

South Plainfield Observer

VOL. 8, NO. 27

50 CENTS

MARCH 11, 2005

Bare Bones Budget Calls for Tax Increase

The South Plainfield Board of Education unveiled the 2005/2006 budget Tuesday evening. The new budget, if approved, will increase the school portion of property taxes for the average household by \$375, or 32 points, if the present tax rates remain the same. This amount could go up or down, depending on next year's rates. The average household has an assessed value of \$117,300.

The board has obtained permis-

sion to utilize \$564,694 in unused spending authority, known as a bank cap, from their prior budget, which helped to avoid possible massive staff cuts of 38.8 personnel. Despite this increased spending, 14.8 staff cuts were made, removing \$800,000 from the budget. The 2005/2006 budget amount is \$47,561,491, an increase of \$1,125,761 over last year. The amount to be raised by property taxes is \$37,347,987. State aid will remain

the same for the third year.

According to Interim Business Administrator Bob Davis, the budget increased by 2.4 percent. However, that percentage is based on the adjusted 2004-2005 budget, not the budget presented to voters last year. Last year's budget of \$44,185,421 was rejected and the council cut one tax point before it was passed. The adjusted budget after the audit was actually \$46,435,730. The tax levy

amount for fiscal year 2005/2006, however, will increase by 13.8 percent this year.

Very little discussion and few questions took place before the vote was taken. Only about 18 people were on hand due to the inclement weather on Tuesday. The public was not privy to the actual budget details until after the vote was taken and only total budget numbers were available.

When Davis was asked if the voters could be assured that the proposed budget will not be subjected to the

numerous line item transfers that took place on last year's budget, he said there is no guarantee. He added that there are many variables, such as higher heating and utility costs, teachers retiring and requiring a pay off of sick days and any unforeseen circumstances which might occur during the year. Over the last year, more than 800 line item transfers have taken place. Line item transfers occur when money is moved from a one account into another.

The budget allows for no extras, as the surplus amount is only \$4,000.



Helping Eleanor Wascavage celebrate her last day as secretary to the police chief are (l to r) Ellie's son Mark, son-in-law Scott, granddaughter Kerri and Jennifer, daughters Ellen and Sue and grandson Eric. Her daughter-in-law Cindy, son-in-law Mark and granddaughters Allyson and Melissa were unable to attend. (See page 3 for story.)

Armed Robbery at Ramada Inn, Suspects at Large

The Ramada Inn, located on Hamilton Blvd., was robbed at gunpoint over this past weekend by two men.

Police responded to the Ramada Inn on Saturday morning after receiving a panic alarm from the manager.

An employee at the hotel told police he saw two men enter the front door and jump over the counter. One of the suspects displayed a silver handgun and demanded, "Where is the money?"

The robbers removed an undetermined amount of cash from the safe

and fled the area in a dark colored car, possibly driven by a third person.

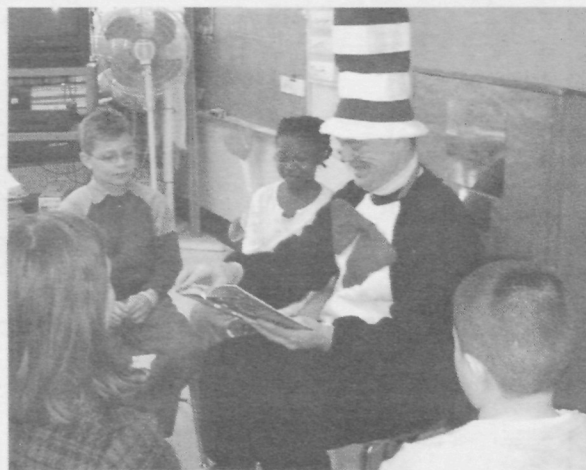
The two suspects were described as a black male, 5'11" with a thin build, wearing a black hooded jacket, black ski mask, knit gloves and blue jeans, and a black male, 5'6" wearing a black "bubble" jacket, black ski mask, gloves, blue jeans and Timberline boots. The weapon was a small silver semi-automatic handgun.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Det. Wendell Born of the South Plainfield Criminal Investigations Division at (908) 226-7661.

Dr. Seuss's Birthday Celebrated in Schools



Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Rosado reads Seuss classics to Franklin School students (left), while Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan captivates listeners at Riley School (center) and Kennedy School Principal Fred Oberkehr plays the part of "The Cat in the Hat" as he reads to students.



Sacred Heart School student Mike Muglia dressed up as the "Cat in the Hat" and read Dr. Seuss books to pre-K through second grade students.

"Read Across America" encourages reading throughout U.S. schools

Last week the elementary schools celebrated the 101st birthday of Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel on March 1. And what better way to remember Geisel than spending the entire week reading his books. The snow storm last Monday closed schools on Tuesday, but since the celebration was a week-long affair, it just meant that some readers had to be rescheduled. The week-long celebration included dozens of dignitaries, including an assemblyman, council members, members of the school administration, local business professionals and many parents, all of whom were delighted to read their favorite books to the students.

Each elementary school had their

own way of celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday and Read Across America week.

At Kennedy School, Principal Fred Oberkehr dressed up as the Cat in the Hat and spent the day reading to different grades throughout the school. Asst. Superintendent Tony Massaro dropped in and read to the first grade classes.

Franklin School hosted Superintendent Dr. Robert Rosado, who read the Seuss classics *Green Eggs and Ham* and *I'm Not going to Get up Today* to all the first graders. Afterward, first grade teacher Laurie Venetucci and teacher's aide Sue Hill cooked up some "green eggs and ham" for all of the students to try. Over 100

students continued their celebration of Dr. Seuss's birthday with an after school reading session. The youths sprawled out on blankets across the gym floor and relaxed with their favorite Seuss books. They alternated reading and exercising, as well as enjoying birthday cake.

Sacred Heart School had the pleasure of having eighth grade student Mike Muglia dress up as the Cat in the Hat and spent the morning reading Dr. Seuss books to pre-K through second grade students.

Roosevelt School hosted many readers, including Police Chief John Ferraro, Myra Stillman, Ruth Ferraro, Kaye Crown, Mr. Falmini, Mrs. Hajduk, Mrs. Pickoff, Mrs. Joergensen,

Mrs. Madden, Mrs. Mosley, Anthony Massaro, David Sanders and Mr. Celentano. The readers were escorted by members of the Roosevelt Student Council. They were Crystal Myles, Rina Bhalodi, Nick Brinks, Eric Burnham, Deirdre Macchina, Kim Walsh, James Agee, Gernanne Scarpitto, Zach George, Jade McDonnough, Danielle Butrico and Tory Heilman.

Riley School Librarian Joanne Otowski had a week long line up of guests who read to classes during library time. Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan, Police Chief John Ferraro, Borough CFO Glenn Cullen, made appearances as well as Riley School personnel and BOE administrators.

Mark Your Calendars

Log on to
southplainfieldnj.com
for the latest meeting agenda

councilmeetings

Borough Hall Council Chambers

Meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesday

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

Date	Agenda Meeting	Public Meeting
March 15	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
April 5	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
April 18	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.

planningboard

Meets second and fourth Tuesday of the month, *except where noted.

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

March 22, April 12, April 26, May 10, May 24, June 14, June 28, July 5*, July 19*, Aug. 16*, Aug. 30*, Sept. 13, Sept. 27, Oct. 11, Oct. 25, Nov. 29*, Dec. 13, Dec. 27.

zoningboardofadjustment

Meets second and fourth Thursday of the month, *except where noted.

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

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

boardofeducationmeetings

Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. unless otherwise noted

Committee of the Whole meets Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

April 5

Regular Board Meeting Tuesdays at 8 p.m.—March 15 and April 12.

2004/2005 Budget Working Meetings—Final Adoption of the Budget on March 29 at 8 p.m.

taxpayersadvisorygroup

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.

siteplansub-committee

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

March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21, July 19,

Aug. 16, Sept. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20.

recreationcommission

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

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

March 22, April 26, May 24, June 28, Sept. 27, Oct. 25, Nov. 7 and Dec. 13.

environmentalcommission

Meets once a month (second Wednesday)

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

businessadvisorygroup

Meets once a month (first Wednesday)

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

trafficsafetyadvisorycommission

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

in the Conference Room, Borough Hall (No Meeting in August)

boardofeducationcurriculum/technology meetings

Meets once a month on Mondays, (except where noted) at 8 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room at Roosevelt Administration Building on Jackson Ave.

March 21

To the Editor,

On behalf of the South Plainfield Pop Warner Eagles organization, we would like to thank everyone for their generous contributions in memory of Salvatore Severini. Mr. Severini was an integral part of our organization for many years. We are very fortunate and grateful for the many years of service that he gave to benefit the children of South Plainfield.

Your donations in his memory will greatly help our organization as we continue to make a difference in the lives of many boys and girls, as did Mr. Severini.

Thank you again for your generosity. Salvatore will always be remembered in our hearts.

Respectfully,
**THE SOUTH PLAINFIELD
FOOTBALL EAGLES**

Dear Editor,

"Hail to thee, South Plainfield High; Cheer our guiding light! Wave the emerald banner high; The symbol of our might Hear us, Tigers, when we cry; Stand for truth and right. Raise your voices to the sky; Cheer the Green and White. Praise to thee, South Plainfield High; Loyalty be thine." This is a portion of the South Plainfield High School's Alma Mater and about positive cheering for the Green and White, yet at our recent girls' basketball game in South Brunswick, we had some of our very own parents, whose children were playing in the game, screaming obscenities at our coach and pointing at one of our players telling her how horrible she was playing. All this took place while the coach's wife sat in the audience and witnessed all their rude and abusive comments. And, as if that wasn't enough, they continued to carry the comments out into the hall.

There have been many other instances at other South Plainfield High and Middle School sporting events where our own parents have spoken about the body size of a child and her ability to play or yelling at a child because she did not succeed, in their eyes, at carrying out a play. They scream and holler at the coaches. They use their children to carry back comments to their team players, which causes descent among those players. As parents, they feel they have the right to be out on the fields and courts, coaching plays and telling the coaches what plays to make. How can you embarrass your teams, your town and the fans who are really there to support and cheer the team on, whether they are winning or losing? It is so degrading to South Plainfield to have other people from the other towns speaking about how embarrassing the South Plainfield fans behave.

South Plainfield's coaches receive stipends to coach the various teams. They spend countless hours on a daily basis, coaching our children and when you break down the stipend, the amount comes to approximately two dollars a day. Obviously they are not there for the money; they are there because they truly care about our children.

In any sporting event around town, no child should ever be cursed at or taunted by a coach, whether it be a school sport or an outside school

IN YOUR OPINION

sport, because that then becomes a child abuse legal factor. No child should ever feel they have to hang their head in shame because they made an error or team lost a game or match.

A recent swim meet event, had an official shoved a timer, while all of the children witnessed this role model in action.

Let us all leave the coaching to the coaches and the encouraging cheering to the fans. Remember, it's always about the children all the time.

**SINCERELY,
DEBBIE BOYLE**

Dear Editor,

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the families for your donations, dedication and support in the "Pennies for Patients" fundraiser. All your hard work made a difference and we were able to contribute a total amount of \$1,653.79 to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society! The money you have raised will help patients in Northern New Jersey by supporting research, advocacy, community service, patient aid, public and professional education. Because of this kind of support, modern treatments have greatly improved cure rates or remission duration for some patients with leukemia and offered more hope than ever before to those affected with blood cancers.

Many thanks to everyone for making a BIG difference in the lives of those affected with Leukemia or Lymphoma.

For more information regarding the "Leukemia & Lymphoma Society" in Northern New Jersey, call (908) 654-9445. Gina Panas, the campaign manager from the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, will be visiting Roosevelt School on March 11 to talk to our students about the "Pennies for Patients" fundraiser and the work they do.

**SINCERELY,
MS. FERRARO
AND MRS. MOSLEY
STUDENT COUNCIL ADVISORS**

Dear Editor,

I would like to point out something concerning the restricted age housing that may eventually be built on the former Tingley Rubber property.

The society we live in now is comprised of many different cultures and some commonly have multi-genera-

Submit Letters to the Editor:

Please be advised that the Observer will not publish any anonymous letters until further notice. Any letter received without identification will be discarded.

Letters may be submitted to the Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, or fax 908-668-8819 or by email: spobserver@comcast.net. 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.

tions living in what is considered a single family house or apartment. With this in mind, our schools could end up with additional students and the need for more classrooms. Just a few more students in one particular grade could push an already maxed out class size over the limit that is considered reasonable for teachers to instruct with maximum benefit to the students. We would have to hire more teachers and bear whatever other expenses go along with an increase of student enrollment.

MAUREEN TERHUNE

To my fellow residents,

I read with great interest a new feature to this newspaper last week called "The Senior Men's Forum." The article which appeared explained that there is a group that meets regularly and high on their list of priorities is keeping an eye on the actions of the Board of Education. If that was the case, I wouldn't have a problem with it. However, what I believe the column to have been is the latest of a series of unsigned letters, amounting to be nothing more than slanted propaganda in a local publication that has apparently shifted editorially from reporting news to assisting in spreading misinformation. The two main points made in the article basically allege that there is runaway spending taking place and that our students are not performing well academically. Both are simply untrue.

The facts are, that in recent analysis performed by the *Home News Tribune*, South Plainfield spends \$501 less than the Middlesex County average per pupil, and \$1,215 less than the average for the state. Insofar as how our

(Continued from page 12)

Republicans to Screen Candidates

South Plainfield's Republican Organization will hold its candidate screening for this year's council race next week at the group's monthly meeting. While the election is not until November, nominating petitions are due the beginning of April, and the Republican Party will be interviewing prospective nominees over the next week.

"We want to open the screening process up to all borough residents," said Republican Chairman Bob Jones. "We're eager to talk to people

who want to bring good government back to South Plainfield. Our town needs top-notch council members who can start dealing with the problems of overbuilding, mounting traffic and lack of open government. An open screening allows us to pick from a wide assortment of talent—something our town has no shortage of."

Those interested in interviewing should contact Jones at (908)222-9435.

The screening will be held on March 16.

South Plainfield Observer

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(908) 668-0010 • FAX (908) 668-8819

NANCY GRENNIER
Publisher/Editor

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

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

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., fax us at (908) 668-8819 or e-mail us at spobserver@comcast.net. Include your name, address, telephone number. You can subscribe or contact us at: spobserver.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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AIDA SANTOS

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT
BRANCH MANAGER

Valley National Bank

Durham Ave. & Hamilton Blvd.
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

(908) 757-5868

Fax (908) 757-0494

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:

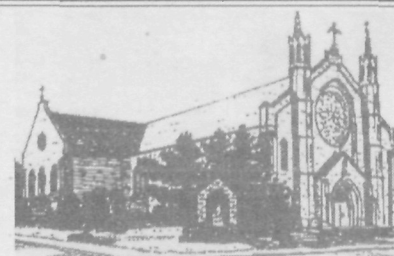
Saturday Evening Mass 5:00 p.m.

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

Weekdays Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9 am; Mon. and Thurs. 7 p.m.

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

Holy Days 9 a.m., 12:10 p.m. and 7 p.m.



Notes from Curriculum Technology Committee

Following are the minutes from a recent Curriculum Technology Committee meeting:

- Dr. Rosado spoke about a great new gang prevention program for middle school students. The program is similar to the DARE program, which is taught by a trained police officer. Instruction will be given to eighth grade students in their health classes. There is no cost to the district.

- Kay Crown, director of Curriculum, proposed that the grading scale for the K-4 schools be changed to match the grading scale in grades 5-12: A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=65-69 and F=64 and below. There was universal agreement.

- Crown also informed the committee that the Curriculum and Instruction Council was beginning a discussion on the D'Nealian handwriting program, which is currently being used in the elementary schools. She distributed a summary of some of the current research and samples of different styles of the handwriting. Handwriting books are consumable and are purchased every year, so a change from the current program to a different method would not have a budgetary impact. K-4 teachers are being surveyed to get their opinions.

- Assistant Superintendent Anthony Massaro updates the status of the SAT prep class. In preparation for the Oct. test—42 students enrolled; preparation for the Dec. test—33 students enrolled and in preparation for the March test—100 students en-

rolled. This is more than double the number of students who were in the SAT prep classes last year. The classes are attended by a mixture of all grade levels, 9-12.

- Russ Mattoon, directory of technology, reported that the fiber-optic network stop-work order was sent at the end of Sept. Mattoon has been informed that the district will be responsible for the cost of all work done before the stop-work order was received, which is estimated at about \$1,200-1,300. There was discussion about when Verizon was informed of the stop-work order and the financial responsibility of the district. The committee will bring this up again when the bill is received from Verizon.

- Mattoon updated the committee of the status of the negotiations between Comcast and the town. Currently, Comcast is offering to bring cable to the middle school and the high school and to install enough repeater stations to wire all the classrooms. Further discussion revealed that, based on previous experiences, this is not a generous offer; other towns and districts have had every classroom wired and have been given equipment. Negotiations will continue.

- BOE Member Tim Morgan inquired about the Costa Rica trip. Fundraising is proceeding and the trip is still on target.

The next curriculum meeting will be held on March 21 at 8 p.m. in the second floor conference room and is open to the public.

Freeholders Adopt a Budget Which Cuts Taxes

The Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders has adopted a \$332.5 million operating budget which cuts the taxes raised by property taxes.

"This budget marks the seventh time in 12 years that the county has reduced the county property tax levy," said Freeholder Director David B. Crabel. "It's also the 12th consecutive year that the Board of Chosen Freeholders has reduced the equalized county property tax rate. That's very good news for the taxpayers."

The levy, or amount to be raised by taxes, was reduced by \$157,000 from the 2004 budget. The equalized county property tax rate will decrease 4.1 cents for each \$100 of equalized valuation.

The levy cut does not mean that it costs less to run county government in 2005 than it did in 2004 or 2003, Crabel has explained. "It suggests that we do our work more efficiently, that we find ways to consolidate operations and we do so with fewer personnel."

The county cut its employee rolls by a total of 132 positions over the past two years. It also consolidated its Area Wide Transit System and Central Vehicle Maintenance divisions into the new Dept. of Transportation, which will focus on improving services

before expanding to include others.

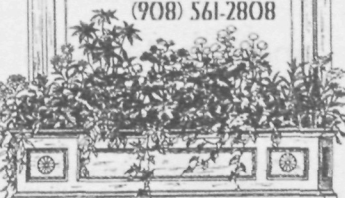
Also, the county collected \$6.2 million more in revenue last year from the offices of the County Clerk, County Counsel, Sheriff and Surrogate than anticipated. In 2004 the county restructured its debt, saving \$4.5 million.

The spending plan calls for the use of \$16 million from surplus to reduce the burden on taxpayers. More than \$14.5 million remains in surplus, \$1,150,760 more than last year. It is also \$21,021,681 less than the budget cap allowed by state law.

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Corporate Accounts Welcome

Chief's Secretary Retires After 27 Years

By Jane Dornick

After working for the South Plainfield Police Department for the past 27 years, Eleanor Wascavage, secretary to the police chief, is finally ready to call it a day. She lamented, "When you feel like everyone's mom, it's time to go."

Ellie has been a South Plainfield resident since 1961. After raising her three children, Mark, Susan and Ellen, she returned to the work force in 1972 in the credit office at Tepper's Dept. Store in Plainfield. She was hired by the South Plainfield Police Dept. in June of 1977 as a police records clerk in the detective division. Eleven years later she was promoted to an administrative secretary working for the chief where she stayed for 17 years. Ellie proudly boasts about having served as secretary to seven chiefs of police and remembers explicitly each of their names; Ed Tyler, Fred Boosman, Tom Boyle, John Muller, Steven Merkler, Robert Merkler and newly appointed Police Chief John Ferraro. She has also been the recording secretary for the Traffic Safety Commission since 1988.

Eleanor's husband Joseph, a former school teacher and football coach in Woodbridge, passed away in 1986 at the age of 49, but Ellie still continued on with her career. On her last day of work on Feb. 28 she said, "I loved working here. It was my second family. I made so many nice friends that I'll keep for life. I've always been happy here." The employees at Borough Hall held a catered luncheon in her honor last Monday in the courtroom, which was attended by many of her co-workers and borough employees. Business Administrator Vinnie Buttiglieri presented her with a plaque proclaiming her dedication to the department for her 27 years of service. She was also given a diamond pendant as a token of her co-worker's appreciation. Ferraro said, "Ellie is a very dedicated, conscientious employee. It was a pleasure working with her the short time that I did and she will be sorely missed by the department."

Mary Wrotny, who is the current administrative secretary in the detective bureau will be taking over as the



Police Chief John Ferraro with Eleanor Wascavage

chief's secretary and also as recording secretary for the Traffic Safety Commission.

Ellie is looking forward to taking a cruise to the Southern Caribbean in

May with her family and friends. She says she'll now have time to organize her own house instead of the office and is considering doing some volunteer work in the future.

Forrester to Speak at GOP Meeting

Douglas Forrester, Republican candidate for New Jersey Governor, will be the special guest speaker at the March 16 meeting of the South Plainfield Republican Organization.

Forrester will talk about his ideas to address the issues in New Jersey and is looking forward to meeting the residents of South Plainfield and to learn their concerns about state gov-

ernment.

The meeting will begin at 8 p.m. at the American Legion Hall on Oak Tree Ave.

All residents of the borough are invited to attend and meet Doug Forrester and also discuss any borough issues and concerns with the local organization. For more information, visit www.spgop.com.

Volunteer Litter Clean-up Week Apr. 23- 30

The big Spring Cleanup will hit the roadsides, streamsides, woods and parks on Saturday, April 23, to be followed by the traditional pickup pizza picnic at Borough Hall.

All are invited to participate—with your scout group, church group, business, school club—or sign up individually. Let the Clean Communities Ad-

visory Board know what spot in the borough you think needs work. We provide the bags and gloves, you provide the energy. Volunteers will have a lot of fun and get a cleaner town.

Call the Clean Communications Coordinator at (908) 226-7621 for more information.

Communion Catering SPECIALS

HOT & COLD CATERING

• Assorted Gourmet Sandwich Platters •

• Homemade Salads •

• 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 Foot Heros •

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SUNDAYS

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LIONS PALM SUNDAY GOURMET BREAKFAST

Sponsored by the South Plainfield Lions Club

Helping the Visually & Hearing Impaired Since 1947....

When: Palm Sunday, March 20, 2005
Where: South Plainfield High School Cafeteria
Time: 8:00 am to 12:00 noon
Ticket Price: \$6.00

Tickets may be purchased at the door or through a Lions member.

For information, please call (908) 753-3850.

Events Around Town

AARP Drivers Courses

March 10 & 11, 12 & 19

The South Plainfield AARP is holding two Safe Drivers courses which give a three-year discount on auto insurance, as well as a two point reduction.

First course is Thursday and Friday, March 10 and 11, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Piscataway Kennedy Library. The second course is Saturday, March 12 and 19, at Muhlenberg Hospital from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. You must complete both sessions to receive certification. There is no age restriction. Fee is \$10. Call Mary at (732) 752-3764 to register.

Education Foundation Annual Art Auction

March 11

The South Plainfield Education Foundation will be holding its rescheduled annual Art Auction at the high school on Friday, March 11. The January auction had to be rescheduled due to snow. Preview begins at 6:30 p.m.; auction starts at 7:30 p.m. This year's honorary chairman is South Plainfield Police Officer Joe Papa, who was a DARE officer for many years.

The price is \$5 per person. For tickets and information, call (908) 561-3951. Hors d'oeuvres, coffee and cake will be available and there will be a door prize.

Knights Annual St. Patrick's Day Party

March 12 (Corrected Date)

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus will be holding their annual St. Patrick's Day Party. The event takes place on Saturday, March 12 at the Knights Hall on Hamilton Blvd. from 8 to 12 p.m. Cost is \$20 pp and includes corn beef and cabbage dinner, an open bar (beer, wine and soda) and a DJ, who will play classic Irish music.

Contact Jim Shea at (908) 756-0478 or (908) 755-6203 for tickets. Seats are limited.

Corned Beef and Cabbage at Elks

March 12

The South Plainfield Elks Veterans Committee is sponsoring their annual Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner on Saturday, March 12, from 4:30-9 p.m. The dinner is all-you-can-eat, including beverages. Adults are \$10 and children are \$5. Come on down and celebrate St. Patrick's Day—a day when everyone's Irish! For information, contact Lou Peralta at (908) 756-6406.

Sixth Annual Chili Fest

March 13

Boy Scout Troop 207 will hold their Sixth Annual "All You Can Eat" Chili Fest on Sunday, March 13 from 3-7 p.m. at the high school cafeteria. Tickets are \$5 each. There will also be games and prizes. For more information, call at (908) 753-2562.

Columbiettes Annual Easter Bunny Brunch

March 13

The South Plainfield Columbiettes will hold their annual Easter Bunny Brunch on Sunday, March 13 in the Sacred Heart School cafeteria. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$10 per person, regardless of age. All children in attendance, ages seven and under, will receive a basket full of goodies

What's happening in MARCH

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

Senior Center EVENTS

The Senior Citizen's Center is open Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
NOW OPEN SATURDAYS 9:00 AM-12:30 PM—CREATIVE PAINTING 10AM

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<div>UPCOMING EVENTS</div> <div></div>	March 19-St. Patrick's Dance Corned Beef and Cabbage 6 to 10 p.m. tickets \$5 April 7... Oklahoma at NJPAC \$40 Includes Transportaion		Weekly Shopping 10 Pathmark 9am Practical Crafts 10am Computer Class 11 & 1pm 55 Alive- AARP	Bingo 10am-2pm 11 Pizza lunch available
	Knitting/Crocheting 14 9:30-11:30am Yoga 10:30-11:30am Drawing Class 11:30am 55 Alive- AARP Senior Board Mtg. 4:30pm	Bingo 10am-2pm 15 Ladies Social 10am	Exercise 8:30am 16 Line Dancing 10am AARP Crafts 1pm Computer Class 10 am 11:30 am, 1 pm	Weekly Shopping 17 Pathmark 9am Practical Crafts 10am Computer Class 11am & 1pm
TO SIGN UP FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, VISIT THE CENTER.				

from the Easter Bunny.

The menu will consist of breakfast, as well as luncheon and will be served as an all-you-can-eat buffet. Reservations must be made in advance by calling Christine at (732) 968-4257.

Historical Society Mtg. Rescheduled

March 15

Due to inclement weather, the March 8 meeting of the South Plainfield Historical Society has been postponed until Tuesday, March 15, 7:30 p.m. at the South Plainfield Senior Center.

Remember: Call DOT at 908 754-3073 if in doubt about a meeting.

VFW to Hold Dinner

March 18

The VFW Post 6763, located at 155 Front St., will be holding a dinner on Friday, March 18 from 5-8 p.m. The public is welcomed. For more information, call (908) 668-9751.

American Legion St. Patrick's Dance

March 19

The American Legion Chaumont Post 243 will be hold a St. Patrick's Dinner Dance on Saturday, March 19. Come enjoy an evening of fun, food and entertainment from 6 to 11 p.m. Cost is \$15 per person. Proceeds benefit the American Legion Post Scholarship Fund.

Franklin School PTA Auction/Raffle

March 19

The Franklin School PTA is sponsoring their Ninth Annual Auction/Raffle Night on Saturday, March 19, at the high school gym. Prizes include a 52" TV, 7-day trip to Disney, electronics, gift certificates and door prizes. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10.

For tickets, call Dorothea at (908) 753-7117 or Terry at (908) 753-2864. No one under 18 will be admitted. A complimentary grand prize ticket will be given with every advanced ticket sale.

Lions Palm Sunday Breakfast

March 20

The South Plainfield Lions will hold their very popular Gourmet Palm Sunday breakfast on Sunday, March 20

from 8 a.m. until noon in SPHS cafeteria. Tickets are \$6 and are available from any Lions Club member or by calling (908) 753-3850.

Ponytail Parents Monthly Meeting

March 22

The next South Plainfield Parents' Ponytail Association meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 22 in the Middle School Library. The association will be holding a free coaches clinic on March 19 at the PAL for anyone interested in coaching or helping out. All are welcome!

We will also be holding a field clean up on March 12 at 9 a.m. at the fields. We can use all the help we can get. So please, give a little time.

SPHS Music Boosters Trip to Atlantic City

April 2

The SPHS Music Boosters are sponsoring a bus trip to Atlantic City on Saturday, April 2. The bus leaves the South Plainfield High School parking lot by the gym at 9 a.m. and returns approximately 8 p.m. The cost is \$30 with a cash back of \$15 per person from the casino.

For information or to reserve your seat, call Julie at (908) 791-0294.

Beach Boys' Revival

April 3

Good vibrations are back! South Plainfield Recreation is sponsoring a trip to see "Beach Boys' Revival" on Sunday, April 3. Cost is \$90. Great seats! Bus leaves the PAL at 11 a.m. and returns at 6 p.m. Purchase tickets at the PAL.

Atlantic City Bus Trip

April 12

The Polish National Home will sponsor a bus trip to the Taj in Atlantic City. The cost is \$20 with a \$17 coin return. Bus leaves the Polish Home at 10 a.m. For tickets or information call, (908) 668-9442 or Mille at (908) 757-8432.

Cahal Dunne Concert

April 17

Cahal Dunne, singer, songwriter, pianist and comedian, will be performing once again at Sacred Heart Church on Sunday, April 17, at 3 p.m. General admission is \$20 and seniors and students are \$15. To purchase tickets or for more information, call (908)

756-0632 ext. 10, (732) 549-9633, or (908) 755-6416.

— Out of Town —

Circle Players Present Proof Through March 19

Proof, by David Auburn, opened at Circle Players on Friday, March 4. Circle Players is located at 416 Victoria Ave. in Piscataway.

Performances are Fridays March 11 and 18; Saturdays, March 12 and 19 at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees are March 13 at 3 p.m. Tickets for Friday and Saturday are \$15. Matinees are \$12 for seniors and students receive \$1 off with I.D. and group rates are available.

For information, call (732) 968-7555.

Widows or Widowers Dance

March 11

The Middlesex East Widows or Widowers, Carteret Chapter, will hold a dance for widows and widowers on Friday, March 11 at St. Demetrius Community Center, 681-691 Roosevelt Ave., Carteret. There will be live music and refreshments. It will be held from 7:30-11:30 p.m. Admission for members is \$8 and \$9 for guests. For more information, call (732) 541-2174 or (908) 757-0515.

Benefit for Messiah Lutheran School

March 12

In celebration of Lutheran Schools' Week and Women's History Month, a benefit for the Messiah Lutheran School will be held at Seinna Visions Fine Art & Framing on E. Second St. in Plainfield on Saturday, March 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A donation of \$10 includes light refreshments.

For information, call (908) 755-4525.

Dinner For Single Christians

March 12

A dinner for single Christian professionals ages 25 to 49 will be held March 12 at 6 p.m. at Ruby Tuesdays in North Plainfield.

There is a \$5 service fee plus cost of dinner.

RSVP Required by March 11 to (732) 764-9073 or angelicbutterfly@iwon.com.

MCCRC Business Breakfast Awards

March 14

The Middlesex County Business Week Awards Breakfast will be held on March 14 from 8 to 10 a.m. at the Westin Hotel at Forrestal Village, Rt. 1 So. in Plainsboro. Cost for members is \$40, non-members are \$55, member walk-ins are \$55 and tables of eight are \$300.

Call Erin at (732) 821-1700 x208.

Judge Bissell Speaker at Meeting

March 16

United States Federal District Court, Chief Judge, Honorable John Bissell will address the March MCBA Bench/Bar Meeting on Wednesday, March 16 from 7:45 to 8:45 a.m. at the Clarion Hotel on Rte 27 in Edison.

Fee for the meeting only is \$12 for MCBA members and \$17 for all others. Reserve by calling (732) 828-3433. Information may be found at www.mcbalaw.com.

Business Week Expo

March 16

The Middlesex County Business Week 50th Expo will be held on Wednesday, March 16 from 3 to 7 p.m. at the Hilton East Brunswick. Complimentary tickets are available. Booths still available at \$350 for members or \$550 for non-members.

Call Erin at (732) 821-1700 x208.

CJJDA Job Fair

March 17

The 21st Annual Job Fair of the Central Jersey Job Developers Association (CJJDA) will be held on Thursday, March 17, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Rutgers Labor Education Center, Ryders Lane and Clifton Ave. in New Brunswick. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, call Donna J. Silverman, Chair, at the New Brunswick Public Schools Adult Learning Center, (732) 745-5300 ext. 4201.

Pro Wrestling Benefit

March 18

The Manville Boy Scouts and Cub Scout Troops 193 have found a partner indeed with the nation's top rated family-themed wrestling promotion in the likes of National Wrestling Superstars as they team up once again to bring another night of bone jarring excitement to the Manville VFW Hall, located at 600 Washington Ave. in Manville. Bell time is 7:45 p.m. for this Friday night affair.

Adults are \$15 and children are \$12. To purchase tickets, call (732) 888-1704.

Send Us Your Around Town Events

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Junior Journalist Corner



Maggie Mclean, Roosevelt School Fourth Grader, Named "Junior Journalist"



Junior Journalist Maggie Mclean with Roosevelt School Principal Jacqueline Keogh and teacher Ellen Decker-Lorys.

Maggie Mclean, Roosevelt School fourth grader, is this week's winner in the *Observer*/Hometown Heros Junior Journalist Program. Her poem "Imagine This," has won dinner for her family, courtesy of Hometown Heros.

Students are encouraged to submit their original poetry, articles, opinion pieces or essays to their

teacher, school principal, Hometown Heros located on Hamilton Blvd. or the *Observer* office.

Winners and their families will receive a catered dinner from Hometown Heros and will be honored at a year end banquet on May 25.

For more information, call the *Observer* at (908) 668-0010 or Hometown Heros at (908) 755-4376.

Imagine This By Maggie Mclean

Imagine a world with candy for houses, slushies for the sea, pop rocks for sand, pixie stix for grass
And
No Parents.

Imagine a world where nothing horrible ever happens.
Things bad would turn into dust and nobody would hurt you.
Imagine a world that mud was chocolate, twigs were lollipops, bears would be enlarged gummies and birds will be sugar candy.
Imagine a world where robbers would break into your house to help you.
Imagine a world that chemicals were sour spray and worms were gummies.

Imagine a world that if you're choking you would be laughing and criminals tried to save you.

What world would you pick?

A world with only kids, candy for everything that might turn into nothing or a world with parents to help you out, a normal life no guns.

Nothing to hurt you.

Pick a world!!

District Music and Art Festival

The South Plainfield Public Schools will present its 36th Annual All-District Music and Art Festival on Thursday, April 7 at South Plainfield High School starting at 6:25 p.m. The festival will feature performances of instrumental and vocal ensembles, as well as displays of art created by the district's many talented students.

The music performances will take place in the auditorium while the displays of art will be located in the gymnasium. The concert will be performed in three segments. The first part of the concert will be devoted to orchestral music. After a short intermission, the second part of the program will feature vocal music performances. Following another short intermission, the concert will conclude with performances of symphonic and jazz bands. Each segment of the program will feature ensembles from Grant School, the Middle School and the High School. Each of the three concert segments will require a separate ticket. Tickets will be made available first, on a limited basis, to the families of the performing students starting on Feb. 22. Additional tickets may then be made available to the general public starting March 14.

More ticket information will be made available as the All-District Music and Art Festival draws near. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Weiss, district music team leader, at aweiss@spnct.k12.nj.us.

Celtic Music Journey at Library

The program "Celtic Music Journey" will be presented at South Plainfield Free Public Library on Sunday, March 13, at 2 p.m.

Just in time for St. Patrick's Day, New Jersey singer Heather Mulvey will speak about and perform a number of Celtic songs in a program including audience participation. The program is presented free of charge and no pre-registration is required. Everyone is welcome to attend.

South Plainfield Free Public Library is located in the South Plainfield Municipal Complex at 2484 Plainfield Ave. in South Plainfield, NJ. For more information, please call (908) 754-76885, or visit the Library's website at www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us.



Weekly Worship

A guide to local houses of worship

Pilgrim Covenant Church

3121 Park Avenue

Reverend Arnold R. Bolin, interim pastor

Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday, 10:30 a.m., Bible Study at parsonage

Wednesday, 7:00 p.m., Prayer: 7:30 p.m., Bible Study

*

Pilgrim Covenant Learning Center

Phone (908) 756-4879—Church (908) 756-2474—Parsonage (908) 754-0768

*

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

3145 Park Ave. (908) 757-4474.

Reverend Richard J. Kiesling, Pastor

Sunday worship 10:30 a.m. with Holy Communion celebrated weekly

Religious Education and Adult Bible Class is at 9:15 a.m.

During Lent, Wednesday night services at 7:30 p.m.,

preceded by an optional 6:30 p.m. Soup Supper

St. Stephens also offers a Christian Martial Arts Program open to the community free of charge. This is held normally on Wednesday evenings, but during Lent it is on Thursday evenings. Ages 4-9 at 6:30 p.m. and 10-teens 7:30 p.m. Call the church office for more details on that program.

*

Sacred Heart Church

149 South Plainfield Avenue

(908) 756-0633—www.ChurchoftheSacredHeart.net/

Rev. John P. Alvarado, Pastor

Weekend Masses—Saturday Vigil 5 p.m., Sunday 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.

Daily Masses—Monday 7 p.m., Tuesday 9 a.m., Wednesday 9 a.m.,

Thursday 7 p.m., Friday 9 a.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.

Holy Days: 9 a.m., 12:10 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Eucharistic Adoration: Monday 3 p.m. (Divine Mercy Chapel)-7 p.m.

Miraculous Medal Novena: Monday 6:45 p.m. with Benediction and

Saturday following 9 a.m. Mass

Fish dinners every Friday during Lent are held in the cafeteria from 5 to 7 p.m., sponsored by Saint Vincent de Paul and members of the South Plainfield Knights of Columbus.

*

Wesley Methodist Church

1500 Plainfield Ave.

Contact Pastor Thompson at (908) 757-2838 or (908) 756-1044 for any spiritual needs

During the Lenten season celebrate five weeks of Lenten Love during the 9 and 10 a.m. worship services. This concludes with a Prayer Vigil on Saturday, March 19 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. and is open to all friends, guests and members of Wesley Church.

Welcome in Christ on Palm Sunday March 20 and know the glory of Christ on Easter Sunday, March 27. Worship begins at 9 and 10:30 a.m. times. It is our prayer to see you there.

Wesley Five Weeks Of Lenten Love—As Christians we are thankful for God's amazing grace and love. God wants us to enrich our lives by passing on this love to others. Wesley Church encourages you to reach out to those in need of His love during the five weeks of Lent. Each week a different area of love will be emphasized.

Week 5 - March 13th: Love and the Heart—This week you can reflect back on the four previous weeks. Prayers, Presence, Gifts and Service all come from having a generous Christian. May God richly bless you during this season of Lent.

Our "Five Weeks of Lenten Love" will conclude with a Prayer Vigil in the church sanctuary on Saturday, March 19 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Lenten Concert Series at First Presbyterian

The First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen will present a series of concerts to celebrate the Lenten Season. The concerts, held each Wednesday from noon until 12:30 p.m., will run through March 16. Each will feature a different musical performance.

The entire concert series is free and open to the public.

The remaining concert series date and performers is March 16-Concord Bell Ringers.

Our Lady Of Czestochowa R.C. Church

807 Hamilton Blvd., South Plainfield

MASS SCHEDULE

Daily at 8am except Wednesdays
(908) 756-1333

Tues-Miraculous Medal Novena followed by Mass
Thurs-Mass followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament until 10am

Weekend Schedule: Saturday evenings 5:30pm
Sunday mornings 8am and 11am

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ob•serve

(v.t.): 1. to celebrate ceremonially // 2. to notice (something), to pay special attention to // 3. (a) to look at with attention // 4. to perceive, notice, come to know by seeing // 5. to comment, to note attentively

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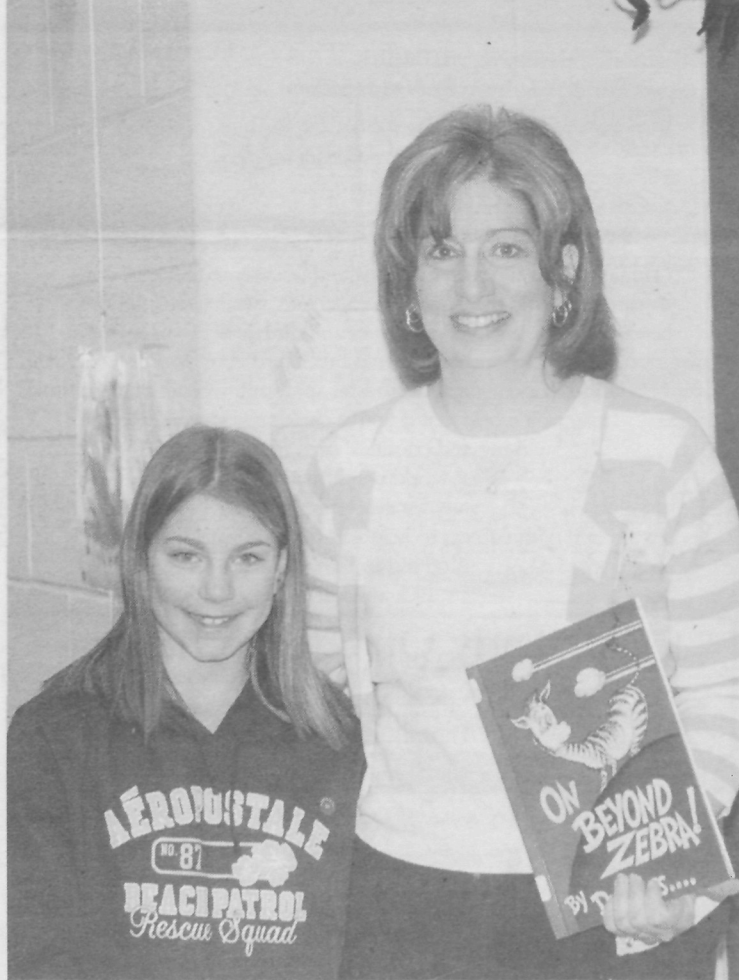
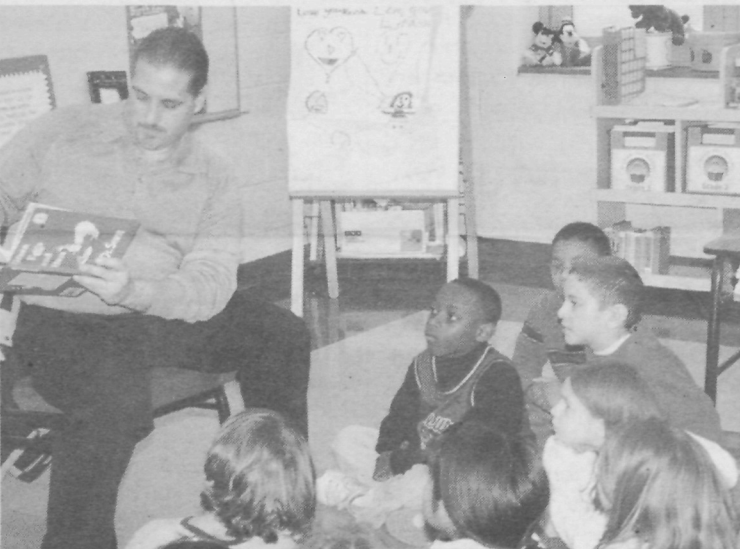
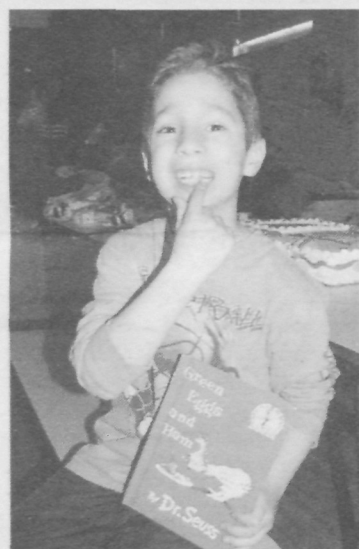
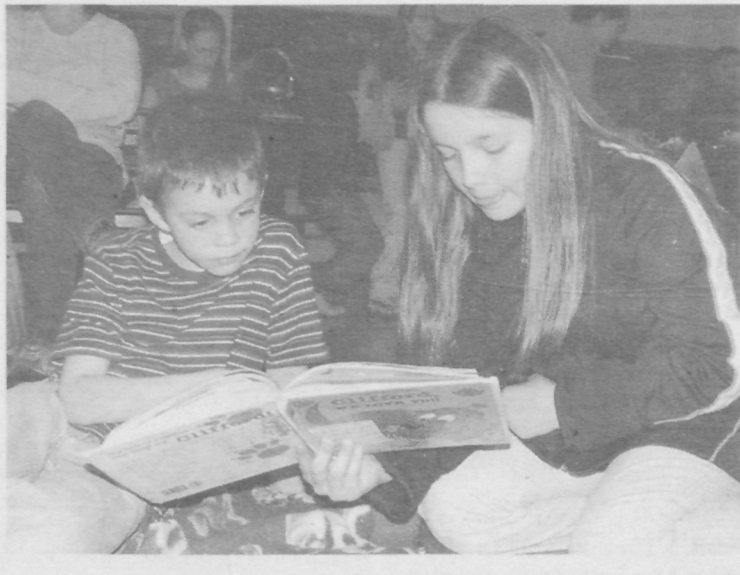
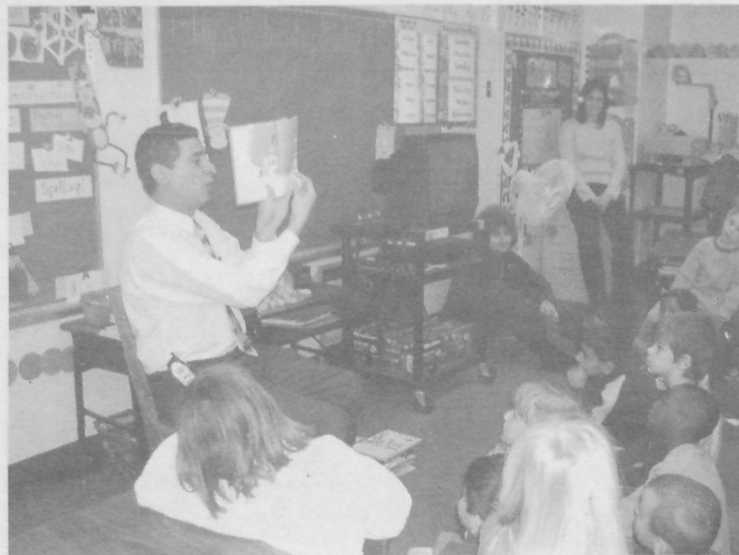
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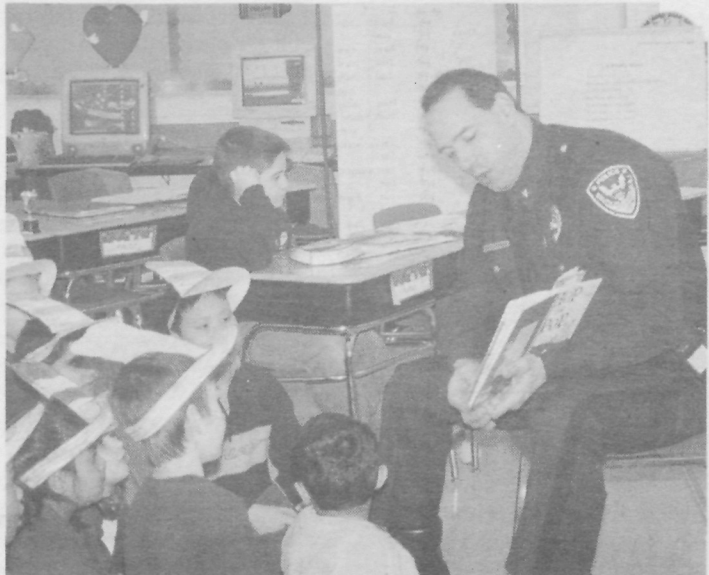
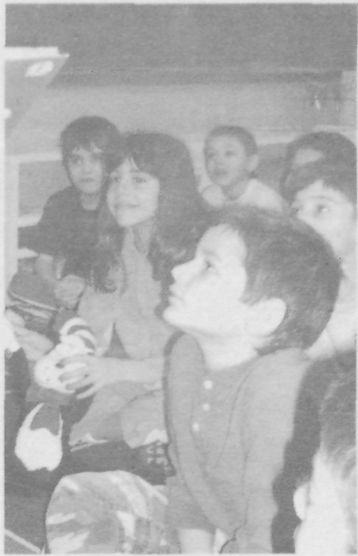
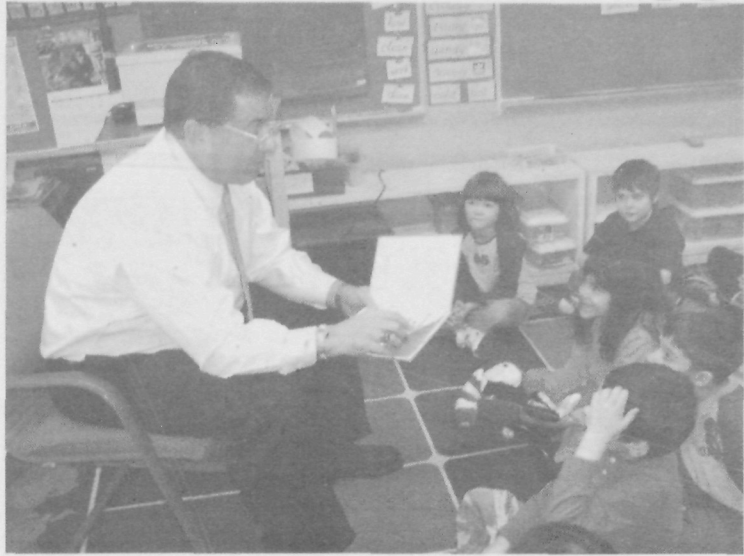


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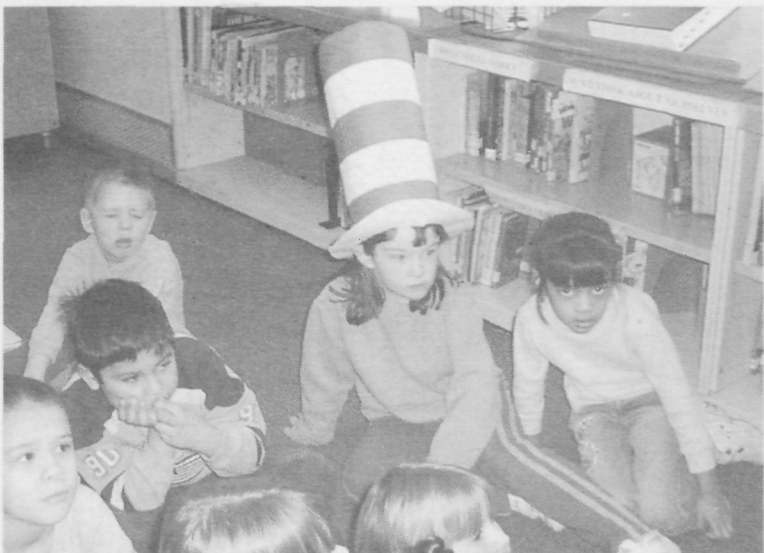
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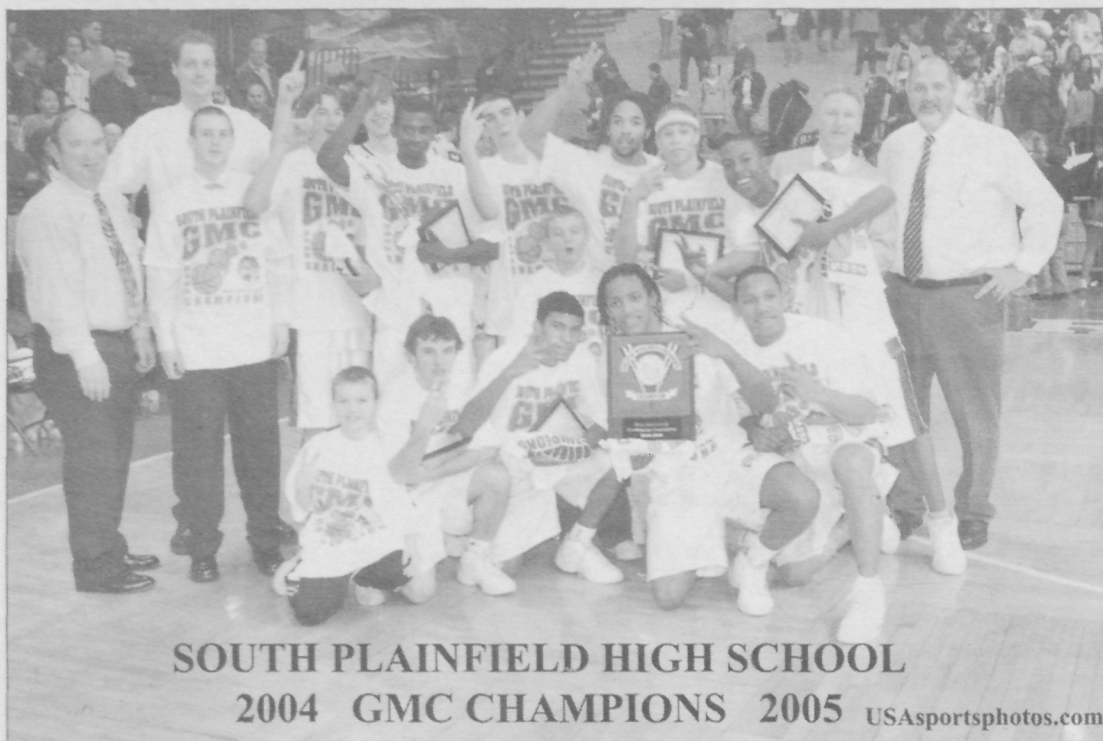
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Sports

Basketball



SOUTH PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
2004 GMC CHAMPIONS 2005 USAsportsphotos.com

Photo by John E. Szpara

SPHS Boys Basketball Team and GMC Champions are Matt Baszika, Marquis Jones, Darren Smith, Brian Cole, Kevin Graham, Kevin Siedenburger, Danny Hubner, Otheo (Opie) Muse, Shamai Santiago, Mike Stallone, Chris Stallone, Daryl Stevenson. Head coach is Jeff Lubreski and assistant coaches are Mike Allocco, Sebastian deVoogt and Robert Conway.

Tiger Basketball Ends Season With GMC Title

By Michael Duquette

South Plainfield High School's Boys Basketball Team ended the 2004-2005 season on a high note, capturing their second straight Greater Middlesex Conference Championship title and advancing to the quarterfinals of the state tournament.

Head Coach Jeff Lubreski was very pleased with the boys' outstanding performance this season, which consisted of an impressive 19 wins and 6 losses. "The key to this year's victories," Lubreski said, "was within the seniors, who displayed superior leadership skills for their underclassman teammates. I think we had very good senior leadership from [team captains] Marquis Jones and Darren Smith," he

added. Jones and Smith excelled with an average of about 20 points per game. Also, Jones scored the basket that edged out opponent St. Joseph High School and won the GMC title with only 14 seconds left.

But Smith and Jones were not the only stellar players, Lubreski commented. Senior Matt Baszika "had a couple of outstanding games" during the season, as did junior Kevin Seidenburger, who will be captain for the 2005-2006 season. Other notable players include juniors Brian Cole and Kevin Graham and sophomores Danny Hubner, Shamai Santiago, Opie Muse, and Chris and Mike Stallone. "These players," Lubreski proudly stated, "were able to get experience and confidence" from their

older teammates.

Perhaps most importantly, Coach Lubreski said that one of the biggest factors in this victorious season was the tremendous support of South Plainfield High School's student body, who crowded the stands throughout the season supporting their Tigers. During the many winning season of South Plainfield's winter sports, the fans have constantly come out to show an inspiring amount of support for their deserving peers.

It was the hard work, dedication and support for the outstanding players that has led to a stellar season. Congratulations to the Tiger Boys' Basketball Team—and all of South Plainfield High School's hardworking athletes—on a job well done!

By Lee Flanagan

JUNIOR BASEBALL CLUB NOTES



We have filled all eight teams in C-League with a total of 96 children. Two more players are still needed in B-League to bring it to a total of 96 also. A-League is filled and will have 66 players. This makes a total of 386 registered players this year.

Managers are now set in all leagues, with a total of 32 teams in five leagues. All small fry players will hear from their managers this week.

This Saturday, March 12 is our first pre-season work detail at the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Complex (SPJBC). We are asking all parents of our eight-year-old and 13-year-old players to attend. The work detail begins at 8 a.m.

Equipment pick-up for all managers will be on Sunday, March 13 from 1 to 4 p.m.

Anthony Guida, freshman boys

baseball coach at South Plainfield High School will be conducting a coaches clinic at the SPJBC on Tuesday, March 15 beginning at 7:30 p.m. All managers and coaches are welcome to attend along with any players. Door prizes will be awarded at this clinic.

Selection of managers for our SPJBC traveling all-stars teams will be made by the April monthly meeting. If you would like to manage one of our traveling all-star teams, drop the commission a note by March 28.

We have tickets on sale for a new Mercedes. Michelle Kunie and First Class Travel are sponsoring the second prize. Tickets are available from Nancy Salici or any Executive Board member. Call the SPJBC for tickets at (908) 754-2090.



Ponytail Softball Batters Box

By Tom Gratta

Next South Plainfield parents' Ponytail Association meeting is at 7 p.m. March 22 in the Middle School Library. The association will be holding a mandatory free coaches clinic for all recreation coaches on Saturday, March 19 at the PAL.

Anyone interested in coaching or just helping out are welcome! Time will be posted later. We will also be holding a field clean up. On March 12 at 9 a.m. At the fields we can use all the help we can get. So please, give a little time, it will go a long way.

Student/Faculty Basketball Rescheduled

The annual Student/Faculty Middle School Basketball game and fundraiser, postponed on Feb. 24 due to the snowstorm, has been rescheduled for Thursday, March 10.

Pre-game ceremonies (introductions, national anthem, cheering, etc.)

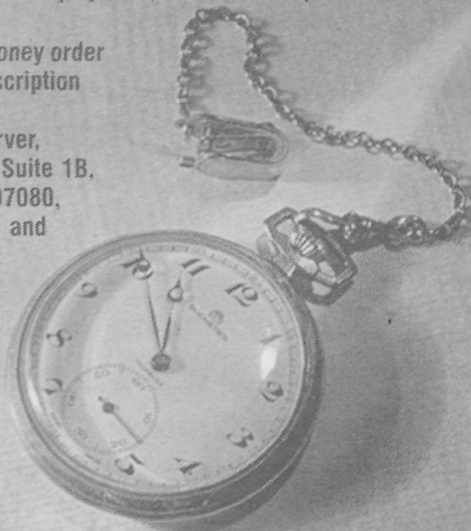
begin at 6:30 p.m. and the game starts at 7 p.m. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$4. The money raised will be used to buy pre-paid phonecards for the soldiers in Iraq. (They will be bought and sent in bulk after the game.)

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Junior Journalist WINNER



Charlie and Debbie Kurland from Hometown Heros present dinner to this last week's Junior Journalist contest winner Tara O'Day, pictured here with her mom Diane, dad Bob and sister Lauren.

Congratulations Tara!

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soul...write!

Winterguard Are Novices No More!

The 2005 Silver Dreams Winterguard from the South Plainfield High School competed this past Saturday at Triton High School in South Jersey. The guard, under the direction of Mr. Tweed and Mrs. Petrocelli, scored an excellent 82.1, not only earning them first place in the Scholastic Novice Division, but also earning them a promotion to the Scholastic "A" Division. The Silver Dreams Winterguard consists of 15 very talented young ladies who practice for long hours to improve on the intricate flag, saber and rifle work for this year's show. The guard performs to *Cry If You Want To* and *Blue Skies* done by the Holy Cole Trio.

This year's 2005 guard members are Nicole Aiello, Gaelle Amazon, Liz Blackford, Gina Butrico, Katie Eder, Dunai Galarza, Kristin Gualano, Cassie Hoffman, Brianne Howarth, Tara O'Keefe, Ashley Peterson, Stephanie Troia, Alyssa Woodel and Nadine Yon.

The Winterguard will compete over the next several weeks before taking their show to Wildwood for the Atlantic Coast Championships which are held April 28 through May 1. The Winterguard will be fundraising Friday, April 1 and Saturday, April 2, at local businesses to raise money for their admission and registration costs for the Atlantic Coast Championship Competition. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Congratulations to all Winterguard members on your promotion to Scholastic "A."

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If this sounds like something you would like to get involved in, contact Sheela Thompson or call our church secretary Kathy at (908) 757-2838. After hours you may leave your name and phone.

We promise to help you find a prayer mom and get you started praying for the children.

Wrestling

BY BOBBY HUNTER

Tiger Wrestlers Send Seven To Atlantic City

By Bob Hunter

The wrestling season will culminate in Boardwalk Hall for seven South Plainfield wrestlers this weekend in Atlantic City, where the New Jersey state wrestling tournament begins Friday night and ends with the finals on Sunday.

South Plainfield will be sending seven wrestlers to the state tournament after a very tough and physical Region 3 tournament this past weekend at Union High School. The Tigers sent eight into the semi-final round and had three in the consolation round. But things did not go as planned, as the Tigers wrestlers did not get a lot of help from the officials and did not get any good calls the entire tournament.

It was obvious in the opening final, at 103 pounds, when Patrick Hunter was hit with a stall call 15 seconds into the second period while out to the side working to turn his opponent. Then in the third period he was hit again with the score tied at 2-2. Then in the last thirty four seconds the wrestlers tied up on the mat, with each not having any advantage, a stalemate should have been called but it was not. That was how it ended with Hunter losing a questionable 3-2 decision to Frank Perrelli of Delbarton. Hunter won his first two matches by tech-fall and major decision to reach the finals.

Billy Ashnault was next at 112 and he had the same kind of luck when it seemed that he scrambled out of a takedown, but it was not to be as he lost to Ryan Wilson of Rahway 4-0. Ashnault won his first two matches by fall to reach the final.

Then came the showdown between two undefeated 119 pound wrestlers, Jimmy Conroy and Mike Grey of Delbarton. Grey is the number two ranked 119 pounder in the country. Grey went on the attack getting a takedown early, but Conroy quickly escaped. That's how it went the entire match, with Conroy losing his first

match of the year 10-4. Conroy won his first two matches by fall to reach the finals.

Another big match in the finals was at 135 pounds with undefeated Ed McCray going up against state place winner Steve Mineo of Scotch Plains. Things happened quickly as Mineo scored first and held a 6-3 lead going into the third period. Mineo was hit with a stalling call making the score 6-4 with time running out. Now in a neutral position with less than 10 seconds left, McCray hits Mineo with a takedown to tie the score as time runs out. Then, 42 seconds into overtime, McCray hits Mineo with a throw that sends Mineo to his back for the win. But McCray finished him off getting the fall and the lone Tiger championship.

Next up for the Tigers at 145 pounds was Paul Ritchey who has been wrestling great as of late, got caught early by Jionni LaValle of Hanover Park and trailed 5-0. Credit Ritchey for not giving up, he battled

back but LaValle seemed to have the edge in strength. LaValle won by major decision 20-9.

Kevin Crilley (189) also came up short in his final against Shane Mallory of New Providence 4-0. Mallory beat Crilley in the District 12 final 7-6. Crilley won his first match by major decision then beat Matt Rathburn of Boonton 9-4.

Rob Maistickle (215) lost a tough semi-final match 6-2 to eventual champion Niko Somers of Madison. But Maistickle rebounded by beating Bryan Reilly of Middlesex by major decision 14-4 in the second round of wrestle backs. In the consolation finals Maistickle was down in the third period when he turned talented freshman Jessie Boyden of Breauly and scored the fall at 5:22 to secure his reservations in Atlantic City in dramatic fashion.

Nick Dorey (130) won a big OT match over Anthony Crecca of Cranford in the quarters, but lost to his old nemesis Tyler Riccio of Watchung in

the consolation finals. Riccio was pinned by Darion Caldwell in the semis. Dorey defeated Andrew Conley of Madison 11-1 and Joe Duffy of Union 10-5.

Viet Vo (125) lost Friday night but bounced back Saturday when he pinned Nick Desiato of Middlesex. He then lost to Trevor Melde in second round wrestle backs.

Peter DeAndrea (140), who was another one victimized by the officiating, clearly had a takedown when DeAndrea had a leg in and control under both arms. This one of many "no calls" cost him this match. DeAndrea and rival Shane Riccio met again in the consolation finals. The two went through another hard-fought battle, with Riccio coming out on top 5-0. After the match the two sat together on the edge of the mat, embraced one another and talked for about ten minutes. That, my friends, is sportsmanship displayed by two very classy wrestlers. Congratulations to all the coaches and state qualifiers.

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southplainfieldpeople Milestones



(Left to right) Heather Roth-History, Dr. George Sirgiovanni, The Honorable Shirley Hayes Tolentino and Harylnne Lack, American Studies/Justice Studies.

Heather Roth Receives Academic Award

Heather Roth, student from the College of Saint Elizabeth, received the academic award at the 16th Annual Student Academic Leadership Awards dinner and ceremony sponsored by the Alumnae/i Association.

Students are nominated by the faculty. The awards are given for academic

excellence, leadership and service to the community. Ms. Roth is student teaching at the middle school level and high school level in the North Plainfield and Piscataway School districts.

Heather is a graduate of South Plainfield High School.

Tommy Hickey Named Stage Manager

South Plainfield Almost Famous Players member Tommy Hickey of Middlesex is currently serving as stage manager for Middlesex High School's production of *Lucky Stiff*. A musical based on the novel *The Man Who Broke The Bank At Monte Carlo*, by Michael Butterworth.

Lucky Stiff is a musical farce in the best sense of the word. The complicated and hysterically funny plot in-

volves one dead body, a nerdy English shoe salesman, six million bucks in diamonds, and a lot of dogs. Intrigued? Show Dates are March 10, 11 and 12 at 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for students and seniors. Tickets are available at the door. Middlesex High School is located at 300 Kennedy Dr. in Middlesex. For more information call (732) 317-6000.

Local Teacher Retires After 36 Years of Service

Marilyn Winston, first grade teacher at Franklin School, recently retired after 36 years of service to South Plainfield.

Winston received her undergraduate degree in Political Science from Hunter College in New York City and her graduate degree in Education from Queens College in Flushing, New York. She began her tenure in South Plainfield after spending the first three years of her teaching career in another district. In addition to first grade at Franklin, she has also taught second and fourth grades and has been at Grant and Riley Schools. She served as student council advisor at Franklin and was instrumental in introducing Project Read to first grade there. For her teaching expertise and respect from her colleagues, she was honored several years ago as Franklin's recipient of the New Jersey Governor's Teacher Recognition Award. She is a member of NEA, NJEA, MCEA and SPEA.

In retirement Winston hopes to spend more time with family and friends who live far away. She will also continue her volunteer work with the elderly and her interests in doll-house decorating, crocheting, reading and travel, as well as her Mystery Club and Red Hatter activities.

Send us your Milestones!

Email: spobserver@comcast.com or
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From the South Plainfield Library

Bookma

By Kenneth Morgan

Right about now, I'm sure you're breaking out the shamrocks for St. Patrick's Day next week. But, I'm sure you can spare a moment for news from South Plainfield Library:

Don't forget about our special program, "Celtic Music Journey," on Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. Heather Mulvey will speak about and perform a number of Celtic songs. This program is presented free of charge and everyone is welcome to attend.

We'll follow our usual Storytime schedule next week. For those who weren't in the room last time, here's that schedule again: Tuesday morning at 10:30, Wednesday evening at 6:30, and Thursday afternoon at 1:15. Each program is for children ages three and over, lasts about an hour, and features stories and a craft activity. No pre-registration is required. There's also our "Books-N-Babies" program today and next Friday morning at 10:30. That program is for children up to age three. For more information, please call us at (908) 754-7885 and ask for Miss Linda.

The new group from the Video and CD Circuits are now available. New Video titles include *The Italian Job*, *Down with Love*, *Meet the Parents*, *Gentleman's Agreement* and on DVD, *Sponge for Hire* featuring SpongeBob, while the CD Circuit now features artists including Bruce Springsteen, John Tesh, Ashlee Simpson, Bjork and B.B. King. Videos and DVDs may be borrowed, four at a time, for two days, while CDs go out for two weeks. The Video Circuit will be available until March 28, while the CD Circuit will be here until mid-June.

Meanwhile, we've added many videos and DVDs to our own collection. They include *Ray*, *Collateral*, the first season of *The O.C.*, *The Notebook* and *Friday Night Lights*. New juvenile titles include DVD copies of *Swiss Family*

Robinson and *The Lion King II* and VHS copies of *Balto II* and *Benji: Off the Leash*. More new titles are on the way; we'll let you know when they're circulating.

We've got three advisories for you this week. First, here's a word regarding kits that we have available in our Children's Room, like the *Hooked on Phonics* items, for example. These kits each contain several items, like books, flash cards or cassettes. Each of these items is necessary for the kits to be used properly. So, if you borrow them, please ask a staff member to make sure that they contain everything they're supposed to, and then make sure you return all of the contents. Since these kits are complete sets, we can't simply replace one missing part; we'd have to purchase a whole new kit, which we don't have the budget to do. So, please make sure they stay intact.

Next, a financial advisory. If you need to pay fines and other charges, we'd greatly appreciate it if you'd try to have exact change. While we try to keep enough petty cash available, it's a real hassle when we have to repeatedly break big bills. So, please try to keep your payments as close to the needed amount as you can. It looks bad when a public library puts up a sign reading, "WE NEED SINGLES".

And, thirdly, here's yet another reminder regarding personal communications devices; specifically, pagers and cell phones. Please be aware of other patrons and please set your gadgets to inaudible (that's QUIET) mode, or turn them off altogether. And, if you need to make a phone call, please make it from the vestibule or outside the building. We'd rather not have to install jammers in the new building, but if you won't cooperate...

That's all for now; thanks for reading. Maybe those shamrocks are next to the red dragons you wore for St. David's Day. (You did wear those, right?)

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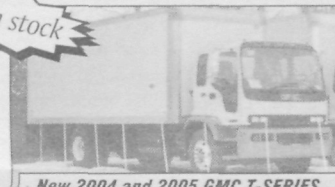
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Obituaries

Santa (Compagnino) Girifalco, 93

Santa (Compagnino) Girifalco died on Wednesday, March 2 at Genesis Elder Care Center, The Woodlands, in Plainfield.

Born in Brooklyn, Santa was raised in New York City and had resided in Pennsylvania and Connecticut before moving to Clark for 30 years. She recently moved to South Plainfield in 2002.

Santa was a seamstress for 50 years and she owned and operated Sandra's Bridal Shop in Linden for many years.

She was devoted and enjoyed spending time with her family.

She is predeceased by her husband, Anthony who died in 1990 and by two sisters, Anna Spina and Mary LaPira.

Surviving is a daughter, Dorothy DeStefano of South Plainfield; two sons, Louis and his wife, Catherine of Pa. and Sal and his wife, Lynn of Huntington, NY; 16 grandchildren and 26 great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Thomas E. Graham, 75

Thomas E. Graham died on Friday, March 4, at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in Linden, he was a graduate of St. Mary's High School in Elizabeth and had resided in Fords before settling to Edison 48 years ago.

A builder by trade, he operated under his name, "Tom Graham Builder," doing all types of construction in the central New Jersey area for most of his life. In addition, he helped his daughter, Doreen, establish "Ms. Doreen's Fabulous Feet Dance Studio" in Metuchen.

Known to many as "Tommy G" or "Pop," he will be remembered by his sense of humor. Tom was also a member of the South Plainfield BPO Elks Lodge #2298.

He is predeceased by his wife, Rita (Krevetski) Graham; two sisters, Louise and Marie and three brothers, Joe, Edward and Peter.

Surviving are two daughters, Donna Lee Barnes and her husband Ed of South Plainfield; Doreen Graham Padilla of Edison; a sister, Eileen Wans of Edison and a brother, Sam Graham of Barnegat.

Also surviving are six grandchildren,

James, Brian, Mary Rita, Katie Barnes, Christopher Luebecke and Gabrielle Padilla.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Jean (Dalton) Evans, 78

Jean (Dalton) Evans died on Friday, March 4 at JFK Hartwyck at Edison Estates in Edison.

Born and raised in Morristown, Mrs. Evans was a lifelong resident of Central Jersey.

She worked for JFK Hartwyck at Cedarbrook as the director of recreation for many years.

An avid piano player and entertainer throughout central New Jersey, Jean dedicated her life to her children and family.

She is predeceased by a son, Jay Przewoznik, who died in 1997.

Surviving are two daughters, Jean Joanes and her husband Kenneth and Joy Ayers, both of South Plainfield; five sons, Vincent Wojciechowski and his wife Adeline of Roxbury, NY, John Wojciechowski and his wife Doreen of Edison, James Przewoznik of Piscataway, Joseph Przewoznik and his wife Marissa of Piscataway and Jeffrey Przewoznik, also of Piscataway; a sister, Diane Blazer of Fla.; 22 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. Also surviving are two cousins, Denny Dalton of New York City and Terri Dalton of Pa. and other numerous relatives.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Matilda (Natale) Perry, 87

Matilda (Natale) Perry died on Thursday, March 3 at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield, surrounded by her adoring family.

The oldest of the famous Natale family, Matilda was born in Bayonne to the late Vincent and Gelsomina Natale. She resided in Plainfield where her family owned and operated the original V. Natale's Bakery on Johnston Ave. and later settled to South Plainfield, where she has resided for the past 57 years.

An extraordinary person, she was a great cook who enjoyed spending much of her time as a homemaker for her children, grandchildren and great

grandchildren.

She was also employed by the former Bronston's Hat Company of Plainfield and the former Mattel Toy Co. in South Plainfield.

She is predeceased by her husband, Harry Perry.

Surviving is a daughter, Joan Mazuca of Plainfield; two sons, Vince of Westfield and Raymond of Green Brook; three sisters, Virginia Omelio of Bridgewater, Amelia Della Ventura of Pittstown and Clara Hagen of Fla. and eight grandchildren, Donna, Raymond Jr., David, Peter Jr., Joseph, John, Lisa and Tracey. In addition, she is survived by her 14 great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Louis P. Garofola, 56

Louis P. Garofola died on Monday, Feb. 7, at home.

Born in Plainfield, Louis resided in Plainfield and South Plainfield all of his life.

He was a self-employed ceramic tile and remodeling contractor. Louis served in the Army in Vietnam, serving two tours of duty. He was a member of VFW Post 6763, American Legion Post 243 and was a former member of the Italian American Progressive League. Louis really enjoyed fishing and hunting.

He was predeceased by his parents, Joseph and Mary Russo Garofola.

Surviving are his wife, Sandra Louise Gregg Garofola; two sons, Kenneth James and Kevin Joel Seibert; two sisters, Maryann Longo of Macungie, Pa. and Josephine Leach of South Plainfield; three grandchildren, Kenneth, Gabriel and Kathleen and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at the Flynn and Son/Koyen Funeral Home in Metuchen.

Valerie (Kummer) Ettman, 83

Valerie (Kummer) Ettman died on Sunday, March 6, at Cedar Oaks Care Center in South Plainfield.

Born in Brooklyn, she resided there until moving to South Plainfield two years ago to live with her son.

Valerie was an award winning seamstress who designed and made her own clothing. She had a passion for sewing and reading.

Mrs. Ettman is survived by her loving sons, Randy Ettman and daughter-in-law Rachele of Brooklyn, NY and Glen Ettman of South Plainfield; her grandchildren Cole Ettman, Veronica Ettman, Todd Ettman and Jessica Ettman and her former husband Spencer Ettman.

A memorial service will be held on Sunday, March 13, at South Plainfield Funeral Home, 2456 Plainfield Ave.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Mrs. Ettman's memory to The Tsunami Relief c/o UNICEF, 333 East 38th St., New York, NY 10016.

IN YOUR OPINION

(Continued from page 2)

tests: on a county basis, in those districts spending less, we outperform all. In those districts spending more, their scores top ours on average, in less than half the categories. On a statewide basis, we outperform the state average test result scores in every category.

I am sorry if the facts don't align with certain people's preconceived notions. For those groups that would like to form their opinions on accurate information rather than rumors and what they've heard, school superintendent Dr. Rosado has a standing offer for any group looking to avail themselves of information and to ask questions. Call the board office at (908) 754-4620 (press 1) and arrangements will be made for Dr. Rosado and representatives of the board to meet with you anytime, anywhere.

A point made in last week's article that I would agree with is that considering it's our tax dollars being spent and our children's education at stake, people should make every effort to get out to the Board's monthly meetings, as participation is key to any democratic process.

In closing I'll do something that has grown somewhat rare in this newspaper recently; I'll sign the letter.

**DANIEL SMITH
MEMBER, SOUTH PLAINFIELD
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Dear Editor,

I would like to commend our Student Leadership group at the South

Plainfield High School, Student Leadership Advisor Mrs. Martko and Dr. Kenneth May, in helping coordinate the fundraising activities at the schools, along with Mr. Blondo and the Middle School Student Council, Grant School, Miss Raimondo and Miss Ribar, Student Council advisors and Student Council at Riley School, Roosevelt Elementary School Student Council, who donated to the American Red Cross International Relief Fund, Franklin School Student Council, all to benefit the Tsunami Disaster Habitat for Humanity, and Kennedy School Student Council, who gave up their lunch and snack money.

Dr. May had requested additional pictures to be taken of all the Student Council members who attended the sendoff, along with various school officials (much to some peoples' beliefs were not pictures of siblings) for inclusion into each school's yearbook. After all this is all about children giving of themselves to others who are less fortunate in this time of disaster and this is what the yearbooks are all about, THE CHILDREN and ONLY THE CHILDREN.

It was wonderful to see The Habitat House travel to the various events at the high school to collect monetary donations to fulfill the fundraising event amount of \$10,000. Thank you to all the schools and the children who gave from the heart.

**DEBBIE BOYLE, YEARBOOK
COMMITTEE MEMBER
2004-2005 RILEY SCHOOL**

police report

- On Feb. 28 a May Ave. resident reported that their house had been shot with paintballs.

- Pyramid Construction on Corporate Blvd. reported that carpet and furniture had been dumped in their dumpster.

- On March 3 Juan Carlos Villavicencio-Mes, 20, of No. Plainfield was arrested for having tinted windows and two outstanding warrants at a motor vehicle stop.

- A Piscataway resident reported the theft of her wallet out of her backpack which was left unattended in a shopping cart at Home Depot.

- On March 4 a Hopkinson St. resident reported that their 2003 Hyundai had scratches on the hood, roof and truck and a sticky substance had been poured on the vehicle.

- An E. Crescent Parkway resident reported that someone withdrew funds from her checking account using her ATM card.

- A So. 9th St. resident reported the theft of their 1995 Ford Explorer from their driveway. The keys had been left in the vehicle.

- On March 5 Hector Nahum Campo-Ventura, 22, of Plainfield was arrested for driving on a suspended license, failure to exhibit a drivers li-

cense, no insurance and an outstanding warrant at a motor vehicle stop.

- Phillip L. Hardware, 57, of South Plainfield was arrested for reckless driving and driving while intoxicated at a motor vehicle stop.

- On March 6 an employee of a nail salon on Steilport Rd. reported that a customer had yelled at her, grabbed her neck and pushed her because she hadn't finished the manicure properly.

- On March 7 Angela P. Cross-Osaaga, 35, of Edison was arrested for fictitious display of plates and an outstanding warrant at a motor vehicle stop.

- Thuc Nguyen, 29, of Piscataway was arrested for driving while intoxicated and reckless driving at a motor vehicle stop.

- Daniel I. Miller, 19, of Edison was arrested for driving while intoxicated at a motor vehicle accident.

- Keirsten D. Myers, 21, of New Brunswick was arrested for driving on a suspended license and an outstanding warrant at a motor vehicle stop.

- A Banta Rd. resident reported that someone had entered her unlocked vehicle and taken some loose change. The suspect left a leather glove in the vehicle.

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Congratulations to the SPHS Tigers – Conference Champs!!!!

**Congratulations to SPHS Wrestling Team –
Undefeated District Champs!!**

**Way to go Jimmy Conroy and Patrick Hunter!!
Best of luck in Atlantic City!!! Go get 'em!!!**