

FEB 24 2006

# Chronicle

Since 1862

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SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Saturday, February 25, 2006

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## INSIDE



### Golden goodness

What sits on supermarket shelves and is purported to be maple syrup has nothing on the real thing. Just ask Christa Wood, a naturalist at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge, seen above in the Sugar Shack checking an evaporation tank filled with what will soon be pure maple syrup. **Page B1.**

## Transit gets new look

The transit fleet of Middlesex County will have a new name and color scheme this year as part of an effort to create an integrated transit network that is more identifiable and more responsive to County residents.

"The Middlesex County Area Transit system puts a new face on transit in the County," said Freeholder H. James Polos, chair of the County's Public Works and Transportation Committee. "The new name identifies our system as a true transit network that integrates public and private systems to improve customer service." The white vehicles will feature blue and gold striping and new logos to make them identifiable and more visible and therefore safer for our customers. Thirteen new 12 to 14 passenger vans will make their debut in the coming months. The existing black and white vehicles will undergo a face-lift, and this will increase the total fleet to 70 assorted modes of transportation.

During 2005, Area Wide Transportation Services — now called MCAT — was expanded to include new shuttle services that provided commuting opportunities and other transportation services to those who live and work in the southern end of the county. The 8A Shuttle, that brings workers from New Brunswick and North Brunswick to jobs in the area of exit 8A of the turnpike, has seen a steady increase in ridership since its debut two years ago. This led to the further expansion of commuter shuttles to the Perth Amboy area.

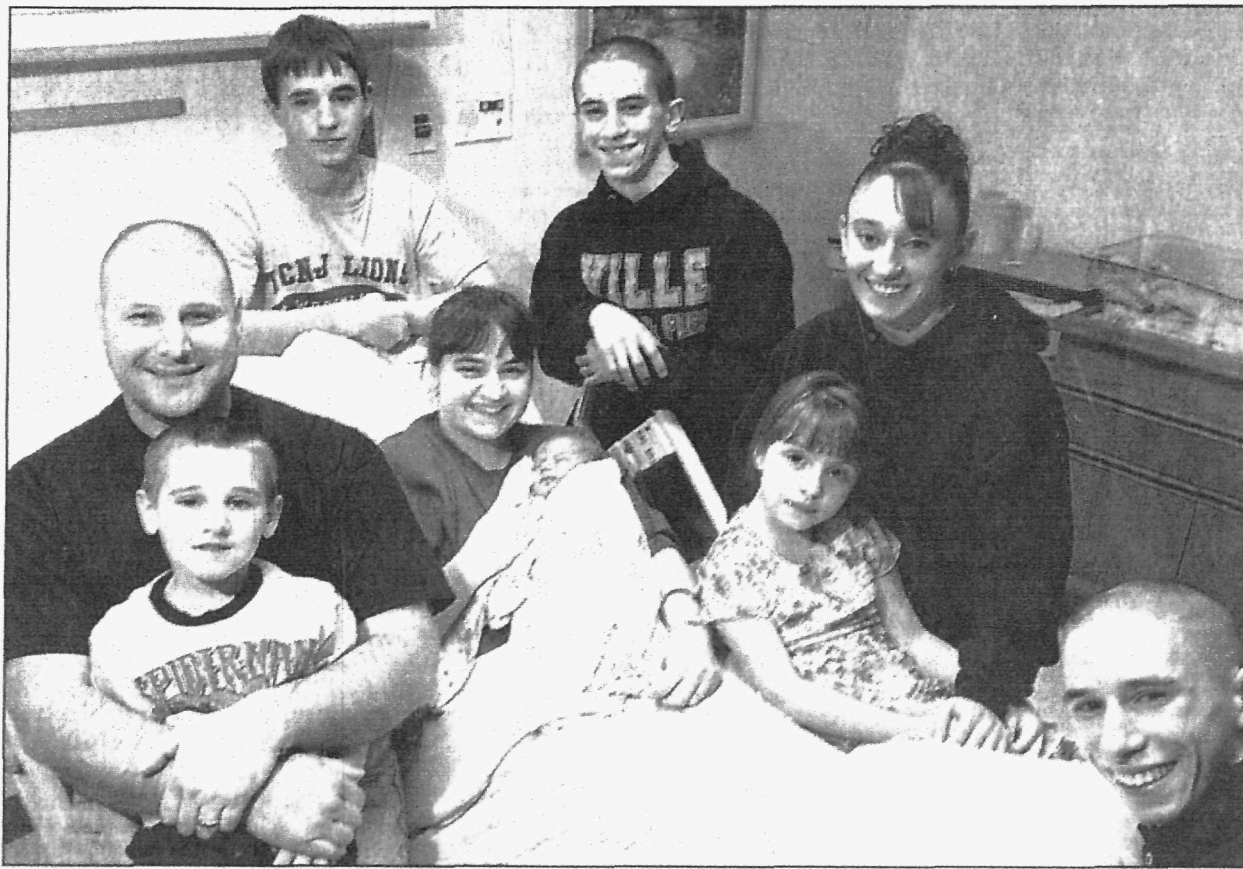
Also last year, the county began offering daytime service to south county residents needing to get to doctor's offices, shopping opportunities and senior centers in Jamesburg, Monroe, Helmetta, Spotswood and East Brunswick. Another shuttle brings south county residents to and from the New Brunswick train station, where they can connect to other destinations. In 2005, Polos said, the Transportation Department also reorganized the MCAT staff to meet increasing demand and provide improved customer service. This included hiring an additional reservations clerk to meet growing demand and provide bi-lingual customer service. Last March, the state Department of Transportation hired a full time Safety and Training Director to provide classroom and behind-the-wheel training that addressed safety and passenger-assistance skills.

Polos said his personal goal for 2006 is to substantially reduce cancellations for medical trips resulting from driver unavailability.

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## 'The children are family, and you can't give up family'



**The Stitley family**, clockwise from left, Joey, dad Michael, Nicholas, Joseph, Crystal, Tyler, Christopher, and mom April surround the newest member of the family, Ashlyn Elizabeth, at Somerset Medical Center on Tuesday.

## Bonds go beyond normal bounds

By ALLISON ELYSE GUALTIERI  
Staff Writer

SOMERVILLE — Ashlyn Elizabeth Stitley came into the world on Monday, greeted by her parents, Michael and April, and her six older siblings: Crystal, 18; Christopher and Joseph, both 16; Nicholas, 15; Tyler, 6; and Joseph, 5.

"We've got the big family, but with only two births," said April, resting at Somerset Medical Center on Tuesday, Ashlyn sleeping quietly by her side.

"There hasn't been a baby around for awhile, so it'll take some getting used to," said Crystal. "But it's definitely exciting."

It wasn't a question of whether or not to have a big

family; it was merely circumstance. Five of the Stitley's children are adopted.

They took daughter Tyler home from the hospital when she was born, while they were engaged. Technically, she is April's niece, but has been a part of their family from day one.

Crystal, Nicholas, and twins Christopher and Joseph are biological siblings and April's first cousins, and were adopted by April and Michael in the aftermath of their parents' deaths. The Stitleys first started caring for them shortly after their biological son Joseph was born in 2001.

Continued on page A2

## Legacy focus of exhibit

NEW BRUNSWICK — "The Hungarian Legacy in America" opens with a reception from 2-5 p.m. Sunday in the Museum of the American Hungarian Foundation, 300 Somerset St.

The exhibition runs through March 26 and presents the documentary and pictorial record of the foundation's 50 years.

First shown last September in Budapest, Hungary, the exhibition there was part of the three-day international academic conference commemorating the 50th anniversary of the foundation at the National Szechenyi Library.

The foundation was established in 1955 at Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Ill., and moved to New Brunswick in 1959 when it funded the then-nascent Hungarian Studies program at Rutgers University. In 1989 the foundation invested \$3 million for a museum, library and archives in New Brunswick.

Among the numerous firsts sponsored by the foundation is the first all-Bartok concert presented in 1957 at Carnegie Hall in New York with Antal Dorati conducting the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra and Yehudi Menuhin as soloist. Music from the concert and the program is part of the exhibition. In the same year the foundation published "Magyar Album," a book which presented the contributions of famous and notable Hungarians worldwide in the sciences, arts, theater, film and literature, with articles about Bela Bartok, Hungarian Nobel laureates and Sir Alexander Korda.

Over 60,000 volumes, including rare books from the 15th century, comprise the library collection of the foundation, which is an affiliate library of Rutgers University. The permanent museum collection of the foundation collects the art created in America by Hungarian artists and artists of Hungarian descent. Since 1989 the museum has shown 50 exhibitions which have been viewed by over

Continued on page A2

## RVCC students grow alongside children

By ALLISON ELYSE GUALTIERI  
Staff Writer

NORTH BRANCH — Some call it the best-kept secret at Raritan Valley Community College. No, not the transfer agreements, or the satellite campus, or even the optical clinic. It's the Children's Campus, where students, staff, and faculty members can enroll their children for day-time care while students work with professionals to learn the best practices for early childhood education and care.

"I love working with children, and I came to check it out and everything was so cheerful," said Michelle DeNoia, who is majoring in psychology at the college. "I've taken child psychology, and it's really great to see it play out in front of your eyes."

The Whitehouse Station resident is due to graduate this year, but plans to keep working at the center while obtaining a higher degree. According to center director Linda Sanecki, DeNoia is typical of her employees.

"Childcare has a lot of turnover as a business, but here people stay," she said. "It's exciting to watch the adult students grow."

*"I love working with children, and I came to check it out and everything was so cheerful."*

**Michelle DeNoia**  
Psychology student,  
RVCC

same time, we good practice."

The center, which occupies its own building with two outdoor play areas, was founded to provide quality child care for the children of students, who get a discounted rate, as well as faculty and staff.

"It's so rare for a parent to have a 9-5 job. You've got to be really creative with flex time, but at the same time, you want consistent care," said Sanecki.

For Sharon Decker, who works in Student

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**Michelle DeNoia**, a psychology major at Raritan Valley Community College, plays with Ean Stolzer last week inside the school's Children's Campus, where students, staff and faculty members can enroll their children for day-time care.

## New Jersey American Water honored for clean-up effort

The New Jersey Business & Industry Association has presented New Jersey American Water with a 2005 Award for Excellence in the Environmental Quality category for its cleanup of an old asbestos dump in Bound Brook.

New Jersey American Water was one of eight companies receiving awards at the NJBIA's 2005 Awards for Excellence Dinner held recently.

"The winners were selected because they are the best of the best. They have succeeded not only as private sector companies, but in improving people's lives and our communities,"

NJBIA President Philip Kirschner told a crowd of 240 at the event. "New Jersey American Water's tremendous commitment to environmental protection has made a real difference in the community of Bound Brook."

During the installation of a 72-inch water main reinforcement pipe in the South Bound Brook area, New Jersey American Water realized that it would have to cross a former asbestos dump and an area heavily contaminated with arsenic. Although the company could have easily diverted its pipes to avoid the contaminat-

ed area, or only cleaned the 10 percent of the contaminants that posed a problem to its project, it decided to clean the entire area so it could be turned into a children's park for the surrounding community.

New Jersey American Water successfully removed or cleaned a total of 4,000 tons of asbestos-containing materials and 21,000 tons of arsenic-contaminated soils. The formerly affected soils now meet strict state cleanup standards, and the company has turned the

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**Lindel Jones**, American Water's vice president for government affairs, and **Dennis Ciemniecki**, regional vice president of operations, accept a New Jersey Business & Industry Association Award for Excellence in the Environmental Quality category at the recent NJBIA 2005 Awards for Excellence Dinner.





Everything Jersey

## The Chronicle

Since 1862

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## Childcare

Continued from page A1

Activities and Civic Engagement at the college, it's a convenient place as well as one she trusts. Her 4-year-old daughter, Makenna, has been enrolled in the center for the past two years, and attends four days a week.

"I knew the teachers and the director, so I really trusted them," the Warren resident said. "My daughter loves it. That was the deciding factor."

The center welcomes parents at any time, and encourages them to stop by during lunch or breaks, Sanecki said. Having her daughter so close means that if she gets

sick, Decker can easily pick her up and tend to her.

The campus requires children to be enrolled for at least two half-days a week, but some, like Makenna Decker, attend more often, where days are filled with artistic endeavors, snacks, naps, and educational activities — for both children and the teacher's assistants, most of whom are college students.

With the colorful drawings and decorations, snowmen dotting the play area, and even a few turtles, the center is a welcoming space for the children.

The center is as diverse as the college. Last year, the small students hailed from 18 different countries and spoke 11 different languages, something Sanecki views as an added benefit of the facility.

"It's a really nice reflection of the college and the world," she said.

## All in the family

Continued from page A1

"If we'd only known a few months earlier," Michael joked, referring to having two sons named Joseph. The older one is referred to as Big Joe, the younger as Little Joe or Joey.

"We all had each other, so it wasn't walking into something new, but it was a change, because now we had a little sister and a little brother, and now the baby," said Crystal, who is a junior at Somerville High School. "It was definitely a change." When they first decided to get married, Michael knew that he wanted a big family, though he and April didn't quite agree on the number.

"I said I wanted six," he said. "And I said I wanted four," she chimed in. Seven years and seven children later, movies like "Cheaper by the Dozen"

and "Yours, Mine, and Ours" have become family favorites.

So what is life like when mom is a decade older than her eldest, there are four teenagers in the house, and a newborn has just joined the fray?

The key is time management and organization, according to April, who draws on the skills she learned during eight years as a member of the National Guard. Everyone has daily chores, from the little ones, who help with recycling, to the older ones, who vacuum, sweep, and do their own laundry on assigned nights in the family's industrial-capacity washer and dryer.

"Because we're a big family, everyone has to contribute," said Michael. "We fill up a garbage can a day."

Crystal, now that she has a driver's license, helps with the chauffeur duties, but everyone pitches in.

## Exhibit

Continued from page A-1

90,000 visitors. The archive holdings of the foundation include personal include personal papers, newspapers, and records of institutions and organizations of Hungarians in America since 1776.

Since 1963 the foundation has presented its distinguished George Washington Award and Abraham Lincoln Award. Notables honored include Theodore von Karman, an aerospace scientist; John von Neumann, a mathematician; Kati Marton, an author; George Olah, Dennis Gabor and Elie Wiesel, all Nobel laureates; Adolph Zukor, founder of Paramount Pictures; George Pataki, governor of New York; and Andrew S. Grove, chairman of Intel Corp.

Museum hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1-4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$5. For more information, visit [www.ahfoundation.org](http://www.ahfoundation.org) or call (732) 846-5777.

## Legal Notices

**N.J. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
SEALED BIDS will be received from bidders classified under N.J.S.A. 27:27-35.1 et seq. in the NJDOT MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM, New Jersey Department of Transportation, 1035 Parkway Avenue, Trenton, NJ 08625, until 10:00 A.M. on 3/1/06 and opened and read for:

Underground Structures for Electrical Facilities, Contract South 2006. Various Locations, Counties of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Ocean and Salem.

Region South  
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DP No: 05452

Bidders are required to comply with the requirements of P.L. 1975, c. 127 N.J.A.C. 17:27.  
Effective October 15, 2004, Pursuant to P.L. 2005, c. 51 (formerly known as Executive Order 135) apparent low bidder must provide a completed, signed Contractor Certification and Disclosure of Political Contribution Forms within seven (7) state business days from the project bid date.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:22-44, Business Registration, proof of valid business registration shall be submitted by a bidder with its bid proposal at the time of bid for 100% State funded projects.

Pursuant to the "Public Works Contractor Registration Act," N.J.S.A. 34:11-56.4 et seq. (P.L. 2003, c. 31), bidders must register with the New Jersey Department of Labor, Division of Wage and Hour Compliance.

The Department, in accordance with Title VI Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252 U.S.C. 43 C.F.R. Parts 21 and 23 issued pursuant to such Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 will afford minority business enterprises full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not discriminate against any bidder on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, or handicap in the contract award.

Drawings and specifications for the proposed work are available at Bid Express website [www.bids.com](http://www.bids.com). You must subscribe to use this service. To subscribe follow the instructions on the web site. The fee is \$35.00 per month for unlimited access to view and download the documents and additional \$95.00 per month for unlimited access to download the plans, directly payable to Bid Express.

Drawings, special provisions, and bid documents may be inspected (BUT NOT OBTAINED) by contacting organizations at our various Design Field Offices at the following locations:  
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New Jersey Department of Transportation  
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Bureau of Construction Services  
1035 Parkway Avenue  
PO Box 605  
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\$69.36 B29 3T 2/18,25,3/4/06

**BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX**  
ORDINANCE #06-01

The following ordinance, published in full, was Adopted after a Public hearing at a meeting of the Governing Body of the Borough of Dunellen, in the County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, on February 20, 2006. During the week prior to and up to and including the date of such meeting copies of the full ordinance were available at \$14.62.

**Schedule**  
Property: Lincoln Middle School  
Number of Spaces: 1  
Location: Lincoln Avenue, beginning at the driveway pole and adjacent to the sidewalk leading to an entrance to the school.

Ord. 269-35, Handicapped parking. Handicapped parking in municipal parking lots and Board of Education property. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 39:4-197 the following off-street parking yards and Board of Education property are designated as handicapped parking areas. Such spaces are for use by persons who have been issued special identification cards, plates or placards issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles or a temporary placard issued by the chief of Police. No other person shall be permitted in these spaces.

Each such parking space shall be not less than 12 feet wide.  
Any such person violating any of the provisions of this subsection shall be subject to a maximum penalty, upon conviction, of a fine not exceeding \$80 for the first offense and not exceeding \$150 for the second and each subsequent offense.

Submitted by William M. Robins, RMC  
Dunellen Municipal Clerk  
B26 1T 2/25/06

**BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX**  
ORDINANCE #06-02

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
NOTICE OF PENDING BOND ORDINANCE AND SUMMARY

The bond ordinance, the summary terms of which are included herein, has been finally adopted by the Governing Body of the Borough of Dunellen, in the County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, on February 20, 2006 and the twenty (20) day period of limitation within which a suit, action or proceeding questioning the validity of such ordinance can be commenced, as provided in the Local Bond Law, has begun to run from the date of the first publication of this statement. Copies of the full ordinance are available at no cost and during regular business hours, at the Clerk's office for members of the general public who request the same. The summary of the terms of such bond ordinance follows:

**TITLE: BOND ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO WALNUT STREET IN THE BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN, APPROPRIATING \$250,000 THEREFOR AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF \$47,600 OF BONDS AND/OR NOTES OF THE BOROUGH FOR FINANCING THE COST THEREOF AND MAKING THE DOWN PAYMENT FOR SAID IMPROVEMENT AUTHORIZED TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN AND BY THE BOROUGH OF DUNELLEN, IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX, NEW JERSEY.**

Purposes: Improvements to Walnut Street, said improvements to include all costs, equipment and/or improvements necessary therefore or related thereto.  
Appropriations: \$250,000  
Bonds/Note Authorized: \$47,600  
Section 20 Costs: \$50,000  
Useful Life: 10 years  
William Robins, RMC  
Dunellen Municipal Clerk  
B29 1T 2/25/06

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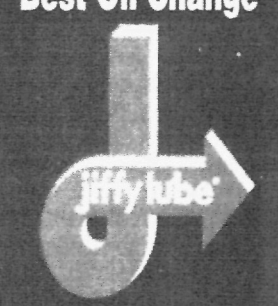
## Water

Continued from page A-1

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## Middlesex County News

## Merchants group schedules meeting

**DUNELLEN** — The Dunellen Merchants and Professionals Association holds a general meeting at 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27 at the Dunellen Public Library on New Market Road.

All business owners and professionals in the borough are invited. Dunellen residents are also welcome.

For more information, call (732) 713-6068.

## Shrove Tuesday ham and pancakes

**DUNELLEN** — The Dunellen United Methodist Church serves a ham and pancake dinner on Shrove Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Servings are from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the religious education building at 316 Jackson Ave. The menu also includes potatoes, beverage and dessert. Cost is \$9 for adults and \$4 for children.

For more information, call Betty Hixon at (732) 752-7250.

## Social event held for Christian women

**EDISON** — Starlight Socials sponsors an event for Christian professional women from 6-8 p.m. Wednesday, March 1 at the Fox & Hound Pub & Grille, located in Menlo Park Mall.

There is no cover. A casual weight loss chat, support group and pool tables are available. Finger foods are free.

Registration is required; e-mail StarlightSocials@aol.com or call (732) 764-9073.

## Knights are offering Lenten fish dinners

**SOUTH PLAINFIELD** — Knights of Columbus Council 6203 and Sacred Heart Church sponsor fish dinners every Friday night in Lent.

Servings are from 5-7 p.m. March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 and April 7 at Sacred Heart School, 149 South Plainfield Ave. The menu includes fried fish, broiled fish, fish Parmigian, garden salad, rice pilaf, French fries, cole slaw, coffee, tea, soda and dessert. Pizza is available as well along with macaroni and cheese.

Cost is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors and \$4 for children. Takeout is available.

In addition, Sacred Heart Church holds Stations of the Cross at 7 p.m. each Friday in Lent.

## Camp Middlesex holds open house March 5

**EDISON** — The summer recreation program at Middlesex County College will be ushered in 1-4 p.m. March 5 when the Camp Middlesex Open House will be held at the Technical Services Center on the Edison Campus.

Children from 6 to 18, along with their families, are invited to sample some of the programs and activities that will be offered this summer. Once again, there will be a raffle for a \$100 reduction on camp tuition.

"We're showcasing the camps that have been the kids' favorites, and we've added many exciting new ones," said Lynn Lederer, director of Professional and Community Programs at the College. "We want everyone to come to the camp fair and see what we have in store."

"The Camp Fair offers a fun-filled day where kids can get a feel for what Camp Middlesex will be offering this summer," said Elaine Berlin, assistant director. "There will be face painting, balloons for kids, opportunities to decorate pretzels with chocolate and excerpts from the ever-popular theater camp. Snacks of

donuts, pop corn and juice will be served, respecting the dietary traditions followed by all of our campers."

Staff and administrations will be present to answer questions and many programs will be demonstrated.

Because so many camps fill before the summer season begins and many children miss out on their favorite programs, on-the-spot registration will be available at the Camp Fair. Parents must bring their children's immunization records in order to complete the process.

Reservations for the Camp Fair on March 5 are not required. For additional information, or to request the complete Summer Fun brochure, contact the camp registration office at (732) 906-2556.

## Learn to make a practical craft

**SOUTH PLAINFIELD** — Learn "Practical Crafting" at the South Plainfield Public Library at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday, March 6.

Ronda Wisniewski shows you how to make origami gift boxes using paper-folding techniques. Bring a ruler, a pencil and a glue stick. Fee is \$1.

Registration is required; call (908) 754-7885 or visit the library at 2484 Plainfield Ave.

## Borough kindergarten holding registration

**MIDDLESEX** — Middlesex Public Schools have scheduled kindergarten registration for the 2006-07 school year.

Registration is at Hazelwood School on Hazelwood Avenue, Parker School on South Lincoln Avenue and Watchung School on Fisher Avenue. Hours are 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, March 9-10.

Children entering kindergarten must be 5 years old on or before Oct. 31.

Registration packets are available at each elementary school. To find out which school your child would attend, call Nancy Johnson at (732) 317-6000, Ext. 20303.

## Juried craft market held at folk festival

Applications are now accepted for a juried craft market to be held as part of the 32nd annual New Jersey Folk Festival.

This year's festival is on Saturday, April 29 at Douglass College, on the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers University. "Korean-American Heritage" is the theme.

Craftspeople may submit color slides or digital images of their work to be considered for the craft show. While the primary focus of the craft show is on traditional folk crafts, all craftspeople are encouraged to apply. A knowledgeable, impartial panel of jurors will review all submissions.

For an application, rules and fees, visit njfolkfest.rutgers.edu or call (732) 932-5775. All entries must be received by Wednesday, March 15.

## Junior Baseball Club sponsors scholarships

**SOUTH PLAINFIELD** — The South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club is accepting applications for its college scholarships.

Applicants must live in South Plainfield, be graduating from high school in June and have participated with the Junior Baseball Club at least five years.

For an application, call (908) 754-2090 or visit the guidance department at South Plainfield High School.

All applications must be returned by April 1.

## Obituaries

## Jason Sheran

**SOUTH BOUND BROOK** — Jason Sheran, 25, died Jan. 30, 2006.

Born Oct. 14, 1980 in Somerville, he lived in Manville before moving to South Bound Brook in 2004.

Mr. Sheran was employed at V.A. Tramontano & Son in South Plainfield.

Preceding him in death was his maternal grandfather, John

Chiola.

Surviving are his mother, Darlene Chiola, a brother, Jesse, and his maternal grandmother, Helen Chiola, all of South Bound Brook; and several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Services were held Feb. 3 at the Bongiovi Funeral Home in Raritan. Burial was in St. Bernard Cemetery, Bridgewater.

## Kevin Hoffmann

**SOUTH PLAINFIELD** — Kevin C. Hoffmann, 57, died suddenly Feb. 20, 2006 at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in Yonkers, N.Y., he was a son of the late Charles and Mary McEnroe Hoffmann.

Mr. Hoffmann lived in Yonkers before moving to South Plainfield in 1980. A longtime salesman, he most recently was a sales and leasing consultant with Open Road Honda in Edison.

Surviving are his wife, Valerie Tomany Hoffmann;

three daughters, Christine Mazzeo and husband Danny of Easton, Pa., Michelle Wronski and husband Robert of Rahway and Carolyn of South Plainfield; a sister, Susan Hoffmann-Kagan and husband Edward Kagan of Tabernacle; and three grandchildren.

A funeral Mass was held yesterday at Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, following services at the McCrisky Home for Funerals. Burial was in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Hawthorne, N.Y.

## Edward Barry Sr.

**BOUND BROOK** — Edward L. Barry Sr., 80, died Feb. 14, 2006.

Born in Dunellen, he lived in Bound Brook before moving to Warren in 1989.

Mr. Barry founded the Bread Basket Deli in Somerville and, before that, was a production supervisor with the Diehl Manufacturing Corp. in Bridgewater. As a Navy veteran of World War II he was an armed guard aboard the SS Little Big Horn and the SS Michael Moran.

He was a member of Blessed

Sacrament Roman Catholic Church in Martinsville.

His wife, Gloria Sterra Barry, died in 1997. Also preceding him in death were two sisters, Lee Anzovino and Vera Franzysen; and a brother, Joseph. Surviving are a son, Edward Jr. and wife Audrey of Kona, Hawaii; two daughters, Lynne Micucci and husband Mike of Nazareth, Pa., and Kathleen Gove and husband Tom of Warren; a brother, Leo of Jamesburg; a sister, Eileen Maher of Brick; and four grandchildren.



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# Mall's Star-Spangled event helps OPSHBX

*Patriots host auditions for National Anthem; call goes out for 100 performers and donations to be sent to U.S. troops*

If you're patriotic, think you've got the voice and the poise to belt out the National Anthem in front of thousands of people, here's your chance.

Bring your family, bring your friends, and have them bring items that can be shipped overseas to U.S. troops in the Mideast.

The 2005 Atlantic League Champion Somerset Patriots will host National Anthem auditions at Menlo Park Mall in Edison Saturday, March 18th from noon-4 p.m.

The event will take place in the Nordstrom wing on the lower level of the mall. In addition to the National Anthem auditions, the event will include a special collection event for Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005, a grass roots volunteer group sponsored by The Chronicle that maintains a supply line of personal items that are shipped overseas.

The Patriots will audition the first 100 people that sign up through the team's office by calling Matt Rothenberg, community relations manager, at (908) 252-0700 ext. 210 or e-mail at mrothenberg@somersetpatriots.com.

Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 volunteers will be on hand to collect the following items: sun screen, foot powder, telephone calling cards, eye drops, beef jerky, mouth wash, bug spray, lip balm, feminine products, ear swabs, wipes (travel size), razors, toilet paper, tea bags, coffee, small drink mixes, socks, clothesline/pins, snack foods, cereal/protein bars, fleece blankets, microwaveable foods (can or box), hard candy/gum, writing materials, and batteries (any size).

An emcee from Magic 98.3 FM/WCTC 1450 AM will be at the event to provide music and entertainment. This is the third year the Patriots will be hosting National Anthem auditions at a location outside Commerce Bank Ballpark.

"The auditions have become an exciting annual event for the team and our fans. We always enjoy giving some very talented singers the opportunity to audition for a chance to perform at the ballpark. The event is

Rod Hirsch  
Executive  
Editor



also helping a good cause, as we encourage all those who attend to bring items to support Operation Shoebox," said Patrick McVerry, president and general manager of the Patriots.

The Patriots are a major supporter of Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005.

On March 11, the Patriots will begin selling single game tickets at Commerce Bank Park in Bridgewater and each fan who brings a bag of supplies to be shipped to U.S. troops serving in Iraq will receive a special Buy One Get One Free ticket good for any Patriots game Sunday through Thursday throughout the season.

Patriotic fans will also receive a 25 percent discount in the Patriots' Headquarters gift shop as part of the promotion.

The Patriots, who last year won the Atlantic League championship for the third time in their eight-year history, were one of the first organizations to pledge their support for Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 when the program was launched last year by The Chronicle. OPSHBX volunteers were on hand last year to collect items from fans when tickets went on sale.

"We are proud to have Operation Shoebox join with us for the opening day of ticket sales once again. This event is not only the start of our individual ticket sales, but also our commitment to be an even bigger part of Operation Shoebox for the upcoming season," McVerry said.

The Patriots have promised to host two packing events at the ballpark this year, in May and September.

To date, OPSHBX has shipped over 6,000 packages to U.S. troops in Iraq and the Mideast region and raised \$75,000 to pay for shipping. Its most recent packing event was held Feb. 4 at the

Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2290 in Manville, at which 1,465 packages were prepared for the troops.

The ticket windows open at 9 a.m. March 11. Tickets for all 72 home games will be available. Somerset Patriots ticket prices are \$12 for executive field box seats; \$9.50 for field box seats; \$8.50 for upper box seats, and \$5 for turf club seating.

Game times for the 2006 season are 7:05 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1:35 p.m. on Sundays. The Patriots will host 12 fireworks shows, different promotional nights, and a variety of theme nights throughout the season.

For more information call (908) 252-0700 or visit the website at [www.somersetpatriots.com](http://www.somersetpatriots.com).

## Honor roll

We've picked up right where we left off.

Contributions continue to arrive in the mail, with \$990 in checks received since our Manville shipping event Feb. 4.

One of those letters came from Shirley Shipston, a former Somerville-area resident who now lives in Powell, Ohio. Inside was a check for \$100. Her letter reads:

Dear Sir:

"I have received a subscription to the Messenger Gazette for at least 50 years. I lived in the Somerville area and finally moved to Ohio to be near the daughter and family 19 years ago.

Anyway, I decided I should contribute to the Operation Shoebox. I wish you and the whole organization much success."

Shirley M. Shipston

Other contributions received included: Dolores Bassano, Somerville, \$150; Mountainside Rosary Altar Society, \$150; Albert and Constance Donato, Bound Brook, \$100; June and Michael Farabelli, Bridgewater, \$100; Diversiprint, Raritan, \$100; Temple Hatikvah Sisterhood, Flanders, \$50; Temple Hatikvah Men's Club, Flanders, \$50; Leroy and Alice Gunzelman, Somerville, \$50; Kathleen



COURTESY SGT. SAIS SINGH

Army Spc. Cami Carber, at right, a member of the Louisiana National Guard, is shown with Iraqi children and adults during a humanitarian stop while on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq.

Chin, Neshanic, \$50; John and Elaine Dudash, Green Brook, \$40; Antoinette and Robert Andersen, Raritan, \$35; Anne Vinciguerra, Clifton, \$15.

## Dinner at the diner

Last call. Louka's Last American Diner on Route 22 in Branchburg, arguably the most popular roadside eatery on that stretch of state highway for miles, will close out their month-long Monday Night Special promotion next week which was launched to support the efforts of Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005.

"You have to respect what the troops are doing over there," said co-owner Nikolaos Renieris. "Every little bit helps," he added. "We can't change the world, but we can help do something."

The diner - its windows trimmed in American flags and "God Bless America" - is donating a portion of its profits from Monday nights during February to OPSHBX.

Make plans with family or friends to have dinner at the diner Feb. 27, beginning at 5 p.m., or stop in through midnight. Every dinner, cup of coffee, dessert or a late night snack that is served will help support OPSHBX.

The diner is also a drop-off site for those wishing to donate a bag of groceries with items to be sent to U.S. troops overseas. Donations of loose change and dollar bills can also be deposited in a large jug at the cash register.

Louka's Last American Diner is on the eastbound side of Route 22, directly across from Colonial Motors.

## T-shirts for sale

Quality t-shirts with the handsome Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 poster and logo are available for a donation of \$10.

Several stores on Main Street in Somerville and Main Street in Metuchen are selling the shirts, which feature the distinctive red, white and blue Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 logo, and a full-color reproduction of the Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 poster.

The shirts are also available at The Chronicle office, 44 Veterans Memorial Drive East. All proceeds from sale of the shirts directly benefit OPSHBX. Sizes available are medium, large and extra-large.

We can also reproduce the shirts in quantity for veterans' groups, corporations, or other sponsors, and include the name of your company or organization on the shirt. Call and ask for details.

Rod Hirsch is executive editor of The Chronicle. He can be reached at (908) 575-6684 or email [rhirsch@njnpublishing.com](mailto:rhirsch@njnpublishing.com)

## Letter from Iraq

Sgt. Sais Singh, a 1993 graduate of Somerville High School, arrived in Iraq Thanksgiving week, and has been sending letters and photos to The Chronicle. Last week, he and other members of his unit received some of the packages that were prepared during the Feb. 4 Manville event. His letter follows:

Hi Rod:

I received a couple of packages from Operation Shoebox. Thank you guys so much. The items are being shared by many. Is there anyplace that I can send a thank you card that will reach the school or the kids involved?

Thank you as well to your staff and all the volunteers that helped. It really is comforting to know how much support we have back home. Thank you.

Sgt. Sais Singh  
A415 MI BN  
Camp Victory  
Baghdad, Iraq

## SALUTE THEIR SACRIFICE

OPERATION  
**SHOEBOX**  
NEW JERSEY 2005  
*Support Our Troops*

Salute the sacrifice of our troops deployed around the world by donating care package items through OPERATION SHOEBOX: NEW JERSEY 2005.

The Reporter, along with our community & corporate partners, are collecting small, personal items that will be packaged and shipped to the brave men and women serving overseas.

Look for our drop-off boxes at a store or business near you! Pick up The Reporter each week for updates and information. For details on becoming a drop off location, contact The Reporter's Executive Editor, Rod Hirsch at (908) 575-6684. Send your message of support today!

## We're collecting the following items to be sent to our troops overseas:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suntan lotion        | <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bug spray            | <input type="checkbox"/> Small drink mixes    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lip balm             | <input type="checkbox"/> Socks                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine products    | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothesline/pins     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ear swabs            | <input type="checkbox"/> Snack food           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry detergent    | <input type="checkbox"/> Cereal/protein bars  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bug wipes/bug strips | <input type="checkbox"/> Fleece blankets      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wipes (travel size)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Microwaveable foods  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Razors               | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard candy/gum       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper         | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing materials    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eye drops            | <input type="checkbox"/> Batteries (any size) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spices/Tea bags      | <input type="checkbox"/> Calling cards        |

\*Donated items must be in their original packaging.

Visit us on the web: [www.NJ.com/shoebornj](http://www.NJ.com/shoebornj)



Photo: Jon Nappi/The Star Ledger. Used by permission.

Ike Hishmeh  
Businessman  
Bound Brook

I'm a  
**Patriot**  
How 'bout you?

A Community activist Ike Hishmeh, owner of Bound Brook Carpet, has hosted several fund raising events at his store for Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005, contributing the profits from his weekend sales to help ship packages to U.S. troops overseas. He and his son Jacob have signed up other area businesses who have also pledged to support this ongoing effort.

Join The Reporter, Ike Hishmeh and other citizens and businesses who support Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005. Salute the sacrifice of our brave men and women serving overseas. Be a Patriot. Support OPSHBX. Call The Reporter's Executive Editor Rod Hirsch at (908) 575-6684 or click [www.nj.com/shoebornj](http://www.nj.com/shoebornj) for information on how you can help.

**SHOEBOX**  
NEW JERSEY 2005

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## Middlesex Briefs

### Scrapbooking seminars are set in South Plainfield

SOUTH PLAINFIELD — Scrapbooking has become a fun hobby and the South Plainfield Public Library is holding seminars on how to get you started.

These free seminars are at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, March 13 and April 24. Dayel Giammarino from Creative Memories, a leading scrapbooking company, leads each program.

Bring three of your favorite photos; all other materials will be provided. You can attend any or all three seminars.

Registration is required; call (908) 754-7885 or visit the library at 2484 Plainfield Ave.

### World Day of Prayer is being celebrated

METUCHEN — The Church Women United of Metuchen-Edison have as their theme "Sign of the Times" for its World Day of Prayer celebration. The event will take place at the First Presbyterian Church, 270 Woodbridge Ave., Metuchen at 1 p.m. on Friday, March 3. Women of South Africa have prepared the prayer service, with prayer and song in support of the HIV-AIDS ministry. An offering will be received in support of this work. Child care will be available. The women of the New Hope Baptist Church will present the program, and serve refreshments. All women of the community are welcome at this service.

### Celtic music is coming to the Edison Library

EDISON — Mary Kay Mann will present a program of Celtic music at 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 4 at the Edison Library, 340 Plainfield Ave. Drawing on the rich musical heritage of Ireland, Scotland and America, she will sing and play the Celtic harp, flute and tin whistle.

Friends of the Edison Public Library are sponsoring this program. Refreshments will be served.

To register, call the library at (732) 287-2298, Ext. 1, or sign up at the Circulation Desk.

### Blood drive set for March 5

PISCATAWAY — A blood drive will be held from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Sunday, March 5 at St. Frances Cabrini School, 2300 Cooper St.

To schedule an appointment, call Paul at (732) 885-0209.

### Rabies clinics for dogs, cats

EDISON — The Division of Health has scheduled its rabies vaccination clinics for 2006.

Clinics are on Saturday, Jan. 21 at the H.K. firehouse on New Dover Road; Saturday, March 11 at the Clara Barton firehouse, 849 Amboy Ave.; Saturday, April 8 and June 3 at the Edison Animal Shelter, 125 Municipal Blvd. Each clinic runs from 10 a.m.-noon.

Each dog must be on a leash and accompanied by an adult. All cats must be in carriers or on leashes.

Dogs and cats that were vaccinated against rabies in 2003 are due for a booster in 2006.

Licenses for 2006 may also be purchased at each clinic. Dog licenses are \$8.20 if the dog is spayed or neutered, \$11.20 if not. Cat licenses are \$3 if the cat is spayed or neutered, \$5 if not. The license fee may be waived for senior citizens with a valid township ID card.

For more information, call (732) 248-7278.

### Diocese plans weekend seminar in Piscataway

PISCATAWAY — "Life in the Spirit" is the theme of a seminar scheduled for the St. John Neumann Center, the Diocese of Metuchen chancery at 146 Metlars Lane.

The free seminar runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, March 11-12. Guest speakers include Rev. Robert Santa Barbara, Monsignor Ray Cole, Rev. Ed Abano, Doris Brennan, Rev. Bill Halbig and "prayer group sharers" from the four-county diocese.

As part of the seminar, Halbig and Rev. Tom Ganley will celebrate a Mass at 3 p.m. March 12.

Music will be provided by Celebrate; Rejoice, a music ministry; and other prayer group music ministries. Food will be available.

For reservations, call (732) 699-0396. "Life in the Spirit" is sponsored by the diocese's Charismatic Renewal Steering Committee.

### St. Patrick's dinner planned

DUNELLEN — St. Francis Episcopal Church at 400 New Market Road holds a St. Patrick's dinner from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 18.

The traditional meal includes corned beef, cabbage, carrots and dessert. For reservations, call (732) 271-0136 or (732) 968-6781.



# Oh my, maple goodness

By CAITY FODOR  
Correspondent

BASKING RIDGE — Some people are going a little further than the grocery store this winter to get the best maple syrup they can find for their pancakes.

Though they weren't able to take it home with them, they did learn how to make it right in their own backyards.

That's because the Environmental Education Center at the Somerset County Park Commission offers maple sugaring tours for six weeks every winter, providing an opportunity to teach people of all ages about the history of maple sugaring and how the process has evolved over time.

With the tour running for just one more week, Saturday's tour was packed with about 50 people, despite the bitter cold and snow flurries.

Little children dressed in their warmest — with wool hats, mittens, scarves and boots — as they ran the half mile from the center up to the Sugar Shack where the program was held. The ground was muddy and patches of ice and snow still remained on the path, but that didn't stop anyone from taking the journey.

Once at the Sugar Shack, Christa Wood, a naturalist at the center, began the demonstration by asking the kids who had breakfast and what kind of syrup they used. She continued by making jokes, putting smiles on all the kids' faces, making them forget about the cold. Almost all maple syrup bought in stores has little — if any — actual maple syrup in it, unless it is labeled 100 percent pure.

Wood's demonstration consisted of five stations and took the kids back to when the Pilgrims first arrived in Plymouth, Mass., and encountered American Indians. Wood spoke about how the value of maple syrup has changed since then and how every part of the process of making it has evolved, from the kind of buckets used to the size of the axe — or tap — used to collect the sap out of the tree.

Wood made every child on the tour part of the demonstration by asking questions and asking for volunteers. She even had small containers of maple syrup in every pocket of her jacket and pants that she would give out as prizes when someone gave the right answer to her question.

After showing the kids how to tap the trees and how to recognize a maple tree in their own backyards, Wood showed those on the tour different kinds of maple syrup and the process of making the syrup in the Sugar Shack. According to Wood, it takes 40 gallons of sap to

make just one gallon of pure maple syrup and that one gallon of syrup costs about \$50 right now because of the cost of fuel used to run the evaporation tank, which is part of the process of transforming sap into maple sugar.

Wood even read the ingredients on the back of different brands of syrup, such as Aunt Jemima, and asked kids to shout out when she said the word maple. The kids were silent.

Sarah Kramer of Middlesex said the very end of the tour was her favorite part.

"Getting to taste the syrup," she said.

Wood handed out small samples of the syrup to all those in attendance and made sure nobody went home without having a taste.

Though the kids got a taste, that's all they could get from the center, as the center does not sell the syrup and focuses on teaching about the process and history of maple sugaring, Wood said.

"It's a fantastic part of American history," she said.

Rich Hoffman, a naturalist at the center, said the program has been running since the 1980s. The program runs for six weeks every winter, usually in January and February because that is the traditional time that sap is collected from the trees. Saturday and Sunday will be the last days the maple sugaring demonstration is offered for 2006. The program is free and is offered at three different times — 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. Demonstrations last approximately an hour and a half.

Wood said the particular year's weather determines exactly when the tours are given, though they are never cancelled because of the cold.

"If people show up, we're happy to do it," she said.

Hoffman has been a naturalist at the center for 11 years and said he enjoys giving the tours because of the children.

"I like working with kids," he said. "They humor me by listening to my humor."

Wood has been a naturalist at the center for five years and says she loves everything about maple sugaring and even does it on her own at home.

"I love maple syrup," she said. "I've loved it since I was a little girl. It's a great thing and I love sharing it with people."



PHOTOS BY GEORGE PACCIELLO/STAF PHOTOGRAPHER

Christa Wood, seen at top, a naturalist at the Environmental Education Center, checks a bucket used to collect sap from a tapped maple tree. Once collected, the sap is taken to the Sugar Shack where it is placed into an evaporation table. Wood is seen at left using a trowel to check the sap, which begins its transformation into sugar. Above is a sampling of the different taps used to collect sap from trees. According to Wood, it takes 40 gallons of sap to make just one gallon of syrup, and that one gallon of pure maple syrup costs about \$50.



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No purchase necessary. Entry Blanks may be picked up and deposited at any of the NJN Publishing papers listed above. Entries can be mailed to: NJN Publishing, Classified Dept. 171 State Rt. 173, Suite 300, Asbury, NJ 08802. One lucky winner will win a trip for two to Disney World in Florida. Reservations will be confirmed around 30 days from departure depending upon availability. Air will originate from Philadelphia or Newark, which is the choice of AAA. Winner is responsible for all taxes and ground transportation. Winning entry will be selected by random drawing of completed entries on or about March 3, 2006. All entries become property of NJN Publishing and will not be acknowledged or returned. Open to legal U.S. residents 18 years or older as of date of entry, except employees of NJN Publishing Company and their families. Income and other taxes, if any, are the sole responsibility of the winner. Subject to all federal, state and local laws and regulations. Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. acceptance of prize constitutes consent to use winner's name and likeness for editorial, advertising and publicity purposes without further compensation, except where prohibited. Winner may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility, which must be returned in ten days or an alternate winner will be chosen.







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Goddard School

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Goddard School

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lease. Pets considered.  
Avail. Immed. \$1300/mo +  
sec. & Ref's 609-203-0289

**FLEMINGTON AREA**  
3 BR, 1 BA, w/w carpet new,  
W/D hookup, C/A, \$1600 +  
utils. Call 908-782-8056 or  
732-904-6234

**HIGH BRIDGE** 1BR cottage by  
the river. Secluded, pets  
welcome all ages. \$1200 per  
mo. plus ins & sec.  
908-638-5768

**All real estate advertising in**  
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Housing Act. The New Jersey  
Civil Rights Law, which  
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cestry, marital status, or  
national origin, is hereby  
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nation, call the Office of  
Fair Housing and Equal  
Opportunity of the U.S.  
Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
(HUD) at 1-800-999-9777.  
The HUD TTY telephone  
number for the hearing  
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**In New Jersey, call the**  
Division of Civil Rights in  
the Department of Law and  
Public Safety at (609) 984-  
3100. In Pennsylvania, call  
the Pennsylvania Human  
Relations Commission at  
(717) 787-4410 or the Fair  
Housing Council of  
Suburban Philadelphia at  
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**FREE WOOD** - Networking  
Warehouse has lots of  
free wood, pallets, shims,  
etc. for people who can  
pick up. Call Mark or  
Justin: 973-927-1391 Ext.  
297, Thursday - Tuesday.

**HOME GYM** - Schriener 735  
Excellent Condition, \$150 or  
best offer, Cash & Carry.  
973-224-1452

**LANE HOPE CHEST** - 40 x  
18, 65 cubic ft. \$175  
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**General Merchandise**  
580

**Free DIRECTV Satellite, 4**  
months FREE TIVO/DVR,  
And HDTV, 220 Chan-  
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from \$29.95/mo. First  
500 months get Free DVD  
Player. 866-641-7031.  
Promo #1492E.

**New 7 Person Spa, loaded,**  
\$96/month. 1100 Home De-  
pot. Cover, warranty. Car  
delivery. 908-770-0590

**SNOWS & RIMS (4) Blizzak**  
15" snow on alloy rims, 5  
12" hot putter, new 40-  
A12W tires \$75. 732-689-  
5605 908-470-0438

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15" snow on alloy rims, 5  
112 hot putter, new 40-  
A12W tires \$75. 732-689-  
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**Machinery & Tools 584**  
Tractor - Garden Drive  
Engine, 4 HP, 1000 PWS, 1  
Gang, Mower, PWS, \$1100  
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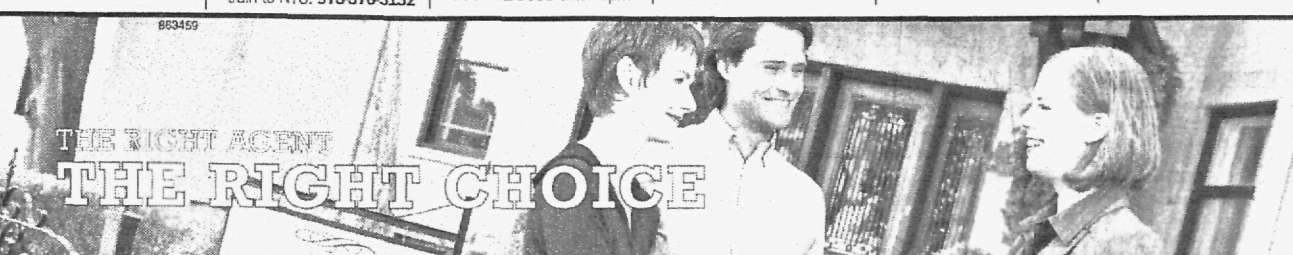
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