

South Plainfield Observer

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50 CENTS

APRIL 8, 2005

BOE Budget Tops Candidates Debate

By Libby Barsky

Five of the six candidates vying for three Board of Education positions answered questions put to them by the public about whether they support the budget and what they would remove from the budget at Wednesday's Candidate's Debate sponsored by the Riley School PTSO.

All six candidates, incumbents Ken LaFreniere, Tim Morgan and Dan Smith and challengers Carol Byrne, John Markham and Jeff Seider are experienced board members. They were all given the opportunity to review what they had done during their tenures. A bout of the flu sidelined Seider from the debate.

In a format developed by The League of Women Voters, moderator Ann Armstrong of Branchburg asked for opening statements and then proceeded to ask the questions submitted by the members of the audience.

Most of the questions surrounded the \$47,561,491 budget, with \$37,347,987 to be raised by local taxes at the rate of \$2.49 per \$100 of assessed valuation or an increase of \$375 for a home valued at \$117,300.

All the incumbents, LaFreniere, Morgan and Smith, affirmed their

support of the budget.

"It's hard to ask people to vote for that number, but I will vote for it. I've never voted against a school budget," said Byrne, who acknowledged that the loss of ratables by three points and the lack of additional state aid increased the school rate.

"I'll support it, but I'm not happy with the staff cuts and leaving only \$4,800 for the capital outlay account," said Markham. LaFreniere quickly noted that the state now includes the \$250,000 maintenance account as part of capital outlay. "In the construction of the budget, this district has to gain the confidence of taxpayers. If a budget is voted on, the Board has to live with that budget. It can't go out and ask for additional funds," Markham added.

Contacted at home, Seider commented about the budget, "I don't support it, but that doesn't mean I won't vote for it. I don't support it because I don't think all avenues of control were exhausted before presenting that budget. I would rather see administration go, and top administrators assume more duties. To cut teachers aides and the ones directly linked to the children is very wrong," he said. The budget includes

(Continued on page 16)



Members of the eighth grade Student Council at South Plainfield Middle School pose with the cell phones donated to the class fundraiser by Comcast. Council members include Kathryn Paterek (8th grade president), Katie Baldassarre (8th grade vice president), Samantha Barthel, Cari Black, Jackie Bosse, Danille Butrico, Gina Curcio, Jeannine DeAndrea, Stephanie DiCindio, Sara Frazzano, Jaime Giannakis, Jessica Handwerker, Stephanie Lanza, Brittany Okoszko, Anita Paterek, Scott Suleski, Alyssa Sutherland, Kara Thomas and Gina Viola.

Comcast Phone Donation Gives Boost to 8th Grade Fundraiser

South Plainfield Middle School eighth grade class was the recent recipient of 222 donated used cell phones from Comcast. The cell phones will be recycled to raise funds for eighth grade activities.

The cell phone project was initiated by South Plainfield resident Jennie Fazio, an employee in Comcast's Technical Operations Department. She is the mother of Vinnie Fazio, a member of the class.

"Comcast's donation gave our collection drive a big boost," said eighth

grade advisor Donna Tierney. The class will receive one to 16 dollars per phone, depending on the phone's condition.

"From the beginning, Comcast has believed in giving back to the communities we so proudly serve," said Tom Sharrard, Comcast Area Vice President. "We continue to have a strong commitment to improve the quality of life in the local communities where our customers and employees live and work."

Comcast's community investment encompasses a wide range of activities

and initiatives, including products and services, employment opportunities, charitable contributions and grants, commitment of employee volunteer hours and the donation of millions of dollars of airtime for public service announcements through its affiliation with the Ad Council.

Anyone wishing to donate used cell phones may bring them to South Plainfield Middle School's main office, 2201 Plainfield Ave. For more information call Donna Tierney at (908) 754-4620-ext. 376 or 307.

Superintendent Goes Door to Door Rosado visits schools, seniors & more to promote budget

With less than two weeks left before residents go to the polls to vote on the 2005/2006 budget, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Rosado has been busy speaking at any and all meetings and gatherings all over town. He has

spent hours explaining how the budget was compiled, what cuts the board was forced to make and where the money is and is not coming from.

Tuesday, Rosado met with seniors for two hours. Their questions were tough, but he made sure that he answered every one that was asked. Also speaking was Assistant Superintendent of School Anthony Massaro, who urged everyone to support the budget and talked about the consequences if the budget does not pass. Something will have to go and it won't be in the classrooms, but in sports and clubs. Also attending were several students from the Peer Leadership Club, who volunteer their time with seniors at dances and dinners throughout the year. When asked why they were there, they answered in unison, "Because this budget is all about us and we wanted to be here to support it."

Dr. Rosado's presentation uses slides containing charts which cover everything voters need to understand

the budget. He is trying to convince voters to approve a budget that will raise school property taxes by about \$375 or 32 points per year on a home assessed at \$117,300. It hasn't been easy, but he is not deterred. He explained that no one likes the tax increase, but the board already made cuts of \$800,000 in the budget, including 14.8 jobs, most of those living in South Plainfield. Had the cuts not been made, they would have been forced to cut 38.8 positions.

The most impressive of Rosado's chart showed that the cost per student in South Plainfield is less than the county or state average, and the test scores are also above both the county and state average. Those scores exceed those of districts that get massive school aid from the state. Rosado says the rise in the test scores is due to programs instituted during the past few years that are finally beginning to show positive results, such as summer school courses and the

(Continued on page 11)



Roosevelt School children entertain their guests at Grandparents Day. For story and additional photos, please turn to page 8.

GOTCHA!

When the Observer editorial staff planned the April Fool's Edition, we had no idea that we'd actually "get" so many readers. The response to the "joke" issue was overwhelmingly positive and we applaud our readers for being such good sports.

For the past few weeks Nancy Grennier, Editor in Chief, contemplated adding some humor to constant deadlines the staff faces, and very few others were made

aware of our plans.

We chose stories that would not offend anyone and that would, initially, be plausible (with the exception of the aliens). Politics was taboo.

The issue evoked the response we were hoping for. People all over town read the front page and began yelling, calling friends and borough and school officials. When they caught on, they all

started laughing.

The Observer received calls from the mayor, superintendent, many irate residents and Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan. All were laughing and congratulated us on the issue.

To set the record straight, every story on the front page was fictitious! None of it was true! So let's all go about our business and be glad that for a few days we had something to laugh about! GOTCHA!

If you enjoyed this edition of the Observer & would like to subscribe, call 908-668-0010.

Mark Your Calendars

council meetings

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
April 18	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.
May 3	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, *except where noted.

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

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.

zoning board of adjustment

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

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

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.

board of education meetings

Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. unless otherwise noted

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

Regular Board Meeting Tuesdays at 8 p.m.

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.

April 19, May 17, June 21, July 19, Aug. 16, Sept. 20, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, Dec. 20.

recreation commission

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

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

environmental commission

Meets once a month (second Wednesday)

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

April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, Aug. 10, Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 9, Dec. 14 and Jan. 11, 2006

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 (No Meeting in August)

board of education curriculum/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.

Dear friends,

My heart was filled with gratitude and humility when you gathered at Wesley on March 6 to send a mission team off to India. I continue to cherish your love for me and the cause I am engaged in. I will write individual notes. But it may take a while, so I decided to send this letter to you now.

The three college students from Wesley and I arrived in India safely on March 9 and were received warmly by the officials of the Nesamony Institute. Immediately we visited the tsunami areas and one refugee camp. It broke our hearts to see the damages. The next day we visited more refugee camps in Kanyakumari District (southern most tip of India), and what broke our hearts was not the wreckage of homes and properties only, but the broken people who were living in the refugee camps. The camps were not even fit for animals. No clean water, no nutritious food, no bathroom facilities, small rooms for a family of five or seven, no kitchen, no beds, I can go on. These camps have been set up by the so called international relief organizations and of course the state government. These agencies obviously believe that these refugees deserve only this.

We set out and made profiles of orphans and other destitute children. We gathered them at the Nesamony Institute Home for Children that we rented on March 12. We decided that we cannot fix everything, so, let us raise some children and make them creative and smart persons so that they get jobs and support themselves and their families. So the Home for Children was officially inaugurated in Nagercoil near Kanyakumari, a city 12 miles north of the Indian Ocean. Fifteen children will live there and attend school starting on June 1. Now, since the school year is not over, they will continue to go to schools near their refugee camps until the end of May. But we have given to them \$25 for March. The April support will also be given on April 9, but they look forward to living in the home in June. Our goal is to support 50 children, so we have 50 profiles to promote. Those of you who have sent your annual or monthly sponsorship money will receive a profile soon. I am happy about the way it is going so far.

But we need to build a new and comfortable home for the 50 children. We have bought a little more than a half acre of land with most of the help from Wesley church and some, from NAAIC. We want the home with latest educational tools for the children so that they will do well in school. I am looking for donations. I am looking for many individuals to give \$1,000 each. If you are not that person, you can raise it. You have one year to do it. Please consider. I will send details about the building plan in another mailing. But stay with us at this critical point in the life of these children. But feel free to call me at (908)756-1044. God bless you and your family.

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Corporate Accounts Welcome

Dear Editor,

I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to everyone who sent their prayers and best wishes to me during my recent hospitalization.

The outpouring of love and prayers as well as all the cards and flowers and gifts were just overwhelming. They sustained me week after week and continue to be a constant source of strength. I am truly blessed and I will never be able to adequately thank you all.

I would also like to publicly thank my unbelievable staff at the Senior Center ...Sandy, Angelo, Linda, Michael and Joe and volunteers Barbara, Lillian, Loretta, Fran, Joe and Dolores and Rose B. I cannot tell you how reassuring it is to know that everything at the Center would run as smooth as always.

I want to thank them so much for their tireless dedication and exceptional service to the center. My thanks also to the mayor and council for their support and encouragement during my absence. I truly appreciate it.

**GOD BLESS,
JOANN GRAF**

To the Editor,

On behalf of the South Plainfield High School Girls Softball teams, we would like to thank Rosa and Rich Szeliga for hosting the softball season kick-off pasta dinner at their home and Eileen Senz for all her added help.

It was a great way to start off the season by bringing everyone to the table. Thanks from all the girls.

**MEGHAN AND DEBBIE BOYLE
AND THE GIRL'S SOFTBALL TEAM**

To the Editor,

Many opinion pieces that concern the budget have flooded the *Observer* for weeks. They have been written by parents, BOE candidates and other concerned citizens. One group that has been left out, however, is the one that matters the most, the children of South Plainfield.

As a junior at South Plainfield High School, I have had the privilege of experiencing all that our public schools have to offer. Never before did I think something so devastating as this would happen. Although I may not be old enough to vote or have a direct say in the matter, I do know what will occur if the budget does not pass. For decades, South Plainfield High School has been known for their many accomplishments in the three A's: Academics, Athletics and the Arts. Consider these areas obliterated in terms of excellence; vote down the budget and you vote down everything students have worked for.

The new budget calls for a small portion of teachers to be cut. Without this, even more teachers would be let

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 or to limit the number of letters submitted by one individual on the same subject.

go. This will directly impact public schools by weakening the learning environment. Class sizes would increase and punish students whose main goal it is to concentrate. The budget *must* pass to ensure quality education in South Plainfield.

Our town has long been praised for its high achievements in the area of athletics. Our wrestling, field hockey, and basketball teams, among others, have been crowned champions in passing years. What will happen to kids when their teams are disbanded due to lack of funding? What will they occupy their time with after school? The same goes for our arts program. Talented singers, instrumentalists, artists, and actors have graduated with such success in the past; high school would no longer be a place to expand your horizons outside of the mundane curriculum. Also, students would most likely not get the chance to take part in a field involving music, athletics, or other artistic endeavors.

If the budget gets voted down, colleges will laugh at South Plainfield students. What modern school chops down its extracurricular activities and only stresses academic courses with larger class sizes? Not only would the school system fail, but the town would as well. Property values would decrease dramatically because, let's face it: who wants to go to a town with a horrible school system? *Everyone's* lives would change. Don't ruin the town just because you want lower taxes. The results will be devastating if the budget does not pass.

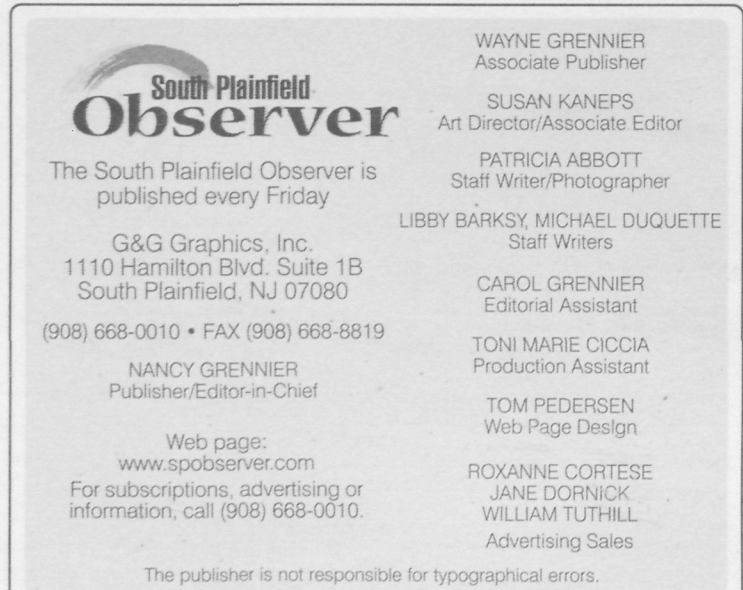
Once again, I may only be a junior and you may be thinking that a teenager has no true knowledge of the issue. Yet, the voices of the next generation should matter. What I am saying voices every student's thoughts in South Plainfield. Please take into consideration everything I have stated and vote for the budget on April 19. With your help, the kids in South Plainfield won't have to suffer. Don't kill our voices.

**SINCERELY,
NATALIA TAMZOKE**

To the Editor:

This is in response to a statement by Dan Smith that he read at a board meeting and, in an unusual precedent,

(Continued on page 10)



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

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OPINION EDITORIAL

By Majority Whip Peter J. Barnes, Jr.

The Face of Online Sex Crimes in New Jersey

At four-years-old, little Baby J. should have been out building sand castles at the beach or visiting the local playground. But no, not Baby J. Instead, she spent months of her most formative years as the repeated victim of sexual torture. Worst of all, she was victimized at the hands of a supposed loved one—her father. To make an already tragic story more horrifying, her father memorialized each encounter by video tape and traded these videos online like baseball cards to other pedophiles.

It was this very sobering story that the New Jersey State Police and FBI shared when they testified before the Assembly Law & Public Safety Committee in March to highlight the increasing prevalence of online sex crimes and the difficulty they face when investigating such heinous offenses. Indeed, underneath this true story lies a startling truth in New Jersey, “our law enforcement agencies do not always receive the tools and resources they need to keep New Jersey children safe when it comes to online sex crimes.”

What we do know, though, is that every year, the number of complaints regarding online sexual crimes against children increases at unprecedented rates. In fact, the New Jersey State Police indicate that they receive between 350-400 sex crime reports each year from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children. However, due to a technical and unintended oversight in current law, they are only capable of investigating a fraction of these crimes. How can this possibly be true?

The simple answer is that the State Police are handicapped by their inability to acquire an offender's IP (internet protocol) address expeditiously. This information allows the State Police to trace back the sexually explicit images to an account holder and a specific location.

However, in order to obtain the IP address of a predator, the State Police must navigate through a bureaucratic quagmire by filing a Communications Information Order (CIO), which must be reviewed and approved by their immediate supervisor, a Deputy Attorney General, and a presiding Judge as well as file a request for a subpoena from the County Prosecutor's Office. This cumbersome process causes significant delays, often times exceeding 42 days—during which time pertinent IP address records are erased by the local service providers, who are only capable of maintaining these logging records for 25-30 days. Consequently, the loss of this information stifles any attempt to investigate the matter further.

As such, I have sponsored Assembly Bill 3786, a bill that would remedy this oversight to allow the State Police to acquire an offender's IP address as part of the requested subpoena through the County Prosecutor's Office within ten days. Specifically, it would streamline the information gathering process by eliminating the need to obtain the lengthy and complicated CIO. Indeed, New Jersey has been behind the learning curve in this area as most other states have already adopted measures similar to the one I am proposing.

Additionally, and perhaps most important, there is one more concern with respect to our current State law—it prohibits the FBI from sharing critical information with the State Police.

For instance, if the FBI obtains information that involves an online sex crime in New Jersey using the expeditious federal subpoena process, court rulings prevent them from sharing this material with the State Police. Instead, the State Police are required to initiate their own investigation and request additional CIO's and subpoenas. By having to restart this investigation, a great amount of time is lost and the probability of an arrest, let alone conviction, is minimal. By passing A-3786, it will allow immediate communication between these two agencies.

For those who live in Middlesex County “and all across New Jersey for that matter” who still feel that their small, quiet, little town is immune to these online sexual predators, consider the recent arrest of an Edison man who was caught by undercover officers in an online chat room initiating sexual dialogue with what he thought was a fifteen-year-old girl. According to the Passaic County Prosecutor's Office, this Edison resident was charged with endangering the welfare of a minor. The fact that this potential predator was arrested is a comforting thought; however, one should not be lulled into a false sense of security. In fact, according to the FBI, the average molester commits numerous sexual offenses prior to being apprehended for the first time.

Failure to enact A-3786 immediately could result in an increase in preventable online sex crimes against children in New Jersey. It may be too late to save Baby J. from enduring this physical and emotional pain, however, her story should serve as a cautionary tale with regards to the importance of providing our law enforcement officials with the necessary tools to investigate and apprehend these vile and reprehensible individuals.

To end on a more positive note, I am happy to report that Baby J.'s father has been sentenced to thirty years in prison on charges of child molestation. He will not be allowed to earn good time credits and will be forced to serve all thirty years.

Grant School Student Takes Third in Elks Essay Contest



Dan Uken, Central District Elks Americanism Chairman, congratulates Keith Horvath.

By Patricia Abbott

On February 27 Grant School student Keith Horvath was presented third place in the Elks district wide essay contest. The annual event is held each year by the Central District Americanism committee of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. This year's theme was “What Old Glory Means to Me.” Keith's father, Ray Horvath, is a past exalted ruler for the South Plainfield Elks lodge.

Keith received his award at the annual flag retirement ceremony held at

the Woodbridge Lodge. The ceremony is a tribute to the United States flag, its meaning and history. The Elks collect unserviceable flags and transport them to a facility for proper disposal. Citizens can take their tattered flags to any Elks lodge and drop them in the box outside the lodge.

Keith's winning essay is brief but poignant “What Old Glory Means to Me.”

Old Glory is another name for the American flag. When I think about what the American flag means to me, I think of freedom. When I think of

freedom, I think of all the men and women in the past who fought and died so we can be free. There is no other country in the world where people have the freedom to read, write and say what they want to like in our great country. In this country you can travel from state to state and not have to worry about being stopped and checked.

Ever since 9/11 there has been more security at airports and waterways. I think this is necessary because we need to keep America safe from terrorists and keep our freedom. After 9/11 many people all over the United States put Old Glory on their houses, their cars and on many bridges. We were showing the world we care about our freedom.

I am happy that I live in the United States and that I have the freedom to do what I want to when I grow up. This is what Old Glory means to me—Freedom.

Eleven years old and in the sixth grade, Keith shows a mature respect for our national emblem. His simple words speak volumes and remind us that perhaps private citizens and businesses alike need to take a look at our flags and retire those that do not proudly represent our country. Residents can deliver old flags to the So. Plainfield Elks Lodge at New Market Ave.

Watch the *Observer* for more information on the proper disposal of our national emblem as Flag Day approaches.

SPHS Drama Club Gears Up for “My Fair Lady”

By Michael Duquette

This month, the South Plainfield High School Drama Club is positive that audience members who see the upcoming production of Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Lowe's *My Fair Lady* will say they could have danced all night. The musical favorite is set for opening on April 21, following a series of meteorological setbacks, and will continue through April 23.

Director Gloria Naso is confident that both the immense talent of the cast and the familiarity of the story, based upon George Bernard Shaw's non-musical *Pygmalion*, will bring lots of fans out to see this popular

telling of the tale of English professor Henry Higgins and his attempts to convert the poor flower-girl Eliza Doolittle into a sophisticated lady. Although Mother Nature has been less than kind to the cast and crew by forcing rehearsals to cancel due to the snow, the show must, as always, go on. Naso further commented on an added bonus sure to boost ticket sales: the original text of *Pygmalion* is required reading for English classes for juniors at SPHS.

My Fair Lady stars seniors Peter Assad, Eric Rhode, and Katie Mott as Henry Higgins, Colonel Pickering, and Eliza Doolittle, and includes a talented ensemble of several dozen young actors. The staff of the arts de-

partment are coordinating the most integral parts of the production: Tracy Glenn Murray, the chorus director at SPHS, is serving as vocal director for *My Fair Lady* and band director Mark Tweed will lead the orchestra. Also, Darren Delaney, choreographer for the successful SPHS Winterguard, is serving as choreographer for the production. Maureen Imbrosiano is returning to produce the show as well.

Once again, *My Fair Lady* will open on Thursday, April 21 at 7 p.m. in the Joseph A. Mondoro Auditorium at the high school and will repeat on Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23. Be sure to check out what promises to be a show that is, to quote one of its own songs, “lovely.”

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Glitterbug Club Event

April 10

The South Plainfield Clean Community Advisory Board is hosting a Glitterbug Club Event at the Highland Avenue Woods on April 10 off Sylvania Place at 1 p.m. They will be doing a brief clean up, having an environmental talk, a short hike and children will discuss their Litter Detective assignment. There is still time to become a litter detective. The club is geared to fifth grade and younger, but older children are welcome! Do you need community service hours? Assist the Glitterbugs and learn how you can get involved and volunteer in a leadership or assistant role. For information call Marie Markey (908) 755-3213.

Atlantic City Bus Trip

April 10

The Polish National Home will sponsor a bus trip to the Taj in Atlantic City on Sunday, April 10. 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 (908) 757-3428.

Women Aware Soup Kitchen Fundraiser

April 11

The Middlesex County Battered Women's Shelter, Women Aware, will be holding their 13th annual Soup Kitchen Fundraiser...A Taste of Kindness on April 11 at 6 p.m. at the Pines Manor in Edison.

The Soup Kitchen Fundraiser is an event at which the community can enjoy dining on gourmet soups from many of the area's finest restaurants. Local establishments donate breads, cheeses and desserts to tantalize your palates. Door prizes and raffles round off the events of the evening.

For information contact Eve Hook at (732) 249-4900.

SP Historical Society Monthly Meeting

April 12

The South Plainfield Historical Society will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, April 12 at 7:30 p.m. in the Senior Center on Maple Ave.

The agenda includes an announcement of a new Educational Outreach Project Phase I.

Membership renewals are due: \$10 individual, \$15 family and \$75 life. Send your check to SP Historical So-

What's happening in APRIL

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 AM-12:30 PM—CREATIVE PAINTING 10AM

Senior Center EVENTS

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
UPCOMING EVENTS 	May 19... Cactus Flower at Hunterdon Hills			7 Weekly Shopping Pathmark 9am Practical Crafts 10am NJPAC Oklahoma 12pm Computer Class 11am & 1pm
	11 Knitting/Crocheting 9:30-11:30am Yoga 10:30-11:30am Drawing Class 11:30am Senior Advisory Mtg. 4:30	12 Bingo 10am-2pm Ladies Social 10am	13 Exercise 8:30am Line Dancing 10am AARP Crafts 1pm Computer Class 10 am 11:30 am, 1 pm	14 Weekly Shopping Pathmark 9am Practical Crafts 10am Computer Class 11am & 1pm
				15 Bingo 10am-2pm Lunch Available
TO SIGN UP FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, VISIT THE CENTER.				

ciety, P.O. Box 11, South Plainfield, NJ 07080

VFW Hosts Dinner

April 15

The VFW Post 6763, located at 155 Front St., will be holding a dinner on Friday, April 15 from 5-8 p.m. The public is welcome. For more information, call (908) 668-9751.

Cahal Dunne Concert

April 17

Cahal Dunne, singer, songwriter, pianist and comedian, will be performing at Sacred Heart Church on Sunday, April 17, at 3 p.m. 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.

Rainbow Academy Open House

April 19

Rainbow Academy Child Care Center, located on Oak Tree Rd., will hold an Open House on Tuesday, April 19, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Limited space is available for the infant, nursery, pre-kindergarten and summer camp. Register before the open house and receive free registration and two free months of ParentWatch. For new customers only, mention the South Plainfield Observer. Visit the center for a tour during operating hours. For directions and information, visit their website at rainbowacademy.com.

12-Hour Scrapbooking Event

April 23

Are you a scrapbooker? Would you like to learn how to scrapbook? Come to a 12-hour workshop given by Creative Memories Consultant, Dayel Giammarino, on Saturday, April 23 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Wesley

United Methodist Church on Plainfield Ave. Enjoy 12 hours of uninterrupted cropping time, light snacks and drinks, unlimited use of cropping tools, project demos, mini workshops and lots of chances to win door prizes, raffles and a grand prize raffle. Come and go, or only stay a few hours. Seating is limited to 25. Call or email to reserve a seat, Dayel at (908) 754-4255 or The8Gs@aol.com. Please register by April 16. Class fee is \$25.

Spring Fest 2005 at First Baptist Church

April 23

A celebration of Arts and Crafts will be held on Saturday, April 23 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Henderson Hall of First Baptist Church on Hamilton Blvd. The event is sponsored by the Women's Evening circle. For information, call Linda at (908) 754-2386.

Tricky Tray Raffle

April 30

Sacred Heart Home School Association is sponsoring a Tricky Tray Raffle on Saturday, April 30 in the school cafeteria featuring baskets, sports memorabilia, gift certificates, bikes, 27" TV, a Dyson vacuum and more. Doors open at 6 p.m. and drawing starts at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$10 and includes five raffle tickets. For information or for tickets, call (908) 755-0891. Must be 18 years or older.

Trip to Las Vegas

May 27-30

The Senior Center is sponsoring a four-day trip to Las Vegas Friday, May 27 to Monday, May 30 (Memorial Day Weekend). Trip includes round trip non-stop flight on Continental, three nights at the Paris Hotel and Casino, round trip airport transfers to/from hotel and all taxes and baggage handling.

Cost is \$689, double occupancy. A

deposit of \$200 per person is required to make a reservation. For reservations, call Joann Graf at the Senior Center at (908) 754-1047.

— Out of Town —

Grief Bereavement Series Through April 26

Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care will offer a four-week lecture series each Tuesday night through April 26 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Center for Hope's Administrative & Information Center on Raritan Rd. in Scotch Plains. Series is free and open to the public.

For information or directions, call center at (908) 889-7780.

Poetry Workshops

Through May 25

The Unlimited Potential Theater Company (UPTCo) is offering a Spring Poetry Workshop Series at N. Brunswick High School on Wednesdays through May 25 from 7-9 p.m. The program is free and open to ages 16 and over.

For information, call (732) 745-3885, or info@vsanjan.org.

Evenings For Singles

April 9

An evening for single professionals 25-49 will be held on Saturday, April 9 at 7 p.m. Dinner at Morristown Headquarters Plaza Grille in Morristown, \$35 and includes buffet dinner, soda, coffee, dessert, tax and tip. Singles are invited to socialize and network.

RSVP by April 8 to (732) 764-9073 or angelicbutterfly@iwon.com.

Walk Through Keyport

April 9

The Princeton Area Walkers (PAWS) is sponsoring a walk through Keyport on Saturday, April 9. The Keyport community is an historic town and features many older resi-

dences and mansions many dating back to the early 1800's.

Registration fee is \$3. Non-members have the option of walking for free but we are requesting a \$3 donation to assist in covering our expenses.

For information, call Teri at (732) 739-1404 or email TEMWALKS@comcast.net.

Auditions for Guys and Dolls at NJPAC

April 9 & 16

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) Summer Musical Program and the Westfield Young Artists' Cooperative Theatre (WYACT) will hold auditions for the Broadway musical comedy *Guys and Dolls* on April 9. Final callbacks on April 16.

The show premieres on Friday, July 15 and runs through Saturday, July 24. For details call (973) 353-8051.

For information, call (973) 353-8051.

Stockton College Plans Benefit

April 9

Stockton College is presenting the 25th Silver Anniversary Spring Scholarship Benefit on Saturday, April 9. Tickets, sponsorships and volunteer opportunities are available. For information, call (609) 652-4658.

Peter Arakawa at Metuchen Art Works

April 9 & 10

Metuchen Art Works will feature artist Peter Arakawa at a reception on Saturday, April 9, 7 to 10 p.m. and a coffee talk Sunday, April 10 at 12.

For information, contact Madeline Tolins-Schlitt: (732) 662-7403.

WOWs Business Meeting

April 9

The Middlesex East Widows or Widowers will conduct a business meeting on Tuesday, April 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Carteret Community Center in Carteret. Light refreshments and socializing to follow. Widows and widowers are invited to attend. For more information, call Dorothy at (732) 541-2174 or Lois at (908) 757-0515.

Moonrakers Meeting

April 12

The New Jersey Moonrakers Tall Club, Inc., a social and community service organization serving people of "taller-than-average" stature in the NJ/NY metropolitan area, will hold its monthly meet and greet social at the Saddle Brook Marriott hotel in Saddle Brook on Tuesday, April 12 at 8 p.m. Prospective members, women 5'10" and taller and men 6'2" and taller and over 21 years of age are encouraged to inquire.

For more information, call (973) 267-3648 or visit our website at <http://www.njtall.org>.

WOWs Business Meeting

April 13


The Woodbridge Area Chapter of Widows or Widowers (WOWs) will have a business meeting and social hour on Wednesday, April 13 at 7 p.m. in the Main Public Library, George Fredrick Plaza, Amboy Ave., Woodbridge. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, call (732) 297-1775.

Look Who's Having a Birthday!



It's a good thing... go out and celebrate!

Happy Birthday Bill!
From your friends at the Observer



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy Birthday Joann Graf!

Best Wishes from the Staff at the Observer

Send Us Your Around Town Events

South Plainfield Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd., Suite 1B
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
or fax (908) 668-8819
email: spobserver@comcast.net

From the South Plainfield Library

Bookmarks

By Bruce Harger

I was wracking my brain to come up with something interesting to write in this week's article. You see, as the cataloger for the library, I don't spend as much time "out from" working with the public as some of the other employees. But, being the cataloger does have some other advantages—I'm the first one to see everything as it is being added to the Library's collection (books, DVD's, videos, etc...). One of the newest additions to our collection of videos is a wonderful 10-disc set put out by PBS Home Video, a series by Ken Burns entitled *Baseball* that traces the history of the game back to the 1840's. It seems to me, what better use could I make of this week's article than to give folks an idea about what is available in the library about "America's favorite pastime"?

If you are one of the brave souls who has been drafted to coach a baseball team, we have a few titles that might help you. Check out Joe McFarland's *Coaching Pitchers* (796.357 MCF 1990), Skip Bertman's *Youth League Baseball: Coaching and Playing* (796.357 BER 1993), and Dusty Baker's *You Can Teach Hitting* (796.357 BAK 1993).

There's even a book on umpiring that might prove helpful, though the latest edition we have on the shelves is from 2003, *Rules for Umps, Baseball* (796.35702 RUL).

We have tons of books about baseball for kids! Bryant Lloyd's *Baseball—Rules of the Game* (J 796.357 LLO) surveys the rules of baseball, covering such aspects as strikes, walks, outs, innings, and runs. Doug Marx's *Gold Gloves* (J 796.357 MAR) discusses the relative merits and importance of various defensive positions in baseball, including first base, shortstop, and center field, and celebrates great defensive players in the history of the sport.

For kids who are interested in baseball history, check out these titles:

Michael Goodman's books *The History of the Philadelphia Phillies*, *The History of the New York Yankees*, and *The History of the New York*

Mets, Wayne Stewart's *The History of the Los Angeles Dodgers* and *The History of the Atlanta Braves*, John Nichol's *The History of the Baltimore Orioles*, or Aaron Frisch's *The History of the Boston Red Sox*. You can find most of the titles about baseball under the same call number in the library 796.357.

For adults whose interests run more in the direction of sports biography we have books about the heroes and villains of the game. Here are just a few of the more recent titles we have acquired: Jane Leavy's *Sandy Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy* (796.357 KOUFAX-LEA), David Wells' autobiography *Perfect I'm not* (B WELLS WEL), Billy Bean's *Going the Other Way* (B BEAN BEA), Paul O'Neill's memoirs *Me and My Dad* (B ONEILL ONE), two books by Yogi Berra *What Time Is It? You Mean Now?* (796.357 BER) and *Ten Rings* (B BERRA BER). How about Mickey McDermott's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Cooperstown* (B MCDERMOT MCD) or Pete Rose's *My Prison Without Bars* (B ROSE ROS)? Three books that are just hot off the press this spring are: Joe Canseco's *Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, And How Baseball Got Big* (B CAN CAN), Jonathan Eig's tribute to Lou Gehrig *Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig* (B GEH EIG) and Carl Erskine's book about his teammate, Jackie Robinson *What I Learned from Jackie Robinson* (B ROB ERS).

If you are more the type who would like to try and impress your friends with the statistics of the game you might take a look at *Total Baseball*, the official encyclopedia of major league baseball in the Reference Collection or check out the 2005 edition of *The Sports Encyclopedia. Baseball* (796.357 SPO).

Whatever your interest are in the game, one thing that I discovered when I started to look at our Library's collection, we have something for just about everyone. Let me encourage you to use the Library as a way to wet your appetite for the game... whether you are a player or a fan.

TSANJ Accepting Scholarship Applications

The Board of Directors of Tourette Syndrome Association of New Jersey has announced that they are accepting applications for the 2005 TSANJ Scholarship Award.

The scholarship award will be presented to a resident of New Jersey who is a public or private high school senior, who has been diagnosed with Tourette Syndrome and who will be attending college or trade school in the fall.

The scholarship recognizes a student with TS who has a proven record of accomplishment and achievement despite the disorder. The recipient will be selected based on academic record, recommendations, and a written essay or audio or video tape demonstrating the individual's talents. The winner will be announced at the TSANJ annual dinner in May of 2005.

Students interested in applying for the scholarship should call the TSANJ

office at (908) 575-7350 or visit the website at www.tsanj.org. Applications are due by April 30.

Sending in ads, letters or copy?
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spobserver@comcast.net



Forty-two smiling tourists toured Italy last month on a Recreation Department sponsored trip. The department has two trips upcoming, a trip to Niagra Falls in August and next March Recreation will be touring Ireland. For information on the trips, contact the PAL.

"Shower for New Beginnings" Being Held to Support Victims of Domestic Violence

The YWCA Eastern Union County is holding a "Shower for New Beginnings" to support their new Transitional Housing Program for women and children victims of domestic violence. The shower will be held on Saturday, April 9 at the Schering-Plough headquarters in Kenilworth at 1 p.m. Proceeds of the event will benefit the new transitional housing program in Plainfield scheduled to open in 2005.

In the words of a woman from another Transitional Housing program, "Transitional Housing gave me the time and support I needed to get back on my feet. I can now support myself and my children, and am no longer financially dependent on my abuser. I don't know how I could have done all this on my own!"

Women who flee domestic violence have few options and require significant support in their transition from victim of domestic violence to independence and self-sufficiency. The new facility will house up to eight families for one to two years as women participate in domestic violence counseling, employment and financial training, and search for permanent housing.

Domestic violence continues to be a significant problem in Union coun-

try. At least one third of all women experience domestic violence. It is the second highest reported crime in Union County after larceny and accounted for 4,363 police reports in 2002. However, according to the FBI, domestic violence is the most under reported crime in the United States, demonstrating that actual cases of domestic violence are much higher in our county.

For over twenty-five years, the YWCA Eastern Union County's Project Protect has provided compre-

hensive services to victims of domestic violence. Services include emergency shelter, a 24-hour hotline, individual and group counseling, therapeutic children's services, court advocacy, teen dating violence programs, domestic violence response teams, life skills and awareness building workshops, community education, and professional training.

For more information please contact Jennifer Vriens, Fund Development Officer, (908) 355-1500, ext. 14.

Class of 1980 25th Reunion

St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Edison will hold their 25th reunion on Nov. 25 at the Double Tree Hotel in Somerset.

There will be an open bar, cocktail hour, dinner and dancing as well as a block of rooms at a discounted rate. Call the hotel at (732) 469-2600 to reserve your room.

A web page has been set up for fellow alumni, an invitation to the web page is required for access. Email Amfips831@aol.com to receive an invitation. For more information, contact Ann Marie at (908) 756-6218. You may also contact Rich Fuentes at RichKofC@aol.com. Spread the word and save the date!

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(Photo: Top row, left to right: Mrs. Ashner, Mrs. Mandes, Mrs. Muñoz, Mr. and Mrs. Jaramillo, Mrs. McGeehan and Nicholas, Mr. and Mrs. Scherer. Children, left to right: Edward Lopez, Michael Mandes, James Muñoz-Morales, Brian McCann, Joseph McGeehand, Shante Manning, Jalline Jaramillo, Christopher Scherer and Grayson Lackey.

Franklin School Hosts International Luncheon

Sharon DeLair, senior teaching intern in Nancy Furka's and Marie Stemmler's class at Franklin Elementary School, organized and hosted an International Luncheon at the school on Friday, March 4.

Students brought in their favorite foods that originated from the countries or continents of their ancestors. Some of the foods the stu-

dents made were baked ziti from Italy, Mexican tostadas, Irish oatmeal cookies, Polish pierogies, and Ethiopian fruit salad.

In preparation for this event, students shared discussions and made flags of these countries. Parents and faculty members attended the celebration.

MDA Awards Research Grant In Borough

The Muscular Dystrophy Association has awarded a research grant of \$1,500,000 in South Plainfield, for one of 23 new or continuing projects recently funded by MDA.

The new grant is awarded to Langdon L. Miller, M.D. at PTC Therapeutics, Inc. in South Plainfield for a study of the use of PTC124, an experimental drug, as a possible treatment for Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

In addition, MDA serves community families affected by neuromuscular diseases through six MDA clinics in New Jersey, a weeklong summer camp for youngsters with neuromuscular diseases in New Jersey, support groups, educational information, and assistance with purchase of wheelchairs, leg braces and assistive communication devices.

"MDA research, including this project at PTC Therapeutics, Inc., is on the cutting edge of medical science, and we're extremely grateful to the residents of South Plainfield who so generously support our efforts," MDA President & CEO Robert Ross said. "Their donations enable MDA to make strides toward treatments and cures every day, and to provide vital services to their neighbors who are affected by neuromuscular diseases."

The new grant, approved by MDA's Board of Directors at its recent meeting in Phoenix, represents part of the Association's grant allocation for 2005, funding projects in basic and clinical research in pursuit of cures and treatments for the more than 40 neuromuscular diseases in MDA's program. MDA currently funds nearly 400 research teams worldwide.

The Association's programs are funded almost entirely by individual private contributors.

Junior Journalist Corner



Bianco LoBosco, Kennedy School Fourth Grader, Named "Junior Journalist"



Winner Bianco LoBosco, 4th grader, Kennedy Elementary, pictured with teacher Cynthia Severino.

Bianco LoBosco, Kennedy School fourth grader, is this week's winner in the *Observer*/Hometown Heros Junior Journalist Program. Her poem, "Springs Nature," 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.

Apply Now for Ponytail Scholarships

Deadline to submit application is April 30

Applications are currently being accepted for the South Plainfield Ponytail Parents Association's scholarships and can be obtained from the South Plainfield High School Guidance office.

To qualify for the scholarships, the applicant must be a high school senior graduating in June 2005 and a current resident of South Plainfield. To qualify for one of the recreation scholarships, applicants must have played for a minimum of four years in the

South Plainfield Recreation Department's Ponytail Softball League.

All-Star players may apply for both the recreation and All-Star scholarships; however, a player is eligible to receive only one scholarship. Please refer to the application for further details. The filing deadline is April 30.

All completed applications must be mailed to SPPPA Scholarship, P.O. Box 441, South Plainfield, NJ 07080. Verification of school enrollment is required prior to funds being awarded.

Attention Class Of 1991!!

It's time for the 1991 class reunion. We need lots of help. If interested, email your address and what you can do to help to [morin](mailto:morin@tunc1221@aol.com)

tunc1221@aol.com. Anyone who can supply other peoples' addresses, send it to us. As soon as we have enough addresses more information

will follow. Continue to check the *Observer* for information.

Email me, Michelle Morin (Cochrane), president, Class of 1991.

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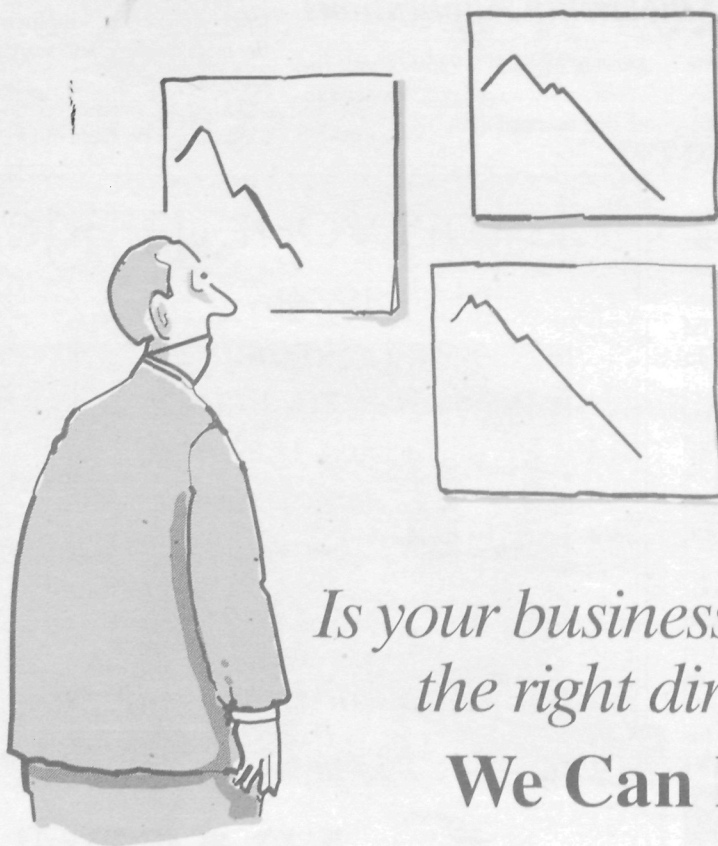
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southplainfieldpeople Milestones

Duddy Earns Place on Dean's List at Berklee College of Music

Berklee College of Music announces that Christopher Duddy has earned placement on the Dean's List for the fall semester of the 2004-2005 academic year. To be eligible for the honor, a full-time student must achieve a grade point average of 3.4 or above; a part-time student must achieve a grade point average of 3.6 or above.

The Berklee curriculum focuses on practical career preparation for today's music industry. Four-year degrees are offered in Performance, Jazz Composition, Music Production & Engineering, Film Scoring, Music Business/Management, Composition, Music Synthesis, Contemporary Writing & Production, Music Edu-

cation, Songwriting, Music Therapy and Professional Music.

Berklee College of Music was founded on the revolutionary principle that the best way to prepare students for careers in music was through the study and practice of contemporary music. For over half a century, the college has evolved constantly to reflect

the state of the art of music and the music business. With over a dozen performance and nonperformance majors, a diverse and talented student body representing over 70 countries and a music industry "who's who" or alumni, Berklee is the world's premier learning lab for the music of today—and tomorrow.

Melissa Rae, Stephen Goda are Engaged

Mrs. Michele Rea of Green Tree, Pa. and the late Mr. Louis Rea are proud to announce the engagement of Melissa Michele Rea to Stephen Michael Goda, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Goda of South Plainfield.

Melissa is a graduate of Keystone

Oaks High School and has a B.A. in Public Relations from Westminster College. She is employed as a print production coordinator for Giant Solutions part of Giant Ideas Creative Group, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Stephen is a graduate of South Plainfield High School and served eight years in the United States Navy. He is employed as Director, Investor Relations for Texas Keystone, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa.

A November 2005 wedding is planned.

Nick Green Named to Dean's List

Nick Green, a sophomore at Gettysburg College, was named to the Dean's Commendation List with a 3.6 GPA. Nick is double majoring in Math and Physics.

Buendia Earns Prestigious University Merit Award at Rutgers University

Justin Buendia of South Plainfield High School has been chosen as a recipient of a University Merit Award at Rutgers University. The scholarship acknowledges the academic achievements of outstanding high school seniors admitted to Rutgers for the Fall 2005 term.

Founded in 1766, Rutgers is the eighth oldest institution of higher learning in the U.S. Offering more than 100 undergraduate majors,

Rutgers has the distinction of being one of only 62 members of the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU). AAU member institutions are widely recognized for the quality and scope of their research and educational programs and are at the forefront of global scholarship and research.

Our congratulations to Justin Buendia on earning the prestigious University Merit Award.



Helping celebrate Cindy Michaels Jewelers grand re-opening at its new location at 2525 Plainfield Ave. on April 2 were (l to r) Councilmen Ray Petronko and Charlie Butrico, Mayor Dan Gallagher, owner Ed Colucci, Councilwoman Kathy Thomas, daughter Natalie and wife Kathy. A raffle was held for a \$400 diamond necklace and Mayor Gallagher picked winner Laura Lodes of South Plainfield.

Reality Show "Know It All" Looking for Participants

Hollywood is invading New Jersey! Finally, the chance has arrived for parents and kids to see how the "other half" lives. The Executive Producer of ABC's "Hope and Faith" is now giving families the opportunity to understand each other better through the new show, "Know It All".

The premise of the show is to have a parent and their teenager swap lives. Parents will attend school and experience first hand how high school has changed and what it's like to be a teenager again. Teenagers will be given the opportunity to understand the stresses of the real world.

Producers have found that New Jersey families are some of the busiest in the country. Usually while working full time, raising a family and running a

home, most parents don't have much time to themselves. Meanwhile, kids have their own busy schedules to contend with; sports, dance, theater, school organizations, community activities and of course high expectations for their academics. School gets more difficult with each year and once the kids are teenagers, the pressure to attend a good college gets added to the mix.

Sometimes it's hard for parents to recognize the stress their kids have to shoulder while, at the same time, it's difficult for teenagers to appreciate what their parents go through to provide for them.

If you or someone you know would be interested in participating, please e-mail the producers at knowitalltv@yahoo.com.

Share Your Good News... Send us your Milestones! Email: spobserver@comcast.com • Fax: 908-668-8819

Do You Have

HIGH CHOLESTEROL?

Anderson & Collins Clinical Research, Inc. is seeking volunteers for participation in a clinical research study that examines an approved and an investigational medication (being studied for a new approach to raising HDL-C, "good cholesterol").

Qualified patients will receive all study-related care and study medications free of charge. Compensation will be provided for time and travel.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE?

Anderson & Collins Clinical Research, Inc. is currently seeking volunteers to participate in a 6 month research trial to determine if an investigational weight loss medication also helps to lower high blood sugar. If you are at least 18 years old, have high blood sugar & use diet and exercise to try and control your sugar you may qualify.

If you qualify, study related lab work, dietician visits and study-related health care will be provided at no cost. Compensation will be provided for time and travel.

For more information on these trials, please contact Irene Margaretta, RN:

Anderson & Collins Clinical Research, Inc.

1 Ethel Road, Suite 106B, Edison, NJ 08817

(732)650-9175 or (732) 287-5130

www.centerwatch.com/pro230.htm

Also recruiting for: High Blood Sugar, Low Back Pain, Rosacea, Fibromyalgia, Menstrual Migraine

Grandparents Celebrated at Roosevelt School



Roosevelt Elementary School held its annual Grandparents Day on March 30 for its Kindergarten classes.

The youngsters took to the stage in front of a crowd of proud grandparents and parents to show off their musical skills. They sang *America, We Are Roosevelt's Children, I'm Gonna Climb My Family Tree, Spend Some Time With Your Child, Let's Go See Our Grandparents, Skinnamarink, All I Really Need, Grandma, Grandpa, How I Love You and Now We Say Goodbye*. Instrumentalists were Justin Rodriguez and Sara Roman on maracas, Kyle Whalen and Jasmine McKnight on sandblocks, Michele Philip on cabasa, Justin Nguyen and Elijah Torres on guiro and Ashli Bell and Michael Lampasona played the claves.

Students also came up and recited what grandparents are for such as loving you, telling how things used to be, playing games and many more. The program was coordinated by Kindergarten teachers Christina Block and Joy Czapinski and were accompanied by Musical Director Sharon Perez on piano.

Afterward the children sat down with their families and enjoyed cookies, cake and other snacks provided by the PTO.



500 Attend Project Graduation Auction

by Patricia Abbott

Late comers to the 2005 South Plainfield High School Project Graduation Auction found themselves left out in the cold. The sold out auction filled the gym with approximately 500 people. The parking lot was full and a line formed outside the doors long before the 6:30 p.m. opening.

Once inside people swarmed around the many ticket tables to purchase their chances. The crowd then began the trek around the gym to select their favorites. Ticket sellers were kept busy as people returned to buy more in hopes of increasing their chances. At 7:30 most were settled at tables laden with goodies and beverages. A party atmosphere filled the room as the auction began. Cheers, laughter, applause and occasional sighs

of disappointment filled the room.

After the winning tickets were called, SPHS seniors assisted in bringing prizes to the winners. Runners for the evening were: Mike Benak, Lauren Haus, Cassie D'Urso, Stephanie Miller, Toni Ciccio, Caitlin English, Gerry Butrico, Linda Lee, Stacey Diana, Jessica Manning, Chris McKnight, Peter Aquino, Billy Merkle and Jayne Merlo.

There were nearly 100 prizes donated by SPHS families, residents and local businesses.

Grand prizes included a flat screen TV, iPod, Yankees memorabilia, a four day, three night all inclusive trip to any of Club-Med's resorts, patio furniture and a grill. The auction is the major fundraiser for the Project Graduation party, a substance free all night party for graduating seniors.



A Very Busy School Year at the Middle School Music Department

Donna Markiewicz, choir teacher, reports that in Dec., the Gems and the Orchestra went to the Cedar Oaks Nursing Home to play for the residents' enjoyment. They presented a 45-minute concert that included holiday and secular works.

On Jan. 29, the Middle School hosted the Central Jersey Region II Intermediate Band and Orchestra auditions. Ryan Harrington auditioned and was accepted on tympani. The concert was held in March. On March 15, the Middle School Chorus sang at the Board of Education meeting.

Four students were accepted to

the Central Jersey Music Education Association Intermediate Region II Choir. They are Daphne Aguinaldo, Alan Kasmer, Nora Stasio and Stevie Stark. They worked very hard during their weekend rehearsals and put on a great concert this past Feb.

The 36th Annual District Festival Concert will be held on Thursday, April 7 at the high school auditorium. The Middle School, High School and Grant School choruses, orchestras and bands will be performing.

May will be an especially busy month for Middle School musicians and their teachers. May 12 is the

band concert at 7 p.m. in the gym. The chorus and orchestra concert will be held on the 26 at the same time and location. The final event, which will complete the music department activities for the year, will be the trip to Dorney Park on May 20. Select groups from the Middle School, such as the Gems, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Band and Orchestra will be competing. Last year, the Gems took home the highest rating of the day overall and were notified that they had the highest score all year long! Naturally, the students are looking forward to matching last year's great performance.

Sacred Heart Parking Lot Resurfacing Underway

By William Tuthill

The repaving of the parking areas at Sacred Heart Church School and Parish center is underway. The entire parking lot will be scraped, leveled and renewed. Work was scheduled to begin last Monday so the parking lot could be finished during the Easter school break, but the weather threw off the schedule.

Stilo Paving Company of South Plainfield is handling the project.

This is only one portion of the \$1.2 million refurbishing program scheduled for the 40- and 50-year-old facility, all of which coincides with the 100th Anniversary celebration this year.

At the same time, Ferguson Electric Company from Clark is repairing and replacing lighting fixtures in the

school gym. The boiler in the school will be replaced as soon as the school closes for summer recess.

Anyone who is interested in what else is planned can stop by the Parish Center to pick up a list of the various projects.

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Citizens Are Urged to Vote in April 19 School Board Elections

The South Plainfield Board of Education is urging community residents to vote in the 2005 annual School Board elections on Tuesday, April 19.

"The local school board plays an essential role in the education that our children receive," said Robert H. Davis, interim business administrator/board secretary. "On April 19, voters will have the opportunity to select the men and women who will set the policies under which our community's schools will operate. Voters will also weigh in on the proposed school district budget. But citizens cannot be heard if they don't exercise their right to vote."

Davis explained the school board's "essential role" in education: the local board of education sets policies in areas such as classroom instruction, student discipline and use of school facilities. These policies guide the school administration in managing the educational program; the school board approves the local district's proposed budget for presentation to the voters; it negotiates employee contracts and

approves the hiring of teachers, administrators and other staff.

Statewide, more than 1,600 board of education positions will be on the ballot on April 19.

Voters can become familiar with the candidates and the issues affecting the South Plainfield Public Schools in a number of ways, according to Davis. Newspapers and local-access cable stations cover school board elections and frequently profile candidates. In addition, local Leagues of Women Voters, parents' organizations and community groups often sponsor candidates' forums.

To participate in the annual school board election, a citizen must be a registered voter in his or her municipality. Citizens not currently registered must do so by March 21 to be eligible vote in the April 19 election. Registration information is available from the municipal clerk or the county board of elections.

Voters unable to go to the polls on April 19 may apply for absentee ballots, which are available at the county

clerk's office. Residents can apply to their county clerk for absentee ballots by mail. County clerks must receive mail applications by April 12. In addition, voters have until 3 p.m. on April 18 to apply for absentee ballots in person at the office of the county clerk.

The polls are open from 2-9 p.m. Locations are as follows: Poll 1, Districts 1 and 7—Franklin School; Poll 2, Districts 6 and 11—Rescue Squad; Poll 3, Districts 9 and 12—John E. Kennedy School; Districts 3 and 13—John E. Riley School; Poll 5, Districts 4, 10 and 15—New Roosevelt School; Poll 6, Districts 5 and 14—Middle School and Poll 7, Districts 2 and 8—American Legion Hall. Polling information is also contained in sample ballots mailed to all registered voters prior to the election.

"Local school board membership is an important public office—one that affects the quality of life in our community," said Davis. "I urge voters to make sure their voices are heard on April 19."



Fun Erupts at Science Club Meeting

by Patricia Abbott

ence Club meets several times a year on Wednesday nights from 7-9 p.m.

With the help of club advisor Glenn Graves, members of the Franklin School Science Club recently learned what makes volcanoes erupt. After the brief lesson each student was given an instruction sheet and supplies to create their own mini volcanoes.

Approximately 30 students and 15 parents went to work mixing dough and molding it around water bottles to form the mountain. The job was sticky, messy and obviously fun. The best part was yet to come. With parents helping the youths the ingredients were added to the bottles and before long the room was filled with erupting lava and laughter. The Sci-



Almost Famous Players Gear Up for Haunted Woods



Almost Famous Players is gearing up for their 2005 Putnam Park Haunted Woods Tour/season. Several fundraisers are in progress and/or planning stages.

We are currently soliciting donations of used cell phones, inkjet and laser jet cartridges. The funds raised will help us to purchase much needed equipment such as generators, lighting and special effect pieces.

The following businesses have generously offered to collect items for us: the Observer, Port Africa Art Gallery located in Hadley Center and Car-

ousel Salon, Oak Tree Ave. For a pick up call the number below.

Anyone donating five or more cartridges/phones will receive a free ticket to the Halloween show. Please submit your phones/cartridges in a single plastic grocery type or other plastic bag with info on contacting you both inside and outside the bag.

We are seeking business sponsors to collect phone/cartridges for us as well.

For more information email almostfamousplyrs@aol.com or call (908) 346-2290.

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IN YOUR OPINION

(Continued from page 2)

had the statement published in the *Observer* on March 25. Maybe I will be fortunate enough to get my response published so the public can read the real facts.

Mr. Smith wanted answers to questions he raised about me. To begin with, the state did not conduct a thorough audit as you stated. The district provided certain information to the State and they commented on those selective accounting practices and procedures. The official audit was conducted by the audit firm of Hodulak and Morrison, P.A., for the 2003-04 year. Page 15 of that audit reads as follows: "Total spending for all governmental funds was \$48,379,179.79; total revenues were \$45,295,902.79, resulting in excess expenditures over revenues of \$3.1 million for the year." Those, Mr. Smith, are the recorded facts.

As to the issue of the Vision Impact: since you work for PSE&G, I'm sure you are acquainted with the fact that in 1993 PSE&G announced a program to save electricity through the installation of energy-efficient equipment known as the "Standard Offer." They initiated, sponsored and promoted the program, which we entered into with Vision Impact. Vision was the vehicle used to do this installation for the lighting retrofit program. They installed more efficient lamps, ballast and reflectors for each fixture in our classrooms and schools. In addition, by installing this energy-efficient equipment, the level of lighting in all classrooms was increased to meet school codes. The lamps were guaranteed for two years and ballast for five years and in case of failure were replaced free of charge. The details of this program were reviewed and approved by Conservation Management Corporation, which was contracted by PSE&G to administer the Standard Offer Program on their behalf. Approval was also received from the Department of Education Bureau of Facilities Planning and Services. There were in fact savings produced by installing this new, more efficient lighting equipment and there are records on file to support this. The Board did approve the program and the district did not lose money on the deal, as you call it. The district obtained better lighting for the classrooms and did save money on reduced and controlled electrical costs.

You also say in going back you find

the Board Attorney expressing a number of concerns about the contract. This is true and those issues, both financial and procedurally, were resolved and there is on file a copy of the attorney's letter dated 7/24/95 in which the attorney released the contract for approval. By the way, that letter was addressed to Mr. Cornell and then copied to Superintendent Ferri and Board members. I want you to prove that, as you state that I told the attorney "never mind, we're going to enter this agreement..." It is interesting to note that the attorney was retained by Vision Impact to represent them in New Jersey.

Your allegation that Johnson Controls correspondence from the attorney was only copied to me is not true. The letter from the attorney was sent and addressed to Business Administrator Ellen Johnson with copies to Superintendent Ferri. So again you make a reckless claim not supported by the record. You were also a member of the Building and Grounds Committee, yet claim no knowledge.

On the arbitration issue, you have enough experience in labor relations to know that grievances that lead to arbitration are filed by the Union. You also know that the effort to settle the grievance at \$37,000 was rejected by the Union. You can check this with Superintendent Ferri and Personnel Committee members in 1995. You also know that a grievance was filed by the SPEA Union on 12/25/95 that included in its language "all affected teachers." The record shows initially there were 92 teachers claiming they should have received a higher starting salary when they were hired; some claims go back as far as 1991. This number, following review by the Superintendent and attorney, was reduced to 58 and finally down to 22. Both myself and a majority of the Board agreed to proceed to arbitration and the appeals that resulted eventually resulted in the award covering 22 of the original 92. You know that any action by the Board requires approval of the majority. The arbitrator, in her award opinion, granted back pay for those 22 teachers.

Now onto the allegations of the salaries of 22 teachers not included in the 2003-04 budget. At the last meeting and other board meetings, I produced documents from the Superintendent and the Business Administrator that showed how this was resolved and I've

referred to discussions with Dr. Rosado. I even showed that the salary scattergram you used in negotiations that had that the program salary data was resolved and I referred to discussions with Dr. Rosado.

Not once in your statement did you mention or respond that the 2003-04 school year budget was advertised at \$42,771,797, but the board spent \$45,610,525. Why don't you explain to the public what happened to the \$900,000 approved by the taxpayers in the 2003-04 budget that was to be spent to improve safety at all elementary schools when parents drop off or pick up their children. Or why not explain to the public why you have not completed the fiber optics installation intended to enhance technology for our students. Why don't you explain that the 2004-05 current school year budget was advertised at \$44,185,421 and in the adjusted budget 1/31/05 account balance report a spending pattern of \$46,4354,729. To cover the deficit you are borrowing \$1,675,000 via loan purchase of textbooks, using all recent surplus and the transfer of enterprise funds to cover the debt service costs. You know if you had been straightforward when you developed the 2004-05 budget which budgeted less for a number of line items where more had been spent in the previous year in order to tell taxpayers that the 2004-05 budget was only increased by seven tax points. If the budget were developed realistically for 2004-05, the top increase would have been, in my opinion, between 12 to 15 points. It's time to look in the mirror and stop blaming everyone else.

In closing, I refer to your letter to the editor in the 3/11/05 issue of the *Observer*, you say "unsigned letters amounting to be nothing more than slanted propaganda in a local publication that has apparently shifted editorially from reporting news to assist in spreading misinformation." It seems that your statement in the *Observer* meets that criterion exactly.

FRANK A. MIKORSKI

To the Editor,

I have been a constant presence in South Plainfield since 1963, as a resident and educator. My start with our schools was motivated by a simple desire to make a difference and help people. Whether that has happened is not known. What I do know is that it has been a great way to spend a lifetime. We have an amazing community and it has been a privilege to work with our students.

This letter is sent to endorse the school budget and urge a "YES" vote. I recognize that there are some people who are thoroughly familiar with the budget document and the hundreds of pages of supporting documentation. These people have concluded, based upon their knowledge, that they cannot support it or our students. There are others, however, who have not read the document and may be unsure. I am asking them for a "YES" vote.

There are a great many fact-based arguments, based upon our last ten years of history, surrounding this budget. Allegations of bad decisions, misuse of surplus funds to maintain an artificially reduced tax rate, and incompetent budget administration have all been made. All of these could be argued at length.

However, there is one certainty about this budget: a defeat will generate a dismantling of our schools as we know them. The listing of further looming cuts is a horrible scenario. It includes our ability to guide and direct our schools. It includes the cutting of massive amounts of teachers. It includes the cutting of virtually every extra-curricular activity available to our students.

We have made significant progress in recent years. Please and I do not use the word lightly, help me/us help our students. Support our schools and students.

If any reader wishes to discuss the facts of our budget further, I am available for that conversation. Please contact me directly.

**SINCERELY,
ANTHONY F. MASSARO**

Dear Editor,

April 19 is an important day for the students of South Plainfield. Voters will go to the polls that day to vote on the school budget.

A lot has been written regarding the financial situation of our school district. After much discussion and investigation, our current situation clearly appears to be the result of gross financial mismanagement over the course of many years. Blaming the current school administration and current Board of Education members is wrong. These leaders are the people who have the thankless job of cleaning up the financial mess left to them by previous administrations.

The facts are quite clear. The damage was done. The mistakes were made. Our school district is in serious financial trouble. Finger pointing, accusations and public meeting filibustering do nothing to help this situation. In fact, the only solution to the problem is voter approval of the school budget on April 19.

The true innocents in this situation are the students of our community. They had no voice in the financial mismanagement. Too young to vote, they also have no voice in the solution. It is

up to us, the adult voters of this community, to speak for our kids by voting "yes" to the school budget on April 19.

School years are more than simply academics. Our kids have the right to the same rounded school experiences we adults enjoyed as students. A defeated budget more than likely will result in the elimination or reduction of school sports, band and extracurricular clubs. It will necessitate cutting many teaching positions, resulting in larger class sizes for our kids. Life today is tough enough for kids. School activities are needed more than ever. I, for one, do not want to see our student athletes benched and our student musicians silenced due to a defeated school budget vote.

I urge the parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles of South Plainfield to come out in force for their kids on April 19. Vote YES to the school budget.

**SINCERELY,
JENNIFER RICCI**

To the Editor,

Most of the discussion I have heard around South Plainfield and the questions asked at the Candidates Night at Riley School had to do with the unexplained and unbudgeted use of money. Where it went, who authorized the expenditures, how did it happen without the Board of Education knowing about it, why were unnumbered purchase orders issued, why was Business Administrator Ed Izbicki escorted out of the building? These questions seem to fall on deaf ears.

The explanations offered don't always match up with the questions asked. Is there a credible reason why the current years budget was deliberately under funded? Was it because the people in charge didn't want the citizens to be up in arms about the tax increase? What about the 21 teachers that weren't included until the last minute? Why was there zero dollars in the capital outlay portion of the budget? What happens now if the board only has \$4,000 in surplus and a boiler goes down in one of the two schools that only have one boiler?

Why did Dan Smith carry on about an insurance holdback in 1985, when this board, from what I understand, did the same thing in December of 2004? Why did Smith, as chairman of the negotiations committee not insist on proof that the Board had the money to pay for increases of 4.95% in salary lines when he was well aware that there was less than that provided in the budget, and the broadening of the insurance coverages? Why did the Board not use a professional negotiator when the SPEA always does?

How does the Board justify the spending of the \$900,000 earmarked for the safety of our children to cover shortfalls they created? Is there any legal means to address the monetary

(Continued on next page)

Junior Journalist WINNER



Charlie and Debbie Kurland from Hometown Heros present dinner to last week's Junior Journalist contest winner, Eric Burnham, pictured here with grandmother Donna, mom Marissa, friend Nikos Amick and Aunt Marlena.

Congratulations Eric!

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IN YOUR OPINION

(Continued from previous page)

problems the district finds itself in?

I believe that South Plainfield deserves answers to these questions. I am asking that you, the voters, support my candidacy. I want to bring back the pride, the honesty, the stability, and the solvency of the South Plainfield School District. Please vote Line 4 on April 19.

CAROL M. BYRNE

Dear Editor,

During this important BOE election campaign, I was shocked by the misconceptions and deceptions that appeared in Jeff Seider's letter in the March 18 issue of the *Observer*. In his letter, Seider lumps together the proposed budget for the 2005/2006 school year, contract extension and raise for the superintendent and the negotiated employment contract, as being irresponsible due to a "cloudy and bleak" financial picture. What is irresponsible is his use of inflammatory rhetoric during a time of financial concern in this town.

Let's take a look at the facts that relate to Mr. Seider's issues:

The proposed 2005/2006 BOE budget does represent an increase; the first in 10 years. How many voters can look at prices for services and goods over the last 10 years and not expect cost increases?

The negotiated employment agreement does not call for 4.9 percent for all three years. The contract is a matter of public record and all Seider has to do is read it to get his facts right.

Negotiating agreements with administrators, teachers and other district employees is part of the responsible actions that a BOE is elected to perform. When you look carefully at the history of the town's school superintendents, the turn over rate for staff and the comparison of compensating packages within the county, you will see the necessity for these actions. Instead of crying "the sky is falling," he should look at these actions by the BOE in proper perspective.

There is no disputing the fact that South Plainfield is facing a school funding crisis. What needs to be recognized is that the current BOE is not hiding or trying to shrink its responsibility to serve the town. Seider states that there were repeated warnings by former and sitting board members.

Mr. Seider: What warnings were given? Who issued them? When were they put on the record? Did you or the "other board member" ever bother to find answers?

You know as well as we do that those things never happened. Did you, as a sitting board member, investigate any impending financial crisis?

Mr. Seider, you can run, but you can't hide.

D. JOFFE AND L. MRUZ

Dear Editor,

I plan to vote for BOE incumbents Dan Smith, Tim Morgan and Ken LaFreniere on April 19. These three individuals, along with the rest of the current Board of Education members, were dealt the difficult job of putting our school district's financial chaos back in order. These three people could have also taken the easy way out...quitting their BOE positions when the magnitude of the financial programs became apparent. Instead, they chose to remain and honor their commitment to the vot-

ers who elected them.

The current school district financial problem were years in the making. They were caused by financial mismanagement and errors that compounded over the course of many years. Smith, Morgan and LaFreniere, along with the rest of the current BOE members, volunteered countless hours in trying to rectify this snowballing financial problem. They found solutions to both short term and long term problems, all while keeping the interests and needs of our students foremost in their plans. For this, they should be commended.

A viable plan in the form of their proposed school budget will now be presented to the public for approval on April 19. This plan saves numerous teaching jobs, which in turn helps keep class sizes at their current rate. It saves student sports and music programs and allows for repairs to our schools. This budget is the result of the hard work put forth by the current BOE members. I strongly feel incumbents Dan Smith, Tim Morgan and Ken LaFreniere deserve the chance to help put their plan in action. Vote yes to the school budget and vote Smith, Morgan and LaFreniere to another term on the South Plainfield Board of Education. They earned our support.

**SINCERELY,
SANDY DOYON**

To the Editor,

My motivation to write this letter is the hope that it will encourage all eligible voters to participate in the April 19 school election. In the recent past, only a small percentage of eligible voters chose to do so, resulting in a minority rule by a vested interest group. Its goal: to enhance their self-interest by electing school board members supportive to their interest and approving budgets which provide for their financial targets.

If this year's budget is approved, average homeowners will have their taxes increased by \$386. If you have been following the state's financial problems, you have noted that property tax rebates are in jeopardy. Many taxpayers will see a reduction of all or a large part of the amount for the prior year. A third element in the development—continued major increases in property tax—are the items in next year's budget already in place. These are: teacher salaries by contract will go up 4.4; fuel and utility costs as tied to world oil prices; lend/lease agreement to purchase textbooks; and the inflationary cost creep up on many line items. All of this will require careful budget planning, which the current board seems incapable of providing.

From the very beginning of the budget crisis era, the board has responded with a "spin strategy" worthy of the old political machines. Allegations are cast out with no or improbable data dispensed to prove them. These allegations go back in time to 1985 with the implication that practically all or most of the items resulted from prior boards ignoring poor accounting practices. This is blatantly untrue. However, anyone's present statements are summarily ignored.

I submit that the major financial problems facing the district at this time primarily developed in the fiscal school years ending 6/04 and 6/05, when most of the present board was in charge. It is time for them to step forward and acknowledge responsibility.

In his job description, the Superintendent is charged to gather budget data from each of the district's cost centers and ascertain that the budget, as presented and adjusted, meets the district goals of providing the essential education for the students at a cost that is affordable to the community. He is responsible for the finished product as presented to the public for their approval.

Before deciding on your current year voting, please consider the following:

- Line item transfers – the practice of transferring budget amounts among departments. When the activity reaches an annual level of 800 to 900 or more, it is a clear indication that the budget was poorly prepared. The ramification of this makes it virtually impossible to implement any form of cost control. There is also a procedure that approvals for such activity should be obtained before the spending occurs and not after.

- Sodexo – an outside service that is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the district's buildings and grounds. The firm was directed to reduce its staff by 25% last fall and further cost reduction steps were also imposed by the board. This action about the current condition must be raised, better or worse. Common sense would seem to support the worse. Just a question.

- Surplus – Past boards consistently tried to maintain an amount of \$1,000,000. Or about three percent of annual expenditures. I understand only \$4,000 remains. Does this imply more deficit seems imminent?

- Lend/Lease – This funding practice has already been utilized in the current year. The funding choice places additional cost to the operation in the form of interest, legal fees and other administrative fees to an already strained financial situation.

The list could go on but I believe the above makes the point. Under these conditions, I believe that a change is needed. I request that you please join me in supporting Jeffrey Seider (Line 1), John Markham (Line 3), and Carol Byrne (Line 4) for the school board. These candidates are well qualified and I know they will restore fiscal discipline to the district while maintaining a quality education for our students. Their previous service as school board members support this belief. Don't let the minority continue their dominance in the district. VOTE! Your community needs you.

**SINCERELY,
FRANK CORNELL, BOARD MEMBER,
1993-1995**

Dear Editor,

Carol Byrne began her Letter to the Editor with the question, "Why am I running for the Board of Education?" Carol admits to having no answer to the challenges facing our district. Instead she relies on the time worn formula political hacks have employed for years. Take us back to a simpler time and place; remind us how good it was and how happy we were, a truly tired strategy.

We face an enormous crisis if the budget is not passed. Our district will be devastated by the loss of administrators, teachers and support staff. Budget failure insures larger classes, less programs and perhaps even the curtailment of high school and middle school sports.

Our current board has found themselves in a situation Dan Smith has compared to "a perfect storm." They have advanced solutions to our problems through hard work and dedication. They have proposed an austere, sensible budget that deserves to be passed.

My question is why Carol Byrne and her running mates have not urged passage of a budget that raises taxes less than a dollar a day for the average taxpayer?

This election is about much more than the "good old days." It is about the very survival of the district that has been referred to as the best kept secret in Middlesex County.

This budget must pass in order for

our children to experience the opportunities, good days and happy times we adults have known.

PATRICIA A. HAJDUK

To My Fellow Taxpayers,

First, I must again thank the John E. Riley School Parent Teacher Student Organization for the annual Board of Education Candidates' Night on Wednesday, March 30.

It was not surprising that the majority of the questions to the candidates were about the budget. What was surprising was the response from Messrs. Smith, Morgan and LaFreniere. Each expressed concern when a question was posed about the traffic safety zones that were never established. What they did not express or explain is why the \$900,000 appropriated for the purpose of construction of these safety zones was not used for that purpose. I understand that about \$200,000 was paid to consultants for that project. The remaining \$700,000 was used for line item transfers to other accounts because of insufficient balances. Again the taxpayers were never informed about this misuse of appropriated dollars for a specific line item of such importance.

Why and how was the 2004-2005 budget overspent by \$2,000,000? The amount put to vote on by taxpayers was \$44,185,000, yet the amount being amount spent is \$46,435,730. Leased text books, exorbitant administrative raises and contract settlements that exceeded the amount appropriated by almost two percent. It's time to say no more, it's time for change. Do not re-elect Messrs. Smith, Morgan and LaFreniere. They have been on the Board for terms of six and nine years, so they are obviously part of the financial problem and not part of any solution. In fact the annual audit fees almost doubled. The 2003/2004 fee was \$17,750 and the 2004/2005 was \$32,500.

It's time for this community to get reliable and truthful information about how the tax dollars are being spent. I was vice-president/treasurer for two mutual funds and also a registered stock broker with a member firm of the New York Stock Exchange. I have the background and financial experience to make a difference. Please help me to make change by voting for me on April 19 ballot position #3. It is time for efficient and effective management of your money.

JOHN S. MARKHAM

Dear Editor,

On April 19, voters will be asked to decide who will help guide our school system for the next three years. They

will also be asked to approve or disapprove the school budget. I have been a member of the Board of Education for two years. The Board's primary function is to guarantee a solid educational environment for all the children of our town. Test results have shown that our children are doing better than they had done in years. All scores are above the state average and several indicators have put their performances in the top one percent in Middlesex County. Our SAT scores may be the best in the school's history. If your vote is based on students' success and achievements, I believe you should vote for Dan Smith, Tim Morgan and Ken LaFreniere. As far as the budget is concerned, all the candidates who have made public statements have endorsed the budget.

There has been financial mismanagement and unprofessional actions taken by several school business administrators. They are gone and their mess has been cleaned up. This budget calls for a significant tax increase. That increase is there to cover past expenses that were never paid for. If past budgets were accurate, this year's increase would be much smaller. But we can not go back. We must continue to move forward. Our children deserve the best possible education we can afford. Our children deserve Dan Smith, Tim Morgan and Ken LaFreniere.

**RESPECTFULLY,
MICHAEL ENGLISH**

To the Editor,

After reading Board Member Dan Smith's statement which appeared in the March 25 issue of the *Observer*, I would like to take this opportunity to say that it was a wonderful work of fiction. As a result of the implications made against Frank Mikorski and Dawn Jefferys in Mr. Smith's statement, I will only reply by saying:

To Frank Mikorski, Thank you for many years of continued service to the children and residents of South Plainfield. Those who really know you and have worked with you appreciate your efforts, most of which are done without public knowledge. When it has been said "its about the children," there is no doubt that is where your allegiance lies.

To Dawn Jefferys: I hope your tail feathers that were on fire have been extinguished, since they were set on fire by an administration and a Board of Education that chose to ignore your warnings about financial concerns looming. To this the concerned residents of South Plainfield say, "You Were Right!"

**THANK YOU,
JEFF SEIDER**



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Sports

Submitted By Bob Nilan

Masters will face a formidable challenge in defending its league championship when the South Plainfield Golf League begins its 2005 season on April 26 at the West Nine Golf Course.

The 14-week season runs through August and concludes with a divisional playoff tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 16.

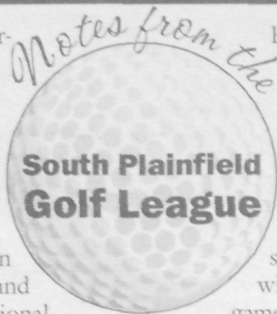
President John Cotone announced that the opening matches will see defending champions, Masters, facing last year's third-place finishers, Plainfield Animal Hospital. Masters will again be led by Danny Griffin, who can look for fine support from teammate Al Szumski. PAH will be eager to regain the title it won in 2005 and will rely on last season's Most-Improved Player, Mike Sikanowicz, Mark "Mr. Steady" Chichvar and "Old Reliable" Mike Cortese.

Patti's Construction will count on the formidable partnership of "Iron Mike" Behr and Matt Ward in their match against Twin City, the team that compiled the second-best record in the league last year. If Twin City can get off to a better start than last season, they could very well be contenders for championship honors in 2005.

KC's Korner will face Pornovets on opening night. With their strong, balanced line-ups, both teams could be battling for first-place honors in the tough American Division if they can overcome the inconsistencies that hurt them in 2004.

In the National Division, Sport & Social, seeking to regain the form that led them to the league championship two years ago, will face the Elks who are looking to improve on the terrible start they had last season when they dropped their first five matches.

Aiello Chiropractic, with the best twosome in the league, Ed Banach and



Fred "Catfish" Kirchofer, will tee off against Hank's Hackers. The team expected to give Aiello the stiffest competition for championship honors in the National Division. Hank's showed last year that when they are on their game they can take on any team in the league. New team captain Kevin Boyce is confident that Hank's can avoid the ups-and-downs of 2004 and be in the thick of the fight for first-place all season long.

Witty's dropped all the way from third place in 2003 to eleventh place in 2004 and are determined to get back to the top of the league in 2005. When Kevin Bickunas keeps his booming drives in the fairway and when Howard Adier has his putter working, Witty's definitely has the firepower to be right up there with the best in the league.

Witty's will face a VFW team that will field a new line-up. Bob Besser, a key member of the Sport & Social 2002 league championship team, will pair up this season with Bob Milan. Captain Ray Costa will again tee up with veteran Al Tillotson. The number one sub for VFW will be Jack Ford who turned in some impressive rounds last year as a pinch-hitter.

With the assurance of having a full four-man team every week, VFW has great expectations of being able to climb out of the cellar in 2005 and become truly competitive in the National Division race.



Ponytail Softball Batters Box

By Tom Gratta

To all South Plainfield softball fans, the time is finally here.

Ponytail softball starts this week. The games start on Monday, April 11 and Opening Day ceremony will be held on Saturday, April 16. Be sure to come and check out all the fun, food, and excitement. You should not miss all the very talented girls that South Plainfield has to offer. We will also be holding a banner contest. Each team will create a one of kind team banner. The banners will than be displayed so that they can be voted on. So come and cast your vote for the most creative banner. Which team will be the best?

South Plainfield Ponytail All-Stars is looking for the best of the best. All girls are welcome and needed to try out. We need new talent every year. The try outs are April 30 and May 1. If you don't try out you can't make the team. So don't let another year go by thinking I could have made the team if I had just tried.

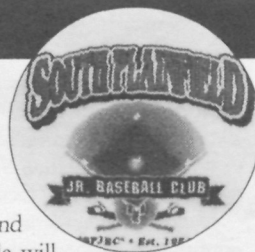
Starting on May 5 and ending May 7 the Ponytail girls will be all around town asking for donations. Please give whatever you can, no amount is too small. The girls could really use the help, lets make this the best year ever. When it comes down to it, the girls just want to play softball. Thanks in advance for every ones donations.



Congratulations to the South Plainfield Recreation Department Lady Cavaliers, who recorded an undefeated season. The team is made up of the following girls: (bottom row) Elizabeth Martin, Taylor Adorna, Megan McMahon, Liz Gratta, Michele Nugen, (top row) Coach Maria Adorna, Rosa Spallion, Lauren Conrad and Coach Tracy Gratta. The Lady Cavaliers had an undefeated season.

By Lee Flanagan

JUNIOR BASEBALL CLUB NOTES



Opening Day is this Saturday April 9. On this day we will have our annual parade which starts at 10 a.m. from Borough Hall. Teams should meet there at 9:30 a.m. and be organized with their team banner. Opening day festivities begin after we arrive at the field. Phil Aiello will be the master of ceremonies. This year we will be honoring Tony Cassano, Dennis Kazimir, and Tom Kizcula as Lifetime Member award winners, plus John Celentano, Dominic Papa, and Sal Severini as the Commissioner Award winners. Our Grand Marshall is Mike

English and the parade will be led by the South Plainfield High School Marching Band. There will be a special guest, so come out and check it out.

We have tickets on sale for a Mercedes Benz. Michelle Kunie and First Class Travel are sponsoring the second prize which is a trip for \$2,000.00 to any place you would like to travel to. Tickets are available from Nancy Salici or any Executive Board member. Call the SPJBC for tickets also.

Soccer Squirts Returns

The South Plainfield Soccer Club and United Soccer Academy will again host the popular "Soccer Squirts" program this spring at Kenneth Ave. fields. Age groups are 3-5

and 5-7. Dates for the programs are April 23, 30, May 7, 14, 21 and June 4. Cost is \$89.

To enroll, visit www.unitedsocceracademy.com.

LEGAL NOTICES

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

ORDINANCE NO. 1693

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

Ordinance #1693 entitled: AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING CERTAIN INTERSECTIONS AS "STOP INTERSECTIONS" AND PROVIDING STOP SIGNS AT SAID LOCATIONS WITHIN THE BOROUGH was adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, April 8, 2005 and that a public hearing be scheduled for Monday, April 18, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080.

ORDINANCE NO. 1693

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING CERTAIN INTERSECTIONS AS STOP INTERSECTIONS AND PROVIDING FOR A STOP SIGN AT THESE INTERSECTIONS.

WHEREAS the following streets are totally self contained streets within the Borough of South Plainfield and have no direct connection with any other municipality; and

WHEREAS the municipal engineer of the Borough of South Plainfield after investigation of the circumstances and under his seal as a licensed professional engineer has certified to the municipal governing body that the designation of these intersections as a stop intersection and the erection of a stop sign at said intersections is in the interest of safety and the expedition of traffic and will conform with the current standards prescribed by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices as adopted by the Commissioner of Transportation of the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS the Mayor and Council support said designation in the interest of public safety;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of South Plainfield that pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 39:4-140 that the intersections described below are hereby designated as a "STOP" intersection. "STOP" signs shall be installed as provided.

Intersection "Stop" Sign On

St. Johns Place at St. Johns Place

Harvard Avenue St. Johns Place

Smith Street at Jackson Avenue Smith Street

FURTHER BE IT ORDAINED that a certified copy of this ordinance shall be transmitted to the Commissioner of Transportation of the State of New Jersey as required by law.

This ordinance shall take effect after final passage and publication in accordance with the law.

ATTEST:
Vincent Buttiglieri/Municipal Clerk

\$68.25 April 8, 2005

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

ORDINANCE No. 1695

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

Ordinance #1695 entitled: AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PARKING, STOPPING AND STANDING OF ANY MOTOR VEHICLE AT ALL TIMES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE EASTERLY SIDE OF NEW BRUNSWICK AVENUE WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD was adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, April 8, 2005 and that a public hearing be scheduled for Monday, April 18, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080.

ORDINANCE NO. 1695

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PARKING, STOPPING AND STANDING OF ANY MOTOR VEHICLE ON THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE EASTERLY SIDE OF NEW BRUNSWICK AVENUE LOCATED IN THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY,

Section 1. Whenever any words or phrases are used in this ordinance, the meaning respectively described to them in Subtitle 1 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes of New Jersey shall be deemed to apply to such words or phrases.

Section 2. No person shall park, stop or stand any motor vehicle at any time at the following location in the Borough of South Plainfield, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey:

a) New Brunswick Avenue - easterly side entire length located in the Borough of South Plainfield

Section 3. Any person or persons who violate any provision of this ordinance shall, on conviction thereof, forfeit and pay a fine of not more than fifty (\$50.00) dollars.

Section 4. All ordinances or parts of ordinances, which are inconsistent herewith, are repealed to extend to such consistency.

Section 5. This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption and publication in accordance with New Jersey Law.

ATTEST:
Vincent Buttiglieri/Municipal Clerk

\$64.75 April 8, 2005

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

ORDINANCE No. 1694

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

Ordinance #1694 entitled: AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PARKING, STOPPING AND STANDING OF ANY MOTOR VEHICLE AT ALL TIMES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF CASE DRIVE IN THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD was adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, April 8, 2005 and that a public hearing be scheduled for Monday, April 18, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080.

ORDINANCE NO. 1694

AN ORDINANCE REGULATING PARKING, STOPPING AND STANDING OF ANY MOTOR VEHICLE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF CASE DRIVE IN THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD, MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY,

Section 1. Whenever any words or phrases are used in this ordinance, the meaning respectively described to them in Subtitle 1 of Title 39 of the Revised Statutes of New Jersey shall be deemed to apply to such words or phrases.

Section 2. No person shall park, stop or stand any motor vehicle during school days at the following location in the Borough of South Plainfield, County of Middlesex, State of New Jersey:

a) Case Drive - both sides entire length

Section 3. Any person or persons who violate any provision of this ordinance shall, on conviction thereof, forfeit and pay a fine of not more than fifty (\$50.00) dollars.

Section 4. All ordinances or parts of ordinances, which are inconsistent herewith, are repealed to extend to such consistency.

Section 5. This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption and publication in accordance with New Jersey Law.

ATTEST:
Vincent Buttiglieri/Municipal Clerk

\$61.25 April 8, 2005

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

ORDINANCE No. 1686A

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

Ordinance #1686A entitled: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE #1686 ENTITLED: "AN ORDINANCE TO CREATE THE POSITION OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PARKS AND RECREATION AND ESTABLISHING SALARY FOR SAID POSITION FOR 2005" was adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, April 8, 2005 and that a public hearing be scheduled for Monday, April 18, 2005 at 8:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080.

ORDINANCE 1686A

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE #1686 WHICH CREATED THE FOLLOWING EMPLOYMENT POSITION FOR THE BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD AND ESTABLISHING THE COMPENSATION FOR SAID POSITIONS THE YEAR 2005.

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

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

POSITION	BASE SALARY 2005
AFSCME EMPLOYEES	
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PARKS AND RECREATION	40,000 - 50,000

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

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

ATTEST:
Vincent Buttiglieri/Municipal Clerk

\$84.00 April 8, 2005

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

An appeal has been filed by Tony Cassara requesting a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield to permit a dormer on existing carport with spiral staircase. Proposed dormer lacks 8' required side setback, 9' being proposed; and other variances that may be required, said property being located at 2511 Linden Avenue on Block 82, Lot 24 on the South Plainfield Tax Map.

For the purposes of hearing objections to or protests against the granting of said appeal, the South Plainfield Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Thursday, April 28, 2005 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 April 8, 2005

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Superintendent Goes Door to Door Explaining Details of School Budget

(Continued from page 1)

SAT review course, which had 172 students enrolled last year, as well as the before and after school programs which improved GEPA test scores by 40 percent.

A few facts revealed were that state aid has not increased by one penny in three years, yet school salaries, insurance and other costs increase every year. Also, many state and federal mandates are not funded, and the district is

forced to implement those mandates and foot the bill. Rosado asked that residents petition the state to pay for mandates and to find a way to give more to the school districts. The Abbott districts, which account for only 30 districts, now receive 70 percent of all of the state aid, while the other 500+ school districts get the rest of the 30 percent. A Supreme Court decision directed that poorer school districts get more aid

to compete with the richer districts, so that student education will be equal. Over the years, the Abbott districts have received increased aid, some having more money than they can spend in a year, while the non-Abbott districts have had to struggle with their budgets each year and pass the burden onto the local taxpayers. The state did increase aid to the Abbott districts this year, but non-Abbott districts received no increases. Unless taxpayers pressure the state,

nothing will change.

In the end it is the students who reap the benefits or suffer the loss of some programs, all depending on whether the budget passes or is rejected. Rosado has promised that if the budget is rejected he will not cut any educational programs. This means that cuts will have to be made in after school programs, clubs, sports and other areas.

If the budget does not pass, the

council will be able to make cuts or leave the budget as is, which is highly unlikely. What cuts and programs will be made are unknown. The school budget vote is scheduled for Tuesday, April 19. Polls are open from 2 to 9 p.m.

Dr. Rosado is still available to talk about the budget to any group or club before the school board election. Call the superintendents' office at (908) 754-4620 to make an appointment.

Obituaries

John Kuebler, 59

John Kuebler died on Saturday, March 26 at the V.A. Hospital in East Orange.

John served in the U.S. Navy.

He is the beloved father of John Kuebler, Jr. and Raymond Kuebler; grandfather of Emily Kuebler; brother of Florence Whitney of California, Robert Kuebler and Elizabeth Golden of New Jersey and also dear friend of Charlene Gaffney.

Funeral services were held at the South Plainfield Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to the V.A. Hospital in East Orange in John's name would be appreciated.

Mary J. (Novak) Jaskulski, 103

Mary J. (Novak) Jaskulski died peacefully on Friday, April 1 at her daughter's home with her family at her side.

Born in Dickson City, Pa., she resided in Erie, Pa. after she married at the age of 16 in 1918. She was even reciting the rosary until the time she passed away. "Grandma" as she is known to many, loved to sew, cook and garden, while always wearing an apron which she made for herself and many others.

A founding member of Our Lady of Czestochowa RC Church, she was also a member of the Rosary Society. Her husband of 75 years, Anthony,

died in 1993. She is also predeceased by two daughters, Sally Henkel, who died in 2003 and Florence Zamber, who died in 2004. She was also the last surviving of the many siblings and the oldest of them.

Surviving are three daughters, Irene and her husband Charles Butrico, Theresa and her husband Joe Bielinski and Mary Zajac, all of South Plainfield; two sons, John and his wife Christine of Spokane, Wash. and Anthony and his wife Betty of Huntingtown, Md. Also surviving are 22 grandchildren, 47 great-grand grandchildren and 16 great-great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations in her memory may be made to Our Lady of Czestochowa Church.

Anna Maria "Mary" (Capraro) Kapsch, 94

Anna Maria "Mary" (Capraro) Kapsch died on Thursday, March 31 in the Haven Hospice at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in New York City, Mary had lived in South Plainfield for 20 years.

She was a dressmaker for the former Roth Dress Factory in South Plainfield for 20 years.

An avid gardener, Mrs. Kapsch enjoyed sewing and cooking. She was a member of Sacred Heart Church,

the South Plainfield Democratic Organization and the South Plainfield Senior Citizens.

She is predeceased by her husband, Charles, who died in 1989; her parents, Guiseppe and Isabelle Kapsch and by a brother, John.

Surviving are two children, Virginia Cocco and her husband, Nicholas and Dan Kapsch, both of South Plainfield.

Also surviving are five grandchildren, Daniel Kapsch and his wife, Janine, Joseph and Michael Kapsch and Nicole and Francis Cocco.

Funeral services were held at the McCriskin Home For Funerals.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Mary's name to Haven Hospice, c/o JFK Medical Center, 80 James St., Edison NJ 08820.

Lydia M. Pantaleon

On March 18, Lydia M. Pantaleon finally went home.

Lydia was a dynamic teacher, a great dancer and an avid gardener. She loved to create beauty around her. No wonder she was called "Grandma Beauty" by her grandchildren. She was a great mother, who gave selfless devotion, limitless sacrifice and pure love. "You will be missed!" She was indeed beautiful!

She was the eldest daughter of the late Dionisio and Lucrecia Malamug; devoted sister of Cesar, Nyda, Jose, Delia and Ruben; loving mother of Grace, Gladys, Giv, Gemma, Girlie Ann and Genis; a "Grandma Beauty" to 15 grandchildren; "Inang" to the nieces and nephews and "Manang Lyds" to all relatives and friends, who are too many to mention.

Funeral services were held at the South Plainfield Funeral Home.

Anna M. (Vakerich) Percevault, 90

Anna M. (Vakerich) Percevault died on Monday, April 4 in Cedar Oaks Care Center, South Plainfield.

Born in South Plainfield, she resided in Plainfield before moving to South Plainfield in 1958.

Mrs. Percevault was a homemaker and a member of Sacred Heart Church, South Plainfield.

Her husband, Alfred C. Percevault, died in 1991 and her son, Charles Percevault died in 2003.

Her sisters, Helen Eodice, Elizabeth Nowakowski and Mary Pellegrino and brothers, John, George, Michael, and Charles Vakerich have predeceased her.

Surviving are a daughter and son-in-law, Patricia A. and Russell Bowers of South Plainfield; a daughter-in-law, Barbara Percevault of Piscataway; and two brothers, Frank and George Vakerich, both of South Plainfield.

Also surviving are three grandchildren, Beth Ann Manno, Anthony and Carla Percevault and one great-granddaughter, Alexa Manno.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

Vincent W. DeMarco, 82

Vincent W. DeMarco died Saturday, April 2 at his residence.

Born in Jersey City, he resided in South Plainfield for 42 years. Mr. DeMarco served with the U.S. Navy during WWII. He was an accountant with Western Electric in New York City for 40 years. Vincent enjoyed watching sports, especially baseball and also enjoyed playing baseball in his younger days.

Surviving are his loving wife Yolanda (Stanziani); two sons, Frank DeMarco of South Plainfield and Peter DeMarco and daughter-in-law Susan of Dayton; a daughter, Lisa and son-in-law Jerry of Scotch Plains and five grandchildren, Jessica, Christopher, Dante, Gianna, and Luca.

Funeral services were held at the South Plainfield Funeral Home.

Richard M. Fulton, 73

Richard M. Fulton died Friday, April 1, at JFK Hartwyck in Edison.

Born in Cook County, Ill., he resided in Pittsburgh before moving to South Plainfield 37 years ago. Richard served in the U.S. Army during the Korean conflict. He was a member of Wesley United Methodist Church in South Plainfield. He enjoyed bowling, gardening and singing in various choirs.

Surviving are his loving wife of 52 years, Elizabeth (Antisell); two sons, Richard Fulton, Jr. and Steven Fulton; a daughter Lisa Seader, all of South Plainfield; a grandson Ronald McCall; a brother, Paul Fulton of Pittsburgh and several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at the South Plainfield Funeral Home.

Memorial contributions in his name may be made to Wesley United Methodist Church and or the South Plainfield Fire Rescue Squad.

Frank W. Pike, 76

Frank W. Pike died on April 2 in JFK Haven Hospice at JFK Medical Center in Edison.

Born in Woodside, N.Y., Frank was raised in the St. Albans section of Queens. He lived in Massapequa, N.Y., Edison and Lakewood before moving to Woodbridge in 2001.

He was employed as a general construction foreman with Otis Elevator Corp. in New York for over 30 years. His most significant achievement of his career was the design and development of the entire elevator system for the World Trade Center and the New York State Pavilion at the World's Fair in Flushing Meadows, Queens.

An avid bowler, Frank enjoyed playing darts and his trips to Atlantic City. He was a member of the American Legion Post #65 in Metuchen, a member of the Free Masons Union and the National Elevator Industry Local #1 in Manhattan.

An Army Veteran of the Korean War, Frank earned the rank of Sergeant before being discharged in 1952.

Throughout his loving Irish family, Frank was well known for his infamous saying, "I Reckon."

His is predeceased by a brother George, a step-daughter, Kathy McCriskin and three brothers-in-law.

Surviving are his wife of 19 years, Eileen (Sheehan); three step children, Eileen Magee and her husband Rich of Metuchen, Kevin Griffin and his wife Barbara of South Plainfield and Keith and Sharon Griffin of Metuchen; a step-son-in-law, Rich McCriskin and his wife Dolores of South Plainfield and five step-grandchildren, Rick McCriskin, Megan and Christine Magee, Shannon Griffin and Collin Griffin. Also surviving are numerous relatives and extended family members.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, April 30 at 2:30 p.m. in the McCriskin Home For Funerals, 2425 Plainfield Ave. in South Plainfield. Cremation is private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Frank's memory to the Kathy McCriskin Cerebral Vascular Fund, c/o The Neuroscience Institute at JFK Medical Center, 65 James St., Edison, NJ 08820.

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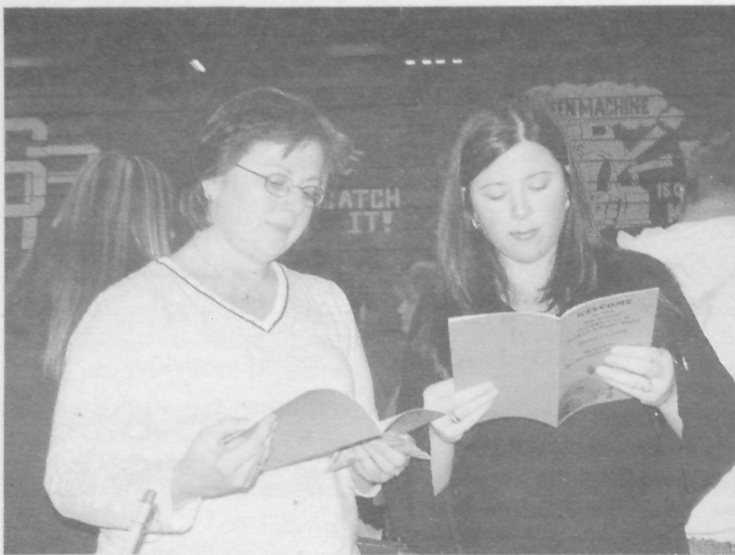
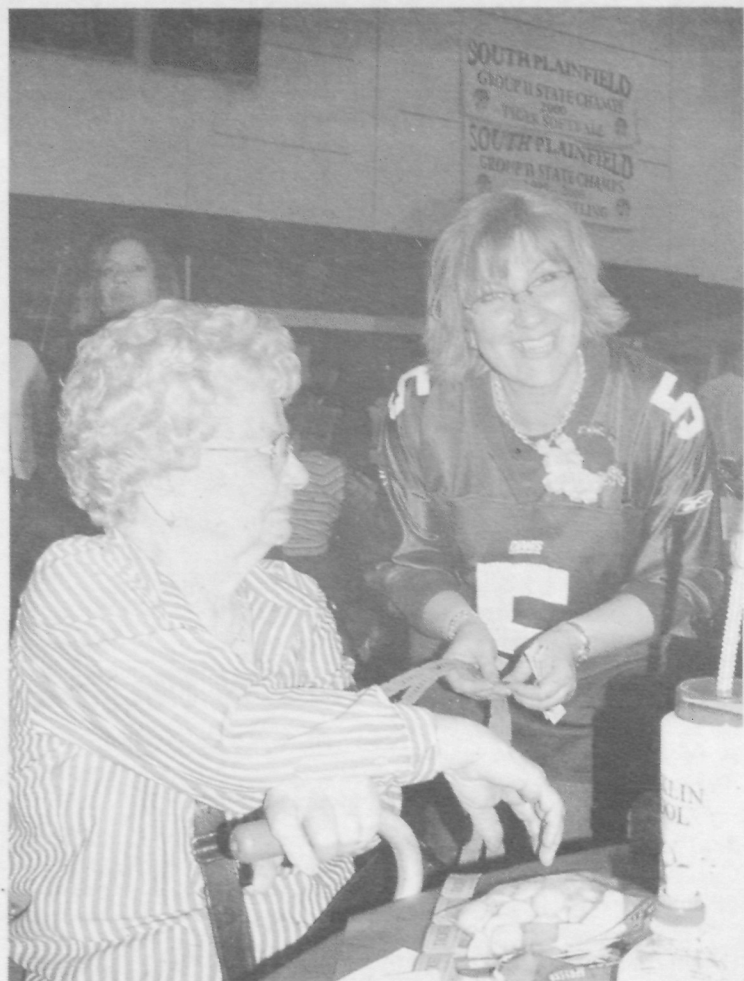
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Hundreds Come Out for Franklin School Auction

On March 19 Franklin Elementary School held their ninth annual auction/raffle.

This year's auction followed a sports theme and every guest received a free sports water bottle.

The event offered over 350 prizes. Among the 450 people in attendance were; Franklin Principal Nancy Erick-

son, teachers Patti Ratti, Rose Pelton, Kiley Jackson, Mary Rodger, Janet Donnelly and the Roosevelt School Principal Jacqueline Keogh.

The most sought after prizes included: a seven day, six night Disney cruise, 52 inch big screen TV, a Dell computer and a four day, three night Busch Gardens trip.

Senior Softball Popular in Central Jersey

Waddya do when your 50, old and creaky? Play softball! Company presidents, tradesmen, salespeople and a mix of everyone else rubs elbows as a team and loves it. Men's slowpitch softball is one of America's most popular sports. It is played by men and women of all ages. One organization, the Amateur Softball Association, supervises over 245,000 teams comprising over 3.5 million players. Over 4,000 "unique visitors" visit the ASA website, (www.asasoftball.com), per day. It is estimated that as many as 40 millions Americans enjoy softball every year. Over the last decade, a rapidly growing number of older players have formed leagues specifically for older players. And we look forward to enjoying continued growth.

Central New Jersey is home to over 1,000 softball teams of all types and descriptions and senior softball is becoming an increasing large percentage of the whole. If you are interested, why not contact us about playing? Just jump on line and go to <http://njssa.us> for more contact information.

Ride To Cure Diabetes

If you would love the feeling of peddling your bike through some of the most beautiful countryside in America while at the same time helping to raise money to find a cure for diabetes, sign up for one of the Ride to Cure Diabetes events. Check your local cycle shop or gym for registration information or call (888) 422-9590.

The Ride to Cure Diabetes is a three-day adventure featuring an exhilarating one-day ride through historic Asheville, NC, Oct. 6-9, or through Death Valley, Calif., in the spring of 2006. The 2005 Death Valley ride in October reached capacity in one week! If interested contact the Mid-Jersey Chapter to register immediately so you are not shut out.

The Death Valley ride varies from 38 to 105 miles beginning at Furnace Creek Ranch and takes riders through the breathtaking vistas, salt flats and rolling hills of the desert.

For information on diabetes or on participating, call the JDRF Mid Jersey Chapter at (888) 422-9590.

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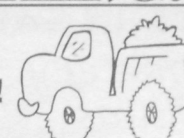
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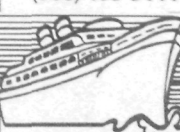
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The "Rubber Band Man" Rules in Reading Room

By Jane Dornick

Eight year old Tucker Merkler, a third grader at Kennedy Elementary School, has become affectionately known as the "Rubber Band Man" to his classmates in the reading resource room.

His obsession with making "rubber band balls" began last September when he began knotting rubber bands together and then as it grew, he wrapped more around the outside. He brought the ball to school to show reading teacher Sherry Lawrence and she decided to start one for the class as a learning tool. If students do well on their work they earn the opportunity to place rubber bands around the ball. "It encourages the students to write longer sentences by stretching them as a rubber band does," said Lawrence.

The class ball, started in October, now weighs in at one and a half pounds. Tucker's personal rubber band ball weighs a whopping three pounds and has an incredible bounce to it. The highlight of the class period is when the students get to place their own rubber bands on the ball.

Tucker's mom Stacy says, "Whenever he gets money as a gift, he buys bags of rubber bands at the dollar store and whenever relatives visit, they sing the song *Rubber Band Man* to him."



Tucker Merkler adds another rubber band to his growing rubber band ball.

Take Note!

**Observer
Office to Be
Closed April 14
and 15**

Please be advised that the Observer office will be closed next Thursday and Friday, April 14 and 15. The office will reopen on Monday, April 18, noon.

Submit your stories via email: spobserver@comcast.net or by fax (908) 668-8819.

Board of Education Budget Tops Candidates Debate

(Continued from page 1)

two administrative positions, five teaching positions, three secretarial positions, one technology position and two instructional aides and elimination of sixth teaching period at high school. Also, earlier this year an administrative position was cut in the Adult School.

When asked what cuts the candidates would make if the budget is defeated, all the candidates stated that it wouldn't be up to the Board to make the cuts, but the cuts will actually be in the hands of the members of the borough council. In the event of the budget not passing, Smith suggested that the council make those meetings open to the public.

With an anticipated 18 percent increase in health care costs the question was asked if teachers would be asked to contribute to their health benefits. "At the last board meeting I attended I asked if the SPEA would make concessions in their contract to prevent layoffs. If they paid \$100 a month toward their health benefits, it would cover the costs, but the SPEA was never contacted, nor did the

SPEA contact the Board," Seider said.

"I would ask for teacher contributions to their health care plan during negotiations," said Byrne. Markham agreed, saying "There has to be a give and take."

Both Markham and Byrne said that one of the first things they would do if elected would be to hire a permanent business administrator. Smith noted that the Board had begun a

search for a permanent business administrator, but the pool of applicants didn't have a suitable candidate. Smith defended Interim Business Administrator Bob Davis' salary of \$500 a day as costing less to the district than a salaried employee. "He is paid only per day. He is not paid for vacation days, sick time or benefits," said Smith.

In reviewing what each had done to better the district while they were

on the board, Byrne recalled that the best thing was hiring Mary Ellen Martko as staff developer, and Markham said finding money for new band uniforms in 1979. LaFreniere noted putting in place the technology plan in the curriculum. Morgan said it was his time as chairman of the Transportation Committee and his work with Traffic Safety to fix traffic patterns entering and exiting at Grant, the

middle school and the high school complex. Smith said he contributed to building a new school to replace 100-year-old Roosevelt School at a cost of \$10M and replacing the track. Seider noted he also worked to replace the track, was also on the board that hired SAC counselors for the elementary schools and instituted athletic programs at the middle school and Grant School.

Prayers for Pope John Paul at Sacred Heart

Sacred Heart Parish will remember Pope John Paul with special prayers during their Thursday evening mass which begins at 7 p.m.

Sacred Heart Church will also be adding an additional mass to Sunday service. A 6:00 p.m. mass will be offered beginning this Sunday, April 10.

Reminder: Sacred Heart Centennial Gala will be held at the Pines Manor in Edison. Cocktail hour at 4 p.m. Dinner and dancing will follow. Open bar. \$50 pp. For tickets and information call the Parish Center, (908) 756-0633, ext. 10.

Skateboard Park Rules Apply to All

The South Plainfield skateboard park is open for the enjoyment of all residents who would like to utilize it. However, residents should be aware that while the use of the park is open to all residents, those who refuse to follow the park rules will be denied access.

For access to the park, residents must register at the PAL and obtain a sticker.

For more information, call recreation at (908) 226-7713.

Skateboards must adhere to the following rules: helmets are required and bicycles are never allowed in the park at any time. Rules will be strictly enforced.



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