

Up and running

With Mason Robinson leading a strong cast of sprinters and Brian Cashman back as a top hurdler, Somerville High's boys track and field squad will be going after another sectional and group championship this spring. Page B1.

Get on the bunny trail

EDISON — The 28th annual Easter Funday will be held today at Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

There will be six separate agetime categories: 8 a.m. - 2year-olds; 8:35 a.m. - 3-yearolds; 9:10 a.m. - 4-year-olds; 9:45 a.m. - 5-year-olds and kindergarteners; 10:20 a.m. first and second graders, and 10:55 a.m. - third, fourth and fifth graders.

All Edison children are invited to have breakfast with the Easter Bunny and his friends and participate in an egg hunt with the possibility of winning a grand prize. All children will receive a holiday surprise for participating. The Easter Bunny will preside over the event, and along with J. J. Huggles the Clown, will be visiting the children.

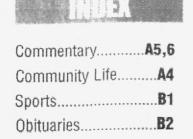
All children must be registered. All registered 2, 3, 4 and 5 year olds and grade K must be accompanied to the breakfast and egg hunt by an adult. Registration must be done in person to either the Stelton Community Center, 328 Plainfield Ave. or the Minnie B. Veal Community center, 1070 Grove Ave. Proof of Edison residency must be shown when reaisterina.

There will be a \$5 per child registration fee that must accompany the application. For further information or ADA

concerns, call the Edison Recreation Department at (732) 248-7312 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Additional forms will be available at the Recreation Department, the Municipal Complex and all Edison

A little bit of English

Episcopal Church will hold its annual Fish and Chips dinner today. The meal is catered by the Thistle Restaurant in Kearney. Open seating will be from 5-7 p.m. and take-out dinners are also available. Reservations are requested, chicken dinners must be ordered in advance. Dinners include fried fish or chicken. cole slaw, fries, dessert and beverage. Adult meals are \$12 and children's meals are \$6. The church is located at the corner of Oak Ave. and Middlesex Ave. (Route 27) in Metuchen. Call (732) 548-4308, Ext. 10, for reservations, questions or directions to the church.



Summit explored economic future

NEW BRUNSWICK — As part of he Regional Chamber of Chamber Business Week, Freeholder Director David B. Crabiel invited leaders of business, industry, county and municipal economic development, workforce development, planning agencies and elected officials to come together to discuss the factors affecting economic development and workforce development in the county, and to get them thinking about cooperative planning solutions to keep the county's tax base and economy healthy and growing.

The summit was broken down into panels: Infrastructure, Education and Training Research, and Regional Impact. Each presented a focused segment on how that area would impact economic growth over

Infrastructure panelists Mark Bocchieri, director of External Affairs for Verizon, Gerri Ricciardi, area manager for Jersey Central Power and Light, and Robert Felton, division manager of Public Service Electric and Gas, explained the capitol investment each of their companies were putting into infrastructure improvements in the county. With the increase in Businesses and house-holds coming into the county, demand for services continues to grow which means new services, new equipment, new lines and upgrades to increase service capacity. This will increase the need for trained workers for good paying jobs in these indus-

John Hummer, manager of Freight

Development for North Jersey Economic Planning Authority, added that because of its location, the county and its workforce could greatly benefit from the growth at the Port of New York and New Jersey.

The "Liberty National Corridor" stretches from the George Washington Bridge to the Raritan River, he explained. "With the millions of containers going through the port feeding a massive cargo and freight industry, this area will be New Jersey's equivalent to Silicone Valley," he said. "Congress has earmarked \$100 million to develop supportive infrastructure for this region.

Although some of the jobs associated with this growth will pay self-sus-

Economic taining wages and offer local businesses a pipeline for their products, Impact panel presenters were concerned that other light manufacturing jobs, such as warehousing, and service industry jobs would not pay

"Warehouse jobs, retail jobs, service jobs, just don't pay enough to keep a family living in central New Jersey from sinking below the poverty level," said Jane Z. Brady, director of Middlesex County's Department of Workforce Development.

Carl Spaturo, director of Economic Development for the county agreed. 'The high paying jobs we used to have are being lost to other areas of the country and being replaced by

Continued on page A2



The battle returns



COURTESY TOM BUCKINGHAM (top) AND KAREN KEITHLER (crosses) OF STAATS HOUSE, SOUTH BOUND BROOK

The annual Battle of Bound Brook reenactment will be held this weekend. A Soldier's Encampment, colorful sights and sounds of 18th century living, exciting street and field battles, historic house tours and more mark this multi-community event held in Bound Brook. South Bound Brook and Franklin. As in past years, the weekend will feature an exciting mix of American Revolutionary War history, with American and British soldiers in colorful uniforms reenacting battles in street and field. Colonial crafters, an 18th century encampment, children's activities, special programs and tours, food and more. For additional information or for information on volunteering to help during the reenactment and encampment, visit www.staatshouse.com or call Kathy Faulks of the Friends of the Abraham Staats House in South Bound Brook at (732) 469-5836 or e-mail BKFAULKS@aol.com, e-mail Karen Fritz at Kfritzcda@aol.com or Linda Brnicevic at MacChong@aol.com, both of the Bound Brook CommUnity Development Association.

Composting workshop is offered

SOUTH BRUNSWICK - A Free Composting Workshop is being sponsored by the Middlesex County Department Division of Solid Waste Management. County residents will learn how to reduce waste and improve their soil by composting their yard waste and kitchen scraps right in their own backyards.

A workshop will be held to explain and or demonstrate vermicomposting (composting with worms) starting at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday at the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension offices at Davidson Mill Pond Park, 42 Riva Ave., and will last about two hours. Pre-registration is required.

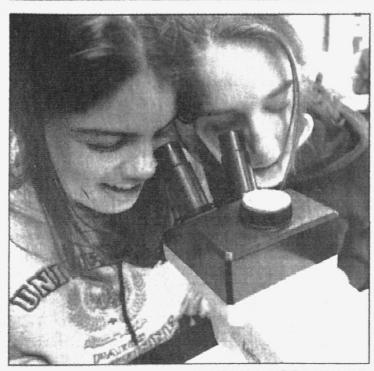
Through classes like this, Middlesex County hopes to raise homeowner awareness of the benefits of composting. Residents will learn the correct way to compost and how to troubleshoot problems. Freeholder Camille Fernicola, a proponent of backyard composting, states "By properly composting in their backyards, residents can help their environment and create a beneficial product for their plants and garden.'

The free workshops are sponsored by the Middlesex County Division of Solid Waste Management in conjunction with the Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension Service.

This is the sixth year of workshops offered by Middlesex County and the third year Middlesex County will be offering a vermicomposting workshop. Attendees at previous workshops overwhelmingly commented that the classes were "very informative" and "well presented"

Workshop attendees may also pick up pre-purchased compost bins at the workshop. Bins are available for purchase include the Handy Composter (\$5 each), Earth Machine (\$25 each), Home Composter (\$29 each) and Vermincompost bin (\$40 each). Purchase of a bin is optional. Again, there is no registration charge to just attend the classes.

To register for the workshops or for further information about this opportunity, call the Division of Solid Waster Management at (732) 745-4170 or e-mail solidwaste@co.middle-



GEORGE PACCIELLO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The country of the contract of

Jackie Reef and Brooke Conti, both students at The Pingry School in Martinsville, peer at a wasp through a microscope last month. The girls are involved in Today's World Learning Center, a foundation aimed at supporting young women in their pursuit of careers in science, math and engineering.

Girls just want to have fun with science, engineering

By AMY S. BOBROWSKI

Women are greatly underrepresented in careers related to science, math and tech-

Green Brook Middle School teacher Barbara Henke is trying to change that. She created Today's World Learning Center, a foundation aimed at supporting girls in their pursuit of careers in those industries.

Over the summer, her organization took 15 girls from throughout the county on a trip to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"It was great to see all these little girls in hard hats looking over all these blue prints," Henke said. "They swarmed. They wanted to know the scale, what the symbols meant." Last year, the foundation held an essay

contest where participants wrote about women in engineering. The submissions surprised Henke.

"More than 70 percent of the essays talked about women in engineering in the past," Henke said. "We respect the past, but we need to look for the future.

To help girls do that, the foundation is

holding another contest, one that challenges them to come up with a new product in the field of science and engineering and create a business plan for that product. The Small Business Development Center at Raritan Valley Community College has committed to meeting with all participants to help them prepare their plans. Winners from high school and middle school levels will each be awarded \$250 for their product.

"This will be a chance for girls to really put their skills to work," she said. "This could be the path to a rewarding career. We want them to feel like they own their futures. They have the greatest stake in determining their future."

The new contest, "Put a little Biz in your Life," allows girls to do just that. Colleges often seek more than straight-A students. Applicants who have taken steps to bring a good idea to the marketplace are more likely to be accepted to choice institutions, Henke noted. The foundation is also offering girls pre-college planning, so that they can

Continued on page A2

Summit explored county's economic future

Continued from page A1

lower end retail, service and

Also serving on the panel were Thomas Dallessio, vice president and New Jersey director of the Regional Planning Association, and Richard Pucci, executive director of the Middlesex County Improvement Authority.

Pucci reminded local officials that the MCIA could supplement municipal development and redevelopment efforts. "Our MCIA Assist Program can help you develop new projects or redevelop underutilized sites, making your municipality more attractive to business and, ultimately, create jobs and ratables for your own town. However, you have to ask for our assistance," he added. "We only get involved in an economic development project in your town at your request and only

to the extent you define." The MCIA has helped with many projects including in New Brunswick, Highland Park and Milltown.

According to business owners, one of the greatest challenges they face is finding qualified workers. If that important piece is not supplied, businesses will

go elsewhere to find them.
"We have 428,000 workers in our county." said Crabiel. "Last year, our average unemployment rate was 3.9 percent. This was lower than the state and national averages. But it's not enough to say that we have low unemployment, we must continue to work to help people find better jobs and train for true careers. As our workforce improves, so does our econo-

The challenges to workforce improvement were presented by the Education and Training Research Panel: John Heldrich,

"With the millions of containers going through the port feeding a massive cargo and freight industry, this area will be New Jersey's equivalent to Silicone Valley. Congress has earmarked \$100 million to develop supportive infrastructure for this region."

> John Hummer Manager,

Freight Planning and Economic Development for North Jersey Economic Planning Authority

chairman of the State Employment and Training Commission, Henry Plotkin, PhD., executive director of the Employment Training Commission, and Carl Van Horn, PhD., director of the Heldrich Center. All agreed that improved education and training were vital to job growth and economic develop"A decade ago, the first national study of literacy was said completed," Henry Plotkin. "I was surprised at how little attention it got. It showed 40 percent of the adult population was less literate than the labor market was demanding. Three months ago that study updated. That 40 percent has now increased to

of our economy are getting stronger, what's not getting better is the quality of our workforce needed to work in all these areas. Businesses will come to where there is a high quality workforce. New Jersey has a wonderful legacy in this area, but we need to get the literacy of our population where it needs to be.'

Plotkin noted five critical areas: improve the literacy of immigrants through ESL classes; high schools and colleges need to come together to develop a common set of standards; educational institutions need to be more responsive and adaptive to teaching for labor market demand jobs; continued training of the existing workforce to ensure their skills are up to date; creating dis-

tance learning opportunities. In wrapping up his presentation during the Impact Panel,

leaders and planners to coordinate and collaborate across the region. "Middlesex County is in the middle of a mega-development region - an economic breadbasket," he said. "But you need to talk to one another. The countries in Europe that were at war years ago have now come together in cooperation to improve and expand economically. If they can do it, our towns, counties and states should be able to do it, as well."

"We called our summit Economic Development plus Workforce Development equals Middlesex County First," said Crabiel. "It is an equation that just makes sense. We need to find the opportunities for businesses to develop and grow, and train workers to find better jobs and careers, in order to keep our county growing, prospering

IN THE TOWNS

'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

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

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.

NFO

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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

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For more information, visit www.sbbfd.com or call (732) 627-9577.

'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 expert. The public is invited and refreshments will be served. For more information,

call Mary Kobasz at (732) 549-

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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Science

Continued from page A1

determine which courses will meet admissions requirements. Additionally, the foundation made arrangements with the RVCC Library to work with a highly trained librarian to research their interests.

Henke announced the contest at a Dad & Daughter Dinner held at the Ryland Inn

in Whitehouse late last month. With a title of the dinner 'My Dad Thinks I'm Beautiful Even If I Build Rockets in the Backyard on Weekends!" the dads were encouraged to get involved with the academic lives of their daughters by Dr. Gerald Goldin, keynote speaker from Rutgers University and father of two young with women impressive degrees from MIT and Harvard. He reassured the fathers that their daughters were very capable of reaching some of the highest levels in math and science and that the girls should pursue these areas vigorously despite occasional press to the contrary.

Zara Mannan, a 15-year-old freshman at The Pingry School, has participated in several of the foundation's events, including the trip to MIT. Mannan is one of the girls that inspire Henke to continue hosting contests and seminars.

Mannan, a Short Hills resi-Science club at her school in representation in these e-mail fields." With about 15 mem- president@twlc.com.

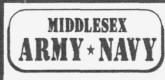
bers, the club's a hit.

"We do labs, write a newspaper called the 'Catalyst', tutor one another if there's a test coming up, have luncheons, participate in the Robotics competition, watch science movies, have speakers," said Mannan, who noted the club is working on hosting a science symposium with professors from Princeton University.

One day, Mannon hopes to become an engineer. In the more recent future, Mannan hopes to become student body president in her senior year. These goals highlight Mannan's dedication to achieving leadership positions and she wants to help other young women feel comfortable doing the same thing.

'Women need to take a stand to show they can do it," she said. "If women don't get involved, we lose input from half the population.'

Henke can see a bright future ahead for Mannan. Perhaps it will be similar to lives of some of the students she interviewed at MIT. Along with the help of her daughter, an MIT graduate, Henke interviewed about 30 women at the institute, questioning them about the factors of their success. Her research indicated that these young women were so determined because their parents offered strong support. Girls today need that support more than ever, Henke said. "The biggest issue is girls who dumb themselves down so dent, started a Women in they can get a date," Henke said. For more information September to help deal with about the contest or the founthe current lack of female dation, visit www.twlc.com or Henke



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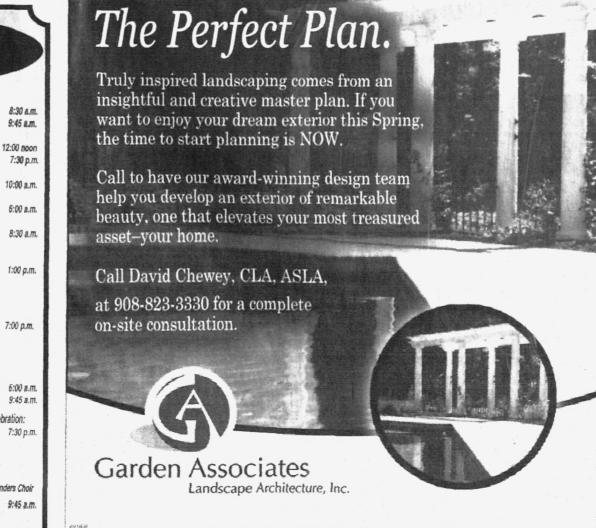
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Please call the church office for more information. Reverend Dr. Kenneth L. Saunders, Sr. - Pastor



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Middlesex County News

Palm weaving offered at folk life program

PISCATAWAY — The Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission and the Folklife Program for New Jersey present "Palaspas, traditional Filipino Palm Weaving Workshop" with Samahan Cultural Heritage, Eastern Seaboard, Inc. at New Jersey Olde Towne Village, 1050 River Road, 1-2:30 p.m. Saturday.

"Palaspas" which means palm weaving in the Philippine language, is a centuries old tradition practiced in preparation for Palm Sunday. Coconut palm fronds are woven into intricate designs and brought to church to be blessed.

Once blessed, they are displayed in the home for protection and decoration.

Filipino families have preserved their own weaving patterns by passing them down orally from one generation to the next.

Participants of this hands-on workshop will learn how to create this special folk craft under the instruction of master artists from Samahan Cultural Heritage, Eastern Seaboard. Inc. It will be presented in a bilingual format, with an interpreter speaking English and Tagalog, the official language of the Philippines.

"Palaspas" is presented without charge, however registration is required, as space is limited. To register, contact the commission at (732) 745-4489. Those

with hearing impairments may call (732) 745-3888 (TTY) or 711 via the NJ Relay Service. East Jersey Olde Towne is a fully accessible site.

Funding for this program is provided by Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders, Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission, New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tour of historic sites takes place today

PISCATAWAY --- On Saturday, April 8, The Raritan Millstone Heritage Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to historic promotion, protection and preservation within the region of the Raritan and Millstone River systems, will sponsor a mid-day motor coach tour of the historic southern district of Perth Ambov and the Conference House on Staten

The tour, which begins at 10 a.m. at East Jersey Olde Towne at Johnson Park in Piscataway, includes a driving tour of historic Perth Amboy, with detailed narrative about the city's brilliant colonial history, and visit to The Proprietary House, residence of the last Royal Governor of New Jersey, William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin.

After lunch at the Barge restaurant, the tour will drive to the Conference House in Tottenville, Staten Island, Built in the 17th century, this man-

sion owned by Christopher Billopp, was the site of the historic Peace Conference between British Admiral Lord Richard Howe and the American Peace Commissioners, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and

Edward Rutledge on September 11, 1776. These talks that occurred after the Declaration of Independence was signed, were unsuccessful. The Peace Commissioners returned to Perth Amboy and the American Revolutionary War continued for seven long years. The tour will conclude at East Jersey Olde Towne by 3:30 p.m.

Tour tickets, which include the luncheon, are \$50 each, and may be obtained by calling

Elyce Jennings at (732) 463-

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 submis-

For an application, rules and fees, visit nifolkfest.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

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.



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Middlesex County News

Nursery school has flea market

DUNELLEN - A flea market is scheduled for 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, April 8 at the Busy Bee Nursery School, 316 Jackson

Breakfast, lunch and homebaked pastries also will be available. For more information, call Henry Cattle at (732) 752-8391.

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

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

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. 1-cent coin from the late 18th century to today. He'll also

answer questions from the audi-

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 at 2484 Plainfield Ave.

Liberal arts festival to be held at college

EDISON - Middlesex County College is holding a Liberal Arts Festival for students through 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

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

Good Friday fish dinner

DUNELLEN - The Knights of Columbus and Dunellen United Methodist Church sponsor a fish dinner on Good Friday, April 14.

Servings are from 5-7 p.m. in the church's religious education building at 316 Jackson Ave. The menu also includes potatoes. macaroni and cheese, cole slaw,

homemade dessert and beverage. Cost is \$9 for adults and \$4.50 for children.

For more information, call Betty

Hixon at (732) 752-7250. 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 social 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

For tickets, call (732) 247-1655.

Vendors wanted for outdoor sale

EDISON - A multifamily outdoor yard sale is planned for 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, April 22 at John Adams Middle School, 1081 New Dover Road.

Vendors are wanted; call Agnes Brooks at (908) 769-9350.

Spaces cost \$15 and are about the size of a car.

'Anglo-Indians' are lecture topic

EDISON - "Anglo-Indians" are people of mixed British-India descent.

They married and formed families in India when it was a British colony. Many of their descendants moved abroad after India became an independent nation in

Blair Williams is one of those descendants and has spoken about "Anglo-Indians on the Verge of Extinction." He gives his program at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 22 at the Main Branch of the Edison Free Public Library. Admission is free.

For registration, call (732) 287-2298, Ext. 1 or visit the library circulation desk at 340 Plainfield

Concert benefits scholarship fund

METUCHEN -- The Suzy 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 avail-

For more information, call (732) 548-2238. 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.

School poetry winners named

EDISON - The Edison Arts Society has announced the winners of its 2006 school poetry competition:

Grade 12 -- Matthew Strom. Metuchen High School. Grade 11 -- Luming Li, John P. Stevens High School.

Grade 10 - Victoria James, Metuchen High School. Grade 9 - Olga Kislyanova, John P. Stevens High School. Grade 8 - Erik Pasierski, Edgar Middle School, Metuchen.

Grade 7 -- Dweep Mehta, Woodrow Wilson Middle School. Grade 6 - Aiit Unnam, Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

They have been invited to read their poems at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 27 at Barnes & Noble in Menlo Park.

In addition, winners and runners-up will receive a booklet with the winning poems and a list of honorable mention.

New program focuses on coping with stress

Residents of Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield, Somerville and South Bound Brook who are between ages 21-64 have a unique opportunity to learn new ways of coping with stress while receiving gift cards and free dinner on a weekly hasis

The Somerset Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency is offering a free weekly program, "Bridge to Success," which meets for eight sessions of two hours each. Hot dinner and gift cards are provided to participants each week. Transportation and child care are available on request.

Two groups are currently in progress; one meets Tuesday evening and the other meets Thursday evening. Others are scheduled to begin soon. "Bridge to Success" can also be offered on-site to interested groups of 8-12 people who meet residency and age requirements.

People experience stress in different ways. Difficulty coping can lead to a variety of negative effects, such as depression, anxietv. substance abuse and even physical health problems. Do not be fooled by the agency's name; this program is not just for people

with a history of substance use. For more information, call (908) 722-4900. Funding for "Bridge to Success" is provided by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Human Services.



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State parks are in need of everyone's help

By STATE SEN. ROBERT LITTELL

People often ask me for my opinion on what is the most important thing we do as elected officials. I tell them that for my part, the most important accomplishments are the ones that transcend the politics of the moment and make a difference for generations to come.

During this session of the Legislature, I have sponsored legislation entitled the "State Green Acres Park Development Bond Act of 2006," which would provide \$75 million in general obligation bonds as a down payment for muchneeded improvements to our system of State parks. With bi-partisan support, I am hopeful that the bill will pass the Legislature and be signed into law by the governor before the summer recess, and appear on the November election ballot for the voter's approval.

I decided to introduce the bond act because the needs of the 396,000-acre State park system have never been greater.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection, there is as much as a \$250 million backlog in maintenance projects throughout the system of 42 parks, 11 forests, three recreation areas and 50 historic sites and districts. A visitor to the state parks can readily see the results of years of deferred maintenance coupled with heavy use. Dilapidated buildings that need repairs and paint, roads in need of paving and interpretive signs that have been destroyed as a result of vandalism or the passage of time.

In my own legislative district, I witnessed the state government neglect the historic Kuser Mansion at High Point State Park. The Kuser family donated the lands that make up High Point State Park to the people of this State in 1923, and paid for the construction of the 220foot granite foot tower built to commemorate New Jersey's war dead. Anyone who has been to the top of the tower knows how magnificent the 360 degree vista from this spot can be. They also donated their mansion, which was the last of New Jersey's mountain-top resorts.

How did the state government repay the Kusers for their donation? We permitted the tower and the mansion to fall into disrepair. Although the tower was ultimately repaired, the mansion was not so lucky. After years of disregard in both Democrat and Republican administrations, the mansion had to be torn down in 1995 because it had become impossible to repair it at any cost. A valuable historic resource was lost forever because our collective failure to remember what was important and do what was

I suppose one could argue that this would not

The following is contact information for state

representatives serving Somerset County, as

well as members of Congress serving Central

One Gateway Center, 11th Floor, Newark, NJ

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CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE HOLDERS

U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez (D)

(202) 224-4744 (Washington, D.C.)

- U.S. Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg (D)

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Washington, D.C. 20510, (202) 224-3224

45 Mountain Blvd., Building D, Suite 1,

- Rep. Michael Ferguson (R-7th)

Warren, NJ 07059, (908) 757-7835

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Washington, DC 20515, (202) 225-5361

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Rep. Rodney Frelinghusyen (R-11th)

Washington, DC 20515-3011, (202) 225-5034

- Sen. Walter J. Kavanaugh (R-16th)

76 North Bridge Street, Somerville, NJ 08876,

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STATE OFFICE HOLDERS

be an urgent problem if the parks were unpopular, or went unused by the general public. However, the statistics show that the exact opposite is the case. The truth is that our park system has never been more popular with visitors and residents alike. Last year alone, 15 million people visited the sandy beaches, campgrounds, forests and historic areas of the state parks. They were able to enjoy a wide range of recreational activities including swimming, hiking, cycling, cross country skiing and horseback riding. They were also able to visit places that played a pivotal role in the founding of this nation and the advent of the Industrial

I am sure there will be some people who will argue that with all our other pressing fiscal needs that we should not be spending any more on parks. I think that this kind of thinking promotes false economies and phony fiscal conservatism. First, the continued failure to provide adequate maintenance funds to the parks will only make the final cost of repairs even higher in the long run. Problems do not get better by ignoring them, and small investments in maintenance now can avoid costly repair bills later.

This kind of thinking also ignores the reality of how the park system contributes to the state economy. A study completed by the Department of Environmental Protection last year concluded that the State parks contribute \$1.2 billion annually in economic benefits through direct tourism and through ecosystem services such as erosion control and watershed land protection. The study also showed that the parks generate over \$800 million recreation expenditures from

Lastly, a vibrant park system is a critical element in maintaining a high quality of life for New Jersey's residents. The parks promote healthy lifestyles, provide diverse habitats for plants and animals and generally make this State a more desirable place to live.

I hope that everyone will contact their state legislators and ask them to support this important initiative. With bi-partisan backing and an informed public, I believe that we will be successful in our efforts not only for ourselves, but for generations to come.

The writer, state Sen. Robert Littell, R-24th, introduced the bill, known as S1360, into the Senate on Feb. 9 and referred to Senate Environment Committee. An identical bill, A2694, was introduced into the Assembly by Assemblyman John McKeon, D-27th, on Feb. 27. It has been referred to Assembly Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

Question of the week: Should cable providers be allowed to compete in the same market?



MILLIE CABREJA Bridgewater "Yes, if that means bringing the prices down things are getting too expensive.



KAREN HART Bridgewater "Yes, because we're paying exorbitant prices, we get a lot of channels, but not a lot to watch. Competition should bring cost reductions and better programming."



RICK HOLLAND Somerville "Absolutely. Competition is healthy.

PAT WESTON

Somerville

"I don't think it's fair

that there's only one

(cable provider). We

should have the right to

choose.'

- Assemblyman Christopher Bateman (R-36 East Main St., Somerville, NJ 08876,

(908)-526-3600 - Assemblyman Peter J. Biondi (R-16th) 1 East High St., Somerville, NJ 08876, (908)-

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Correction policy

sentation and clarify any news content that confuses report errors to editor Craig Turpin at (908) 575-6698.

Letters to the Editor

Spending plan hurts schools

To The Editor:

By now New Jerseyans know about Gov. Jon Corzine's pro-posed austerity budget for 2006-07. The governor's budget resulted from hard choices at the state level. At the local level, boards of education also faced difficult financial decisions as they prepared school budgets for the April 18 annual school election.

Like it or not the state of New Jersey's financial picture — and in particular, state aid to public education — is a major part of the dynamic that determines what a community spends on its schools and the amount of money it must raise in property taxes.

2006-07 will mark the fifth consecutive year that the state's budget has either flat funded, or provided negligible increases in, aid to education. (In fact, this year more than one-quarter of New Jersey's school districts will experience actual decreases in state dollars.) The five-year funding freeze has occurred at the same time that school districts must serve an increasing number of students statewide and pay sharply escalating prices for necessities - such as motor fuels, utilities and insurance coverage - the costs of which are outside their con-

In this climate school boards directed limited

resources to the classroom through increased efficiencies and shared-service arrangements. Today more than 70 percent of New Jersey public school expenditures go toward classroom instruction and instructional support services, according to the U.S. Department of Education. In fact, since 1989-90 the number of administrators employed in our schools has decreased by .14 percent while the number of students and teachers has grown by 29 percent and 33

percent, respectively. In his budget message Gov. Corzine acknowledged the predicament facing local school boards this year when he said, "I appreciate that flatfunding in an inflating envi-

ronment is a real cut." Creating a school budget in this financial environment is no easy task. It involves balancing the community's education goals with the resources available from the state and from local property taxpayers.

As citizens go to the polls on April 18, I urge them to keep in mind the challenges facing their local Board of Education in determining the financial resources necessary for the education of their community's children.

PATTI J. PAWLING President, New Jersey School Boards Association

Administrator pay needs closer look

We learned from a State Commission of Investigation report released on March 13 that top school administrators throughout the state routinely receive perks and bonuses that push their annual compensation well into the six-figure range. This, of course, comes at your expense. For years you, the taxpayer, have been left in the dark as to the full cost of employment packages for more than 300 top education officials in 71 school districts.

The problem is that there is little or no transparency. Some officials underestimate or gloss over bottom-line total compensation paid to administrators. Public listings on file with the state Department of Education merely reflect salaries submitted by local boards of education. True costs are further shrouded from public view by periodic renegotiations that alter compensation and benefits in substantial, complex ways difficult for the public to decipher.

For example, a Bergen County administrator received more than \$500,000 in additional pay for unused sick time and other benefits, including \$300,000 that was paid to his estate following his death in 2004.

In Pleasantville, the school chief left in 2002 prior to the termination of his contract in 2004 following a dispute with the school board. He was paid \$125,000 and \$11,999 for unused vacation time. Additionally, his full family medical coverage continued until June 30, 2003. That's just the top of the iceberg.

Consider this — \$9 billion in taxpayer funds are spent on public education each year. That's more than one-fourth of

the state's entire budget. Local property taxes account for billions more. Yet many of our school districts are broke or

struggling. The investigation also revealed that, in some cases, superintendent pensions had been inflated by padding earnings either throughout the course of employment or in the years leading up to retirement. The report also questioned whether these perks and other payments received in addition to base salaries were properly reported to the Internal Revenue Service for federal

and state tax purposes. As a result of the SCI report, I have requested that legislation be drafted to address these questionable practices by school administrators and local school boards. I encourage you to read "Taxpayers Beware: What You Don't Know Can Cost You Public School Administrators Report" at www.state.nj.us/sci.

I believe a well-informed constituency is our best weapon in the fight to hold public officials accountable for their actions. These deplorable practices are costing you, the taxpayer, millions of dollars annually, adding to the state's already dismal economic condition.

Clearly the system is broken and must be fixed now. I am working toward that end. I thank you for your continued support as we work together to restore fiscal responsibility and integrity to Trenton. I look forward to hearing from you on this or any matter of impor-

ASSEMBLYMAN KEVIN J. O'TOOLE, R-40th Deputy Minority Leader, New Jersey Assembly

Celebrate education

To The Editor:

Children are born learning. During the first five years of life, their bodies and brains grow faster than at any other time. Almost 90 percent of our intellect, personality, and social skills develop by the time we are five years old. That's why quality early learning experiences are so important.

Through April 8, programs for early care and education throughout New Jersey will celebrate The Week of the Young Child, a time to recognize both the importance of early learning and the needs of young children and their families. For New Jersey's preschoolers, quality early

place every day in family child care homes, community early childhood centers, and Head Start programs. It is important for the pub-

lic to be more aware of how early learning influences both a child's chances for school success and the economic health of our state.

LORRAINE COOKE Elizabeth The writer is executive director of the Egenolf Early Childhood Center and vice president of Public Policy for the New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children Chair, Early Childhood Coalition of New

Soldiers' shopping sprees resume Saturday

Dawn Concepcion Hillsborough

Saturday, April 8, 2006

Volunteers working on behalf outside supermarkets through counting on the generosity of troops spirits overseas. of Operation Shoebox New out Central New Jersey this shoppers who understand the Jersey 2005 will be stationed month and next, and they're importance of boosting U.S.

As they enter the store, shoppers will be handed a condensed shopping list of items requested by soldiers, Marines and sailors. Past experience has proven that this is the most effective way for OPSHBX to accumulate goods that are shipped in the care packages sent overseas.

As shoppers exit the stores, they drop off the items they've purchased for the soldiers with the volunteers, who then transport those donated goods back to The Chronicle office where they will be sorted in preparation for the next OPSHBX packing event May 27 at Commerce Bank Park in Bridgewater.

Some of the items needed include snack foods like cereal bars, small boxes of cereal, beef jerky, pull-top cans of tuna and soup, chewing gum and candy; needed toiletries items include soap, shampoo, moist wipes, lip balm and disposable razors. We have already stockpiled adequate supplies of toothpaste, toothbrushes and deodorant.

Here's the schedule of Soldiers' Shopping Sprees:

Sunday, April 9: Pathmark, Veterans Memorial Drive West, Somerville;

Saturday, April 15: Stop'n Shop, Route 206, Raritan; Saturday, April 15: ShopRite,

Route 202, Flemington; Saturday, April 22: Stop'n Shop, Route 206, Raritan; Saturday, May 6: ShopRite, Route 22, Branchburg;

Sunday, May 7: ShopRite, Route 22, Branchburg; Saturday, May 13: ShopRite,

Saturday, May 13: ShopRite, Route 202, Flemington; Saturday, May 20: King's. Route 206, Bedminster: Sunday, May 21: King's, Route 206, Bedminster.

Route 28, Bound Brook;

Special thanks to OPSHBX volunteer Julia Simmons for working with the various supermarkets to arrange these dates, as well as the management of

Rod Hirsch Executive



each store that is willing to support the efforts of OPSHBX, and U.S. troops overseas.

Letters from Iraq

Dear Operation Shoebox:

I wanted to take a few moments out of my day to thanks you for the generous care packages I received while in Iraq. My name is Thomas Cunningham; I am a Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corps. The packages were a welcome reminder of the support we have back home. To tell you the truth, I received more packages than I knew what to do with, and let's just say my squad was well stocked with candy and everything we could have possibly needed.

The Any Marine letters we received from the kids back home decorated the small room that my squad called home for 21/2 months. This email does not convey how much we appreciated the packages we received.

All I can say is thank you for your hard work and support. Every box that is received by anyone over there makes an impact.

Lance Cpl. Thomas Cunningham 1st Squad 2nd Platoon Golf Battery 1/2 22 MEU (SOC)

Dear Good People,

I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to send me a care package over here in Iraq. I am Marine Corps Sgt. Terence A. D'Alesandro of Alpha Company Anti-Terrorism Battalion II Marine Expeditionary Force

from Camp Lejeune, N.C. After three tours over here it never gets old receiving kind words and support from great folks back home like yourselves. It's why we do what we do. We are not Marines just for ourselves - we are Marines first and foremost for our countrymen. Life as a Marine Corps infantryman is rough. It's not pretty being a grunt - we see and do things that can dehumanize ourselves, then we hear from home and our minds and hearts get eased.

Thank you for doing that for me from the bottom of my heart.

Tell the good folks from nearby Raritan that Marines are still taught to this day about "Manila" John Basilone and his heroism on Iwo Jima. His name resonates through the Corps, par-ticularly in the infantry and specifically with machine gunners. He is a hero to Marines and he was 100 percent Jersey, all the way. Thank you all.

Sgt. Terence D'Alesandro Marine Security Force Baghdad A Co. ATBN

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



Dawn and her daughter Alexa have spent several

hours at the Pathmark Supermarket in Hillsborough

asking shoppers to donate money and buy supplies

from a grocery list provided by Operation Shoebox New

Jersey 2005. Joined by her husband Alex and several

friends of Alexa, the family has also participated in

several fund raising events for OPSHBX.

The Reporter

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Pioneer boys again will be in the running

SHS will seek sixth straight sectional title

By DAVE ALLENA Staff Writer

SOMERVILLE again the Somerville High boys track and field squad will start with a modest goal and go from there.

None of the Pioneers' success during the past five years, however, can be considered minor spoils, and with one outstanding athlete returning surrounded by a group of talented performers, they figure to be on target for another strong campaign.

Although SHS lost two major point-producers in Marion Easley, last year's state javelin champ, and Vince Carpentier as well as pole vault standout Tom Spinelli, junior sprinter Mason Robinson leads a solid cast of veterans and some promising newcomers as the Pioneers will bid for more titles.

Tom Reynolds begins his second year as head coach after guiding SHS to its fifth straight Central Jersey Group II crown and fourth state Group II title in five years with a short-term goal in

'Our goal every year is to keep the streak alive and win the division," he said of the Pioneers' run of 52 consecutive dual-meet triumphs. "After that, whatever happens happens. That's how we approach it. We want to win our division and hope everyone peaks at the end of May

"If we stay healthy and the younger kids come along we have a chance to do something in the sectional. As far as the group meet, I just don't know at this point. We have some potential. With Mason we're assured of some points.

'We don't have anyone to replace Marion, and we're trying to replace Vince with three or four guys and that could work out. In terms of replacing Tom in the pole vault, our Number Two guy is back and has the potential to do as well as Tommy did last

SOMERVILLE TRACK

year. So we should be OK

"This group is working their tails off. They don't take anything for granted. They know what the previous team had to do to accomplish what it did, and they're willing to do the same things.'

While dominant against Skyland Conference-Raritan Division rivals the past decade, Somerville has also fared well in county and conference action despite being one of the smaller schools. Last year SHS took second in both the Somerset County championship and relay meets, while placing third in the Skyland individuals and fourth in the conference

The big reasons for those performances have been talent and depth, and those usual assets will be tested this spring. Robinson is a given on the big stage after sweeping his way through the season in the 100 meters into the Meet of Champions, where he placed 11th, and while also excelling in the 200.

"I think Mason would like to be a state champion this year but you really can't say what's going to happen in the sprints," Reynolds said. "Mason is going to do whatever he's going to do, and that's all he can control. You never know who's going to show up and have a great day. He absolutely does have the potential to run a time that will win him a state champi-

SHS looks especially strong in the sprints but needs to fill some holes in the throwing

sprints are our strength, and by the end of the year we'll have some good hurdlers and jumpers," Reynolds said. "Overall, we're generally weak in the throws.

Someone is going to have to step up if we hope to go far this year."

After Robinson, Pioneers have some under-classmen who'll provide depth in the sprints as juniors Dan Cuozzo and Gary Kline as well as sophomores Cesar Garcia and Stephen Robinson return after lettering in 2005. Cuozzo and Mason Robinson were both part of last year's 1600 relay team which reached the Meet of Champions.

Senior Brian Cashman should be the Pioneers' leader among the hurdlers, where senior Shaun Healey, junior Chris Roberts (who'll also do some sprinting) and soph Jeremy Lichtman will also compete.

Senior Steve DeFazio will be the pace-setter in the 3200 while also running the 1600, and soph Dan Stiles should lead the way in the 800 and possibly the 1600.

Junior Anthony Appezzato returns in the triple and long jumps, while classmate Eric Toro will do those events along with the high jump. Stephen Robinson can also go in all three jumps, while Cuozzo (high jump) and Kline (long) will look to contribute to the group.

Senior Will Emmons returns in the pole vault and will look to match Spinelli's efforts of last year, while soph Jim Winters figures to be the No. 2

As far as the throws go, senior Maurice Doman will look to pick up many of the lost points from Easley in the shot put and discus, while junior Tyler Cuffie will do the shot, discus and javelin. Senior Matt Migliore will go in the shot and discus.

Appezzato (discus), Healey (javelin), seniors Sam Pickell (javelin), Kevin Diemer (shot put) and Don Aubrey (javelin) and sophs St. Clair Watson (shot, discus) and Alex Torras (shot, discus) will be part of



GEORGE PACCIELLO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dueling here in the 400 hurdles during last May's Somerset County Meet, Somerville High's Brian Cashman (left) and Watchung Hills' Pete Gallo could be facing off again this spring. Cashman, a senior, is the Pioneers' top hurdler and Gallo, a junior, is among the Warriors' finest

men are Mike Naples and Williams Watson, both of whom will compete in the jumps, and sprinter Sal Garfi. SHS GIRLS

With a huge turnout of 88, including 33 freshmen, to work with, Dave Vaughn begins his fourth season as the Pioneers' head coach with some solid upperclassmen along with some younger athletes who've shown promise.

"I'm hoping the 1600 relay and the 800 are our strongest events," he said. "Dana Bradley and Kelcey Coffin are both top-notch hurdles in both the 400 intermediates and 110 highs, so we should he pretty strong there, too.

"I think our weights could be another good area for us. Espree Vandervoort should do well, and we have some younger people coming behind her. If I had to pick Among the promising fresh- one girl who could reach the Meet of Champions it would have to be Amanda Mamery in one of the distance events.'

Bradley, a junior, probably qualifies as SHS's most versatile performer because she's capable of going in both hurdles, the 400 meters, triple jump, long jump and relay. Coffin, a senior, will compete in the hurdles while classmate Vandervoort will do the shot put, discus and javelin.

Mamery, meanwhile, should be solid in the middle distance events as the sophomore will run the 800 and 1600 and anchor the 1600

Covering the sprints will be junior Brittany Mackey (100, 400), junior Danielle Lella (110, 200), senior Ashley Jones (100-400), senior Alexa Truchen (100, 400, 800) and freshmen Kata Lazauskas (100, 200), Amanda Reynolds (200, 400) and Jessica Kiniery

(200, 400)

Along with Mamery in the distance races, SHS will have senior Kelly Oelkers (800), soph Kim Mineo (3200) and freshman Danielle Fraser (1600, 3200). Junior Molly Stires will join Bradley and Coffin in the 400 hurdles.

Stires and junior Caity Laub should be the leaders in the high jump, while Lella, Jones, Kiniery and Lazauskas are all options in the long jump. Junior Liza Razillard returns in the pole vault where Lazauskas and fellow freshmen Jillian Hart and Stephanie Crivello will look to contribute.

Senior Dorian Jackson is out for track for the first time and will throw the discus and javelin. Sophs Ally Bowers and Anissa Barton will do the shot and discus, while Oelkers and Laub will also throw the

GEORGE PACCIELLO: STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Bridgewater-Raritan High junior Taryn Schnell, taking a cut during a March 22 scrimmage with Voorhees, and her teammates are hoping for a winning season although the Panthers did drop two of their first

Panthers like their chances

By DAVE ALLENA

BRIDGEWATER - Even with the prospect of having only two seniors in the starting lineup, Bridgewater-Raritan High has high hopes of perhaps recording its best season in a decade.

A dominant pitcher will do that for anyone's expectations. Coming off a 12-14 year, the Panthers return only four starters but one is sophomore righthander Lauren Fitzsimmons, who showed considerable promise last year when she took over the pitching chores midway through the season. Sandy Baranowski has begun her ninth year as head coach

with a young squad, including at least two freshman starters, but believing their talent and versatility will give the Panthers a chance for success. However, B-R did lose two of its first three

"We're awfully young," she said prior to the season, "so maybe we're were a year-away-team kind of deal, but I'm hoping we can win 15 games this year, and the most we've won since I've been here I believe is 14. Even though we're young and rebuilding, I'm looking for our best season. "I think we'll be in the thick of things in the conference and

county. Hillsborough lost their pitcher, Montgomery lost their pitcher, Watchung Hills has a very good sophomore pitcher, too, but we should be right there with those teams. I think it'll be important to win some early games to gain some confidence."

There are a couple of reasons for Baranewski's optimism -Fitzsimmons and the other Panthers' ability to play multiple

"Lauren has looked very good in the pre-season," she said. "She's got a lot more movement on the ball, and she's been very consistent in our scrimmages, maybe walking only one batter each game. I don't care about how fast she is. I just want her to keep batters off-balance by changing speed.

"So far she's been getting a lot of strikeouts, and strikeouts

BRIDGEWATER-RARITAN SOFTBALL

aren't something I'm used to having. I'm used to us having to make all the plays in the field. I expect she's going to be one of the best we've had, especially if she continues to get better. "The other kids can play different positions, so

this is the most versatility we've had in a while. Based on the pitching and who we're playing, I'm going to be able to move people around. Right now we're working out who's going to start where.'

Fitzsimmons will be aided by the return of sophomore catcher Samantha DeSimone, who moved into the starting job midway through the 2005 season. Junior Kelly Rafferty figures to get time behind the plate as well, while she and DeSimone will divide the designated hitter duties.

The corner infield spots will be handled by players with experience with senior Michelle Goydan returning at third base and soph Lindsay Durant back at first, where she was a part-time starter a year ago. Junior Taryn Schnell moves in from a starting outfield spot to play shortstop, while freshman Maria Caro will be at second base.

The outfield will enter the season untested at the varsity level, with senior Jill Dorell in left, freshman Carrianne D'Alessandro in center and soph Taylor Stevens in right. Senior Kristen Yuzik is the top outfield reserve. Senior Skylar Roehl could also get some time in the circle backing up Fitzsimmons.

"I think we'll be better offensively than we've been in the past," Baranowski said. "If Lauren can limit teams to one or two runs a game we'll be in every game with a chance to win. I think she's good enough to do that, so we should be competi-

"We've got good base-runners and we have a lot of speed, more than we've had in the past. We'll play some 'small-ball.' The goal is to score runs, and I think we're good enough to score a couple of runs a game. We've been hitting the ball pretty well in the pre-season."

Strong veteran cast boosts Spartan outlook

After an almost daily dose of scrimmages, Immaculata High was more than ready to play some ball for real.

"We're very anxious to get the season started," said Spartans Head Coach Tom Gambino last week. "We're looking forward to our opening game, and doing a better job than in our opener last year (a 4-4 standoff with Ridge). Not that the result was so bad, but we just want to play better.'

The Spartans had their chance Tuesday, and they didn't waste it. Mike Backus had three hits, including two doubles, scored three runs and drove in another when Immaculata ripped Ridge 14-4 in the season debut at Field HealthQuest Flemington.

Mark Bernhardt also had three hits, including a double and an RBI, and Ken Gregory singled and belted a solo homer in the sixth inning when the home team, which totaled 15 hits, broke loose for seven runs to end the contest

via the "mercy rule." Winning pitcher Morrison allowed nine hits, one walk and four runs. Immaculata was scheduled to travel up to Washington Thursday to face Warren Hills and will participate in a fourteam tournament today at Hillsborough.

Tuesday's impressive opener could be a hint of what's to come for the Spartans, who fully expect to be typically strong this year — certainly not startling news to area squads.

The Spartans 17-8-1 went overall last spring, cap the tured Skyland

Conference's Delaware East Division crown and reached Somerset Tournament final, where they fell to eventual State Group 4 Hillsborough. champion Immaculata has won county titles nine of the last 15 years. Seven of last year's starters return, and the Spartans look particularly solid through the middle - catching, pitching, second base-shortstop and center field - which is typically the focal point in assess-

ing any team's strength. "I think we're very strong there because we have everyone back," said Gambino.

"Pitching-wise, we're as deep **IMMACULATA** as any team BASEBALL we've had. It's been a busy

pre-season. We've been fine-tuning what we've been working on and the guys have been training all year on their own." Kyle Morrison, a senior, fig-

ures to be the Spartans' pitching ace after going 5-2 with a 2.52 earned run average last year. Also bolstering the mound staff will be junior lefthanders Sean McKeown (4-1, 4.02) and Jack Rice and classmates Jamie Colt and Bernhardt. Two more juniors, Stan Meleczko and Peter Cirianni (another southpaw), also could be in the plans.

Junior Jeff Bland, who hit .389 last season, is back for his

third year as the Spartans' catcher while Rice, who had just 13 at-bats last year, takes over at first base. Backus (.319) is the senior second baseman, junior Tom Burke is at shortstop and Kyle Morrison (.313)Bernhardt (.327) will split third-base duties.

Junior Jamie Connell, who played for the junior varsity in 2005, will likely see action at second and short because Backus and Burke are also pitching candidates.

Senior rightfielder Gregory, who had a team-high 24 runs batted in and batted .444 last year, will probably be the No. 3 man in the batting order (and will play some first base when Rice pitches) while junior leftfielder Frank Floria (.403, 18 RBI) is the cleanup

Sophomore Matt Marquis, who saw some varsity time late last spring, will be in center although he may shift to right on occasion and senior Chris Morrison should also see plenty of action as Immaculata's fourth outfield-

The quick Marquis is the leadoff batter and Backus is behind him, which could set up things very nicely for the next few Spartans in the line-

"The first two guys have a lot of speed," said Gambino, "and the next four guys drive the ball with power to all fields. I think offensively we'll be as good as any team I've had in the past few years, especially with the addition of Marquis.

Obituaries

Rosemarie Drzewoszewski

BOUND BROOK Rosemarie Peltack 71, died Drzewoszewski, March 25, 2006 at Somerset Medical Center in Somerville. Born in Bound Brook, she was a daughter of the late

Cebula Peltack. Mrs. Drzewoszewski lived in Manville before returning to Bound Brook in 1962. She was the office manager for Suydam Robinson & Greck in Bound Brook, retiring in 2004

Alexander Sr. and Angela

after 25 years with the insurance agency. She was a member of the Altar Rosary Society at St.

Mary of Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church.

Surviving are her husband of 50 years, Henry J.; a son, Henry "Wayne" of Bound Brook; a daughter, Diane Clauss and husband Steven of Manville; a sister, Patricia P. Cichon of Manville; and three grandchildren.

Services were held March 31 at the Fucillo & Warren Funeral Home in Manville with Rev. Daniel Sloan, pastor of Christ the King Roman Catholic Church in Manville, officiating. To send a condolence, visit www.fucilloandwarrenfuneralhome.com.

Marie Kelly

PISCATAWAY Marie Connolly Kelly, 91, died March 31, 2006 at the New Jersey Eastern Star Home in Bridgewater.

Born July 4, 1914 in Bayonne, she was a daughter of the late Lawrence and Mary Sheehan Connolly.

Mrs. Kelly lived in Hampton, New Market and Plainfield before returning to Piscataway in 1970. She had resided in Somerville since 1994.

She retired in 1983 after 21 years as a nurse in the neonatal unit of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Elizabeth. Mrs. Kelly began her career with the neonatal unit of St. Vincent's Hospital Manhattan. She graduated from the nursing school at St.

Vincent's Hospital. More recently Mrs. Kelly worked at the Dunellen Public

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Library and in the office of the Dunellen building inspector.

Her husband, Charles B., died in 1962. Also preceding her in death were four brothers, Charles Connolly in 1945, Richard Connolly in 1954, Edward Connolly in 1976 and Lawrence Connolly in 1993; and two sisters, Marjorie Connolly in 1949 and Ruth Day in 1996.

Surviving are two daughters, Maryanne of Bedminster and Sara Stackhouse and husband David of Somerville; and many nieces and nephews.

Services were held Wednesday at the Cusick Funeral Home in Somerville. Burial was in Holy Redeemer Cemetery, South Plainfield.

Donations may be sent to Plainfield Area Humane 75 Rock Society, Plainfield, NJ 07063.

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Registration accepted

EDISON - Registration is underway for the VSA arts of New Jersey Annual Statewide Partners in the Arts Festival being held 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. June 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Middlesex County College.

for area arts festival

Partners in the Arts provides opportunities for children and adults with and without disabilities to engage in an enriching and accessible celebration of the arts. Individuals and groups are invited to participate in a day of performances, exhibits arts workshops and more.

Students will have the opportunity to engage in interactive and cooperative learning activities that support the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in the Visual and Performing Arts. Interested participants are also invited to register to present exhibits and performances for the festival audience. This event is offered free of charge

The festival is one of the many projects of VSA arts of New Jersey, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the lives and promoting the creative power of individuals with disabilities throughout New Jersey. Cosponsors for this event are the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission and Middlesex County College.

This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts - Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts and the central office of VSA arts, under an award from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily reflect the policy of the U.S. Department of

Education and endorsement should not be assumed. Individuals, schools and organizations are invited to particiinformation or to register, contact Karen Singer at VSA arts of New Jersey, 703 Jersey Ave... New Brunswick, NJ 08901, (732) 745-3885, (732) 745-5935 or (732) 745-3913 (TTY) or info@usanj.org.

Registration deadline is April

South Plainfield to hold spring cleaning

SOUTH PLAINFIELD - The Clean Communities Advisory Board sponsors a borough-wide cleanup in late April.

The main cleanup program is on Saturday, April 22. Meet at 9 a.m. at Borough Hall, 2480 Plainfield Ave., to pick up equipment and find out where you should go. Roadsides, parks, streams and empty lots will be targeted. You can come on your own or form a crew.

A pizza party at Borough Hall follows at noon with "environmentally friendly" door prizes.

For more information, e-mail atempel@southplainfieldnj.com or call (908) 226-7621.

Two workshops for non-profits

EDISON - The Partnership in Philanthropy sponsors two workshops for officers of nonprofit agencies.

"The Basics of Fundraising" are covered on Saturday, April 8. "The Role of the Board and Board-Staff Relations" will be explored on Saturday, April 22.

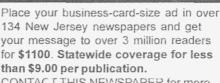
Both workshops run from 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in the PSE&G training center at 234 Pierson Ave. Cost of each workshop is \$65 and includes lunch.

For registration, e-mail bdembo@pipnj.org or call (973) 701-9810.

Scouts planning **Spring Camporee**

EAST BRUNSWICK - The Central New Jersey Council, Boy Scouts of America, will hold a Spring Camporee from April 28-30 at the Middlesex County Fairgrounds

pate in this event. For additional **GROW YOUR BUSINESS!**



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The theme is "Be Prepared — Scouting Salutes Our Emergency Services.' Scouts will learn disaster relief

from the people who provide those services in New Jersey. More than 4,000 scouts are expected to attend.

There will be displays from the Middlesex County Office of Emergency Management, including emergency vehicles and mobile command buses. The State Police will be there with one of their helicopters, as well as Haz-Mat teams and a mobile emergency hospital.

Civil emergency response teams will conduct demonstrations. There will be displays from the Red Cross, which will conduct a blood drive. The Sharing Network will talk about organ donations.

Scouts can earn a number of merit badges, including Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Safety, Traffic Safety, Fire Safety, Crime Prevention, Fingerprinting, Public Health and Weather.

The Cerural New Jersey Council covers most of Middlesex County.

County library system adds Spanish interface

The Somerset County Library System has launched a Spanish interface of its on-line catalog. Spanish-speaking patrons are now able to search the Spanish version of the catalog from the library home page (www.somerset.lib.nj.us) by clicking on one icon. There is also an option available to patrons to have their library checkout receipts and overdue notices printed in

The growing Hispanic population created the right opportunity to begin offering this valuable service at the Somerset County Library System. This feature is not costing the SCLS any additional money and will address a growing need

Although the SCLS does not foresee the need to offer the catalog in any other additional languages at this time, it is always monitoring the needs of the community in an effort to

provide the best possible service to all library cardholders.

Learn to handle stress at eight-week series

Throughout the course of a person's everyday life, they are confronted with stress-inducing situations. In the areas of family, work, relationships and finance, we often have to juggle multiple responsibilities which can lead to mental and emotional overload. People experience stress in different ways. Difficulty coping with stress can lead to depression, anxiety, substance abuse and health problems.

In order to teach individuals how to develop and apply effective coping strategies to deal with stresses of everyday life, the Somerset County on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency is offering a free eight-week program called "Bridge to Success." This program is held one night a week and offered at no cost. Dinner and incentives are provided. Transportation and child care can be arranged if necessary.

To qualify for the "Bridge to Success" you must live in Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, Manville, North Plainfield or Somerville. Applicants must be between 21 and 64 years

For full information and registration, call (908) 722-4900. Spring classes held

at community school MIDDLESEX - The Middlesex Community School has scheduled a number of courses in the winter and

Except where indicated, courses are held at Middlesex High School on Bound Brook Road. The schedule:

- "Decorative Painting and Design Craft Projects" with Ann Rothwell, 6:30 p.m. Thursday, May 4 and June 1. Fee is \$20 payable to the Community School plus \$15 payable to the instructor.

Register on-line at www.middlesex.k12.nj.us or call (732) 317-6000, Ext. 20206.

Kaster Sunday SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 2006 6:00 a.m. Easter Sunrise Service

Roosevelt Park, Edison

Breakfast immediately following the service at New Hope.

9:30 a.m. Easter Worship Service

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH 45 Hampton Street, Metuchen • (732) 549-8941

Rev. Ronald L. Owens, Senior Pastor

Legal Notices

fractions for the segment repair and mantenance contract. Perspensibilities include repair and mantenance of sid induplicate with the Clerk of the Superior Court, Hughesing, timin guitters and leaders, roofing and roofing components, building lighting, Cubhouse interior and extending Justice Complex, CN-971, Trenton, New Jersey 98625, in nexts, bedding lighting, Cubhouse interior and extending a session of the Rules of Civil Practice and tenns courts, playground, driver vents, and signage wait. Procedure. This action has been instituted for the purpose of (1) hance of see met dispersives; grounds policing, breeze, therefore, a mentiopage was been and truthleshooting; preventative and periodic mant. EACH MORTGAGE COMPANY, considered on March 19, tenance, periodic inspections, administrative assistance. 2005, in Book, 10497 of Mortgages for MIDDLESEX Contractor to provide insurance, vehicle, and uniform. Contractor to provide insurance v

PANY, AS TRUSTEE FOR LONG BEACH MORTGAGE LOAN TRUST 2005-WL1 & Plaintiff and RAMON \$19.70.

Society Hill at Piscataway
Invitation for Maintenance Contract Bids
sety Hill at Piscataway Condominum Association.

a 545 cmt. 47 building, 43 acre community located date. If you fail to do co, Jedgment by Default may be renbecataway. Nul. is inviting sealed bids from local contors for its general maintenance contract. Complaint You shall file your answer and proof of service
periodicities include: repair and maintenance of sad, in displicate with the Clerk of the Superior Court. Hughes
term nutting and faulten repairs and maintenance for sad.

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Announcements

Announcements 110

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Employment **Education 201**

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JOB COACH PT The Midland Adult Service, a nationally recognized school/work program associated withe Midland School No. Branch (Somerset County), associated with seeking a part-time Job Coach to train young adults with learning dis-abilities in-house as well as out in the work force High School diploma re 908-722-7727 EOE A/A

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Open Houses 331

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or ancestry. The newspaper will not knowingly accept or print any advertising for residen-tial real estate which

To report housing discrim nation, call the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) at 1-800-699-9777. The HUD TTY telephone number for the hearing impaired is (212) 708-1455.

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 o Suburban Philadelphia a (610) 604-4411.



Real Estate Rentals

Apartments 405

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