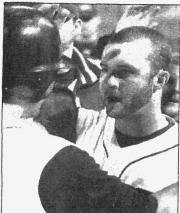
Vol. 14



Welcome back

Third baseman Jeff Nettles and right fielder Ryan Radmanovich, who've been among the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball's top power hitters the past two seasons, have signed to play again this year with the Somerset Patriots. They each walloped 28 home runs a year ago, setting a team record. Page B1.



Coming home

After more than a year of waiting, countless little decisions, small victories and emotionallytrying times, Felix Garcia and Fawnda Genovese-Garcia are preparing to move back into their Green Brook home, which was nearly destroyed last year by fire. Page A6.

Walk for a cure

The 18th annual Multiple Sclerosis Walk will be held April

This year walkers in Central Jersey can choose from nine different sites: Bridgewater, Edison, Flemington, Freehold, Hamilton, Lake Como, North Brunswick, Sandy Hook and Seaside Park. Prior to the walk participants should collect contributions from supportive family and friends before event day. The walk includes great food, entertainment and the opportunity to help end multiple sclerosis.

"Walking in the MS Walk is a great way to kick off your spring exercise routine and help and important cause," said Michael Elkow, president of the Mid-Jersey Chapter. "MS is typically diagnosed in the prime of people's lives when they are starting families and careers. The MS Society provides programs and support for people who have to come to grips with the diagnosis. This is why we walk."

Thanks to significant advances in research, the Food and Drug Administration has approved several treatments that may alter the underlying disease course of multiple sclerosis. Last year the Mid-Jersey

Chapter raised nearly \$900,000. For more information on the society and MS Walk, visit www.nmss.org or call (800) FIGHTMS.



Sports**B1** Weekend Plus B2

boys of summer day dream leads to Patriots ball field

"Oh, Put me in, coach, I'm ready to play, today. Put me in coach, I'm ready to play, today. Look at Me. I can be Centerfield." John Fogerty, 1985

By ROD HIRSCH

Just one year after Fogerty recorded this rock anthem for Major League wannabes, Pat DiNizio attained a modicum of success as a rock star himself, writing songs and playing lead guitar for The Smithereens.

Almost 20 years later, new tunes and live performances compete with mighty swings and quality time in the batting cage. Good friends to the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Joan Jett, Todd Rundgren and other rock celebrities, DiNizio's still got it musically, and he's got lots of baseball friends, too — Don Mattingly, Tony Gwynn, David Wells and Cal Ripken, Jr. to name a few.

Just weeks ago, the Smithereens played to a packed house at BB King's in midtown Manhattan, and last summer, he took Wells deep at Fenway Park, smashing a line drive off the venerable Green Monster. He just signed a contract for a new compilation CD, but truth be told, he'd love to sign a contract with the Somerset Patriots.

Now 50, still smoking, overweight with abundant girth, he's hardly the profile of someone who could help the Patriots repeat as Atlantic League champions.

You're just as likely to see Patriots manager Sparky Lyle jump on stage and play a few chords from the Smithereens 1980s haunting rock classic "Only a Memory."

But as the New York Lottery guy says in the commercials: "Hey, you never know.

Saturday, DiNizio gets a chance to show his stuff. He's one of dozens of





hopefuls who will take the field at Commerce Bank Park for the Somerset Patriots annual open tryouts for baseball players, most of whom are less than half DiNizio's age, and carry on to the field some experience — low level minor leagues, maybe Division I college

The Patriots will take a look, perhaps longer than most, because ESPN will have a crew on hand filming DiNizio's unlikely quest, footage that may provide the ending to his unlikely dream.

DiNizio has spent the past year criss-crossing the country visiting rock stars and baseball legends for a one-hour special that will be broadcast by ESPN in late May or early June.

He shared a diet soda with Kiss rocker Gene Simmons in the living room of his luxury California mansion, and batting tips with the Yankees' Don Mattingly in the batting cage beneath Yankee Stadium. He interviewed Joan Jett sitting at a desk in his former homeroom at Scotch Plains H.S., and spent time with BB King on a tour bus in

Philadelphia. Best of all, he tossed a hard ball back and forth for 20 minutes with Bruce Springsteen at his Colts Neck farm before he and The Boss - eat-



GEORGE PACCIELLO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER (above); COURTESY ENIGMA RECORDS Pat DiNizio, frontman for The Smithereens, takes a cut in the batting cage at his house. The musician has dreams of becoming a member of the Somerset Patriots, and will try out for the team this weekend. His journey is being made into a reality television show that will air on ESPN. The Smithereens as they were in their younger days, above left, in this cover for their single, "Strangers When We Meet," released in 1986.

ing a bowl of corn chowder - sat down and talked about "Glory Days," the game they both love, as well as trading baseball cards when they

were young. Welcome to Pat DiNizio's Great

Adventure. As an entertainer, DiNizio points out that he's comfortable in front of crowds, he's used to road trips, and wants nothing more than to please the fans.

Continued on page A2

Health concerns addressed at meeting

Freeholder John Pulomena, chairman of Middlesex County's Public Health and Education Committee and David A. Papi, Public Health Department director and chairman the Middlesex Government Public Partnership, hosted the MAPP Adult Health Work Group meeting at the Middlesex County Fire Academy in Savreville.

MAPP is an acronym for "Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships."

Attending the meeting were representatives from county and local government, various public and private organizations, universities, hospitals and corporations. The program consisted of a speech by Pulomena, a keynote address from Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan, D-18th, and a presentation by Papi, followed by breakout work group sessions on the following adult health issues: Access to Care, Cancer Prevention, Cardiac Health and Hypertension, Obesity and Women's

"In order for us to address these growing health concerns, it is important for all of us to work together and share our strengths," Diegnan said his motivating address. "The ultimate goal is the optimal health of the community.

Pulomena said "established partnerships" were strengthening and growing. He also thanked everyone involved in the MAPP process for their commitment to public health and their continued effort to improve it.

Papi addressed the forces of change associated with the MAPP process. He encouraged the breakout work group members to participate in facilitated and structured brainstorming discussions, share ideas for the identification of new forces that cause changes and develop a comprehensive list of these

Continued on page A2



Larry Markiewicz, conductor of the Bridgewater-Raritan High School band, leads his students through a song on Tuesday. Markiewicz is also the conductor of the Raritan Valley Symphonic

Moonlighting for more music

By ALLISON ELYSE GUALTIERI

BRIDGEWATER — Even though Larry Markiewicz is 37, his parents still come to all his concerts.

The next concert the Somerset resident will conduct will hold a special meaning for those most faithful audience members. Titled The Greatest Generation," the Raritan Valley Symphonic Band concert, featuring World War II-era selections, was inspired by Markiewicz's father, a Marine.

"My dad is part of the Central Jersey Leathernecks, which is the Marine Corps league, and he's very active," said Markiewicz, adding that his father was awarded "Marine of the Year" by the group last year for his civic

efforts.

program, includes pieces such as "Victory at Sea," complete with clips from the documentary, and a rendition of "God Bless America," will also feature the Honor Guard from the Avenel Detachment of the Marine Corps League, as well as a rendition of each branch's song to honor the veterans in the audience.

Markiewicz, who is in his first full season as conductor of the Raritan Valley Symphonic Band, said that working with the group has been different than his day job as band director for Bridgewater-Raritan High

"What's been fun this year is

Continued on page A2

Hospital president earns humanitarian award

Clifton R. Lacy, president and chief executive officer of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, New Brunswick, has been named recipient of the National Conference for Community and Justice - New Jersey Central Jersey Chapter's 2006 Humanitarian Award.

He was honored at the chapter's Business and Youth Dinner held recently at the Sheraton at Woodbridge Place.

"Dr. Lacy is being recognized for living the commitment to NCCJ-NJ's mission of fighting bias, bigotry and racism," said John E. Hogan, chairman of the Central Jersey Chapter. "Through his dedication to his patients as a practicing physician, his service to the State of New Jersey as commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services, and now as president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, he has demonstrated a lifetime of active service to others. We are truly pleased to recognize Dr. Lacy for his University of Medicine and Dentistry

"Dr. Lacy is being recognized for living the commitment to NCCJ-NJ's mission of fighting bias, bigotry and racism. Through his dedication to his patients as a practicing physician, his service to the State of New Jersey as commissioner of the Department of Health and Senior Services, and now as president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, he has demonstrated a lifetime of active service to others."

John E. Hogan Chairman, The National Conference for Community and Justice — New Jersey Central Jersey Chapter

commitment to community and humanitarian causes and for his support of many local deserving causes. Lacy is the first physician president and chief executive officer of Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, the principal teaching hospital of the

New Jersey-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. The hospital is a tertiary and quaternary health care institution and the founding member of the Robert Wood Johnson Health System and Network

Before being named the hospital's president and CEO, Lacy served as commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services and a cabinet member in the administrations of former Gov. James McGreevey and former Gov. Richard Codev.

Prior to becoming commissioner, Lacy served as senior vice president for medical affairs and chief of staff at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. As well he was an was associate professor of medicine and chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Diseases and Hypertension and director of the Center for Disease Management and Clinical Outcomes at the medical school. He also was a visiting professor in the Department Pharmacy Practice Administration at the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy, on the Piscataway campus of Rutgers

University. Lacy earned his medical degree from the UMDNJ-Rutgers Medical

Continued on page A2

Boys of summer day dream leads to Patriots ball field

Continued from page A1

He's got good hands they're wrapped around the neck of a guitar or dancing across a keyboard.

But, put on a leather glove, try to field a few ground balls, and he's got hands of iron - that's if he can reach the ball. Fast feet, they're not, owing as much to his age as his mid-section. He proved that to himself during a late season visit to the ballpark last vear.

DiNizio's Great Adventure began in front of a television set several years ago as he was recuperating from a bout with hives that almost killed him. Medication pushed his weight to 340 pounds.

"I began to lose the use of my right hand. The steroids ruined my life . . . I was watching a lot of baseball on

able to do that again - to be a kid and just play baseball."

Laying on a couch during his recuperation, he recalls one of those games; a Yankee outfielder misplayed a fly ball. He remembers thinking to himself, "That's all I want to do is catch a fly ball."

According to the script that's unfolding between DiNizio, ESPN and the Somerset Patriots, DiNizio has a very long shot at maybe stepping to bat in the late innings of a game that's gotten out of hand.

But that's a BIG maybe. At the very best, he can expect to sit in the dugout, at the end of the bench; he'll not be an active member on the Patriots roster.

Pat McVerry, Patriots' president and general manager, cautions that DiNizio's quest will not come at the expense

TV and I just wanted to be of the team's credibility. DiNizio has also huddled with Patriots' owner Steve Kalafer who outlined the very specific parameters of his association with the

> DiNizio will travel to Florida, and spend time with the Patriots and other Atlantic League teams during Spring Training in Lakeland between April 17-26. He'll put on a practice uniform, get some time in the cage, take some cuts, enough for the film crew that will also accompany him to Florida.

Truth be told, he hasn't stopped smoking and hasn't lost the weight. He hasn't spent as much time in the gvm as the team would have liked.

He's written off being a fielder, but he has been punishing himself in the batting

cage set up in the driveway alongside his modest home in Scotch Plains, evidenced by the cuts and sores on the palms of his hands and wrists.

A mechanical pitching machine 45 feet from where he stands - 15 feet short of the regulation 60 feet, 6 inches at the ballpark - has been firing fastballs and curveballs at 70 miles per hour. His logic tells him the shorter distance means he's swinging at fastballs in the

He's making contact and gaining confidence.

"I'm up to 70 miles per hour now, three hours a day until my hands are raw, DiNizio explained earlier this month.

In the weeks leading up to this weekend's tryout, DiNizio increased the intensity of his regimen, spending upwards of five hours daily in the backyard batting cage and taking cuts off a t-ball

"My skills have picked up since I started. But it's difficult using a pitching machine because you never see the release of the ball," he explained.

"My goal is to be able to hit everything, no matter how it's pitched," he continued. "When I master that, I'll be more selective.'

DiNizio has taken the time to study the art of hitting, buying every book on the subject that he can find on Ebay - Johnny Mize, Ted Williams, Tony Gwynn, Stan Musial and Pete Rose among them.

He's been given pointers by some of the best hitters in the game - Hall of Famers Tony Gwynn and Don Matting!, among them; these

private sessions are included in the ESPN footage.

He's even researched the bats major leaguers use to menace pitchers, and has ordered two custom made bats from a manufacturer in Canada made from Rock Canadian Maple trees which he says are less apt to split or splinter.

But it takes more than good lumber to make the cut; the odds are weighted heavily against DiNizio, but that doesn't faze him.

"Should I be lucky enough to make the team, I'd like to wear the number 50, so that when people see me on the field they can say, 'hey, that

His longtime friend Todd Sinclair is a believer.

'Pat always has wild ideas. At first, you might not think they'd work, but he usually winds up pulling it off."



Everything Jersey



Music

Continued from page A1

that we've tried to pick themes for concerts that are palatable to our audience," he said, noting that many of the group's supporters are of a certain age. "In public school, you're trying to teach them the classics. But with the community band, you get to do things that are more

Having fun with music is something Markiewicz discovered in elementary school, and has been doing ever since. He started his musical journey on an old Sears and Roebuck trumpet -- a hand-me-down from a

cousin - and hasn't ever stopped.

"From day one, my parents knew that that would be it. I knew I wanted to be a high school band director before I was in high school," Markiewicz said. Though he switched from trumpet to euphonium during his sophomore year in high school, his love of music hasn't waned.

Though he has worked with groups from world-class drum corps to students around the world, Markiewicz said he is having a great time working with the community band.

"They're a lot of fun. I've never worked with a community band before," he said, noting that he's amazed by the band's members, many of whom practice nightly despite jobs and families. "They really lead enriched artsy lives. I had no idea what to expect.

"They're a practicing band. They get better between rehearsals," Markiewicz said, and the members of the Raritan Valley Symphonic Band have a high level of musicianship, thanks in part to their last conductor, Dr. William Berz, chair of the Department of Music at Rutgers University.

"When I first took over, I was very nervous, because those are very big shoes to fill," he said.

With about 15 new members and an ambitious rendition of "Porgy and Bess" slated for their June concert, Markiewicz is on his way to realizing his goals of expanding the group

and doing different kinds of music, especially transcriptions of symphonic works.

"With that, you need a big band, you need 70 to 100 people playing. You can't hide behind the strings," he said.

Despite what he describes as a more conservative programming style, Markiewicz said his personal tastes are very diverse, running from 20th-century composer Vincent Persichetti to live azz, of which he said he sometimes sneaks out to catch sets.

"I'll listen to everything. I appreciate all music," he said, though he admits to not owning any country.

"The Greatest Generation" concert will be held 3 p.m. April 9 at Bridgewater-Raritan High School. Admission is free.



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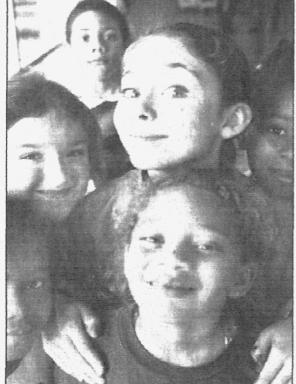


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Hospital president honored

Continued from page A1

School, where he completed a residency in internal medicine, served as chief resident in internal medicine and completed a fellowship in cardiovascular diseases. He is board certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular diseases.

Lacy is a member of Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor Alumni.

society, a fellow of the College American Cardiology and a fellow of the American College of Physicians. He is a recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award from University of Medicine and Dentistry -New Jersey and was inducted into the Rutgers University Hall of Distinguished

Health concerns addressed

Continued from page A1

changes that impact adult

The breakout session participants successfully accomplished their goals of providing lists of critical issues asso-

work groups. These issues will be the foundation for future

work group meetings. For more information, Middlesex County residents interested in participating in this project can call Padma Arvind, project coordinator, at (732) 745-3140.

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Middlesex County News

PRIDE celebrated at Piscataway schools

PISCATAWAY — Piscataway PRIDE in its schools will be celebrated 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday.

The community is invited to attend; the event is free.

The celebration will be based at King and Conackamack schools and will include student music performances, mock trial, living history, and world language demonstrations, and art displays.

The celebration will feature students from pre-school through 12th grade, and will be held indoors and outdoors, weather permitting.

"We hope that parents, public officials, and senior citizens will stop by and see the innovative and remarkable learning that is transforming our Piscataway schools," said Robert L. Copeland, superintendent. "Our residents can be proud of their educational pro-

Among the special events will be high school students from French, Spanish, and Italian classes performing vignettes as they sit in authentic café' settings in France, Spain and Italy. Middle school students will portray famous Black Americans.

Intermediate school students will illustrate portrait drawing. Drama students will present excerpts from plays including their most recent production, "Little Shop of

Visitors can see a Model UN min-conference, a mock trial court demonstration, brain gym exercises, literature jigsaw puzzles, algebra demonstrations from secondgraders, and string, jazz, and dance performances. The middle school orchestra will perform "The

Everything Jersey

Blue and the Grav Music" of the Civil War.

There will also be refreshments and information booths. Visitors to the event will receive a program detailing times and locations of various activities.

Additional information may be obtained by visiting www.piscatawayschools.org or by calling (732) 572-2289, Ext. 2520.

SBB Easter

program is set

SOUTH BOUND BROOK -The Recreation Committee holds its Easter program at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 1 at Robert Morris School on Madison Street.

The program is "The Last Dragon on Earth" presented by Encore Performing Arts Inc. The Easter bunny also will be on hand as a special attraction.

Admission is free to all borough youngsters. For more information, call Ada Barber at (732) 469-2436. 19th century leaders

are topic of lecture MIDDLESEX — William and Sue Wills return to the Middlesex Public Library for another in their

series on "Presidents and Their First Ladies, Dramatically Speaking.' The couple will speak at 3 p.m. Sunday, April 2 about William Henry Harrison and John Tyler,

American presidents in the 1840s.

Library Week and a reception will

The program is part of National

follow. For more information, call (732) 356-6602. The library is adjacent to the Municipal Building at 1300

Mountain Ave. 4-H sponsors clothing drive

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Council sponsors a clothing drive to benefit needy families.

Used clothing, shoes, handbags and linens are wanted. Bring them in sturdy plastic trash bags to the 4-H Center in East Brunswick between 7-9 p.m. Monday, April 3

and Wednesday, April 5. Proceeds go toward Project Gift, a holiday shopping day for lowincome families

For more information, call (732) 398-5261. The 4-H Center is adjacent to the fairgrounds on Cranbury Road (County Road 535), 3 miles south of Route 18.

Clubwomen

to hear author

METUCHEN - The Metuchen-Edison Women's Club holds its monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 5 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Middlesex and Oak avenues.

Published author Feather Schwartz Foster is the speaker. Guests are welcome and refreshments will be served. For membership information, call Diana at (732) 548-0925.

A trip is planned Sunday, April 9 to the Renault Winery and an Atlantic City casino. The bus leaves at 8:45 a.m. from the Edison Municipal Complex off Route 27. For details, call Cassie

at (732) 985-7583. The public is invited.

The Women's Club plans to have a booth for the Townwide Garage Sale on Sunday, April 23.

Easter egg hunt is coming up

EDISON — There's an Easter egg hunt that's open to Edison teenagers in Grades 6-12.

The egg hunt is at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 7 at the Minnie B. Veal Community Center, 1070 Grove Ave. Entry is free. Transportation from the Dorothy K. Drwal Stelton Community Center on Plainfield Avenue will be avail-

Registration is required at either Community Center by Wednesday, April 5. For more information, call (732) 248-7312. The egg hunt is sponsored by the Edison Recreation Department.

'Dream Team'

basketball game DUNELLEN — The Dunellen

High School Project Graduation Committee sponsors the "Dare to Dream" basketball game, the NFL Players Dream Team versus the Dunellen Community Team.

Game time is 7 p.m. Saturday, April 8 in the Faber School gym. Bring a jersey, hat, program or

other sports item for a free auto-

Adult tickets are \$7 in advance or \$10 at the door. Student tickets are \$5 in advance or \$8 at the door. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

For advance tickets, call Maria Harty at (732) 752-6164.

Have breakfast with the bunny

PISCATAWAY — All are invited to a "Breakfast with the Easter Bunny" on Sunday, April 9 at the Possumtown Fire Company, 85 Stratton St. South.

Servings are from 8:30 a.m.noon. Cost is \$6 for adults. \$5 for seniors, \$4 for children ages 4-12 and free for children ages 3-under.

Palm Sunday breakfast buffet

SOUTH BOUND BROOK -The South Bound Brook Fire Company helids an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet on Palm Sunday,

Servings are from 7:30 a.m.noon in the firehouse at 81 Edgewood Terrace. Cost is \$9 for adults, \$8 for seniors, \$6 for children ages 5-10 and free for children under age 5.

For more information, visit www.sbbfd.com or call (732) 627-

'Glory and Joys' for garden club

EDISON — The Edison Garden Club meets at 7 p.m. Monday, April 10 at the Main Branch of the Edison Free Public Library, 340 Plainfield Ave.

Cynthia Lin covers "The Glory and Joys of Annuals" in your garden. She is a member of the Garden Club as well as a garden center professional and plant

The public is invited and refreshments will be served. For more information, call Mary Kobasz at (732) 549-3579.

Six Flags trip for teens

EDISON — The Recreation Department sponsors a trip to Six Flags Great Adventure for Edison teens on Saturday, April 15.

Departure is at 9 a.m. from the Minnie B. Veal Community Center, 1070 Grove Ave., and 9:30 a.m. from the Dorothy K. Drwal Stelton Community Center, 328 Plainfield Ave. Cost is \$33 per person; those who hold a Six Flags season pass pay \$5 extra.

Registration is required at either Community Center by Wednesday, April 12. For more information, call (732) 248-7309 day or (732) 248-7313 night.



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Middlesex County News

Jewish artist coming to area

METUCHEN — Hadassah and the Sisterhood of Congregation Neve Shalom are sponsoring a lecture by Jewish artist Mordechai Rosenstein

The program is at 8:30 p.m. Saturday at the Edison home of Lenore and Roberto Laracuente. Admission of \$18 includes dessert.

In addition, Rosenstein will have his art available for purchase with a portion of the proceeds to go toward the synagogue's fundraising efforts.

For reservations, call Susan Goldman at (732) 549-0195 or Michelle Stein at (732) 744-0803 by Sunday, March 26.

Amnesty Week at Edison library

EDISON - The Edison Free Public Library has an Amnesty Week from Monday, April 3 to Saturday, which coincides with National Library Week.

Bring your overdue books to any Edison library branch between Monday and Saturday. You will not be charged a fine for overdue books returned in that period. Overdue DVDs continue to accumulate fines as usual.

In addition, donations of canned food will be accepted for MC

County college plans open house

EDISON --- Middlesex County College is holding an open house for would-be students and their families

The open house is from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Sunday in the College



CORN

Center, located on the main MCC campus off Woodbridge Avenue. Officials of all academic departments are scheduled to be on hand. MCC students will conduct tours of the main campus.

For more information, visit www.middlesexcc.edu or call (732) 906-4243.

19th century leaders are topic of lecture

MIDDLESEX - William and Sue Wills return to the Middlesex Public Library for another in their series on "Presidents and Their First Ladies, Dramatically Speaking.'

The couple will speak at 3 p.m. Sunday about William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, American presidents in the 1840s. The program is part of National Library Week and a reception will follow.

For more information, call (732) 356-6602. The library is adjacent to the Municipal Building at 1300 Mountain Ave.

Make a collage pin or pendant

SOUTH PLAINFIELD - Ronda Wisniewski returns to the South Plainfield Public Library for more "Practical Crafting" at 10:30 a.m.

She'll show you how to make a collage pin or pendant. Bring in shells and beads to add a personal touch. Fee is \$1.

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

Order flowers for Passover

00

0.

METUCHEN - The youth committee of Congregation Neve Shalom is selling floral center-

pieces for your Passover table. Each centerpiece is \$18. For orders, call Nancy Kaswin at (732) 548-8738 or Jennine Shpigel at (908) 757-8143 by Monday

Proceeds go toward children's programs at the Metuchen synagoque.

Liberal arts festival to

be held at college EDISON - Middlesex County College is holding a Liberal Arts Festival for students between April

This year's festival offers programs in literature, language, psychology and culture. The public is invited to the keynote address at 11 a.m. Friday, April 7 in the Performing Arts Center, on the main MCC campus off Woodbridge Avenue.

Diana Kendall speaks on "Framing Reality: How the Liberal Arts Help Us Make Sense of Our World."

She is a sociology professor at Baylor University and a published author as well. A reception follows her address.

4-H sponsors clothing drive

The Middlesex County 4-H Teen Council sponsors a clothing drive to benefit needy families.

Used clothing, shoes, handbags and linens are wanted. Bring them in sturdy plastic trash bags to the 4-H Center in East Brunswick between 7-9 p.m. Monday and Wednesday.

Proceeds go toward Project Gift, a holiday shopping day for low-income families.

For more information, call (732) 398-5261. The 4-H Center is adjacent to the fairgrounds on Cranbury Road (County Road 535), 3 miles south of Route 18.

MCC recruiting adjunct faculty

EDISON - Middlesex County College is recruiting instructors to be adjunct professors.

The college has scheduled an Adjunct Faculty Recruitment Fair is from 4-7 p.m. Thursday in Cafeteria C at the College Center,

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on the main MCC campus off Woodbridge Avenue.

Most positions require a master's degree or equivalent. Bring your driver's license, your Social Security card, your resume and copies of your transcripts.

For a full list of open positions, visit www.middlesexcc.edu/hr or call (732) 906-4688.

Church rummage

sale on in April BOUND BROOK - A rummage sale is scheduled for early April at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 214 Church St.

Hours are 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday and 8 a.m.-noon Friday. Proceeds benefit church programs. A "Big Bag" sale is on April

Final area visit for appraiser

SOUTH PLAINFIELD -Antiques appraiser Alan Snyder pays his final visit to the South Plainfield Public Library at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 9.

As he is leaving Central New Jersey, this is your last chance to have Snyder conduct an appraisal of your antiques. There is a limit of two items per person, first come, first served. Admission is

For more information, call (908) 754-7885 or visit the library at 2484 Plainfield Ave.

Go on treasure hunt for Easter

EDISON — Community Presbyterian Church is planning a "Holy Treasure Hunt" for kids who are toddlers up to Grade 5.

This free program is at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturday, April 15 on the church grounds at 75 Glenville Road. Kids can hear the Easter story, make a craft and take part in an Easter egg hunt. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, call (732) 287-1666

Wine and cheese s ocial in April METUCHEN - A wine and

cheese social after Easter benefits the Milltown-based Interfaith Network of Care.

The fundraising event is at 6 p.m. Saturday, April 22 in the auditorium at St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral on Main Street. Admission of \$40 includes door prizes.

For tickets, call (732) 247-1655. Concert benefits schol-

arship fund METUCHEN — The Suzv

Schwartz Memorial Scholarship Fund presents its 16th annual benefit concert with an encore performance by Kol B'Seder.

The concert is at 7 p.m. Sunday, April 23 at Congregation Neve Shalom, 250 Grove Ave. Cost for adults is \$18 in advance or \$20 at the door. Cost for children under age 18 is \$8. Patron and benefactor seating is available.

For more information, call (732) 548-2236, Ext. 18. Babysitting is available for parents who reserve by Sunday, April 16.

Men's Club is offering Pasta Night on April 30

METUCHEN - Tickets are on sale for the annual Pasta Night sponsored by the Men's Club of Congregation Neve Shalom.

The dinner is from 5:30-7 p.m. Sunday, April 30 in the synagogue at 250 Grove Ave. Cost for adults is \$6 in advance and \$8 at the door. Cost for children is \$5 for ages 5-10 and free for ages 4under. For reservations, call Jeff at (732) 494-1518 or Abe at (732) 494-6427.

Author will speak to local Women's Club

METUCHEN - The Metuchen-Edison Women's Club holds its monthly meeting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Middlesex and Oak avenues.

Published author Feather Schwartz Foster is the speaker. Guests are welcome and refreshments will be served. For membership information, call Diana at (732) 548-0925.

A trip is planned April 9 to the Renault Winery and an Atlantic City casino. The bus leaves at 8:45 a.m. from the Edison Municipal Complex off Route 27. For details, call Cassie at (732)

985-7583. The public is invited. The Women's Club plans to have a booth for the Townwide Garage Sale on Sunday, April 23.

'Animal Item Drive'

being held in area METUCHEN - A heads-up to all who love cats, rabbits, dogs and other animals: The Metuchen-Edison Women's Club

is holding an "Animal Item Drive." Dry cat food, moist cat food, cat box litter, rabbit food, dry dog food and canned dog food are desired. Old blankets, old towels, guinea pig bedding, paper towels, bleach, dish detergent and laundry detergent are also wanted. Blankets and towels must be clean.

Bring your donations to Borough Hall at 2480 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield; Donna's Hometown Deli at 1018 Amboy Ave., Edison; or the Metuchen Veterinary Hospital at 69 Pearl St. Donations will benefit the

Plainfield Area Humane Society. For more information, call Helena at (908) 754-0313 or Diana at (732) 548-0925.

Library coins are April exhibit and lecture

SOUTH PLAINFIELD - The South Plainfield Public Library has a month-long exhibit of coins in April to mark National Coin Week.

To tie in with the exhibit, the library raises the point that "A Penny Saved is History Learned" at 7 p.m. Monday, April 10. Presenter Gregory Heim covers the different designs of the U.S. 1cent coin from the late 18th century to today. He'll also answer questions from the audience.

Heim is a life member of the Watchung Hills Coin Club and the American Numismatic Association.

For more information, visit www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us or call (908) 754-7885. The library is adjacent to the Municipal Building.

Military News

Madeleine O. Dahl has

joined the Air Force under its

"Delayed Entry" program,

which gives recruits the

opportunity to delay going on

active duty for up to one year. She is scheduled to report for

basic training in May at

Lackland Air Force Base,

Dahl is the daughter of

Avenue,

Chris and Naomi Dahl of

Highland Park, and a 2005

graduate of Highland Park

Air Force Airman Russell J.

Basile has graduated from basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He is the son of Karin Welsh of

Flemington and the nephew

of Ilona LaChina of Duclos

Air Force Airman David R.

Zaleski has graduated from basic military training at

Lackland Air Force Base, San

During the six weeks of

training, Zaleski studied the

Air Force mission, organization, and military customs

and courtesies; performed

drill and ceremony marches,

and received physical train-

ing, rifle marksmanship, field training exercises, and spe-cial training in human rela-

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn

credits toward an associate degree through the Community College of the

He is the son of David and Christine Tuttle of Dunellen.

Zaleski is a 2005 graduate of Dunellen High School.

Air Force Airman Vincent C. Calantoni has graduated

from basic military training

at Lackland Air Force Base,

During the six weeks of

training, Calantoni studied the Air Force mission, organi-

zation, and military customs

and courtesies; performed

drill and ceremony marches,

and received physical train-

ing, rifle marksmanship, field

training exercises, and spe-

cial training in human rela-

In addition, airmen who complete basic training earn

credits toward an associate

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Lane, Edison.

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through Community College of the Air Force. He is the nephew of Mary

Nelson of Edison. Calantoni is a 2005 graduate of Edison High School.

tions.

degree

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Volunteer efforts expand in several counties

A Girl Scout troop in East Brunswick; a senior citizen complex in Franklin; high school students in Parsippany Hills and Bridgewater; grade school students in Newark; a dentist's office in Edison; a YMCA in Mountain Lakes and a group of young thespians in Branchburg are all working on initiatives to raise donations and collect snacks and toiletries to send to U.S. troops deployed overseas.

Five Girl Scouts 13 and 14, members of Troop 76 in East Brunswick, will host a May 7 event at the Sunrise Assisted Living Facility on Summerhill Road and have invited troops from throughout the Delaware-Raritan Council to participate in the card and letter-writing campaign.

Members of the host troop are all working on their Silver Award, and have asked all Girl Scouts attending the East Brunswick event to also bring goods that can be sent to members of the armed services.

Chet Trechock, a veteran of the Korean conflict, will coordinate a drive next month to collect groceries and contributions at the Canal Walk senior citizen complex in Franklin.

Jillian Dorrell and Cara Yuknis, seniors at Bridgewater-Raritan High School and members of The Spanish Honor Society under the direction of Sonia Avellan are coordinating a collection drive at their school, while senior Scott Pierson, Jr., vice president of the Interact Club at Parsippany Hills High School in Morris County will do the same at his school. Coleen Troiano, a guidance counselor at the Wilson Avenue School in Newark, is also putting together a program at her school.

Tia White, who coordinated a very successful weekend collection at the Lakeland Hills Family YMCA in Mountain Lakes last year, will host another collection for several weeks next month as well.

The Branchburg Recreation Department will host a performance of "Alice in The Attic" May 19-20, with rehearsals slated to begin soon, and will once again dedicate their performance to U.S. troops overseas. This will be the third time that the students have decided to do so in the past year.

Last April, the students performed "Darn Yanks" and later that year, "I Love Lulu." Both times, the cast, numbering dozens of grade school and middle school students, asked audience members to donate supplies, and drop them off at the performances in lieu of paid admission.

Dr. Saul Frechtman, 98 James St., Edison, is collecting donations of goods from his patients, with his staff sending out information on Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 in all patient mailings; another new drop off



Hunterdon County at Gerard's Watch & Jewelry, 4 Leigh St. Fan fest

Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 volunteers will be at Commerce Bank Park Saturday to help the Somerset Patriots welcome fans back to the ballpark for the unofficial start of the 2006 season.

OPSHBX staff will hand out information detailing efforts to ship supplies to U.S. troops overseas, as well as collect donations and items for ship-ping at the Reporter booth on the concourse.

Opening Day for the Somerset Patriots is April 27, and Saturday's annual Fanfest and Open Player Tryouts helps to cick off the season.

The Patriots are providing an incentive to fans who contribute to the welfare of the Marines and soldiers.

The Patriots ticket office will be open, and for those fans who do make a contribution to OPSHBX, the Patriots have a special offer that provides a free ticket to any game during the season with the purchase of a second ticket.

It's the Patriots way of saying thanks for supporting OPSH-BX, according to Pat McVerry, president and general manager.

"This illustrates our commitment to be an even bigger part of Operation Shoebox for the upcoming season," McVerry

Thousands of fans are expected to come and watch unsigned players who hope to impress manager Sparky Lyle enough to earn a trip to Spring Training April 17. They'll also be able to take advantage of discounts in the Patriots Headquarters gift

Letter from Iraq

"WE DON'T LOOK TO BECOME HEROES . . . IT JUST TURNS OUT THAT

My name is Joseph Peter Letizia, 29. I am a Naval Reservist from south Florida. My unit: MIUWU 205 out of Charleston, S.C. was mobilized some time ago and is currently supporting U.S. operations for the war on terror in Kuwait.

I write to you at 04:30 am on Friday, March 17, 2006 after coming across a few small packages left on a table in one of our recreational centers.

I felt the desire to write and let



COURTESY LANCE CPL. THOMAS CUNNINGHAM, JR.

Marine Lance Cpl. Thomas Cunningham, Jr., a resident of Ringoes, cuddles Chaos, one of three orphaned dogs found by his Marine unit at a train station somewhere in Iraq. Cunningham's unit has since left Iraq, but they were able to leave Chaos to the Army unit that replaced them. Chaos fattened up eating a steady diet of MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) according to the Marine's father Tom, an Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 volunteer.

have arrived. While they are that there are Americans willing not addressed to me and I am not sure if the recipients have written you back yet or will have the time to, I take the responsibility to do so. The boxes were care packages. All marked: "Operation

To my surprise, they still had a lot of items in them; candy, soup, cereal, shaving razors and so on. While all the boxes were addressed to the same individual, it appeared that, that person wanted to share the gifts with

That is what [We] Americans are about - having the desire to

This person felt it was best to offer these goods to his fellow countrymen, to aid in their personal detachment from wherever it is they may live back home. If nothing more, than to give away special items marked for him only, an unselfish act of kindness.

Just receiving something as minor as a toothbrush or even certain foods which are not available here, means so much on a personal level to so many here in the military. It reminds us of home, it keeps us focused, it tells us there are many who are home paying attention and wanting to help in many ways possible. And it reminds us that we have a goal to reach and when the mission is complete, we will return home to enjoy those same liberties of just being able to get up in the morning and drive to the local store, to purchase the very same items without having to worry about an unstable environment full of terror around every corner.

This is my first time hearing of Operation Shoebox and am deeply grateful to all those who had volunteered their time and hard earned money to offer us a little something from home. It truly means so much to know

bout vou!

OPSHBX events. Their dedication is an inspiration to

Join The Reporter, Tom Cunningham and other

Shoebox New Jersey 2005. Salute the sacrifice of our brave servicemen and women serving overseas. Be a

Patriot · Support OPSHBX. Call The Reporter's Executive Editor Rod Hirsch at (908) 575 6684 or

click www.ni.com/shoeboxnj for information on how

all OPSHBX volunte

The Reporter

to take the time to reach out to us to offer support.

For those of you with military families, you understand the term: BRAVO ZULU!

For those who do not, it means Great job, job well done, thank

I would like to extend a warm and sincere BRAVO ZULU to the following individuals:

TROOP 111, Clinton, NI Sydney, Olivia, Allison, Erin, Sarah, Cassie, Alicia, Madeline, Nicloe, Emily, Sophia and the rest of Troop 111.

The Mini- Roooters Victoria, Christopher, Christina, Courtney, Trevor, Matthew Ryan, Eluse and Ava

c/o Elyse & Ava Dicesare Basking Ridge, NJ Lakeland Hills Family YMCA

Att: Tia White Community Serivice Director Lakeland Hills Family YMCA Mountain Lakes, NJ

Mayor of Borough of Manville Angelo Corradino, the Borough Council and the residents of Borough of Manville.

For myself, I only ask of support from the American public, nothing more. Like my grandfather and father before me, I volunteered. My youngest brother recently joined up as well.

I truly hope our country never

has to see another draft. This is the strongest military on earthand we are volunteeers.

We understand the threat and are willing to sacrifice all we have for the future of our country and for those who live here. I am one person. There are millions of people who live in my country. They are all strangers to me. The only relationship I have with them is that we are all American. It starts and stops there for me. I continue to ask for your support. Get the message out, break through the media's rhetoric and make sure all the positive things we do become heard. It is the only way America will survive.

Respectfully,

Joseph Peter Letizia Petty Officer 3rd Class, USNR MIUWU 205 Charleston, South Carolina

Girl Scout cookies

Jill Larson and the Girl Scouts of Warren are in the midst of a month-long sales drive, and are counting on you to help them support U.S. troops overseas. So far, customers have bought

120 boxes of Girl Scout cookies, the equivalent of ten cases. The girls will be out in force again this weekend beginning at 10 a.m. at four locations: Kings in Mountain Warren on Boulevard; A&P on Washington Valley Road in Warren; Shop-Rite on Valley Road in Stirling and A&P on King George Road in Basking Ridge

Jill is supervising the efforts of 28 Girl Scout troops, with hundreds of girls taking turns selling Thin Mints, Peanut Butter and Shortbread cookies door-to-door, as well as manning tables that will be set up outside food stores in town. We've supplied the Girl Scouts with Operation Shoebox posters which will be displayed at their

The cookies are a popular item with our soldiers and Marines based overseas, who have written letters of thanks for receiving the cookies in the packages OPSHBX ships over-

Though it's hard to believe, Jill says there are people who say "no" when asked to buy the cookies for themselves.

'We're hoping that instead of saying 'no,' they'll say 'yes' to buying a box of cookies for our instead."

Sounds like a great idea, and for those of you who do support the Girl Scouts, make sure you buy an extra box or two for the soldiers. The Girl Scouts will take care of delivering them to OPSHBX, and we'll make sure they get tucked into the packages headed overseas.

The Girl Scouts will be out again the weekend of April 22-

Call (908) 753-7668 for further information.

Cash contributions

The Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 452, based in Hunterdon County, held their dinner dance last Saturday at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2290 in Manville. Part of the festivities included a 50-50 raffle, with the veterans and their guests donating \$486 to Operation Shoebox New Jersey

OPSHBX volunteers also collected \$160 at Commerce Bank Ballpark March 11 in conjunction with The Patriots opening day of single game ticket sales, and \$217 March 18 at Menlo Park Mall in Edison during The Patriots Star Spangled Banner

T-shirts for sale

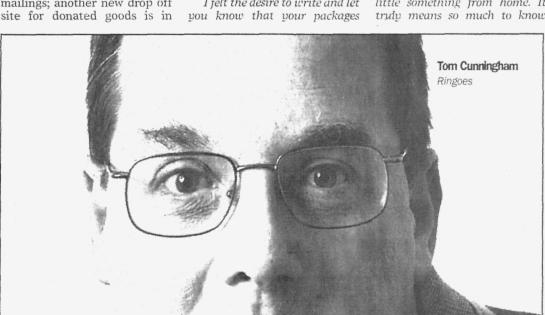
Quality T-shirts with the handsome Operation Shoebox New Jersey 2005 poster and logo are available for a donation of \$10.

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

The shirts are also available at The Chronicle office, 44 Veterans Memorial Drive East. All proceeds from sale of the shirts directly benefit OPSH-BX. 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

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



Tom, his wife Susan and daughter Marykate spe-

family's service to the United States armed forces.

Jr., recently concluded a tour of duty in Iraq. In

addition to their son, a niece and four nephews have

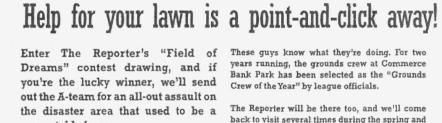
served in Iraq and Kuwait, one of whom was award

ed a Purple Heart for wounds received in action. The

name have also recruited several members of their extended family to support and participate in

Their son, Marine Lance Cpl. Thomas Cu

ntless hours helping to sort, pack and ship boxes



respectable lawn. Grand Prize is an on-site assess-

ment of your besieged lawn and lots of advice, the best advice available, from one of New Jersey's pre-eminent turf and lawn care special-The Reporter ists, a national award winner

and green grass professional who is so busy during the summer that he hires a landscaper to take care of the lawn chores at his home.

These pearls of wisdom on lawn care will come to you free from the caretaker of the "Jewel of the Atlantic League."

Turf troubleshooter Ray Cipperly, head grounds keeper for the Somerset Bank Park in Bridgewater,

assisted by Joe Zavodnick, assistant grounds Winners will be announced at keeper, will come to your home, assess the prob- Commerce Bank Park during lem areas, and offer advice on how to attack what's plaguing your turf.

Enter now through April 20!

third- second- and firstprize winners. Third- and

summer, and report on the progress of the recla-

There's more. Once your lawn has begun

to once again resemble a lawn, the

Patriots hope to host a party at your

house - complete with players and

Sparkee the Mascot - for invited family and friends. The

Patriots will provide the

To Enter: fill out

of your lawn, send it

to The Reporter, 44

Veterans Memorial Drive East, Somerville, N.J. 08876, or email fixmy-

lawn@njnpublishing.com

Photos will not be

Cipperly, along with repre-

sentatives of The Patriots

and The Reporter, will

judge the contest, and pick

the coupon, and along with a photo

good refreshments.

mation project.

second prize winners will receive a gift package of lawn tools, lawn care products and Patriots tickets.

returned.

pre-game ceremonies April 28.

If you enter, they may come...

"Field of Dreams" Entry Form

Name Daytime Phone

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The Reporter . Patriots "Field of Dreams" Contest The Reporter 44 Veterans Memorial Drive East

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A special kind of homecoming

After a devastating fire, couple ready to begin again



Editor's Note: This article is Part XI in a continuing series that looks closely at how a ramily picks up the pieces, rebuilds and goes on with their life in the aftermath of a fire that destroyed their home. The first seven parts of the series were published in The Reporter on Thursdays between May 5 and June 9, and resumed in September. Part X was published last month.

By AMY S. BOBROWSKI Staff Writer

GREEN BROOK -Fawnda Genovese-Garcia laughed when she realized her husband accidentally got stripes of colonial blue paint on their white ceil-

ing.
"I didn't know," Felix
Garcia said sheepishly.

Fawnda continued to laugh deep from her stomach. It was a laugh that felt good, considering what

she's been through.
Sunday marked an important day for the cou-

"It was kind of mixed emotions... I don't know whether to celebrate we got through the year or cry," Fawnda said. "But I guess I just won't dwell on the Pine Brook based it and move on."

anniversary, the couple did not cry, nor did they celebrate. Instead, they rolled up their sleeves, picked up rollers and painted the two of the three bedrooms very vibrant colors. The colonial

blue was for the guest room. "I have black Georgetown furniture and that cast iron bed," Fawnda said. "I want a black, white and blue theme. I bought these cute Laura Ashley blue and white curtains. The room's really going to look great."

Amethyst cream — a bright purple color — was for Emma's room, Fawnda's 4-month-old granddaugh-

"I just love this color," said Fawnda, who loves being a grandmother and can't wait to have regular sleepovers with little Emma. "It's just so perfect for a little girl's room. I'm going to use little violets or purple roses for the curtain ties. It's going to be so neat." Working on the house

together got the couple even more anxious to move back home. For almost a year, they've been living in a small apartment in Watchung's Crystal Ridge Club.
"I'm ready to be back in.

I've already started packing up the apartment," Fawnda said. "You give ple— the one year anniversary of the fire that destroyed their cozy and I can be out of there," Fawnda said. "You give me 24 hours and I can be out of there," Fawnda said. "Most of our stuff is in storage anyway."

But before they move in, the house needs to pass all the regular inspections. Wertheimer & Sons, company that completed

The week before the the construction, already this business," he said. has approvals from plumbing and the electrical inspections and the building and fire inspections were scheduled for earlier this week.

"She should be able to get back in the first week of April," Andrew of April," Andrew Wertheimer said. "I told her she can start brining stuff in. We've just a few punch list items to finish, but it's mostly things we can do while she's in

Remaining work includes installing new garage doors, removing dumpster installing the cabinet shell around the refrigera-

"They're going to build the fridge into a cabinet, so it just looks like it fits there," Fawnda said. "But I just want to get in and they can worry about that later. I want to get in. I don't careabout a damn refrigerator

During and even after the move-in process, the Wertheimers will keep in touch with the couple, making sure the house meets their expectations.

"I'm sure we'll have to touch up paint. A lot of people bump walls when they move things in," Wertheimer said during a recent trip to the house. "And we'll give them some sort of credit so they can get landscaping to fix up the yard."

27-year-old Wertheimer, reconstructing this house was his first big project.

To Place Your Ad Call: Claire 908-894-1082

"This is one of the first projects I've taken full on by myself. It was a chal-lenge for me, but I learned a lot. It was nice to work with a nice client. It could have been a real headache if I was with someone mean. I thoroughly enjoyed it." One of the things he most enjoyed was putting together a surprise for the couple — a hand carved and painted wood mantle and amber marble hearth in their front living room.

"From meeting with her so many times, I got a taste of her (Fawnda's) basic tastes," he said. "I went to a custom fireplace store and I knew the moment I saw it that she'd like it. I like to surprise a client when I can. It's always nice.'

In the corner of the living room, Felix leaned over and pretended he was laying his hands on the ivory keys.

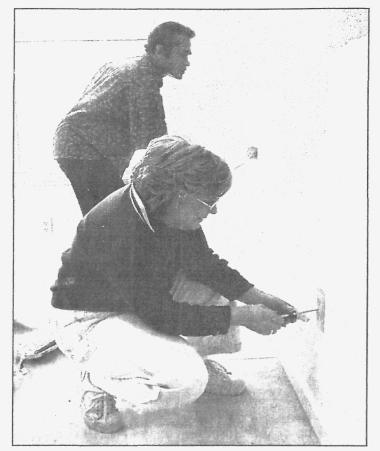
For their first wedding anniversary in February, Fawnda bought Felix a baby grand piano. She even had the builders add special recessed lighting to high-light the spot they'll place the piano.

"I can't wait to play it," he said.

The house, which recently saw the installation of wide planked wood floor and cabinetry, smells like fresh wood.

"It's got that new house smell, said Wertheimer, inhaling deeply. "I love this house. I'd love to live here myself."

In the kitchen, Fawnda



Fawnda Genovese-Garcia and her husband, Felix Garcia, are pictured painting one of the rooms in their recently-rebuilt home

granite countertop. Its purple and amber hues standout against next to the stainless steel appliances.

"Look at the lights," Fawnda said. "They turned out to match the countertop."

Exploring each room, Fawnda felt closer and closer to getting her home back.

'It's exciting," she said. "I can feel things coming

The couple is anxiously "I'm relatively young in and Felix ran their hands awaiting the move, but

over the cool and smooth they know it'll bring back painful memories everything they lost.

"It almost feels like you're moving in to a brand new house for the first time," Fawnda said.
"But I know once we starting bringing stuff out of store I'm going to look at all the stuff I wanted to try and save but couldn't. Then the nightmares will come back. But now it's over. We've had a year to think about this pain. That's



The Reporter

Somerset Messenger-Gazette • The Chronicle

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Dynamic duo returning to Patriot lineup

Nettles, Radmanovich sign after leading '05 title team

By ALLAN CONOVER Sports Editor

BRIDGEWATER — Following a rather quiet winter - one which was actually a bit quieter than he preferred — Jeff Nettles is ready to pull on a Somerset Patriots uniform

Among the most dangerous power hitters in the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball

the past two sea-Nettles sons, signed a contract last week to play his fourth campaign with the defending league champion Patriots.

A few days later Ryan Radmanovich, who had a somewhat busier off-season, also agreed to terms with the Patriots, once again ensuring Somerset perhaps the most potent 1-2 power punch in the ALPB.

Nettles, who spent some time in the Kansas City Royals' spring training camp last spring, received no calls from major league organizations this

"I was hoping to get picked up by someone," said the 27-yearold third baseman from his home in Lenoir City, Tenn. March 23. "But nothing came of it and I knew once teams started heading for their training camps and I hadn't heard anything, there was a good chance I'd be coming back to Somerset."

came aboard again Monday.

games, mostly in the outfield.

Gsell is among

Patriot signees

BRIDGEWATER -- With their Florida spring training session just

two weeks away, the Somerset Patriots continue to step up their pace in signing players, bringing four more players from last year's squad

Former Immaculata High standout Tony Gsell and Patrick Boran,

key reserves who helped Somerset win its third Atlantic League of

Professional Baseball championship last year, signed late last week

and lefthanded pitcher Todd Moser and utility man George Sandel

Gsell will be playing his fourth season for Somerset and Boran, a

An All-State selection at Immaculata, where he graduated in

Princeton University graduate who joined the club last June, is also

1995, the 29-year-old Gsell batted .233 last year with 22 doubles,

five home runs (including a grand-slam) and 26 runs batted in

In 2004 Gsell hit .244 with five homers and 23 RBI in 69 games

and during his first year with the Pats, he hit .263 with 11 homers,

six doubles and 35 RBI in 67 games. Gsell was a draft pick of the

Boran, a former draft choice of the Boston Red Sox but whose

career has been plagued by injuries, hit .280 last summer with 60

hits, including 11 doubles and four homers, and had 34 RBI in 76

Boran, 25, was a four-year starting shortstop for Princeton, twice

earning All-Ivy League laurels, and then signed with Boston after

graduating in 2002. But the Pottsville, Pa. native was heavily hit by

the injury bug and played in just 132 games in three years with the

Red Sox organization before being released during 2005 spring

Six games into the 2003 Florida State League (Single-A) season,

he suffered a broken bone when he fouled a ball off his left foot,

and then injured his Achilles tendon while rehabilitating the foot.

In the same league the next year, he developed a "sports hernia,"

which wasn't accurately diagnosed until after a very painful season

Moser went 3-5 with a 5.00 earned run average in 35 games,

including 12 starts, for the Pats last year. He was the winner in

Game 2 of the ALPB championship series with Nashua, allowing

two earned runs on five hits in six innings. Moser, who has three

seasons of Double-A experience with the Florida Marlins and St.

Louis Cardinals, has a career 38-25 record with a 3.54 ERA.

back after being an effective utility-role performer.

while playing in 68 games, mostly in left field.

Chicago Cubs out of Old Dominion University.

Not that that's such a bad thing, either.

"If I'm not on an affiliated major league-affiliated) team, this is where I want to play ball," said Nettles. "It's a fun place to play. This isn't the spot I want to play another 10 years, but if I don't get picked up, it's the place I want to be.

"But the main goal is always trying to get picked up," he added, "and so

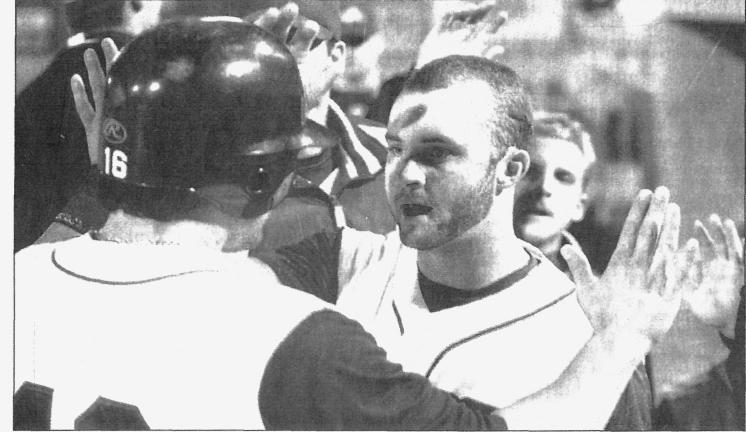
you try to put up some good numbers and hope teams see those numbers and you get an invitation to spring training. Last year it didn't work out but I'm

still young enough. I still have a couple of years to try and do

Because he's now 34, Radmanovich knows major league ball is no longer in his future but there's no doubt the rightfielder can still play the

He and Kevin Nicholson, Somerset's shortstop in 2005, were on Team Canada which participated in the inaugural World Baseball Championships earlier this month and Radmanovich is coming off his finest pro campaign, helping the Pats win their second league title in the past three years. This will also be his fourth year with Somerset.

lefty-swinging Radmanovich, still hopeful of signing with an overseas league at some point this year, was



Jeff Nettles (right), here being greeted by teammates after scoring against Atlantic City during the 2005 playoffs, will be playing his fourth Atlantic League of Professional Baseball season with the Somerset Patriots. Nettles hit 28 home runs and had 99 RBI, third in the league,

among the ALPB leaders in hitting with a .319 average last season and, like Nettles, ripped 28 home runs to set a Somerset

He concluded the regular season with 154 hits, including 27 doubles, and drove in 89 runs in 129 games. A career .277 hitter, Radmanovich peaked at the right time, too, as he went 8 for 20 (.400) in the playoffs with three homers, two doubles and

"Ryan really carried us offen-sively through the playoffs," said Patriots Manager Sparky Lyle, "and he was a big reason we won the championship. He gets better every year here and we look forward to having him and Nettles in the heart of our lineup again."

Echoing Nettles' sentiments, Radmanovich would much rather be with Somerset than anywhere else if affiliated ball isn't in the plans or an overseas deal doesn't come to fruition.

"Maybe there will still be an opportunity for me overseas, said Radmanovich, a resident of West Hartford, Conn. "But it's nice the Patriots are there for me. They're a great organization and it's fairly close to home, so it's a nice option to have. The Atlantic League is a great place to play ball if you can look past the salaries.

Although he also produced some superb offensive numbers last year, belting 28 homers and 36 doubles and driving in 99 runs, Nettles' batting average did drop precipitously, from a career-best .319 to .265.

He suffered through a slow start and never got into the type of groove in which he strung together several multiple-hit games. But he did deliver frequent clutch hits, as evidenced by his RBI total, and his average did rise in the season's latter

"I never did get the average up to where it had been the previous two years," said Nettles, who missed just four regularseason games. "I think I salvaged something getting it up to .265, but it was a productive .265. If I went 1 for 4, that hit was often something that really



Ryan Radmanovich, trying to elude a tag at second base during a game last September, has signed to play a fourth season with the Somerset Patriots. The veteran rightfielder was Somerset's offensive leader in 2005, batting .319 and walloping 28 home runs, which tied Jeff Nettles for the team record.

the Triple-A level. During his

counted. And the main thing was, I helped the Patriots win the championship.'

Nettles, who's hit a teamrecord 63 homers the past three vears, also showed considerable defensive progress after totaling a league-high 66 errors during the 2003-04 seasons. Last year he committed just 19 in 434 chances after spending some time (23 games) at first base early in the campaign.

"I think some of that improvement had something to do with going to spring training with the Royals," said Nettles, "I got to work on my defensive footwork and really get down on grounders during infield drills, which are things I didn't get to do my previous two years with the Patriots."

Somerset's training field in Homestead, Fla. was in such horrific shape infielders were reluctant to take grounders, which is among the reasons for

the move to Lakeland this year. Nettles was drafted by the Yankees in 1998 and reached

first Patriots season in 2003, he hit .286 with 13 homers and 56 RBI in 117 games, and then was named MVP of the championship playoff series when he hit .450 (9 for 20) with a homer and five RBI.

The following season he was second in the league with 93 RBI, third in runs scored (87), sixth in the batting race (.319) and totaled 22 homers and 23 doubles.

While still primarily focused on baseball, Nettles is keeping his eye on another sport as a future option. He can rip some wicked shots into the gaps at Commerce Bank Park but he's also been known to drive a golf ball into the nether reaches of Willow Creek Golf Club and a few other courses not far from his Tennessee residence.

Once a highly-rated junior player while growing up in San' Diego, Nettles still does his best to stay sharp on the fairways and greens.

"If baseball doesn't work out,

golf is something I'd really consider pursuing as a profession," said Nettles, who's been involved in the sport since he was 7 years old and plays four or five times a week during the offseason. "It's something that comes naturally to me and I love the game and take it seriously when I'm playing.

"It was a little too cold out there today to play a full round but I was working on my putting, and I was just watching some golf on TV."

His father, former New York Yankee All-Star third baseman Graig Nettles, is also an avid golfer and they were planning on getting a few rounds in together this week. The elder Nettles had been helping out at the Yankees' spring training site in Tampa, Fla.

Right now, however, Nettles is beginning to zero in on another independent league baseball season, anticipating the Patriots' own version of spring training which will be held April 17-26.

Panthers will be shooting for more victories

By DAVE ALLENA

had concluded.

BRIDGEWATER

Reclaiming its status as one of the state's top boys lacrosse squads will be among Bridgewater-Raritan High's objectives this season.

Coming off a rare losing campaign during which a poor slow start led to a 7-12 record, the Panthers will look to a veteran cast that finished well a year ago to return to the upper echelon of state teams while challenging for New Jersey Interscholastic Lacrosse League-Pitt Division and

Skyland Conference titles. Chuck Apel, who begins his 27th season as head coach in the Bridgewater-Raritan school district, has a large group of starters and other contributors back from a year ago and will look to feed off the Panthers' play down the stretch, when they won seven of their last 10

games and earned a state tournament berth as a wild card.

"We'll be a lot stronger because we have some kids back and we started to win some games in the Pitt Division at the end of last season," he said. "If we continue to make progress we can be a pretty good team. We have an opportunity to do something.

"Challenging for the Pitt and Skyland titles certainly are goals, but we just want to go out and win some games. It's always a disappointment when you don't make the states, but we don't set goals like that.

"We set goals like playing well individually and as a team, playing hard every game and getting better every day. If we do those things we have a chance to win every game."

Still, with more than a week to go before their April 1 opener against Montgomery, the Panthers have some work to do before satisfying Apel.

looked **BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN** LACROSSE

mages but we need to get better," he said. "We're much further ahead than we were a year ago. We're a little more settled in the kids' attitude and their approach to practice. We're handling the ball better, and working harder.

OK in our

scrim .

"But we're still sorting things out. We're still giving everyone a chance, making sure we don't miss anyone. We're hoping to put a finer edge on it the next couple of weeks. I think we've gotten better, but there are certainly a lot of concerns.

"We need to shoot a little better. Our shooting hasn't been very good in practice so far. That's the final skill you need to have. You need go be able to finish, and you need to have a few finishers, not just one or two. If you can't score you can't win." B-R will have at least two

STREET, STREET, BURNING BURNING STREET, STREET

senior - attack man Nick Federici and Chris Jones, who finished 1-2 in scoring for the Panthers last year.

point-pro-

The team, in fact, returns just about all its scorers. Part of the reason for the sluggishness has been the absence of Federici from practice because of an injury, although Apel expects him to be back for

the opener. "Having Federici out puts a little damper on our offense," he said, "but it also gives us a chance to play some other kids and maybe that helps us in the long run. We just need to shoot better and handle the ball better. I think we're going to be solid on the attack. Our defense has been playing pretty well,

The Panther defense is experienced and deep with seniors having seen plenty of time in

Chris Derrico and Nick Powers and junior Mike Randall all returning starters. Senior Andrew Hudec and junior Kyle Brady, both lettermen, have been pushing the top trio along with seniors Nick Anderson and A.J. Smith, while classmates Patrick Smith and Oliver Koltelnicki should also get some time on defense.

One of the few graduation losses B-R suffered was at goalie, where juniors Jim Federici, a converted attackman, and Patrick Maney have

been vying for the job. "They've both played well in our scrimmages," Apel said. "It's been a good battle between the two of them, and I just might end up using both. They both need to improve on some things, but they're working hard and have looked pretty good."

The Panthers will go eight deep in the midfield with six

the rotation last spring. Seniors Dan Flecca and Kyle McGrady along with juniors Steve Golmond, Brian Nepview and Ryan Maloney all return.

Seniors Alan Matusiewicz and John Michael Alexi will also be part of the midfield setup in their initial varsity seasons, while the third starting assignment on the attack will go to junior letterman Will Clark, senior Brandon Blumber or junior Ron Upphenour.

"There were a lot of problems last year, and that's why we didn't win many games," said Apel. "We just weren't a very good team. I was proud of the kids that hung in there tough because that was a pretty difficult stretch we went through.

"We just need to keep getting better, and we'll be OK. The key is always picking up the ground ball. Pick up loose balls and you control the game. That's always the key."

Middlesex County News

Polish Night in the Elks hall

SOUTH PLAINFIELD - Elks Lodge 2298 sponsors a Polish Night from 4-8 p.m. Saturday, April 1.

Home-cooked pierogis, stuffed cabbage, kielbasa, babka, coffee and tea are on the bill of fare. A polka dance is also planned. Cost is \$10 and there will be a cash bar.

This event is in the Elks hall at 1254 New Market Ave. For more information, call (908) 668-9750.

Metuchen businesses hosting spring events

METUCHEN — The Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce sponsors these spring events:

Townwide Garage Sale, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 23. This is being held for the eighth vear and runs rain or shine. Entry forms are available at the Metuchen Savings Bank; the Metuchen Public Library; What's the Scoop; the Metuchen railroad station: and the chamber office at 323-B Main St.

Antique and Classic Car Cruise Nights on Wednesday, May 3, June 7, July 5, Aug. 2 and Sept. 6. Music and entertainment are provided.

Memorial Day parade. Monday, May 29. All scouts and youth groups are encouraged to participate.

For more information, visit www.metuchenchamber.com or call (732) 548-2964.

Unlimited Arc softball league

SOUTH PLAINFIELD - The Recreation Department has opened registration for its men's softball league.

An "Unlimited Arc" open slowpitch league plays on Monday night beginning April 24. Registration continues through March 31 or until eight teams are formed.

For a form and full details, call (908) 226-7713.

Veterans outreach forum is planned

PISCATAWAY --- Are you a veteran or part of a veteran's family? You may want to know about the benefits and services available to you.

The Middlesex County Veterans Advisory Council has scheduled a Veterans Outreach Forum with speakers from local, state and federal agencies. This free forum is at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, April 27 at the Piscataway Senior Center, off Hoes Lane behind John F. Kennedy Library.

www.njpublicnotices.com

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Library collects food for FISH

DUNELLEN - Food donations for FISH Inc., Dunellen Area, are accepted at the Dunellen Public Library.

All donations can be dropped off inside the New Market Road library during library hours. Food collected at the library goes to needy families in the

Grant helps students to take to the seas

NEW BRUNSWICK -Students at Greater Brunswick Charter School will trade a school desk for a sailing deck this spring, thanks to a grant from Toshiba America Foundation

The \$9,900 grant will allow seventh- and eighth-graders at the school to learn sailing and celestial navigation as part of their physics curriculum.

Students will receive their sailing instruction this May on Raritan Bay under the guidance of New Brunswick Sea Scouts Ship 132, a group of Sea Scouts sponsored by the char-

"We believe that by combining the classroom study of physics, astronomy, and earth science

with the incredible experience of sailing on the open water we will be setting our students on a path that makes science learning a part of their lives," said Rick Pressler, executive director of Greater Brunswick Charter School. "The lessons and proiects we develop with these funds will become a permanent part of our curriculum for years

This is the second grant Toshiba America Foundation has given to the school.

Located at 492 Joyce Kilmer Ave., Greater Brunswick Charter School is a free, independent public school developed by area parents and educators in 1998, with 207 students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Participating families come from New Brunswick, Highland Park and Edison, as well as from nine other school districts in Middlesex, Somerset and Union counties.

For more information, call Pressler at (732) 448-1052.

Free tax return help is now available

SOUTH PLAINFIELD Taxpayers can receive free help in filing their federal and state returns as part of a program at the South Plainfield Senior

Center at 80 Maple Ave. NJ Volunteers will be available to aid taxpayers in preparing their reports and-or in reviewing reports done by the taxpayer. This service is sponsored by TCE (Tax Consulting for the Elderly) The IRS and the AARP.

Volunteers will be available at the Senior Center on Thursdays and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. through April 14. Participants should bring all their income reports (that is 1099's, W2's, bank statements and any other income) and any records of expenses it they think that they would be itemizing their deductions. They should being a copy of their last years report if it is available. For more information, call the Senior Center at (908) 754-

Library adds Wi-Fi to list of services

BOUND BROOK -- Router by router, byte by byte, the Somerset County Library System is equipping its branches as Wi-Fi hotspots.

Wireless online access was installed in January at the Peapack-Gladstone Library and in February at the Bridgewater

Plans are to have Wi-Fi installed in all SCLS member libraries by the end of this year.

This includes the Bound Brook Memorial Library on East High Street, which joined the SCLS on Jan. 1 and is closed for renovations through April.

"This service is something library patrons have been looking forward to and asking for," according to Kathleen Harris, director of the Bridgewater Library. "For example, parents visiting the library with their children can bring their personal laptops and do their Internet work in the Youth Services Department while children look at books, listen to music or attend programs.

Wi-Fi also provides remote access for PDA devices as well as laptops. Visit www.somerset.lib.nj.us for a full list of SCLS member libraries.

Colon cancer screening kits

(732) 562-2323.

PISCATAWAY — Free colon cancer screening kits are available from the Health Department throughout March.

These kits are provided to adults ages 40 and up who live in Piscataway. You can pick up the kits in the Health Department office at the Municipal Complex, 455 Hoes Lane. For more information, call

Obituaries

J. Robert Rankin

MANCHESTER, N.H. - J. Robert "Bob" Rankin, Jr., 79, of Manchester, N.H., died March 24, 2006 in the Villa Crest Healthcare Center, Manchester following a 19year battle with Parkinson's disease. Rankin was born in Atlanta on Dec. 10, 1926, a son of the late John R. and Lois (Wilkinson) Rankin. He was a resident of Manchester since 2001, formerly living in

board repair, assistance with snowlice control, maintenance of ice-melt dispensers; grounds policing, breezeway cleaning, and clubhouse cleaning, problem evaluation and troubleshooting; preventative and periodic maintenance; periodic inspections; administrative assistance. Contractor to provide insurance, vehicle, and uniform. Work ticket and time tracking system to be followed: 40 & 8.6 80 B 5.4 17 04/01/06 hours per week, 8:00am to 4:30pm, except holidays. For full specifications, contact the property manager at 732-69-0091 or visit www.societyhillpiscataway.com. Mait sealed bids to Society Hill at Piscataway Condominum Association Inc., Attr. Maintenance Contract Bids, 550 Chesterfield Drive, Piscataway, NJ 08854. Bids must be received by Monday. April 3, 2006, 4:30PM.

828.56 B50.3T.3/25,4/1,8/06 Piscataway for 49 years. Mr. Rankin played semi-pro baseball and had been offered a contract with the St. Louis

Cardinals prior to his serving with the US Navy during WWII

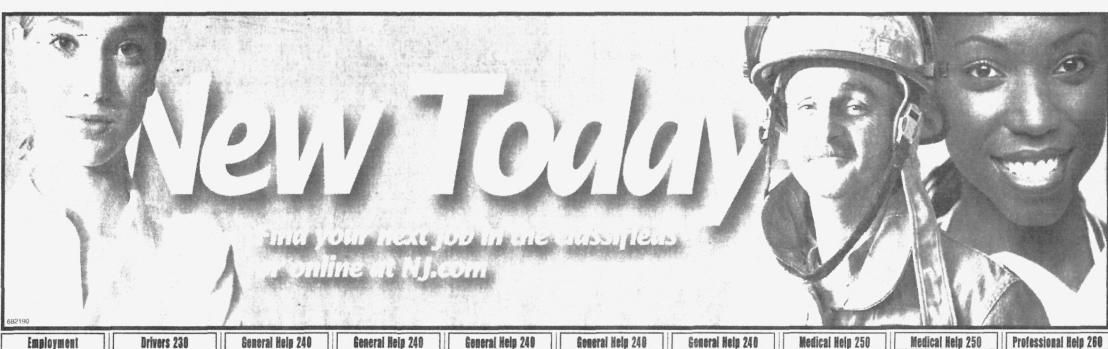
Following the war he received his degree in electrical engineering from the Georgia Institute Technology and received his Masters Degree from the University of Oklahoma. He married Mary L. Wyand on Oct. 9, 1948 in Pittsfield.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Mary L. (Wyand) Rankin of Manchester; four sons, Robert W. Rankin and his wife Karen of Austin; John D.

Rankin and his wife Lynne of Pennington; James R. Rankin and his wife Linda of Warsaw, Ind.; William S. Rankin and his wife Susan of Derry, N.H.; a daughter, Anne K. Pfannkoch and her husband Thomas of Chester, N.H.; 15 grandchildren, Gregory Rankin and his wife Pamela Pontius of Washington, D.C.; Tracy Rankin of Austin; Lauren and John Rankin, both of Pennington; Hillary, Ruth, Robert and Cameron Rankin, all of Warsaw, Ind.; Heather Rankin of Groveton, N.H.;

Rebecca and Charles Rankin, both of Derry; Laurie Beth, Thomas, David and Julia Pfannkoch, all of Chester. He was predeceased by his granddaughter, Amy Rankin in 1999.

A memorial service was held in the Fellowship Bible Church, Chester. In lieu of flowers memorials may be made to the National Parkinson Foundation, Inc., 1501 NW 9th Ave., Bob Hope Road, Miami, Fl. 33136-1494. To send a condolence, visit peabodyfuneralhome.com.



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