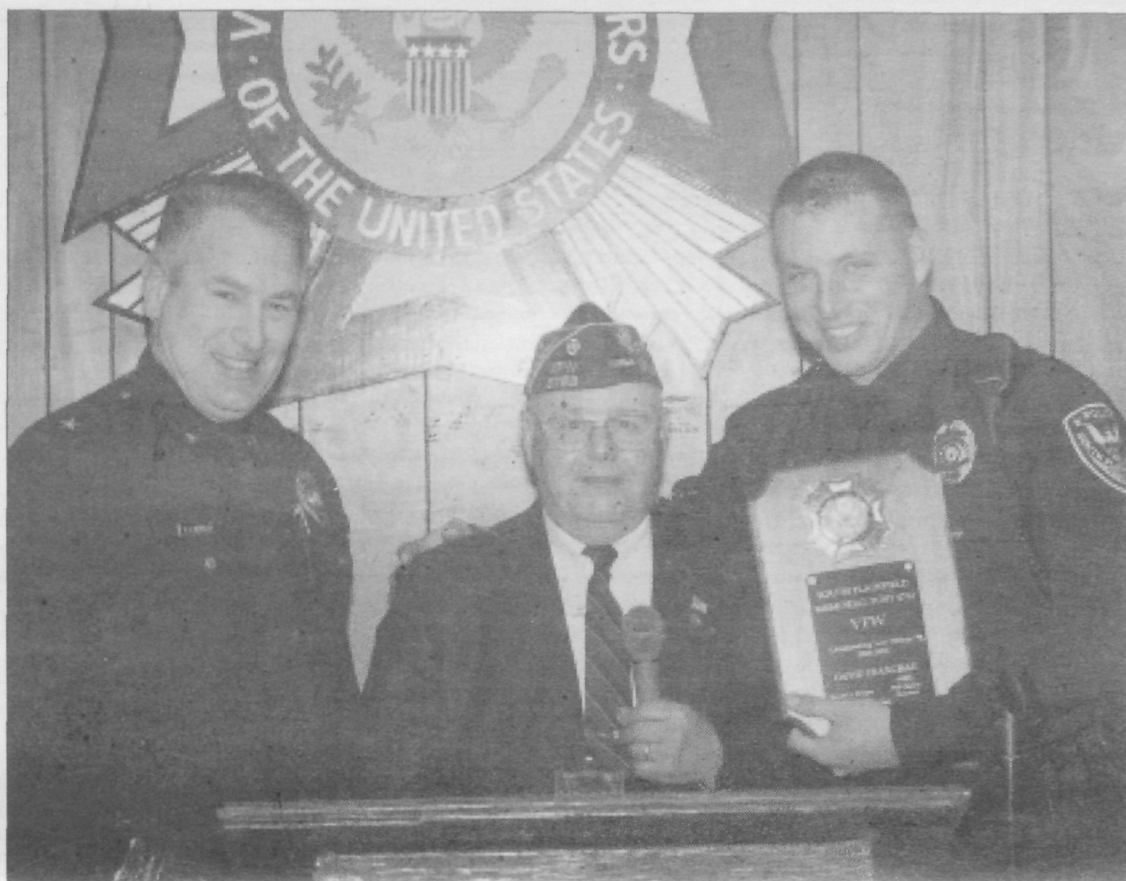


South Plainfield Observer

VOL. 8, NO. 27

50 CENTS

FEBRUARY 27, 2004



Police Chief Robert Merkler, VFW Commander Harold Evagan congratulate Police Officer Dave Franchak.

Dave Franchak Named VFW Policeman of the Year

South Plainfield Police Officer Dave Franchak was honored last Friday by VFW Post #6763 for being chosen as Policeman of the Year.

Attending the ceremonies were Police Chief Robert Merkler, several fellow police officers, Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan, members of the Borough Council and Franchak's family members and friends.

Chief Merkler spoke about several reasons why Franchak was nominated. After joining the police force

in 1998, Dave willingly volunteered for the Police Department Honor Guard, became South Plainfield's first full-time bicycle officer, was assigned to Community Policing and is presently a DARE officer, where he instructs fifth graders on the perils of drugs. "Dave's ability to communicate with the youth of our town has had a direct impact upon their career paths," said Merkler.

In addition to the plaque he received for being named "Police-

man of the Year," he also received a plaque from the Mayor and Council. Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan also presented him with a proclamation from Governor McGreevey and the New Jersey State Assembly.

Franchak is a life-long resident of South Plainfield, receiving his education through our local schools and

(Continued on page 7)

From the Superintendent

"What He Wrote... What I Said"

Last week an article appeared in the *New York Times* introducing the readers to our town of South Plainfield. In the article I am attributed with several statements that were misleading and misquoted. I apologize for any angst this misrepresentation has caused you and our community.

For the record, a question was posed to me regarding why we have poor SAT scores as well as poor performance in other test areas. In response to the SAT part of the question, I indicated to the reporter there were many factors researchers say have a high correlation with SAT scores. Some of those factors are socioeconomic status, level of college attained by the parents, the number of times a child takes the exam, review programs set up for the exam, as well as the expectations of the adults involved in the child's life (teachers and parents). I also provided approximate statistics for the first two. I stated that out of all of the above, what we can

control is providing effective SAT review programs for our children at a reasonable cost as well as to provide extra practice on the exams, which is something we are already doing this year.

How the writer took these statements and placed them in the context he did is puzzling and offensive to me. I am celebrating my first year anniversary with the South Plainfield Educational Community this week. I took the position based upon my perception of the willingness of everyone involved, the children, the parents and the professional staff to make this one of the best school systems in the state. I would never say or do anything to jeopardize that commitment to excellence. I again apologize for any misunderstanding this may have caused, but let me assure you I will never underestimate your commitment to our children's futures and the success of the entire system in South Plainfield.

Robert J. Rosado, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

SPHS Tiger Boys in Finals Girls' Team Lose in Semi-Finals

Basketball is hot at South Plainfield High School! The boys team, which has never won a conference or county championship in 39 years, will play Colonia at Rutgers University at 8 p.m. in the GMC finals. They de-

feated St. Joseph's in the semis, 58-56, to reach the finals. The girls team reached the semi-finals, only to lose to JP Stevens, 44-31 in Edison Tuesday night, finishing with an impressive 19-3 record for the season.

Forecast Looks Bright for Future Stars Preschool

According to Board of Education Board member Sue Peck, legislation was recently introduced by Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan that could allow South Plainfield's popular Future Stars program to continue. Peck updated board members and the public during last week's board meeting.

The legislation (A12170) asks that non-Abbott school districts be allowed to run a non-profit preschool program. Future Stars, which has been operating in the district for more than 23 years, is a non-profit program run by the Adult School.

Last year, South Plainfield was informed by acting Middlesex County Superintendent of Schools Patrick Piegri that our Future Stars pre-school program could no longer be run by the South Plainfield Board of Education. The decision was based on a 1996 court ruling concerning a preschool

program in Montclair, which concluded that public school programs must be tuition free. After studying the ruling, Board of Education attorney Dr. Nicholas Celso agreed that the Future Stars was indeed operating illegally.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Rosado immediately asked and received permission to continue the program during this school year while a transition plan was completed. The plan was to move administration of the program outside of the realm of the school district. Meanwhile, several board members began to seek a legislative solution and contacted Assemblyman Diegnan for his help.

Now that the legislation has been introduced, Dr. Rosado has again written a letter requesting an additional extension of the program for another year in hopes the bill will pass and allow the Future Stars Program to continue.



Chicks are Hatching at Future Stars—Future Stars preschool students have been watching over chicken eggs, patiently waiting for the them to hatch. They were delighted and fascinated when the baby chicks finally began to peck their way out! Everyone in the class has enjoyed watching the little chicks grow each day. After spending a week at Future Stars, the chicks returned to Quiver Farm, which donated the eggs for the hatching project. A special thanks to the Parents Group for providing the wonderful experience.

Mark your calendars

Log on to
southplainfieldnj.com
for the latest
meeting agenda

council meetings

Meets twice a month on the first and third Monday.

Borough Hall Council Chambers • Questions? 908-226-7605

	Agenda Meeting	Public Meeting
Monday, March 1	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Monday, March 15	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Monday, April 5	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Monday, April 19	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 4	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.

All meetings of the Governing Body are held in accordance with New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act (NJSA 10:4-6 et seq) in the Council Chambers at 2480 Plainfield Avenue.

planning board

Meets second and fourth Tuesday of the month

Borough Hall Council Chambers, 7 p.m. • Questions? 908-226-7641

March 9 and 23, April 6 and 20, May 11 and 25, June 8 and 22, July 6 and 20, Aug. 10 and 24, Sept. 21, Oct. 12 and 26, Nov. 16 and 30 and Dec. 14 and 28.

zoning board of adjustment

Meets second and fourth Thursday of the month

Borough Hall Council Chambers, 8 p.m. • Questions? 908-226-7641

March 11 and 25, April 8 and 22, May 13 and 27, June 10 and 24, July 8 and 22, Aug. 12 and 26, Sept. 9 and 23, Oct. 14 and 28, Nov. 4 and 18 and Dec. 2 and 16.

board of education meetings

Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. unless otherwise noted

Committee of the Whole meets Tuesdays at 7 p.m.: March 9 and April 6.

Regular Board Meeting held Tuesdays at 8 p.m.: March 16 and April 13.

taxpayers advisory group

The Taxpayers Advisory Group (TAG) meets the fourth Tuesday of every month at Borough Hall, 2480 Plainfield Ave. at 7 p.m. Questions? 908-769-0786.

site plans sub-committee

Meets once a month on the third Tuesday of the month, 8 p.m.

March 16, April 20, May 18, June 15, July 20, Aug. 17,

Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16 and Dec. 21.

recreation commission

Meets once a month on the first Tuesday of the month, except July and August

PAL Building, Maple Ave. 7 p.m. • Questions? 908-226-7716

March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1, Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Nov. 2 and Dec. 7.

environmental commission

Meets once a month (second Wednesday)

Borough Hall Conference Room, 8 p.m. • Questions? 908-226-7621

business advisory group

Meets once a month (first Wednesday)

Borough Hall Council Chambers, 5 p.m. • Questions? 908-757-8100

traffic safety advisory commission

Meets once a month (fourth Wednesday) at 7 p.m.

in the Conference Room, Borough Hall

IN YOUR OPINION

Letter to the Editor,

There is no project that is more important to the quality of life of the residents of South Plainfield than the Helen Street extension. This project, which will cost \$34 million, is fully funded by the Federal government and will take all truck traffic off the residential streets on the south side of our borough. It has taken eight years to get to the point where we are ready to go out and acquire the land, after which, contracts will be awarded and construction can begin. If there are no stumbling blocks put in the way, Helen Street will be under construction in 2007. With this in mind, Feb. 11 was an important day for South Plainfield. On that day a public hearing took place so that the government could gauge the support of our residents and approve the environmental study that was submitted as part of the project. I must commend Councilman Charlie Butrico for all of his work in moving the project along to this point and for presenting the borough's case at the meeting. In addition a big 'thank you' should go to the over 100 residents who attended the meeting to show their support.

Mayor Gallagher and my fellow councilmembers were also there to stress the importance of the project. Not one representative of the Republican Party even bothered to attend the meeting. Every election, the Republican Chairman, Bob Jones and his candidates complain that Helen Street isn't moving along fast enough. They contend that they have some secret plan to accelerate the project. Well, as the expression goes, "Some people talk the talk, others walk the walk." By their total lack of interest, Mr. Jones and the Republicans proved, once and for all that talk is cheap. True positive change comes about by hard work. The meeting about Helen Street shows who really cares about South Plainfield's future.

COUNCILPERSON RAYMOND PETRONKO

Dear Observer,

What a great opportunity our town had when they were featured in the *New York Times* Sunday, Feb. 15. This article painted a positive light on our community up until the comments by Dr. Rosado on the reasons why our SAT scores are below the state averages.

At the recent Board of Education meeting, Dr. Rosado apologized for his comments in the article, saying he was misquoted and his words were taken out of context. I understand being misquoted; however, this theme of the educational and income level of the parents in South Plainfield has been discussed before as one of the reasons why our students do not fare as well as neighboring towns on the SAT and other standardized tests.

I take exception to this reference and as a long time resident with a child currently attending the middle school, I could not disagree more. It may be true the expectations are not as high in our district as other towns, but the push also has to come from the administration and the teachers. I have always visited with the school princi-

Submit Letters to the Editor:

Letters may be submitted to the Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, by email: ggnan@aol.com, or faxed to 908-668-8819. Deadline is Monday, 5 p.m. Letters must be accompanied by a name and telephone number for verification. Limit letters to no more than 400 words. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. We reserve the right to limit the number of letters submitted by one individual on the same subject.

pals and teachers in all the schools my son has attended to let them know what my expectations were of my child and how I could assist in their process of educating my child. I have not been disappointed with the education my son has received so far; however, I have always had to take the initiative with the schools, it has never been the other way around.

I am very involved within the community from a professional level and as a parent. I am a local realtor and often am told by incoming buyers of our inferior test scores and educational system. We always promote what a close-knit community we live in and the genuine involvement of the parents in school and outside activities. It is comments like this that we have to overcome on a daily basis. I recently received a call from someone I sold a home to four years ago. She loves her home but asked my advice if she should sell her home due to the school system because she heard (her words), "it stinks." I told her I have been pleased so far and that she should visit the new Roosevelt School and speak with the principal and form her own conclusions. Conversations like this one take place everyday when our buyers evaluate which community they wish to reside in.

Our school system directly reflects the value of our homes. Prices are very high all over and even though our homes' prices have increased significantly, they still are below the neighboring communities with superior school systems. As taxpayers and parents, we deserve more. I believe our school system is trying to raise the

bench, but they should assess from within and not blame the parents within our community of their past failures. The South Plainfield school system should be raising the bar for all students so they can receive the best education possible. We have new facilities, new technology and well-compensated educators. Let us know as parents what we can do; most of us only want the best for our children.

**SINCERELY,
ANDREA LACERDA**

To the Editor,

A handful of environmental groups are attempting to block the Helen Street Extension. They are motivating as many comments against the project as they can. Almost all of these comments are from non-residents who have nothing to lose if this project is stopped. As the extension will be funded with federal money they have a right to comment. We need to make sure those of us who live or work in town are heard by sending as many letters and emails as possible. Please take a moment to review my comments below. Mailed comments must be postmarked by Feb. 28. Please include your name and address. If you work in town please indicate that with your comments. Send your comments to rob@cmeusa.com or mail them to: Helen Street Extension Draft EA, c/o CME Associates, Attn: Robert Russo, P.O., P.P., 3141 Bordentown Rd., Parlin, NJ 08859-1162.

I would like to respond to the handful of environmentalists who are attempting to block the Helen Street project. I am certain none of these folks have looked at this project with an open mind. If South Plainfield could divert a million trucks away from our children by killing one weed in the Dismal Swamp, you can bet these folks would be out in full force to save that weed. That's not too far from what's happening now. Officially South Plainfield has been searching for a solution to this problem for 20 years. The South Plainfield Business Association is in possession of a newspaper article

(Continued on page 9)

South Plainfield Observer

The South Plainfield Observer is published every Friday

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

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

The publisher is not responsible for typographical errors.

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

SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES

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

To get an article published in the South Plainfield Observer:

1. Type (double spaced) the article you wish published.
2. Mail, fax or drop it at: South Plainfield Observer, Editorial Department, 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

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Historical Society Announces 2004 Events

Calendar Features Live Performances, Displays, Town History Day & More

The South Plainfield Historical Society announced their 2004 program and event schedule during their Feb. 10 membership meeting held at the South Plainfield Senior Center.

Program coordinator Kathy Horvath announced that Saul Broudy, a folklorist and performer, will offer a live musical performance on March 21 at the South Plainfield Public Library. Broudy will present songs of railroad workers, farmers, pilots and other workers who made their own songs to express emotions, convey information and tell stories. The program is free and begins at 2 p.m.

Hadley Airport photographs will hang in the South Plainfield Public Library for the month of March. The defunct airfield was the takeoff site for the first transcontinental night airmail delivery by the U.S. Post Office in July of 1925. Long since bulldozed over to make way for the development of a retail mall, it is still nostalgically remembered by many who live in the area.

During the month of April, images of the venerable Lehigh Valley Railroad will grace the walls of the Public Library. The LVRR brought a myriad of changes to New Brooklyn (as South Plainfield was once known), once the line that carried coal to Perth Amboy from Pennsylvania was open in 1975.

One-of-a-kind pieces of hundred-



This turn of the century photo which depicts Philomena (Minnie) Santoro, wife of the Borough's first barber, Vincent Santoro is one of six photos representing the Santoro, Pomponio and Goudiosi families who emigrated to the U.S. around the turn of the century. The photos were donated by Minnie and Vincent's daughter, Marie.

year-old antique clothing from the Society's Ida Rose Collection will be displayed during the month of June. Everything from hats and shoes to intricately stitched pleated baby clothes will be spotlighted.

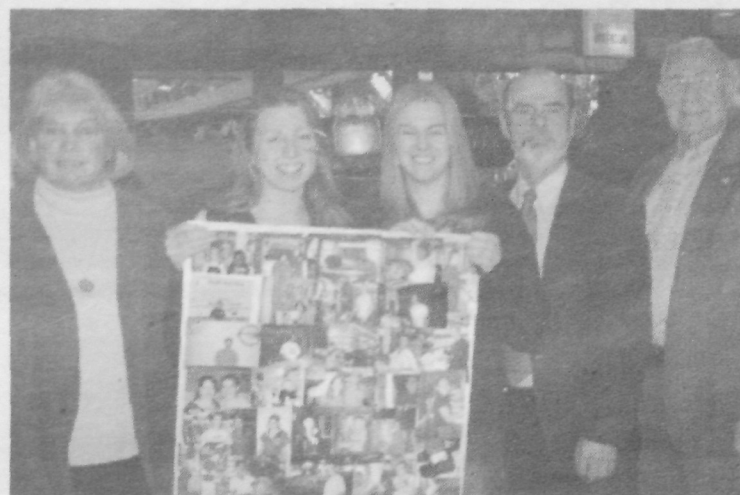
The Public Library is located on Plainfield Ave. across from the Municipal Complex. Call (908) 754-7885 for hours of operation at the library.

Two major events, an inaugural "Reunion Sunday" on April 25 and the second installment of "Town History Day" on Nov. 7, will be held at the Senior Center. Further information will appear later in the issues of the *Observer*.

The Oral History Preservation Program is going forward with weekly interviews of present and former residents. To date, over 55 people have participated in the interviewing process. A hundred photographs of old South Plainfield have also been obtained. Anyone interested in giving an oral history should contact Tulio "Chuck" Capparelli at (908) 755-7993.

The public is reminded that Historical Society meetings, held the second Tuesday of the month, are open to the public. The society meets at the senior center, 90 Maple Ave., at 7:30 p.m. from January to December (except July and August). Membership is \$10 for an individual and \$15 for a family.

Call Dorothy Miele at (908) 754-3073 for further information, or contact the Society via email at SPHistoricalSoc@cs.com. Your support and interest will help forward the programs and initiatives of this organization which has dedicated itself to preserve the history and heritage of the Borough of South Plainfield.



Left to right are Cooperative Education Coordinator Deirdre Falato, high school seniors Jeanine Christopher and Courtney Krajcik, Applied Technology Team Leader John Lartaud and Frank Licato, owner of Frank P. Licato Agency, who has sponsored many high school students in the Cooperative Education program.

CE Program Offers Students Career Awareness Training

The South Plainfield Business Association hosted advisor and student guest speakers from the South Plainfield Cooperative Education (CE) program.

Cooperative Education/School to Careers Program is designed to develop student awareness of career options. The curriculum allows students to experience the real work world, explore their career options, personal skills, abilities and help them make college decisions.

Seniors learn what the real work world is all about beginning with preparing for their first interview and then getting on the job experience in the work place. The program has assisted students in careers ranging from computer programmer, forensics specialist, mystery shopper, pet sitter, telecom-

munication specialist, chiropractor, contractor and graphic artist, to name a few. All in all, students have been assisted in learning about more than 70 different job types. Last year, CE students received more than \$100,000 in scholarships.

High school students Courtney Krajcik, who plans to pursue equine training, and Jeanine Christopher, who wants to specialize in non-profit management, spoke about their goals and how the CE program has helped them.

If you would like to find out more about the Cooperative Education Program contact Deirdre Falato, CE Coordinator or John Lartaud, Applied Technology Team Leader at South Plainfield High School.

By
Joann Graf

NOTES FROM The Senior Center

A scam against seniors has come to my attention which warrants my sharing it with our South Plainfield seniors.

Two bogus chimney sweeps were going door-to-door, soliciting repair work, looking for unsuspecting sen-

iors to prey upon. They found a naive and trusting woman who agreed to have them service her chimney. However, before they were done, they nearly cleaned out her bank account as well. They told her she needed a lot

of unnecessary work and kept upping the cost. They scared their victim with stories of fires and carbon monoxide buildup due to a cracked chimney liner. She actually got in a cab to go to the bank to withdraw \$1,900 to pay the workmen. Fortunately for her, the cab driver struck up a conversation with the lady and alerted her to the scam. They called the police and the repairmen were arrested for homeowner fraud.

Many of these home improvement scams are seasonal. During winter months, chimney cleaning and heating/cooling system servicing are the hot scams. Very shortly we will begin to see direct solicitation for driveway sealing and repairs. These opportunistic scammers usually look for seniors or people who live alone so they have only one decision maker to deal with.

Use caution when hiring home improvement contractors. Don't get work done on the spot. Don't let these guys rush you. Get several estimates and try to get recommendations from neighbors and friends. If a repairman stops at your home looking for work, have him put the work being ordered and the full cost of the work in writing. Tell him you will call him. Ask for a license or identification, a business card and referrals. Don't take their word for it. Have them take a picture of the damage they intend to repair and show you exactly what is wrong. Consumers must stay alert.

Lenten Fish Dinners Return To Sacred Heart

The Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of the Sacred Heart Church will again sponsor their famous Lenten Fish Dinners on Feb. 27, March 5, 12, 19, 26 and Apr. 2.

Dinners will be served in the Sacred Heart School cafeteria, at 149 South Plainfield Ave., from 5 to 7 p.m.

The menu will feature filet of fish (fried, broiled, parmigiana) or pizza; fresh garden salad, French fries or macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, coffee, tea or cold drink, plus dessert. Take out orders are also available. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors and \$4 for children. Pay at the door.

Stations of the Cross will be held in the Church at 7 p.m.

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Regular Masses:

Daily at 8am, Wed. eve. at 7:30 starting Feb. 25
Saturday eve. at 5:30pm, Sunday morn. 8am & 11am

Stations of the Cross - 7:30pm
Every Friday during Lent



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Adult Classes Run 7:30-9:30pm
Children's Classes Run Mon-Tues-Thurs, 3:45-5:15pm

Around Town

Rotary Club Wine Tasting Evening

March 1

The South Plainfield and Edison Rotary Clubs will sponsor a Wine Tasting evening on March 1 at the Clarion Hotel on Rt. 27 in Edison from 6 to 9 p.m. Price of a ticket is \$20.

Tickets may be purchased from any Rotary member or at Oak Tree Buy Rite Wines & Spirit on at 902 Oak Tree Rd. in South Plainfield or VW Liquors in Wick Plaza Shopping Center on Rt. 1 in Edison. For further information, call (908) 561-0051.

SPHS Music Boosters Meeting

March 3

All parents of students in the South Plainfield High School Band and Chorus are invited to attend the Music Booster meeting on Wednesday, March 3 at 7 p.m. in the SPHS Band Room.

VFW Country Breakfast

March 7

The VFW Memorial Post #6763, located on Front St., will be hosting a Country Breakfast on Sunday, March 7, from 8 to 11 a.m. The donation is \$5 and children 12 years and under are \$3. For more information, call (908) 668-9751 after 3 p.m. daily and 12 Noon on weekends.

Jr. Baseball Club Presents Pro Wrestling

March 8

The South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club will hold a fundraising Pro Wrestling match at the South Plainfield Middle School on March 6. Doors open at 7 p.m., bell time is 8 p.m.

Cost of tickets are \$25, \$20 and \$15. Tickets are available at Sportworld or at the door.

Morris Ave. Seniors Atlantic City Trip

March 9

The seniors at 151 Morris Ave. are planning a bus trip to Atlantic City on Tuesday, March 9 to the Showboat Casino. The cost is \$15 and you receive \$15 from the casino. The bus leaves the senior residence at 151 Morris Ave. at 9 a.m. and returns at 7:30 p.m. The trip is open to the public. Bring a friend. For information or to purchase a ticket, contact Frank (908) 753-1083 or Cricket at (908) 753-7027.

AARP Chapter 4144 Drivers Course

March 10-11, 13 & 20

A defensive drivers course will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, Mar. 10 and 11 at the Senior Center. A second course will be held on Saturday, Mar. 13 and 20 at Muhlenberg Hospital. For more details and reservations, call Mary at (732) 752-3764.

SPHS PTA Annual Auction/Raffled

March 13

The SPHS PTA's Project Graduation Auction/Raffle will be held on Saturday, March 13 in the South Plainfield High School Gymnasium. All proceeds benefit the SPHS Class of 2004's Project Graduation. Doors open at 6 p.m. The Raffle/Auction begins at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10. No one under the age of 18 will be admitted.

What's happening in FEB/MARCH

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Monthly meetings will now be on the third Thursday of the month				
EVENTS March 3—Atlantic City Trip to Taj Mahal March 17—Hunterdon Hills Playhouse "The Rainmaker" April 7—Atlantic City Trip to Taj Mahal May 26— Hunterdon Hills Playhouse "Everyone Loves Opal"				
Adult Crafts 9:30-11:30am Yoga 10:30-11:30am Drawing Class 11:30am-12:30pm	1 Bingo 10am-2pm Ladies Social Group 10am Lunch Available Income Tax Prep 9am-Noon Computer Class 12-2pm Men's Forum 1pm	2 Exercise 8:45-9:45 Movie Time 11:30am AARP Crafts 1pm Computer Class 11am & 1pm Line Dancing 10am Atlantic City Trip	3 Weekly Shopping at Pathmark 9am Practical Crafting 10-11am Income Tax Prep 9am-Noon Pinochle Club 1pm	4 Bingo 10am-2pm Pizza Lunch Avail. Bridge Club 12:30pm
TO SIGN UP FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, VISIT THE CENTER.				

For tickets and auction information, call (908) 756-3731 or (908) 756-6512 or email ando1932@aol.com.

Franklin PTA Auction/Raffle Night

March 20

The Franklin School PTA is sponsoring their annual Auction/Raffle Night. The event will be held on Saturday, March 20 at 6:30 p.m. at the South Plainfield High School Gym.

With every advanced ticket sale, you will receive a complimentary ticket for a grand prize drawing. Food is welcomed and soft drinks will be available for purchase.

Price of the tickets are \$7 in advance and \$10 at the door. For more information or to purchase tickets, call Dorothea at (908) 753-7117 or Terry at (908) 753-2864.

Troop 207 Chili Fest

March 21

BSA Troop 207 from the Knights of Columbus will hold their 5th annual "All You Can Eat Chili Fest" on Sunday, March 21 at the South Plainfield High School Cafeteria from 3 to 7 p.m. Tickets are \$4 each and are can be purchased from any Troop 207 Scout or at the door. This fundraiser benefits the troop to help them in purchasing camping supplies that are needed. Please come and support our Troop and enjoy the Chili.

For additional information please call (908) 753-2562. Hope to see you there!!!!

Rescue Squad Auxiliary Basket Bingo

March 28

The South Plainfield Rescue Squad Auxiliary presents the 2nd annual Basket Bingo, held on Sunday, March 28. Doors open at 12 Noon—calling begins at 1 p.m. sharp! The Basket Bingo will be held at the South Plainfield Rescue Squad Building, Plainfield Avenue. Advance ticket price is \$20. The door price is \$25. Ticket price includes 16 games, four specials and door prizes. Raffle, 50/50 and extra

Daily Events
9-11 AM Coffee & Cake
9 AM-4 PM Cards & Pool
(908) 754-1047

The Senior Citizen's Center is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
NOW OPEN SATURDAYS 9:00 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.

Senior Center EVENTS

boards are also available. All proceeds benefit the South Plainfield Rescue Squad. For more information or to purchase tickets in advance, call Denise at (732) 261-8942 or Tracy at (732) 841-4844.

Recreation Plans Trip to Atlantic City

March 28

The South Plainfield Recreation is sponsoring a trip to Resorts Casino, Atlantic City on Sunday, March 28.

The bus leaves the PAL at 10:30 a.m. and returns to the PAL at 8:30 p.m. The price is \$13 per person and you receive \$15 in coins. You can purchase tickets at the PAL every weekday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The PAL is located on Maple Ave.

Rainbow Academy Plans Open House

April 17

Rainbow Academy Child Care Center, located at 2177 Oak Tree Rd., will hold an Open House on Saturday, April 17, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Rainbow Academy offers a variety of programs to fit your child's needs, from ages six weeks to eight years. There is limited space available for the infant, nursery, pre-kindergarten, half-day pre-school and summer camp programs. 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.

In addition to the Open House, you are invited to visit the center for a tour during normal operating hours (7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday). For directions and additional information, visit their website at www.rainbowacademy.com.

Historical Society Reunion Sunday

April 25

South Plainfielders! Renew old friendships and reminisce of times gone by at "Reunion Sunday" on April 25 from 1-4 p.m. The "Reunion Sunday" is sponsored by the South

Plainfield Historical Society. It will be held at the South Plainfield Senior Center, 90 Maple Ave. Light refreshments will be available and there is no admission fee. All are welcome. Don't worry- there's ample parking!

— Out of Town —

Books for Jamaican Film Festival

February 26

Books for Jamaica is presenting a Jamaican Film Festival. Three documentary films will be featured: "Life of Bob Marley," "Marcus Garvey: Toward Black Nationhood" and "Haile Selassie's 1966 Visit to Jamaica."

Books for Jamaica is a non-profit solidarity organization affiliated with the Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church. Books for Jamaica ships books and computers to community based organizations, schools and other public institutions in Jamaica.

The Jamaican Film Festival will take place on Feb. 26 at 7 p.m. at the Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church Auditorium, 170 Watchung Ave. in North Plainfield. For information and directions call (908) 755-2781. All are invited to this free event.

Circle Players Present "Our Country's Good"

Feb. 27 through March 7

Our Country's Good, a compelling drama by Timberlake Wertenbaker about the triumph of the human spirit, opens at Circle Players, the community theater of Piscataway, on Friday, February 27.

Performances are Fridays, Feb. 27, March 5 and 12; Saturdays, Feb. 28, March 6 and 13, 8 p.m. Sunday matinees are Feb. 29 and March 7 at 3 p.m.

Tickets for opening night, Feb. 27 are \$13 and include a champagne reception. All other Friday and Saturday performances are \$12. Matinees are \$11 (or two for \$20). Seniors and students receive \$1 off with I.D.

Circle Players is located at 416 Victoria Ave. in Piscataway. For tickets and information, call (732) 968-7555.

Woodbridge Widows or Widowers Dance

February 29

The Woodbridge Area Widows or Widowers (WOWs) will hold a fundraiser dance/social on Sunday, Feb. 29 from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. All

are welcome. There will be a live band and refreshments will be available. Admission is \$8. The dance will be located at the Elk's Hall, 665 Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge.

For more information, call (732) 297-1775.

Student Robot Teams Competition

March 5-6

A record number of 51 high school teams, each with remote-controlled robots they designed and built, will fill Trenton's Sovereign Bank Arena for two action-packed days of competition on Friday, March 5 and Saturday, March 6. Complete with pep squads, screaming fans and play-by-play commentary, the New Jersey First Regional Robotics Competitions, sponsored by Johnson & Johnson, is the "big league" event to celebrate kids working smart in science and technology. The competition takes place on March 5 and 6, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Sovereign Bank Arena in Trenton. For more information, visit www.usfirst.org.

Edison Symphony Finale Concert

March 6

The Edison Arts Society has announced that the Edison Symphony Orchestra Season Finale concert will be presented at 8 p.m. on Saturday, March 6 at the Middlesex County College Performing Arts Center.

Reserved seats for this concert are on sale: adults at \$30 each and students at \$25. Ask about our special Movie Magic dinner/concert package offered at \$45 per person in conjunction with the Sheraton Edison Hotel. Group rates are available and both Visa and MasterCard are accepted. Call the Edison Arts Society office at (908) 753-ARTS now to reserve best seating!

Sunday Brunch at American Legion

March 7

We're having a Sunday Brunch! On Sunday, March 7, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Dunellen American Legion Post 119 invites you to attend the brunch. The price is \$6 at the door. The food served will be eggs/omelets (any style, made to order), homemade pancakes, waffles and french toast, crispy bacon and sausage, country style biscuits and gravy, homefries, toast, coffee cake, coffee and tea. The American Legion Post 119 is located at 137 New Market Road, Dunellen.

For additional information, please contact Lynn Giacchini at (732) 752-3808 or post119@optonline.net.

Chinese Auction at Resurrection of Christ

March 7

A Chinese Auction will be held at the Resurrection of Christ Church, 649 Bound Brook Rd. Rt. 28 in Dunellen on Sunday, March 7. Doors open at 12 noon and calling begins at 2 p.m.

A large variety of items are offered, including Easter items, perfumes, household items, gift certificates and all the other good stuff. The kitchen will be open for purchase of food. Free coffee and cake is available and there will be door prizes. The donation is \$5 a person.

For more information, call (732) 873-1731 or (732) 752-5741. Snow date is Sunday, March 14.

Send Us Your Events:

Mail or drop off stories and photos to **South Plainfield Observer**, 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, fax (908) 668-8819; or email to ggnan@aol.com.

Franklin Renews Kindness and Justice Challenge

By Patricia Abbott

Kindness—helping others and justice—standing up for what is right—two simple but important lessons that are part of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. legacy. Franklin School students recently concluded a study of that legacy, the Martin Luther King Kindness and Justice Challenge, a nine-day quest honoring the values of the late civil rights leader.

The students learned about King and his ongoing but peaceful struggle to gain freedom and equality for all people. Part of each school day was set aside for activities related to the challenge. Each day a new value was introduced. During the course of the program, the children learned about



vision, empowerment, courage, inclusion, tolerance, respect, responsibility, perseverance and on the ninth day, reflection and celebration. They discussed the meaning of each value and looked for ways to act on them within their school, home and community.

School Principal Nancy Erickson noted the youths sang songs of peace and brotherhood each morning and listened to parts of Dr. King's famous March on Washington, "I Have a Dream" speech. The students ended their annual K & J Challenge with a student body assembly. Each grade offered a brief presentation representing what they had learned about Dr. King's beliefs. The third grade LAMP students led the songs, which included *We Shall Overcome*, *All You Need is Love* and *We Are The World*.

Results of their studies were visible in the lobby, where dozens of paper hearts proudly noted acts of kindness and justice completed by the children throughout the project. Reading teacher Esther Marcus organized the K & J Challenge as she has done for the past seven years.

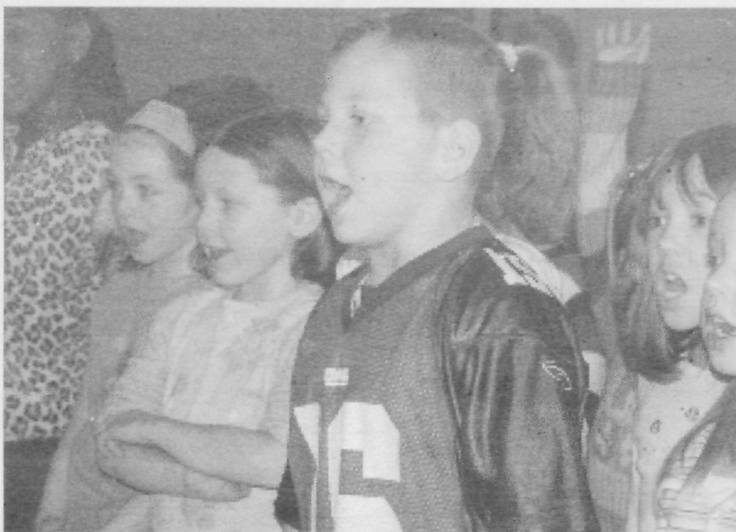
The National K & J Challenge was founded in 1994 by students and teachers in Newark.



Student's K & J Pledge

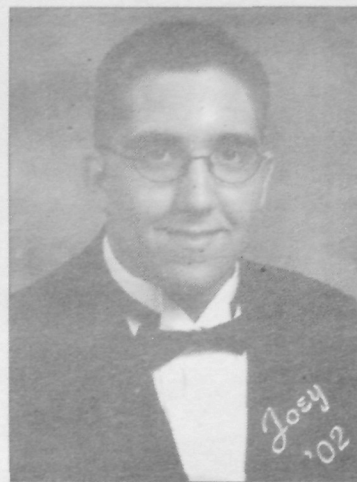
During the Kindness and Justice Challenge and ALWAYS, I pledge to:

Act compassionately, act respectfully, act nonviolently, act fairly, act honestly, act responsibly, demonstrate moral courage, serve my community, my friends, my family, my school, my neighborhood and celebrate my ability to take action to improve the world around me in both small and large ways.



southplainfieldpeople Milestones

Sierzega Accepted in Honors Program



Joseph Sierzega

Joseph A. Sierzega, Jr., a sophomore at The University of Maryland, has been accepted into the university's Kinesiology Honors Program. This program was established to recognize those students with outstanding academic achievements in the study of Kinesiological Science. He is currently one of a limited number of students in this Honors Program.

Joey, as he is affectionately called by his family and friends, has also been named to the Dean's List for the second consecutive semester with a cumulative GPA of 3.54. He graduated from South Plainfield High School in 2002 as class salutatorian and plans to graduate from UMD in the spring of 2006.

Bonney and Patzwa are Married

Alton Bonney of Clark and Marjorie Kennedy of Garwood have announced the marriage of their daughter, Lynn April Bonney to Michael Patzwa, son to the late Steven Patzwa and Patricia Quattrocchi.

Lynn and Michael, both originally from Garwood, have lived in South Plainfield for two and a half years.

The couple was married at the Old Mansion in Elizabeth on Dec. 13, 2003.



Lynn and Michael Patzwa

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Middle School students decorated anything and everything in the hallways during their annual team competition.



Grant School Announces Honor Roll

High Honor Roll—Taylor Adorna, Alyssa Aiello, Rachel Alexa, Jesse Allen, Christopher Anyamene, Oscar Arriaga, Ashley Aya, Elizabeth Becker, Mark Benak, Morgan Bethea, Jimmy Bijlani, Ryan Billich, Jayme Bishop, Jeffrey Bodyl, Candice Brown, Adam Buck, Olivia Butler, Joelle Butrico, Alisa Calderone, Kenneth Calderoni, Amanda Calvi, Natalie Colucci, Stephen Coppi, Jillian Cortese, Kayla Cotone, Kristie Crilley, Snehal Darji, G. Bjorn DeLaCruz, Angela DeSantis, Michael Dispenziere, Brandon Downes, Nicole Firmin, Michaela Fore, Alana Franco, Jessica Frank, Amanda Freitas, Matthew Galinsky, Jordan Gamble, Jeffrey Gillen, Steven Grzenda and Aaron Guiang.

Jaclyn Handwerger, William Hartmann, Jenna Heckel, Nicholas Heilmann, Paige Herriott, Charles Huber, Riley Hubner, Dana Hunt, Daniel Hunt, Joseph Ifrach, Arham Jain, Taylor Jarema, Kristina Jewkes, Kyle Kaczka, Megan Kaczka, Namarta Kalia, Lauren Keane, Jenae Keith, Brigitte Kelly, Michael Krusinowski, Patrick Landy, Dung Le, Harrison Lee, Ryan Lind, Thalia Lopez, Natalie Madurski, Jennifer Martinez, Sean McDede, Dylan McDermott, Jamie McLean, Amber Miller, Edwin Molina, Andrew Muhlgeier and Kellen Naranjo.

Erin O'Connor, Tara O'Day, Brittany Pasquarella, Raja Patel, Ruchi Patel, Shruti Patel, Kelly Pauls, Emily Piekarski, Anthony Pisano, Amanda Plum, Kyle Pompilio, Samantha Pukash, Frederick Reichert, Katelyn Rems, Patricio Robles, Sara Roibal, Jonathan Romero, Nicholas Ross, Richard Rotella, Cindy Ruiz, Joana Sa, Jake Salerno, Karly Sanko, Danielle Schaaf, Justin Sealy, Eric Shumaker, Manraj Singh

Daniel Smith, Dennis Smith, Rebecca Smith, Rosa Spallieri, Daniel Sticco, Jonathan Sukenik, Michael Sullivan, Stephanie Tereck, Danielle Tramutola, Agupunam Ufondu, William Whitefleet, Sara Wojewodka, Cody Woodruff, Kerry Yorkanis and Ellen Zinsky.

Christian, James Coccaro, Kevin Coffey, Ray Coletta, Maria Comayagua, Jeffrey Conroy, Jesse Courtyauch, Christopher Cupo, Michele D'Angelo, Frank DeBiase, Jaclyn DeCillis, Deanna Dean, Sarah Delair, Jennifer Deligne, Abigail Demegillo, Justin Deoliveira, Gaganjot Dhaliwal, Bianca DeDolce, Meghan DeFrancesco, Francisco Dias, Luigi Diaz, Jennifer Dillon, Nicole Disch, Jonathan Ditmars, Thuy Trang Doan, Katherine Douglas, Dina Douras, Tyler Driscoll, John Duran, Glenn Edridge, Manyah El, Michael Eosso, Devin Evans, Elizabeth Fasullo, Ryan Flanagan, Darrec Fonti, Alex Frank, Paola Freire, Kyle Freuler, Joseph Fugazzi, Connor Gillis, Lucas Goitiandia, Joseph Gonzalez, Elizabeth Gratta, Kaitlyn Graziano, Logan Green, Charles Gruver, Gabrielle Guancione, Darren Guiang, Michelle Gustafson, Teresa Gustafson, Sarah Hageman, Jaimie Handwerger, Daniel Hansen, Ryan Harrington, Gregory Harvey, Kenneth Hayward, Christopher Hebreo, Gregory Herberster, Michelle Hernandez, Nicole Herador, Peter Hiavka, Jorgen-Erik Holtermann, Alexander Horn, Tori Huber, Kyle Hughes, Ryan Hutchison, Jennifer Ibarra, Courtney Irber, Iris Ivaniuc, Rajesh Jaikaran, Amizan Jaleel, Keely Joaquim, Brandon Jones, Megan Kerper, Maher Khan, Alexander Khidre, Kelly Kline, Andrew Kovalevich, Steven Kovalevich, Julian Krupit, Hieu La and Marina Lam.

Sang Le, Taffy Le, Tammy Le, Justin Lesky, Frank Licato, Cory Limone, Vincent Lionetti, Samantha Listorti, Alexander Liszewski, Matthew Little, Thomas Loalbo, Jayce Lombardi, Philip Longo, Kevin Lopez, Norma Lopez, Kara Lowery, Amelia Lyte, Meghan Makowski, Kurt Maniaci, Chante Martin, Elizabeth Martin, Sarah McCarthy, Holly McDede, Lindsay McMahon, Megan McMahon, Tiffany McRae, Chelsi Melendez, Denzel Mensah, Michelle Miller, Zachary Mitchell, Michael Mocharski, Parin Mody, William Mott, Jose Moya, Felicia Mulhearn and Amanda Murtagh.

Christine Nau, Christopher Negron, Chelsea Ng, Andrew Nguyen, Ashley Nguyen, Michelle Nguyen, Anthony Nguyen, Joseph Nicastro, Kristianna Niemczyk, Eric Niemeyer, Patrick O'Connor, Shane O'Connor, Iyanosa Ogbevoen and Fadesola Ojeikere.

Nicholas Okoszko, Christopher Oprysk, Pearl Paguntalan, Kristina Palazzo, Brian Palma, Dylan Papa, Michael Parello, Kairav Parikh, Shawn Parisi, Steven Paskowitz, Victoria Pasquarella, Robert Pasternak, Aesha Patel, Ankur Patel, Kishan G. Patel, Kishan S. Patel, Jason Pattison, Daniel Peel, Alycia Pereira, Vasant Persaud, Ashley Pierce, Amanda Pileggi, Gerald Pinto, Brittany Plasse, Jeffrey Praul, Cassandra Prendergast, Kayla Prins, Michael Pullen, Lewis Quevedo, Deanna Ranger, Amanda Ray, Jessica Ray, Ricardo Reyes and Ryan Rhoads.

Christopher Richard, Nicholas Rincon, Hector Rivera, Valeria Rivera, Gamriel Rosario, Lucille Rosco, Julie Rosocha, Sharif Ross, Carlos Ruiz, Jillian Rutowski, Ryan Sacco, Robert Sacks, Idris Sadiq, Katherine Samul, Joaquin Santos, Matthew Santos, Jennifer Saravia, Nicholas Savoca, Katelyn Scarinci, Jessica Scarpitto, Courtney Schaefer, Matthew Schaefer, Michele Schuetz, Alyssa Scudato, James Seyfert, Andrea Sierra, Joao-Rafael Simoes, Michael Simone, Rupinder Singh, Alexandra Skula, Nicole Slatky, Italia Spallieri, Brandon Stannings, Amanda Steger, Julie Stilo, Katherine Stilo, Nicole Stoeckel, Megan Storm, Francis Suarez, Edward Sullivan, Matthew Sward, Timothy Sweeney, Samantha Swierc, Richard Szeliga, Angelina Tamburri, Joseph Thibault, Pravin Thompson, Brian Tjong, Shana Tom, Julie Tran, Kristin Treslar, Nina Trujillo, Nicole Usuriello, Luis Valladares, Bryant Villamarin, Joshua Werts-Galloway, Tyler Whalen, Andre Williams, Briana Williams, Brittany Williams, Heba Younes, Thomas Zazzara, Ashley Zeccardo, Kaitlyn Zielinski and Christopher Zwatschka.

Honor Roll—Isabel Afonso, Juliana Agrillo, Jenna Alexander, Stephanie Alexander, Lisa Afano, Freddy Almanzar, Bacilio Alvarado, Brittany Alvarado, Shyam Amin, Sadiq Amini, Jhemarr Anderson, Angela Ang, Lauren Annetta, Stephanie Annunziata, Carly Ashnault, Brian Babinetz, Favian Balza, Stephen Balzer, Victoria Belen, Joshua Biggs, Scot Bishop, Aleksandra Blazewicz, Joanna Bosse, Kimberly Bosse, Andrea Brady, Brandon Brady, Matthew Brazza, Dorsey Britton, William Brown, Henna Budhan, Ursula Buice, Jacob Butynski, Heather Calderone, Constance Caldroncy, Cassie Capparelli, Rebecca Camey, Erika Carrillo, Amanda Cerini and Megan Cerini.

Leiloni Chepulis, Joshua Christendat, Christine Christian, Stephanie

Sacred Heart Church

149 South Plainfield Ave.
South Plainfield, NJ

Rev. John Paul
Alvarado, Pastor

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10-11 a.m., 4-4:45 p.m.
and after 5 p.m. Vigil Mass

Mass Schedule:

Saturday Evening Mass 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 8:00, 9:30, 11:30 a.m.
Weekdays 6:30 a.m. (except Monday) 9:00 a.m. (church)
Monday Eve. Mass with Miraculous Medal Novena Prayers 7 p.m.
Holy Days 7 p.m. (Vigil); 6:30 and 9 a.m., 12:10 p.m. and 7 p.m.



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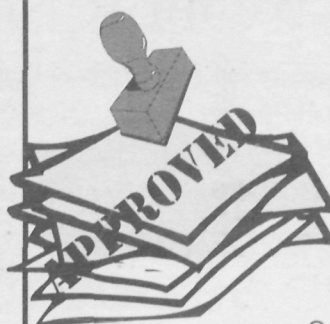
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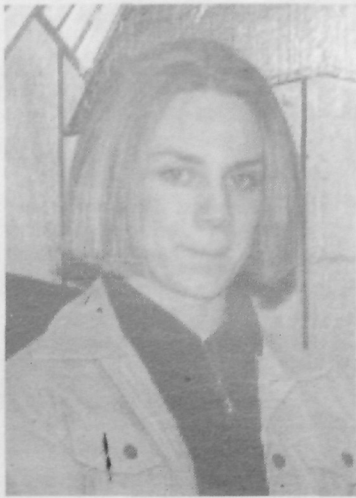


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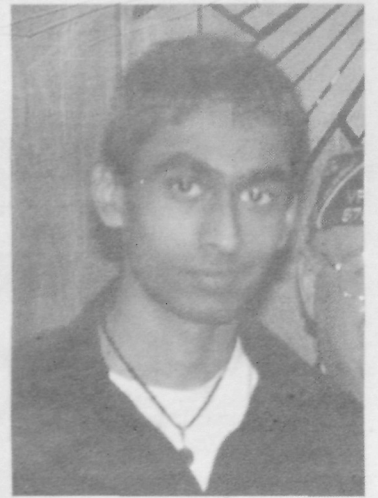
Amy Patel, VFW Commander Harold Evgan and Past Commander Rudy Poczak.



Ashley Ritchey



Brittany DeNitzio



Ravi Patel

VFW Announces "Voice of Democracy" Winners



First place winner Kristina Latonio

Members of the VFW Post #6763 proudly presented their annual "Voice of Democracy" prizes to winning high school students at ceremonies held last Friday.

Rudy Poczak and Post Commander Harold Evgan made the presentations while parents, teachers and friends looked on with pride.

High school students truly have the greatest challenge in this contest. They not only have to write an essay, on what democracy means to them, but they also have to make a recording of their essay. Students usually find that making the recording is much more difficult and challenging

than just writing an essay.

Several members of the VFW spent hours reviewing the entries and finally chose five winners. Entries do not have the students' names, so they don't know the actual winners until after they judge the essays.

First place winner was Kristina Latonio, second place went to Amy Patel and three students, Brittany DeNitzio, Ashley Ritchey and Ravi Patel, placed third.

First place winners were awarded \$250; second place \$200 and third place \$175. The first place winners were also asked to read their essays for the audience.

The VFW holds fundraisers all year to support their scholarship and contest awards. They try to educate students about what the VFW stands for and how its members are an important reason why America enjoys freedom and is a democracy.

This contest continued to grow each year is because of the encouragement from the teachers and advisors in our school district.

The first place essays were entered in the District Essay Contest. If they win at that level they move onto the National Competition.

After hearing a few of the essays, one could only feel that each was a

winner and the contestants all got the message of what democracy means.

VFW Memorial Post 6763 recently presented awards to the winners of the annual Patriot's Pen Essay Contest. The winners, students at South Plainfield Middle School, were Nicole Brooks, first place; Kathryn Paterek, second place and Ashley Sacks, third place.

Barbara Pinelli-McDonough, a teacher at the Middle School, was presented an award as the Post's Outstanding Teacher. She was also the eighth district's (Middlesex County) first place winner.

Curves Supports "Food for Friends" Campaign

Curves, 30 Minute Fitness and Weight Loss Center in South Plainfield, will be joining the Curves International, Inc. "Food for Friends" food drive to benefit local food banks. Last year, the Curves food drive collected over 2,250,000 pounds of food for local communities across the nation.

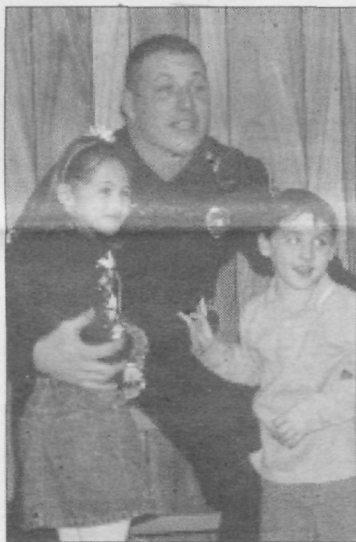
Anyone joining Curves the week of March 8 can bring a bag of groceries and have the normal service fee waived. Anyone may drop off nonperishables at Curves Monday through Friday during business

hours.

"The Food For Friends promotion allows us, the franchisees, to help more women reach their fitness goals, while giving back to the community simultaneously," said Elissa and Jerri, owners of the South Plainfield Curves.

With almost 7,000 locations, Curves is the world's largest fitness franchise and the fastest-growing franchise in history. Currently, Curves is helping over two million women to realize their fitness and weight-loss goals everyday.

Franchak Named "Policeman of the Year"



Police Officer Dave Franchak with his children.

(Continued from page 1)

graduating from South Plainfield High School in 1988.

After graduation, Dave enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he served in active duty for four years. During his enlistment, he obtained the rank of Corporal, serving with honor and distinction in the Persian Gulf War. He received the following awards: Rifle Marksman Badge, Pistol Sharpshooter Badge, Letter of Appreciation, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon (2nd award), Southwest Asia Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award and National Defense Service Medal.

After he was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Dave worked for the N.J. Department of Correc-

tions for five years.

In 1998, at the age of 29, Dave realized his goal of becoming a police officer in his hometown of South Plainfield. He attended the N. J. State Police Training Center in Sea Grit, graduating in March of 1999.

Franchak has received many awards, recognitions and letters of commendations since joining the South Plainfield Police Department. In addition, Dave has received many letters and emails from citizens and organizations praising him for his efforts, compassion and professionalism.

"He is truly a role model for other police officers as well as the youth of South Plainfield. He set the bar extremely high for future law enforcement professionals to follow," Merkler concluded.

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For more information, call 908-668-0010.

Sports

BY LEE FLANAGAN

JUNIOR BASEBALL CLUB NOTES

Pony League Director Tony Cassano has called a meeting of all managers and coaches for Sunday evening, February 29. Pony B will meet at 7 p.m. and Pony A will meet at 8 p.m.



A manager and/or coach will not be allowed on the field without a club member's card and they must have completed the Rutgers Certification course. This includes the third and fourth coach that is in the dugout. This situation will be monitored during the season. Call Mike English to register for this course if you need it, at (908) 226-7713.

The months of February and March are big planning months for us. With the "New Beginning", there are many new ideas. March 6 is our big tryout day for all Small Fry players. Tryouts are at the PAL building;

8-year-old tryouts—8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.

9-year-old tryouts—10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

10-year-old tryouts—12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

11-year-old tryouts—1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

12-year-old tryouts—2:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

The night of March 6 is our "Base-Brawl 2004" Jersey All Pro Wrestling Show at the South Plainfield Middle School gymnasium. Bell time is 8:00 p.m. Advance tickets will be available at Sportworld.

March 27 at Franklin School will be our Pancake Breakfast

April 17 at Roosevelt School will be our Spaghetti Dinner

May 1 at the VFW will be Casino Night once again, with the Women's Auxiliary.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: There is a new burglar alarm system in place at the SPJBC. You must see Lee Flanagan for a new burglar alarm code. Individuals will be assigned their own code. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Last Chance to Register for Ponytail Softball

The 2004 Ponytail Softball Registration is underway and will continue until March 5. Registration is open to all South Plainfield resident girls, ages 8-13 as of October 1, 2003. All games are played at Pitt Street Park. The fee

is \$35 per participant and there are no refunds. A birth certificate is required to register new participants in recreation programs, as well as a proof of residency. You may register at the PAL Building, Maple Avenue.

Phone: (908) 755-2289

Cell: (908) 581-3610

E-Mail: SoPlfdDoc@aol.com



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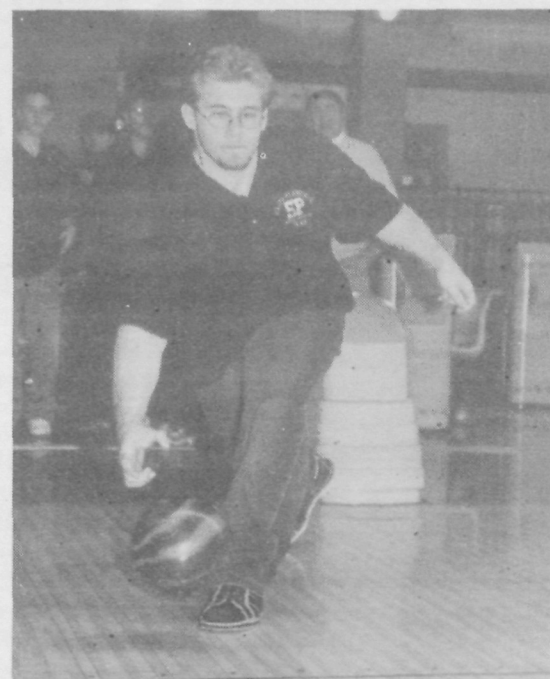
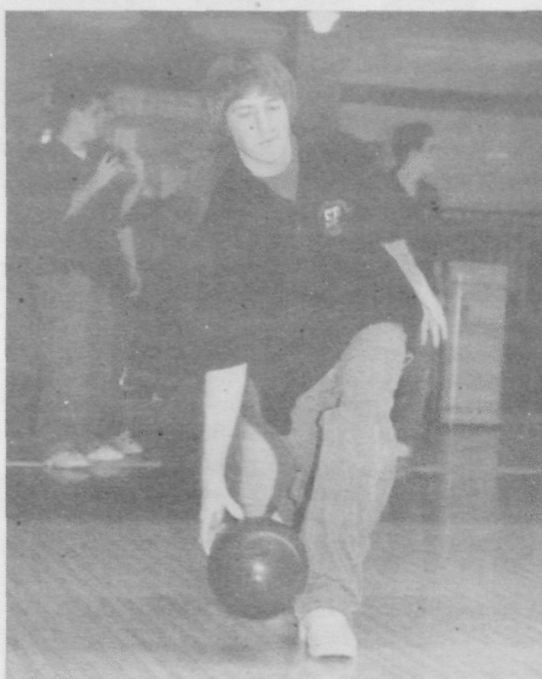
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SPHS Bowling

BY RALPH FECH



Sophomore Vinnie Genova's (left) 175.5 season overall average for 85 games earned him "Rookie of the Year" honors. Junior Matt Boley (right) set a new SPHS record for season overall average of 211.7 for 99 games. The old record was Matt's 199.83 average, which he set in his freshman year.

Rec Forming Men's and Woman's Softball League

The South Plainfield Recreation Department will again be offering a Men's and Woman's Softball League.

Registration for the league is underway and will continue until the maximum number of six teams is reached. Registration ends Friday, March 26.

Both leagues are open to the first six teams to register. Teams play on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. with rainouts made up on the first available Friday. League play commences on April 27 and concludes in June. No residency rule applies. Each team is responsible for paying half of the umpire's fees before the game begins.

Men's League amounts to \$18 per game. Fee is \$240 per team before March 15 and \$260 after March 15.

Woman's League amounts to \$18 per game. Fee is \$170 per team before March 15 and \$200 after.

Game times are subject to change, depending on the number of teams.

Shotman Basketball Camps Planned

Folks, SHOTMAN Basketball Camps is having a basketball clinic on Sundays Feb 15, 22, and 29 at the Wardlaw Hartridge School on Inman Ave. in Edison. The clinic is for boys and girls grades five to 12. Cost is \$100 for all three sessions. For more information, check out the upcoming schedule of camps and clinics at <http://www.shotman.net>.

pending on the number of teams.

If you have any questions, contact the Recreation Department at (908) 226-7714. Remember that no spots

will be held; registration will be open to all teams, so please sign up early to avoid not having a spot for your team this season.

Business Association Plans Golf Outing in May

The South Plainfield Business Association is sponsoring their 7th Annual Golf Outing on Tuesday, May 4 at the Cranbury Gold Club in West Windsor.

Entry fee includes the 18-hole event, use of locker room, greens, fees and cart; continental breakfast; complimentary beverage cart; hot dog chips "at the turn"; open bar (beer, wine and soda) and a BBQ luncheon. Casual attire. No metal spikes are to be worn on the greens.

Prizes will be awarded for hole-in-one, the longest drive, closest to the pin (two holes), low gross, low net and the most honest golfer.

The day starts with the registration and a continental breakfast from 8 to 8:45 a.m. The shotgun start will begin at 9 p.m. and the open bar begins at 2 p.m. The BBQ luncheon starts at 2:30 p.m. and the day comes to a close with the 3:30 p.m. award ceremony.

The entry fees are as follows: Corporate: Eagle (includes foursome/flag/tee)- \$1,000, Birdie (includes two-

some/tee)- \$500; Corporate Underwriter: Breakfast Sponsor- \$250, Beverage Cart Sponsor- \$250, Flag 1st and 18th Green- \$175, Flag 2nd-17th Green- \$125 and Tee Sign- \$100.

RSVP by April 18. For information, call Bob Longo at (908) 753-7004 or Ed Koznowicz at (908) 754-8900.

Baseball Club Plans Chinese Auction

A Casino Royale and Chinese Auction is being sponsored by the SPJBC on Saturday, June 5 at the VFW from 7 p.m. until midnight.

The cost is \$50 per person and includes an open bar and buffet. Each guest will receive \$500 in play money. Money must be redeemed for Chinese auction tickets. Tickets can be used as chances to win one or more prizes.

For ticket information, contact Stacy Lake at (908) 757-9531. Tickets are limited to the first 100 people. Get are first come first serve. Tickets available also on opening day, April 3.

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IN YOUR OPINION

(Continued from page 2)

is in possession of a newspaper article dating the project back to 1964. All this time the situation has been getting worse. This solution is long overdue. WE NEED THIS ROAD!

The arguments against the project seem to boil down to the following three points.

1. We don't know if the new road will achieve the goal of moving trucks off residential streets.

South Plainfield has known for decades where the majority of these trucks are coming from or going to and 40 more years of traffic studies will not change this. This minor extension will alleviate a large problem and anyone who views the project with an open mind will have to admit that.

2. South Plainfield has not considered a ban on trucks.

Aside from the fact that these are county roads over which South Plainfield has no jurisdiction, many companies that rely on trucks are located in South Plainfield and unlike some of our neighbors, we would not unfairly restrict them even if we could. A banner outside the New Jersey Motor Truck Association reads "Without Trucks You Would Be Homeless, Hungry and Naked." Trucks are an important part of our economy, so unless you want to live in a tree and eat roots you had better leave room for them. The selfish idea of diverting unpleasant traffic to neighboring communities has contributed to our current situation.

3. We need more environmental impact studies.

We hear this every time two or more environmentalists are gathered together. They will never admit a project has been properly explored, because it would then have to be allowed to start. When all else fails they hope to call for study after study until the project dies for lack of interest or lack of funds. This one will not!

The safety of our children and the quality of our lives are being greatly diminished by truck traffic. The Helen Street Extension is without a doubt the best solution and it will have virtually no impact on the Dismal Swamp area. This solution is long overdue. WE NEED THIS ROAD AND WE NEED IT NOW!

SINCERELY,
JACK PEDERSEN

To the Editor,

Last week Governor McGreevey announced that New Jersey would not assist New York in disposing of its garbage through a transfer facility in Linden. New York officials were already moving ahead at full speed to reactivate a dormant rail line to transport New York's garbage through our state. The New York City Sanitation Depart-

ment planned to ship their household garbage from Staten Island to the planned transfer station in Linden. From there it would be transported by rail across the Garden State to landfills in Pennsylvania and Ohio. Everyday these garbage trains would transport up to 10,000 tons of New York garbage along our neighborhoods, including Edison Township and South Plainfield, which are part of the 18th legislative district, which I represent in the Assembly. It is estimated that the number of trips per day along the old Lehigh Valley line would more than double. Apart from the environmental and quality of life issues arising from the proposal, a commuting nightmare would be created at railroad crossings throughout the state. Some estimate that a train would cross every thirty minutes if this plan were approved.

Don't be misled by the argument that New York's garbage will now be trucked along the highways of New Jersey. The alternate plan being considered by the City provides for transportation by ships to disposal sites in other states. Therefore, there doesn't need to be a transfer station in New Jersey at all. To quote Governor McGreevey, "This is not New Jersey's problem and we're not making it our problem."

The Governor must be commended for his courage in taking on this fight. One can only imagine the powerful interests that are involved in this proposal. I urge every resident of our state to write the Governor and show him your support. You should also contact your Assemblyperson and State Senator and tell them to support the Governor's position. We must be vigilant. If this plan isn't blocked now, we will all smell the results in the very near future.

PATRICK DIEGNAN,
ASSEMBLYMAN, 18TH DISTRICT

Dear South Plainfield Observer,

Mayor Gallagher and school superintendent Dr. Rosado should hang their heads in shame for their complicity in turning what should have been a proud and positive opportunity for South Plainfield into a de facto "trashing" of the town and its residents (see Sunday New York Times, 2/15 Real

Estate Section, "If You're Thinking of Living in" column). I have seldom seen such thoughtless, irresponsible and harmful comments in print from people in their positions; they should both resign immediately. Thanks to their poorly chosen words, anyone with an interest in a good educational environment for their children or a promising location for a vibrant modern business now knows to avoid our quiet little town.

In essence their statements (collectively) read: "South Plainfield DOESN'T want new people or business, new construction of ANYTHING progressive or classy...we're an overwhelmingly uneducated and unambitious lot as are our children and we PREFER TO KEEP THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE." This should bring great comfort to the many hardworking, sacrificing folk of South Plainfield who now, thanks to "change" have (and now maybe, HAD) more equity in their homes than they ever thought they would have. I'm quite sure many of these families are counting on that (now threatened) equity to help in the college education of their children, the higher education the soph-moronic Dr. Rosado implied they have no interest in!

Next time, gentlemen, may I suggest you THINK before you speak when being interviewed by an internationally read and respected publication. NEGATIVE advertising is NEVER good for a town and being a grumbling, dumb "hick" is NOTHING to be proud of! You truly blew a golden opportunity and as a town resident I am ASHAMED for both of you.

EMBARASSINGLY YOURS,
VINCENT C.C. BORINGQUEN

P.S. Mayor Gallagher: Are you actually SO unsophisticated, tasteless and clueless that you truly believe Olive Garden and Starbucks are "high class"? WHAT type of business would you like to

see open in our town (more Dunkin' Donuts franchises)??? You COULD have just spoken the plain and inviting truth: Most South Plainfield home cooks prepare tastier Italian fare than the bland and uninteresting Olive Garden (though we'll take their job opportunities) and offer superior café to the overpriced snob-appeal swill purveyed by Starbucks. Just ask the spouse of Tori D'Cabo or the friends and neighbors of the lovely Ernie D.!

To the Editor,

South Plainfield Invaded by Edison Wetlands Association-Dismal Swamp!

On Feb. 11, a hearing on the Helen St. Project was held at the Senior Citizen Complex. Since 1998, the Mayor and Council have been working on this project. Reviews and studies have been made on the appropriate alignment for the proposal roadway. The objective of the Helen St. project is to divert truck traffic from Belmont Ave. and Hamilton Blvd. Senator Corzine has also visited and reviewed the proposal and as far as I know, gave his endorsement. That evening, CME presented an Environmental Assessment. There is no question in my mind that CMA has done an excellent job on this project's proposed route. The meeting presentation was intended as a final step to move forward with the design phase.

All of this time, the numerous studies and the environmental assessment were not enough for the Edison contingent of environmentalists (I call them obstructionists). Councilman Butrico permitted them to make their presentation. Make no mistake they were well organized—after all they have had the dismal swamp agenda for years and years. It was obvious to me that their presentation placed more concern for protecting so-called endangered species (turtles and raccoons) than the safety of our children who attend school at Belmont Ave.,

or the quality of life of residents on roads adjacent to Belmont and Hamilton. They were not impressed with the study conducted by Sgt. Murtagh in 1998 which counted 1,028 trucks on those roads within a 24-hour period.

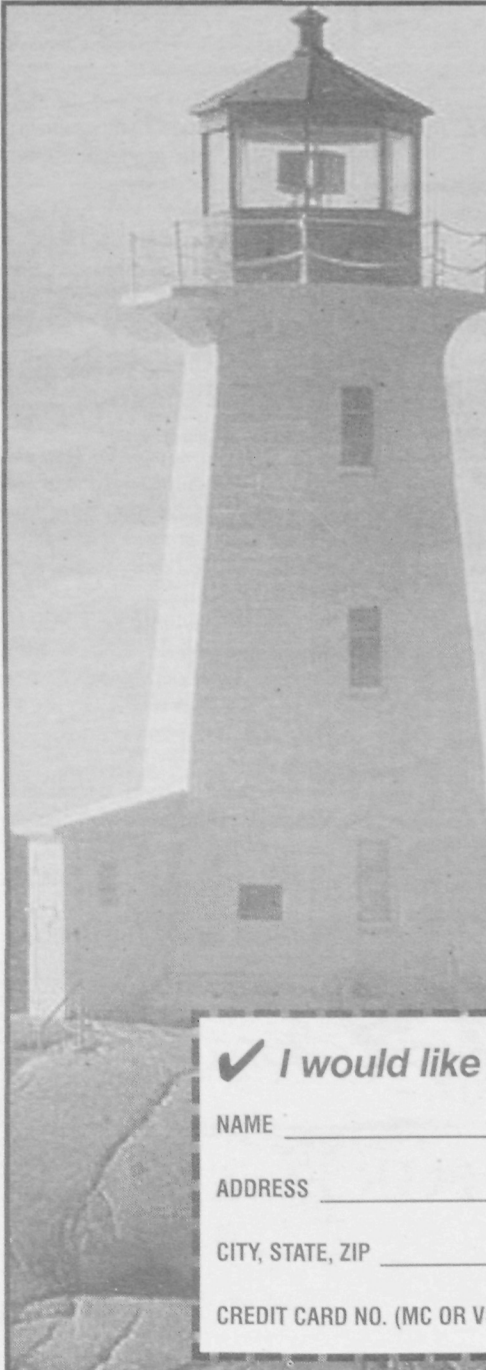
Yet the same obstructionist had okayed building a road through the dismal swamps from New Durham Ave. to Park Ave. in Edison. They even saw to it that truck traffic was not permitted on this Talmadge Rd. to Park Ave. Trucks are detoured to South Plainfield. Ride down Talmadge Rd. and see the hundreds of condos, apartments and homes that have been built. It was okay to have all this construction built, all adjacent to the dismal swamp. Yet for South Plainfield, they object to a road. I asked one of the group members what kind of vehicle they drove and they said an SUV. Too bad they don't practice what they preach when it comes to energy conservation.

It is time for residents of South Plainfield to step forward and stand together. Get this project started. We don't need more studies. It is time to protect the safety of our children and improve the quality of life for our residents on Belmont Ave. and Hamilton Blvd. We've had enough dialogue and delay. It is time for these environmentalists from Edison to get their priorities in order. Children and people first. We didn't tell Edison what to do and we don't want them delaying this project in South Plainfield by asking for another study.

On a personal note, I must confess I was disappointed by the lack of attendance at that meeting by residents who are most affected by the truck traffic. There is no justification for this lack of commitment. I thank Councilperson Butrico for the manner in which he concluded the meeting and appreciate those individuals who testified in support of the project.

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Scout Earns Light of Christ Medal

Christopher Markey, a member of John E. Riley Cub Scout Pack 224 and parishioner at Sacred Heart Parish, recently earned the special scouting medal, the Light of Christ medal.

Christopher, 9, received his medal at the conclusion of Mass on Scout Sabbath, Feb. 8, from Rev. John Paul Alvarado, Pastor.



Christopher Markey

To earn the medal, Christopher, with required help from his parents, completed a series of five steps outlined in the Light of Christ Activity Book. The steps included learning about families, God's Call, the Eucharist, forgiveness and Family of God. After completing the steps, Christopher reviewed the book with Rev. John Primish at Sacred Heart. He then applied for the medal from the Catholic Committee on Scouting. Religious awards programs keep with the religious principle of the Boy Scouts of

Scouts.

The pendants or emblems are awarded by the related religious groups. They are not a scouting recognition. Each faith has its own requirements for earning its emblem. Most call for religious knowledge and service.

Duty to God is a fundamental principle of Scouting. It is a pledge to which every Tiger Cub, Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Explorer and Scout leader is committed to as a member of the Boy Scout Movement.

America. The programs make every effort to strengthen scouts in their religious obligations. It also is an exercise in personal growth.

The religious emblem and the Arrow of Light are the only Cub Scout awards which may be displayed on a Boy Scout uniform as they move from Cub Scouts to Boys

Police Taking Applications For Written Exam

Applications for the N.J. Department of Personnel written examination for the position of police officer for the South Plainfield Police Department are now available.

The application is published by and must be returned to the N.J. Department of Personnel. Applications may be obtained any time at the South Plainfield Police Department communications center, on the Internet at www.state.nj.us/personnel, during normal business hours at the South Plainfield Public Library or South Plainfield Police Athletic Building (PAL).

The filing deadline is March 31. Candidate must be a resident of South Plainfield as of the closing date for filing the application and maintain continuous residency in South Plainfield up to and including the date of appointment.

Other requirements are listed in the application.

The starting salary is \$37,265.00 (2002).

A listing of job benefits may be viewed at Police Headquarters.

A brief summary of duties and responsibilities may be viewed at Police Headquarters.

If you have any questions, please contact Sgt. Chuck Siedenburgh at (908) 226-7674.

Mensa Holding Walk-in Testing in Piscataway

Once every year, Central New Jersey Mensa holds a walk-in qualification test where reservations are not required. This year the tests are being held on Saturday, March 6 at The Four Points Sheraton Hotel in conjunction with the Chapter's 30th annual "Snowball" celebration.

Anyone who might be interested in membership in Mensa is asked to stop by and take the test. The test

begins at 10 a.m., so be there by 9:30 a.m. to register. You'll be done by noon. There is a nominal \$30 test processing fee that must be paid at the time of the examination. (If you'd like to take the test but English is not your first language, we have a 'culture-fair' test that you may arrange to take at a different time.)

If after completing the test on Saturday morning you'd like to partici-

pate in the rest of Saturday's activities-for instance, our keynote speaker and midnight chocolate fondue party-then a donation of \$5 will allow you to do just that.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call our Test Coordinator, Martha A. McKeon at (732) 494-5826. We hope to see you at "Snowball."

Obituaries

Katherine E. "Kay" (Sadowski) Lapsley, 83

Katherine E. "Kay" (Sadowski) Lapsley died on Sunday, Feb. 15 in Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center. Born in Newark, Mrs. Lapsley had been a resident of South Plainfield since 1951.

She was employed by the former NJ Bell Telephone Company as an operator for 25 years, working in Plainfield and Cranford before retiring in 1985.

She was a member of the Pioneers of America and had enjoyed numerous trips to Atlantic City with friends, as well as her trips to Las Vegas.

She is predeceased by her husband, Edwin "Bud" Lapsley.

Surviving are a daughter, Constance and her husband, Joe Palitto of Springfield; two sons, Barry S. and his wife, Janet Lapsley of South Plainfield and Thomas J. of Edison; three sisters, Viola Mazurek of California, Ethel Thomas of Stewartville and Evelyn Birch of Springfield and a brother, Stephen Sadowski of Niceville, Fla.

Also surviving are two grandchildren, Katie and Joseph, Jr. Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Lisi DiNardo, 37

Lisi DiNardo of South Plainfield died on Tuesday, Feb. 17 at the Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center.

Lisi was born in Montgomery, Ala. and had lived in South Plainfield for the last 34 years.

Lisi was a dental receptionist for her father, Anthony R. DiNardo, D.D.S., PA in South Plainfield for the past 17 years.

Lisi was a computer enthusiast and enjoyed being online with hers. She hosted a disabled chatroom on AOL and enjoyed reading and needlepoint.

She is survived by her loving and devoted parents, Anthony R. and Jane McCutcheon DiNardo and a brother, Paul and his wife, Eva DiNardo of New York City.

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

Frances Monica Cannon, 52

Frances Monica Cannon died on Sunday, Feb. 15 at the Arkansas Methodist Medical Center in Paragould, Arkansas.

Frances was born on March 13, 1951 in Plainfield. She was employed as a legal secretary and a L.P.N.

Frances was a member of the Southside Baptist Church in Paragould.

She is predeceased by her father, Francis John Cannon.

Frances is survived by a daughter, Laura Adams; her mother, Violet Cannon; a sister, Carol Queen and three granddaughters, Sarah Cavaliere and Brittany and Emily Adams, all of Paragould, Arkansas.

A memorial service at Southside Baptist Church will be announced at a later date.

Joseph Gross, 76

Joseph Gross of Somerset died on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at the Robert Wood Johnson University Medical Center in New Brunswick.

Joseph was born and raised in New Brunswick before moving to Somerset 50 years ago.

Joseph was a postal supervisor at the New Brunswick Post Office for 30 years before retiring. He then worked for the Ryder Bus Company as a driver in New Brunswick for 15 years.

Joseph served his country in the US Army during the Korean War. He was a member of the VFW Post 8025 in Perth Amboy and a life member of the Franklin Eagles and a member of the Somerset Knights of Columbus Council 9925.

He was a communicant of St. Matthias Church in Somerset.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Doris Larsen Gross, who died in 2003.

He is survived by two sons, Glenn and his wife, Karen Gross of South Plainfield and Gary Gross of Highland Park; a daughter, Gail and her husband, Michael Buttrick of South Plainfield; a sister, Phyllis Masterhouse of Somerset and eight grandchildren, Glenn, Matthew, Allison, Jeanette, Nicky, Joelle, Danielle and Michaela.

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

Esperanza Camacho Fernandez, 87

Esperanza Camacho Fernandez of Howell formerly of South Plainfield died on Saturday, Feb. 21 at her home.

She was born in Havana, Cuba and was a former resident of South Plainfield before moving to Howell 14 years ago.

She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Rafael Fernandez, who died in 1986.

She is survived by two daughters, Becky Triano and Cristina Palmieri of Lakewood; four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

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

The A. Tran, 29

The A. Tran died on Friday, Feb. 20 at John E. Kennedy Medical Center in Edison.

Born in Vietnam, Mr. Tran came to the United States in June of 1993 and resided in the suburbs of Philadelphia and later resided in Iselin before he and his family settled to So. Plainfield.

A 1996 graduate of JFK High School in Iselin, he was currently attending Middlesex County College.

He is survived by his parents, Lap Tran and Nuoi Le and a brother, Andy, all of South Plainfield.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

LEGAL NOTICES

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

An appeal has been filed by Marlena and Christian Schulz requesting a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield to (1) permit a rear setback for the stair landing. Proposed stair landing lacks 20' required, 18' being proposed; (2) HDD zone does not permit one and two family homes, and (3) expansion of a non-conforming use; and other variances that may be required, said property being located at 137 Front Street, on Block 267, Lot 7.01 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 Thursday, March 11, 2004 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 February 27, 2004

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

An appeal has been filed by Roseanne Barletta requesting a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield to permit the construction of a 7' x 20' open front porch. Proposed open front porch lacks 30' required front setback, 18.99' being proposed; and other variances that may be required, said property being located at 129 Kenwood Avenue on Block 121, Lot 7 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 Thursday, March 25, 2004 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 February 27, 2004

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

Public Notice is hereby given that the following action was taken by the South Plainfield Board of Adjustment at its meeting held on February 12, 2004.

A. Case #83-02/S-AT&T Wireless PCS, LLC. Block 527.01; Lot 46.01; 4000 Hadley Rd. The applicant's request for height variances, site plan relief and other variances was hereby GRANTED with conditions.

B. Case #40-03/V-Sub.-MLS/Development, LLC. Block 77; Lots 4.01, 5 and 32; Stacy Ct. The applicant's request to dismiss this case without prejudice was hereby GRANTED.

C. Case #79-03-Pedro Salvado, Block 152; Lot 1; 1103 Clinton Ave. The applicant's request for a front yard setback variance in order to construct a 20 ft. by 20 ft. two car garage with a max height of 10 ft. 2 in. and with a 24 ft. front yard setback from Franklin Ave. was hereby GRANTED with voluntary conditions.

D. Case #84-03-Hector Armini, Block 404.04; Lot 1.02; Tremont Ave. and St. John's Pl. The applicant's request for relief from the requirement to install curb and sidewalk on the opposite side of Tremont Ave. and St. John's Pl. and for relief from the requirement to install a top course of pavement on Tremont Ave. was hereby GRANTED with conditions.

E. Case #88-03-John and Nancy Padovano, Block 195; Lot 6; 126 Daniel St. The applicant's request to construct a second story addition to their existing home with a 6.18 westerly side yard setback was hereby GRANTED with one voluntary condition.

F. Case #89-03-Carol Lynn Bacher, Block 315.03; Lot 3; 547 Carmine Ave. The applicant's request for side and rear setback variances in order to allow a 9 ft. by 14 ft. barn design shed with a max height of 10 ft. and a 2 ft. 8 in. rear yard setback and a 3 ft. southerly side yard setback was hereby GRANTED with conditions.

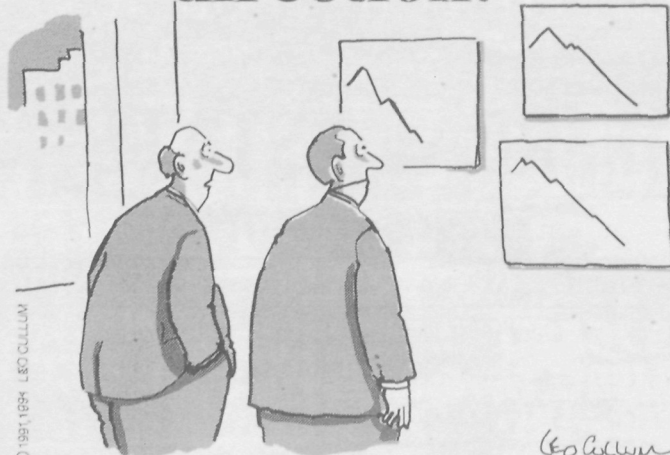
G. Case #90-Sylvia Jacobs, Block 339; Lots 6 & 11; 226 Delmore Ave. The applicant's request for (2) six inch side yard setback variances and a lot coverage variance of 87 sq. ft. was hereby GRANTED with voluntary conditions.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mary Beth Khidre
Secretary-Zoning Board of Adjustment

\$56.00 February 27, 2004

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police report

The South Plainfield Rescue Squad was called to Marinoware on Metuchen Rd. last Tuesday afternoon after a report of an employee with a crushed leg.

Eduardo Freire, 26, of Plainfield was injured when he attempted to cut the band off a steel coil so it could be moved. After cutting the band, a section of the coil knocked him to the floor and landed on top of him. It took several workers to lift the 2,000 pound coil off of Freire.

Freire was transported to Muhlenburg Hospital in Plainfield and his condition is unknown at this time.

• On Feb. 17 Blockbuster on Hadley Rd. reported that \$422.74 worth of Xbox games had been stolen. Empty boxes had been found under the bottom shelves.

• The manager of the Ramada Inn on Hamilton Blvd. reported that a husband, wife and two children had left without paying a \$1,395 bill.

• On Feb. 18 a Barnosky Ct. resident reported that the front door to her apartment had been pried open. Assorted coins and a box of personal checks were taken.

• On Feb. 19 Taco Bell on Stelton Rd. reported that 10 male customers had thrown food and sauce at the walls and seat cushions had been ripped.

• An Arlington Ave. resident reported that the rear door of the abandoned home he had just sold behind

his had been broken down. Nothing was taken.

• On Feb. 20 Susan Pou, 37, of Edison was arrested at Kohl's for shoplifting assorted clothing and shoes worth \$411.

• A Highland Ave. resident reported that the hood ornament on her Dodge Ram was taken while parked in the high school parking lot.

• On Feb. 21 Tu V. Nguyen, 29, of Edison was arrested on Park Ave. for driving while intoxicated and refusal to take a breathalyzer test.

• A W. Elmwood Dr. resident reported the theft of a 36' extension ladders from his back yard.

• On Feb. 22 Sandy Hurshel Sevier, 50, of Somerset was arrested at Pathmark for shoplifting \$213 worth of baby formula and diapers.

• On Feb. 23 a Hopkinson St. resident reported that a large black man knocked on her door and stated he was from Verizon for a service call. The resident had not called the phone company. He was dressed in a work uniform with a tool belt and left in a white beat up van with Verizon on the sides. The phone company had no record of her making a service call.

• On Feb. 24 an employee at 3000 Hadley Rd. reported that the door handle to the office had been bent. It appeared to have been hit with a hammer. No entry was gained.

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Last chance to purchase OBSERVER photos by Patricia Abbott!

There are many photos that have never been published! The following files will be deleted in March: SP Fire Dept. 02 & 03 FD concerts, FD Circus, 03 fifth grade class pics, 02 & 03 high & middle school graduations, '02 & '03 Jr & Sr Proms, election 02 & 03, Girl Scout Gold Awards, 02 & 03 Bike Rodeo, All District Concert, SPHS Anything Goes, SPMS Yearbook, Grant's ANNIE Jr., MS girls basketball Grant 6th basketball, Kennedy Grandparent's Day, Bands for Riley, Skatepark, PAL concert, school concerts & events, Nat. Honor Soc. inductions, Franklin K&J and Suess, Dare Graduations, 02 & 03 Labor Day, MS Peer to Peer, SDW Footloose, 42nd St. SPHS players, Anything Goes! Hello Dolly!, Damn Yankees, Tommy, & many other files. For detailed info or to see proof sheets call 908-756-8011 or email Pattie at angelonly@aol.com.

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Junior Journalist Corner



Jamie McLean Named "Junior Journalist"



Jamie McLean, Grant School fifth grader, with Reading/Language Arts teacher Amy Curcio.

Grant School fifth grader Jamie McLean's, "Dream of Happiness," is this week's winning entry in the *Observer*/Hometown Heros Junior Journalist Program. Jamie will receive dinner for her family courtesy of Hometown Heros.

Students are encouraged to submit their original poetry, articles, opinion pieces or essays. Entries should be given to teachers.

Winners receive a catered dinner from Hometown Heros and will be invited to an end-of-year banquet with their families.

For information on the program, or for the name of your school contact, call the *Observer* at (908) 668-0010 or Hometown Heros at (908) 755-4376.

Dreams of Happiness

By Jamie McLean

Step into a world overloaded with imagination,
Where never, never land lives just a daydream away.
Where gunpowder is POOF, fairy dust that could
Transform all evil to kindness with just a flick of a
Magic wand.

The heart, mind and soul.

Where strong, frightening fists can open up into friendly handshakes,
And hurtful slaps can become a thoughtful pat on the back.
But I'm looking outside, hoping to see this never, never land;
Hoping to see fairy dust fall from the sky.

But what I see is very poor,
Lonely people out in the cold,
Hurt and crying.

It's like a horror movie,

Can't watch anymore cause we know it won't get any better.

But with one heart,

One soul,

As a team

Working together,

We can change our nightmare into a never, never land.

So we don't have to dream it,

We can live it

Together

As one peaceful nation.

So don't give up now cause just one YOU,

Can change the world.

FREE Adoption Info Seminar

Florida Home Studies and Adoption, Inc. (FHSA) will hold a free adoption information seminar at 7 p.m., Thursday, March 4, at the First Unitarian Society of Plainfield, 724 Park Ave. in Plainfield.

Attendees will receive information about international adoption - the process and the requirements - and will have the opportunity to ask ques-

tions, meet adoptive families, see photos of waiting children and more.

An additional seminars is scheduled for March 25 in Parsippany as well as others scheduled elsewhere in New Jersey during March and April.

Space is limited. RSVP by calling (908) 757-7787 or for locations and schedule.

PICK UP THOSE PENS & ENTER TODAY!



Roosevelt School third grader James O'Connor, last week's Junior Journalist Contest winner, with parents Liz and Tom and sister Erin, happily welcome Debbie and Charlie Kurland of Hometown Heros.

Junior Journalist

Win a catered dinner for your family from Hometown Heros through the *Observer*/Hometown Heros Junior Journalist Contest! To enter, see story above or ask your language teacher at school.



Representing the South Plainfield Business Association, William Snell of Commerce Bank and Gail Wylam of Bryant Staffing present a welcome basket to the owners at the newly opened Curves, Jerri Hochron and Elissa Bennett.

From the South Plainfield Library

Bookmarks

By Chris Grippio

Important News! The library will be upgrading their automated circulation system the week of March 1 through March 5. This will impact patrons in the following ways. During this period, if you need to renew an item, you must call the library (908) 754-7885 during the hours we are open (Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10-9, Tuesday and Friday 10-6) and speak to a staff member. ELVIS, our 24/7 renewal system, will not be available from 12:01 a.m. Tuesday morning until 11:59 Wednesday night and you will not be able to renew online for this period.

Furthermore, due to the nature of the access certification, online services both internally and externally will be unavailable.

All that said, the library will be open its regular hours and you will be able to check out materials. All storytimes will also be held at their regular times (except the Friday morning program is cancelled). The entire staff will be here to assist you.

There is also a change in the date of the Library Board of Trustees March meeting. It will be on March 16 at 7:30 p.m. in the library.

In March we will be having two events you will not want to miss. On Sunday, March 14, Allan Snyder, a professional antiques appraiser, will be at the library from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. to appraise your precious items. Due to the number of people who normally attend this event we request that you limit yourself to two items. On Wednesday, March 17, the Friends of the South Plainfield Public Library will be having a bake sale in the afternoon/evening at the library.

So there is a lot going on the next few weeks at the library and we will be looking to assist you in any way.

★★ ATTENTION TEENS★★

Sacred Heart Church will soon be celebrating its 100th anniversary year. In conjunction with this, the celebration committee would like to hold events specifically for teenagers. We are looking for young people ages 13-18 who would be interested in selecting and planning the events to be held. Participants can earn community service hours while helping to make this celebration more meaningful to themselves and their peers. Please consider being a special part of this celebration. A meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 10, at 7:30 p.m., in the Sacred Heart School cafeteria. If you have any questions please contact Kathy Thomas at (908) 561-3247.

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