

South Plainfield Observer

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MARCH 1, 2002

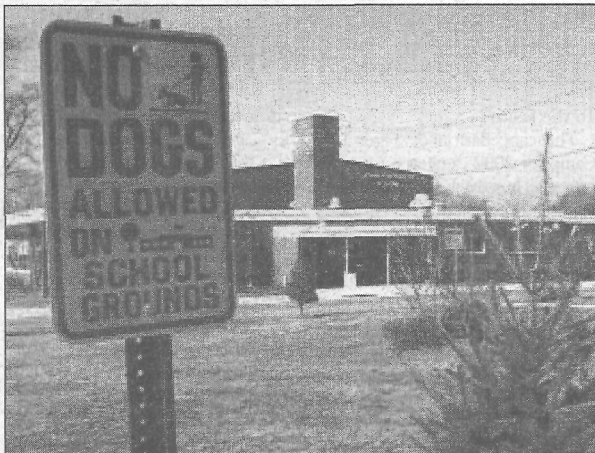
Kennedy Third Grader "Doing OK" After Dog Attack

By Jane Dornick

Local residents were stunned last week to learn that eight-year-old Jeffrey Praul, a John F. Kennedy School student, had been viciously attacked by a loose Bulldog.

As many as 200 third, fourth and fifth grade students were outside on the playground during recess, when lunch aide Joyce Heckel observed a man walking two unleashed dogs behind the backstop of the baseball field. The children were organizing a game of kickball when Heckel noticed one of the dogs run from the baseball field and pounce onto Jeffrey Praul. She immediately ran over and tried to pry the dog off the boy. As she struggled with the dog, she was bitten on the ankle.

Elizabeth Sweeney, a school parent who was there spending time with her child at lunch, also observed what was happening. According to Heckel, after the dog bit her, Sweeney came over and kicked the dog. "I was in shock at that point," said Heckel. She also noted that the man who was sup-



'No Dogs Allowed' signs are posted at every school, but since the attack on Jeffrey Praul additional signs have appeared.

posed to be tending to the dogs made no attempt to call the dog off. The man was later identified as South Plainfield resident James Guzzo.

While the women were trying to free Jeffrey from the dog, school per-

sonnel hurried the other children into the building. Sweeney carried Jeffrey in the school where school nurse Mary Bannon administered first aid to both victims.

Rescue Squad Capt. Ron Sward,

who was first on the scene, described the boy's injuries as "pretty bad." As he cut the boy's pants to expose his legs he uncovered numerous wounds. Jeffrey was rushed to St. Peter's Medical Center in New Brunswick where he was treated for 12 dog bite wounds, requiring 50 stitches. Heckel was initially treated by Mrs. Bannon for the wound on her ankle. She sought further attention from her own doctor and was given a tetanus shot.

South Plainfield Police Department Capt. John Ferraro said that James Guzzo, the father of the owner of the dogs, had given his name to school personnel and left the scene before police arrived. James T. Guzzo of Manchester, NJ, who owns the dogs,

was found at his father's residence putting one of the dogs in his car.

Police officers did not issue a summons immediately because the boy's condition wasn't deemed "too serious." After police learned that the boy was taken to the hospital, a summons was issued to the elder Guzzo for not having the dogs on a leash. The dogs have been quarantined for 10 days according to State law. Both dogs were found to be up-to-date on their shots.

The next day the media descended on South Plainfield, looking for interviews from police, school officials, the Prauls and anyone they could find. Channel 9 News was at the play-

Continued on page 7

Golden Acres Shopping Center Renovations are Underway

By Pattie Abbott

The long awaited and much anticipated renovation of Golden Acres Shopping Center is about to become a reality. A delay in the start of the renovations has caused anxiety and frustration among many of the remaining tenants. The once thriving strip mall on Oak Tree Ave. has been little more than a ghost town since Bradlees closed its doors in January, 2001. The parking lot has been conspicuously empty, but the future of the shopping center is looking much brighter.

Paul Mullins of Polimeni International is confident that the job will be moving forward as planned. The renovations, along with the addition of new businesses opening will return the mall to its prosperous state.

Work has already begun around the area where a bank was located to bring the building facade flush with the rest of the mall. An 8,000 square



Paul Mullins of Polimeni International was at Golden Acres Shopping Center Wednesday to meet with the contractors about the renovations.

foot dollar store is tentatively scheduled to take up residence in that location. When the current job is finished, the architectural work on the rest of the mall will begin. Facade renovation, sidewalks, new columns and overhead canopies will give the mall a

Continued on page 2

Graphic Arts Students Create Fireman's Memorial Model



(Left to right) SPHS sophomores David Allaro and Robert Barone, Graphics Arts teacher Rich D'Urso, SPHS Principal Anthony Massaro, Mayor Dan Gallagher, SP Fire Chief Larry DelNegro and former Chief John Contone.

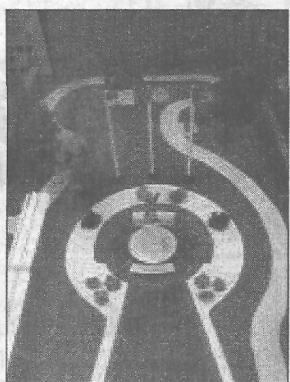
Rich D'Urso's high school graphic arts class has become a beehive of activity lately. The students were asked to create a miniature replica of the proposed Fireman's Memorial planned for the property next to the new senior citizen center on Lakeview and Maple Ave.

The original plans were designed by South Plainfield Architect Joe DeAndrea.

The students were asked to make the replica to help the fire department in their fundraising efforts. The project will be funded through donations. The fire department is planning on selling bricks to fund the project.

Sophomores David Allaro and Robert Barone, plus a number of

other students in the first period graphic arts class, eagerly went to work



on the project. The result is a beautiful 3-D replica of what the site will look like, including grass, trees and the area surrounding the memorial.

The project took over a month to complete. It entailed creating and cutting the templates, then constructing the miniature pieces, one by one. Barone also visited a local hobby shop to purchase trees and grass.

The 3-D model will be placed on display in various places around town such as the library, the PAL building and Borough hall. While on display, residents can pick up the necessary information on how to purchase a brick.

For further information on purchasing a brick, call (908) 756-4761.

2002 School Board Candidates Announced

Six candidates will be vying for three seats at this year's school board elections.

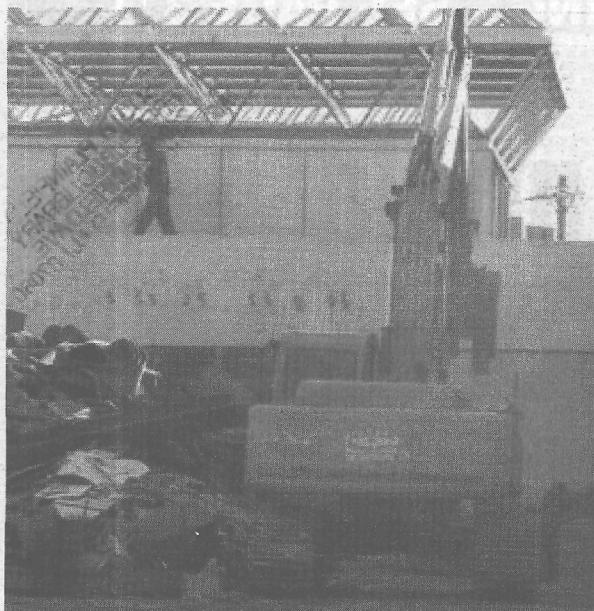
Three incumbents will be seeking re-election this year. They are Board members Daniel Smith, Jeffrey Seider and Kenneth LaFreniere. Also running are Tim Morgan, who ran unsuccessfully last year and new comers, Terry Alexa and Angel C. Jazikoff.

School board members serve for three-year terms. Although elected locally, school board members are considered state officials, not local ones. School boards make the policies that guide local curriculums and instruction and also oversee personnel policies, fiscal management and the upkeep of buildings. They do not run the schools themselves, that day to day

responsibilities are carried out by the school superintendent.

The school board election is set for Tuesday, April 16, but that date could be changed. A bill is making its way through the State Legislature to postpone the date because of the delay in introducing the state budget. Municipalities say they need more time to produce a budget. The bill does not change the voting day, but gives the Education Commission authority to adjust the date.

The latest reports out of the Trenton say that Governor McGreevey is against changing the election date. Municipalities have been told that school aid will be frozen at last years level and they should prepare their budgets accordingly.



Workers has already begun on the portion of the shopping center where a bank was previously located.

Continued from page 1

much needed face lift from Bradlees continuing all the way to the Hong Kong Market. The contractor for the job is Cusi Construction of Haddon Heights, NJ.

Mullins explained his company is currently talking to potential users for the Bradlees building. While they'd prefer a single user, dividing the building for two is also acceptable. Con-

struction of a Wendy's will start sometime in the spring. They are currently working on permits with the town. Wendy's will be a freestanding building located near the corner of Oak Tree Rd. and Park Ave.

Golden Acres was built in 1987 and an addition along the side was put in in 1987.

The renovations are expected to be completed by the end of June.



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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 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 their name be omitted when published.



The Bagel Stop at 23 South Plainfield Ave. held a grand opening ceremony last Saturday. Attending were (l-r) Matthew Ertle, Councilman Charlie Butrico, owner Dale Finn, Samatha Williams, Mayor Dan Gallagher, Councilman Ed Kubala, Megan Hickey, Police Chief Robert Merkle, Brian Acrin, Michael Alvarez and Mathew Finn holding Samantha Hickey.

INMYOPINION

To the Editor,

The cancellation of Tiger Day Camp for 2002 came as a total surprise on Thursday Feb. 21, after reading the Adult School letter enclosing the deposit check. As a single working mother of a six year old daughter enrolled in the Latchkey and Tiger Day Camp, myself and other hard working parents rely on these programs for quality child care and a means of earning a living. Coping with the cancellation of Tiger Day Camp came at a personal cost involving time off from work to accommodate an alternate summer program for my daughter on an emergency basis.

I am sure other parents are going through the same distress as I did placing their sons and daughters in alternate and more costly programs.

The lack of professionalism in the timing of the cancellation notice raises some questions regarding management of bonded upgrades to the South Plainfield schools. A quick chronology of specific events leading to the cancellation notification should be an enlightening study in mismanagement:

- Jan. 8, 2002 - Tiger Day Camp 2002 application picked up at the Latchkey school.
- Feb. 15, 2002 - Executed application and deposit dropped off at the Latchkey school.
- Feb. 16, 2002 - Phone call to my place of work from the Adult School

SEND YOUR LETTERS/OPINIONS TO:

The South Plainfield Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd., Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080. Fax: 908-668-8819 or email: ggnan@aol.com

acknowledging receipt of the deposit for Tiger Day Camp 2002.

• Feb. 21, 2002 - Tiger Day Camp 2002 cancellation letter dated Feb. 15, 2002, postmarked Feb. 20, 2002 received with deposit returned.

• February 22, 2002 - Phone call to the Adult School Director, James A. Lenox, at 9 a.m. from my home questioning this fiasco left much to be desired.

Although Mr. Lenox was pleasant but defensive in the cancellation explanation, there was no official help for an alternate to the Tiger Day Camp program for this summer.

I believe that a letter dated and signed by Mr. Lenox on Feb. 15, but postmarked six days later, indicates previous knowledge of the cancellation. So why accept applications and deposits and phone acknowledgment after the letter was written?

Communications are awful in the South Plainfield school system wherein the execution schedule of the school upgrades should be known far in advance so as not to inconvenience the citizens and displace the Tiger Day Camp Staff for the convenience of contractors.

Further questions arise regarding the implementation of the school upgrades and the selected contractors conducting the electrical and other school work that require professional answers. Being familiar with general contracting via my father's business, it is commonplace for work specifications to accommodate the users of a facility and not the contractors.

Often off-hours or alternate scheduling of work is required to meet these requirements and contractors include these in their bids. It appears to me that this is the beginning of the Con-

struction Manager and the contractors dictating policy to South Plainfield instead of the other way around. Who is responsible for the "big picture" within the Borough? What is included in the work specifications regarding selected utilization of a portion of one school for Tiger Day Camp? Is there a citizen's oversight panel made up of non-involved professionals advising the Borough?

Will there be other poor decisions forthcoming during the course of school upgrades affecting the students and others in my position?

South Plainfield owes answers.

SINCERELY,
DANA M. MILLER

Mayor Declares March "Youth Art Month"



After declaring March as "Youth Art Month" Mayor Dan Gallagher presents a copy of the proclamation to Mary Ann Iannitto of the Suburban Woman's Club, who suggested the idea to the council.

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Acme Supermarket Slated to Close Its Doors



The loyal shoppers of Acme Supermarket on Park Ave. will have to find another grocery store when they close their doors for the last time on or about February 28.

According to sources, their lease is up and they will not renew it. Employees are being relocated to several stores in the area including one in North Plainfield, Middlesex and Milltown. Manager Dave Miller was unable to give us any more information about the closing.

Acme Supermarket has been a landmark in South Plainfield for many years. Other grocery stores which have relocated or renovated have tried to entice shoppers away from Acme, but those in the neighborhood who have shopped there for years have remained loyal to the store.

southplainfieldpeople Milestones

Gindas Announce the Birth of Son

Bob and Maddy Ginda of East Crescent Parkway welcomed their second son, Robert Simone Ginda, born on Feb. 22. Robert weighed in at 7 pounds 14 ounces and was 20 inches long. Robert joins his big brother Thomas at home.

The maternal grandparents are Angela and Simone Lentini of Brooklyn, NY. Paternal grandparents are Bob and Audrey Ginda of South Plainfield. Paternal great grandparents are Leonard and Mary Potts of Carteret, NJ.

Alison Tietjen Joins Scholarship Program

Alison Elisabeth Tietjen, a 2001 South Plainfield High School graduate, has been invited into the Scholars Program at Stevens Institute of Technology, in Hoboken.

Tietjen had an exceptional first semester, earning a grade point average of 4.0. A chemical engineering major, she has also been named to the Dean's

list for the Fall 2001 semester.

The Scholars Program offers students the opportunity to participate in stipend special research projects or to enter an accelerated program to pursue a bachelor's degree in three years or a dual bachelor's/master's degree in four years.

Local Student Named to Honor Roll

Headmaster John Neiswender of The Pingry School is pleased to announce that Thao "Liz" Nguyen, grade 11, was recently appointed to the first semester honor roll. This recognition is given to those students who have achieved an academic average of B+ or better.

Liz Nguyen is the daughter of Tan and Mongnga Nguyen of South Plainfield.

The Pingry School is a K-12 coeducational, independent country day

school that currently enrolls 1,011 students from 12 New Jersey counties and more than 90 communities. Founded in 1861 in Elizabeth, NJ by Dr. John F. Pingry, the school is recognized throughout the United States for its academic excellence, Honor Code, sports programming and a universal concern among faculty for each student in the school. Pingry offers its students a challenging college preparatory curriculum.

Finalists for "Little Miss Baseball" Contest Named

The finalists for Little Miss Baseball 2002 are Cassie Prendergast, Krista Hey, Jaclyn Decillis, Courtney Calvey, Alyssa Serudato, Jennifer McClary and Lori Gangorra.

Voting boxes with pictures are located at Ciccio's, Quick Check, and B & C Deli. Voting is cast by the "penny-a-vote" system. The boxes will be collected and counted on Apr. 6. The

winner will be announced at the Opening Day ceremonies on Apr. 13 at the baseball complex and will receive a \$25 mall certificate from the Women's Auxiliary.

So come on out and cast your vote for Little Miss Baseball 2002. If you have any questions, please call Stacy Lake at 757-9531.

Pay Your Traffic Ticket On Line!

Gotten a traffic ticket recently? Now it's even easier to pay—just go on line and pay your ticket on the internet.

For a small fee, tickets ranging from speeding to double parking can be now be paid on line.

A pilot program begun at the start of the year has rapidly expanded to a total of 27 towns that are now accepting payments on-line, including South Plainfield. By the end of June, court officials expect to have all of the towns waiting for the service to be up and running.

It's easy to pay your ticket on-line. If you are issued a ticket, log on to the state judiciary web site (www.judiciary.state.nj.us) and choose the traffic ticket payment option. Put in the court identification number, a prefix and ticket number, all of which are listed on the traffic ticket, along with your license plate number. You can then inquire about fees and points and if you choose, pay the ticket with either a Visa or Mastercard.

There is a "convenience fee" charge of \$1 to \$4 added to each transaction, which based on how much the ticket costs.

Payments can be made between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 11:45 p.m. When a ticket is paid on-line, it is electronically recorded in the municipal court immediately and updated and the money is put into the court's account with 24 hours.

To help this new service run efficiently, traffic tickets were redesigned.

Curriculum/Technology Meeting Date Changed

The meeting of the Curriculum/Technology/Student Activities Committee has been changed to Thursday, March 7 at 7 p.m. in the high school

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South Plainfield Republican Club Chairman David Gouth (left) with Essex County Executive and U.S. Senate candidate Jim Treffinger (middle), and outgoing Middlesex County Chairman Dennis Little (right).

Treffinger is Guest Speaker at Republican Meeting

Essex County Executive Jim Treffinger, who is running for the U.S. Senate seat held by Bob Torricelli, was the guest speaker at last week's South Plainfield Republican Club meeting. Treffinger was well received by the group as he explained why he is running, his qualifications and his dreams for the future.

Newly elected Chairman Dave Gouth announced that the club has a lot of plans for getting residents involved in the club once again. One idea is to create a website.

Also speaking was Dennis Little, who announced that he has resigned

as the Republican Middlesex County Chairman after eight years. Little, who has been involved in politics for over 30 years, told the group that he can now dedicate more of his time helping local Republicans re-establish themselves with the voters. He emphasized that there are many issues to bring to the voters this year. Little was a Borough Councilman from 1980 to 1984.

The regular meetings of the Republican Club are held on the third Wednesday of the month at the American Legion on Oak Tree Ave. at 8 p.m. The public is invited.

Hall of Fame is Seeking 2002 Nominees

The South Plainfield Hall of Fame Committee is beginning their search for candidates for induction into the Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame was established at South Plainfield High School to recognize outstanding graduates as leaders in their fields who could serve as role models for current and future students.

To be eligible, Hall of Fame candidates must have graduated South Plainfield High School at least 15 years prior to nomination and have achieved a prominent position in their careers, or made a significant contribution to the world/community.

Those candidates selected will be honored at a luncheon and will be inducted into the Hall of Fame at the High School's Annual Academic Awards Program in June 2002. All Hall of Fame Inductees from past years will also be invited to attend this luncheon. The nominees will also have their photographs and biographies displayed on the "Hall of Fame" at the High School.

Community members interested in obtaining a Hall of Fame nomination form should call Mr. Massaro at (908) 7544-4620. The application deadline is April 5, 2002.

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Events

Around Town

Country Breakfast at VFW

March 3

VFW Post #6763 located at 155 Front St. is planning a Country Breakfast on March 3 from 8 to 11 a.m. Donation is \$5, children 12 and under \$2.50. For information, call (908) 668-9751 daily and after 12 noon weekends.

Community Fashion Show Planned

March 3

A community fashion show will be held at the Fashion Bug, located in the Golden Acres Shopping Center on Saturday, March 3 at 2 p.m. Women of all sizes are encouraged to attend.

College Savings Plan Seminar

March 5

A.G. Edwards will host a seminar for a 529 College Plan on Mar. 5, at 7 p.m. in the South Plainfield Public Library. To reserve a seat, call 1-800-233-5102.

Suburban Woman's Club Holds "Cats!" Program

March 7

The program for the March meeting of the GFWC Suburban Woman's Club of South Plainfield will be "Cats!" The speakers will be Jean and Dave Walter, who will tell of their volunteer experiences at St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7 at 2 p.m. at the American Legion Hall on Oak Tree Rd. Women interested in joining may call 561-1908 for further information.

Project Graduation Auction/Raffle

March 9

The SPHS PTA Auction/Raffle to Support Project Graduation for the Class of 2002 will be held at the High School on Mar. 9. Doors open at 6 p.m.

This year the auction will even surpass last year's event with more exciting gifts—a Dell Computer, Get-away to St. Thomas, digital camera,

DVD and a gas grill to name a few. Our goal is to sell out before the event, so call now for your tickets, 756-6512 or 756-3731.

Chili Fest at Kennedy School

March 10

Boy Scout Troop 207 sponsored by the Knights of Columbus will hold its third annual "Chili Fest" on Sunday, Mar. 10. It will be held at Kennedy School auditorium located on Norwood Ave. from 3 to 7 p.m.

This will be an all-you-can-eat chili dinner which will also include salad, rolls and drinks. The cost is \$4 per person. Games and prizes for the younger children attending will be included.

This annual fundraiser will benefit Troop 207 on future scouting events and for equipment the troop may need. Your support for the scouts is appreciated and we invite all that can attend. For more information or to purchase tickets, call Troop 207, (908) 753-2562 and ask for Mark.

Columbiettes Annual Easter Bunny Lunch

March 10

The South Plainfield Columbiettes will hold their annual lunch with the Easter Bunny on Sunday, Mar. 10, at 12:30 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 334 Hamilton Blvd.

There will be prizes for all ages. Children seven years and under will receive an Easter basket filled with goodies from the Easter Bunny. A buffet lunch will be served.

The cost is \$10 per person and reservations must be made in advance by calling Geri at (908) 753-2032. The exact ages of all children must be given at the time of registration. Deadline is Mar. 1.

Six Course Wine Dinner Sponsored By Buy Rite Liquors

March 11

A six course wine dinner, sponsored by Buy Rite Liquors located on Oak Tree Ave., will be held on March 11. Seating is available to only the first 25 guests.

For tickets and menu information, call (908) 561-0051.

Pilgrim Covenant Coffee House

March 15

Pilgrim Covenant Church, 3121 Park Ave., will hold a Coffee House on Mar. 15, at 8 p.m.

Acts from all over the area will be performing. For ticket information call 908-756-4879, or if you wish to perform, please let us know.

VFW Italian Dinner

March 15

VFW Ladies Auxiliary VFW 6763 will sponsor a dinner on Mar. 15 at VFW Post 6763 at 155 Front St. There will be a choice of an Italian dinner or cabbage and noodles. Dinner will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Donation is \$6; children's menu available. For information, call (908) 668-9751.

Franklin School Auction/Raffle Night

March 16

The Franklin School PTA is sponsoring the Sixth Annual Auction/Raffle Night. The event will be held on Saturday, Mar. 16 starting at 7:30 p.m. at South Plainfield High School Gym. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$7 in advance or \$10 at the door.

For tickets call Dorothea at 753-7117 or Terry at 753-2864. There will be a complimentary ticket for a Grand Prize Drawing with every advance sale. Food is welcomed and soft drinks will be available for purchase.

St. Patrick's Day Party & Corned Beef, Cabbage Dinner

March 16

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus will hold a St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner.

Take out dinner prices are \$8 for adults and \$5 for children. Advance orders are recommended. To order, call (908) 755-6203 and leave a message for John Weakley, or just stop in on Mar. 16.

The Knights of Columbus will also hold their annual St. Patrick's Day party at the hall from 8 p.m. to midnight. Price is \$20 and includes dinner and open bar. If interested, please call Jim Shea at 908-755-6203.

Alice in Wonderland, A Magic Show

March 23

The South Plainfield Girl Scout Community of Washington Rock Girl Scout Council and The South Plainfield Recreation Department will be presenting "Alice in Wonderland," a magic show by Westcraft, Inc. along with snacks with the bunny.

The show takes place on at the South Plainfield Middle School on Saturday, Mar. 23. Doors open at 9:30 a.m., show time begins at 10 a.m.

Tickets purchased in advance are \$5 and \$7 at the door. Pictures will be taken with the bunny! Limited seating is available.

For ticket information call, Carrie George at (908) 755-8429 or Connie Palmer at (908) 755-3850.

PAL Sponsoring Trip To See Oklahoma!

March 28

The PAL of South Plainfield is sponsoring a trip to see *Oklahoma!* on Broadway on Saturday, Mar. 28. Bus leaves the PAL at 4 p.m. There will be plenty of time for dinner before the play. Orchestra ticket price is \$90 per person. Tickets can be purchased at the PAL on Maple Ave. weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. There are only 27 tickets available so get yours soon.

Dance/Gymnastics To Benefit of Autism

April 6

Jo-Ann's Dance Studio and Feigley's School of Gymnastics, 4475 So. Clinton Ave., will hold a program celebrating the art of dance and gymnastics for the benefit of autism awareness on Saturday, Apr. 6, from 7-8:30 p.m.

Some of the area's top dancers and gymnasts will perform to raise funds for the COSAC, the NJ Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community, Inc. The only admission charge will be a donation and tickets are available in advance or at the door.

For information call Jo-Ann's Dance Studio at (908) 561-5094.

Rainbow Academy Open House

April 6

The new Rainbow Academy Child Care Center located at 2177 Oak Tree Rd. in Edison will hold an Open House on Saturday, Apr. 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. They are now registering for Summer Camp and Fall 2002.

For directions and information visit their website at www.rainbow-academy.com.

Everyone who registers 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.

Vision 2001 Presents Annual Art Auction

April 19

This year's annual Vision 2001 Education Foundation Art Auction will be held on Friday, Apr. 19 at South Plainfield High School.

Admission is \$10 per person. \$5 will be returned as a gift certificate to be redeemed at the Apr. 19 art auction only.

Preview time is 6:30 p.m. and the

auction begins at 7:30 p.m. There will be hors d'oeuvres, coffee, cake and door prizes.

For tickets, call (908) 561-3951.

Knights of Columbus Plan Bus Trip to AC

April 27

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus is having a Bus trip to Atlantic City on Apr. 27. Price is \$25 which includes lunch and drinks at the Kof C Hall before leaving. Refreshments will also be available on the bus trip. The bus will leave from the Kof C Hall at noon and each person will get \$10 back from the casino.

Call Ed Koznowicz at 754-3094 or 755-6203 for more details.

Casino Royale and Chinese Auction

May 11

On Saturday, May 11, the Casino Royale and Chinese Auction will take place at the VFW Hall located on Front St. from 7 p.m. til midnight!

The event is open to SPJBC members only at \$45 per person. The Casino Royale has an open bar and music will be provided by DJ Kevin.

Each guest will receive \$500 in play money. The money must be redeemed for Chinese Auction tickets.

For tickets, call Stacey Lake, (908) 757-9531 or (732) 646-1676. Tickets are limited—"first come, first served!" (Tickets will also be available Opening Day!)

— Out of Town —

Villagers Theater Announces Opening

March 1, 2

The Villagers Theater of Somerset will run *Fuddy Meers* by David Lindsay-Abaire Fridays and Saturday, March 1 and 2. Showtimes are evenings at 8 p.m. All tickets are \$10.

For tickets call (732) 873-2710 or visit www.villagerstheatre.com.

The Odd Couple at Entertainers Theater

March 15-24

Neil Simon's *The Odd Couple, Female Version*, will be presented by the Entertainers Theater weekends Mar. 15-24. Directed by Noreen Dunn, *The Odd Couple, Female Version*, promises to bring wholesome entertainment for the whole family, says Suzanne Ferris Hammer, founder of Entertainers Theatre.

The comedy will be performed Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. The only Sunday performance is Mar. 24 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$10; \$5 for seniors on Mar. 24 only.

Entertainers Theatre performs at the People Care Center, Edward A. Chandler Theatre, 120 Fender Ave., Bridgewater, off Route 28.

For tickets, call (732) 846-5032.

Westfield History Societies Meeting

April 17

The Planning Committee for the Spring Assembly of the Westfield history societies has announced that the group's annual meeting will be held on April 17 at 8 p.m. at the First Baptist Church on Elm Street. Introductory music will start about 7:45 p.m.

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

ENCOURAGE YOUR ORGANIZATION TO SEND US THEIR UPCOMING EVENTS. We want to add them to AROUND TOWN. It can make your event more successful. Send them to us by mail, fax or e-mail.

SEND US INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MILESTONES, i.e., promotions, births, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, graduations. Include photos. Share your good news with the community!

IF THERE IS SOMEONE YOU KNOW WHO MAKES A DIFFERENCE in South Plainfield? Thank them by letting us know.

USE THE OBSERVER AS AN ADVERTISING TOOL. Introduce your business to the community. Promote your specials or sales. Residents would rather patronize local businesses than travel out of town. It is more convenient and it's good for the local economy.

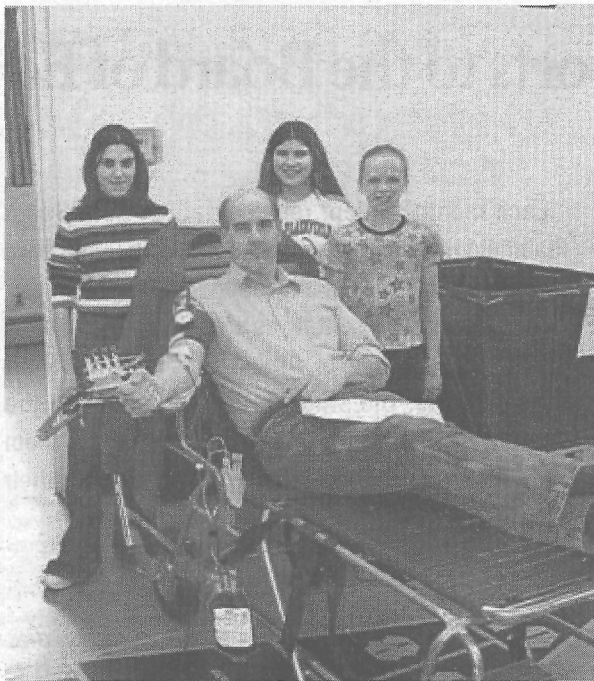
SUGGEST A BUSINESS FOR US TO SPOTLIGHT. If you have had great service in South Plainfield share it with your neighbors through the newspaper.

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.com.

SUBSCRIBE. It's \$25. (in town) for one year!!



Girl Scouts Hold Blood Drive

Melissa Franzson, Crystal Gorman and Tina DeStefano, Middle School Cadets helped out during last Saturday Blood drive at Wesley Methodist Church.

From the South Plainfield Library

Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

Well, February ended yesterday. (Boy, was that fast). So, here we are in March. And here we are with more news from the South Plainfield Library:

We're between groups on the Video Circuit today. The next batch of Circuit tapes and DVDs will be available early next week.

There will be a meeting of Home Schooling parents (or those parents interested in Home Schooling) on Monday evening at 7:30 in our Children's Room. No pre-registration is required.

We'll feature our normal schedule of children's Storytime programs next week. For those who need a reminder, that means the programs will be held on Tuesday morning at 10:30, Wednesday evening at 6:30 and Thursday afternoon at 1:15. The programs are for children ages three and over; there's no need to sign up in advance. Each program lasts about an hour and features stories and a craft activity. If you'd like more information, please call us at (908) 754-7885 and ask for Miss Linda.

The Friends of the Library will hold their next meeting on Tuesday afternoon at 1 p.m. Both members and non-members are invited to attend.

The library will continue to offer classes in both basic computer usage and job searching information throughout March. Please call us for more information regarding scheduling and registration.

Last week, we told you about our new recycling bin for used Inkjet and LaserJet cartridges. Well, you can add another bin to the list. We're now collecting used cell phones. Like the cartridges, the collected phones will make us eligible for new, free A/V and com-

puter equipment. The bins are located near the door to the Children's Room. This program is also provided by the Funding Factory, an educational fundraising group.

And here's word about another fund raising effort for the library. Zany Brainy has agreed to donate some sorely needed money to us. Here's how it will work: At our Circulation Desk, you'll find a bunch of coupons for the Zany Brainy store in Bridgewater. When you shop there from Friday, Mar. 8, to Sunday, Mar. 10, if you present the coupon, the store will donate 10 percent of the total sales to the library. So, we ask that you please make use of the coupons. Your kids could use the toys, Zany Brainy could use the business and we could use the donation. Thanks for your help on this.

This week, we'll close with a serious note. Sometimes, parents have felt free to leave their children here at the Library unaccompanied. It is our position that this is NOT a good idea, even if it's for a relatively brief period of time, or the youngsters are well behaved. We just don't have enough staff to keep a watchful enough eye on your kids, and our staff is just not trained for such duties. Children can get hurt anywhere, even a public library, if nobody's watching over them. Please make certain that a responsible adult accompanies your child when they come to the Library, especially if the child is under 11 years of age. Let's be clear on this: If a child is left alone here for an extended period, we will notify the police and DYFS so that they may handle the situation. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please don't hesitate to ask.

That's about all for now. See you next Friday for more news. And Happy St. David's Day.



Pictured from left to right are first year Webelos from Pack #324 (Den #5) at Kennedy School; Johnny Bullock, Kevin Simms, Ray Coletta, Logan Green, Mat Santos, Steven Grzenda, and Jimmy Bijlani. The scouts were working towards their communication achievement badge. Observer staff member Jenevieve DeLos Santos showed the scouts some pointers on how the paper is produced. They were accompanied by their leader Vijay Bijilani and co-leader Steve Bullock.

John E. Riley Exhibits "Art for the Main Office"

The second installation of the exhibit "Art for the Main Office", under the direction of art teacher Barbara Harris, is currently on view at John E. Riley School. The new display features mixed media still life collage prints by fifth graders Michael Burton, Mark Sprenger, Stevie Stark and Teddy Skwiat.

This project grew out of a unit of study in art class on the Baroque Period (17th century). Dutch and Flemish artists were one of the aspects emphasized. They were the first artists to depict still lifes as an important subject for art.

The children were also introduced to Rembrandt, who made

etchings (line prints) as well as portrait paintings. Unlike Rembrandt, the fifth graders did not use a printing press. Their still life prints were a contemporary and colorful interpretation of the genre that combined printer's ink, polyfoam board, crayon, and collage.



Pictured left are Michael Burton and Mark Sprenger, on right are Teddy Skwiat and Stevie Stark.

Limited Preschool Programs Available

The South Plainfield Public School District is offering *Limited Free* Preschool programs for four-year-old children at the Grant School for the 2002/2003 school year. The Preschool Inclusion class enrolls preschoolers with disabilities, along with typically developing children in order to provide public school opportunities according to the Individual's with Disabilities Education Act. They are looking to recruit typical children for these new classes.

Children must be four years-old by Oct. 1, 2002 and reside in South Plainfield. The afternoon program runs Monday-Friday from 12:15

a.m. to 2:45 p.m. No transportation will be provided for regular students. Children should be toilet trained and have age appropriate verbal skills. Selection for the program will be made by lottery.

Applications and information may be obtained for the preschool program by calling the Adult School office at (908) 754-4620, ext. 214.

Completed applications must be filled out and returned to the Adult School office by March 25, 2002. The South Plainfield Adult School is located in the Middle School, Room 2, 2201 Plainfield Ave.

Rescue Squad Calls

The South Plainfield Rescue Squad announced that in January they answered a total of 134 calls, equalling 383 man hours.

Looking for a job?

We can make your search much easier!

FAX directly to local and statewide businesses!

Give us your resume — let us do the rest! Our personally compiled fax database is categorized to specific job fields!

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Saturday evenings 5:30 PM
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High School Students Report on Sports to the Board of Ed



Each month student representatives from South Plainfield High School present a report that they have written to the Board of Education members.

The student representatives are selected by Dr. May and assigned a topic to discuss. This month's report covers sports. The students' presentations to the board were impressive. We would like to share them with our readers. They deserve recognition for their efforts.

South Plainfield High School students from left to right, Scott Doerr, 4.06 GPA; Billie Jean Sarullo, 3.4 GPA; Vickie Boley, 4.03 GPA; Jaclyn Noonan, Erica Parks, 2.98 GPA; John Rayho, 4.1 GPA.

Indoor Guard

By Jaclyn Noonan

Good evening. As Dr. May said, my name is Jaclyn, but you can call me Jaci. I am very honored and happy to be here on behalf of the sport, Indoor Guard which is relatively new to South Plainfield High School. This also happens to be only the third year of the Indoor Guards' existence. This season there are 19 girls in the guard.

The Indoor Guard is a group of girls, who use a flag, sabre or rifle and their body expressions while the music is being played. The Indoor Guard performs to taped music on a gym floor and will normally have backdrops as scenery and a tarp, which is a thick piece of vinyl to protect the gym floor and add to the atmosphere of the show. Mrs. Petrocelli and her Sewing Committee make all of the flags and costumes used in our shows.

At the end of November, the Indoor Guard season will begin planning. This starts with the Guard advisors, which in my case are band director, Mr. Tweed and colorguard season advisor, Mrs. Petrocelli, or as we call her, Mrs. Pet. Along with the leadership from the past colorguard season we talk about the type of music and get a rough idea of a show that we would like to perform this year.

The competitive season begins in late January and continues until the championships in early May. The Guards are judged on a variety of areas, such as movement, which is how the performers are brought on and off the floor. Then there are the overall captions who look at how the guard looks as a whole, performs and

does their work. The girls are judged individually on the way they dance, spin their equipment and portray their character. The highest score is 100. In order to have a guard that will be competitive everyone has to practice. The SPHS guard practices Wednesdays and Fridays, from 2:40 to 5 p.m. in the auditorium, until basketball season is over, and then the move into the gym.

I am not the only person who is important here. There are four other girls who I work with to make up a guard show. There are two seniors, Sabrina Hollis and Danielle Servedio; two juniors, Tiffany Boyle and myself; and one sophomore, Wendy Kollarick. Unlike other guards who hire professional choreographers to make up their entire show, we get together after-school and weekends, listen to the show music and make up dance, flag and weapon moves. Soon we put all these moves together to form a show. Over the course of a season, the show will be altered various times in order to achieve the full effect of the music.

Our first competition was on Jan. 24, where we came in second place and earned a score of 62.8. Our next show is this Sunday, Feb. 24 at Rosen Park. We also will have the honor of holding two shows at our own school. On Sunday, April 7, we will host a show. Then on April 28, we have been selected out of all the guards to host Chapter Championships at our school. It would be great to see some of you out there.

Thank you for your time.

Winter Track

By John Rayho (4.1 GPA)

The boy's and girl's Winter Track team runs from late November through February. Unlike the other winter sports, ours is the only winter sport that takes place outside, including practices.

The girl's have 21 members and have a 3-3 record. The had two very close losses in meets. In the East Brunswick Relays they tied eighth overall, placed third in the 55 hurdles and sixth in shot put.

The Boy's Winter Track Team has a record of 6-0 and consists of 38 members. Our average victory was achieved by 36.5 points. We came in second overall in the East Brunswick Relays, winning the 4x200m and receiving five other metals.

Sean Grevious is the 55-meter County Champion and his brother Chris Grevious is the 55-meter County runner-up.

Tim Morgan took third in the GMC's for the 3200 meter. He qualified for the 3200 Meet of Champions with a fourth place finish in the Group III State Individuals, placed fifth in the 3200 in the New York City Varsity Classic and fourth in the GMC individual 4x400m.

The Tigers were awarded more than 75 individual medals from invitational meets.

In the GMC, the tigers are the White Division Champs, White Division Relay Champs, were fourth overall in relay, second in sprint med., third in 4x200m and third in 55-meter hurdles, third in the 55m hurdles, placed in distance med and 4x400m and 4x800m and high jump.

Congratulations to the boy's and girl's Winter Track and thanks to our Coaches Malone and Horowitz.

Bowling

By Vicki Boley (4.03 gpa)

Good evening.

It is with great pride that I am here to speak about the South Plainfield High School Bowling Program. The program has a boy's team and a girl's team, each is compiled of six athletes. We bowl in at least 20 matches in the Greater Middlesex Conference league at Brunswick Zone Carolier Lanes in North Brunswick.

The GMC league is one of the most competitive bowling leagues in the state and splits into two divisions, red and white, which is determined by the population of the school. The teams are also entered into four or five tournaments, including the Central Jersey Winter Classic, a tournament sponsored by the SPHS Bowling Club.

We are fortunate and thankful to have two outstanding coaches, Ralph Feh and our volunteer coach, Lori Gerstl. They led the girls team to a White Division title in 2001 and the boys clinched in 2000.

The Tigers used this season to rebuild their boy's team, after graduating four starters last year. Starting one freshman and one junior as their varsity squad, they finished the season with six upset victories, two ties and 13 losses to veteran teams, which put them in fifth place in the White Division. I had the privilege to watch the young Tigers come together as a team when they rolled their high game of the season, a 927 in the state qualifiers.

Freshman Matt Boley shined in his first year as a Tiger, leading the team with a 198.83 average. With that average, he snapped the SPHS record of 198.46, set the last year. In the 71 games that Matt bowled, 34 were 200 or better. He set a career high with a 691 set and 269 game. Matt was this season's male Rookie of the Year.

The Lady Tigers finished their season with a 15-8 record and stood fourth in the White Division, after graduating three varsity starters last year. These tigers were ranked 18th in the state by the *Star Ledger*. Shining for the Ladies were freshman Kim Gaub, whose high game was a 252. Kim holds this season's female Rookie of the Year title. I was also fortunate enough to help our team to 15 victories this season. I enlisted the help of my coach, Lori Gerstl and my brother, Matt, to increase my average 26 points to a 184. This improved my chances when I represented our school in two state and one county tournaments.

As a Tiger, I would like to acknowledge how hard our coaches work to make sure our teams represent the green and white to the fullest extent. No athlete from either team will graduate this year, so we expect to have both full teams returning for another year of Tiger Bowling. There is no doubt in my mind that the bowling program will continue to thrive for years to come at South Plainfield High School.

Thank you

Wrestling

By Scott Doerr (4.06 gpa)

Good evening. I am here tonight to speak on behalf of the South Plainfield Wrestling Team. The wrestling season is coming to a close with another successful winter season. Led by head coach Pavlak and assistants Kevin McCann and Bill Hamilton, the squad of twenty-six wrestlers has proven once again to be one of the best teams in the state of New Jersey.

Although we have been put to the test with one of the most difficult schedules in the state, the Tigers were able to post a 9-5-1 record. We are currently ranked 15th in the state by the *Star Ledger*.

The season kicked off the morning after Thanksgiving; thus we were will prepared to defend our Morris Knolls title from last season. We did so in style, winning by about sixty points and crowning six champions. Next, the Tigers competed at the prestigious Hunterdon Central Holiday Tournament. Although there were no team points kept, we had the best showing, with four champions.

Early in February, we entered the greater Middlesex Conference Tournament. Although we

were the underdogs to win this year, we defied the odds by topping the second place South Brunswick by two and half points. In doing so, we crowned three champions: at 130lb. Matt Anderson, at 145lb. Scott Doerr and at 152lb. Glenn Gross. Also, Matt Anderson was awarded "The Most Outstanding Wrestler" for the tournament and Scott Doerr received the award for "Most Pins in the Least Amount of Time."

This year Matt Anderson broke the school record of "Most Career Victories." My brother Tommy Doerr, who finished his career with 114 wins, previously held this record. Matt has broken that record and is still continuing to add onto it. Some have been saying, our wrestlers are having somewhat of a "down" year—which is ironic—because we are ranked 15th in the state of New Jersey. But I guess this is a "down" year, coming off of two consecutive State Titles. We have fallen short of some of our goals such as the Red Division Title and State Sectional Title, but we are looking to add to our seventeenth consecutive district title—a state record which we are proud to hold.

High School Students Report on Sports to the Board of Ed

Competitive Cheerleading

Billie Jean Sarullo (3.4 GPA)

Each month students have been reporting on activities they are involved in at the high school. This month's theme was sports groups.

Board of Ed Meeting

Good Evening Everyone! Before I start, I would like to thank everyone for inviting me here again to speak. I think this is about my third or fourth time coming here to talk about the different activities in our high school. Today, I will talk about a great activity—something I like to call a sport—Competition Cheerleading.

First, I would like to explain what Competition Cheerleading is about. The team does not cheer at basketball, wrestling or football games. The cheerleading squad competes against other competitive cheerleading squads around New Jersey. All we do is compete.

To make the Competition Squad, everyone must try-out for the team. Tryouts are held in May and the team starts practicing over the summer. We then go to camp to learn our routine for the competition season. We practice everyday for two hours. We have been competing every weekend for the past two months in different high schools. Some of the schools we compete at are Jackson, Bayonne and Bishop Ahr High School.

The competition squad consists of 21 people and the coolest part of the squad is it consists of girls and guys. We are a coed cheerleading squad. We perform our routine every weekend and get judged on our performance. Competition Cheerleading is not easy! Some of the guys on the squad are football players and sometimes they comment that competition practice is just as hard as football practice. We constantly are moving at a fast pace and people are getting tossed into the air (one of those people that gets tossed is me). It's tough, but I absolutely love it. Just before we start to compete, everyone is always very nervous, because so many people are at the competitions. "Everyone thinks, 'Why do you we do this thing called

competition cheerleading?' But as soon as we step on the mat and hear the fans, it's all worth it. Also when you get a trophy, it makes you want to practice and work even harder so you can get another one!

I think one of the best characteristics about the team is that there are no sub-groups or little cliques. Everyone is a friend. One of my best friends on the team is a freshman. It doesn't matter how old you are or what grade you're in, we are all the same, because we are all members of the same cheerleading squad.

Our biggest accomplishment as a competition squad was winning first place in Walt Disney World. Last year we were National Champions! For only being a competition squad for three years, we are proud to say we were national champions of Walt Disney World. It was a huge accomplishment. I still can't believe it. This year, I think we are on our way to being National Champions again. But this year, the competition has gotten a lot harder.

I brought along two of our trophies tonight. On Feb. 2, we took first place at Bishop Ahr and last weekend we took second at Bayonne High School. This was a huge accomplishment, because we beat Colonia and they have a great cheering squad. They've been defeating us all year and we finally were able to beat them after a lot of hard work. Our next competition is Saturday at Toms River North High School. After that there are a couple more competitions, then on to the counties, states and nationals at Myrtle Beach. That's Competition Cheerleading!

I'm a senior this year and it's going to be sad leaving the squad! I love my coaches, and I love my teammates. I hope the program stays strong in the future and they can win some more of these nice looking trophies. Thanks again for letting me talk on such a great sport; "Competition Cheering!"

Thank you!

Basketball

By Erica Parks (2.98 GPA)

Good evening. It is a pleasure to be here tonight to enlighten you about our girls basketball program. This four-month program, which began the day after Thanksgiving, consists of 32 girls.

Our freshman team, coached by Mr. Greco for the first time, has a record of 16-3. The establishment of the sixth grade team has helped our freshman to be very successful over the years.

The junior varsity team, coached by Miss Decker for the first time also, has a record of 17-5. The team is currently in the semi-finals of the JV tournament. Captains, Chiara Tomei and Yamara Salazar lead the team.

Our varsity team, coached by Mr.

Schulte, has a record of 13-10. Because of a loss, we are ranked third in the White Division. We are out of the County Tournament, but will begin the State Tournament on Feb. 28 playing against Monmouth Regional.

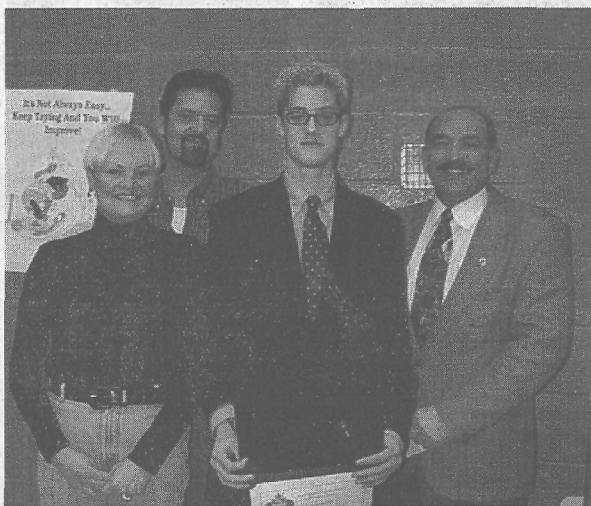
Senior Captain Kelly Ritchey has been selected for First Team in the White Division and First Team All conference. Sophomore's Ngozi Okparapke and Jessa Jones have been selected for Second Team all White Division.

We are a group of girls that get along very well and overall our girls' basketball program is very successful because of our hard work and the guidance of our coaches.

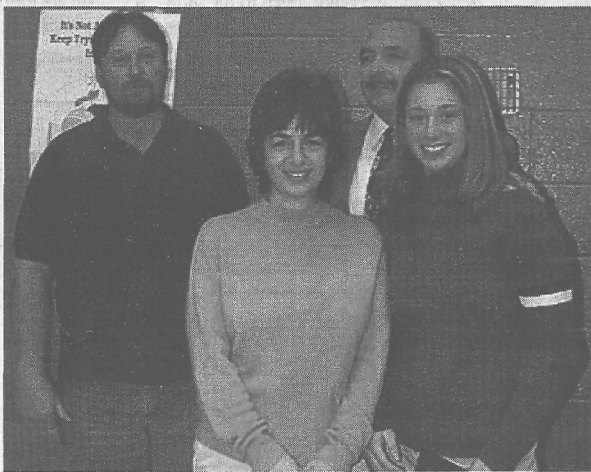
Congratulations to the Following...



RULA KANG and her father Hassan are pictured with Dr. May. Rula was recognized because she is a National Merit Scholar finalist. She placed in the top one percent out of the 1.2 million students in 20,000 high schools. Dr. May read a long list of her school activities which included Emeralds, Drama Club, Academic Team, Choir, just to name a few.



MATT ANDERSON PICTURED with his proud parents Linda and Jim Anderson and Assistant Principal Dr. Ken May. Matt was recognized by the Board of Education for breaking the school record with 115 career wrestling wins. He is still breaking the record as he continues to win matches in tournament play. Last weekend, playing in the NJSIAA District 12 Wrestling Tournament, Matt won his fourth championship crown, while leading the Tigers to their 18th consecutive team title. Matt will be attending Lehigh University in the fall.



KELLY RICHEY is pictured with her parents Sue and Rich. Kelly was recognized by the Board of Education for scoring 1,000 points in basketball. She also continues to break her record everytime she goes on the court. She was the Rookie of the Year as a freshmen, has been voted 'Most Valuable Player', is team captain, has the all-time 3 point shooter and has been chosen to the All County Team. Kelly is also captain of the softball team.



BARBARA HEPBURN pictured with Middle School Principal Fredrik Oberkehr. Hepburn was awarded a tenure certificate during last week's board of education meeting. Hepburn is a seventh grade reading teacher.

Kennedy Third Grader "OK" After Dog Attack

Continued from page 1

ground interviewing parents. Channel 11 News was also there on Friday.

Principal Al Czech was visibly shaken by the incident and has kept in constant contact with the boy's parents regarding his condition. As soon as Jeffrey is able to return to school they plan to have a party for him. He also said that he is considering getting walkie-talkies so lunch aides who are outside can have a direct line to someone inside the school building. PTSO President Sue Barry said they are looking for a donation or will purchase the walkie-talkies themselves by the end of this week.

Czech also said that the owner of the dogs, a former resident of South Plainfield who attended school here, has been in touch with him regularly inquiring on the boy's condition.

Jeffrey's classmates have been busy making get well cards for him. On Friday, rescue squad members Ron Sward, Carol Grennier and Joe Abbruzzese paid a visit to the Praul's and brought along "get well" gifts donated by the following South Plainfield businesses: LA Dreyfus, Hollywood Video, Drug Fair employees, Vail Hardware, AKA Inc., Blockbuster Video, Physical Therapy Center, Ciccio's and the SP Fire Dept.

Lori Praul, Jeffrey's mother, explained that her family is getting tired of talking to the media. They have been bombarded with phone calls and unannounced visits from the press. She noted however, that it seems to be dying down. Jeffrey is doing okay, but she is unsure of when he will be able to return to school. He is being monitored for infection and is learning to walk on crutches.

Joyce Heckel and Elizabeth Sweeney both deserve credit for saving Jeffrey from further harm. Without their quick reactions, the outcome could have been a lot worse.

Residents are reminded that a leash law is in effect in South Plainfield and they should always be careful while walking their dogs. Residents should also be aware that dogs are not permitted on school property at any time.

Borough News

Council

■ A \$4,000 grant was received from New Jersey State Police for Emergency Management.

■ A professional service contract was awarded to PMK Group to perform a preliminary assessment and site investigation at a fee not to exceed \$25,300.

■ Lordina Builders was awarded the contract to install barrier free bathrooms in Borough Hall at a cost of \$14,400. This is part of the renovations currently underway.

■ Barbara Tucker has resigned as a full-time telecommunicator.

■ An additional \$5,000 has been authorized for electrical repairs to Borough Hall. Borough Hall renovations should be completed in a few weeks.

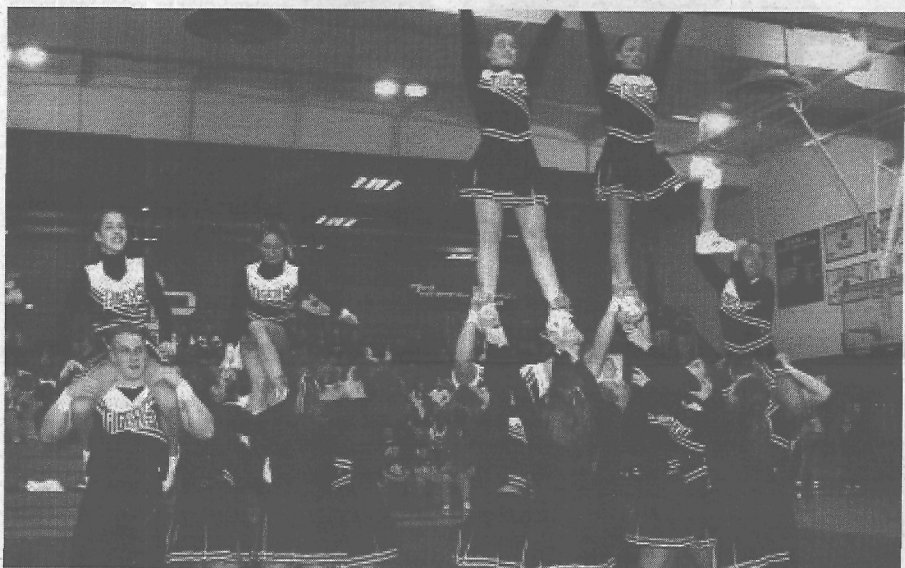
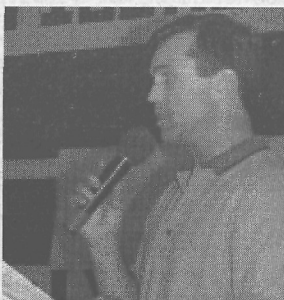
■ The Borough is asking for \$555,000 from the Middlesex County Improvement Authority to participate in the county lease program. The Borough would like to use the funds to purchase a new fire truck, an ambulance and a lawnmower.

■ Ken Seidel has been hired as a member of the South Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department.

High School Pep Rally Held for Wrestlers



A pep rally held at South Plainfield High School last Friday really did the trick. The Tiger Wrestlers won their 18th consecutive team title, finishing with a total of 195.5 points. Matt Anderson won his fourth district crown. Seven Tigers in all reached the finals, five winning titles. They were: Scott Doerr (145), Danny DeAndrea (119), Richy Ringel (112), Glenn Gross (152). The Tigers will be sending a total of 10 wrestlers to the Region 3 Tournament, which is already underway. In addition to the winners listed above, competing will be: Guy Severini (140), Steve Johnson (171), Peter DeAndrea (125), Mike Buteau (160) and Ryan Elliott (215).



Sports

BOYS WINTER TRACK

By Tim Morgan Jr.

The South Plainfield Boys' Winter Track Team finished their season with an undefeated dual meet record of 6-0. They clinched the White Division title when they rose above Perth Amboy by a score of 43-34 and then hammered Bishop Ahr 64-4. This is only the second time in history that the team has had an unbeaten record and became Division Champions.

Against Perth Amboy, the meet came down to the wire as the Tigers prevailed in the last event. Sean Grevious won the 55 Dash and Tim Morgan won the 1600 and 800. Chris Dickerson won the high jump. The second and third place points ended up being the deciding factor and the boys simply racked up more than their opponents.

The Tigers very nearly shut out Bishop Ahr, winning everything but the 400 and 800, giving up only a second and a third place the entire meet. Phil Thomas won the 55 high hurdles, Chris Grevious took the 55 dash and Tim Morgan prevailed in the 1600 and 3200. John Rayho ran away with the 800 and Sean Grevious got the 400. Tommy Haus threw a first place in the shotput and the South Plainfield 4*400 team capped off the string of wins.

On Monday, Feb. 11, Tim Morgan competed at the Armory Classic, which was held in the Armory Track and Field Center in New York. He finished fifth overall in the 3200 with a time of 9:51.

The boys were coached by Scott Horowitz and led by captains Phil Thomas, John Rayho, and Jeff Will-

iams. They concluded their season with a dinner at the Italian American Club in North Plainfield on Feb. 27.

The team aspires to be formidable in the spring, adding more athletes and more events. Their main competition will proudly be Colonia and Perth Amboy on their quest to compete for another Division title. Good luck and great season everyone!

Register for 2002 Ponytail Softball

There is still time to register for Ponytail Softball. After March 8 there is no guarantee for placement.

Registration for the 2002 Ponytail Softball season is open to all South Plainfield resident girls, ages 8-13. The league is sponsored by the South Plainfield Recreation Department. All games are played at Pitt Street Park.

Fees are \$35 per person before March 8; \$40 after March 8. Placement on a team is not guaranteed after March 8. No special team placement will be permitted. No refunds will be given.

Birth certificates are required at registration for anyone who has not participated in a recreation-sponsored youth league during the past year.

Register at the PAL building, 1250 Maple Ave. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Checks can be made payable to "SPREC."

For more information, please call (908) 226-7714.

Sign-ups Underway for Adult Softball

Adult softball leagues are now forming and games start on April 9.

The men's league plays at 6 p.m. on Tues. and Thurs. with a cost of \$220 plus umpire fees.

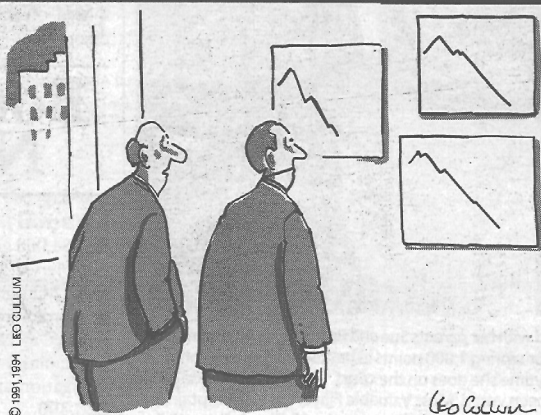
The women's league plays at 6 p.m. on Tues. with a fee of \$155 plus umpire fees.

If you are interested please contact Pete at the PAL, located on Maple Ave.

or call (908) 226-7714. Deadline for registration is March 15.

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Sports

BASKETBALL

By Greg Machos

By Kevin Lykes

Tigers Prepare For State Tournament Play

Upon being dismissed from the recent Greater Middlesex Conference Tournament by eventual finalist and runner-up, Colonia, the South Plainfield Tigers Varsity Boys Basketball team began working toward state tournament play in the Central Jersey Group III bracket. With a couple games against Hunterdon Central and East Brunswick as well as a couple scrimmages against Essex Catholic and Westfield, the Tigers would get plenty of work in before its first round matchup against a familiar foe in Colonia on Feb. 26.

First, we'll take a look at the regular season games played recently against Hunterdon Central and East Brunswick. In the game against Hunterdon Central, Gary Houston knocked in a jumper at the buzzer to give the Tigers a 63-62 victory over Hunterdon Central of the Skyland Conference at the Anthony J. Cotoia Gymnasium on Feb. 15.

Some interesting facts about this game. It marked the first time the Tigers matched up against the Red Devils in Boys Basketball since the two teams competed in the extinct Mid-State Conference back in the 1984-85 season. Also Hunterdon Central is one of three teams to defeat New Brunswick this year. The other two are Sayreville (twice) and Carteret, which recently defeated the Zebras in the semifinal round of the GMCT by a score of 42-28.

South Plainfield was also on the short side of the ledger this past week

as they lost a tough one to East Brunswick of the Greater Middlesex Conference Red Division by a score of 56-54 in overtime at South Plainfield on Tuesday, Feb. 19. In that game, Gordon Hurley, a 6'8" junior center, hit a short jumper with four seconds remaining in the extra session to give the visiting Bears the victory. Matt Cassidy had 17 points to lead the way for East Brunswick, while Hurley chipped in with 16. On the Tigers side, Ulysses Russell led all scorers with 18 points, including a three pointer with 12 seconds remaining in regulation that forced the game into overtime. Aaron Parks chipped in with 12 points in the losing effort.

Besides those two regular season games, the Tigers played a couple of tune-up scrimmages against Essex Catholic and Westfield. Westfield, which features a team that doesn't strike you as an explosive team at face value, but can put a lot of points on the board. Having players such as point guard Eric Turner, Dan DeSerio, who had a triple double (28 points, 15 rebounds and 10 blocks) against North Brunswick at the Rahway Holiday Tournament back in December and Allen Cook, who had 33 points against Cranford the week before, the Blue Devils have plenty of firepower that has enabled them to compete with the very tough teams of the Watchung Conference.

The Tigers played well in both scrimmages against very difficult competition. They fared a bit better in the scrimmage against Essex Catholic, losing in the scrimmage to Westfield by 15. Nevertheless, the Tigers played tough competition over the past few weeks with foes such as Ewing, Hunterdon Central, East Brunswick, Westfield, and Essex Catholic, giving the Tigers some tough non-conference opponents right up and until the state tournament.

Speaking of the state tournament, it got underway on Monday, with first round action. The Central Jersey Group III bracket got underway on Tuesday night. The Tigers are seeded eighth in a field of 12. Records each team had at the time of the state tournament cutoff, which was several weeks ago, determined the seeds. Colonia came off a tough loss to Carteret in the Championship Game of the Greater Middlesex Conference Tournament by a score of 64-51. In

that game, Justin Chiera led the attack for the Patriots with 29 points, but many of those points came after the game was no longer in doubt.

Coming into the game against the Tigers, Colonia has won 15 of its last 18, after losing five of its first seven games of the season. The recent streak includes convincing victories over the Tigers at Colonia High School. One game was during the regular season and the other was a first round matchup of the GMCT on Feb. 13. South Plainfield will need to rely on its home cooking, where it played Colonia tough in December. The Tigers lost by only six.

The winner of this game will move on to play Neptune, which recently won the Shore Conference Tournament Championship over Christian Brothers Academy. The Fliers are led by the backcourt tandem of Taquan Dean, who is headed to Louisville next fall, Terrance Todd, junior forward Marques Alston, who had 18 points and 14 rebounds in a recent victory in the SCT over Point Pleasant Boró. In addition, to winning the Shore Conference Tournament, the Fliers also defeated top ranked St. Anthony's of Jersey City by two and a top New York basketball school.

If either Colonia or South Plainfield get past Neptune, they'll have to take on Somerset County Champion, Franklin. One thing is for sure; the Tigers will definitely have their work cut out for them in the tough CJ Group III bracket.

Junior Baseball Scholarship Applications Available

The South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club is now accepting applications for our college scholarship. The applications can be picked up at the guidance department of the South Plainfield High School or by contacting the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club at (908) 754-2090.

The applicant must be a graduating high school student this June, must be a South Plainfield resident and must have participated in the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club for a minimum of five (5) years.

The filing deadline is April 1, 2002.

Log on to the

Borough of South Plainfield's official web site at

southplainfieldnj.com

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Or call 908-226-7656

juniorbaseballclubnotes

BOOSTER WEEKEND IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS

Booster Weekend is coming soon. For those of you who don't know, Booster Weekend is the weekend all small fry players can in front of various establishments throughout town.

Booster Weekend Chairman Al Lisewski is desperately looking for people to volunteer for his committee. The success of Booster Weekend is very important to the baseball club. Last year over \$14,000 was raised over the three day period, which went directly into our budget for 2001. This year we're looking to raise a similar amount, but we can't do it without help. We need people to serve on the committee to collect the approval of local businesses, organize the locations and send the players off to their locations during the 3-day-Thur., Fri., Sat. period of April 4-6.

Anyone who can help will be doing the club a great service, and the best part about it is that once it's over and done with you're finished until next year. Please contact Al Lisewski at 908-753-5745 for more details.

Also on the agenda is the annual trip to see the Somerset Patriots. This will be happening on Friday, May 17, at Commerce Bank Park in Somerset. The Patriots, the 2001 Atlantic League Champions, will be taking on the Newark Bears. The SPJBC usually has about 200-250 seats reserved for the evening, and it's a great baseball experience for the younger kids. We always have a terrific time, and it's a good opportunity to get to know some of the other people in the club. Tickets are priced at \$7 ea., and can be reserved by contacting Debbie Lykes at 908-756-3671, or by mailing in one of our order forms to: SPJBC, Attn: Patriots Game, P.O. Box 166, South Plainfield, NJ 07080. All orders must be accompanied by a check made payable to SPJBC, and must be received by April 25, 2002.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES TO TAKE NOTE OF:

Saturday March 2, tryouts at PAL, (Small Fry only).

Week of March 4, Draft nights/player notification.

Monday March 4, General Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 12, Coaches Clinic, at SPHS practice 7:30 p.m., site to be determined

Saturday, March 16, "C" League Orientation 9:30 a.m., on Field 1.

Monday, April 1st, General Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, April 4-6, Booster Weekend (All Small Fry players).

Saturday, April 13th, OPENING DAY!



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Obituaries

Gloria S. (Gunn) Walter, 73

Gloria S. (Gunn) Walter of South Plainfield died Tuesday, Feb. 19, at Community Hospital in Toms River. Born in North Plainfield, she resided in South Plainfield for 37 years before moving to Toms River in 1988. Gloria was employed as a bus driver for the former Scalera Bus Company of South Plainfield for seven years and was previously employed by the Plainfield School System.

She was a former member of the Ladies Auxillary of the South Plainfield Rescue Squad, a former tour director and served on the Board of Directors for Cedar Glen Homes of Toms River.

She was predeceased by her husband, Edmond L., who died in 1984.

She is survived by two daughters, Nancy R. Robertello of Waretown, NJ and Tracey Gordon of Massachusetts; two sons, Thomas E. of South Plainfield and Kenneth R. of Hackettstown; a sister, Muriel Carson of Toms River. She is also survived by 11 grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home for Funerals.

Catherine M. Stayvas, 85

Catherine M. Stayvas died on Wednesday Feb. 20, in Genesis Elder Care Center, The Woodlands, in Plainfield.

Born in Newark, she resided in Nantytglo, Pa. and Irvington, before moving to South Plainfield in 1966.

Mrs. Stayvas was a homemaker. Her husband, Walter T., died in 1992.

Surviving are her son and daughter-in-law, Walter T. and Dee Stayvas of South Plainfield; four sisters, Mary Chawluk of Clark, Julie Warchola of Cool, Calif., Helen Skinnell of Youngstown, Ohio and Anne Ball of Downingtown, Pa.; three brothers, John of Pittsburgh, Pa., Alex of Millville, NJ and Charles of South Carolina. Also surviving are two grandchildren, Scott and Robin Stayvas and 29 nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home for Funerals.

James Austin Harris, 70

James Austin Harris of South Plainfield died on Wednesday, Feb. 20 at the Haven Hospice Center at JFK Medical Center in Edison.

He was born in Westfield and was a former resident of Plainfield before moving to South Plainfield 31 years ago.

Mr. Harris was a supervisor in the shipping and receiving department of Spex Industries in Edison for 38 years before retiring in 1997.

He was an Air Force Veteran of the Korean War. After being released from the Air Force, Mr. Harris graduated from Lincoln Tech in Newark in 1958.

Mr. Harris was a member of the Hyewood Park Baptist Church in North Plainfield and a member of the Free and Accepted Masons Key-

stone Lodge 33 in Newark.

He was predeceased by a sister, Lillian Harris Thompson, who died in 1996.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 45 years, Sarah Garrett Harris, his mother, Bernice Harris of South Plainfield, a son, Leon Harris of Greenville SC; two daughters, Bernice E. Harris of South Plainfield and Kimberly E. Harris of Woodbridge and three grandchildren, Lesley, Brittany and Allegra.

Funeral services were held at the James W. Conroy Funeral Home.

Helen M. (Lehlbach) Schaeffer, 80

Helen M. (Lehlbach) Schaeffer of South Plainfield died on Friday, Feb. 22, at her home.

Mrs. Schaeffer grew up in Dunellen, resided in Plainfield and later in South Plainfield from the early 1960's to 1997, before settling in Bridgewater.

Helen had been employed with Sears Roebuck & Co. in Watchung at their catalog department, retiring at the age of 62.

She was a member of the Bridgewater Senior Citizens organization and a former member of the South Plainfield Senior Citizens. She was a former communicant of Sacred Heart and St. Mary's RC Churches.

She is predeceased by her husband, Edwin, who died in 1995.

Surviving are her two daughters and their husbands, Barbara and Skip Savard of Grand Rapids Mich. and Arlene and Bob Wedderman of Milford; a sister, Madeline Ramskow and a brother, Richard Lehlbach both of North Plainfield.

Also surviving are seven grandchildren, Bill, Christine, Mike, Laura, Bruce, Randy and Jeff, as well as six great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home for Funerals.

Lillie Bryant Ellerbe, 71

Lillie Bryant Ellerbe of South Plainfield, died on Friday, Feb. 22, at the JFK Medical Center in Edison.

She was born in Marianna, Fla. and was a former resident of Irvington before moving to Edison two years ago.

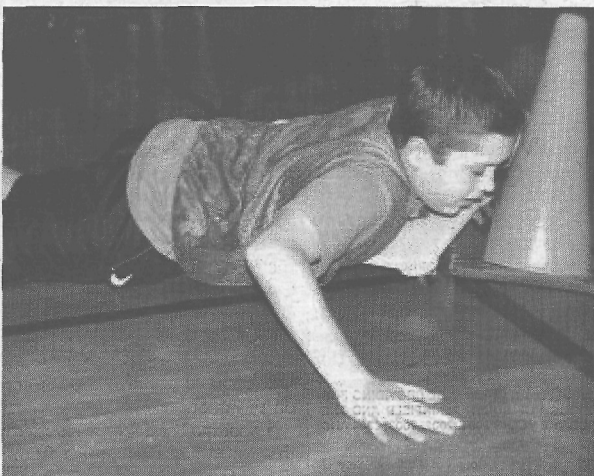
Mrs. Ellerbe was self-employed and provided domestic service for thirty years before retiring in 1998.

She was predeceased by her husband, Cornelius Ellerbe, who died in 1967.

She is survived by her beloved daughter, Elaine Ellerbe-Nurse of Piscataway; her father, Joseph Bryant of Pensacola, Fla.; two sisters, Charlotte Ward of Edison and Joanne Bryant of Los Angeles, Calif.; two brothers, James Ellis of Albany, Ga. and Donnice Bryant of Mobile, Ala. and two grandchildren Julian and Nycole Nurse.

Funeral services were held at Conroy Funeral Home.

Middle School Students Battle it Out!



By Patricia Abbott

The battle lines were drawn at the South Plainfield Middle School, there were four teams, two grades and a cheering crowd of excited spectators. The eighth annual Battle of the Classes gave the students the chance to show their school spirit and root for their friends. Each class had three representatives and one alternate. The teams, two for each grade, battled each other in a race for points. Events included; Over and Under, Alligator Crawl, Hula Hoop Circle, Foul Shooting, Baton/Hoop Relay and Tug of War.

The afternoon's competition was close, seventh grade Team B-the Green team took first place with a final score of 57 points, seventh grade Team A-the Blue team came in second with 56 points and grade eight teams A-Burgandy and B-Gold tied with 51 points each.

Battle of the Classes 2002 was held in the afternoon so that all the students could participate. Masters of Ceremonies were teachers John Limyanski and Jim Makowski. Team monitors were Patty Bayak and MaryAnn Eder for eighth grade A-Burgandy, Paul Baldesarre and Debra Bishop for eighth grade B-Gold, Maria Kripit and Cindy Parillo for



seventh grade A-Blue and Charisse Miglis and Cindy Rayho for seventh grade B-green team. Judges were Terry Allen, Kim DeMatteo, Cindy Piwowar and student judges Tom McCullen and Jenny Chang. Monitoring the games on the floor were teachers Kathy Boyle, William Mosca and Susan Slinger.

The annual event began eight years ago as a fundraiser for the PTA's Tiger

Gold program. Tiger Gold is not an academic program, instead it rewards students who display pride in their school, kindness, cooperation, and general civility. Students who are 'caught being good' are given certificates that can be redeemed for prizes. The Middle School's Battle of the Classes is a competition where everyone wins.

Consideration

It is far easier for the family if a family plot is arranged prior to need. The considerate staff at Hillside Cemetery will assist your selection. All lots are in fully developed areas and include perpetual care. Located on Woodland Avenue in Scotch Plains, a non-profit organization. 908.756.1729

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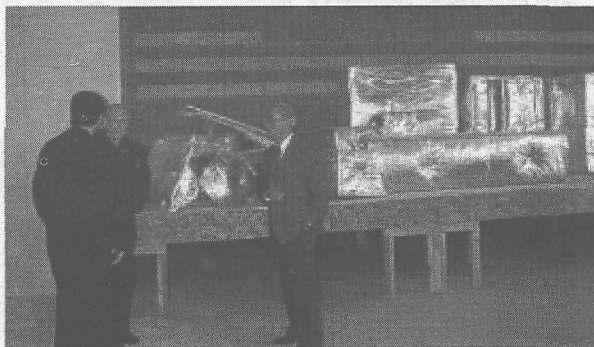
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Legal Notices

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE
ORDINANCE 1590

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY, THAT:

Ordinance 1590 entitled: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 1440E PROVIDING FOR THE COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD AND THE METHOD OF PAYMENT OF SUCH COMPENSATION FOR THE YEARS 2001 THRU 2005 be adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, March 1, 2002 and that a public hearing be held at 7:00 PM on Thursday, March 21, 2002 in the Municipal Building, South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080.

ORDINANCE 1590

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE #1440E ENTITLED: AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE COMPENSATION OF EMPLOYEES OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD AND THE METHOD OF PAYMENT OF SUCH COMPENSATION FOR THE YEARS 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 AND 2005.

Be it ordained by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of South Plainfield, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey, as follows:

SECTION 1. The rates of compensation for each employee of the Borough of South Plainfield shall be on an annual basis as follows except where indicated. Such rates of pay shall be effective on January 1st of the years shown.

POSITION	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
DPW						
GENERAL SUPERVISOR	31.69	33.11	34.27	35.47	36.71	37.99
SUPERVISOR	29.86	31.33	32.43	33.56	34.74	35.95
HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR	24.64	25.97	26.88	27.82	28.79	29.80
MECHANIC	24.14	25.45	26.34	27.27	28.22	29.21
TRUCK DRIVER	21.66	22.91	23.71	24.54	25.40	26.28
BUILDING MAINTENANCE	21.10	22.33	23.11	23.92	24.76	25.62
LABORER	19.33	20.51	21.23	21.97	22.74	23.54

SECTION 2. INCONSISTENCY - All ordinance or parts of ordinances inconsistent with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent of such inconsistency.

SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE - This ordinance shall become effective and operative ten days after the publication thereof after final passage.

Daniel J. Gallagher/Mayor

ATTEST:
Vincent Buttiglieri/RMC Municipal Clerk
\$112.00

March 1, 2002

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
LEGAL NOTICE

An appeal has been filed by Pasquale Cantarella requesting a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield to permit the erection of a 10' x 16' wood shed, proposed shed lacks the required 30' front setback from Thornton Court, 5' being proposed; and other variances that may be required, said property being located on Block 170, Lot 24 on the South Plainfield Tax Map.

For the purposes of hearing objections to or protests against the granting of said appeal, the South Plainfield Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 19, 2002 in the Council Chambers, Borough Hall, at 8:00 p.m.

The maps and documents pertaining to this appeal are available for public inspection in the Building Inspector's Office, South Plainfield Borough Hall, Monday through Thursday, between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

\$35.00 1T March 1, 2002

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
LEGAL NOTICE

An appeal has been filed by William Brooks requesting a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield to permit the erection of a 50'10" x 12' wood deck, proposed deck exceeds lot coverage by 163.6 s.f. or 2.2%; and other variances that may be required, said property being located on Block 379, Lot 10 on the South Plainfield Tax Map.

For the purposes of hearing objections to or protests against the granting of said appeal, the South Plainfield Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, March 19, 2002 in the Council Chambers, Borough Hall, at 8:00 p.m.

The maps and documents pertaining to this appeal are available for public inspection in the Building Inspector's Office, South Plainfield Borough Hall, Monday through Thursday, between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm.

\$35.00 1T March 1, 2002

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY
LEGAL NOTICE

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY, THAT:

WHEREAS, a need exists to perform a preliminary assessment and limited site investigation of property located within the Borough, and

WHEREAS, PMK Group, the Borough's environmental engineer, will conduct this review on behalf of the Borough, and

WHEREAS, PMK Group has submitted a proposal to conduct said review at a fee not to exceed \$15,300, and

WHEREAS, this contract will be awarded without competitive bidding as "Professional Services" in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(1)(a).

WHEREAS, funds for said purposes have been certified by the Chief Financial Officer and are available in the SFY 2002 Engineering O & E Budget, account # 2-01-20-165-000-204.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Governing Body of the Borough of South Plainfield that PMK Group is hereby authorized to perform a preliminary assessment and site investigation at a fee not to exceed \$15,300.

Daniel J. Gallagher/Mayor

ATTEST:
Vincent Buttiglieri/RMC Municipal Clerk
\$38.50

March 1, 2002

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Senior Center UPDATE

Mayor Gallagher, Councilman Ray Petronko, Rec. Dir. Mike English and several member senior citizens toured the senior center which is still under construction. They took the walk through to find out what furniture will be needed and where it will go. Even though the walls, floors and ceilings are not completed, everyone was very impressed with the way

the building is shaping up.

The senior center will have a huge meeting room, with a stage and kitchen, an arts and crafts room, a card room, a billiard room, an exercise and computer room, a reading room and registration office.

Every room is spacious and the windows are placed to bring natu-

ral light into them.

The entrance that faces the rear of the building has a canopy and a driveway for seniors to be dropped off. There is also plenty of parking space in the lot.

The building is being built at no cost to the taxpayers, by Jack Morris, who has contributed the material and labor.

policereport

• CVS on Stelton Rd. reported that a Hispanic male left the store without paying for an unknown quantity of Tylenol.

• A Bergen St. resident reported that two stepladders and an Echo gas pack blower had been removed from his open garage.

• Jose Agosto of New Brunswick was arrested at Red Lobster for aggravated assault. He punched the victim in the face and smashed a bottle over his head which started a brawl. Apparently, there was a long standing argument between the two. The manager reported damage to bar stools, dishes, glasses and salt and pepper shakers.

• Robert Popielarski of Traditions on Durham Ave. reported the theft of a dishwasher and range hood from a condo that is under construction.

• Jerome Foster of Plainfield was arrested for trying to pass a counterfeit \$50 bill at Bravo Food Store on W. 7th St.

• Sodexo Food Service reported that \$300 had been stolen from their safe at SPHS.

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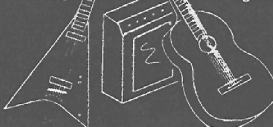
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L-R back row—Katie Mott, Susie Mott, Pam Cianfrocca, Diana Nasar, Jamie Morris and Chris Imbrosicano; (bottom) Wajdi Kanj, Chris Abbott, Wael Kanj and Roweena Kanj

Love Triumphs Over Fear in "The Dragon Heart"



The clang of swords, the roar of a dragon, the squeals of a cowardly prince and the sound of laughter and giggles filled South Plainfield Library last week. The *Almost Famous Players* paid a return visit to present an original show, *The Dragon Heart*. The exciting fight choreography was created by Jake Levine, eighth grade, and SPHS sophomore Chris Abbott. Heather Crisitello, SPHS freshman, assisted with sets and props. Dressed in colorful costumes created by local resident Roberta Leszczynski, the performers brought the age of chivalry back to life.

Before the show began performer Wajdi Kanj talked to the children about the time of kings, queens and, of course, dragons. He told about his missing baby dragon. Unbeknownst to Wajdi the missing critter was sitting on his shoulder and it took the children several minutes to convince him the dragon was not lost. Chris Abbott followed and learned the art of juggling right before their eyes. When he'd finally mastered three clubs and a toss under the leg the main feature began. The show was narrated by Grant School student, Diana Nasar.

The story is about a king, played by SPHS junior Chris Imbrosicano, and his queen, Jamie Morris (also a junior) who have five daughters. Following an age-old custom the oldest princess must marry first, but only after a prince proves himself worthy with an act of courage and bravery. Princess Golda, played by SPHS senior Pam Cianfrocca, hopes to marry Prince Beau, sophomore Chris Abbott, but Beau is a coward afraid of everything, including butterflies.

The King asks Squire Hickey (Wajdi) to assist Prince Beau in his quest for a dragon, but it backfires. After a brief sword battle and a close call with a dragon, the two scramble back to the kingdom minus a dragon. While sauntering in to meet with his princess, Beau and Hickey experience yet another scare—this time in the form

of villagers, Wael Kanj (grade seven) and five-year-old Roweena, who scare both the squire and the prince with a simple "Boo!"

During a walk in the woods and a picnic, Golda, Beau and princesses Bella (freshman Katie Mott) and Emilia (seventh grader Susan Mott) encounter a dragon who tries to harm Golda. Without thinking Prince Beau saves the day by driving the dragon off. His act of courage means they can finally marry. The show closes as Princess Bella begins her long wait to find a brave prince.

Almost Famous Players director Patricia Abbott said, "I am so proud of my performers, they worked hard perfecting their characters and breathing life into this show. We had a huge audience and they loved the show."

Being a small private group has its drawbacks. Rehearsals took place in Abbott's cramped living room. There was no budget for anything. Every prop, set piece and costume came from her large collection or from a cast member. "The show would not have been half as good without the visual effects of Leszczynski's wonderful costumes. The hardest part was finding set pieces. We needed a tree, any kind of tree. We asked the Circle Playhouse, but after getting the run-around, we found no one who could help us, so we improvised!" said Abbott.

Almost Famous Players was founded ten years ago by Abbott and many high school students who served as volunteer directors/teachers at Franklin School All Stars Drama Club. *The Dragon Heart* was originally written by Abbott nine years ago as a three-page skit for the Franklin Drama Club. Since then it has been performed at the New Jersey Renaissance Kingdom, a full-scale version for Roosevelt School's play and a mini version for Franklin School's play—all in the same year. *Almost Famous Players* members and Abbott have previously taught theater arts

skills and directed students at Franklin School plays for five years and more recently, directed Roosevelt School's plays. Pam Cianfrocca, Chris Imbrosicano and Chris Abbott have volunteered their time at Roosevelt for the past five years.

Over 70 children of all ages attended the performance. Miss Cheryl said, "The show was great, we hope to have *Almost Famous Players* back again soon!" The group hopes to perform in other libraries and day care centers. They are currently working on new scripts. Ten years ago the group wanted to perform but the opportunity never arose. They are finally realizing a dream.

Local Dancers Perform at Lincoln Center

Performers of the Encore Center for Performing Arts performed at Alice Tully Hall, a part of Lincoln Center's performing arts venue in New York City recently. Performing were Nicole Sacci and Alicia Montanario, both of South Plainfield, as well as Lindsay Erskine of Green Brook, Michelle Pakenham of Dunellen and Cory Rotondo of Warren.

"On Tour" director Matt Straub selected the performers. "On Tour" has hosted performers at the Olympic games in Sydney, Australia, Carnegie Hall, as well as the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

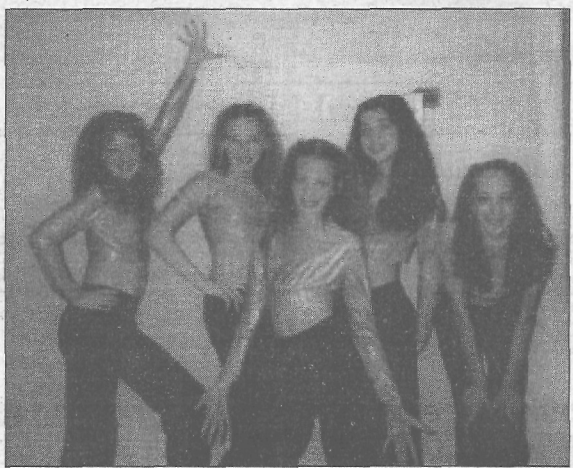
The group distributed 750 tickets to the Fireman's Union and the Police Foundation, providing re-

spite to families affected by the horrific events on Sept. 11.

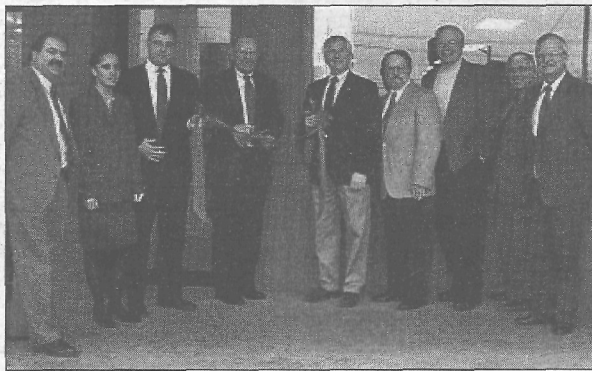
The performance was additionally sponsored by Capezio who has established the healing with dance program.

All the students study dance at Encore Center for Performing Arts in Dunellen. Encore is a performing arts program encouraging students to share the gift of dance, music and voice with the community. With a professional teaching staff from New York and New Jersey, students are guided in an emotionally supportive and technically challenging environment.

For additional information, contact the director, Michelle Marigliano, at 732-752-4242.



Central Jersey Federal Credit Union Holds Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



(Left to right) Richard Calhoun, Asst. Business Admin.; Chanda Hunter, Branch Mgr.; Mike Reilly, CEO; John O'Malley, Chairman; John Hoagland, Richard Wiegers, Robert Kasko, board members; Mario Barbieri, South Plainfield Asst. Superintendent and Jim Lenox, Adult School Director.

Central Jersey Federal Credit Union, located at 130 Maple Ave., held its official ribbon cutting ceremony on Feb. 20.

The credit union is an indepen-

dent organization which serves groups of people who have something in common. They may all work at the same place, attend the same church, belong to the same profes-

sional group, or live in the same neighborhood.

These common bonds serve to unite members and permit them to save and borrow from their collective savings. There are no stockholders or outside directors, meaning credit unions can pay higher than average dividends on savings and have favorable loan rates.

Membership in the CJFCU is limited to employees of groups affiliated with the credit union. In addition, family members of a credit union member are also eligible to join.

For more information, stop by or call (908) 412-8881. They are also on the Internet at www.cjfcu.org.

Happy Belated Birthday Joan Abbott!

*From daughter Pattie and
grandson Christopher
and of course, Cammie.*

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