors who recalled living under Japanese occupation, remained silent as speakers from their community described that era.

“We honor today to remember that freedom does not come easily nor cheaply,” Jonathan Kim, vice president of the Korean-American Association of New Jersey, told the crowd. “The cost of freedom, freedom from unjust persecution, freedom from senseless murder and im-

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### Fast facts

- New Jersey has the nation’s third-largest Korean population.
- The 2000 census counted slightly more than 1 million Koreans in the United States and 65,349 in New Jersey. Korean community leaders here estimate there are more than 100,000 Koreans in the state today.
- More than half of the state’s Korean population lives in Bergen County.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau



CARMINE GALASSO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A moment of silence in Palisades Park, where Korean-Americans marked the anniversary of their independence from Japan.

## Westwood PD goes green with an SUV rated at 30 mpg

By DEENA YELLIN  
STAFF WRITER

WESTWOOD — The Police Department is giving a new ride to officers on patrol: a Ford Escape

■ Charles Stile is on vacation. His column will return Sunday.

Hybrid sport utility vehicle.

Westwood recently ordered the “green” SUV at a cost of \$28,322, said Borough Administrator Robert Hoffmann. The hybrid has a mileage rating of 30 miles per gallon in town and 34 on the highway.

“This is part of our ongoing effort to manage our fuel expend-

es,” said Hoffmann.

The department will also receive a rebate from the car company, he said. The cost of the hybrid, which typically runs higher than gasoline-only vehicles, was arranged by state-contracted bids. Hoffmann said the borough is likely to get a tax break but he doesn’t yet know how much it will be.

Hoffman said most police departments are upgrading from Ford Crown Victorias — which average 6 miles per gallon — to the Dodge Charger for patrol cars. Westwood paid \$29,000 for its Charger.

The Escape Hybrid can drive 500 miles on one tank of gas.

The one drawback for the envi-

ronmentally friendly SUVs is speed, officials said. A hybrid travels up to 102 mph, while typical police cars can reach speeds of 140 mph.

But Police Chief Frank Regino said it’s worth a try.

“We discussed several options and decided to see how a hybrid would benefit the borough,” he

said. “We hope it will save tax dollars for the community. We tried the Dodge and I jumped on the opportunity to try a hybrid. I don’t know if it will work out because it is a smaller vehicle.”

The Escape is expected to roll onto borough streets next month.

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