

FILE



2001: The Year in Review -- See Pages 5-8

# South Plainfield Observer

VOL. 5, NO. 18

50 CENTS

JANUARY 4, 2002

## Pinto Exits Council; Cerami, Butrico Take Seats

The New Year will bring some changes to the 2002 South Plainfield Borough Council. As one year exits and another enters, so do two council members. Exiting will be Darlene Pinto, who chose not to run for a third term and Charlie Butrico, who will fill the vacated seat as he begins his first term on the council.

Returning for a third, three-year term is Dennis Cerami. He has been and will continue on as chairman of Public Safety, which includes the Police and Fire departments, the Rescue Squad and Department of Emergency Management.

Cerami has been a vocal advocate for all our local volunteer services, requesting additional fire and rescue squad vehicles and other necessary equipment needed to carry out volunteer services efficiently. He is always available for our police department and emergency management personnel. He speaks his mind on issues and when he disagrees, he is not afraid to say so.

When asked what he would like to see accomplished during the next three years, Cerami immediately mentioned the traffic congestion along Durham Ave. and Hamilton Blvd. He said that with the widening of Durham Ave. and the planned renovations to Hamilton Blvd., traffic should improve in those areas. He also added he would like to see the Helen St. project underway before his three-year term is completed.

Cerami said he is looking forward



Charlie Butrico

to the next three years. He adds that the Democratic council will continue to work together with respect to future public safety projects.

He welcomed Charlie Butrico to the council, calling him his friend and neighbor saying, "Charlie Butrico has his heart and soul in South Plainfield and will be an asset to our town."

About Darlene Pinto Cerami said, "Darlene had been nothing but a class act as a councilwoman. She has been an avid supporter of the police, fire and rescue squad, as well as a dedicated councilwoman. She has always been there for all of the residents of South Plainfield. I will miss her, but I know she will only be a call away if we need her help."

Dennis Cerami lives on Strong Place with his wife Michelle and three children, Jessica, Joseph and Dennis.

Councilwoman Darlene Pinto



Darlene Pinto

chose not to run this year after serving one three-year term. The Scotch Plains native has been a South Plainfield resident for the past 15 years. She has two sons and a daughter, Andrew, Rachel and Gerry. Darlene was recently appointed assistant vice president at Commerce Bank in Fanwood.

Pinto said she was inspired to run for a council seat because she wanted to give something back to the community and to gain a better understanding of local, county and state government. She has served as chairwoman for the Economic Development Committee for the past three years, sat on the Public Works Committee, Health Education and Welfare, and Public Safety. She has been a member of the Planning Board for four years and will be appointed for another year by Mayor Gallagher. Darlene noted that her most rewarding committee work, where she felt she was really able to make a difference, was serving on the Planning Board and working on public safety with Councilman Dennis Cerami.

Darlene feels strongly that a councilperson does not accomplish any task alone. She believes that all successes are a joint effort of the entire council, Mayor Gallagher and Borough Attorney Patrick Diegnan, all working as a whole. She feels that much was accomplished over the past three years and no one individual can or should take the all the credit. Darlene explained, "Personally, I think I added a 'woman's touch' to the group and a different way of looking at situations. Many people found I was much more accessible than some of my counter parts and as a result, I have gotten to know many interest-



Dennis Cerami

ing people and groups. When I first got involved with politics, I just wanted to do what was right for the community, especially the children, since they are our future. I have been very dedicated and I feel my most important attribute was my honesty and always speaking my mind on matters."

Anyone who has approached Darlene with a problem, whether needing help or information, can attest to her dedication. When dealing with the *Observer*, Darlene always returned our phone calls and eagerly answered any questions we asked. If she didn't know the answer, she would call back when she had obtained the needed information. She always seemed to enjoy her time on the council and her work on the various committees and we will miss her honesty and her dedication to her job.

Darlene will take many memories of her term on the council. Reminiscing, she said, "I have been privileged to meet many people during my three years and honored to call some my friends. I will truly miss being part of the 'team,' but I am not concerned. I truly do believe I will be back...there always should be a 'rose amongst the thorns.' I am looking forward to the opportunity to serve on the council again one day in the future, if the opportunity arises."

She offered this advice to Councilman Butrico: "Follow your heart and always stick by your own beliefs. Always be honest with everyone you deal with and never make promises that you have no intention of keeping. Keep focused on the issues, since it is very easy to be swayed or sidetracked."

Lifelong resident Charlie Butrico joins the council for his first term of

office. He ran for the council seat with incumbent Councilman Dennis Cerami. Serving as a member of the council is his way of giving back to the community where he grew up. He hopes to apply his extensive business skills to help in managing the borough.

Charlie is active with the youth of South Plainfield. He has been involved with the South Plainfield Summer Drama Workshop (SDW) for five years and co-produced the 2001 anniversary production of *Bye Bye Birdie*. He is a member of the SDW board and is part of the team that plans each year's production. He was active with the Roosevelt School PTA for many years, assisting where needed. Charlie coached his daughter's T-ball team in 1995 and served as an assistant coach for his daughter's softball team in 1998. Charlie and wife, Sherry, have three daughters, Dana, Kristie and Michelle. All three attend South Plainfield public schools.

A 1977 SPHS graduate, he received a BS in Management from Rutgers University with High Honors. He is employed by CSC Consulting as a project director. He is responsible for the day-to-day running of a number of highly visible projects as well as the management of a 5+ million dollar budget.

Charlie has his goals as a councilman firmly in place. He said, "First and foremost, I plan to continue to support keeping control of borough expenses and help manage a budget that minimizes tax increases, while at the same time providing the best services possible to the community." He will call on his 20-plus years of experience in managing budgets, projects and people to help accomplish this. Charlie noted that he plans to push the preservation of open space in town and hopes to see that land is made available to the community for parks or playgrounds. He is also committed to keeping borough roads in good condition. He supports the current plan of repaving a number of roads each year on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Charlie is excited about the challenge of serving as a South Plainfield councilman saying, "I have been watching the current council over the last few years and have been very pleased with both the way they work together and the things they have accomplished. I want to be part of that success."

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## Pop Warner Honors Players and Coaches

Story and photos by Patricia Abbott

The parents of the South Plainfield Junior Midget Football Team recently hosted a pizza party at the PAL Building to honor the players and coaches on the triumph of becoming the Mountain Valley Conference - North Division Champs.

A plaque with the team's photo and names was presented by Darren Gorman, South Plainfield Pop Warner Football Commissioner. The plaque will be displayed at the football fieldhouse.

The players were also presented with varsity style jackets. The jackets were provided through the support of Columbia Savings Bank, Unity Bank, Bagel Pantry, Bennigans, Buy Rite Liquor, Creative Kids Academy, Attorney Patrick Diegnan, Flanagan's, Bob Hunt Plumbing and Heating, John Atchunas Insurance, KC's Corner, McCrisken Home for Funerals, Rodolfo Pizzeria, Sal's Spirit Shoppe, Sears Hardware, SP PBA, Pop Warner, Wrestling Club and Twin City Pharmacy.

The players are Anthony Cassano, Bennie Gibson, Billy Ashnault, Billy Daly, Bobby Yulick, Bryan Hunt, Debarius Alford, Garrett Lake, Jesse Hay, John Mills, Kenny Yetko, Kyle Darr, Mark Wagner, Mike Glover, Mike Jakubik, Mike Stallone, Nick Dorey, Sam Martin, Scott Barton, Sean Tamzoke, Steve Joaquim, TJ Brown, Tommy Pryor, and Troy Russell. Coaches are Gary Cassio, Bill Ashnault, Tony Cassano, Scott Barton, Harry Brown, John Mills and Bill Lake.

## southplainfieldpeople Milestones

### Randy Petronko Graduates from Naval Basic Training

Randy Petronko graduated from basic training at the Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Chicago on Dec. 6. His division was one of eight Divisions, with a total of 683 recruits graduating that day.

His division graduated as the Top Division, which means they received the most awards. The awards his division received are as follows: Honor Division-Battle E Flag, Scholastic-Flag S, Drill Flag-Gun and Cutlass, Athletic-Flag A, Inspection-Flag Star, Personal Flag.

Randy will be stationed in Pensacola, Fla., where he will be in training to become an Aviation Ordnance Officer.

Randy is a graduate of South Plainfield High School Class of 2001.



Randy Petronko

Randy is the son of Raymond and Patricia Petronko of South Plainfield. Raymond currently serves as a South Plainfield councilman.

### Robert and Elsie Ohl Celebrate 60th Wedding Anniversary

Robert and Elsie Ohl celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with their family on Dec. 25 at the home of Robert Jr. and Judy Ohl of Westfield.

Robert, Sr. spent four years in the army during World War II and recently received the New Jersey Service Medal for combat in the Pacific (Guam).



Left to right are Sgt. Harold Debbie, Gertrude Kmosko, Elsie and Robert Ohl on their wedding day, December 25, 1941.

## Back Pain?

**Edison, NJ** - Most people have no idea what to do when they experience back pain; they use heat, ice, sleep on the floor, even take pain pills hoping their pain will go away. The more you don't know, the more likely you may experience serious disc or nerve injury. If you are tired of suffering and don't know what to do about it, there is a Free Eye Opening Report that just been released. For your free copy, call Toll-free 1-888-568-8424, 24 Hrs. Free Recorded Message.

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## South Plainfield Observer

The South Plainfield Observer is  
published every Friday

G&G Graphics, Inc.  
1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

(908) 668-0010 • FAX (908) 668-8819

Web page:  
www.spobserver.com  
For subscriptions, advertising or  
information, call (908) 668-0010.

The publisher is not responsible for  
typographical errors.

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Advertising Sales

The South Plainfield Observer (U.S.P.S. 018253) is published weekly, except Thanksgiving week, by G&G Graphics Inc. 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080-2004. Second class postage paid at South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080-9998. **POSTMASTER:** Forward change of address orders to G&G Graphics Inc. 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080-2004. Subscription rates \$25 per year in South Plainfield; \$30 per year out of town. To subscribe: 908-668-0010.

### SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES

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.

To get an article published in *South Plainfield Observer*:

1. Type (double spaced) the article you wish published.
2. Mail, fax or drop it at: Editorial Department  
South Plainfield Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd., Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080 or drop it in the box at Mohn's Flowers on Plainfield Ave. or at (908) 668-8819 or e-mail us on our web page at spobserver.com or ggnan@aol.com or ngrennie@ix.netcom.com. Include your name, address, telephone number.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters may be submitted by mail to South Plainfield Observer, Editorial Dept., 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, by email at our website at spobserver.com or faxed to 908-668-8819. Letters should not exceed 400 words. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. It is the editor's discretion to limit the number of letters submitted by one individual on the same subject. The opinions expressed in "Letters" do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Observer. Letters must be submitted with name and phone number, even if they request name their name be omitted when published.

## Borough News

Board of Adjustment

• National Realty & Development, located on Stelton Road, request for a use variance to allow existing sign panel to be utilized for two tenant's signs was granted.

• James Howard of South Central Ave. was granted a variance to construct a second floor addition for a two-foot cantilever.

• YMCA Kid's Place on Park Ave., was granted a variance to allow their existing advertising sign to remain on the property where currently located.

• Susan Kaplan of Fleet Ave., was granted permission to construct a second floor addition.



# Thanksgiving Day Celebrations at Pilgrim Covenant Learning Center

The children of Pilgrim Covenant Learning Center celebrated Thanksgiving Day with various activities. Besides dressing in pilgrim costumes, the children also decorated hats, headaddresses, pillowcases, and sheets to resemble clothing worn by Indians and settlers of the 1600's. Parents helped with the festivities by cooking turkeys and all the trimmings.



Pictured clockwise from top left is the Three Year Old Class at Pilgrim Covenant Learning Center: Joanna Linn, Kyle Bythell, Cassandra Whalen, Edward Mazzetta, Brianna Spinella and Gabrielle Schultz. Top right is the Four Year Old Class; bottom left is the Kindergarten Class: Scott Quiroga, Chris Mathis, Gordon Murphy, Nico Anjos, Alexa Moreno and Isaac Behne; bottom right is the Four Plus Class.



From the South Plainfield Library

## Bookmarks

by Kenneth Morgan

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2002! (Sorry, if that's a little late.) And here's the latest news from South Plainfield Library:

Our normal schedule of children's Storytime programs will return next week. Those programs are for children age three and over; no pre-registration is required. They're held on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday at 1:15 p.m. There's also the January Kidcraft program for children age six and over. It's scheduled for Friday, Jan. 18, at 4 p.m. We ask that you please sign up for this program. For more information, please call us at (908) 754-7885 and ask for Miss Linda.

"Internet Basics" is the title of the latest basic computer class at the Library. It's set for Tuesday morning at 10:30. Space is limited for the program, so pre-registration is required. Please call for more details about this or any of our upcoming computer classes.

Two meetings are also scheduled for Tuesday. (Seems like everything happens this Tuesday, huh?) At 1 p.m., there will be a meeting of the Friends of the Library. Members and non-members are welcome to attend. At 7:30 p.m., there's this month's meeting of the Library board of Trustees. The public is invited to attend.

The next class from our Job Information Center, "Job Searching 101" is scheduled for Thursday at 10:15 a.m. There's limited space for this

program, so you must register in advance. The program is made possible by the Special Populations Grant from the NJ State Library.

This month's group of Circuit videos is now ready for borrowing. This month's titles include *Scary Movie*, *What Lies Beneath*, *Freaky Friday*, *Goldeneye*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and, on DVD, *Miss Congeniality*. Videos and DVDs may be borrowed, four at a time, for two days. We also have a new group from the Large Print Circuit. Available books include *Terminal* by Robin Cook, *The Undwelling* by LaHaye & Jenkins, *Bend in the Road* by Nicholas Sparks, and *Paving Through the Past* by Rita Mae and Sneaky Pic Brown. LPC books may be borrowed for two weeks. On the other hand, we're between groups on the Audiobook Circuit. New titles from that group will be available later on this month.

Throughout the Holiday season, a number of patrons brought the Library staff lots of goodies (cookies, cake, etc.) for our enjoyment. We greatly appreciate your generosity (though our dieticians and dentists might think otherwise). Thanks very much.

That's about all for this week. Limited space prevents us from listing everything that's coming up in January. For that information, feel free to pick up one of our monthly calendars; you'll find them in the rack next to the Children's Room. (But keep reading this column, though!) See you next Friday.

## Diegnan To Take Oath of Office Jan. 8

Senior citizens, commuters and children will gain a new voice of advocacy when Assembly-elect Patrick Diegnan, Jr. is sworn into office during the Assembly's reorganization ceremony to be held at noon Tuesday, Jan. 8, at the War Memorial in Trenton.

Diegnan, 52, of South Plainfield, will take the oath of office along with 17 other Democrats who boost the party's Assembly ranks to majority status (44-36) in the 210th Legislative Session.

"I look forward to working with Senator-elect Barbara Buono and Assemblyman Peter Barnes to ensure our constituents have a strong voice in state government," said Diegnan. "We are committed to tackling problems such as traffic congestion and overcrowded classrooms at four-year universities."

The 18th District, which was reconfigured in April to reflect statewide population shifts under the 2000 Census, include East Brunswick, Edison, Helmetta, Metuchen, South Plainfield, South River and Spotswood.

Assembly Majority Leader-designate Joseph J. Roberts, Jr. commended Diegnan for his dedication and com-

mitment as a Democratic Party official and as a municipal attorney. Roberts said Diegnan brings a fresh approach to dealing with state issues like easing property taxes, reducing state debt and safeguarding the environment while promoting sound economic development.

"Patrick Diegnan will bring considerable practical experience to his job in the state Legislature," said Roberts (D-Camden). "District 18 residents are getting a fine, upstanding and dedicated professional as their representative. Pat Diegnan is the perfect compliment to the Democratic legislative team of Buono and Barnes."

Diegnan has been a member of the New Jersey Bar Association since 1974, working as an attorney with a private practice in South Plainfield for 27 years. He also serves as municipal attorney for South Plainfield and Milltown.

Serving as municipal party chairman in South Plainfield since 1984, Diegnan has helped to elect 23 con-

secutive Democratic candidates to municipal office in his community. He also serves as counsel to the Middlesex County Democratic Organization and labor counsel for the Middlesex County Vocational and Technical School.

Diegnan's primary goals as legislator are targeting the state's open-space purchases toward environmentally sensitive lands, particularly watershed areas, and boosting education.

Long involved in a variety of community service efforts, Diegnan is a former member of the South Plainfield Board of Adjustments, former president of the Sacred Heart Parish Council, former member of South Plainfield Environmental Commission, and former chairman of the South Plainfield Senior Citizens Advisory Commission.

Diegnan is married to Anita, his wife of 25 years. He has two daughters, Heather and Tara. Diegnan earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and government and his Juris Doctorate from Seton Hall University.

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# Events

## Suburban Woman's Club Meeting

January 3, 2002

The January meeting of the South Plainfield Suburban Woman's Club will be held Thursday, Jan. 3 at 2 p.m. in the American Legion Hall on Oak Tree Rd. The program will be "Open Space and Its Benefits." Speaker will be Mary Beth Cooney, project director of Morris Land Conservancy in Boonton.

For information on membership, call 561-1908.

## Roosevelt School Blood Drive

January 5, 2002

Roosevelt School is having a community blood drive on Jan. 5, 2002. Anyone interested in donating blood, please contact Theresa Montuori, (908) 769-5270 to schedule a time.

## VFW Country Breakfast

January 6, 2002

A Country Breakfast will be held on Sunday, Jan. 6 at the VFW Post #6763, located at 155 Front St. from 8 to 11 a.m. A varied menu is available. The breakfast is sponsored by Pup Tent #41 Military Order of the Cootie. Proceeds go toward parties at Lyons VAMC.

For more information, phone (908) 668-9751 after 3 p.m. daily and after 12 noon on weekends.

## Annual Reorganization Meeting

January 6, 2002

The Mayor and Council will be holding their annual reorganization meeting on Sunday, January 6 at 1 p.m.

Councilman Dennis Cerami will be sworn in as well as the newest council member, Charlie Butrico. Nominations to the boards and committee will be made and members sworn in. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

## Rainbow Academy Open House

February 2, 2002

The new Rainbow Academy Child Care Center at 2177 Oak Tree Rd.

## Photo Night Meeting Change

Due to unforeseen conflicts, the date of the Historical Society "Photo Night" at the high school must be changed to Wednesday, January 16, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Veit was just elected to another prestigious post and it conflicts with the previous date of Jan. 8.

The regular Tuesday Historical Society meeting will still take place on Jan. 8.

in Edison is having an Open House on Saturday, Feb. 2, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For directions and information visit their website at [www.rainbowacademy.com](http://www.rainbowacademy.com).

Everyone who registers will receive a free photo sitting with proofs taken by Reminiscent Photography. In addition, you will receive one free month of ParentWatch, an internet viewing service. For a demo of their video services, visit their website at [www.parentwatch.com](http://www.parentwatch.com).

## Rec Going to See "Naked Boys Singing"

February 3, 2002

For those who would like an alternative to watching football on Super Bowl Sunday, the South Plainfield Recreation Department is planning a trip to Broadway to see "Naked Boys Singing." The trip takes place on Sunday, Feb. 3 and costs \$45 per person. Bus leaves the PAL at 11 a.m.

Register at the PAL, Monday through Friday.

## Recreation Winter Dinner Show

February 7, 2002

The South Plainfield Recreation Department will be sponsoring a trip to a Winter Dinner Show at the Hunterdon Playhouse on Feb. 7, 2002. The bus leaves from the PAL Building at 10 a.m. The fee is \$45 per person and includes dinner and the show.

Tickets can be purchased at the PAL, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## AARP Plans Bus Trip To New Orleans

April 20-28, 2002

AARP Chapter 4144 is planning a

bus trip to New Orleans from April 20-28, 2002 (9 days/8 nights). The trip includes deluxe motor coach transportation, hotels, tours in New Orleans, riverboat jazz cruise, dinner party, Bellingrath Gardens and cruise in Alabama, Stone Mountain Park in Georgia and much more. Price is \$655 for double occupancy and \$855 for single occupancy.

For reservations and information, call Lee at (732) 968-6613 or Mary at (732) 752-3764.

## PAL Sponsoring Trip to See Oklahoma!

March 9, 2002

The PAL of South Plainfield is sponsoring a trip to see *Oklahoma!* on Broadway. The trip is planned for Saturday, March 9, 2002. Ticket price is \$90 per person and can be purchased from the PAL, Maple Ave., on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. There are only 45 tickets available so get yours soon.

## Rec Offering Trip To Virginia Beach

September 8-12, 2002

South Plainfield Recreation, along with White Star Tours, is offering a trip to Virginia Beach, VA, featuring a ghost tour of Williamsburg. The trip will take place from Sept. 8-12, 2002.

Features include four nights accommodations at one of Virginia Beach's finest motels; a tour of the Norfolk Naval Base, Arthur Memorial in Norfolk, Waterside Complex, four breakfasts, four dinners, including Spirit of Norfolk Dinner Cruise and evening entertainment.

The cost is only \$350 per person. Only one bus is available for this trip, no extra buses will be added, so make your reservations early.

For information or reservations, contact Mike English at (908) 226-7714.

## — Out of Town —

## Smoke Free Comedy Night

January 6, 2002

The Middlesex County Communities Against Tobacco Coalition (CAT) is continuing its efforts to promote a smoke-free environment. So, to begin the New Year with a breath of fresh air, CAT will sponsor a 100 percent smoke-free night of free comedy at the Stress

Factory in New Brunswick on Sunday, Jan. 6, 2000, from 6-9:30 p.m.

The event includes free admission and dinner, excluding dessert and alcoholic beverages. The evening will feature headliner Ted Alejandro, who appeared on "The Late Show" with David Letterman and just recently had his own half-hour comedy special on Comedy Central. The evening will include dinner from 6 to 7:30 p.m., followed by comedy. There is limited seating available, so register in advance. For tickets, call the Stress Factory at (732) 545-HAHA (4242).

## Tourette Syndrome Association To Hold Meeting

January 10, 2002

The Tourette Syndrome Association of NJ, Middlesex/Union County Family Support Group will hold its next meeting on Thursday, Jan. 10, 2002, 7-9 p.m., in the Neuroscience Institute Department at JFK Medical Center, 65 James Street, Edison, NJ. There will be an open discussion for parents of children affected with Tourette Syndrome.

Future meeting will be held on March 14 and May 9.

For more information, call Marilyn at (908) 757-5074 or Debbie at (732) 283-1439 after 6 p.m.

## Rainbow Experience Announces Auditions

January 11-14, 2002

Rainbow Experience, a community youth theater program in collaboration with The First Congregational Church of Westfield and United Church of Christ Congregational of Plainfield announce auditions for its 2002 production of "Once on This Island" for youths, seventh grade and up (adults are also welcome.) Auditions for "Once on This Island" will begin on Friday, Jan. 11 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the United Church of Christ, Congrega-

tional of Plainfield on 220 W. 7th St. (908-755-8658) and on Jan. 12 from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Westfield at 125 Elmer St. (908-233-2494.) Callbacks will be held on Monday, Jan. 14 at the Westfield Church from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Be prepared to sing, dance and read from the script.

A series of workshops entitled "How to Audition," will show first hand what to do and what not to do at an audition. Professionals from theater, music and dance will be on scene to help participants and give advice for the future. The workshops are held at the United Church of Christ, 220 W. 7th St. on Wednesday, Jan. 9 from 6:30 to 9 p.m. The \$100 workshop is available for only \$10 thanks to funding, in part by the NJ State Council on the Arts. Reservations are required to attend this workshop and limited space is available. Call 908-755-8658 or 908-233-2494 before Jan. 7, 2002.

Funding for Rainbow Experience has been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Department of State, through a grant administered by the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs.

"Once on this Island" is an exciting American musical with book and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty, the same team that brought us "Ragtime." "Once on this Island" is a tale of a peasant girl who has fallen in love with a boy in an upper class. This stage version of "The Little Mermaid" is told around a fire by a group of Caribbean peasants as they wait out a terrible storm.

Rehearsals will run from January into March. The actual production will be on March 9, 10 and on March 16, 17, 2002. The Rainbow Experience is intended to increase interaction between different groups of people in the area. Rainbow experience is proud to announce their creative team including: Producer-Shayne Austin Miller, Director-Patti Murtha, Music Director-Albert Ganter, Stage Manager-Ruth Sykes, and Choreographer-Sherri McLaughlin Ryan.

## How You Can Be a Part of the South Plainfield Observer.

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**SUGGEST A BUSINESS FOR US TO SPOTLIGHT.** If you have had great service in South Plainfield share it with your neighbors through the newspaper.

**SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** to allow readers to discuss and react to issues.

**SEND US YOUR PHOTOS.** If you have an event, take a photo, write a caption identifying the event and people and send it to us via mail. The best photos record action and don't include so many people that it is impossible to identify anyone. Please don't send us photocopies or laser prints. They don't reproduce well.

**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](mailto:ggnan@aol).

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# The Year in Review

## Looking Back at 2001

As we look back on 2001, we realize that while tragedy affected our nation and impacted all our lives, there were triumphs as well in this corner of the world that we know as the Borough of South Plainfield. It's amazing how much really goes on in the eight square miles we call home.

We hope you enjoy this recollection of 2001, most of which is excerpted from the the pages of the *South Plainfield Observer* this past year.



Buttiglieri, who chose not to run for re-election.

The Borough received \$675,000 in Middlesex County Open Space funds to purchase property on the corner of Tompkins and Clinton. South Plainfield had to pay just 10 percent, or \$75,000, towards the purchase.

Bradlees, located in the Golden Acres Shopping Center, closed their doors and filed for bankruptcy. This was a blow to businesses occupying the surrounding stores in the shopping center. Major renovations, which were planned to the shopping center had to be put on hold until

management could find another store to replace Bradlee's. As of this printing, the store is still vacant, but there have been rumors that there is a tenant ready to lease the space.

The *Observer* became part of a "Day in the Life of South Plainfield" feature in the *Home News Tribune*. Reporter Beth Rosenberg spent a day with us. We were just one of the many



stories covered in our town that day.

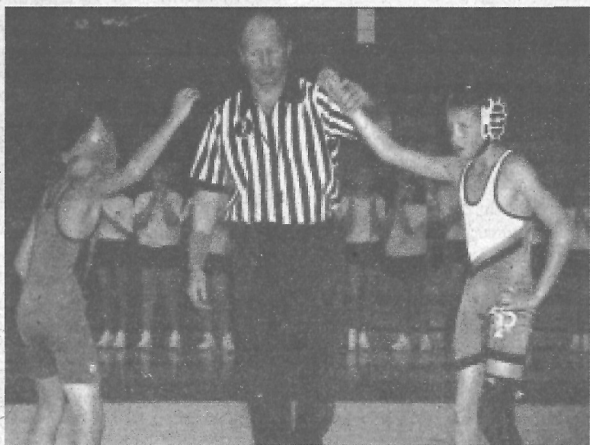
Melissa Jamieson became South Plainfield's first GMC Individual Bowling Champion. Ray Tomei won a bronze medal in the competition.

All five elementary schools held formal graduations ceremonies for the students who completed the DARE program. Members of the council, school board and police department were on hand to congratulate the students.



### JANUARY

The year began with the annual reorganization meeting held in Borough Hall on Jan. 7. Councilman Ray Petronko was sworn in for a second term. Bob Cusick was also sworn in for a three-year term. He replaced Vinnie



### FEBRUARY

The Board of Adjustments voted unanimously to deny three proposed billboards along Rt. 287.

Ricochet Racquet Club, located on St. Nicholas Ave., was sold to The Club at Woodbridge. Ricochet had been owned by South Plainfield resident Gary Hamrah for 22 years.

South Plainfield was awarded \$145,000 in grant money. The money was earmarked to help fund several borough projects, such as the NJ Safe and Secure Program, Open Space Program, Safe Housing, NJ Body Armour Replacement Fund, Middlesex County Senior Citizens Transportation and the NJ Clean Communities Program.

Police Chief Steven Merkler retired and took a job with the FBI. Merkler had been chief since 1997.

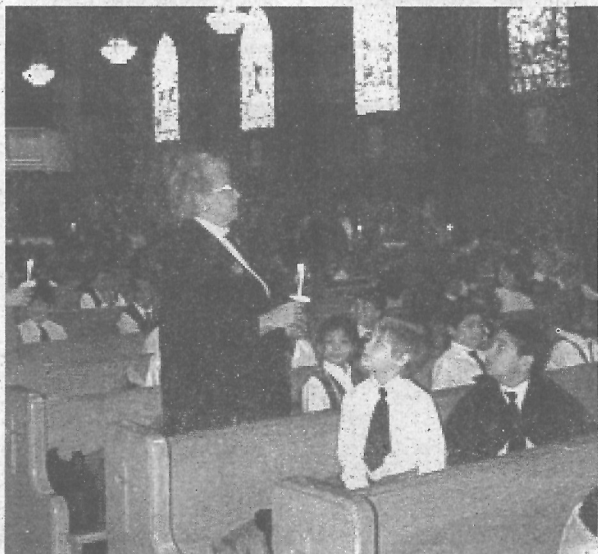
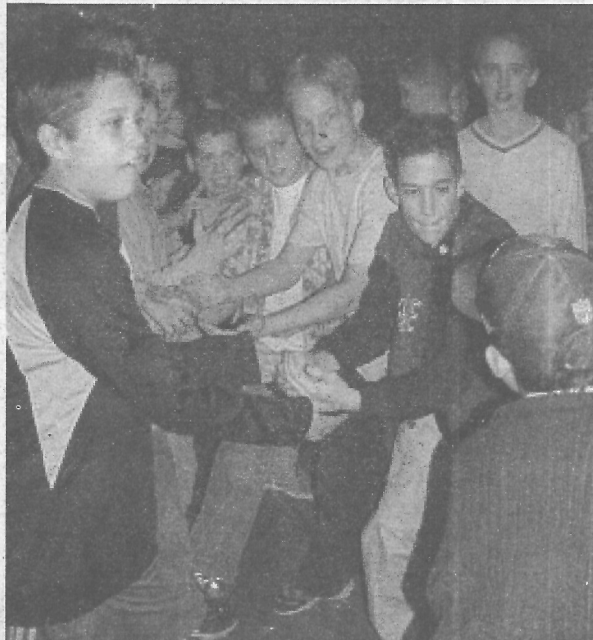
Former Councilman Vinnie Buttiglieri was appointed Municipal Clerk. Deputy Clerk Mary Blue, who had been the acting municipal clerk since Jim Ekert retired in 1999, opted to retire. She felt she should have been appointed because of her many years of experience in the clerk's office. She is now the Municipal Clerk in Dunellen.

SPHS Tigers won the Group III Wrestling State Championships. This followed their winning the Group II title the year before.

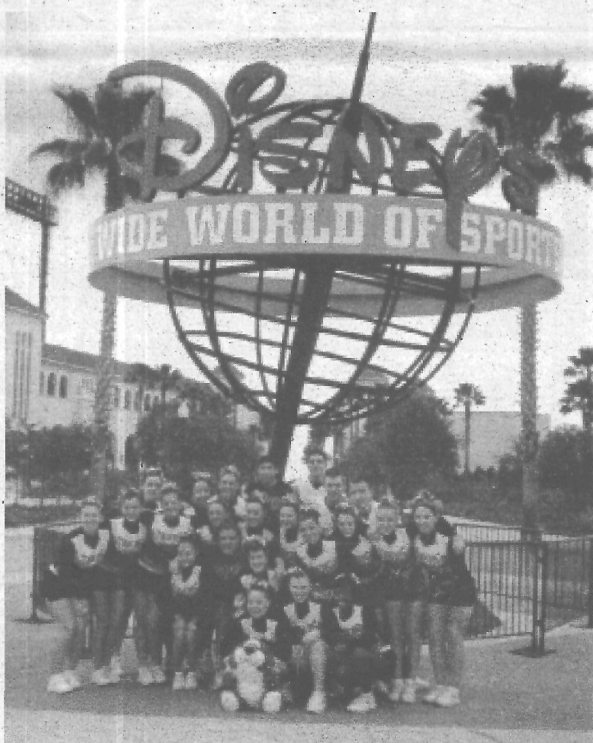
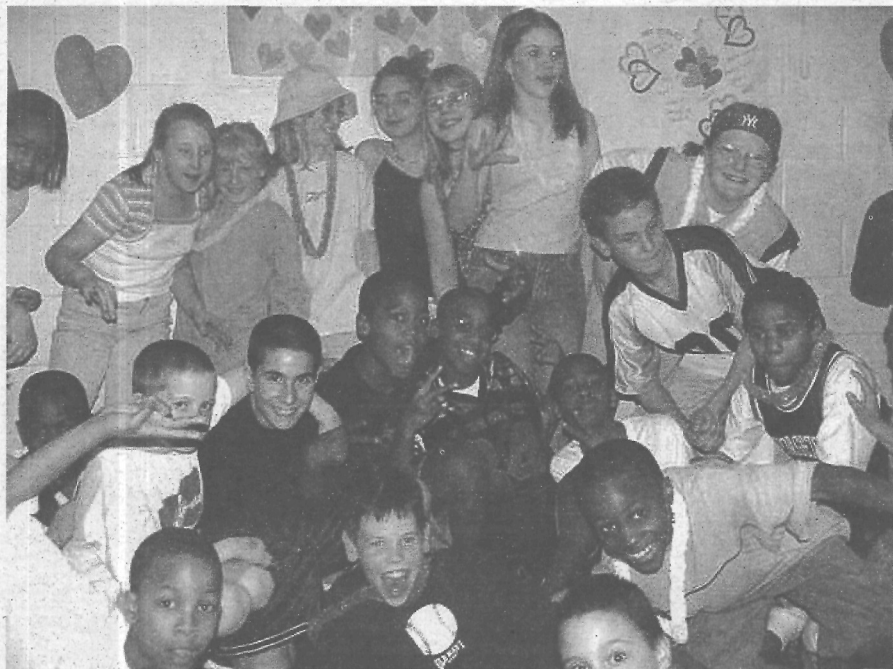
Two major fires occurred in town. Early in the morning on Feb. 16, a tractor trailer fire destroyed a 40-foot trailer and caused extensive damage to a second trailer. Both trailers contained three different types of chemicals.

On Feb. 18, a fire at a house on South 9th St. caused extensive damage. The residents all fled without injury, but unfortunately, the family dog perished.

(Continued on next page)







## MARCH

Robert Merkler, the brother of retiring police chief Steven Merkler, was named acting police chief. Merkler, a popular choice, joined the South Plainfield Police Department in 1983.

The police department promoted John Ferraro, 20-year-veteran, to captain; Kenneth LaVerne, 20-year-veteran, to lieutenant. Robert Barone, 14-year-veteran, to lieutenant and Paul Wylam, 21-year-veteran was promoted to sergeant.

The SPHS Tigers advanced 13 players to the Region Tournaments. Recreation Tigers hold a 13-0 record.

The Referendum Vote on school expansion was cancelled after the weather service issued a storm warning in the area. Consequently, just a few inches of snow fell.

Dr. John Krewer was named superintendent of schools, replacing retiring Superintendent Guy Ferri.

The SPHS Competition Cheerleaders took first place in the Florida National Cheerleading Competition. This was quite a feat since the team was formed just three years ago.

South Plainfield joined the country in the celebrating Dr. Suess' birthday. Officials from borough council, fire and police departments took the time to visit a school and read to the students.

New Senior Center plans were unveiled by Architect Joe DeAndrea. Builder Jack Morris had previously promised to build the senior center free of charge after receiving approval to build townhouses and condominiums on New Durham Ave.

Residents turn out in the hundreds for the "Hoops for Horn" fundraiser. Horn was injured in a work related accident. The fundraiser took in over \$4,400 to help with family/medical expenses.

Hundreds turned out to help celebrate South Plainfield's 75th birthday party in Borough Hall. Residents over 75 blew out the candles on the birthday cake. Attending were three past mayors and many other past and present South Plainfield dignitaries.

Councilwoman Darlene Pinto announced she would not seek re-election to a second term on the council.

Sue Ashnault was named "New Jersey Official of the Year." Ashnault has been involved in gymnastics for many years and, since 1984, served as a NJ Interscholastic Athletic Official/Judge.

Joanne's Dance sponsored a benefit for Autism Awareness that drew hundreds and raised both funds and an awareness of what autism is.

# 2001

## APRIL

Quick Chek opened their newest store on Durham Ave. Also holding ribbon-cutting ceremonies were Custom Creations & Gifts located on South Plainfield Ave. and Durham Deli which relocated to the corner of South Plainfield Ave. and Front St.

Voters overwhelmingly approved the School Bond Referendum. Re-elected to the school board were Dawn Jefferys and Steve Bohn, along with Pio Pennesi, who had served previously.

The South Plainfield Lions held their Annual Gourmet Breakfast, the PBA 100 held its Annual Gold Gloves event and the Vision 2001 held their Annual Art Action.

The SPHS Co-Operative Education students were awarded \$92,975 at the 29th Annual CE Scholarship Competition.

The Junior Baseball Club held their opening day ceremonies, starting with a parade.

Ponytail Softball held their opening day ceremonies at Pitt Street Park.

Borough attorney and lifelong resident Patrick Diegman was nominated to run for the State Assembly seat vacated by Barbara Buono.

First Place Contestants in the "Battle of the Books" Competition received a perfect score at the Middle School.

## MAY

The police department unveiled a state-of-the art forensic computer laboratory to investigate computer crimes.

A 60-inch Elizabethtown water main ruptured, closing Roosevelt and Franklin schools. Emergency Management personnel geared up, and by the time residents awoke, water was available at the rescue squad building.

Candidates for council were announced. Running on the Democratic ticket were Councilman Dennis Cerami and newcomer Charlie Butrico. The Republicans chose former School Board member Marjorie Reedy and newcomer Jerry Harris.

*Damn Yankees*, presented by the students of South Plainfield High

School, successfully performed to packed audiences for three nights.

Volunteers throughout South Plainfield spread out to help clean up the town. They removed litter and trash from nineteen public places, comprising 43 acres of parks, streams and school grounds and over three miles of roadside.

The Fourth Annual Police Rodeo was held at Spring Lake Park. Kids



brought their bikes to be registered and inspected. Helmets were distributed to those bikers who did not have any. Kids enjoyed an obstacle course and free hot dogs and soda.

For the first time in 33 years, SPHS held a Junior Prom. The theme was "A Night in Hollywood."

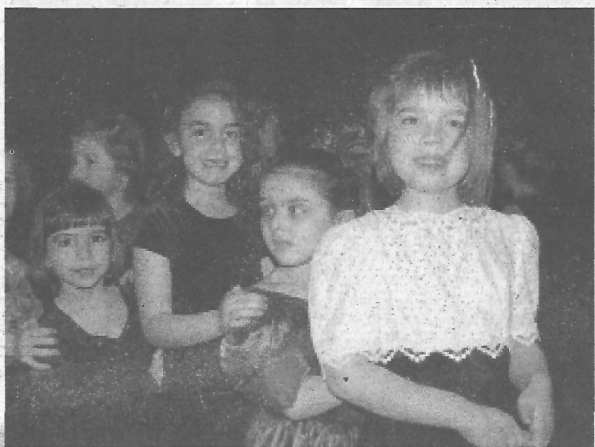


Borough Engineer Rich Navceznny retired after 16 years. The firm of CME Associates of Parlin assumed the borough's engineering duties as a cost cutting measure.

Roosevelt Principal Mario Barbieri was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Schools by Dr. John Krewer.

The National Honor Society inducted 24 SPHS students.

Rudy Poczak was installed as VFW Commander and Dorothy DeWolf as Woman's Auxiliary President during installation ceremonies. (Continued)





# The Year In Review

## JUNE

Six former graduates of South Plainfield High School were inducted to the High School Hall of Fame. They were Patricia Abbott, Philip J. Aiello, Sr., Dr. Thomas G. Klukoski, Pio Pennisi, Alfred H. Ranger and John Patrick Santoro.

All elementary schools held their spring concerts. The Rescue Squad held its Annual Open House and the OLC Feast of St. Anthony took place.

Lightning struck Sullivan's Auto Body Shop on Hamilton Blvd., destroying the building and 10 cars inside the shop.

Robert Merkle, who had been serving as Acting Police Chief, was officially sworn in as Police Chief.

The Senior Class held their prom on the Cornucopia Princess, sailing around Manhattan while they dined and danced.

Graduation ceremonies were held at Future Stars, Creative Kids Academy and the Adult School.

The borough passed an ordinance to require background checks for all recreation volunteers. Volunteers will be required to be fingerprinted.

Roosevelt School's playground was deemed unsafe and inspectors recommended the equipment's removal.

Members of the School Board broke ground to initiate several school projects.

The newly expanded PAL Building held gala grand opening ceremonies.

The elementary, middle and high school graduations were held.

## JULY

An accident on Hamilton Blvd. results with person one dead and the driver charged with DWI and vehicular homicide.

Safety Town classes were held for preschoolers.

Mark Bullock and David DeLair are sworn in as police officers.

150-year-old Geary House was slated to be torn down to make way for new houses.

Groundbreaking for the Senior Citizens Center was held.

Dr. Richard H. Hangge was named principal of Roosevelt School.

Democratic candidate Jim Mc-

Greevey visited South Plainfield during his "Walk Through New Jersey" campaign.

The 14/15 year-old SPJBC All Star Team went to Weehawkin to participate at the State Level of the Babe Ruth Tournament.

A borough auction netted \$700K for three parcels of land.

The annual Fishing Derby, sponsored by SPHS S.A.F.T.E. Fishing Club, was held at Spring Lake Park.

## AUGUST

Summer Drama Workshop presented *Bye Bye Birdie* — its 30th season production.

Ponytail All Stars claimed three titles. The 10-U, 12-U and 14-U all won titles at the South Plainfield All-Star Softball Tournament.

Mayor Dan Gallagher was chosen as the 2001 Parade Marshal.

James Curcio pled guilty to embezzling \$2M from his employer. Curcio, the Recreation Commissioner, was immediately suspended and an audit of the Recreation Comm. was held.

Det. Garrett Cassio was injured while attempting a motor vehicle arrest. The suspect tried to get away and ran over his foot.

The South Plainfield Fire Department held a wet down, which was attended by over 1,500 people and scores of neighboring fire departments, to dedicate their new #56 engine.

A ruptured water main on Park Ave. closed roads and flooded the area around Kennedy School.

Samson was declared the largest dog in South Plainfield by his owner, Pamela Russo. Samson weighs over 250 pounds.

## SEPTEMBER

The 44th Annual Labor Day Parade took place. The all-day event, which began early in the morning with police department awards, included a 5K run, 1.5 mile walk, the parade, games at the park, bands and evening fireworks. It was attended by one of the largest crowds ever.

Public Works held an auction to dispose of unwanted cars, equipment and bikes.

The Sept. 11 attacks put police, fire

and emergency services on high alert. Some members of the fire and police departments went to ground zero to help during the crisis. Members of the rescue squad were dispatched to Liberty State Park to help with the evacuated who were injured.

As South Plainfield residents watched the twin towers fall, flags went up all over town.

The South Plainfield Crisis Management Team in the schools geared up and called the parents of students who work in Manhattan, making sure all were safe. They also began to counsel students who had trouble dealing with the terrorists attacks.

More than 5,000 residents attended services at Spring Lake Park for a 'Night of Healing.' The event was put together in just a few days by Marion Gallagher, with the help of Anthony Massaro, high school principal and the senior class, as well as the band. Sacred Heart held prayer services attended by members of other churches in South Plainfield.

Students at Franklin School held a "Honor Our Heroes" walk-a-thon, with members of local police, fire and rescue squad members participating. The students collected \$17,800 for a relief fund for the victims.

High school students made and sold World Trade Center badges, raising \$10,000.

## OCTOBER

Nineteen youth volunteers spent a day cleaning up the Highland Park Woods.

Ron Sward was appointed Captain of the South Plainfield Rescue Squad replacing Ken Seidel, who resigned.

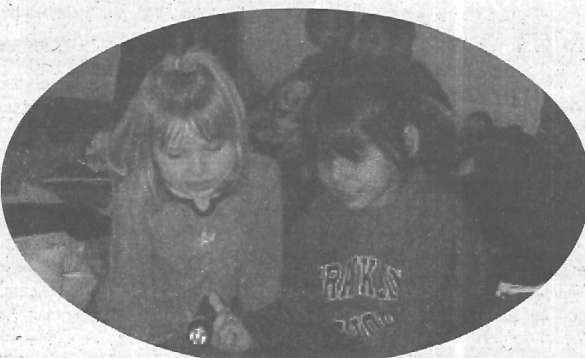
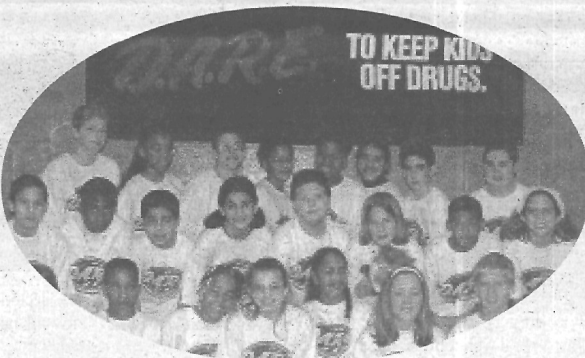
The Recreation Commission appointed William Cochrane as acting president, replacing Jim Curcio, who was dismissed after pleading guilty to embezzling money from his employer.

Rainbow Academy opened their third childcare center on Oak Tree Rd.

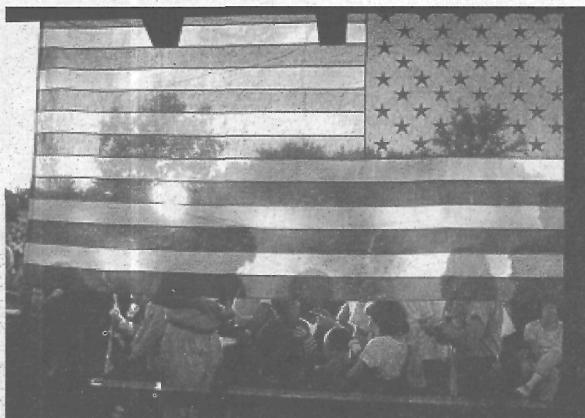
Back to School Nights were held at all of the schools. Superintendent of Schools Dr. John Krewer attended each event, explaining the new computer technology programs introduced to help students in all grades with their studies.

The South Plainfield High School

*Continued on next page*







The Tiger Marching Percussion Band won Best Percussion in Group III at the Old Bridge Tournament of Bands Competition. The SPSHS Marching Tigers were awarded second place at the West Deptford Annual Music Festival in the Cadence Field Competition.

Columbus Day ceremonies were

scene was Richard Spence. Both drivers were charged with DWI and numerous traffic citations.

Halloween parties and parades were held at the schools. Trick or Treat took place without incident.

Bunchies Arts and Craft store opened on Front St.

The high school FLA sponsored a lunch for the senior citizens.

Kennedy School playground equipment is inspected and determined unsafe. Plans are made to remove the equipment, disappointing everyone at the school.

The annual High School Sports Auction, sponsored by the High School Athletic Boosters Club, was held.

## DECEMBER

Plans were unveiled by Middlesex County to expand and widen the entire length of Hamilton Blvd. Lights will be placed at South Clinton Ave., Ryan St. and St. Nicholas Blvd. The intersection at New Market will be completely redone and widened.

Quick Chek was held up by armed robbers. No one is injured and the suspects got away.

Borough hires James McConville and Christopher Cochrane as police officers. McConville has a brother, John, serving on the force and Cochrane is the son of Police Officer William Cochrane, who retired in January, 2000.

Santa began showing up all over town. He started out riding on a fire truck throughout town, giving out gifts to the kids. He was spotted at numerous breakfasts around town, at the PAL Building the Saturday before Christmas, speaking to the kids and at the sing-a-long at Spring Lake Park. He was also seen on Ritter Ave., the home of Al Mitchell and his wife Pat Silo-Mitchell, handing out presents. Santa was a busy man this year and we were delighted he spent so much time in South Plainfield.

Builder Dave Deluccia got approval from the Planning Board to build a shopping center on Durham Ave. His plans were rejected last year, but he appealed the decision.

The Annual Tree Lighting at McCrisky Home for Funerals was held by the members of the 101st Airborne Division in remembrance of the 28 members who died in a plane crash in 1985.

Concerts could be heard through the school district during the month.

We hope you enjoy these memories of 2001. We couldn't begin to get everything that happened in this issue, but we tried to give you an idea of how busy our town really is. Happy New Year from the staff of the *Observer*.

## NOVEMBER

Ahmad Elkomi, a Dunkin' Donuts employee, was charged with murdering fellow employee, Abdel Zahir. Zahir was stabbed 22 times and bled to death on the floor of the store.

South Plainfield hosted their 20th Annual Band Festival at Jost Field.

Democrats Dennis Cerami and Charlie Butrico were winners in the Borough Council election over Republican candidates Marjorie Reedy and Jerry Harris.

Borough Attorney and life-long



held in front of Borough Hall.

The South Plainfield Fire Department held their Annual Open House, as well as the annual Wine Tasting Event.

Students from the Middle School attended New Jersey Peer to Peer Training Workshop.

The Planning Board approved redevelopment plans for the Hamilton Blvd. Superfund Site. The site may be put on a fast track for clean-up through the EPA's Brownfields program.

Councilman Ed Kubala took the gavel at the council's Agenda meeting, becoming mayor for a night, because Mayor Dan Gallagher, who had knee surgery, and Council President Jim Vokral were both absent.

A baboon from the Staten Island Zoo made a visit to Dr. Scott Linick at the Plainfield Animal Hospital for dental surgery.

Two motorists died in separate accidents within one week. A pickup truck driven by Clyde McRae hit a parked truck on Clinton Ave. It went on to hit a telephone pole and ended up on the lawn of a resident. A passenger, Arthur Henry, was killed. In the second accident, George Lopez failed to stop for a red light at New Market Ave. and slammed into a car turning left. Pronounced dead on the



resident Patrick Diegnan is elected to the State Assembly. He will be South Plainfield's first representative.

Franklin School held their Annual Veteran's Day Program attended by hundreds of relatives and veterans.

Community-wide Thanksgiving services held at Wesley Methodist Church. This year they honored our uniformed personnel.

St. Stephen's Church held their Fourth Annual Oktoberfest.

The South Plainfield Rescue Squad Woman's Auxiliary hosts a Night at the Races.

Kennedy School teachers put on their annual variety show to the delight of hundreds of guests.





# Sports

By Kevin Lykes

## juniorbaseballclubnotes

### WINTER REGISTRATION FOR 2002 SEASON!

Our annual Winter registration for the upcoming 2002 baseball season here at the SPJBC will be held on Thursday and Friday, Jan. 10 and 11 from 6 to 9 p.m.; also on Saturday, Jan. 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the SPJBC Complex. All new players must bring a birth certificate and all registrants must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Winter fees are \$60 single, \$90 double, and \$110 for three or more. At this time we will also be accepting registration for new umpires, managers and coaches.

### SPECIAL NOTE TO ALL MEMBERS:

- This will be your last opportunity to register for the 2002 season without paying late registration fees, or facing possible waiting lists.
  - Also, a new bylaw passed this year prohibits any new players from joining a team after May. So there is no sense in waiting until the last minute.
- Coaches clinics are continuing* with the next one scheduled for Tues. Jan. 8, 2002 at 7:30 at the complex. This month's featured speaker will be Bill Leahman, former major league pitcher with the Chicago White Sox. Bill will be discussing pitching and practice organization. Previous clinics conducted by Bill have been very educational.

*Our fundraiser for the WTC 9-11 disaster* will continue with the sale of ribbon pins, flag pins and flag decals at the January registration. Pins are \$3.00 and flag decals \$1.00. Thus far we have covered our expenses and are generating a profit from this sale which will go to the NYC Police & Fire Widows and Orphans Fund. We are hoping to reach the \$2,000 mark which will be matched by the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, NY.

Ladies Auxiliary will be begin their Gertrude Hawk Candy Fundraiser at our January registration.

### IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES TO TAKE NOTE OF:

- Monday, Jan. 7, 7:30 p.m.: General Meeting
- Tuesday, Jan. 8, 7:30 p.m.: Coaches Clinic featuring former major leaguer Bill Leahman discussing pitching and practice organization.
- Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Jan. 10, 11, 12, Winter Registration; times: Thurs. and Fri., 6-9 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., (tentative). This is also registration for managers, assistant coaches and NEW umpires.
- Monday, Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m. General Meeting
- Tuesday, Feb. 12, 7:30 p.m. Coaches Clinic, topic TBD
- Monday, Feb. 25, 6:45 p.m. Rutgers Certification course, (Certification Required for all Managers and Assistant Coaches)
- Week of Feb 26 to March 1, League Manager meetings
- Saturday March 2, tryouts at PAL, (Small Fry only)
- Week of March 4, Draft nights/player notification
- Monday March 4, 7:30 General Meeting
- Tuesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m. Coaches Clinic, at SPHS practice, site to be determined

## Boys Basketball Takes Tournament Crown

Last Saturday, Dec. 29, the high school boys basketball team took top honors in the Bound Brook Holiday Tournament.

Senior Aaron Parks provided an early surge into the game, by scoring 11 of his 15 points in the first half to lift the boys past Somerville, 52-42 in the championship game.

Parks was also named the

tournament's most outstanding player. Parks also hit identical jump shots from about 16 feet away early in the second quarter. He also converted an offensive rebound into a score for a 25-13 lead with 2.8 seconds left before halftime.

Throughout the whole game, South Plainfield never lost the lead. The Tigers record now stands at 3-2.

## THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

....AND THEY'RE ALL HEADING TO HOMETOWN HEROS FOR THE BEST SELECTION OF...

BREAKFAST, BAGELS, DONUTS, MUFFINS  
PASTES, DANISH, COOKIES, COFFEE'S,  
ITALIAN BREAD FROM BROOKLYN, HERDS,  
GOURMET SANDWICHES, SALADS AND SOME  
OLD FASHIONED FIRST CLASS SERVICE!

## WATCH FOR GRAND OPENING

"QUALITY FOOD FOR THE EVERYDAY HERO"

**HOMETOWN HEROS**  
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South Plainfield

## Boys Winter Track

by Tim Morgan Jr.

The SPHS Boys Winter Track team is much improved season this year. The boys finished second in the East Brunswick Relays, the best showing in school history for that particular invitational. They compiled 36 points and the sprinters had an especially successful day. Before that, the Tigers beat out a competitive Group 4 school Bridgewater in a preseason scrimmage.

Recently, the Tigers competed in the 25th Annual Pearl River Track and Field Festival at Rockland County Community College in New York and turned out some notable performances.

Leading the pack was Tim Morgan in the 3200, achieving a first place finish with a time of 10:02. Morgan finished sixth in the 1600 (4:43) as well. Jeff Williams demonstrated his abilities with a second place finish in the 600 (77.4) and was part of the third place 4x400 team.

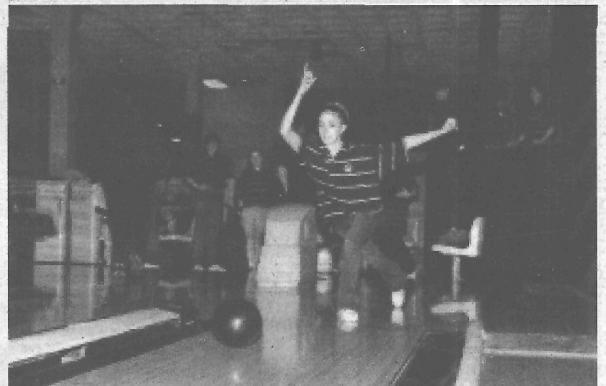
The 4x400 team also consisted of Sean and Chris Greivous and Phil Thomas. They recorded a time of 3:39. Chris Greivous also placed fourth in the 55 dash. In the high jump, Mike Raynes placed fourth and Sean Greivous was sixth, both with 5'6" jumps.

The freshman and sophomore races provided opportunities for the

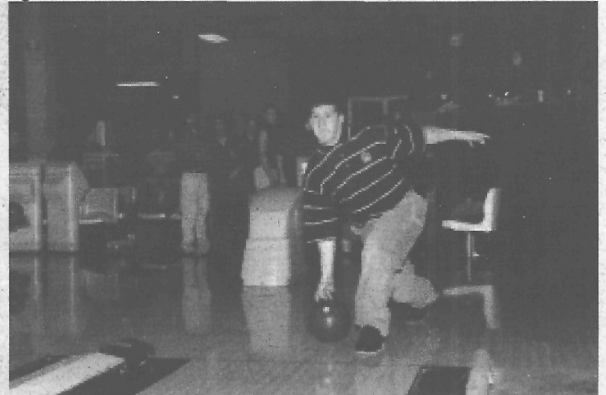
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## BOWLING

By Ralph Fech



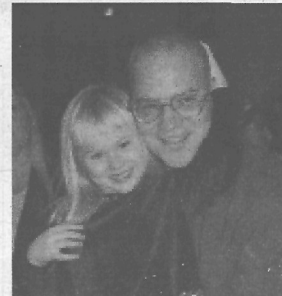
The South Plainfield High School Girls Bowling Team Junior Danielle Larisch (above). The team record (White Division) is 6-3. SPHS Boys Bowling Team Junior Anthony Ingrerto (below). The team's record (White Division) is 3-4-1.



There's  
a lot  
going on...



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## Fa La La La....

Recreation Commission sponsored Caroling in the Park for South Plainfield residents at the gazebo in Spring Lake Park on Dec. 23. The caroling was led by Tracy Murray, SPHS choral director and SPHS Traveling Choir.



## Santa Wishes

Santa was especially busy in the days before Christmas. In addition to his travels throughout town on a fire truck, he took some time to visit the PAL. Children had the opportunity to give him their wish lists one last time and have their pictures taken. Each child received a gift and a candy cane. After visiting Santa some stayed to watch "How the Grinch Stole Christmas."



## Obituaries

### Wilfred G. Adams, 54

Wilfred G. Adams died Thursday, Dec. 27 in Springfield. Born and raised in Guyana, South America, Wilfred came to the United States in 1968, residing in Plainfield before settling in South Plainfield in 1981.

Mr. Adams attended East Orange General Hospital Associated Registered Radiology Technician's School. After graduation, he became employed with United Hospital in Newark for many years. He had currently been employed with St. Michael's Hospital in Newark in the same capacity.

Wilfred is pre-deceased by his father, Fredrick.

Surviving are his wife, Cheryl (nee Roberts); two sons, Kevin. A of South Plainfield and Kurt A. of the U.S. Navy; his mother, Kathleen Adams of South Plainfield. Also surviving are two sisters and a brother.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to Grace Episcopal Church, 600 Cleveland Ave., Plainfield, NJ 07060.

Rosemary and her husband Jeff Flanagan; a companion, George, and four sisters, Margie, Jean, Irene and Virginia.

Also surviving are nine grandchildren; Rosa, Tara, Sam, Ryan, Cassandra, Desiree, Gabby, Billy and Paige Ellie.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

### Henry W. Benedickson, 78

Henry W. Benedickson died on Saturday, Dec. 29 in Overlook Hospital in Summit.

Born in Irvington, he resided in Edison for many years. Upon his retirement, he moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. He returned to New Jersey and had been living in Hampton for the past three years.

He was employed as a truck driver for Budweiser (Anheuser-Busch, Inc.) of Newark for 37 years, before retiring in 1983.

He served in the US Navy during WWII, and was a former member of the American Legion and the VFW. He was also a former member of the F&A Masons Lodge in New York City.

He was predeceased by his first wife, Betty E. Benedickson and by his second wife, Ketty Benedickson. A stepdaughter, Lisa Hasara, has also predeceased him.

Surviving are three daughters, Lynn Benedickson of Washington, NJ, Lori Coyle of Glen Gardner and Susan and her husband, Steve Nieroda of Hampton; two sons and daughter-in-laws, Rod and Maryann Benedickson of Clinton; Scott and Alison Bene-

dickson of Ringoes and two step-children, Mariann Jones of Whitehouse Station, and Eugene Soderstrom of Amsterdam, NY.

Also surviving are 12 grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his memory may be made to the Pattenburg Rescue Squad, 590 Rt. #614, Asbury, NJ 08802.

### John A. Hawkins, 79

John A. Hawkins died on Tuesday, Jan. 1 at the home of his son and daughter-in-law in Kingwood.

Born in Plainfield, he resided in South Plainfield for 34 years before moving to Stockton three years ago.

Jack was employed as a serviceman for PSE&G of Plainfield for 30 years before his retirement.

He served in the US Army during WWII, serving as guard of captured prisoners and as a crew chief of the corp. for Barrage Ballooning. He was a member of the American Legion Chaumont Post #243 of South Plainfield.

Jack was a loving father and taught his two sons his love for woodworking, to the extent that they built their own homes.

Surviving are his wife, Marilyn (Snyder) Hawkins; two sons and daughters-in-law, John A. and Kathy Hawkins of Stockton and Jay and Mary Hawkins of Kingwood. Also surviving are his five grandchildren; John, David, Holly Erica and Ashley.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.



(908) 561-8000

# McCriskin

## HOME FOR FUNERALS

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## Sacred Heart Church

149 South Plainfield Ave.  
South Plainfield, NJ

Rev. John Paul Alvarado, Pastor

### Mass Schedule:

Saturday Evening Mass 5:00 p.m.

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

Weekdays 9:00 a.m. (church)

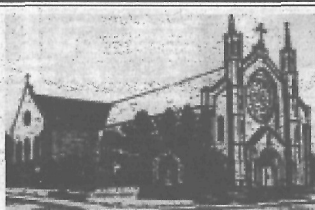
Monday Eve. Mass with Miraculous Medal Novena Prayers 7 p.m.

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

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 11 a.m.- 12 noon, 4:15-4:45 p.m.

and after 5 p.m. Vigil Mass



### Eleanor T. "Ellie" (Shuski) Square, 74

Eleanor T. "Ellie" (Shuski) Square died on Saturday, Dec. 29 at JFK Haven Hospice in Edison.

Born in Elizabeth, Mrs. Square had resided in South Plainfield where she raised her family, before settling in Plainfield in the late 1980's.

She had been employed by many diners in the tri-county area. She also had a great love for Bingo and could be found playing in numerous locations.

Surviving are a son, Michael and his wife Dora Svorinich; a daughter,

## Compare

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## policereport

• On Dec. 21, a Harrison Ave. resident reported that while she was shopping at K-Mart, she had put her pocketbook down and it was gone. She later received a call from someone claiming to have her purse and was told to meet her at Burger King in Plainfield. Two police officers and the victim were able to obtain the purse without anything missing.

• The manager of the Gulf Station on Stelton Rd. reported that an unidentified employee cashed a check for a customer which turned out to be counterfeit.

• On Dec. 22, a Beverly Rd. resident reported that someone had shot the front of his residence with yellow paintballs, causing the siding to crack and break.

• The manager of Radio Shack reported that four fake display cell phones and one real one were stolen from the display case in front of the store. The hinge of the door had been pulled to gain entry.

• On Dec. 23, homeowners on Jankoski Ct. reported when they returned home at 11:30 p.m., they found that their home had been burglarized. The house had been entered through the rear kitchen window. Items stolen were a digital camcorder and camera, numerous laptop computers, a DVD player, stereo equipment and checkbooks.

• The manager of Grand Slam on Oak Tree Rd. reported the theft of a baseball glove.

• An Orchard Dr. resident reported that \$5 in change had been removed from his unlocked vehicle.

• A Murray Ave. resident reported that someone had removed a white reindeer which had been displayed on her front lawn. The legs of the reindeer were left behind.

• Two residents of Kenyon Ave. reported that their driver's side windows had been smashed.

• A Maple Ave. resident reported that while he was parked on Murray Ave. next to his home, someone had smashed out the driver's window.

• On Dec. 24, a So. Plainfield Ave. resident reported that someone smashed in the rear left side window of his Honda Civic while parked at Acme.

• An Adams Ave. resident reported that someone had obtained a Freedom Credit Card in his name and had been making unauthorized charges with it.

• Residents on Rahway Ave. reported that they were awakened by a sound on the side of the residence. They later discovered that a bicycle had been removed.

• On Dec. 26, a Maple Ave. resident reported that someone had scratched both sides of his vehicle from front to back with a sharp object.

• The manager of Consolidated Freight on New Era Dr. reported that someone had cut through three fences and entered 12 trailers. He did not know what had been removed.

• On Dec. 27, the manager of Drug Fair reported that an unknown black female attempted to shoplift three boxes of Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold Medicine. When he confronted her she scratched him on the face and neck and also bit him in the middle of his back. He chased her outside where she attempted to get into an occupied vehicle and then fled on foot.

hicle and then fled on foot.

• Greg Pfingst, owner of Pfingst Inc. on Snyder Rd., reported his building had been hit with blue and orange paint from a paint ball gun.

• On Saturday, a Day St. resident reported that someone had been fraudulently trying to use her American Express account.

• A Plainfield man and woman were arrested at Macy's for stealing five wallets valued at \$150. Another Plainfield woman was also arrested for shoplifting \$220.95 worth of clothes.

• On Sunday, a Franklin Ave. woman reported that the driver's side rear window of her 2000 Ford Expedition had been smashed and Christmas gifts were removed.

## Boys Winter Track News

*Continued from page 9*

younger athletes as well. Alan Dummett placed fourth in the 55 high hurdles, Will Hamilton was third in the 200, Rob Hoffman took fifth in the 800, and Jermaine Thomas finished fifth in the shotput.

In the sophomore 4x800, Ian Levine, Galen Johnson, Rob Hoffman and Kyle Kazmir took fourth.

The winter track team consists of about 35 athletes (boys and girls) and is led by Head Coach William Milone and Assistant Coach Scott Horowitz. They have been moved to Group 2 and will vie for the White Division title.

The group has a hopeful and positive forecast and are sure to be competitive this season.

# Classifieds

**Rates -- 3 line minimum-\$11, \$1 ea. additional line.**

### HELP WANTED

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*Happy Birthday*

*Wishes to*

*Patty*

*Abbott*

*January 3*



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#### G&G GRAPHICS

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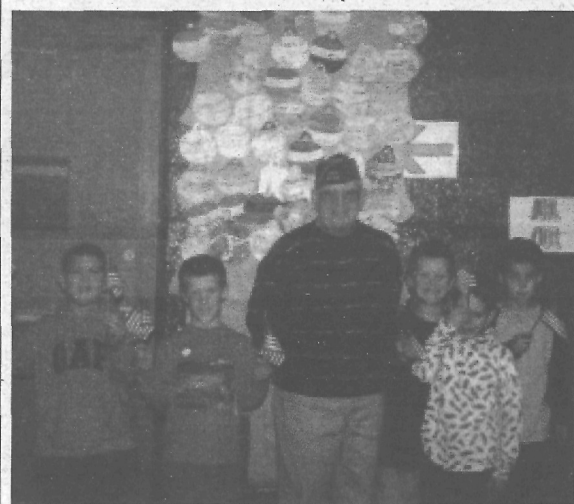




## Local Illustrator to Help Benefit 9-11 Funds

South Plainfield resident and illustrator Larry Roibal has created a memorial to honor the heroism and humanity demonstrated in the wake of the catastrophic events of 9-11. He has created an illustration entitled *Hallowed Ground*, which will be on display at the Society of Illustrators' Museum of American Illustration in New York City, from Jan. 9 to Feb. 2. The Society is paying all costs associated with the show; all entrance fees and subsequent sales go to charity. One hundred percent of the contributions made at this exhibit will go directly to charities including The New York Times 9-11 Neediest Fund, the Robin Hood Fund and the Widows of Hope Family Relief Fund.

Larry has been an illustrator for twenty years and is a member of the Society of Illustrators. He has created illustrations for over 450 book covers and volunteers his services to the South Plainfield Summer Drama Workshop.



## Scouts Learn to Fold "Old Glory"

Commander Rudy Poczak from the VFW recently visited Kennedy's Cub Scout Den 3 to show the boys how to properly fold an American flag. The boys were also very impressed with the stories Mr. Poczak told about our flag. Pictured are Dominic Eosso, Jack Green, Michael Grzenda, Ryan Riccardi and Troy Kurilew.

## EF Au Pair Join in Feeding the Hungry

Americans and friends from around the world have united to feed the hungry this holiday season.

Upset by the news that food banks are over stretched for supplies this year, EF Au Pair decided to become proactive. Both Host Families and au pairs in Samantha Pappas' group donated non-perishable food during December.

They were then matched item for item and a combined total of 21 full bags of groceries were delivered to the Food Bank Network, 9 Easy St. in Bound Brook.

Au Pairs are screened, experienced 18-26 year-old women and men from all over the world who live with a host family for one year and provide 45 hours of child care in return for a

weekly stipend, room and board.

At a time when many people are wary of non-Americans, these young people really came through for hungry Americans.

For more information contact Samantha Pappas, Local Childcare Coordinator, EF Au Pair, 951 Lincoln Blvd., Middlesex, NJ 08846 or call (732) 356-5524.



## SPHS VOICES Club Collects Toys for Tots

Voices, the community service club at South Plainfield High School, collected dozens of toys this holiday season for Toys for Tots. Pictured above (l to r) are officers Rula Kanj, Amanda George, Denise DiMeglio, Jenny Cai, Lauren Kaczka and advisor Tara Schweitzer.

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