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# South Plainfield Observer

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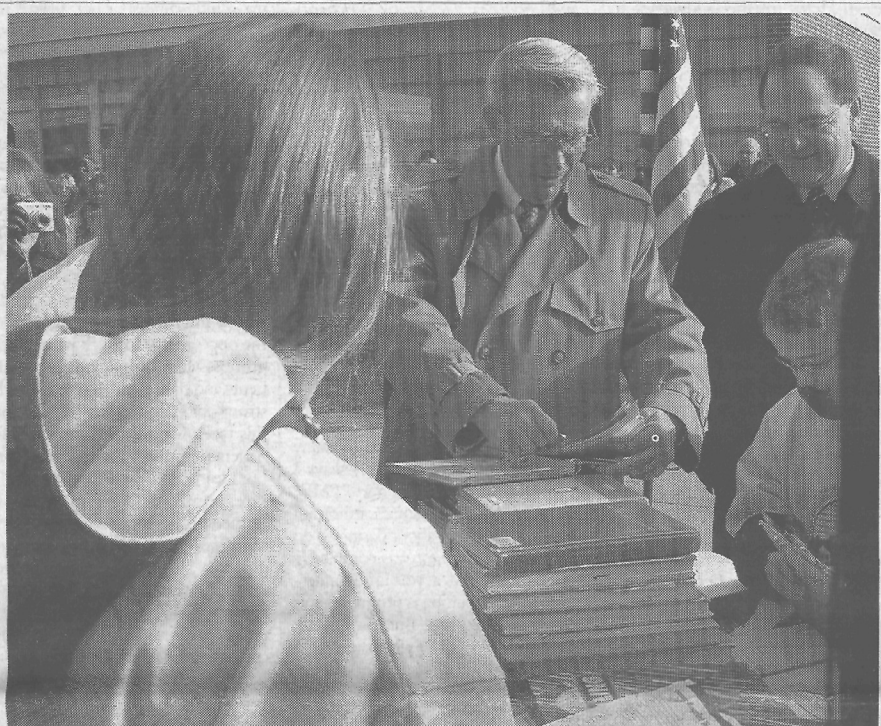
SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY

DEC 15 2006

VOL. 10, NO. 15

50 CENTS

DECEMBER 15, 2006



"It's something I've always wanted to do," said Mayor Dan Gallagher as he tore out the contents of a book at the book recycling program kick-off at Grant School. See page 3 for story.

## 101st Airborne Tree Lighting

The New York Chapter's Association of the 101st Airborne held a memorial service and tree lighting ceremony last Saturday under the tree on the front lawn of McCriskin Home For Funerals located on Plainfield Ave. See page 6 for story.

## Teachers, Public Employees "Walk-Out" to Protest Cuts

Some 14,000 public employees, including over 12,000 members of the N.J. Education Assoc. (NJEA), stood in front of the State House in Trenton Monday to protest potential benefit cuts by legislators to help provide property tax relief to homeowners, who pay the highest rate in

the country. The proposed plan would give a full 20 percent property tax credit to households that earn up to \$100,000 and lesser relief to households earning up to \$250,000.

Last weekend Gov. Jon Corzine took the position of leaving the bargaining chips up to local districts, but was told by legislators that they could not pass the entire reform package without including the union worker proposals. Corzine then changed his mind, but did not say whether he would still sign the bills.

The proposed cuts for public work-  
(Continued on page 3)

## Council to Vote Tuesday On Budget Amendment

The 2007 South Plainfield State Fiscal Year budget that was approved on Aug. 8 with a new tax rate of .99, was revisited with an amendment at the Dec. 5 Borough Council meeting.

The amendment includes an increase of approximately \$306,000 in the original budget. Nearly one half of the increase is from grants, as well as police salaries and wages and capital amendments. The overall budget is a 3.7 percent increase over last year's budget. The new tax rate of 1.0 is up from .94 last year for the average house assessed at \$118,250, with homeowners paying approximately \$1,182 a year in the municipal portion of the tax bill. Homeowners only foot 57 percent of the municipal budget with about 15 percent coming from state aid, and additional monies from other revenue sources.

According to CFO Glenn Cullen, the \$897,000 increase in the budget is due to an increase of \$372,000 in state statutory pension increases and in health benefits for employees of \$168,000 which account for 60 percent of the net increase. Excluding

these two items, the borough's overall budget increase was less than 1.5 percent, which Cullen feels "is quite an accomplishment." The minor adjustment in the amendment from .99 to 1.0 comes from a revenue adjustment and the decision by the council to hire a new police officer. Therefore, the amendment will cost the taxpayer on average an additional \$12 per year over the \$58 increase that was originally anticipated in August.

Council members Matt Anesh and Rob Bengivenga voted against introducing the amendment to the budget. Bengivenga stated that his vote was based on a campaign promise made to voters in November of no new tax increases. He also stated that a 14-point tax increase over the last two years is a lot of money out of taxpayers' pockets and he was under the assumption that the August budget could actually have been amended and reduced. The 2007 budget covers the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. Council members will vote to adopt the budget amendment at Tuesday's Council meeting at Borough Hall at 8 p.m.



The Bloustein Distinguished Scholars are Tina Bijlani, Amit Chandler, Ying Chen, Kimberly Galinsky, Samantha Granski, Daniel Hubner, Wael Kanj, Meshva Patel, Kate Reichert and Karla Reyes. The South Plainfield administration and faculty are very proud of the academic achievements of these seniors.

## Ten Named Edward Bloustein Scholars

South Plainfield High School is pleased to announce the current seniors who are recipients of The Edward J. Bloustein Distinguished Scholarship Award from The Garden State Scholarship Program. The criteria for these high achieving students is that they rank in the top 10% of their class and have a minimum combined

SAT score of 1260, or are ranked first, second or third in their class as of the end of their junior year. In New Jersey, more than 5,000 distinguished scholars received an award offer for the 2007-08 collegiate academic year.

Distinguished scholars are offered an annual award of \$1,000 without regard to financial need. Students

must attend an undergraduate program at a New Jersey college or university and the award is renewable for each of the four years.

The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA), an independent agency of the State of New Jersey, administers the Garden State Scholarship Program, which includes the Edward J. Bloustein Distinguished Scholar and Urban Scholar awards. Each year, more than 7,000 students statewide receive scholarships in recognition of their high level of academic achievement. Students may use these awards to continue their education at New Jersey institutions of higher education. For more information about HESAA'S programs, call 1-800-792-8670 or visit online at [www.hesaa.org](http://www.hesaa.org).

## Crash Closes So. Clinton for 6 Hours

On Dec. 7 around 12:30 p.m., Gregory S. Demetroulakos, 19, of Edison, was operating a 1997 Oldsmobile 88 northbound on South Clinton Ave. when he left the roadway and struck a utility pole. As a result of the crash, the utility pole was severed at the ground, causing the utility wires to impede the traffic on the roadway. South Clinton Ave., which is a designated truck route,

was closed to all traffic for six hours.

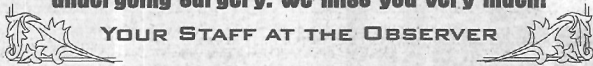
Demetroulakos, who was not injured in the crash, was charged with driving while impaired and careless driving.

The crash is being investigated by South Plainfield Officers Roberto Vega and Vincent Campagna. Anyone with more information should call the Traffic Safety Unit at (908) 226-7679.





We wish a speedy recovery to Nancy Grennier, our Editor-in-Chief, who is currently undergoing surgery. We miss you very much!



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Log on to  
southplainfieldnj.com  
for the latest meeting agenda

### council meetings

Meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesday  
Borough Hall Council Chambers • Questions? 908-226-7605

**Date** **Agenda Meeting** **Public Meeting**

Tuesday, December 19 ..... 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 (N.J.S.A. 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  
Dec. 26.

### 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

### board of education meetings

Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. unless otherwise noted  
Committee of the Whole, Wednesdays 7 p.m.  
Jan. 10, Feb. 14, March 14 and March 28.  
Regular Meeting Wednesdays 8 p.m.—  
Jan. 17, Feb. 21, March and April 4.

### 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.  
Dec. 19

### recreation commission

Meets once a month on the second Tuesday of the month, except July and August  
PAL Building, Maple Ave. 7 p.m. • Questions? 908-226-7716

### environmental commission

Meets once a month (second Wednesday)  
Borough Hall Conference Room, 8 p.m. • Questions? 908-226-7621  
Jan. 10.

### 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 at 8 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room at  
Roosevelt Administration Building on Jackson Ave. December meeting is cancelled.

## South Plainfield Observer

The South Plainfield Observer is published every Friday

G&G Graphics, Inc.  
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NANCY GRENNIER  
Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

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### SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES

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

To get an article published in the South Plainfield Observer:

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

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters may be submitted by mail to South Plainfield Observer, Editorial Dept., 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, by email: sposerver@comcast.net or fax 908-668-8819. Letters should not exceed 200 words. We reserve the right to edit for clarity or length. It is the editor's discretion to limit the number of letters submitted by one individual on the same subject. The opinions expressed in "Letters" do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Observer. All letters must be submitted with name and phone number, for verification.

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## IN YOUR OPINION

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of the publisher.

### To the Editor

The South Plainfield Education Foundation would like to thank the community of South Plainfield for their generous support for this years telethon. We raised \$9,400 this year in pledges.

We were not able to reach every parent; however, a letter will still be sent home. This is our most important fundraiser of the year. Please help us to maintain our incentive programs, such as the gold card in the high school and scholarships to deserving seniors.

We would like to thank Pizza Stop for helping us with the pizzas, Home-town Heros for the sandwiches and Sodexo/Marriott for the soda and the paper goods.

Most importantly, we would like to thank the students for their hard work in making the phone calls and stuffing envelopes—and to the community for their continuing support of the education foundation.

Our 50/50 raffle was also drawn Thursday night. We raised \$5,220. The total prizes given out were \$2,610. There were five winners: first prize, \$1,305; second prize, \$522; third prize, \$391.50; fourth prize, \$261 and fifth prize, \$130.50.

The winners were contacted the night of the raffle. Thanks to all who helped with the raffle and to all who purchased tickets

**SINCERELY,  
MARJORIE M. REEDY  
PRESIDENT, SOUTH PLAINFIELD  
EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

### Dear Editor,

In the past few editions, you had stories regarding poor work ethic on the part of business owners in our area. I am writing you to let your readers know that not all merchants in South Plainfield are dishonest.

On Oct. 24 my washing machine broke down. In the past I have seen a white van with the company name, "AAAA Affordable," and the telephone number on the side of the van. I kept this number in my records just in case of emergencies. I called AAAA Affordable and talked to a gentleman by the name of Bob. I told Bob my problem and the jam I was in and he said he would be out between 1 and 3 p.m. I informed him I would not be able to get home before 7 p.m., and he was more than willing to come at the time I got home. It was so refreshing to have a person that will work with you and not stress you out to try to leave a job that does not understand leaving early. When I returned home shortly after 7 p.m. Bob was already in my driveway waiting for me. I apologized for being late and he was very pleasant in responding to me. "No big deal, don't worry about it," he said. He diagnosed my problem and gave me a very fair estimate. Within one hour, he was finished and my washing machine was as good as new. He gave me a few good tips on how to lengthen the life of my washer and dryer. It was a very good experience working with this company and I highly recommend this company to anyone with appliance problems. I would like to pass on the name and number. It is AAAA Affordable Appliance Repair. You can reach them at (800) 624-0687.

**SINCERELY,  
EDWARD J. CESAREO**

### Dear Roosevelt Elementary School's Parents/Guardians:

On behalf of the Roosevelt Elementary School Student Council and myself, we would like to thank you for making our pajama drive a success! Your pajama donations will provide a special gift of warmth and comfort to many needy children and teenagers. Also, we would like to extend a special thank you to Marge Ackerman for giving us the opportunity to contribute to the community's special holiday packages. Your work each year with the needy families in our community is a valuable lesson supporting good character traits and charity for our students. And finally, thanks and appreciation to Mrs. DeAndrea, our school nurse, who volunteers her time to assist Marge Ackerman in her holiday work and delivers our pajamas to social services. Thanks again to everyone, and may the joy and peace of this season fill all your homes now and throughout the year.

**SINCERELY, MARGARET MOSLEY,  
M. ED, MSW, LCSW  
ROOSEVELT ELEM. SCHOOL  
STUDENT COUNCIL ADVISOR**

### Dear Friends,

I hope this note finds you well! A few months ago I decided to help support Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy (PPMD) by signing up to run a half marathon. There are so many different (possibly smarter!) ways I could have chosen to support PPMD, but I felt that this insane choice meant something. It was about daring to do something I thought was completely impossible! And if you are wondering how the training is progressing, it is going quite badly. But it is going!

Join me! Consider what you would do if you didn't care about failing. Please help sponsor the "greatest marathon underdog ever," and join me in doing something that you think is impossible.

The possibility of it is irrelevant, the outcome is irrelevant, it is just

### Submit Letters to the Editor:

Please be advised that the Observer will no longer publish anonymous letters. 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: sposerver@comcast.net. Deadline is Monday, 5 p.m. Letters must be accompanied by a name and telephone number for verification. Please limit letters to no more than 200 words. We reserve the right to refuse a letter, to edit for clarity or length, and limit the number of letters submitted on the same subject.

about showing up. Super-lame-limping-aching-runner or not, here is the good part: the possibility of finding treatments for DMD is real. It can and must be done. Please help!

Thank you for your support! It does not have to be a lot, any little bit helps! Learn more about Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy at their website www.parentprojectmd.org. It is one of the amazing organizations I have the pleasure of working with. To make a donation, please visit www.firstgiving.com/clauidiahirawat.

In the last six years at PTC, no greater gift has been given to me than the opportunity to work with patient groups. More than anything else, patients and their families teach us to be strong and courageous. I came into this work filled with compassion for patients affected by genetic disorders, but I learned that while compassion is nice, sometimes it is misplaced. I learned that strength is a relative term that goes beyond your muscles and quality of life has little to do with how much life you have or what you are able to do. It is so much bigger; the possibilities are so much greater. I am crawling but I want to run.

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season and a 2007 filled with new possibilities!

**CLAUDIA HIRAWAT  
SENIOR V.P., CORPORATE  
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## Feeding Our Feathered Friends At Highland Avenue Woods

The public is invited to the Nature Center at Highland Avenue Woods Environmental Education Reserve on Saturday, Dec. 16 from 1 to 3 p.m. for a fun activity: making bagel bird feeders for wintering backyard birds. We will be making feeders every Saturday afternoon for the month of December.

The Friends of the Woods are providing the peanut butter, birdseed and dried fruits which participants will apply to bagels with string attachments. The hanging bird feeders provide a high energy food source for chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, downy and hairy woodpeckers, winter wrens and assorted sparrows which do not migrate to warmer climates. The bagels are courtesy of our good friends at

Dunkin Donuts on Maple Ave. The activity is offered without charge.

Story Time, recommended for kids ages 3-6 years of age, begins at 1 p.m. and is followed by a craft every Saturday afternoon. Story Time is also offered without charge. Wildlife Art Classes are held every Tuesday from 4-5 p.m. for ages 5-10. Contact the Friends of the Woods at SPNatureTrails@cs.com for art class fees or further programming information.

The Nature Center and trail head are located at 115 Sylvania Pl. off South Clinton Ave. The walking trails are open to the public seven days a week, from dawn to dusk. The center is open every Saturday from 1 to 3:30 p.m.



Grant Elementary students "tear" into books during the first pilot program to recycle old textbooks in Middlesex County.

## New Book Recycling Program At Grant School

By Libby Barsky

Mayor Daniel Gallagher tore the contents of a book from its covers. "It's something I've always wanted to do," said Gallagher.

The same sentiments were echoed by fifth grade Student Council member Ryan Temple. He stood near Gallagher tearing out the contents of another book at a table piled high with old textbooks in the courtyard of Grant School. They were taking part in the first recycling pilot program to recycle old texts in Middlesex County. The program will make room for new books while keeping the old books out of the waste stream. The district will receive \$20 a ton for recycled pages only, as the covers are covered with glue and shiny paper.

Last summer Grant School Principal Leo Whalen began looking for a way to dispose of the books so there would be room for new textbooks. The district had ordered new social studies, science and health books to upgrade the curriculum for fifth and sixth grades. The old books were be-

ing stored in closets and piled in rows against the walls of the cafeteria.

Whalen contacted book vendors and, although he went through the process of trying to get rid of them by reselling them or donating them to places like New Orleans, he was told to throw them out.

"I didn't want to do that," said Whalen. So early in September he contacted Richard Hills, the director of the Middlesex County Improvement Authority, and put the question of how to recycle the books to him.

Hills met with the Freeholders and a pilot program was developed to recycle textbooks. An enormous container was then placed in the courtyard of Grant at the side of the building by Waste Management.

Freeholder Camille Femicola, chair of the County's Engineering and Planning Committee, spoke of the school emphasizing the value of the program. "This is a hands on learning experience that can be the basis of recycling education as well as keeping the books out of the waste stream to saving landfill space," she said.

After remarks by Freeholder Crabiel, student council members Courtney Allocco, Anthony Ashnault, Patrick Boyle, Danielle Butrico, Justin Glover, Mia Lam, Ryan Temple and Joey Valentino stood around the table and began tearing out pages from the books.

Also present at the event were Superintendent Dr. Robert Rosado, BOE member Carol Byrne, Mayor-elect Charlie Butrico, Recycling Coordinator Alice Tempel and Co-chair PTO President Debbie Boyle.

## Teachers, Public Employees "Walk-Out"

(Continued from page 1)

ers include:

- Replacing state pensions with a 401(k) program for new state and local employees, including teachers.
- Averaging the highest five years' salaries, up from the current averaging of three years. By averaging more years, pension payouts would be reduced.
- Mandate changes at the local level for sick leave, vacation carry over rules and terminal leave payments. Currently, those benefits are set by local negotiation.

In addition to the current proposals, a legislative committee has recommended:

- Raising the retirement age from 55 to 62.
- Forcing all public employees to pay a portion of health insurance premiums. A task force said employees should cover 5 to 10 percent of their health costs. State health benefit costs have risen 150 percent in the past five years.

In the 2006/2007 South Plainfield Board of Education School Budget, approximately \$29 million is spent on employee salaries and \$7.4 million in fully-funded medical, prescription and dental benefits totalling 73 percent of the current \$50 million budget. The school district also received nearly \$10 million in state and federal aid. The school tax accounted for 63 percent of the 2005/2006 homeowner tax bill, up 2 percent from the previous year.

The NJEA feels that if this legislature is passed their will be an unprecedented number of teachers retiring, leaving a large number of teaching positions open which will hurt the children. It will also discourage people from wanting to enter the teaching field.

State legislators still have not decided yet how they will proceed.

### CORRECTION

In the December 8 issue of the *Observer*, Michele Schuetz was incorrectly listed under the Middle School honor roll. Due to a grading error, she should have been listed under 8th Grade *High Honor Roll*.

## Plainfield Animal Hospital Holiday Giving for Needy Pets

The Plainfield Animal Hospital is collecting pet food donations to be distributed to needy pets for the holiday season. Please bring canned or dry pet foods to the drop off box at the animal hospital, 2215 Park Ave. from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sundays.

Monetary donations will also be accepted and used to buy pet food.

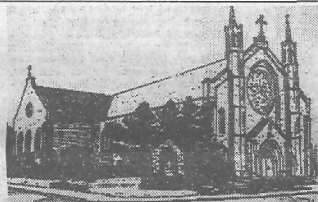
Food will be distributed to Meals on Wheels and Shirley Thompson for Christmas distribution. Thank you for your generosity and may you have happy and healthy holidays.

For more information or directions to the hospital, please call (908)-755-2428.

## Sacred Heart Church

149 South Plainfield Ave.  
South Plainfield, NJ

Rev. John Paul  
Alvarado, Pastor



**Sacrament of Reconciliation**  
Saturday 10-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

### Mass Schedule:

Saturday Evening Mass 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 8:00, 9:30, 11:30 a.m.  
Weekdays Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9 am Mon. and Thurs. 7 p.m.  
Monday Eve. Mass with Miraculous Medal Novena Prayers 7 p.m.  
Holy Days 9 a.m., 12:10 p.m. and 7 p.m.

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## Counseling for School Children

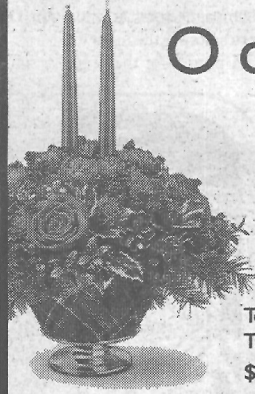
(in your home) coping with

Divorcing Parents,  
Asperger's Syndrome,  
ADHD, 504 Prep., etc.

RETIRED PRINCIPAL

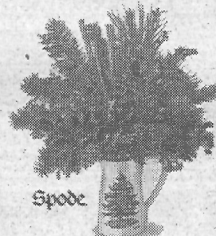
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# Around Town

## Sacred Heart Advent Play December 15

Sacred Heart Church will be offering a special Advent play entitled "The Christmas Angel" on Saturday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m. This one-act spiritual drama will be performed by Gina McKenna-Smith, actress, writer, and founder of Springhouse Productions. Come back to that first night in Bethlehem and experience the birth of Jesus through the eyes of the Christmas Angel. This spiritual drama has something to offer people of all ages, and all ages are welcome! Free and open to the public.

## Roast Pork Holiday Dinner December 15

The South Plainfield VFW is hosting its annual Roast Pork Holiday Dinner on Friday, Dec. 15 from 5-8 p.m. The SPSHS choral group will sing at 6:30 p.m. The public is welcome. For more information, call (908) 668-9751.

## Visit Santa and Get Your Picture Taken December 16

Santa will be on hand for pictures and a visit on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 1-3 p.m. at the Senior Center. Each child talks to Santa, gets a picture taken (newborn to 10 years old), and receives a gift. Cost is \$5.

## Soccer Club Pancake Breakfast December 17

The South Plainfield Soccer Club Pancake Breakfast will be held on Sunday, Dec. 17 from 8 to 11 a.m. The breakfast will be held at the Elks Club, 1254 New Market Ave. This fundraiser is to benefit the kids of the soccer club and will include: pancakes, french toast, sausage, bacon, juice, coffee, and tea. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for children and may be purchased at the door. For information or advanced tickets please call Bill Buttrico at (908) 756-2807.

## South Plainfield SENIOR CENTER

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

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>UPCOMING EVENTS</b> <b>December 17 - Holiday Luncheon 12:30 pm followed by Caroling in the Park at 3 p.m.</b>				
Knitting/Crocheting 9:30am-11:30am Yoga 10:30-11:30am Art Class 11:30am AARP Meeting 12:30pm	Bingo 10am-2pm Ladies Social Group 10am	Exercise Class 8:45am Line Dancing 10am Computer Classes 10am 11:30am & 1pm Tai Chi Class 2pm	Pathmark Shopping 9am Practical Crafts 10am Computer Class 11am & 1pm Hunterdon Hills Trip	Bingo 10am-2pm Lunch Available
18	19	20	21	22

TO SIGN UP FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, VISIT THE CENTER.

## American Legion Pancake Breakfast December 17

The American Legion Chaumont Post #243 on Oak Tree Ave. will be hosting a pancake breakfast on Sunday, Dec. 17, from 8 a.m. until noon. The cost of the event is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children. All profits will go to the scholarship fund.

## Caroling in the Park December 17

Everyone is invited to join the annual "Caroling in the Park" on Sunday, Dec. 17, at 3 p.m. at Spring Lake Park. The high school chorus will be there to lead us. Refreshments at the Senior Center after caroling.

## Winter Bazaar at Cedar Oaks December 19

Stop and shop for the holidays! Many vendors with a large selection of gifts, baked goods, crafts and much more will be at Cedar Oaks Care Center on Durham Ave. on Tuesday, Dec. 19, from 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, please call (732) 287-9555.

## New Scouts Wanted December 19

On Tuesday, Dec. 19, there will be a recruitment night at the Pizza Stop located on Hamilton Blvd., across from the Knights of Columbus Hall, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Any boy who is not already a Cub/Boy Scout who is interested in joining is invited to stop by for a slice of pizza and a soda. There is no prior experience needed for joining either the Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts, just an interest in the outdoors and a desire to learn the scouting way.

If you have any questions, please call Jeff Pauls at (908) 755-6133.

## New Years Bash with John Roesch Orch. December 31

There will be a New Year's Eve celebration at the Polish National Home on Dec. 31 at 8 p.m., featuring The John Roesch Orchestra, an 18-piece big band. They will be playing all of your favorite big band era music as well as modern and latin songs for dancing and listening enjoyment! A scrumptious buffet including chicken marsala, salmon, a sirloin carving station and a shrimp and lobster station will be served along with a fabulous hors d'ouevres hour before dinner. Open bar all evening with a champagne toast at midnight. Door prizes during the night. A portion of the proceeds will be

donated to a special jazz scholarship fund to be awarded to a graduating senior in the SPSHS Jazz Band.

Cost of tickets is \$100 per person and will only be sold in advance. For more information, please call John Roesch at (908) 753-0688.

## — Out of Town —

## Woodbridge WOWs December 17

Woodbridge Widows Or Widowers will hold an open dance on Sunday, Dec. 17, from 7:30-11:30 p.m. at the Elks hall, 665 Rahway Ave. in Woodbridge. Refreshments. All are welcome. Admission \$8 members, \$9 guests. Call (732) 381-7239 or (908) 757-0515 for information.

## MCRCC Breakfast December 19

The Middlesex County Regional Chamber of Commerce will hold a breakfast on Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 8 a.m. at the Sheraton Edison Hotel Raritan Center in Edison. Featured speaker, Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan Jr. Cost is \$20.

For information, call Debbie, (732) 821-1700 x 202.

## Nutcracker at Paper Mill Playhouse December 22-30

The Nutcracker at Paper Mill Play-

house opens on Friday, Dec. 22, at 8 p.m. and continues through Saturday, Dec. 30, at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Week-day performances at 2 and 7:30 p.m., Sunday performances at 1 p.m. Ticket prices range from \$19 to \$54 plus a \$1.25 Facility Preservation Fee. Student rush tickets \$16, available day of performance in person with current student ID.

## Paper Mill Playhouse "Summer and Smoke"

January 10- February 11

"Summer and Smoke" will play Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., Thursdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. beginning Jan. 10 Single tickets are now on sale and range in price from \$19 to \$68. Student rush tickets are \$16 and are available the day of performance in person with current student ID.

Purchase tickets by calling (973) 376-4343, or at the Paper Mill Box Office in Millburn, or online at [www.papermill.org](http://www.papermill.org). Visa, MasterCard, Discover, American Express accepted.

## Rescue House of Prayer Birthday January 13

A 70th Birthday Breakfast Fellowship for Irene Mayjetta Southgate Campbell, senior overseer and pastor of the Rescue House of Prayer, Inc. in South Plainfield will be held on Saturday, Jan. 13 at 9 a.m. at the Sheraton Hotel, Raritan Center in Edison.

Buffet price (does not include gift): adults \$23, children 4-12, \$12.

RSVP to (973) 372-9100, Co-Pastor Anita Corrin Southgate-Spaulding.

## Rahway Quilt Exhibit January 14

The Arts Guild of Rahway presents "The Naked Truth: Quilted and sewn figurative works and nudes," an art exhibit of sewn/quilted works beginning Sunday, Jan. 14. There will be a reception with the artists, open to the general public from 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is free and light refreshments will be served.

For more information call the Arts Guild at (732) 381-7511, by e-mail at [artsguild1670@verizon.net](mailto:artsguild1670@verizon.net), or by visit [www.rahwayartsguild.org](http://www.rahwayartsguild.org).

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Sunday mornings 8am and 11am

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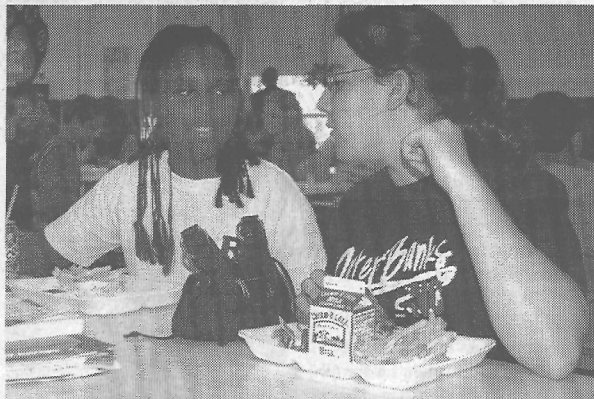
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## Middle School Students "Mix It Up"



Middle School students get acquainted on Mix It Up Day.

By Patricia Abbott

On Nov. 14, students at the Middle School joined youths around the country as they participated in National Mix It Up Day. According to the website, [www.mixitup.org](http://www.mixitup.org), "Mix It Up believes in the power of youth to create and sustain real change. We want to provide ideas and tools to help break the walls of division in your school and community." This year marks the Middle School's second year participating in the event.

During each lunch period students were assigned tables offering them a chance to meet new people. Faculty members joined the youths during lunch, moving from table to table to talk to students and encourage them to talk with others.

The students had this to say about the experience.

Kathleen Vincent, grade 7: "Mix It Up Day is a great thing because you can meet new people, but I think they should mix it up better and not include so many people that you already know."

Richard Rotella, grade 8: "I think Mix It Up day is a great idea. It is a lot of fun and we got to sit with teachers too. I also like it because I met new people."

Jordan Gamble, grade 8: "Today was interesting because I got to see what 7th graders were doing."

Taylor Jarema, grade 8: "It was a cool way of breaking up our usual routine. I liked it for the most part."

Amanda B., grade 7: "It was really fun and we should do it each marking period, and we should do it next year too."

Eighth grade History teacher, Barbara Pinelli-McDonough, said, "I really enjoy organizing Mix It Up Day at the Middle School. It gives students, faculty and staff an opportunity to learn more about others and to make

people breaking into cliques? At our school, how easy is it to make friends with people from different groups? And much more. The students broke into small groups to discuss their responses. McDonough said, "Our object is for the children to become more acquainted, make new friends and to 'open their minds' to learn more about others."

This year Principal Steven Novak, a 38-year veteran with the South Plainfield School District, helped organize the event with the assistance of McDonough and Assistant Principal Ellen Decker-Lorys. Novak said, "This year was much better than last year, with the students being much friendlier and socializing between the grades." He also noted that 98% of the teachers voluntarily are with the students in the student cafeteria and socialized with them throughout the entire period.

Founded in 2002, Mix It Up is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance program.

new friends. It is a very rewarding experience for me."

It expanded on the lessons of tolerance and acceptance in her classroom with a Mix It Up survey for the students. The survey asked questions such as: Are the people at school friendly? In what settings have you noticed



Students have the opportunity to make new acquaintances at the Middle School's second annual event.

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From the South Plainfield Library

## Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

As we head into the home stretch of the holiday season, you're probably busier now than at any other part of the year (wrapping presents, putting up decorations, maxing out credit cards), but you might just be able to carve out a couple of moments to check on events at South Plainfield Library:

Next week, we'll be following the usual schedule of children's programming. For those of you who have yet to memorize it, here it is again: "Story-time" programs for children age 3 and over are held on Tuesday morning at 10:30, Wednesday evening at 6:30 and Thursday afternoon at 1:15. "Time for 2's & 3's," for children age 2 and 3, is held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30, and Thursday evenings at 6:30. And "Books 'N' Babies," for children age 3 and under, is held on Friday mornings at 10:30. No pre-registration necessary. For more information, please call and ask for Miss Linda.

We regret to say that Elvis has left the building... sort of. More specifically, our Elvis computer system is, at this writing, not working due to mechanical difficulties. We're aware of the problem and we'll get him up and running again ASAP. Until then, you may still renew items via our website or with a staff member during normal hours. Patrons will be notified of reserved or overdue items by mail. (Always nice to have back-up plans.) Please contact us for Elvis updates.

We at the library would like to thank everyone who made a donation to this year's "Books to Keep." People have been very generous, and the number of books donated this year is

double the total number of donations last year. Today is the last day you can donate to the drive, so please give what you can. Once again, we're looking for new children's books or, if you wish, monetary donations. You'll find details at the Circulation Desk.

Looking for a nearly last-minute Christmas or Kwanzaa gift or a really last-minute Hanukkah gift? We might just be able to help. We still have our sturdy canvas library tote bags in stock. Large size bags are \$10 each, while the smaller-sized bags sell for \$7.50 each. Or you can get some library chocolate bars at \$1 each. All are available at the Circulation Desk. (And, no, we don't have any library 100-shot range model air rifles with a compass in the stock and a thing that tells the time. You'll shoot yer eye out, kid.)

Here's a very important note for parents: the library is many things to many people, but we simply aren't equipped to be a babysitting service. Recently, there have been times when a child was left here alone and remained alone, even as the library was closing. We don't have the staff, the facilities, or the mandate to supervise your kids after hours. Please be advised that if a child is left here alone at closing with no indication of when they'll be picked up, the South Plainfield Police will be contacted and the child left in their care. So, please make sure you're here to pick up your kids at least 30 minutes before the library closes. If you have any questions, please ask. As always, we appreciate your help.

That's about all for now. For more information, please call us at (908) 754-7885 or visit [www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us](http://www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us). We'll see you next Friday. And we hope you're all having a happy holiday season.

### HOME TIP:

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Authorized Club Representative (signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Certificate must be activated by December 31, 2006. You must bring this certificate with you. Recipient must be 23 years or older, a local resident, and may not have used a promotional pass (three days or more) within the last 6 months. See a membership coordinator for full details. Limit one per person.





The South Plainfield VFW Post #6763 held their annual Pearl Harbor Day remembrance ceremony last Thursday evening. Leaders of the post spoke about where they were on the most infamous day in U.S. history. Pictured are WWII veterans (L to R) Mike Santoro, Albert Ladish, VFW Post #6769 Commander Julius Peterson, Chaplain Mike Pancza, Edward E. Goode and Bill Tuthill.

## Annual Tree Lighting at McCriskin's Honors 248



Members of the General Anthony C. McAuliffe 101st Airborne Division, New York Chapter, VFW and American Legion at the McCriskin tree lighting.

By Patricia Abbott

On Saturday, Dec. 9, McCriskin's Home For Funerals held their 22nd annual tree lighting memorializing the 248 members of the 101st Airborne Division and eight crew members who lost their lives in a plane crash. Assisting were members of the General Anthony C. McAuliffe 101st Airborne Division, New York Chapter.

The noon ceremony began with the presenting of colors. After sev-

eral solemn speeches a wreath was placed by the memorial plaque that sits beneath the giant fir tree on McCriskin's lawn. In attendance were members of the VFW, American Legion, Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan and community members. Diegnan, who attends the tree lighting every year said, "I commend McCriskin's for continuing the tree lighting ceremony in honor of our military. As I was looking at the hundreds of lights on the enormous Christmas tree in front of the funeral home, I was

thinking that each light signifies the thousands of young men and women who have served our country from the Revolutionary War through the Iraq War. We must never take them for granted."

The chartered DC-8 plane had just refueled, it was returning to the 101st Airborne Division home for Christmas from peacekeeping duties in the Middle East when it crashed during takeoff in Gander, Newfoundland.

December 12 marked the 21st anniversary of the disaster considered the worst in Canadian aviation history. In 1985 the McCriskin Family decided to decorate the huge tree for the first time. After learning of the crash, the family, which has a deep seated respect for the military, chose to light the tree as a memorial for the Screaming Eagles that died that day.

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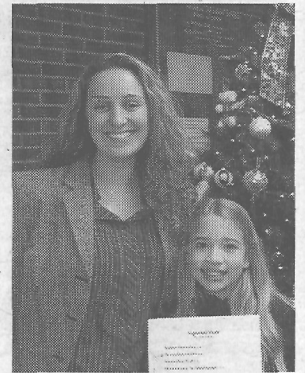
## Alyssa Liszewski Named Junior Journalist

Alyssa Liszewski, Grant School fifth grader, is this week's winner in the 2006-07 Junior Journalist program. Her poem, "Sojourner Truth," has earned her a dinner for her family, courtesy of Hometown Heros.

Students can submit their original written works to their teachers, school principal, Hometown Heros on Hamilton Blvd, or the Observer office at 1110 Hamilton Blvd.

Winners and their families will receive a catered dinner from Hometown Heros and will be honored at a year-end banquet in May of 2007.

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



Jr. Journalist winner Alyssa Liszewski with Language Arts teacher Dana Hauck. Dana is a fifth grader.

## 2006 JUNIOR JOURNALIST

**CONGRATS!**

**Sojourner Truth**  
By Alyssa Liszewski

Sojourner Truth had a *dream*,  
That everybody was not *mean*.  
Sojourner had a lot of *nerve*,  
She could go on the bus without having to *serve*.  
Sojourner Truth is now not a *slave*,  
But we should be thankful for what she *gave*.  
Sojourner Truth had a very hard *life*,  
But through it all she made it *right*.

## Open House Will Help Members to Lose "It" at The Club at Richochet

In 2005, nearly 120 million Americans tried to lose weight and those who exercised in a health club experienced success in doing so. The Club at Richochet will have an open house on Jan. 6 and 7, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The open house will allow the general public to come to the club to work out for free. This is a chance to let everyone experience all the great programs that Richochet has to offer. The club invites everyone to come in. Be prepared to workout. Bring your gym clothes and bathing suits! We have planned a wide range of activities to motivate you and get you into a healthy frame of mind.

Here is a list of the activities planned for the weekend: Jr. and Adult Swim Placement testing, Body Combat Launch, Jr. Racquetball Tournament (Non-member fee \$20), Jr. Arts and Crafts, Pilates Special, Water Fitness, Body Flow, Body Pump, Body Step Launch, Spin, Body Pump Launch, Yoga, Cardio Striptease, Open Swimming and Self Defense Clinic (non-

member fee \$25).

For more information about any of the programs listed, please call (908) 753-2300.

Also this winter, The Club at Richochet will kick off a program designed to further assist its members to achieve success in their individual fitness programs. "I Lost It at the Club!" is an eight-week motivational weight loss program, coordinated by the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) designed to kick-start the renewed exercise programs of existing club members who might have taken time off for the holidays and new members alike. The program will begin on Jan. 8 and ends March 5.

Participants in the program will receive activity cards designed to make every workout different and fun and periodic newsletters filled with useful information and exercise tips.

Make the commitment to get healthy this year! Come in to The Club at Richochet and get started now!

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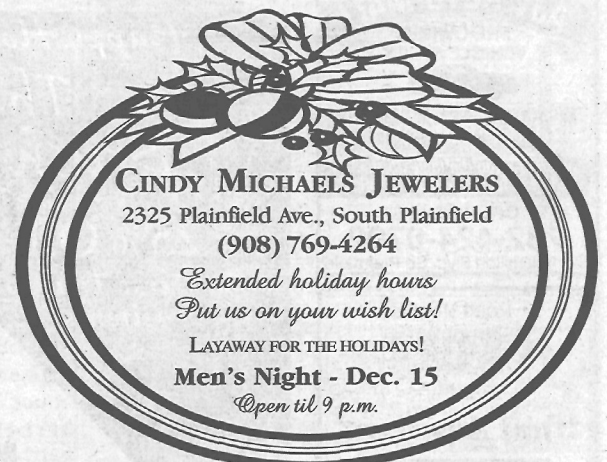
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The South Plainfield Elks Veterans Committee is selling the **ENTERTAINMENT BOOK** for \$25.  
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## Senate Approves Bill to Protect Financial Confidentiality

Senator Barbara Buono welcomed Senate approval of her bill that would fine financial institutions up to \$500,000 if they fail to get individual "opt-in" permission before sharing their clients' private information, saying that recognizes the fact that federal law makes it too easy for those institutions to sell such information to third parties.

"At a time where we need to crack down harder on those who perpetrate credit card fraud, we need to provide more protection from identity theft, not less," said Senator Buono, D-Middlesex. "I find it absurd that people

have to actively work to keep their personal financial information private and secure."

The bill, S-547, would require financial institutions that share their customers' nonpublic personal information with non-affiliated third party entities to give their customers advance notice of such sharing. The bill would prohibit such sharing unless the customer notified the financial institution of his or her consent to such sharing, creating what is known as an "opt-in" system to allow the sharing of the information. Unless the customer consents in writing, the financial in-

stitution would not be allowed to share the information with non-affiliated third party entities.

"Most people only skim the privacy policies sent by their banks and credit card companies, if even that, and often don't realize that they have to sign a form with their credit card company saying they want to keep their financial information private," explained Senator Buono.

The bill would not restrict or prohibit the sharing of nonpublic personal information between a financial institution and any affiliates. An affiliate is any entity that controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with another entity, including a franchisor.

The bill also provides the limited ability for financial institutions to share nonpublic information with third parties in order for the institution to comply with existing laws or provide financial services to the customer.

The penalty for negligently violating the law would be a civil penalty of up to \$2,500 per violation, not to exceed a total of \$500,000. For willful violations, the civil penalty would be up to \$5,000 per violation with no maximum amount. The bill would set forth factors that the court should use in determining the appropriate penalty amount. In the event that the violation resulted in identity theft, the penalty could be doubled. The Attorney General would be granted exclusive authority to bring legal action for violations of the law.

The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 31-7. It now goes to the Assembly for their consideration.



## All About Pets...

By Dr. Anthony Loomis, DVM  
Veterinarian, Plainfield  
Animal Hospital



Welcoming a little fuzzy, feathery, or scaly pet into your home can be both an exciting and challenging experience. Rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, chinchillas, rats, mice, guinea pigs and ferrets are often called "pocket pets" because they are small, cute and inexpensive. Birds can vary in size from finches, to cockatiels, to macaws. Snakes, turtles, and more and more reptiles are making their way into our households.

Purchasing an exotic pet should not be a rash decision. It is important to understand what you are getting into when you welcome any new pet into your family. Each species has special dietary and environmental needs that are more complex than one would assume. More than 75% of the ailments exotic animals are treated for are husbandry related and unfortunately these fragile creatures often show no outward signs of illness until they are critical.

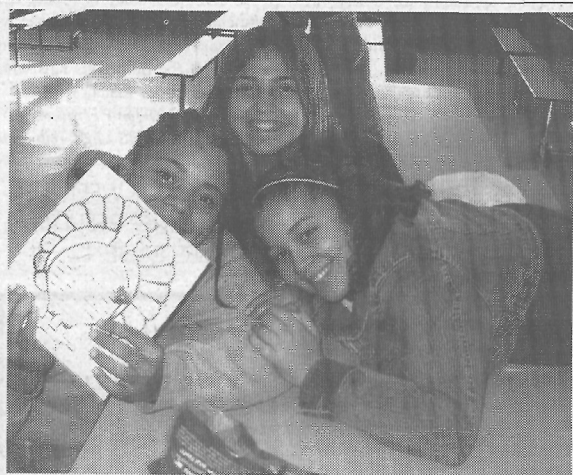
Once you are prepared for the commitment of owning an exotic animal, they can make wonderful pets. Here are a few pointers to help keep your little friend happy and healthy:

1. Make sure their cage is the appropriate size and temperature, has a place for them to hide and several toys for enrichment, and it is cleaned regularly.

2. Provide plenty of high quality fresh food and water daily. Changes in appetite are often the first sign of illness. It can be fatal for a pocket pet to not eat for 2 or 3 days due to their high metabolic needs.

3. Finally, make sure your little pet gets to see the doctor. Just like cats and dogs, exotic pets should visit the veterinarian annually for a checkup. Though they don't require vaccinations, they should be weighed and examined for signs of any problems.

Just like the family dog or cat—with a good home, proper health care, and lots of love and attention—exotic pets can become an irreplaceable member of the family.



Cheyenne Brit, Samantha Kangas and Amanda Hoagland take a break from taping candy to the turkey grams.

## Middle School Peer Leaders "Turkey Grams"

Peer Leaders at the Middle School created "Turkey Grams" for Thanksgiving to be sold during lunch periods. The colorful turkey grams came with candy and a holiday message. They were delivered to students, teachers, other staff members and administrators during homeroom the day before Thanksgiving. The leadership group was able to raise over

\$200, which will be put toward school activities and various charities. In addition, the leadership group has "adopted" a family for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. They provided the family with food and other necessities for Thanksgiving and for the upcoming holiday, will deliver food to the family and provide presents from their "wish list."



Matthew Little, Connor Gillis, Mike Krusinowski and Amanda Chen work hard to make the turkey grams a bit more colorful!

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# Sports

## WRESTLING

### SPHS Tiger Wrestlers Look To Repeat

By Bob Hunter

The SPHS wrestling team, who will be in Group II this year, will look to add another title with a solid and very experienced team. Six seniors will provide the leadership and the spark that will be necessary for a possible threepeat.

The Tigers will be led Billy Ashnault 135, a returning Region 3 champion and Nick Dorey, the 140 pound Region 3 champion. Bryan Hunt 130 and Mike Jakubik 145 each finished second in last year's Region 3 final. Sam Martin 152 was a District 12 champion last year as well as Preston Johnson at 215.

Patrick Hunter 112 was a third place

finisher at the state tournament last year at 103. Mark Wagner 160 was also a state qualifier and will anchor the middleweights. Brad Martin 215 or heavyweight and Rocco Petricello heavyweight will give the Tigers some depth in the heavier weights. Danny Pompilio and Jonathan Conroy 171-189 will look to provide some strength going into the heavier weights.

The incoming freshmen have looked real good so far and will have to step it up if the Tigers are to be successful. Nick Heilmann 103, a kids state runner up last year, will help in the lower weights, while Ryan Sacco 103-112 will see plenty of action this year. John Wylam 119 could be a big

help this year as well as Joe Vetusch who will be competing for the 125 pound spot with Nick Pauls. Bobby Saks 215 could surprise a lot of people this year. Don't be surprised if Mike Wagner 160-189 cracks this lineup.

Here is what I think the starting line up will be for Morris Knolls Tournament: Nick Heilmann 103, Patrick Hunter 112, John Wylam 119, Joe Vetusch 125, Nick Pauls 125, Bryan Hunt 130, Billy Ashnault 135, Nick Dorey 140, Mike Jakubik 145, Sam Martin 152, Mike Wagner or Nick Vallone 160, Jonathan Conroy 171-189, Danny Pompilio 171-189, Bobby Saks 215, Preston Johnson 215, Brad Martin 215 or heavyweight, or Rocco Petricello at heavy.

### Middle School Wrestlers Go 6-2 Over Long Weekend

The Middle School Tigers improved their record to 11-4, and 6-0 in the league during an intense weekend of wrestling.

The Tigers traveled to Neshaminy, Pa. on Saturday to take on some quality out-of-state competition. In the first round of pool wrestling, the Tigers defeated Warminster, Pa. by the score of 64-27. Outstanding performances were handed in by Ryan Walsh, Anthony Ashnault, Kyle Brady, Troy Heilmann, Tyler Hunt, Corey Stasenko, and Kyle Pompilio, winners all by pin. The Haddonfield Warriors were up next and the Tigers were ready for them. With a 60-29 victory, the Tigers looked sharp with the first seven match victories coming by way of fall. The Jackson Township Elite Team gave the Tigers their first setback of the day. Anthony Ashnault, Troy Heilmann, Mike Molinaro and Ryan Billich came out on top with out-

standing performances. A 51-31 loss forced the Tigers to refocus and get back on track against another tough competitor, Council Rock, Pa. Unfortunately, they proved to be a little too much to handle, and the Tigers lost by a score of 49-33. William Whiteflect and Kyle Brady had excellent matches, and Troy Heilmann handed in an impressive overtime victory by fall. The final match of the day against Truman, Pa. helped showcase the Tigers' true colors with a victory over their opponents, 60-21. Eric Neimeyer, Corey Stasenko, Troy Heilmann, Anthony Ashnault, and Ryan Walsh, winners by pin, contributed to the final victory of the day.

On Sunday, the Tigers traveled to Union County to face their cross-town rivals, Kenilworth. Berkley Heights and Warren Hills were also invited to the quad match. South Plainfield went undefeated at the quad

with the help from several Tiger wrestlers: Kyle Brady, Anthony Ashnault, Troy Heilmann, Tyler Hunt, Corey Stasenko, Scott Whalen, Eric Neimeyer, and William Whiteflect all went undefeated. The Tigers defeated Kenilworth 52-33, Warren Hills 69-16, and Berkley Heights 69-24. Other outstanding performances were handed in by Alex Lundy, Danny Bori, Dylan Painton, Bobby Kolvites, Joe Jakubik and Joe Pellegrino.

### Pee Wee Bantam WRESTLING TOURNAMENT RESULTS

South Plainfield Recreation Wrestling held their first annual Pee Wee Bantam wrestling tournament on Sunday, Dec. 10, at the PAL.

This year's turnout was over 90 wrestlers from the area. South Plainfield had four champions, three second place, three third place and two fourth place finishers.

Tournament results are as follows:  
1st Place: Joe Heilmann, Pee Wee 47 lbs.  
1st Place: Mike Marrero, Pee Wee 53 lbs.  
1st Place: Jake Hoffman, Bantam 52 lbs.  
1st Place: Christopher Maszczak, Bantam 87 lbs.  
2nd Place: Dave Loniewski, Pee Wee 41 lbs.  
2nd Place: Andrew Kensey, Bantam 46 lbs.  
2nd Place: Ben Lundy, Bantam 80 lbs.  
3rd Place: Joe Sacco, Pee Wee 41 lbs.  
3rd Place: Doug Veit, Pee Wee 59 lbs.  
3rd Place: Zack DelVecchio, Pee Wee 63 lbs.  
4th Place: Brandon Wizza, Pee Wee 41 lbs.  
4th Place: Ed Wilinski, Bantam 55 lbs.

Submitted by Dave Maszczak

## SPHS GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

### Volleyball Holds Awards Dinner

South Plainfield High School's Girls Volleyball Team held its first awards dinner on Dec. 2.

The girls' volleyball team competed in 23 varsity matches and 20 junior varsity contests. Varsity had a final record of 1-22, and Junior Varsity was 2-18. There were 27 girls who participated in the program, with 13 receiving varsity letters and a total of 16 who experienced varsity competition.

The varsity team had very little varsity game experience, but continued to improve through the season even though the record did not show it.

The volleyball team had its highest ever participation by the freshmen class with nine girls playing. The team was led by senior captains Samantha Horvath and Jessica Vasquez. The statistical leaders were: best server, Jessica Vasquez at 88%; most serving aces, junior Jamie Ensel with 34; most digs senior, Sara Holbrook with 28; most kills, Samantha Horvath with 56; best hitting percentage senior, Ashley Woodell at 21%; most blocks, Samantha Horvath with five and most assists, Jamie Ensel with 72. The team's two most effective passers were freshmen Bianca DiDolce and Jaimie Handwerger.

The team MVP was senior captain Jessica Vasquez and the rookie of the year was freshman Bianca DiDolce. The team is already looking forward to next year. The coaching staff would like to thank the Board of Education, SPHS administration and athletic department for their support, as well as the support of the volleyball team parents and the numerous fans who attended all of our matches.

-Submitted by John Ferguson  
Head coach SPHS Girls Volleyball

FOR THIS WEEK'S  
BOWLING RESULTS,  
SEE PAGE 12.

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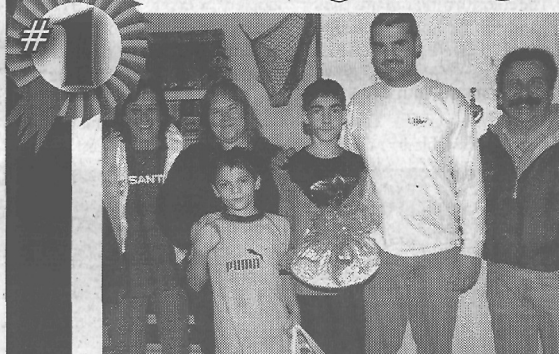
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Charlie and Debbie Kurland of Hometown Heroes deliver dinner to Junior Journalist winner Tanner Painton, pictured here with mom Dale, brother Luke and dad Jim.

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## ob • serve

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

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## Obituaries

### Robert DeAndrea, 62

Robert DeAndrea passed away on Thursday, Oct. 12, in San Diego, Calif. Born in Florida on June 25, 1944, Robert was raised in South Plainfield and Metuchen.

A 1962 graduate of Metuchen High School, he continued on to graduate from the University of Colorado. As a U.S. naval officer, Robert served on the river boats in Vietnam. He then worked as the chief of the Naval Reserve in the Pentagon and worked as a civilian at the Naval Observatory. Upon retiring from the Navy, Mr. DeAndrea moved to San Diego where he worked as the business manager of the Guardian Newspaper at San Diego State University.

Robert was predeceased by his parents, Alfred and Emma DeAndrea, and a brother, Alfred DeAndrea, Jr.

He is survived by two nieces, Cheryl Stenstrom and Erinn DeAndrea; three nephews, Alan, Kevin and Jonathan DeAndrea; three great-nieces and five great-nephews.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

### June E. (Galasso) Colucci, 72

June E. (Galasso) Colucci died on Monday, Dec. 4, in the Haven Hospice at JFK Medical Center in Edison.

Born in West New York, June was raised in Hudson County and had resided in South Plainfield since 1965.

Mrs. Colucci was a member of the South Plainfield Senior Citizens and along with her husband, Nicholas S. Sr., enjoyed going on various trips with the seniors.

An avid bowler, June was a long-time member of the Ford Women's Bowling League at Brunswick Edison Lanes in Edison, where she served on various positions within the league's executive board.

While her children were growing

up, she was very much involved in their sporting and scholastic activities. June held numerous positions in both the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club and Pop Warner Football, as well as volunteering as classroom mom and participating in the school's PTA.

A very caring, outgoing and well-liked person, June enjoyed volunteering and traveling to Atlantic City.

Mrs. Colucci is predeceased by two brothers, Richard and Bruce Galasso. She was a devoted wife of 44 years and survived by Nicholas S. Sr.; devoted mother to three children, Ellen Graf and husband Kevin of Raritan Township, Nicholas S. Jr. and wife Leslie of Marlton and Christopher R. and wife Shannon of South Plainfield; a sister, Madelyn "Diddie" Cummings of Fla.; three brothers, Edwin and wife Linda of Colo., Nicholas of Cliffside Park, and Glen of Colo. and six grandchildren, Nicholas S. III, Chelsey, Erica, Brianna, Hunter and Grace.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

In lieu of flowers, donations in June's name may be made to the Haven Hospice, c/o JFK Medical Center, 65 James St., Edison, NJ 08818.

### Joseph R. Coker, 67

Joseph R. Coker died on Friday, Dec. 8, at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born in Amarillo, Texas, Joe was raised in Bivens Station, Texas and lived in Linden and Oceanside, Calif. before moving to South Plainfield in 1965.

When Mr. Coker first moved to South Plainfield, he, along with two of his brothers, Michael and John, owned the former Mobil Gas Station on Park Ave. Later, he worked as a programmer analyst for Rickels in

South Plainfield, and recently, you would find him greeting shoppers at Walmart in Piscataway.

A veteran of the United States Marine Corps, Joe enlisted in 1962, and in 1965 was honorably discharged at the rank of corporal.

Mr. Coker was a former member of the South Plainfield Republican Organization where at one time he held the position of district committeeman.

He is a former member of the South Plainfield Jaycees, and while his children were growing up, Joe was a committee member of Boy Scout Troop #125 where he enjoyed going camping with his two sons. Joe was also a member of Sacred Heart RC Church.

Surviving are his wife of more than 44 years, Theresa (Serido); two sons, Mark and wife Tracey of East Brunswick and Dan and wife Lisa of Princeton Junction; a sister, Margaret Wanca of Virginia; four brothers, John of Texas, James and wife Diana of Indiana, George and wife Pam of Virginia, and Michael and wife Joan of Piscataway and three grandchildren, Stephanie, Annmarie and Nicole. Joe was also a fond uncle of many nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

### Patrick "Chip" Dunbar, 52

Patrick "Chip" Dunbar, a musician, music teacher, and Macintosh computer consultant, died unexpectedly on Sunday, Nov. 26.

Born in New Jersey, Chip grew up in South Plainfield and was a graduate of South Plainfield High School. He lived in Atlanta, Ga. before moving to Sebastopol, Calif. in 1983.

His powerful, shimmering voice was his entree into the world of mu-

sic. He started singing in folk groups as a teenager, and soon picked up the guitar. After he moved to Atlanta in the mid-70's, he dedicated himself to music, studying several instruments at once. He joined the popular bluegrass band Cedar Hill in 1978 and played with them until he moved to California in 1983.

A passionate and accomplished musician, he played in many local acoustic bands in California. Mandolin was his primary instrument, but he could play with strings. He was an inspiring teacher of music.

He was predeceased by his father, Patrick J. Dunbar.

He is survived by his wife and fellow musician, Sara Winge; his mother, Mary Dunbar; three brothers, Kevin, John and Michael, and two sisters, Cher Brower and Ann-Marie Markus.

A memorial celebration was held at the Sebastopol Community Center in California.

The family suggests contributions to the Gorilla Foundation, [www.koko.org/donate](http://www.koko.org/donate).

### Ruth "Chick" D. (DeLuca) Costantino, 74

Ruth "Chick" D. (DeLuca) Costantino died on Saturday, Dec. 9, in the Haven Hospice Unit of Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield.

Born and raised in Newark, Ruth had resided in Irvington and Newark before moving to South Plainfield in 1969.

She began her career as a senior aid with Irvington General Hospital. Ruth later worked at Columbus Hospital in Newark and the former Birchwood Nursing Home in Edison before

transferring to Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center. She worked there for 15 years before her retirement in the mid 1980's.

Ruth was a long-time communicant of Sacred Heart RC Church. She assisted with the church volunteering for the preschool, and along with her husband, cooking for the priests and the church Funstival. Ruth was an excellent cook. Most importantly, she was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

She is survived by her husband of 53 years, Anthony Costantino; three daughters, Denise A. Padilla and husband Angel of Edison, Joann Toolan of South Plainfield and Maryann Santino of Bloomsbury; a brother, Ernest DeLuca of Watchung; a sister, Virginia Gross of Rochelle Park; 10 grandchildren, Melissa, Joseph, Luis, Erica, Nicholas, Thomas, Jeffrey, Megan, Mark and Morgan and two great-grandsons, Timothy and Anthony.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin Home For Funerals.

### Barbara Lamont, 62

Barbara Lamont of Murrells Inlet, S.C., died Monday, Dec. 4, in South Carolina.

Born October 22, 1944, in Brooklyn, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late William and Martha Melman Lynott. Mrs. Lamont formerly worked with Lens and Eye in South Plainfield.

Surviving are her husband, Bruce Lamont, and a son, Bruce William Lamont of Manhattan.

Services were held at Goldfinch Funeral Home in Murrells Inlet, S.C.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society, 950 48th Ave. North, Myrtle Beach, S.C. 29577. Sign guestbook at [www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com](http://www.goldfinchfuneralhome.com).

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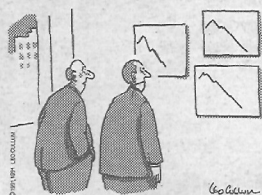
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## FROM THE DESK OF DEBBIE BOYLE

South Plainfield residents, please continue to unite together to help support the Helen Street Project. So many residents are fed up with the truck traffic that continues to tie up our main thoroughfares.

Our objective is not to hurt the trucking businesses, but to push for a quick and easy access away from our main roadways. I am sure that it is very stressful for the truck drivers themselves to try and maneuver their way through the main roads. Many times they cut corners too close and drive over curbs, unintentionally knocking down traffic lights. Lines of cars back up while waiting for the trucks to make their turns.

Please continue to sign the letters; we continually send them to the DEP.

Thank you to the Senior Mens Forum for trying to be positive in their efforts to understand the need for the Helen Street Project.

South Plainfield Middle School parents—please send in your activity fees for the year 2006-2007 to the Middle School PTA. The fee is used for cultural art programs, the seventh grade picnic and eighth grade dinner dance. These funds ensure that these programs proceed without interruption and that the cost for the picnic and dance can be assumed by the PTA

without having to charge each child a fee. Please send the fee to school in an envelope marked "activity fee" with your child's name on the outside.

Grant Elementary Principal Leo Whalen and Assistant Principal Rob Richkus, along with Middlesex County, hosted a "Kick Off" Book Recycling Program. The Grant Student Council, along with the support of the Grant PTO, started a first of its kind pilot program to recycle hardcover books that can no longer be used. This recycling program is used as a tool to educate students about the responsibility of keeping our environment safe, preserving natural resources and teaching character traits. The county and the MCIA contracted with Waste Management of NJ, Inc. to provide special covered recycling containers to collect the materials. The Board of Education will receive a \$20 rebate for every ton recycled.

In attendance at the opening ceremony were Freeholder Camille Femicola, chairwoman of the engineering and planning committee and liaison to the committee; Freeholder Director David B. Crabel, an extreme advocate for recycling; Superintendent Dr. Robert Rosado; Mayor Dan Gallagher; Mayor-elect Charlie Buttrico; Councilman Dennis Cerami; Board

of Education member Carol Byrne; Director of Solid Waste Management Richard Hills; Alice Temple, South Plainfield recycling coordinator; Jack Bernardino, director of operations waste manager; Ed Windas, recycling manager of Middlesex County Improvement Authority (MCIA); Jane Lyle, Authority Waste Management; SP Emergency Management Coordinator Mike Zushma; Cheryl Papa and myself representing the Grant PTO, and student council officers and members Anthony Ashnault, Danielle Buttrico, Justin Glover and Patrick Boyle.

Crabel stated that by working together, we remain one of the top recycling counties in New Jersey. Femicola stated that these books can no longer be used and would have wound up in the trash, but because these books are being recycled, they are kept out of the waste stream, saving space in the landfill and create a hands-on learning experience for recycling education.

Dr. Rosado said that the district's other schools will join Grant in the book recycling program and that he is very excited that Grant had the honor of instituting this pilot program. Whalen enthusiastically embraced the program and said that he will use the program as a practical way to teach students about good character traits.

Thank you to Tomika Dickson, professional NBWA for the Comets, for taking the time to come to SPHS

on Nov. 25 to help kick off the beginning of the girl's 2006-2007 basketball season. You were a true inspiration to the girls, discussing academics and sports and how they can make their dreams a reality.

The Elks hosted a "Breakfast with Santa" on Dec. 10. Thank you to high school students Megan and Michael Boyle, Dorian Bishop, Julia Caruso and Katie Salvatore for volunteering to collect orders, serve and clean up.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Ginny Bruno Family and also to her son-in-law for a quick recovery.

Our condolences and prayers reach out to the Martin Family.

Nancy Grenier, our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family during your surgeries. Please heal with Godspeed.

Congratulations to high school student Danny McCreesh on your Academic Scholar/Sports award.

Congratulations to Bill and Barbara Cochrane on the birth of your beautiful daughter, Wren.

Shout out to Rosemary Petrillo.

The Grant Drama Club, under the direction of Joan Stasio, is requesting the help of parents whose students will be involved in the drama club this year. There are approximately 120 students who have expressed their desire to be a part of this year's drama production. Please contact Stasio if you can volunteer your time.

An incredible amount of patience is required for all persons dropping off children at the high school and Grant circle side in the mornings and especially in the afternoon, when all the children are exiting the schools at the same time. The entire process has been running smoothly, but you cannot expect to be able to zip through the parking lot while children are crossing and cars are backing out to leave. Cars come pouring through the open gate in the mornings from the Grant lot to the circle without stopping to let the children pass.

On Friday, Dec. 8, a woman in a gold SUV lost patience and stepped on the gas to zoom forward past a line of cars, while a young girl hung onto the woman's back door handle and had to run hanging on trying to get into the car for about 200 feet until the woman pulled over to the curb. You are so lucky that the girl's feet did not get caught under the back wheels. Please exercise patience during these times and if you feel that you cannot take your time, then arrange to pick up the children in less congested areas.

The Future Stars program hosted a breakfast with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 9, with an overwhelming turnout. Thank you to Elves Samantha Barthel and Michael Boyle, and everyone who volunteered their time.

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(L to R) Marc Kootman, general manager of No Sweat in South Plainfield, Eileen Kassower, director of health, division of Town Sports Intl. and Matt Daniel, vice president of operations for No Sweat corporate, welcome Mayor Dan Gallagher (far left) and Borough Clerk Vinnie Buttiglieri (far right) during grand opening ceremonies on Wednesday. Not pictured are fitness coaches Julie Jerome and Cate Cucci.

## No Sweat Opens First Location in South Plainfield

Offering a great alternative for effective fitness, No Sweat held its grand opening at their first location in South Plainfield on Wednesday.

A fitness lounge for strength training, No Sweat believes that you don't have to get sweaty to exercise and get fit. No Sweat is an exercise regimen that's easy to do and proven to dramatically enhance a person's level of fitness.

"No Sweat's simple approach makes it easy to get started and just as easy to stay committed," said Eileen Kassower, director of No Sweat. "Regardless of a person's fitness level, No Sweat offers a great solution for anyone who wants to live the good life through exercise."

No Sweat is a relaxed environment where help is always at hand. Coaches

provide the extra motivation, education and support to greatly improve the results guests' get. Personal attention is provided during each exercise session—at no extra charge—to make each session efficient, safe and fun.

Street clothes are suggested attire—there's no need to change because guests will not sweat. Before each session, guests warm up in a heated massage chair. Next, their No Sweat coach guides them through eight stations of strength training equipment. After

completing the eight stations, guests spend a few minutes on one of the core trainers that help strengthen the muscles of the stomach and lower back.

No Sweat suggests guests should visit the fitness lounge one or two times per week and coaches provide resources on how to eat right and tips on how to build cardio into their everyday lives.

For more information, visit [www.joinnosweat.com](http://www.joinnosweat.com).



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## policereport

• On Dec. 5 Rajni Maini, 34, of Piscataway was arrested for endangering the welfare of a child after leaving an infant asleep in a car outside of Kohls.

• A Ten Eyck St. resident reported that the passenger side door lock of their vehicle had been pushed in while parked at Footlocker on Oak Tree Ave. No entry was gained.

• The Recreation Dept. reported that a section of plywood had been torn down from the roof of a dugout at Pitt Street Park. Half of the roof shingles had been ripped off and a metal pole had been bent down to the ground.

• On Dec. 7 Sreenivas Mootakoduru, 32, of Edison was arrested for endangering the welfare of a child after leaving an infant asleep in a car outside the Dress Barn at Middlesex Mall.

• A Wood St. resident reported that a string of Christmas lights on their property had been cut.

• On Dec. 8 Paul Y. Tam, 20, of Edison was arrested for using a fraudulent prescription to purchase drugs at Twin City Pharmacy on Park Ave.

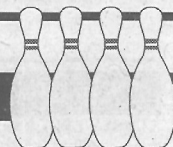
• On Dec. 9 Randi M. Brockman, 26, of Metuchen was arrested for driving while intoxicated and careless driving.

• Benjamin Darby, 45, of Piscataway was arrested for driving while intoxicated, careless driving, no insurance, possession of an open container of alcohol and consumption of alcohol in a vehicle.

• A Clinton Ave. resident reported the theft of an MP3 player, three gold rings, a hands-free cellphone headset and change from their unlocked vehicle.

• On Dec. 10 Anthony V. Reveillac, 27, of Piscataway was arrested for driving while intoxicated, reckless driving and possession of an open container of alcohol in a vehicle.

# Sports



## SPHS BOWLING By Ralph Fech

### Tigers Romp Over New Brunswick But Fall to North Brunswick

SPHS	919	875	969-2,763
New Brunswick	635	581	686-1,902

Mike Dandola 234-578, Chris Esposito 226-574 and Ryan Pauls 203-207-563 led the Boy's Bowling Team to its first win as they overwhelmed New Brunswick.

SPHS	1,032	843	1,004-2,879
North Brunswick	911	1,004	1,030-2,945

The Tigers bolted out to a 121 pin advantage, but gave it all back plus in a disastrous second game. The match turned out to be a nail-biter with good bowling demonstrated by both teams as the Raiders prevailed.

Mike Dandola fired games of 256 and 247 for a sparkling 681 set.

Other high scores for the Tigers were Ryan Pauls 219-225-621, Chris Esposito 200-208-573 and Trevor Rastelli with games of 191 and 181.

### Lady Tigers Zap the Zebras But Are Edged by No. Brunswick

SPHS	622	754	721-2,097
New Brunswick	512	550	601-1,663

The Girl's Bowling Team notched win number two as they swept all three games en route to an easy victory. Jackie Kukuch led the Tigers with games of 167 and 166. Lyndsey Murtagh chipped in with a 162 game. Katie Yon added games of 159 and 150.

SPHS	718	650	674-2,044
North Brunswick	788	703	559-2,060

The Tigers bid for a tie fell short in the third game as they put on a fierce rally, but lost the total pin count by 16 pins.

Jackie Kukuch 173, Gina Curcio 158 and Katie Yon with a high game of 189 were the bright spots for the green and white.

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