

MAR 10 2000

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South Plainfield Observer

VOL. 3, NO. 27

50 CENTS

MARCH 10, 2000

COPS GET DIRTY MONEY!

Law Enforcement Efforts Pay Off

The chief of IRS Criminal Investigations in Washington, Mark Matthews, and U.S. Attorney Robert J. Cleary distributed more than \$2.15 million in forfeited drug money to eight New Jersey law enforcement agencies and the FBI to be used for crime-fighting initiatives.

The South Plainfield Police Department was awarded more than a half million dollars—\$566,574. Police Chief Steven Merkler, Captain Robert Merkler and Retired Detective George Green were on hand in the Springfield office of the IRS to receive the money.

According to Mayor Dan Gallagher who expressed his pleasure that the police department received the funds, the funds are earmarked for police operations and cannot be used to offset the municipal or police budget. Gallagher also believes that the funds must be used within two years.

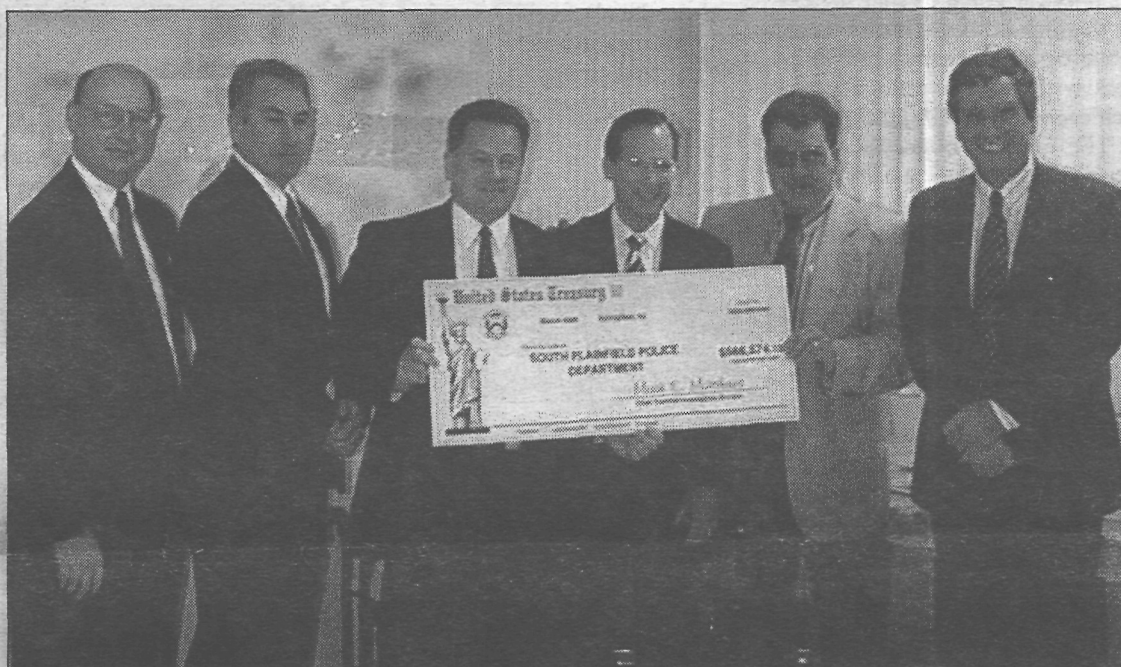
The awards—ranging from

\$28,328 for several police departments to \$708,217 for the Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office—were made to law enforcement agencies involved in breaking up one of the largest drug money-laundering operations in New Jersey history in 1999.

The ring laundered tens of millions of dollars through U.S. banks for Colombian drug cartels. The central figure in the case was Julio Montes Cardona of Piscataway, who pleaded guilty to money laundering conspiracy and other charges in 1990 and was sentenced to eight years in prison. Fourteen other defendants pleaded guilty as well and received sentences of between 18 and 46 months.

The funds distributed came from a brokerage account used by the ring and seized by the government.

The forfeiture awards were as follows: Middlesex County Prosecutor's Office—\$708,217; FBI,



South Plainfield Police Department was awarded \$566,574 in confiscated drug money. Pictured left to right are Dan Whitten, Acting Director of Investigations, Northeast Region, Criminal Investigation Washington, D.C.; SP Police Captain Robert Merkler; SP Police Chief Steven Merkler; Stuart Rabner, First Assistant United States Attorney, Judicial District of New Jersey; Retired SP Police Detective George Green and Frank Nixon, Internal Revenue Service District Director, New Jersey District.

Newark—\$679,889; South Plainfield Police Department—\$566,574 and the Union County Prosecutor's Office—\$56,657. Police departments of Piscataway, North Plainfield, Plainfield and Somerville and the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office each received awards of \$28,328.

An awards ceremony was held at IRS New Jersey headquarters in Springfield on Monday.

Matthews credited officers and agents from each of the agencies for their varied roles in the successful nine-month undercover investigation.

"Asset forfeiture has become

one of the federal government's most effective law enforcement weapons in combating money laundering and drug trafficking," Matthews said. "Drug lords should never believe that the United States is a safe haven for their drugs or their money."

Continued on page 10



In celebration of Read Across America, Kennedy School Principal Al Czech, nicknamed "Mr. Chick" challenged school students to read at least 21,000 books. Because the students exceeded the challenge Czech was tarred and feathered. See page 6 for story.

Referendum Vote Scheduled 2000/2001 Budget Introduced

Next Tuesday, March 14, voters will once again be asked to vote on a school bond referendum totalling \$22.6 million. Next Tuesday's referendum is similar to one which voters turned down last December, except it will retain the old Roosevelt School for an anticipated increase in the student enrollment and instead would build a new administration building behind the present one on Cromwell Place.

Last week the board introduced the 2000/2001 budget which does not reflect any tax increase. A final vote on the budget is scheduled by the board for March 28.

The \$22.6 million bond includes a new \$11 million Roosevelt School, with a 600-student capacity. It also includes 10 additional classrooms to be built in Grant School, an administra-

tion building at the Grant School site, two new boilers at the Middle School, a new track at Jost Field, technology infrastructure and equipment and electrical upgrades to all schools.

Since the defeat of the last referendum, the board has been reaching out to many residents to explain the details of the referendum and its impact on the students, the parents and the schools in South Plainfield. A newsletter explaining the referendum was mailed this week to all residents.

At the board's last meeting a decision was made to put a cap on class size and to suspend open enrollment. The board is trying to avoid split

sessions, but can not guarantee that it will not happen if the referendum isn't passed.

Each board member emphasized the significance of the upcoming referendum to quality of education for the students of South Plainfield.

The projected annual increase in taxes, if the referendum passes, is approximately \$141 per household. The increase in the projected amount is due, in part, to the rise in interest rates since last December. Because interest rates are continuing to rise, an exact amount cannot be determined at this time.

**Get Out and Vote on
School Bond Referendum on
Tuesday, March 14!!**

In My Opinion

To the Editor,

The referendum proposed by South Plainfield's Board of Education should be defeated at the polls for a variety of reasons. To begin with, why has the board not revealed current class sizes in our schools? It may be that we presently have room for increasing these classes to take care of the anticipated new enrollment in the next four to five years.

The board's referendum does not take into consideration how many new students may enroll in Sacred Heart School. I don't recall any mention of this by the board's press releases.

It would make more sense to utilize expanding Roosevelt School by adding offsite classrooms, as may be necessary. Another option, which the Board did mention, is going to split session at the high school. This has been done before in many communities with no loss in academic achievement.

The issue of boiler repair or replacement should be handled by a budget line for building maintenance, as well as the projected cost of rewiring certain schools where needed. Again, these are items that should be financed as part of the Board's overall maintenance program.

I urge my fellow citizens to vote "NO" on the upcoming bond referendum on March 14. There are too many unanswered questions to vote otherwise, to say nothing about a hefty increase in taxes for the homeowners in town.

This is not to denigrate the Board's good intentions, but they should exercise some of the options available to resolve projected increases in our school population.

CHARLES A. GOVER

To the Editor:

This letter is in support of the Board of Education bond issue, and I would like to encourage others to vote "Yes" on Tuesday,

March 14.

As a long-time South Plainfield resident who went through the public school system and has two children currently in the system, I can see the need for the upgrades and additional space. These are not cosmetic needs or construction just to make a showplace facility that is more comfortable. These improvements are needed for safety, better education and long-term improvement in the academic results of our students.

The facilities available in our schools need to be comparable to the schools in surrounding towns to keep us on the same level in academic achievement and property values. Many students have better computer resources at home than at their school and would benefit from a smooth interface of their work at home with their work in the classroom.

Computers and technology are just the first things that are visible in these classroom needs. All that equipment requires a support structure in electricity and connectivity. Some of the district's schools were built when the power needs of each school required no more than basic lighting, cafeteria requirements and heat, along with one or two Selectric typewriters in the main office and maybe a refrigerator in the teacher's room. Instructional materials were run off on ditto or mimeograph machines, telephone systems were powered by the phone company, lessons were illustrated by overhead, filmstrip, or 16mm film projectors and after-school activities were not as widespread as they are today. There were upgrades, to be sure, but you can only add a limited amount of additional capacity before you have to bring in new systems—not only to keep up with the power demands, but also to take advantage of improvements to efficiency that could lower annual operating costs.

Aside from the electric and

PLEASE NOTE: Although **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** can be published with the name withheld, we must know who sent the letter. We have received a few letters without names or phone numbers to verify. We will not publish these letters. If you sent a letter and want it published, contact us at 668-0010. Your name will remain anonymous, but we must know your identity.

technology needs, there are physical plant improvements that need to be addressed. Some of these should have been taken care of in a different way years ago, but in order to make better use of the limited funds available in the operating budget, certain maintenance items were put off with a repair here or there. Unfortunately, we've reached the point where fixes won't do the job anymore and major replacement is in order. I can only hope that the board of education learns from this episode to make repairs before drastic measures are needed, weighing long-term projects against short-term wants.

The reopening of the Grant School building is imperative to ease the overcrowding that will occur in the next school year. Whatever the final plan as to what classes go in there, the space should be made available for its original purpose — student classrooms.

But where do we put the administration? The school system needs a support staff with space for personnel, transportation, maintenance, printing, and special needs education. They no doubt do not need as much space as they have now and the board definitely does not need a double room of its own (in fact, one of the primary reasons the high school auditorium has its current design is that it was planned for the meetings of the board.)

Since the borough does not have any vacant office space that the administration can use and to keep the most classroom space available for students, the new building design is the best compromise. It will give the administration a more compact base of operations, and give us classroom space available this September.

The new school is not a South Side-North Side issue. It's a basic need. When the building restrictions were lifted on the south side, there was no master plan enforced to keep the housing growth in check while basic support infrastructure such as roads, fire safety, schools, and traffic was improved or built. Even today, housing is sprouting up with

no plans in place to handle all the new residents, their needs and the congestive effect. It seems all of the planned construction is to catch-up with what is happening already. This is not the result of the board of education, present or past. While a large portion of responsibility lies with the borough government in not planning for the current population swell on the south side, the residents are partly responsible for voting down past bond issues for schools and rejecting operating budgets, limiting funds that could have been used to address the problems seeking remedies in the bond issue we are voting on next week.

The cost of this will be spread out over all residents—including the new ones who will move into these new homes. With diligence, the borough government must be sure they pay their fair share.

Please go out to the polls and vote "Yes" on March 14. If you are a current homeowner with kids in the schools and you are concerned about the cost, it's worth it — and will be more expensive when we will be forced to address these issues in the future. If you are a senior citizen who has grown children and do not need the system anymore, think of the children of your friends and neighbors, or even your own, who may want to stay in South Plainfield and will need a top-notch education system for their children. And if you are looking to move out of town, selling your home in an established area, think of how much of an asset these improvements will be in selling your home to prospective buyers—who will have children, looking for a good school system.

The polls open at 7 a.m. and stay open until 9 p.m. Many of the polling stations are in a school. Vote on your way to work, keeping in mind the schools your children will be going to later that day. If you vote during the day, visualize what a Yes vote will bring to that school and others. If you vote on the way home, think of how much more learning a child has done today in a less-crowded classroom with the proper tools for the information age.

**SINCERELY,
BILL SEESSELBERG**

To the Editor:

Once again, On March 14, we will be asked to vote on a referendum for a new school on the

south side of town and some additional work on the remaining schools.

We thought we would share a few facts for those of you who can not attend the many board meetings that have been held. If this referendum does not get passed in March, our children may be required to attend split sessions (a working parents' nightmare). All of the schools will be upgraded for electricity, air conditioning, etc. They will all be equal in the technology they offer. This will increase property value. The school system is a very important issue to most people — especially people who are moving in or out of a town.

If the state comes in and decides we will have a new school, we will no longer have a say in what goes into the new school or any other school for that matter. If this happens taxes will go up anyway, possibly higher than anticipated with the current referendum.

Roosevelt School enrollment cannot continue to grow at its current rate. In September, 1999 there were 425 students at Roosevelt School. As of February 2, 2000, there were 470 students. Since December, this school is growing at almost one student per day! This cannot continue. And the bad news is that the low income housing on Hamilton Boulevard hasn't begun to effect this school yet. What kind of learning environment does this create? What is the quality of the education these children are receiving? How can you put your future on the line? These children are our future!!

At some point Roosevelt School will be unable to accept any additional children and these children will have to be enrolled at other elementary schools—a busing nightmare and more overcrowding!

We urge you to get out and vote YES on March 14!!! Make a difference.

**SINCERELY,
TONY AND CATHY POMPILIO**

Continued on page 12

Submit Letters to the Editor:

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Letters may be submitted by email at our website at spobserver.com or faxed to 908-668-8819. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. We reserve the right to limit the number of letters submitted by one individual on the same subject we will publish. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Observer.

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We look forward to hearing from all of you and encourage you to send in your stories and photos. The *South Plainfield Observer* is your paper. Please let us know what you would like to see in it.

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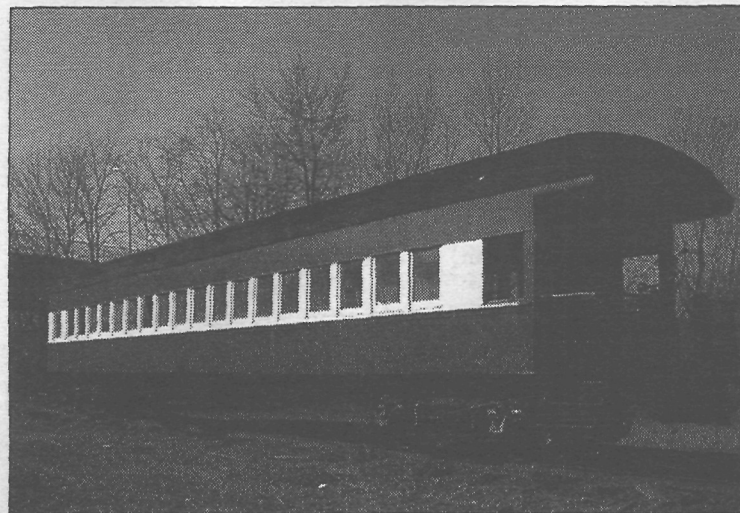
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Train Museum Plans May Be Derailed



For the past three years South Plainfield has been renovating an historic railroad car which is parked near Sherban's Diner. The *Blue Comet* arrived here amidst much of publicity and was set in place with a huge crane. Since then, sometimes at a snail's pace, the car has been undergoing a metamorphosis to restore it to its original state. The original plans were to renovate the car for use as an historical Museum to display the many artifacts the South Plainfield Historical Society has accumulated relating to the borough's history.

The Historical Society has decided they no longer want the railroad car and want to give it to Liberty State Park. Members of the Business Association who have spent much money and efforts, are appalled after hearing this revelation.

During the past few years, the

car was sandblasted and painted, steps to the car are being specially constructed, the windows have been fixed, undercoating applied and a huge cleanup has taken place inside and outside of the car. Heaters were placed under the car so work could be done during the cold winter months and an alarm system was put in after a break-in last year. Electricity was also brought to the site.

For the past two years, students from Middlesex County Vo Tech have been bused here twice a week and are renovating the car's interior. The mahogany and tiles are being painstakingly restored, along with the floor and ceiling. Harris Steel of South Plainfield built a bridge to specifications and donated it at cost of almost \$15,000. The bridge was put in place with a huge crane and ceremonies were held at that time.

According to Bill Tuthill, president of the Historical Society, the railroad car is not suitable for their needs. They have many artifacts that need controlled temperatures.

Donating the railroad car to anyone is not an option, according to Councilwoman Darlene Pinto. She said the car is leased to the town for 99 years and cannot just be given away. Pinto said that during last week's Business Advisory Group (BAG) meeting, members of the Historical Society attended to air their concerns.

Pinto is proposing a committee be formed, consisting of one member each from the Historical Society, BAG, Recreation and the council to reevaluate and propose suggestions as to the future of the car. It is possible that some of items pertaining to the history of South Plainfield can be displayed in the railroad car.

In a related matter, members of the downtown business met last week to discuss ways to attract more interest into the downtown area. Suggestions were made to hold an art fair, car rally and arts and crafts display. Many downtown business owners would like to see the train become a reality and feel it will draw people to the downtown area.

See related story on page 5.

New Store Opens at Middlesex Mall

By Patricia Abbott

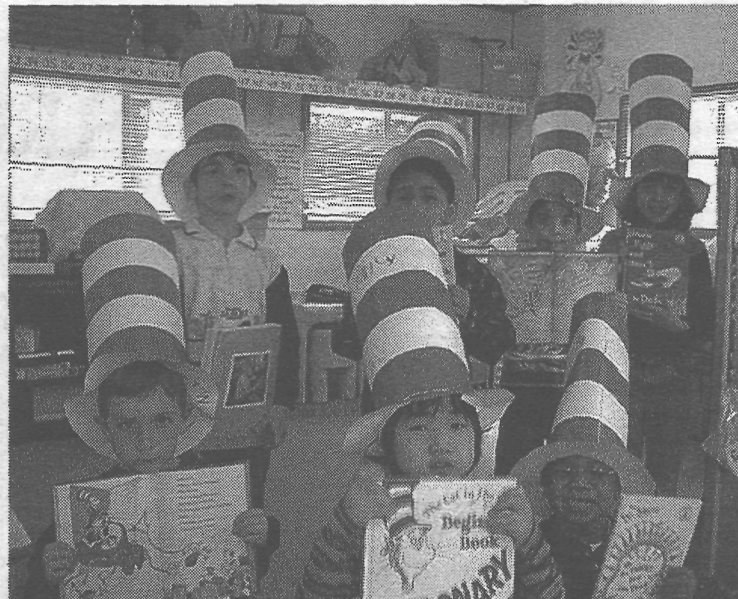
Burlington Coat Factory, the newest addition to Middlesex Mall, will open its doors in South Plainfield on Friday, March 10, at 10 a.m. The store fills the huge area that once held over two dozen businesses and made up the bulk of Middlesex Mall. The Middlesex Mall sign still offers "55 stores" but the actual number has been less than half that for many months, if not years. The newly renovated Kmart began the mall's resurrection and the opening of Burlington Coat Factory will bring new life to the once thriving mall.

Rick Bramble, director of Media Relations and Special Events for Burlington Coat Factory, spoke enthusiastically about how the

store differs from the surrounding stores, "Different and better prices. You save up to 60% off department and specialty store prices. Merchandise is first quality famous labels; it sets us apart."

South Plainfield's Burlington Manager, Nevio Dunatov, comes from the Flemington store which opened a year and a half ago. A mainstay of their popularity is the baby depot and the luxury linens for which the store is well known. Assistant Managers Joan Duigon and Maureen Healy were also busy with the business of preparing for opening.

Manager Nevio Dunatov was confident that all would be ready for opening. Employees readying the store for opening seemed cheerful and confident as well.



The kindergarten class of the Pilgrim Covenant Learning Center celebrate "Read Across America Day" on March 2 by dressing up like the Cat in the Hat and reading Dr. Seuss stories. Dr. Seuss' birthday was March 2.

From the South Plainfield Library

Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

Here's the latest news from the South Plainfield Library:

We'll follow our usual children's Storytime schedule next week. The programs are held on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday at 1:15 p.m. All are for children ages three and over. Also, we've got this month's Kidcraft program set for Friday, March 24. Space is limited for this program, so please sign up in advance. If you'd like more information or have any questions, ask Children's Librarian Linda Hansen.

The regular meeting of the Library Board of Trustees, normally held on the second Tuesday of the month, has been rescheduled. It'll be held on Tuesday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m. Members of the public are welcome to what promises to be an informative meeting.

On the same night, we'll be hosting a program sponsored by the Friends of the Woods. The program is entitled, "Birdscaping Your Garden" and will feature Dr. Emile DeVito, a conservation biologist with the NJ Conservation Foundation. The program runs from 7-9 p.m.; no registration is needed.

Several patrons have asked when we'll present another Internet instructional class. Ask and ye shall receive; the next class is set for Tuesday, March 28, at 7 p.m. As with the previous class, space

is limited, so you must sign up beforehand. You can do this at our main desk, or by calling (908) 754-7885.

This month, our display cabinets feature an assortment of hand tied fishing flies, along with materials used to make them. The display is provided courtesy of South Plainfield resident Joseph Wojcik. Our display wall has a selection of bird artwork provided by Dorothy Miele from the Friends of the Woods. You can see these displays throughout March.

We have a new group of Circuit CD's available. Artists in this batch include Patsy Cline, Alanis Morissette, Shania Twain, Hootie and the Blowfish, and the Beatles. There is also a wide selection of classical discs. CD's can be borrowed, four at a time, for two weeks.

It looks like it's time for another reminder about orphaned Library cards. Unfortunately, we have a number of Library cards just sitting at the main desk taking up space. In general, these cards were either inadvertently left with us or are new cards (usually from Back to School night) that were never picked up. Library cards that just gather dust are no good to anyone. If you think your card might be among this group, please stop by, pick it up and make use of it.

That's about all we have space for this week. Thanks for your attention and feel free to stop in.

Sacred Heart Registration Going On

Registration for pre-K through grade seven is still going on.

Requirements for registration are health records, birth certificate, Baptismal certificate, social security card, most recent report card and recommendation from principal and homeroom teacher.

Pre-K students must be four years old on or before October 1, 2000. Kindergarten students must be five years old on or before October 1, 2000.

First graders must be six years old on or before October 1, 2000. Sacred Heart School admits students of any creed, race, sex and nationality or ethnic origin.

For more information, call 908-756-0631 756-0632, ext. 32 or 33.

Baseball Club Offering High School Scholarship

The South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club is accepting applications for its annual college scholarship. Applications are available at the High School Guidance Department or contact the club. Each year the club offers up to two \$1000 scholar-

ships. Applicants must be residents of South Plainfield graduating this June and have participated at the SPJBC for a minimum of five years. The filing date for applications is April 1,

2000.

Contact the SPJBC clubhouse phone at (908) 754-2090 or email: spjbc@aol.com ... Web Site: members.aol.com/spjbc/spjbc.html.

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AROUND TOWN

EVENTS

Lenten Fish Dinners At Sacred Heart

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of the Sacred Heart Church will again be sponsoring Lenten Fish Dinners on March 10, 17, 24, 31, April 7 and 14.

Dinners will be served in the Sacred Heart School cafeteria located on South Plainfield Ave. from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

The menu will feature filet of fish (fried, broiled or parmigiana) or pizza; fresh garden salad, french fries or macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, coffee, tea, or cold drink, plus dessert. Take out orders are available.

Admission is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors and \$4 for children. Pay at the door. For information, call the Parish Center at 908-756-0633. Stations of the Cross will be held in the Church at 7 p.m.

Riley School to Hold a Scoop Dinner

Riley will be holding their Annual Scoop Dinner on Wednesday, March 22. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. for senior citizens and 5 p.m. for the general public. The cost is \$1 per plate and 25 cents per scoop.

For more information, call Debbie Seider at 908-668-0040.

Easter Bunny is Coming to the PAL!

The South Plainfield Recreation Department is happy to announce the annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Saturday, April 2 at 1 p.m.

All South Plainfield children ages new born to nine years old should meet behind the PAL building.

Harvey the Bunny will be present.

101st Airborne Division Meeting

The 101st Airborne Division will hold their meeting on March 24 at the American Legion Post on Oak Tree Road.

For more info, contact Larry D. Anglin at 732-254-5132.

Mind, Body, Spirit Holistic Expo

Come celebrate the Spring Equinox on Sunday, March 19 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Holistic practitioners, vendors and psychics will all be there.

The expo takes place at the Days Inn on Rt 22 in Bridgewater. Admission is \$10 at the door. Pre-register for \$8 at www.egscorp.com.

For information and directions call 908-526-09500.

Historical Society Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the South Plainfield Historical Society is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14 at 7:30 p.m. in the high school library.

Polish Home Going To Claridge Casino

The Polish Home is sponsoring a trip to Claridge Casino, Atlantic City on Sunday, March 26.

Tickets are \$17 with an \$18 coin return. The bus leaves the Polish Home parking lot on New Market Ave. at 11 a.m. Refreshments will be served on the bus.

For reservations call, Ann at (908) 561-6551 or Chet at 756-0651. All proceeds go to the scholarship fund.

Beauty and the Beast Tickets On Sale

South Plainfield Recreation is inviting you to Broadway to see *Beauty and the Beast* on Sunday, Apr. 2 at 6:30 p.m.

Bus leaves PAL at 3:30 p.m. Only 49 are tickets available. Orchestra seats. Tickets are \$65 per person. Call the PAL for further information at 226-7713.

Country Breakfast At Polish Home

The Polish National Home located on New Market Ave. will be serving a Country Buffet Breakfast on Sunday, April 9, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Eggs, bacon, sausage and

other breakfast items will be served. Prices are \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, \$3 for kids 6-12, children under five are free.

A portion of the proceeds will go to SP Volunteer Fire Dept. and DARE. Please call (908) 668-9442 for further questions.

Columbiettes Sponsoring Country Western Dance and Lunch With Easter Bunny

The South Plainfield Columbiettes are sponsoring a Country Western dance and lunch with the Easter Bunny.

The Country Western Dinner Dance will be held Saturday, April 1 at Bobby and Mary's Restaurant on William Street in Piscataway. Doors will open at 7 p.m., with a buffet dinner served at 7:30. Dancing with Boot Scootin' Slim and Pam will run from 8 p.m. to midnight.

Tickets are \$20 and include the buffet dinner, soda and bottled water. For tickets and information, call Helen at (908) 757-8332.

On Sunday, April 9, the Easter Bunny will visit the Knights of Columbus Hall on Hamilton Blvd. Doors will open at 12:30 p.m. Following lunch the bunny will distribute Easter baskets filled with goodies to all children seven and under. There will also be gifts for all ages and door prizes for each age group.

Tickets are \$7 for children seven and under and \$6 for all others. For tickets and information, call Mary Ann at (908) 226-1222. Reservation deadline is Apr. 1.

Franklin PTA Auction/Raffle Night

Franklin School PTA is sponsoring their Fourth Annual Auction/Raffle Night on Saturday, March 18. The event will be held in the South Plainfield High School gym.

Advance tickets are \$5. Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$7. Doors open at 6:30. For tickets, call 908 753-7117 or 753-2864.

Tickets for 'Spring Fever Breakout' Wrestling Match

The South Plainfield High School Athletic Booster Club are selling tickets for the 'Spring Fever Breakout' pro-wrestling match to be held at South Plainfield High School Gym on Saturday, April 8.

Gold Ringside tickets are selling for \$18; Ringside are \$16 and Bleacher are \$13.

Tickets are also available at B&C Deli on Belmont Ave.

For more information, call (908) 754-3394.

Senior Trip to See The Student Prince

Senior are planing on going to the Papermill Playhouse to see *The Student Prince* on Thursday, May 25. The bus leaves from the PAL building on Maple Ave. at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$35 per person. Purchase tickets at the PAL. Only 49 tickets are available.

Flea Market/Fair Vendors Sought

The South Plainfield Girl Scouts of Washington Rock Girl Scout Council are seeking vendors for their Family Fair and Flea Market planned for Apr. 29 (rain date, May 6) at the Middle School.

Registration fee is \$15 for a 15x5 foot area. Each additional space is \$10. You must supply your own table. Set up is from 7:30 to 9 a.m. and clean up is 4-5 p.m. Sorry no food vendors.

For further information, call Cindy Bosse at (908) 756-9257.

AARP Chapter #4144 Trip Planned

AARP Chapter #4144 is planning a trip to Hunterdon Hills Playhouse on March 30 to see the play *Blythe Spirit*. Ticket includes lunch, show and transportation. For more information call Lee at (732) 968-6613 or Mary at (732) 968-3764.

Boy Scout Troop 207 Plans Chili Fest

Boy Scout Troop 207 is having their First Annual "Chili Fest" on March 19 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Kennedy School.

This fundraiser will allow Troop 207 to launch many successful and interesting high adventures and to purchase excellent equipment for the troop. More importantly, it provides the Scouts with the opportunity (by selling tickets and earning money for their individual accounts) to enjoy all Troop 207 activities at a very low cost.

We have received a positive response from businesses in the South Plainfield area who have contributed ingredients for the chill, paper products, prizes for the Scouts (high ticket sales), or funds to purchase items. In return, we advertise on the tickets the name of each business that has made a contribution. The Scouts will be selling 1,000 tickets.

Troop 207 is going to make this their Annual Fundraiser and each year will increase the amount of tickets sold. Direct questions to Mike Reedy, Assistant Scout Master at 908-561-3951

Old Time Contra-Dance Planned

On Saturday, April 1, the South Plainfield Cultural Arts Commission proudly presents Old-Time Contra Dancing. From 7:30 10:30 pm, enjoy a lively evening of dance and fun at the PAL Building, located on Maple Avenue.

Traditional, American and English Square and Line Dances will be taught. Come alone or with a partner and beginners are definitely welcome. Since dances are lively, please dress comfortably.

The Caller is Sue Dupree, who will teach each dance with backup of Live Music.

Admission is free and refreshments will be sold during the evening.

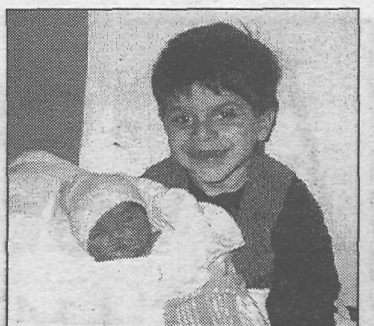
MILESTONES

Birth

Foti's Announce Birth of Son

Gabriel and Lisa Foti of South Bound Brook are pleased to announce the birth of a son, Nicholas Gabriel Foti. Nicholas was born at 9:18 a.m. on Feb. 22. He weighed in at 7 lbs. 11 1/4 ounces and was 19 inches tall. He is welcomed by his brother, Robert Joseph (Bobby).

The proud grandparents are Marge Conley of South Plainfield and Vito and Carmela Foti of South Orange.



Bobby Foti and baby Nicholas

Dean's List

William A. Meixner on Dean's List

The Department of Technological Studies at the College of New Jersey in Ewing has placed William A. Meixner on the Dean's List and the Department Honor Roll for the 1999 Fall Semester. William is a junior majoring in technological studies.



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Downtown Businesses Seek To Attract More Shoppers

On behalf of the South Plainfield Business Association, local business owner Emil Leporino requested a meeting last week with the downtown area businesses. Leporino, an insurance agent, has offices in the downtown area. The group met to discuss what could be done to create some excitement and attract more shoppers to the area. Councilwoman Darlene Pinto, who is chairwoman of Economic Development and Bob Longo, president of the Business Association attended the meeting, along with many downtown business owners.

During the past few years, the downtown area has undergone major renovations and changes. The streets and sidewalks were replaced and Belgium block curbing was installed. Antique lights were placed along the streets and decorative flags were hung. A downtown facade program was implemented, which stores received matching grants of up to \$5,000.

Councilwoman Pinto said new park benches will be also placed in the area in the near future. The exact date has not been set, but it will probably be right after the annual Clean-Up week held in April. The benches will

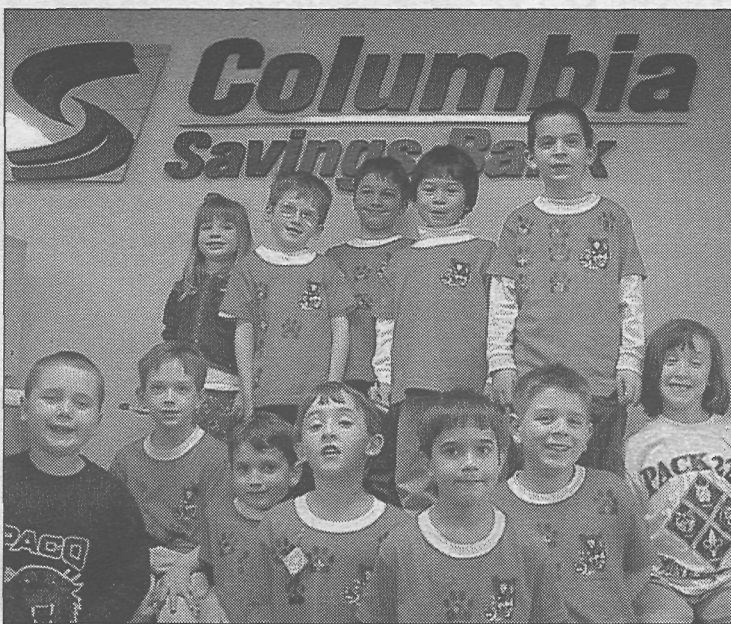
add another dimension to the downtown area, which a few years ago looked like a deserted section of town.

Several suggestions were brought up which could bring more people into the area. Among them were an arts and craft fair, a car show, decorations during the holidays and a farmer's market. The group will also be looking to see if any grants are available to help with the funding.

The railroad car and its future were discussed, including the Historical Society's decision not to use it for a museum. The downtown merchants have been counting on the railcar to attract people to the area. They had expected that it would be completed by the fall.

Leporino, who is also a member of the Clean Community Committee announced that the Adopt-a-Storefront Program has been revived. Anyone who will pledge to cleanup their area receive a broom and dustpan to spruce up their store fronts.

Anyone that has any suggestions or would like more information should call Emil Leporino at 756-8038 or Councilwoman Darlene Pinto at 561-1517.



Riley School Tiger Cub Dens Four and Seven recently visited Columbia Savings Bank.

Tiger Cub Den Counts Cash at Columbia National Bank

By Patricia Abbott

Riley School Tiger Cub dens 4 and 7 recently visited Columbia National Bank on Oak Tree Road. Their goal was to earn Paw Print #8, "Go See It!" The paw prints on their shirts are the Tiger Cub equivalent of a badge or patch. Columbia Bank Branch Manager Carolyn Allen gave them the grand tour of the bank after hours.

The scouts, who belong to Pack 224, got to choose what they wanted to see first. The choice was simple; the vault where all that money was kept. Parents tried to casually contain their curiosity as they craned their necks to watch the boys inside the bank vault.

Ms. Allen showed the excited scouts stacked and wrapped bills and let each boy take a guess at how much was there. Some boys tried to carefully calculate the amount while others had fun adding zeros to the end of their chosen number. The winner was William Harty, who guessed a figure that was closest to the actual amount. The young man was awarded a clock radio for

his correct calculations.

The scouts got a look at a safety deposit box. The box was described to them as a place to keep very valuable items safe from harm and would be thieves. They listened to the explanation about how two keys are needed to access the box. The young minds seemed to be in sync as they plied Ms. Allen with queries about the safety of their

Pokeman cards and rock collections. One parent remarked that the valuable rocks the child spoke of came from the school playground.

Next the boys viewed one of the bank's computers. It was just another computer to them. In contrast to the complicated computer they had just seen, they were intrigued by a simple machine which counted a huge stack of dollar bills in a few seconds. Ms. Allen ran the bills through the machine several times. She asked the kindergarten and first grade students how much money there would be if the stack of 60 bills were \$100 dollar bills. Surprisingly, the answer was supplied in just a few seconds. The boys visited a teller at the drive up window and each had the opportunity to say hello into the microphone. They discovered security camera monitors that showed their parents waving at the camera as they waited in the lobby. The final part of the visit was clearly their favorite, donuts and juice in the lobby.

The experience was a wonderful lesson. As they left the boys thanked Ms. Allen and each received a coloring book, crayons and a small football with the bank's logo. Whether donuts or dollars, the visit was a memorable learning experience for the young scouts.



Carolyn Allen explains the mechanics of the bill counting machine to the scouts.

Local Roads Scheduled for Milling and Topping

Vinnie Buttiglieri announced that South Plainfield will once again enter into an agreement with Middlesex County to "mill and top" roads in town. The following is a list of the proposed roads which will be addressed in 2000:

- Atlantic Street** — Between New Brunswick Avenue and Hudson Street
- Conklin Avenue** — Between Wickford Avenue and Leeds Drive
- Cotton Street** — From DeSepio Avenue to end, From South Plainfield Avenue to end
- Cumberland Street** — Between Atlantic Street and South 11th Street
- East Fairview Avenue** — Between Park Avenue and Woodland Avenue
- Famularo Drive** — From Durham Avenue to end
- Fleet Avenue** — From South Plainfield border to end
- George Street** — Between Sampton Avenue and Ledden Terrace
- Hudson Street** — Between Sussex Street and South 11th Street
- Mahar Avenue** — Between Tompkins Avenue and Palmer Avenue
- Minford Avenue** — From Oakland Avenue to end, From South Plainfield Avenue to end
- Palmer Avenue** — Between Sherman Avenue and Tompkins Avenue
- Schindler Avenue** — Entire length
- Steven Terrace** — Entire length
- Stratford Avenue** — Between Cedarbrook Avenue and Cromwell Place
- Sussex Street** — Between New Brunswick Avenue and Hudson Street
- Terrace Avenue** — From Dolores Avenue to end
- Worth Drive** — Between Perry Street and Greenwich Street

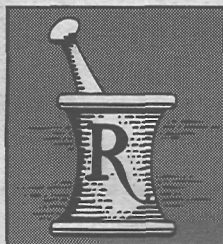
Little Miss Baseball Nominees Announced

The Woman's Auxiliary of the Junior Baseball club has announced the nominations for Little Miss Baseball 2000. They are Megan Boyle, Stacie Carrasca, Sherrie-Lynne Donato and Jaclyn Kukuch.

Boxes with their pictures on them have been placed at B&C Deli located on Belmont Ave., Quick Chek on Sampton Ave. and Ciccios Pizza on Maple Ave. The boxes will remain at these stores for the month of March. They will

then be removed and counted and a winner will be declared.

The official announcement will be made on Opening Day (April 15th). Please make sure you get out and vote for your choice for Little Miss Baseball 2000.



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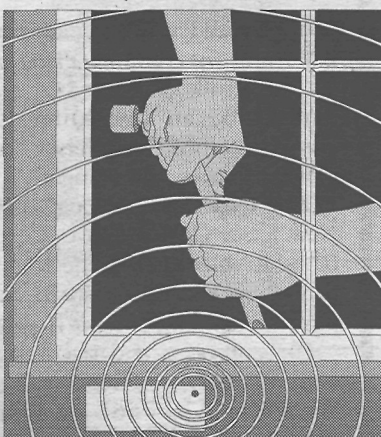
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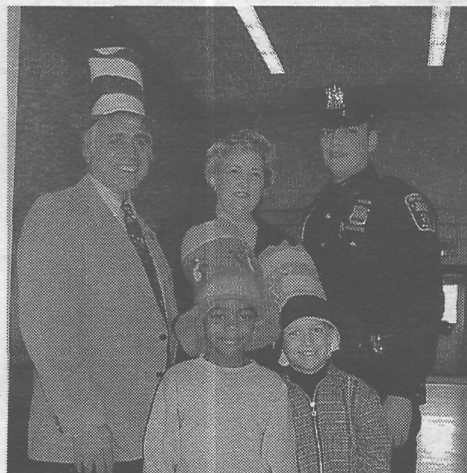
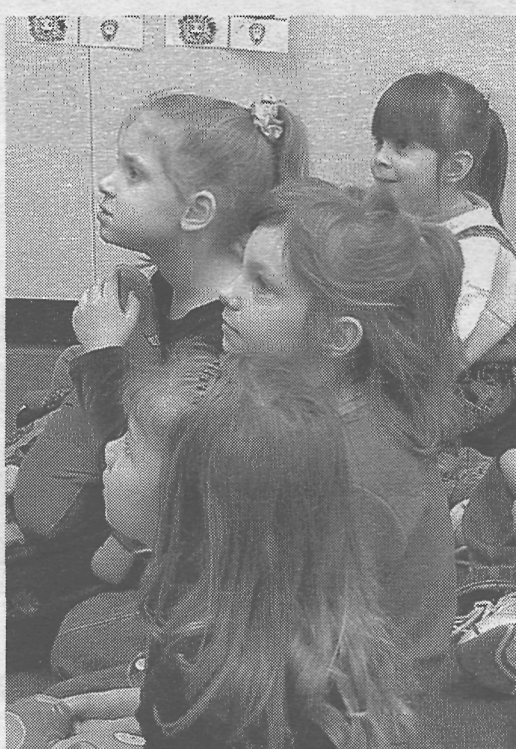
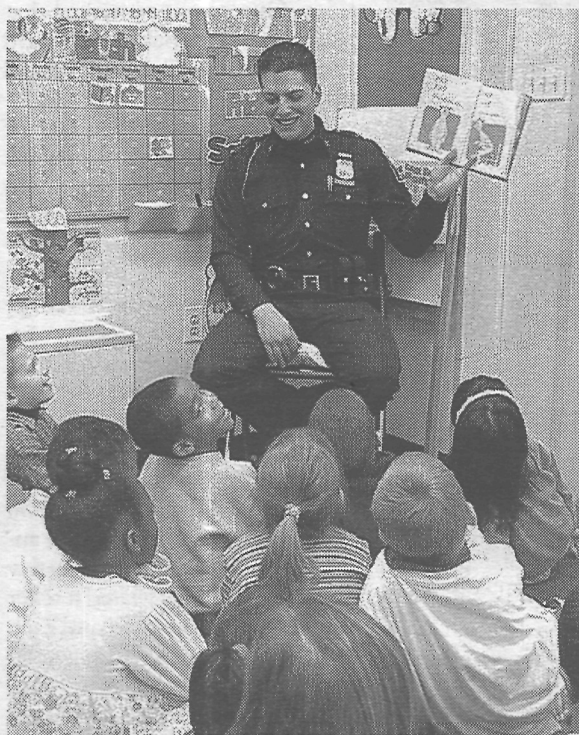
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Roosevelt Joins in *Reading Across America*



By Patricia Abbott

On March 2 students and teachers at Roosevelt School donned colorful, striped stove-pipe type hats and joined children across town and across the country in the *Read Across America* celebration. The National Education Association's Third Annual *Read Across America* program invites children in every school, in every community to celebrate reading on this special day, Dr. Suess's 96th birthday.

Dr. Suess tales are often child-

hood favorites. They are favorites with parents and teachers as well because they make reading fun. The baby boomers and beyond thrilled to the nonsensical whimsy of Dr. Suess. The 'Dick', 'Jane' and 'Spot' of decades old text books can't hold a candle to Suess's larger than life menagerie. Suess entices young minds with his extraordinary and imaginative characters.

Children willingly read, turning page after page to keep up with the antics of the *Cat In The Hat* and a vast assortment of

other creatures and critters.

The three-year-old national reading program was an instant hit and it grows each year as more and more people from communities participate. *Read Across America* brings guest readers to schools to share the joy of books with students. Police Officers Jim Parker and John McConville read to students in Sharon McGrath's class. Superintendent of Special Services shared a book with students in Ms. Muglia's class. Other readers included former BOE member Myra Stillman, Police Officer Foran and many others. The event was celebrated in schools throughout South Plainfield.

Kennedy School Principal Al Chezch (See picture on page 1) once again lost his bet with the students as they exceeded the number of books he dared them to read. This year he was 'tarred and feathered' by the exuberant students. His "loss" is also a victory for him as he watches the students race through books knowing that when they reach their goal they will have some fun. In the past years he has had his head shaved, dyed his hair green, and spent the day sitting on the roof all in the name of a lost bet with his students.

Golden Gloves Tournament Coming to So. Plfd.

The South Plainfield Policemen's Benevolent Association (PBA) and the Plainfields' Chapter of Unico announced an upcoming Extravagaza, "The New Jersey State Golden Gloves Tournament".

The "Quarter Final Bouts" of the New Jersey Golden Gloves Championship will be held at the Middle School on Friday, March 31 at 8 p.m.

For questions and ticket sales contact either Detective Paul Wylam at 226-7662 or Frank Licato at 757-5500.

New Jersey Opera Festival 2000 Held at High School

By Patricia Abbott

Last Saturday South Plainfield High School played host to the New Jersey All-State Opera Festival for the first time. The festival was sponsored by the New Jersey Music Educators Association (NJMEA). The day long event began in the morning with students attending workshops and rehearsals throughout the course of the day. The festival concluded with an evening performance.

Guest artist for the event was Mariana Paunova. The renowned contralto sang "Ulrica's Aria" from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* and Seguedilla from Bizet's *Carmen*. The rest of the evening's music was the culmination of the days work performed by the NJ Opera Festival Chorus, soloists and orchestra. SPSHS Senior Nicole Scavone auditioned and was awarded a solo in the evening's performance. She sang "Mio Babbino Caro" from *Gianni Schicchi* by Giacomo Puccini.

South Plainfield Choral Director Mr. Tracy Murray directed the Opera Festival Chorus. Other schools participating included Ridgewood High School, Glen Ridge High School, Ridgefield High School, Ocean City High School, Metuchen High School, Park Ridge High School, Roselle Park High School, Mount Saint Mary Academy and Ewing High School. The young vocalists performed selections from Faust and other great operas.

The South Plainfield High School and Metuchen High

School orchestras united to perform selections from different operas. Directing the orchestra were Bruce Mikolon, SPSHS orchestra director and Catherine Morrison who teaches string instrument students in grades 4 through 12 at Metuchen public schools.

SPHS chorus members participating included Lindsay Ardis, Christopher Barron, Cassie Bosse, Jesse Brown Jr., Leo Campos, Jody Chepulis, Nadia Deba, Jena DeLos Santos, Thomas Doyon, Andrew Falocco, Kristen Fredericks, Angelique Ganiaris, David Garatino, Melissa Garatino, Nicholas Green,



Senior Nicole Scavone

Kristen Gumina, Rebecca Horn, Chris Imbrosciano, Antonia Katsantonis, Jason Kollarik, Erin Mackey, Krystal McCullen, Mary Otlowski, Jessica Pasco, Lauren Perry, Jenniver Piwowar, Allison Provoire, Nicole Scavone and Andrea Tolentino.

Tax Assistance for Seniors at PAL Building

Income tax assistance for seniors is available free through Chapter 4144 of the AARP every Tuesday and Thursday between the hours of 9 a.m. and 12 noon at the PAL Building located at on Maple Ave.

No appointment is necessary. Interested persons need not be members of the AARP. This service will be available from now until April 15. This program is approved by I.R.S.

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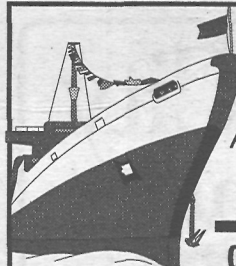
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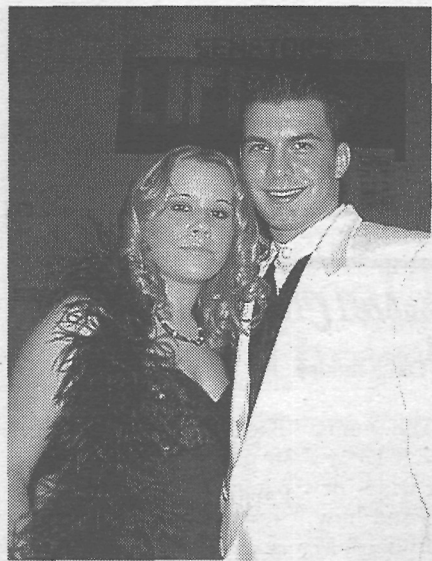
The 46 of us who went last time will tell you about the fantastic time we had. Twenty cabins have been reserved for July 2 through July 9, 2000 aboard one of Carnival's newest and most luxurious ships, the "Elation." (There are only four cabins left.)

Ports of call are: Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cabo San Lucas on the Mexican Riviera. Accommodations are category 6C or better, outside cabins with a large picture window.

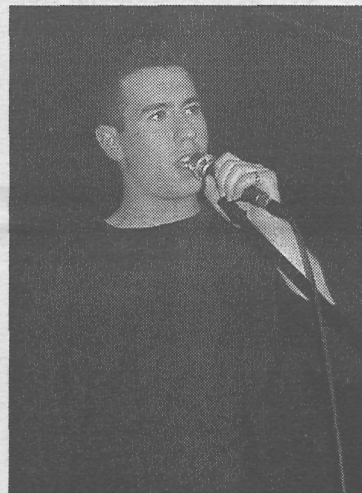
PRICE OF \$1,867.00 PER PERSON!!!! Includes roundtrip airfare Newark to Los Angeles, all port charges and all duties aboard ship except for drinks. We have one cabin left for 3 and 4 persons who will pay \$1211.00 per person.

Join us at this fantastic price for a fun-filled week of sailing along the Mexican Riviera!

Deadline for responding is 3/24/2000



Juniorettes Hit the Runway in Style



By Patricia Abbott

The Juniors did it again! The second annual Prom Fashion Show is held to benefit Project Graduation. This year the show was a huge hit with approximately 200 people attending. The Juniors did all the planning, and solicited for door prizes and advertisements for the program.

Musical entertainment included band *NEWORLD* featuring Matthew Pulomena, Shaun Galya, Loren Domilici, Billie

Jean Sarullo and Anthony Ruiz. Providing atmosphere for the models were DJs — DJ Breeze and DJ Cream.

Juniorette models were Alison Barrett, Sheryl Cwiekalo, Dina Diaz, Krista Gunderson, Erin Mackey, Julie Palmer, Heather Pederson, Carrie Reilly, Samantha Staats, Robin Stavas, Alison Tietjen and Nicole Wrublewski.

Announcer was Amanda Bertrand. Male models were Eric Ambielli, Sam Alexander, Jason Bataille, Sal Carrano, Scott Gunderson, Shawn Kenny, Josh English, Branden Lindgren, Ryan Lindgren, Joe Nicolay, Kyle Prendergast, Matt Pulomena and Brian Raiti. Advi-



sors were Kathy Winner, Kathleen Raiti and Mrs. Taber.

YWCA Offering Adult and Youth Swimming Lessons

The YWCA of Plainfield/North Plainfield located at 232 East Front Street is offering beginning swimming lessons for adults and youth (ages five to 15) in its newly renovated Health & Fitness Center. The lessons are one hour each for a 10-week session. Youth sessions will be

held 10 to 11 a.m. and 11 a.m. to noon each Saturday. Adult sessions are at noon until 1 p.m.

Certified instructors teach the swimming lessons with experience in overcoming water fears and in demonstrating proper swimming techniques. The sessions are limited in number of participants so call today if you are interested.

You may also stop by the YWCA. To register for classes and to tour the new facility which includes state-of-the-art cardiovascular and strength building equipment, a wide range of aerobics classes, the pool and sauna.

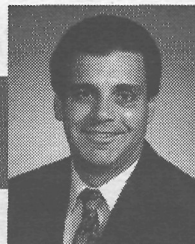
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The Alternative View

By Dr. Anthony J. DeCosta, D.C.

Dear Dr. DeCosta:

Is it true that most back surgery is not only very dangerous but unnecessary as well? — M.S.

Dear M.S.:

Unfortunately, the answer to both parts of your question is yes.

According to Dr. Alan Unruh, D.C., of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, "Each year over 200,000 victims undergo low back surgery. Unfortunately, 20-40 percent will fail the desired outcome. In fact, 10 percent will be worse after surgery. Actually, only 1-4 percent of back problems require surgery. When you are experiencing severe back pain, it's easy to get talked into surgery. You'll do almost anything to get rid of the pain."

Dr. Unruh advises that, "Most cases will respond to conservative treatment. A surgeon making a living doing surgery may not be very objective as to what treatment is needed. The risks of surgery are minimized while you are cautiously told everything in life has some danger. But surgery of the spine is one of the highest risk procedures. Surgery should always be a last resort after all conservative methods have been tried."

The late Dr. Robert Mendelsohn echoed Dr. Unruh's comments. During his career as a practicing medical doctor, Dr. Mendelsohn was chairman of the Medical Licensing Committee for the state of Illinois, Associate Professor of Preventive Medicine and Community Health in the School of Medicine of the University of Illinois and the recipient of numerous awards for excellence in medicine and medical instruction. According to Dr. Mendelsohn, "Nobody in America should be allowed to have back surgery unless they have seen a chiropractor first."

Dr. Mendelsohn stated, "My feeling is that somewhere around ninety percent of surgery is a waste of time, energy, money and life." His conclusions in this matter are supported by the recent publication of the Government Guidelines by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and by the Independent Health Research Group, who say the number of unnecessary operations total more than three million.

The government guidelines for treatment of low back pain advise against surgery and a host of high-cost tests, including CT scans and Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

This is further corroborated by a study conducted by Dr. Maureen C. Jensen and colleagues, from Hoag Memorial Hospital, in Newport Beach, California, on 98 health volunteers. The study found that about a quarter of people with no history of back trouble whatsoever showed ruptured discs when examined for back problems with magnetic imaging scans, or M.R.I. The research suggests that slipped or ruptured discs as indicated by M.R.I. testing may not mean much for many people and certainly cannot be assured to be the cause of any patient's backache.

Dr. Jensen's work, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, is similar to a study completed four years earlier by Dr. Scott Boden, an orthopedic surgeon at Emory University. Dr. Boden states, "The M.R.I. should never be used as a screening test, which is unfortunately the way it is very commonly used today. In fact, use of the M.R.I. too early in somebody's disease process can result in seeing findings that are like gray hair...everybody gets them...and they can result in over treatment."

Back pain, whether it is associated with a slipped or ruptured disc or not, is one of the most common disabling conditions of adulthood. It is estimated that thirty-one million Americans complain of low back pain at any given time. It is also one of the most costly conditions, accounting for eight billion dollars in medical care annually.

Thousands of patients suffering from so-called slipped or ruptured discs have avoided needless surgery thanks to gentle chiropractic spinal adjustments.

If you know anyone suffering with back pain, please suggest they try chiropractic FIRST.

Questions for *The Alternative View* should be addressed to: *The Alternative View*, c/o Dr. Anthony J. DeCosta, D.C., 129 South Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield, NJ 07080. Visit *The Alternative View* on the web at www.usalternativemedicine.com

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Sunday 8:00, 9:30, 11:15 a.m.

Weekdays 9:00 a.m. (church)

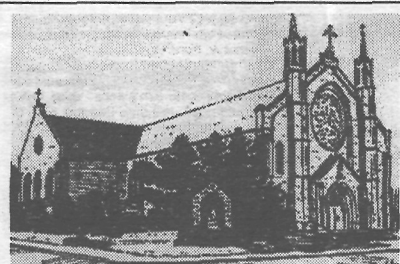
Monday Eve. Mass with Miraculous Medal Novena Prayers 7 p.m.

Holy Days 7 p.m. (Vigil); 7 and 9 a.m., 12:10 p.m.

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Saturday 11 a.m.- 12 noon, 5:15 -5:45 p.m.

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SPORTS

Pender Sets Mark as Boys Season Concludes

By Brian Cochran

The South Plainfield Boys Basketball Team opened the Central Jersey Group II State Tournament impressively, upsetting defending champs Holmdel 58-51 last Monday in South Plainfield. Dominique Pender not only led the Tigers with 20 points, but also set a Middlesex County record by draining his 94th three-pointer of the season. Joe Nicolay also hit for double digits with 10.

The win enabled the boys to advance to the quarter finals to face 16-5 Montgomery last Wednesday. In that game the Cougars threw a 2-3 zone defense at the Tigers and it proved to be effective as the normally potent South Plainfield offense was held to just 19 first half points.

Down by 10 mid-way through the third, the Tigers dipped into their defensive bag of tricks and hit Montgomery with a full court press that quickly erased the 10-point deficit with a quarter to go. That last quarter belonged to the Cougars though as they outscored the Tigers 24-14 and pulled away with the 67-52 win.

Dominique was held to 14 points, but hit another three-pointer to set the mark at 95 for the season. Joe Nicolay added a double-double 10 pts. and 11 boards as South Plainfield concludes the season 16-9.

Girls Exit State Tournament, Finish 16-7

The South Plainfield Girls Basketball Team has once again ended their season, this time by way of last Wednesdays 58-47 quarter finals loss to number five seeded Terriers from Delaware Valley.

The fourth seeded Tigers figured this to be a tough battle coming in and that it was as both teams went three and a half quarters at a neck and neck pace. The Terriers put it away half way through the fourth with an 11-4 run, thanks in part to a slew of offensive putbacks by the Del Val center. Kelly Ritchies 13 (3 threes) led the Tigers as Sheryl Cwiekalo hit for 10 in the season finale.



SPHS bowling team: bottom row left to right are Paul Larisch, Eric Gaub, Rishi Ramogobin and Brett Synder; top row, Coach Ralph Fech, Dough Lauckhardt, Danny Wallis, Matt Square, Ray Tomei and Assistant Coach Lori Gerts.

SPHS Bowling Team Final Results

White Division Champions

Grade		Division (15-1)		Overall (19-2)			
		No. Games	Avg.	Hi Game	Hi Set	No. of 200s	No. of 600s
11	Paul Larisch	67	172.8	256	659	13	2
	GMC Individual Qualifier 14th Place						
12	Danny Wallis	72	175.6	259	646	12	1
11	Ray Tomei	69	178.0	229	664	15	3
	Most Improves +18.9 over last year's average						
11	Eric Gaub	72	183.0	247	625	18	5
12(capt)	Dough Lauckhardt	76	186.2	257	633	22	2
	GMC Individual Qualified 8th Place Bronze Medal All White Division Team						
12	Matt Square	76	191.4	245	660	33	5
	NJSIAA Individual Qualifier Bronze Medalist 653 Set All White Division Team and GMC Conference Team						

Highlights:

Team Average 938 — Individual Average per game 187.7

Fourth out 42 teams — Bishop Ahr Holiday Classic

Eighth out of 35 teams — NJISSA State Sectionals

Fifth out of 10 teams — Joe Romer Memorial

Beat Always tough Woodbridge in the Highest Scoring match of the season, SPHS 3089 — Woodbridge 2970

Ranked Number 12 in the state on Jan. 24, 2000 in the *Star Ledger*
AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESSFUL SEASON— GREAT JOB TEAM!!

The *Observer* would like to thank Coach Ralph Fech who faithfully brought us the scores, standing and highlights of each week's match as well as the team pictures.

South Plainfield Swimmer Wins Four Gold Medals

Danielle Atcachunas captured four first place medals at the New Jersey Swim League State Championships held in Bergen County this past Sunday. Danielle repre-

sented the Middlesex County JCC Blue Dolphins from Edison.

The girls team finished second and the boys team third in the "N" division section of the State Swim meet. Danielle swam in the female eight and under 100 meter medley relay, the 100 meter freestyle relay, the 25 meter breast-stroke and the 25 meter butterfly. Her time in the butterfly of 16.76 seconds beats her pool record of 17.01 seconds.

Danielle's next competition will be this Thursday, March 9, when the New Jersey All-Star Swim Team travels to Orlando, Florida to compete against the Florida All-Stars.

The team is coached by Laurie Post who also coaches the South Plainfield Tiger Sharks Swim Team during the summer season.

Junior Baseball Club Notes

By Frank Hanley

Back To Baseball Night—The annual "Back To Baseball Night" will be held on Monday March 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the clubhouse. "Back To Baseball Night" provides new parents with an overview of how the club is organized and how it operates. All parents are invited to meet the Executive Board, Managers, Coaches and members of the Woman's Auxiliary.

SPJBC Scholarship—The club is taking applications for its annual college scholarship. Applications are available at the High School Guidance Department or contact the club. Each year the club offers up to two \$1000 scholarships. Applicants must be residents of South Plainfield graduating this June and have participated at the SPJBC for a minimum of five years. The filing date for applications is April 1, 2000.

SPRING CLEAN UP—Everyone is invited!!! A work detail is scheduled for Saturday March 18 starting at 8 a.m. Anyone who can spare some time is asked to help out. This is the first of several work details needed to get the complex ready for the 2000 playing season.

Buildings & Grounds—Clay and drying additive have been ordered for all of the fields. The pony building is nearing completion with the installation of electrical and plumbing fixtures.

Tryouts—Tryouts were held at the PAL on Saturday March 4th. The club would like to thank the Recreation Department and the PAL staff for their assistance.

Registration—There are currently 490 players registered to play in the 2000 season. Anyone still interested in playing should contact the club ASAP, as there are only a few openings remaining.

Somerset Patriots—This year, the club is offering tickets to see the Somerset Patriots. The club has reserved 300 tickets for the game scheduled on Friday night May 26. The tickets are \$8 each and are being sold on a first come-first serve basis. Contact John Rayho at 754-8904 for more information.

Sign Sponsors—The Sign Sponsor program is again being offered to local businesses. This program provides businesses with advertising space at the complex. Businesses interested in becoming or continuing as a sponsor or should contact the club as soon as possible.

Woman's Auxiliary—The Woman's Auxiliary is sponsoring the annual Little Miss Baseball contest. The voting boxes are out at local businesses, so please remember to cast your vote. Little Miss Baseball will be announced on Opening Day. Contact Cindy Eichler at 769-4047 for more information.

Contact the SPJBC clubhouse phone: (908) 754-2090 ... email: spjbc@aol.com ... Web Site: members.aol.com/spjbc/spjbc.html.

Events at a Glance

Back to Baseball Night - Monday, March 13 at 7:30 at the clubhouse.

Work Detail - Saturday, March 18 at 8 a.m. at the complex.

Scholarship Application Deadline - April 1.

Opening Day - Saturday, April 15.

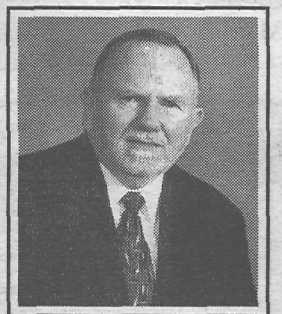
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SPORTS

High School Tiger Wrestlers Claim Three Region Titles

The South Plainfield High School Wrestling team continued to be outstanding as the Tigers claimed three Region titles and three Region runner ups and had four third place finishers. The Tigers which set another school record by sending 10 wrestlers into the Super Regions look to continue their winning ways.

Claiming titles for the Tigers were Matt Anderson (103), who decisioned Brian Marotulli of Parsippany Hills 4-0, Chris Francis (171), who claimed his title by winning a 15-8 decision over Barry Stein of Union and Dan Kunst (189), who avenged his district tournament loss to Gary Cousar of Scotch Plains with a fall at 3:54 to defend his title.

Rich Gebauer (112), Roberto

Ramos (119) and Dave Buttrick (125) all fell short of titles, losing close decisions. Finishing third for the Tigers were Dave Stoeckel (130), Matt Gati (140), Dave Fiore (152) and John Foscolo (215).

On a sad note, Heavyweight Colin Hunter who required knee surgery at the beginning of the season re-injured his knee during the semi-finals and could not continue. "Colin was a warrior for us this year" noted head coach Bill Pavlak. "He wrestled hurt all year for us and he sacrificed himself for the sake of the team. We all felt bad for him because we all thought he could have done well in the states this year. We knew he wasn't 00 percent going in, but he wanted to give it a shot," Pavlak said.



Highlights from the District 12 Tournament

(In last weeks paper we did not publish all of the results from the District 12 Tournament. Here are some additional of the highlights.)

The final at the District 12 Wrestling Tournament looked like a South Plainfield dual meet as one side of the gym was lined with Tigers. The Tigers sent 13 wrestlers to the finals. The most champions the Tigers ever had was eight.

Matt Anderson got the Tiger's rolling when he scored a tech-fall over Sean Devine of Watchung 19-4 5:50. Rich Gebauer kept the balling rolling when he pinned Mike Fullowan of Governor Livingston at 3:34.

Roberto Ramos then won a 9-3 decision over Nick Griffith of North Plainfield. Dave Buttrick who was the second seed decisioned first seed Lucas Francavilla of Scotch Plains 6-5.

Dave Stoeckel (130) pinned Dallas Kingsbury of Watchung at 2:55. Glenn Gross (135) a third seed went on to pin Adam Skordinsky of Chatham who was the first seed.

Matt Gatti (140) decisioned first seed Dan Lizzi of Watchung 20-10.

Steve Johnston (145) a freshmen gave Mike Vitollo of Watchung all he could handle before dropping a 19-9 decision. David Fiore (152) the man in the middle claimed his title by winning a major decision over Mike Garbal of Scotch Plains 15-6.

Chris Francis (171) won his final by major decision 14-4 over Mike Hieber of New Providence. Dan Kunst (189) dropped a close 8-7 decision to Gary Cousar of Scotch Plains.

John Foscolo (215) won his title by winning a 3-0 decision over Steve Skakum of Chatham.

Colin Hunter (Hwt.) Claimed the final Tiger title by winning a 5-3 decision over Nick Parlapianedes of North Plainfield.

Recreation Wrestlers Claim Central Jersey League Tournament Championship

By Bob Hunter

The South Plainfield Recreation Wrestling Team defended their Central Jersey Midget Wrestling League Tournament title by out scoring second place Voorhees 100 to 81. South Plainfield, which sent seven wrestlers to the finals, finished the day claiming two titles, five second place finishers, two thirds and two fourth place winners.

Winning titles for South Plainfield were Jimmy Conroy (67), who pinned Chad Mazurele of Voorhees at 2:42, Billy Ashnault (70), who pinned Clayton Mazurek of Voorhees at 2:26.

Second place medals went to Robert Gentile (53), Patrick Hunter (57), Bryan Hunt (73), Nick Dorey (77) and Kevin Crilley (Hwt), who all lost by decision. Third place went to Ryan Sacco (50) and Danny Bayak (80).

Fourth place went to Mark Wagner (85) and Billy Daly (110).

JV Wrestlers Claim 12 Medals

The JV wrestlers from the rec team had an outstanding day by claiming 12 individual medals and claiming five titles. Winning titles for the Tigers were Nick

Pauls (50), who defeated Nick Fields of Kenilworth 7-1 and Tim Gaughan (67), who defeated Jerry Carlo of Roselle Park 8-4. Also Mike Jakubik (73) won by major decision 14-2 over Kent Woolf of Flemington, Sal Soto (80) defeated Brian Bastian of Flemington 6-0 and Anthony Niemczyk (85) pinned Steven Szczepanik of Kenilworth.

Second place medals went to Kyle Hughes (53) and Jonathan Conroy (60). Third place winners were Corey Hay (53), Mike Wagner (67) and Rocco Petriello (Hwt). Nick Vallone (67) and Pat Millard (90) each won fourth place medals.

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Pictured are the corporate sponsors for the Invitational Youth Wrestling Tournament held last month. Front row (left to right): Sue Ashnault of Creative Kids Academy, Bob Hunter of James W. Conroy Funeral Home and Georgeann DeGrazia of Mohn's Florist. Second row (left to right): Nick Heilmann of Heilmanns Coastal Service, Sal Severini of Sal's Spirit Shoppe, Mark Wagner of Wagner Construction and John Bostick of Bostick's Auto Body. Not pictured are Flanagan's Restaurant & Pub, PM Parts & Equipment, John Cecchetti Insurance, On-Line Systems, James F. Anderson CPA, Degussa (Metal Division) and Dallas Construction Co.

HOW TO CONTACT US....

By mail: 1110 Hamilton Blvd., Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080; By phone: 908-668-0010; By fax: 908-668-8819; By email: ggnan@aol.

Obituaries

Heinz K. Lesche, 86

Heinz K. Lesche of South Plainfield died on Saturday, March 4, in JFK-Hartwyck Nursing Home in Plainfield.

Born in Dresden, Germany, he had come to the United States in 1929 and had settled in Bethlehem, Pa. He had resided in Corning, NY and Venice, Fla. before entering the nursing home in Oct. 1999.

Mr. Lesche had been employed as a superintendent in the machine shop for Corning Glassware in Corning, NY for 40 years before retiring in 1972.

He had been a lover of music and had played the cello and the viola. He was a charter member of the Venice Symphony Orchestra and the Corning Hall Philharmonic Orchestra of Corning, NY.

He was a member of the International Executive Service and as a result of his membership, he had set up a machine shop in Bangkok, Thailand. He had been a volunteer for the Venice Hospital in Venice, Fla. for many years. He was also an avid golfer and a member of the Grace Methodist Church in Venice, Fla.

Surviving are his wife, Alice L. (Lehman) Lesche; two daughters, Virginia Green of South Plainfield and Nancy Kirchmyer of Hebron, Conn. and a son, Robert E. Lesclat of Beltsville, Maryland. Also surviving are seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the JFK Hospital Haven Hospice, 65

James Street, Edison, NJ 08818 or the American Cancer Society. Arrangements were by McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Clair Thorton Graf, 71

Clair Thorton Graf of Sarasota, Fla. died on Saturday, March 4, at her home.

She was born in Plainfield and lived in South Plainfield for 61 years before moving to Sarasota 10 years ago.

Mrs. Graf was a realtor for 25 years working for many of the local area realtors. Mrs. Graf was a Democratic Committee Woman in South Plainfield and a Middlesex County Democratic Committee Woman. She was past president of the Suburban Woman's Club in South Plainfield.

She was a member of St. Patrick's R.C. Church in Sarasota and a former member of Sacred Heart Church in South Plainfield.

She is survived by her beloved husband, John Graf; four sons and two daughters-in-law, Rudy and Michele Graf of Manasquan, James and Diane Graf of Orlando Fla., John Graf, Jr. of Bedminster and Robert Graf of South Plainfield; two daughters, Joann Graf of Toms River and Kathy Graf of North Port, Fla.; eight grandchildren, Jill Connolly, Shelly Russo, Elizabeth Russo, Maureen Graf, Robin Graf, Kathryn Russo-Mejia, Allison Graf-Mejia and Jonathan Graf and four great grandchildren, Justin Dye, Jordon Osteen, Julius Mejia and Miles Connolly.

A memorial service will be held on May 20 at 10 a.m. at the James W. Conroy Funeral Home.

Frank John Yuknus, 80

Frank John Yuknus of South Plainfield died on Sunday, March 5, in Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center, Plainfield.

Born in Newark, he has resided in South Plainfield since 1957.

He was employed as an elevator installer for the Otis Elevator Company in New York City for 40 years before retiring in 1984.

He was a communicant of Sacred Heart Church and a member of the Elevator Union in New York City.

His wife, Margaret O. Yuknus, died in 1986 and his daughter, Jeanne Deering, died in 1989.

Surviving are a son, Frank Jay Yuknus of Parkland, Fla.; a daughter, Margaret O. Yuknus of South Plainfield; a sister, Ann Slaughter of Bound Brook and a brother, Charles Yuknus of Piscataway. Also surviving are eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

By Cyrus N. Moon

Weekly Horoscope 3/10-3/16

PISCES 2/19-3/20 This could be a week of considerable confusion, when your communications are hopelessly misunderstood or perhaps not even delivered. Be careful to formulate very precisely everything you say to others. If there is a possibility of misunderstanding, it will probably happen.

ARIES 3/21-4/19 You may be inclined to indulge in risks, such as gambling or speculative financial ventures. If these ventures are at all valid or have any potential for success, you should succeed. This is also a good time if you have any plans on starting a business. Start an exercise program.

TAURUS 4/20-5/20 This is a period for the use of strategy in manipulating the control and outcome of situations, especially in situations where the demands of social groups or diplomatic purposes must be well served. Use your charm. Be careful! Idle flattery can be interpreted as a serious overture.

GEMINI 5/21-6/20 Not a good week to negotiate any difficult or any contentious matters, you may be more concerned with keeping the peace than with making a favorable arrangement. Real problems that you may sweep under the rug now will cause bigger problems later.

CANCER 6/20-7/22 You may experience some of life's little stresses this week, nothing serious, but one that forces you to pay more attention to what is happening. Are there people who you may have been taking for granted? You should take the time to correct little problems as they arise.

LEO 7/23-8/22 Some conflicts arise between what you must do and what you would rather do. You may encounter insensitive or arrogant people who make demands without realizing what the financial, emotional, or other cost may be to you. So do not let your feelings keep you from getting a project done.

VIRGO 8/23-9/22 This is a time to discuss common goals with a love interest (wedding plans?) or partners in your life (business and family). If you're not very good at engaging in

small talk, you may find it a little easier these days. Advice and information is at hand. Elicit the cooperation of others.

LIBRA 9/23-10/22 What a good time to show love to those dear to you. A (moon square venus transit) may make you feel very sentimental. This transit tends to reawaken memories of the past and causes you to feel very attached to your history. Be careful, you can overindulge in food and drink.

SCORPIO 10/23-11/21 You should have noticed that changes are occurring in a relationship that you will be forced to accommodate. They cannot be ignored, because a real breakdown in your relationship would result. DO NOT resort to manipulating feelings of guilt, you will cause bitterness.

SAGITTARIUS 11/22-12/21 Exercise some care, stay clear about details, and read every word of the small print in all your dealings this week! Contrac-

tual negotiations, conferences, and planning session can go well. Avoid the temptation of thinking that small details are not important.

CAPRICORN 12/22-1/19 If you have recently broken off a relationship, it may be best to leave it that way. Don't make an effort to put it back together (WHY?) for another week. This will give you time to think. And during this time you have an opportunity to do some self-searching for your soul.

AQUARIUS 1/20-2/18 Be careful not to do anything hasty, jump to conclusions or react negatively to anything that is said to you. You have a rebellious spirit about you, and may be inclined to do the opposite of what someone suggests. You have a need to be free, go out and crave some excitement.

QUOTE:

Even though the toils of life fill me, there is always more room for you.

Timber Creek Landscaping Renews Clinton Ave. Extension Adoption

Brian Mazellan, president of Timber Creek Landscaping, has renewed his adoption of the stream crossing at the Clinton Avenue Extension. He and his brother Don have been maintaining this heavily-littered stretch of road for the last seven years. In addition to picking up litter, they trim weeds and mow the turf along the roadside.

Mazellan is a charter member of the Adopt-A-Spot program, which he helped develop in 1993. Based on the New Jersey Adopt-A-Highway program, the bor-

ough's Adopt-A-Spot agreements provide businesses, service organizations and private citizens an opportunity to make a difference in the local quality of life. Timber Creek's efforts have made a noticeable difference in the appearance of the stream crossing. Since the adoption, it is more like a glimpse of nature and less like a dump.

For more information about the Adopt-A-Spot program, contact the Clean Communities Coordinator at (908) 226-7621.

LEGAL NOTICES

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF LAND

At a meeting of the Mayor and Council of the Borough of South Plainfield, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, held on February 24, 2000, I was directed to advertise the fact that the Mayor and Council will meet in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, New Jersey on Thursday, March 23, 2000 at 8:00 PM to expose and sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, according to terms of sale on file with the Borough Clerk, the property described below.

Take further notice that the Mayor and Council have, by resolution and pursuant to law, fixed the minimum price at which said property will be sold together with all other detail pertinent, said minimum price being as shown below, plus \$1,000.00 for costs of preparing deeds, all necessary appraisals, advertising this sale and title search costs.

Take further notice that at set sale or any date or place to which it may be adjourned, the Mayor and Council reserve the right in its discretion to reject any or all bids and to sell said property to such bidder as it may select, due regard being given to terms and manner of payment in case one or more minimum bids shall be received.

Take further notice that in each instance where necessary, I have been authorized to notify all contiguous property owners as required by NJSA 40A:12-13.2.

Take further notice that at 7:30 PM on the date of sale, those persons interested in bidding shall deposit with the Clerk, a certified check for ten (10%) percent of the minimum bid for the parcel or parcels sought to be bid on.

Upon acceptance of the minimum bid or bid above minimum, by the Council and the payment thereof by the purchaser according to the manner of purchase in accordance with terms of sale on file, the Borough will deliver a Bargain and Sale Deed for said premises.

/s/James Eckert, Municipal Clerk

Details of proposed land sale to be advertised in

The Observer on Friday, March 10, 2000 and Friday, March 17, 2000, the sale of property known as:

Sale #1 - Minimum Bid - \$645,000.00
Block 398, P/O Lot 2.01
Block 399, P/O Lot 6
Tremont Avenue, St. John's Place and Smith Street

Sale #2 - Minimum Bid - \$110,000.00
Block 362, P/O Lot 6.01
Kenneth Avenue

Sale #3 - Minimum Bid - \$60,000.00
Block 345, P/O Lot 16
Kosciusko Avenue

Sale #4 - Minimum Bid - \$60,000.00
Block 345, P/O Lot 16
Kosciusko Avenue

all as more particularly described in metes and bounds descriptions on file with the Office of the Borough Clerk, said property being owned by the Borough of South Plainfield and not needed for public purpose or use, sale to be held on in the Municipal Building, South Plainfield, New Jersey and will be made subject to the following conditions:

CONDITIONS OF SALE PUBLIC AUCTION

- Conveyance by the Borough of South Plainfield shall be by Bargain and Sale Deed, without covenants and without representations as to the marketability of title. In the event that the purchaser shall determine that title of the property in question shall not be good and marketable, any questions as to the marketability of title shall be submitted to the Borough Clerk's Office within forty-five (45) days of the date of sale. In the event said questions have not been raised within said forty-five (45) day period, then and in that event all questions relating to the marketability of title shall be deemed waived and this matter shall proceed to closing to title within ninety (90) days of date of sale.
- Easements, both of record and not of record.
- Restrictions of record.
- Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield as presently constituted without representations as to the use to which said property can be put.
- In the event that the purchaser is unable to close title within ninety (90) days of the date

of the sale, they shall forward to the Borough of South Plainfield a check representing the balance of the purchase price to be placed in the general fund of the Borough.

6. In the event that the purchaser fails or refuses to close title and/or pay the consideration therefore within the ninety (90) day period, then in that event, the Borough of South Plainfield, may, by resolution of the Mayor and Council, declare the transaction null and void and the purchasers' deposit shall be retained by the Borough of South Plainfield as liquidated damages.

7. At the time of acceptance of the successful bid, ten percent (10%) of the purchase price plus \$1,000.00 shall be paid by the purchaser representing the cost of appraisal, legal fees, advertising and associated costs incurred by the Borough.

8. The purchaser shall make prompt application for any required approvals, including but not limited to subdivision approval, on-site and off-site improvements as required by appropriate Borough Boards, Agencies and Officers, and all costs shall be paid by the purchaser. In the event said approvals are not received within ninety (90) days of the date of sale, the purchaser shall forward the balance of the purchase price in conformance with paragraph five (5) above.

9. It is expressly agreed by the purchaser that if the subject parcel does not require Planning Board or Board of Adjustment review, then in that event, the purchaser will make all required improvements as determined by the Borough Engineer. The necessary performance guarantees shall be posted for same prior to the issuance of and building permits.

10. Purchaser recognizes that the sale is subject to development standards to be set by the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment and/or the Borough Engineer in addition to the Middlesex County Planning Board if applicable. This sale is made without representation as to same and is subject to same.

11. Purchaser will take any action required by the Borough Engineer and/or the Borough Environmental Officer to protect any designated wetlands or flood plane existing on the subject parcel.

12. At set sale, or any date or place to which it may be adjourned, the Mayor and Council reserve the right, in its discretion to reject any or all bids.

13. Certain properties within the Borough of South Plainfield may be designated as contaminated sites by the Environmental Protection Agency and/or the Department of Environmental Protection. One such property is the "Cornell Dubilier" facility now known as the "Hamilton Boulevard Industrial Complex" located at the intersection of Hamilton Boulevard and New Market Avenue which has been designated as a Super Fund site. The purchaser acknowledges knowledge of such locations and the existence of same will not be a basis for avoidance of buyer's obligations.

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by Robert Hunter

TRUE RICHES

In the midst of our grief, we draw comfort and support from family and friends. As difficult as it may be to come to grips with loss, we may be thankful that the living continue to embrace us with genuine concern. It is at these moments that we reaffirm our faith in loving relationships. As Antoine de Saint-Exupery noted: "We forget that there is no hope of joy except in human relations. If I summon up those memories that have left me with an enduring savor, if I draw up the balance sheet of the hours in my life that have truly counted, surely I find only those that no wealth could have procured me. True riches cannot be bought."

In these modern times, family are often scattered across the planet, and communication occurs by computer, phone, and letter. Such forms of exchange may suffice day to day, yet in the event of a death, we are often bewildered in regards to making final arrangements. At the JAMES W. CONROY FUNERAL HOME, we can help you bring loved ones home from nearly anywhere in the world. To learn more about our wide range of services, please call 756-2800. We are located at 2456 Plainfield Avenue in South Plainfield. "Serving Your Family As If It Was Our Own."

"Men fear death, as if unquestionably the greatest evil, yet no man knows that it may not be the greatest good."

-William Mitford



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Beauty

Hillside Cemetery's gentle slopes are dotted with stately trees and evergreens. Flowering trees and bushes accent the grounds. The serene landscape is meticulously attended and renowned for its care and upkeep. All lots are fully developed areas and include perpetual care. Located on Woodland Avenue in Scotch Plains, a non-profit organization. 908.756.1729

Hillside Cemetery
www.hillsidecemetery.com

Cops Get Dirty Money!

Continued from page 1

"This is definitely not what Colombian drug lords had in mind for their cash. But I can't think of a better result than to turn it over to law enforcement to be used in the war on crime," said Cleary.

Following months of investigation — which involved court-approved wiretaps and 24-hour surveillance — approximately 300 federal, state and local law enforcement officers executed search and arrest warrants in New Jersey, Delaware and Florida against defendants believed to be linked to the Medellín and Cali drug cartels of Colombia.

In New Jersey warrants were executed in Middlesex, Union, Somerset and Passaic Counties, with special focus on the Piscataway home of Julio Monte & Cardona (formerly of South Plainfield). The investigation and guilty pleas from Cardona and his co-defendants revealed that Cardona received virtually daily deliveries of cash in packages and duffel bags at his residence, where the money was counted and stored.

Cardona supervised 11 persons who converted millions of dollars in cash generated from narcotics sales into non-cash instruments for deposit into accounts of his co-conspirators, several of whom were relatives of Cardona.

The co-defendants used various banks in New Jersey, New York and Florida to deposit large sums of cash and to purchase cashier checks in an attempt to disguise the origin of the money. The deposits were made in increments of less than \$10,000 to avoid federal bank reporting requirements for deposits of larger sums.

In one bank in Newburgh, N.Y., for example, the ring deposited at least \$185,000 between May 11, 1989 and June 20, 1989, before bank officials reported the activity to the IRS, according to court records.

The money was sold on the Colombian black market by an indicted co-conspirator and moved to other accounts throughout the U.S. Hundreds of money orders, each for thousands of dollars but never

more than \$10,000, were sent through the mail to banks for deposit by the money launderers.

In most instances, packages filled with money orders and checks that arrived at the banks for deposit had Cardona's South Plainfield home as a return address but identified other persons or businesses as the sender.

The funds distributed today had been held in a brokerage account in the name of the Friko Corporation, a Panamanian company. The Government filed a seizure warrant against the account at the time of the defendants' indictment and arrests, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Neil R. Gallagher of the U.S. Attorney's Civil Division in Newark.

Throughout numerous appeals by Friko and its principals — appeals spanning nearly a decade that were defended by the U.S. Attorney's Office — the Government's seizure of the funds was repeatedly upheld on the ground that the account was used as part of the Cardona money laundering ring.

South Plainfield
Observer

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100X200 BLDG. LOT/SOMERSET \$62,900. Residential neighborhood. Corner lot. Call Susan at Prudential Golden Key Realty, ext. 30. 732-560-0665.

TIRES FOR SALE

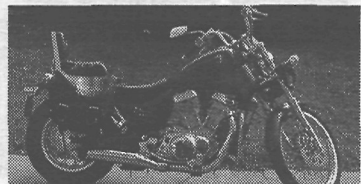
Winter Radial Snow Tires, P205/70/14 on Rims. \$75. 732-545-3132.

92 MAZDA PROTEGE, 4/DR, 5/SPD, New Brakes, Completely new exhaust system, new radiator, most reliable car I've ever owned—buying a truck. \$3500. 732-545-3132.

PHOTOGRAPHY

COPIES OF OBSERVER PHOTOS for sale. Call Pattie Abbott at 756-8011 or the Observer at 908-668-0010.

MOTORCYCLE



MOTORCYCLE FOR SALE 1994 SUZUKI INTRUDER 800 w/ Saddle Bags and pouch. Under 1500 miles. Mint condition. Must see. \$4100. 908-668-0010

POLICE REPORT

• Rachel Billa president of US Plastics, Hollywood Ct. reported that unknown suspects broke into the building. The entire interior was shot up with paint balls and fire extinguishers had been sprayed. Billa reported leaving the building at 10 a.m. on Friday. All exits were secured. The damage was discovered when she arrived on Monday.

• US Truck Parts Inc., St. Nicholas Ave. reported the theft of a truck. The vehicle had been loaned to an employee and was to be returned the next day.

• Days Inn reported damage to a room by the last guest. The damage was discovered when an

employee went to clean the room. Several empty cases of beer cans were found in the room on the ground outside the second floor window. Pictures were ripped off the wall and smashed, lamps were broken, light fixtures in the bedroom and bathroom had been pulled from the wall, and the smoke alarms had been pulled out. The suspect left during the night. His driver's license number was on the receipt.

• Michael Paul Krutz of Stirling reported the theft of a black fanny pack from his vehicle while he was in Dunkin Donuts, Lakeview Ave. The pack

contained a cell phone, various credit cards, keys and a firearms ID. The vehicle not been locked.

• A South Plainfield resident reported an ongoing problem with a neighbor. The victim stated that on several occasions the suspect had attempted to strike her car with his vehicle. She stated that on March 3 the suspect was in his vehicle and the victim was in her driveway in her vehicle. She wanted to wait for him to leave first because of past incidents.

After waiting several minutes she backed out and waited again because the suspect backed out. She proceeded to drive as close to the right as possible when the

suspect proceeded straight at her in a head-on fashion. The victim stated she veered ever further to the right to avoid the suspect. The suspect missed impacting her car. The victim will sign a complaint.

• An employee of Lafarge Gypsum, Reston, Va., reported the theft of a laptop computer from his car while it was parked at Days Inn. The victim said he was packing items from his room into the car and the car was in plain view of the room. When he finished packing, he noticed the laptop missing. There are no suspects. The computer is property of Lafarge Gypsum.

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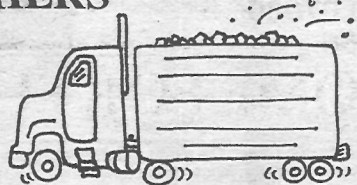
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In My Opinion

Letters

Continued from page 2

To the Editor,

The President of the United States does not make \$5,000 per week. As published, the board of education of South Plainfield has approved—so called—soft cost for services rendered by their architect. This a two year project—construction manager (job superintendent) at \$5,000 per week—total cost for two years service is \$575,400.

Remember, the architect gets six percent of the total cost of the this bond issue. That comes to \$1,150,800. Every cost on this project is six percent higher than the true cost.

Wake-Up! Reject this proposal and vote no on March 14. Reject this architect and this expensive project.

PAT CRILLEY

To the Editor:

At a recent South Plainfield Borough Council meeting, the mayor passed a resolution to sell approximately one million dollars of borough-owned property deemed not needed for public use. This public auction is to be held on March 23, 2000. Will these monies be used to pay off borough debts to balance the budget, in order to satisfy the slogan, "No municipal tax increase?"

During this meeting, a request was made by Councilman Dennis Cerami to purchase a new ambulance for our Rescue Squad, which is badly needed. He spoke about three ambulances that have major mechanical problems, such as steering problems, bad brakes and one that sometimes has trouble getting started. As elected officials, it is their responsibility to furnish the taxpayer with the services it needs. Our volunteers and taxpayers deserve more than

they are getting. We should be able to afford, not one but three, Mercedes-Benz ambulances with more extensive maintenance and mileage warranties. It's a sad state of affairs when defective equipment could contribute to the death of a human being. Mayor Gallagher, will you sell off three more pieces of property to buy updated equipment? It's a sad state of affairs when our elected officials have put this community in a financial hardship that is bound to surface.

Our records show the 3.5 million dollars Mayor Gallagher obtained for senior citizens in 1986 was never used. What happened to the interest it gained during the past 14 years? What happened to the \$900,000 that South Plainfield obtained from the last public auction Mayor Gallagher conducted? We do not have senior citizen housing or a decent center to show for it. What is our money being spent on?

As a lifetime resident and employee, the status of South Plainfield at its present state frightens me. What happened to common sense that this community was built on? What happened to the pay as you go program? The burden that has been placed on our school board and taxpayers is overwhelming. Please put the credit card away and go back to Plan "A", pay as you go. School board members are trying to do the best they can. But, without the cooperation of borough officials, the burden is not only on our school board but us taxpayers as well. This can get out of control.

Mayor Gallagher, the door is starting to close. You are the one that refused to get an impact fee from the builders to supplement our school system. You are the one responsible for the financial problems of the school board's bond issue. You are the one re-

sponsible for the impact of student population with nowhere to put them. This is not only a school board problem, it's everyone's problem and it has to be fixed. It's a sad state of affairs when the taxpayer is expected to pay while the builders profit.

What will you sell off when the borough has no available property left? Or do we use our credit cards?

JAKE CATALDO

Urgent message to ALL citizens of South Plainfield,

These are the consequences to the children of South Plainfield if the school board referendum does not pass on March 14:

- Overcrowding in certain elementary schools will creep quickly into every elementary school in South Plainfield within the year.

- Split sessions for the elementary/middle school students is the next step. This means 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students could go to school 7 a.m.-12:30 p.m., and their 3th, 5th and 6th grade siblings going to school 1:00-5:30 p.m. Can young children learn under these circumstances? Even if we could get our 7 year old son up and dressed at 6 a.m. does not mean he'll be awake and ready to sit at a desk and learn at 7 a.m.

- "Extras" such as music lessons and art programs begin to suffer, and might be eliminated altogether.

Don't mess with the children - they are our future! Give them a fighting chance. Sacrifice \$12 per month to make sure that our children are schooled well enough to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We urge you to vote YES on March 14.

CONCERNED CITIZENS AND RILEY SCHOOL PARENTS, MARTY AND CATHY HORN

From the
South Plainfield Board of Education
SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION VS. COPING MEASURES

The following chart lists the benefits that will accrue in accommodating explosive enrollment growth as a result of an approved school construction referendum. It also lists the various coping measures and liabilities our district will face in the event the March 14 referendum is not approved.

APPROVED REFERENDUM	DEFEATED REFERENDUM
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM FACILITIES New Roosevelt School Renovated Grant School Ten Classroom Grant Addition• SIX ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS instead of Four Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ENROLLMENT CAPS & EQUITABLE TRANSFER of new students to all district elementary schools• SUSPENDED SELECTIVE OPEN ENROLLMENT district-wide• LOST ENRICHMENT & TECHNOLOGY programs to create academic classroom space.• OVERCROWDED ENROLLMENT beyond caps in all schools (30+ students/class)• SPLIT SESSIONS in any or all elementary schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• K-6 REORGANIZATION for all six elementary schools, providing Middle School enrollment relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OVERCROWDED CLASSES at Middle School• RENOVATION of only SEVEN GRANT CLASSROOMS (from annual budget) for student use• TRANSFER OF SOME 6TH GRADERS from Middle School to converted Grant classrooms• SPLIT SESSIONS for some or all Middle grades
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ELECTRICAL UPGRADES in all schools• INSTALLATION of TECHNOLOGY INFRA-STRUCTURE in all schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INADEQUATE ELECTRICAL WIRING incapable of handling current, much less projected needs, in all schools• STALLED TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM• TECHNOLOGY INSTRUCTION LAG, depriving students of competitive edge in education and future workplace ability• NON-COMPLIANCE with SDOE TECHNOLOGY GUIDELINES ISOLATION, resulting from INABILITY TO NETWORK TECHNOLOGY with and among schools and agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BOILER REPLACEMENT at the MIDDLE SCHOOL, including asbestos abatement and disposition (Two Boilers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WIDELY FLUCTUATING Heat at the MIDDLE SCHOOL• Classes that are TOO HOT OR TOO COLD for learning• EXPENSIVE RECURRING REPAIR COSTS to maintain undependable Middle School heating plant• INCREASED COSTS to replace boilers one-at-a-time over several years, subject to annual budget approval• CONSTANT MONITORING and REPAIRS to ensure heat delivery and maintain SAFETY CONDITIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ADDITIONAL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, permitting Grant School to come on-line for student use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EXPENSIVE RENTAL & DUPLICATED RELOCATION COSTS to be funded from regular annual budget• INCREASED TAXES in annual budget(s) to renovate 7 Grant classrooms and fund administrative rent and relocation• SHIFT of annual budget funds FROM DIRECT STUDENT SERVICE to pay for rent and relocation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• REPLACEMENT OF THE JOST FIELD TRACK with a new track	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EXPENSIVE RECURRING PATCHWORK REPAIRS to permit minimal use of track• A CURTAILED TRACK athletic program• CONDEMNATION & ABANDONMENT of Jost Track

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