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**Tulio Capparelli, 80, former deputy police chief (1980-1983), dies. See spobserver.com for funeral arrangements.**

# South Plainfield Observer

VOL. 11, NO. 18

MEMBER NEW JERSEY PRESS ASSOCIATION

50 CENTS

JANUARY 4, 2008



## Notable Moments: 2007 in Review

### JANUARY

#### Dan Gallagher Ends 23 Years of Service to Borough

After serving South Plainfield for 23 years—seven as borough councilman and 16 years as mayor—Daniel Gallagher stepped down, handing the gavel to Mayor-elect Charles Butrico. His decision to retire was based on his desire to spend more time with his family.

#### Officer Injured in Accident

Park Avenue was shut down for more than two hours during an investigation involving an injured South Plainfield Police officer after his vehicle crashed into a tree.

Officer Daniel Hoppe swerved to avoid a collision with another car that pulled out in front of him and hit several small trees. His vehicle overturned and ended up against a large evergreen tree on the lawn of 2704 Park Ave. near Avon Avenue. He had to be extricated by the fire department.

#### Butrico Installed as Mayor; Three Take Council Seats

Charles F. Butrico was sworn in as the 18th Mayor of South Plainfield at the South Plainfield Reorganization Meeting. Councilman Ray Petronko was sworn for a third three-year term, along with newcomer Joe Scudato, who will be serving his first term. Former Councilwoman Kathy Thomas was appointed to fill Butrico's unexpired council term of one year.

#### Student Faces Expulsion After Bringing Phony Gun to School

Three South Plainfield Middle School eighth graders received a 10 day, out-of-school suspension after Principal Steve Novak confiscated what police say was an "inoperable replica of a handgun" from a student's locker. The 14 year-old student, who was in possession of the replica gun, was charged with juvenile delinquency and transported to the Middlesex County Youth Detention Center.

#### Dale E. Salisbury Dies

Dale E. Salisbury of Long Branch died on January 11 at Monmouth Medical Center in Long Branch. Salisbury taught language arts at South Plainfield Middle School for six years and was also a soccer coach.

### FEBRUARY

#### Tiger Wrestlers Cruise To Third Consecutive Group State Title

The South Plainfield High School Wrestling Team won its third consecutive group state title in dominating fashion. The Tigers, winners of the Group III title the past two years, won their first Group II title since 2000 when they defeated Hackettstown 42-9 to complete the three-peat.

#### DARE Boasts 304 Graduates

Three-hundred-four fifth graders were awarded certificates for completing the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program.

During its tenure, the DARE program has graduated nearly 4,500 youngsters.

#### Runaway Train Plows Into Paint Warehouse

A Conrail freight train, carrying more than 70 tanker cars of ethanol, took a wrong turn and drove into Mineral and Pigment Solutions, Inc., a paint warehouse located on Coolidge Street. The train was headed toward Woodbridge when it veered onto a siding used by the company.

### MARCH

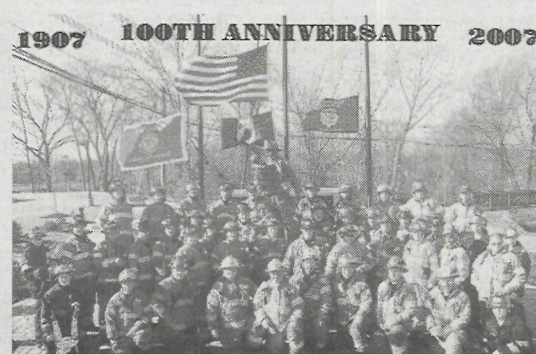
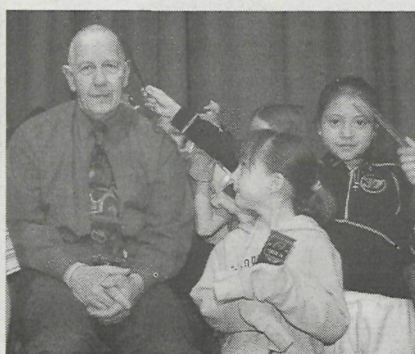
#### EPA Starts Cleanup

The EPA began the demolition of the first of 18 buildings at the Cornell-Dubler Superfund Site at 333 Hamilton Blvd.

#### Seven to for Run BOE Seats

Seven candidates announced that they will be

(Continued on page 6)







## NEW TIME

### Borough Council meetings air on Comcast Channel 74, Mondays at 8:30 p.m.

(Except for Holidays)

The December 19 BOE Public Meeting will air on Comcast Channel 74 Thursdays at 8 p.m. until their next public meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 16. Comcast will air two hours of a meeting. To purchase a copy of a complete council or BOE meeting, contact the Observer.

#### councilmeetings

### 2008 Council reorganization meeting is Saturday, January 5 at noon. All are invited.

Meets twice a month on the first and third Tuesday

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

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

Dates to be announced at the Borough Reorganization meeting on Jan. 5.

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

#### planningboard

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

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

#### zoningboardofadjustment

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

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

#### boardofeducationmeetings

Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. unless otherwise noted  
Committee of the Whole, Wednesdays 7 p.m.-Jan. 9, Feb. 13, March 12, April 2  
Regular Meeting Wednesdays 8 p.m. Jan. 16, Feb. 20, March 19 and April 19.

#### recreationcommission

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

#### taxpayersadvisorygroup

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

#### siteplansub-committee

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

#### environmentalcommission

Meets once a month (second Wednesday)

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

#### businessadvisorygroup

Meets once a month (first Wednesday)

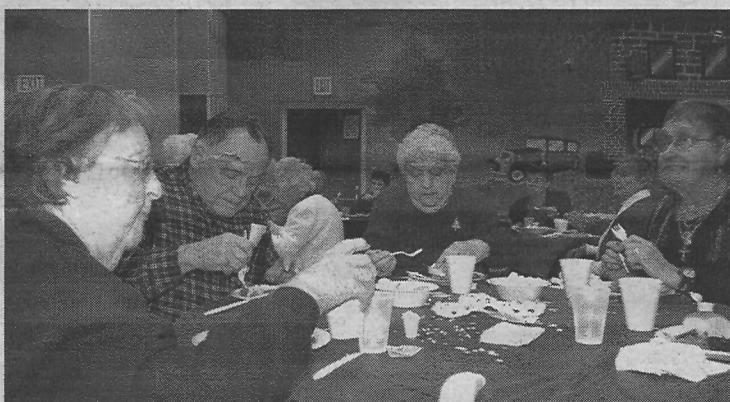
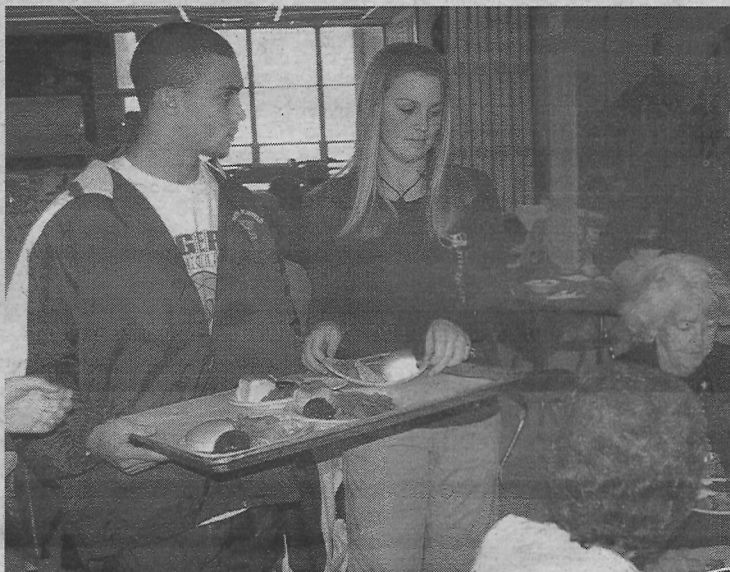
Borough Hall Council Chambers, 5 p.m. • Questions? 908-757-8100

#### trafficsafetyadvisorycommission

Meets once a month (fourth Wednesday) at 7 p.m.  
in the Conference Room, Borough Hall

#### boardofeducationcurriculum/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.



## High School Hosts Holiday Senior Lunch

By Patricia Abbott

The SPHS choral and instrumental groups, Peer Leadership and Student Council joined forces to provide an afternoon of food and fun for local senior citizens.

The event began in the high school auditorium with selections from the winter concert and concluded with a luncheon in the cafeteria.

While the guests enjoyed the music members of the student council and leadership club set up the cafeteria. The tablecloths and centerpieces brightened the room. Place settings with salads were on the tables as the seniors entered the room. The room was a beehive of activity as students, many wearing Santa or elf hats, dashed back and forth serving their guests. The meal consisted of turkey, cranberry sauce, veggies and a roll, as well as coffee, tea or water.

Additional entertainment was a dance performed by a handful of students. Approximately 70 seniors were present. Also on hand for the event were Superintendent Jose Negron and BOE member Debbie Boyle.



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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 spobserver@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: spobserver@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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From the South Plainfield Library

## Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

All together now! Should auld acquaintance be for-...? Oh, yeah, we sang that on Tuesday, right? Sorry about that. While I'm adjusting to the new calendar, here's some early 2008 news from South Plainfield Library.

Following a brief hiatus, our usual schedule of children's programs returns on Monday. For those who missed it the last 20-or-so times we've mentioned it, here it is again: "Storytime," for children ages three and over, is 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 ages two and three, is held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30. And "Books & Babies," for children ages three and under, is held on Friday morning at 10:30. Each program lasts about an hour and features stories, songs and a craft activity for older kids. No pre-registration is required for these programs. For more information, please call and ask for Miss Linda or Miss Mija.

The next meeting of the Library Board of Trustees will be held on Tuesday evening at 7:30. Members of the public are invited to attend and learn more about the library's current and future plans, including the proposed new library building and important matters of library policy. As this is the first meeting of the new year, it will also serve as the annual reorganization meeting. There will be a public question/comment time early in the meeting.

Here is some advance word on an upcoming event: professional organizer Eva Abreu will present a series of program called "Decluttering and Organizing" at the library starting this month. The first program, "Where Do I Start" (on how to begin the job of de-cluttering) is set for Sunday, Jan. 13. The next two programs, "Piles of Paper" (on dealing with records and documents) and "Attics, Garages and Closets, Oh My" (on dealing with storage spaces) are set for Sunday, Jan. 27 and Sunday, Feb. 10, respectively. Each program starts at 2 p.m.; no pre-registration is required.

We're between groups on the video circuit today. Due to some procedural changes, the latest group won't be available for another few days, but we'll get them out to you ASAP. Meanwhile, today is the last day (and I mean the *last* day) for the audiobook circuit here at South Plainfield. So, if there are circuit titles you're interested in, now's the time to get them.

Another last chance reminder: long-time unclaimed occupants of our lost and found box will be disposed of next week. So, if you think you've left something here and you want to check, get yourself in gear and take a look before they're tossed.

Finally, some congratulations are in order. South Plainfield's contribution to the recent "Books to Keep" program turned out very well, with a total of 358 books donated, in addition to financial contributions. Special recognition is due for the South Plainfield Business Association for a sizable donation, and to everyone at Kennedy School who contributed 127 books. And our thanks to everyone who contributed, no matter the amount; it's all greatly appreciated.

That's about all for now. If you have any questions or comments, please call us at (908) 754-7885. Or you can visit our Web site at [www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us](http://www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us). See you next Friday.

## Gas Station Robbed at Gunpoint

A gas station attendant at Jersey Oil on Hamilton Boulevard was held up at gunpoint while closing at 9 p.m. on December 22.

Two black males walked into the office with one pointing a small silver handgun with a black grip at him and asked "where the money was." The suspect began opening drawers and took \$116 in cash. He then asked where the rest of the money was. The attendant pointed to a locked door for which he did not have a key. The suspect demanded that he kick the door in and the attendant was able to force the door open with his shoulder.

The attendant could not open the safe; however, he gave the suspects the \$200 to \$300 in cash in his pocket. The suspects fled west on Amboy Avenue on foot. Before leaving, they also took the attendant's North Face book bag with an AM/FM radio which was in the outside booth.

The male brandishing the gun was described as approximately 20 years old, 5'9", thin build, wearing a black leather jacket, dark jeans, and a hood pulled over his head and a ski mask covering his face. The other suspect was also about 20 years old, 6'1", wearing a black leather jacket, dark jeans and a hood pulled over his head. The description of the two suspects, including the silver gun, also matched those of suspects at robberies at a gas station in Union Township and a liquor store in Woodbridge that occurred after this incident.

## BSA Troop 207 Holds Open House

Boy Scout Troop 207 would like to invite all second year Webelos and 12-year-old boys to come to their open houses on Thursday, Jan. 10, 17, 24 and 31.

Come and see the different types of activities that they all enjoy. The troop meets at the American Legion on Oak Tree Avenue from 7:30 until 9 p.m.

All are cordially invited to be part of a great scouting experience.



Holding the hand-crocheted afghan are (L-R): Dian Collucci, Beverly Wilson, Helena Gromosaik, Christel Takacs and Diana Degnan.

## 'Tis the Season to be Giving

That's exactly what the Metuchen Edison Women's Club (MEWC) does best! At the December meeting, the general membership sponsored a paddle auction and raffled off a hand-crocheted afghan. Gifts were donated by Ann Guarino of Top Drawer Kitchen Remodeling and Essex Interiors of Metuchen, while the members, pictured above, got together to crochet the comforter.

All monies raised went to a charitable cause. Past fundraisers included

a tricky tray, the Metuchen Country Fair and Metuchen's town-wide garage sale.

Guests are always welcome to attend meetings prior to joining. The monthly meetings of the MEWC are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at The Heritage House at Clara Barton, located at 1015 Amboy Ave. in Edison.

For more information on MEWC, contact Beverly at (732) 494-9536 after 4 p.m.

## Kathy Thomas Calls Open Meetings a Farce

By Libby Barsky

As one of her last acts as a member of the Borough Council, Kathy Thomas attended last Thursday night's open public meeting devoted to interviewing the principals of three engineering firms and three insurance companies about their background and experience before the council make their appointments for 2008.

The change in the political makeup of the council from a Democratic to a Republican majority after 12 years is the reason for possible changes in appointments of professional services contracted by the borough.

On Friday night, Thomas didn't show up to listen to the resumes for municipal counsel, bond counsel, municipal judge, prosecutor, appraisal and auditing services.

"The meetings held Friday night were a farce," said Thomas. "They (the Republican councilmembers) had already decided who they would appoint," she said. "The Republicans held private meetings at an offsite location without a borough representative present. They interviewed and handpicked those coming in for the public interview before applications were ever received. To me the whole public hearings—although it was interesting—was a farce. It wasn't open. It wasn't fair and I wasn't going to be part of it. I wasn't going to be part of anything whose purpose would deceive the residents."

"One of the engineering firms actually introduced the individual that would be the person handling South Plainfield's business. At that point it

(Continued on page 10)

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# around town

## VFW Country Breakfast January 6

The South Plainfield VFW, located on Front Street, is holding a country breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 6 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The public is welcome.

## Historical Society Meeting January 8

The South Plainfield Historical Society will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 7 p.m. in the history center, located in the BOE administration building on Jackson Avenue. Nominations for new officers will be held at that time.

## Knights of Columbus Youth Free Throw January 13

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus are sponsoring their annual free throw championship. Boys and girls ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2008 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship. Registration will be held on Sunday, Jan. 13 at 1 p.m. at Sacred Heart School Gymnasium. Competition starts at 1:30 p.m. All local contestants will be recognized for their participation. Participants must furnish proof of age and written parental consent.

For information, contact Greg Gaydos at (732) 762-5003

## "Stroke? R.E.A.C.T." Support Group Mtg. January 16

AristaCare at Cedar Oaks will sponsor a new stroke group, "Stroke? R.E.A.C.T." on Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 6 to 7 p.m. at Cedar Oaks, located on Durham Avenue.

R.S.V.P. to Kathy Sherry at (732) 287-9555, ext. 123.

What's  
happening at the  
South Plainfield

## SENIOR CENTER

JANUARY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

UPCOMING  
EVENTS

January 10 - 1 p.m.  
Foot Health for Diabetics-With Dr. Ben Gurjal

January 28 - Noon

Presentation of Pre-Arrangements by  
McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals with lunch

Crocheting  
9:30am-11:30am  
Yoga 10:30-11:30am  
Art Class 11:30am

7

Bingo 10am-2pm  
Ladies Social  
Group 10am

8

Aerobics 8:45 am  
Computer Classes  
10am, 11:30am, 1pm  
Crocheting 1pm  
Tai Chi 2pm

9

Pathmark  
Shopping 9am  
Computer Class 10am  
11:30am, 1pm  
Exercise Class 1:15p  
Foot & Diabetes Care 1pm

10

Bingo  
10am-2pm

11

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

## SPBA Monthly Meeting January 17

South Plainfield Business Association (SPBA) will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, Jan. 17 at 9 a.m. at Sherban's Diner on Front Street. The "Highlights on Small Business" guest speaker for this month's meeting will be a representative from People Management, Inc.

Contact SPBA President Debra Leporino at leporino1@aol.com by Monday, Jan. 28 to be a guest speaker at the February meeting.

## American Legion Pancake Breakfast January 20

The American Legion Chaumont Post 243, located on Oak Tree Avenue, will be hosting an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast on Sunday, Jan. 20 from 8 a.m. to noon. Cost is \$5 adults, \$3 children and free for kids under the age of six. Everyone is welcome to attend this event profiting the scholarship fund.

## Inauguration of Coalition of Cultural Diversity January 21

Mayor Charles Butrico will inaugurate the newly formed Coalition of Cultural Diversity on Monday, Jan. 21 at the South Plainfield Senior Center.

The event starts at 4 p.m. with various displays of cultural artifacts and music, followed by a brief tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ethnic food will be available at a modest cost.

For more information, call Nehemiah Thompson at (908) 251-3992.

## AARP Chapter #4144 Meeting January 28

AARP Chapter #4144 will host Maria Linda Manola from JFK speaking "Stroke Awareness" on Monday, Jan. 28 at the South Plainfield Senior Center.

Needlecrafters meet Wednesdays at 1:30 p.m. at the senior center. They are currently knitting 130 lap robes for the Highlands, premie hats for DYFS and Muhlenberg Hospital. Call Georgie at (732) 968-3128.

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## — Out of Town —

## 35th Annual Stamp And Postcard Show Through January 6

The New Jersey Stamp Dealers Association's 35th annual Garden State Stamp and Postcard Show will be held on Saturday, Jan. 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 6, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Frank Pombo's Bethwood, 38 Lackawanna Ave., Totowa. Admission and parking is free.

For information, call N.J. Stamp Dealers Association at (732) 247-1093.

## NAACP Hosting Panel Discussion January 10

The Metuchen-Edison Area Branch of the NAACP will host a panel discussion on Thursday, Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Edison Job Corps Academy, 500 Plainfield Ave., Edison. Discussion topics include "Bringing a Public Eye to Court Justice" and the recent N.J. death penalty decision. Speakers include representatives from Watch N.J., concerned N.J. residents committed to advocacy and accountability for families affected by violence.

For information, call (732) 549-7936 or visit [www.naacpmc.org](http://www.naacpmc.org).

## 2008 Bucks County Dinner Theater January 11

The Bucks County Playhouse winter schedule opens on Friday, Jan. 11 with "Beehive, The 60's Musical," a fast paced and nostalgic look back at

the girl groups and soloists of the time.

Ticket prices are \$55 for the evening dinner and show and \$49.50 for the matinee brunch and show. Discounts are available. For tickets and reservations, call (215) 862-2041.

## MLK Jr. Celebration January 20

The New Hope Baptist Church and The NAACP Metuchen-Edison Area Branch presents the Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration entitled "Following in the Footsteps of the Dream" at New Hope Baptist Church, 45 Hampton St., Metuchen at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 20. Light refreshments will be served. This event is free.

For further information call (732) 549-7936 or (732) 906-6664.

## "Freeze Frame" Photography Exhibit February 24

The Edison Arts Society will hold "Freeze Frame," a photography exhibit for members only, on Sunday, Feb. 24 from 3 to 5 p.m. at Middlesex County College. Call (908) 753-2787.

## Howie Mandel to Headline Benefit April 12

The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey announced comedian Howie Mandel, star of the hit NBC show "Deal or No Deal," will be the featured entertainer for the 28th Scholarship Benefit Gala on Saturday, April 12 at Caesars Atlantic City Hotel-Casino. Stockton is seeking corporate and individual sponsorships and partners for the event. Call (609) 652-4658 or log onto [www.stockton.edu/scholarshipbenefit](http://www.stockton.edu/scholarshipbenefit).

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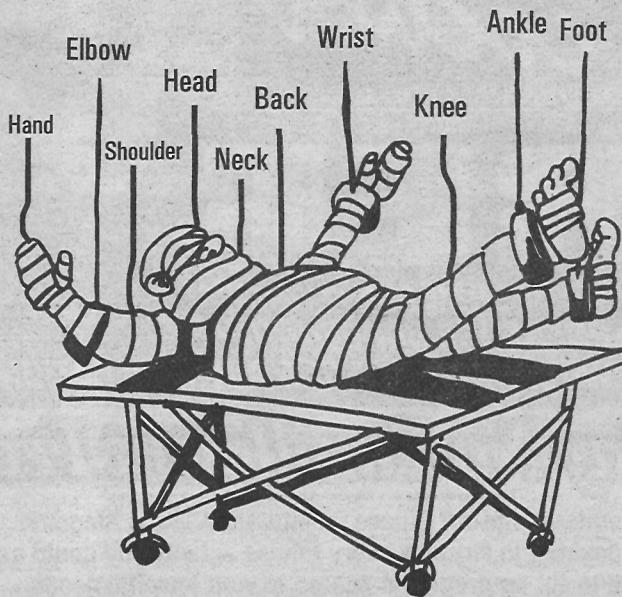
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**SEND US YOUR MILESTONES.** Share your good news with the community, i.e. promotions, births, engagements, weddings, anniversaries, graduations. Include photos if you like.

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

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

**SUGGEST A BUSINESS FOR US TO SPOTLIGHT.** If you have had a great retail, restaurant or service

experience in South Plainfield, share it with your neighbors through the newspaper.

**SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** to allow readers to discuss and react to issues.

**SEND US YOUR PHOTOS.** If you have an event, take a photo, write a caption identifying the event and people and send it to us. The best photos record action and don't include so many people that it is impossible to identify anyone. Please don't send us photocopies or laser prints. They don't reproduce well. Electronic photos should be 150 dpi or higher.

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## Observer's Picture of the Week

Submitted by Alison Katta



Cousins Nicole and Denise Scavone get trapped into posing for a holiday picture.

To be considered for our "Picture of the Week" feature, submit your high resolution photos to [spobserver@comcast.net](mailto:spobserver@comcast.net).

## CONTACT We Care Hotline Enhances Suicide Prevention

CONTACT We Care, the 24-hour telephone crisis hotline staffed by volunteers, is enhancing its suicide-prevention training program for volunteers with a new curriculum provided by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. CONTACT We Care is one of only two centers in New Jersey handling calls made to the national suicide hotline: 1-800-273-TALK.

CONTACT We Care volunteers provide the gift of listening to more than 7,500 callers each year, individuals who are lonely, depressed, stressed and suicidal. "We are always seeking to enhance and update our extensive volunteer training program. The new ASIST program (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) will give volunteers greater assurance in how to talk with callers about what is a very daunting subject," said David Owens, executive director. "In the past two years CONTACT has experienced a more than 100% increase in the num-

ber of suicide calls to our hotline. Currently 3% of our calls are classified as suicide calls."

CONTACT receives calls from individuals throughout all counties in New Jersey. Every year more than 30,000 people die by suicide and more than 750,000 attempt suicide, according to Suicide.org, a non-profit organization focused on awareness, prevention and support. Untreated depression is the number one reason for suicide. "This enhanced suicide-prevention training course will provide hands-on skills to our telephone volunteers so they are able to provide top quality emergency first aid to persons at risk of suicidal behavior," said Sue Fasano, training director.

For more information about volunteering for CONTACT We Care or having a special Suicide Prevention Workshop offered at your school, organization or business, please call (908) 301-1820.

## Teacher Receives Holocaust Grant

By Libby Barksy

South Plainfield Middle School History teacher Barbara Pinelli recently learned she was the recipient of a \$250 grant from Rider University. The grant will be used to purchase materials to educate students about the Holocaust.

Pinelli applied for the Joan Lavine Keats Social Justice teaching grant through the Julius and Dorothy Koppelman Holocaust-Genocide Center at Rider University.

"We have to teach about the Holocaust. Teaching the Holocaust has a very special place in my heart because my neighbor was a survivor of one of the camps," explained Pinelli, who attended a Catholic school growing up.

"When I was eight, I would ask her why she spoke with an accent and why she had a tattoo on her arm. Did she like numbers? Because ladies didn't have tattoos then," said Pinelli.

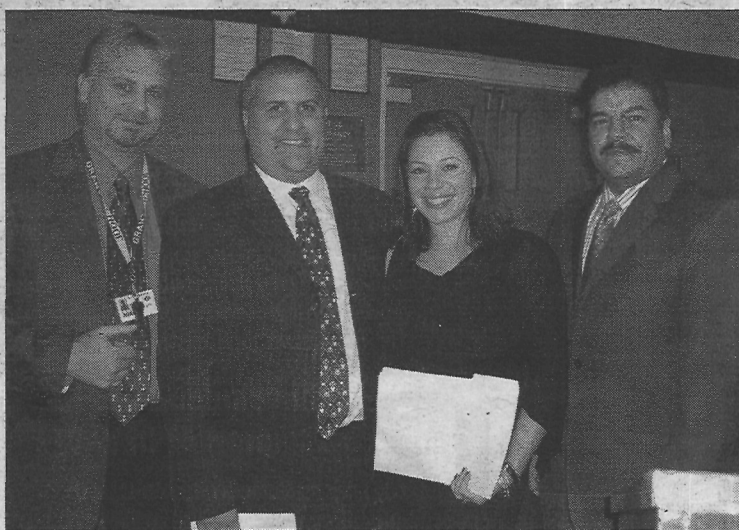
Even though her neighbor was very friendly with Pinelli's parents and grandmother, she only spoke to her about her Holocaust experiences.

It's an experience that has stayed with Pinelli. A few years ago, Pinelli brought in Holocaust survivor Margrit Feldman to speak to middle school students about her experiences as a teenager during the Holocaust.

"I'm thrilled with the opportunity to get the materials, because there wasn't much out there," said Pinelli, who immediately ordered DVDs and books online with funds from the grant.

She will be using some of the funds to have a Holocaust speaker to talk to the eighth graders in the spring. Right now she is searching for a speaker. If anyone knows of a speaker available, they are asked to contact Pinelli at [bpinelli@spnet.k12.nj.us](mailto:bpinelli@spnet.k12.nj.us).

## southplainfieldpeople Milestones



Grant School art teacher Jennifer Gill receives her tenure certificate at the December 19 BOE meeting. Pictured (L-R): Assistant Principal Robert Richkus, Principal Leo Whalen and Superintendent Jose Negron.

## Patricia S. Reach and Bernard J. Stelacone Wed in July

Patricia Susan Reach and Bernard J. Stelacone were married on July 14, 2007. Patty is the daughter of Richard and Joan Reach of South Plainfield and BJ is the son of Bernard J. Stelacone of Exeter, Pa. and Jacqueline Stelacone of West Wyoming, Pa.

The wedding took place at Sacred Heart Church in South Plainfield and was officiated by Father John P. Alvarado. The reception followed at Fairwinds located at the Basking Ridge Country Club in Basking Ridge.

The couple honeymooned in Aruba and are currently residing in Waxhaw, N.C. BJ works for Patterson Dental as a territory representative in Charlotte and Patty is teaching third grade in Pageland, S.C. She is currently working on her masters degree at Francis Marion University in South Carolina.



Bernard and Patricia Stelacone

## Middlesex County Administrator to Retire

Middlesex County Administrator Walter A. DeAngelo will be retiring effective May 1.

DeAngelo, 58, has served as the county's chief administrative officer overseeing the management of county government since 1994. He was appointed by the Board of Chosen Freeholders for one three-year term and two five-year terms. His latest five-year appointment expired in November.

Freeholder David B. Crabiell said he, DeAngelo and county counsel Thomas E. Kelso have been discussing the retirement for several months.

"Walter has done an outstanding job in this position and was a key contributor to the county's financial strength over the past 14 years," Crabiell said. "We wish him the best as he moves on to other challenges."

DeAngelo, who holds a bachelor's

degree in government from Seton Hall University and a law degree from Fordham University School of Law, served as Mercer County Administrator for eight years starting in 1980. He also served as executive director of the Mercer County Improvement Authority and as executive director of the South Jersey Transportation Authority before coming to Middlesex County.

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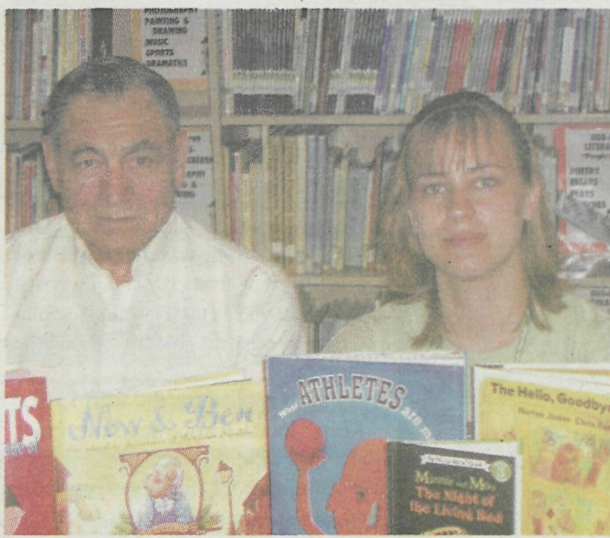
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# Notable Moments:



(Continued from page one)

## MARCH

running for the three open seats on the Board of Education in April. Incumbents running for seats are Terry Alexa, Steven D. Bohn and Pio Pennisi. First time candidates are Deborah Boyle, Robert J. Jones, Danielle Harris Lacasale and Sharon Miller.

### SPHS Girls Varsity Basketball Championship Hopes Crushed

The SPHS Girl's Varsity Basketball Team bid for the Group III Championship suffered a crushing loss to Willingboro at the final Group III Championship at the Ritacco Center at the Toms River High School.

### Buckets for Bob Fundraiser Held

A fundraiser, organized by the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club (SPJBC), was held for Bob Harrington, who was suffering from a very aggressive cancer.

Unfortunately, he passed away the morning of the fundraiser. Harrington, 43, lived in South Plainfield for 20 years and was very active in the SPJBC.

### Elks Name Debbie Boyle Citizen of the Year

The South Plainfield Elks Lodge #2298 named resident Debbie Boyle as their Citizen of the Year.

### Memories of Elvis Concert Benefits Library

The South Plainfield Public Library Foundation sponsored a benefit "Memories of Elvis" concert.

## APRIL

### Patrick Diegnan Honored

Assemblyman Patrick J. Diegnan, Jr. was honored by the New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance for his advocacy in the legislature to promote healthy, active lifestyles among the state's children.

### New Building Slated for Downtown Area

A new building will be built in the downtown area in the fall. The Planning Board approved plans to demolish an existing house at 156 Hamilton Blvd. and replace it with a building that will provide commercial and residential space.

### Pedestrian Accident Kills SPHS Freshman

A South Plainfield High School freshman was struck and killed by a minivan while crossing Plainfield

Avenue near O'Donahue. Jennifer Ibarra, 14, was struck by a 1999 Chrysler Town and Country minivan operated by Alfred Kearney, 71, of Voorhees.

### BOE Candidates Debate

Candidates running for three seats on the Board of Education attending the debate were: two incumbents—Steve Bohn and Pio Pennisi and first time candidates Debbie Boyle, Bob Jones and Sharon Miller. Danielle Harris-Lacasale could not attend.

### Torrential Rains Cause Flooding Problems

More than six inches of rain resulting from a Nor'easter caused extensive flooding in the borough, closing roads and forcing residents from their homes. Numerous roads were closed to traffic.

### Budget Gets Nod; Pennisi, Boyle, Jones Elected

South Plainfield voters said yes to the 2007/2008 school budget. Winning three year terms on the school board were incumbent Pio Pennisi and first time candidates Debbie Boyle and Bob Jones.

### Junior Baseball Club Opening Day

The South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club celebrated opening day of its 54th season. Ceremonies began in the early morning with club members and dignitaries marching from Roosevelt School to the baseball complex.

### Memorial Honors Local Civil War Soldiers

A dedication ceremony honoring five borough men was held. Honored were George C. Boice, Sergeant Henry Brantingham, Private Hugh Downey Private Aaron F. Randolph and Private Augustus Ryno.

### Cibelli Trial Begins

Opening arguments took place in Middlesex County Superior Court in New Brunswick on April 17 in the trial of South Plainfield resident Paul Cibelli Jr. who was accused of murder.

### Ponytail Opening Day

The South Plainfield Recreation Girl's Ponytail Softball league's opening day ceremonies were held.

## MAY

### Marching Band, Emeralds, Jades Perform in Florida

Over spring break, the South Plainfield High School Marching Band, Emeralds and Jades traveled to Orlando to perform at Walt Disney World.

### Car Slams Into 7-Eleven

A car, driven by 72 year-old Frangene Cooper of Plainfield, accidentally drove through the front window of 7-11 on Plainfield Avenue.

### Cibelli Found Guilty

Paul Cibelli, Jr. was found guilty of murder, hindering his own apprehension and a weapons offense in Middlesex County Superior Court.

### 277 Help Clean Up Trash

Hundreds of borough residents turned out in force to clean litter and trash from 19 public places, including school and municipal buildings, grounds, parks and open space areas.

### Man Arrested for Sexual Assault, Kidnapping

German Reyes, 20, of Piscataway, was arrested and charged with attempted kidnapping, criminal sexual contact, lewdness, simple assault and hindering his own apprehension after he was positively identified by his victim, a 27 year-old female South Plainfield resident.

### Teachers Settle Contract

After working without a contract for nearly a year, the South Plainfield Education Association (SPEA) Teacher's Unit and the Board of Education (BOE) came to an agreement. The three-year contract, includes a four percent pay increase each year and a retroactive one-year contract for the period 2006 through 2007, was also settled at four percent.

### Young Writers Honored

The accomplishments of 25 "junior" journalists were celebrated at a banquet in their honor. The program and dinner is a collaboration of the *Observer* and Hometown Heros.

### 500 Walk for Diabetes

Grant School Student Council members led their fellow students on the school's annual diabetes walk. More than 500 students solicited pledges and completed a two-lap mile walk around Spring Lake Park.

### Mothers Get Special Visit

Mohn's delivered huge smiles, a few tears and 15 bouquets of roses to local moms whose children were the winners in their annual Mother's Day essay contest.

### Annual Bike Rodeo Held

Bike thief "Baron Von Pedaloff" was foiled again thanks to the 10th annual South Plainfield Police Department Bike Rodeo. The event, an anti-theft and bike safety program, took place at Spring Lake Park.





# 2007 in Review

## JUNE

### Guidance Center Named For Longtime Counselor

South Plainfield High School held a ceremony to dedicate the Guidance Center in memory of former guidance counselor and director, the late Michael A. DeCarlo, who served the school for 35 years.

### Motor Vehicle Agency Moves to Golden Acres

N.J. Motor Vehicles Commission celebrated the grand opening of the latest model agency in the Golden Acres Shopping Center. The agency located on Hadley was closed.

### Music Department at Dorney Park Festival

Members of the South Plainfield Middle School Music Department participated in the Music Showcase Festival in Allentown, Pa.

### Senior Census Begins

The South Plainfield Office on Aging conducted a town-wide census in an effort to locate every senior citizen in the borough and to determine their specific individual needs. The goal was to establish and maintain a connection with seniors.

### DARE Party at the Pool

Grant Elementary School fifth grade DARE program graduates spent a day having fun in the sun at the community pool.

### Sgt. Trista Moretti Killed in Iraq

Sgt. Trista Moretti was killed June 25 when mortar fire hit her trailer during an insurgent attack on the Army base where she was stationed near Nasir Lajfah, Iraq. Trista was awarded a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star, in addition to three other medals. She was the 78th soldier—and the second woman—from New Jersey to die in Iraq. Twenty-one other paratroopers from the division were injured in the attack.

### Courier News Honors Shirley Thompson

South Plainfield resident Shirley Thompson was honored by the Courier News and the Somerset Patriots as a winner of their contest, "The Summer of Heroes" at Commerce Bank Ballpark during the Patriots' baseball game. Of more than 100 entries, Thompson was chosen for her contributions to the elderly and needy of South Plainfield during the holiday season.

### Four Inducted into SPHS Hall of Fame

Four former graduates of South Plainfield High School were inducted into the high school Hall of Fame. The four inductees added were Cheryl Austein Casnoff, Ronald Kuboski, Michael Price and William Seesselberg.

## AUGUST

### PA Woman Critically Injured After Collision

A serious accident closed South Clinton Avenue for four hours and critically injured a woman. Jenna Smalley, 20, of Newton, Pa., was critically injured when the car she was operating collided with a tractor trailer operated by Luis Duran, 31 of Stratford, Conn. Trapped inside her vehicle, Smalley was extricated by the South Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department.

### SDW Takes the Stage In 35th Production

South Plainfield Summer Drama Workshop (SDW) opened the world of theater arts to youths with their first production, "Bye, Bye Birdie," in 1972. The 2007 SDW production of "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" marked the group's 35th anniversary.

### Governor Corzine Signs Bills at Senior Center

Governor Jon Corzine chose the South Plainfield Senior Center to sign three health care related bills. The first bill required hospitals to implement an infection prevention program to eliminate antimicrobial-resistant infections. Bill A3817 established a three year pilot program to conduct comprehensive eye examinations for second grade students. The final bill required the placement of organ donation information and materials at public institutions of higher education.

### Kids Learn Safety Skills At Safety Town

The South Plainfield Recreation Department sponsored program, Safety Town, completed its two-week, two-session program at the PAL. The program, led by head teacher Kiley Jackson, teaches kindergarten and first grade youngsters the basics of being safe at home, school or where ever they may be.

### Owen Kelly Named Grand Marshal

South Plainfield resident Owen Kelly earned the distinction of being named honorary grand marshal

of this year's Labor Day Parade on Monday, Sept. 3. This year's parade marked the fiftieth anniversary of the annual event.

### Borough Hires Two New Police Officers

John Puljanowski and Anthony Pacillo were sworn in as South Plainfield's newest police officers. The addition of these two officers brought the total police force to 57 men and women.

### Borough Sells Land Despite Objections

The Borough Council added \$780,000 to its coffers after selling three of four borough-owned lots at the council meeting. The lots, all zoned R-10, are suitable for building a one family house. Before the sale took place, the council voted down a motion to cancel the auction by Councilman Rob Bengivenga.

### Asst. Superintendent Retiring

South Plainfield Assistant Superintendent of Schools Kaye Crown announced her retirement as of Dec. 1, 2007.

### Borough holds Annual Labor Day Parade

The Borough's 50th Annual Labor Day Parade was held after the running of the 5K Run and Family Fitness Walk. The theme was "Celebrating 50 Years."

## SEPTEMBER

### Negron Appointed Superintendent

Jose Negron was appointed superintendent of schools during a special meeting. The term of his contract is three years at a salary for 2007-2008 of \$165,000. Negron replaced retiring Superintendent Dr. Robert Rosado. When Negron officially starts October 18, Rosado will become deputy superintendent until his official retirement date of Jan. 1, 2008.

### Borough to Acquire Land For New Market Extension

Plans for an alternate truck route minimizing truck traffic on Hamilton Boulevard became more urgent with the possibility of the borough obtaining the property through eminent domain, which is located within the Hamilton Boulevard Industrial Site Redevelopment Area.

### Shredding Program Recycles 10,000 lbs.

Sensitive documents and financial statements that residents would not normally place in their recycle bin were securely shredded by a mobile shredding unit at the senior center. Approximately 100 residents from South Plainfield took advantage of the shredding program.

### Police Officers Receive Commendations

In the early morning just prior to the Borough's annual Labor Day Parade, the South Plainfield Police Department held their commendations and awards ceremony.

## OCTOBER

### Domestic Violence Awareness Month

In conjunction with Domestic Violence Awareness Month, educators and organizers of the South Plainfield Educational Outreach Program tied purple ribbons on trees from Borough Hall up to the middle school.

### Columbus Day Ceremonies At Borough Hall

Plainfield's Chapter of UNICO held their annual Columbus Day program on the front lawn of Borough Hall. Chairman for this year's event was Councilman Rob Bengivenga and master of ceremonies was Frank Licato.

### SPHS Halls are Painted

Students from the SPHS Class of 2008 devoted their time to painting the walls of one of the cafeteria's in the high school themed "South Plainfield: Past, Present and Future."

### Cornell-Dubilier Clean-up Progresses

Since January 18 warehouses bordering Hamilton Boulevard were torn down. The remaining buildings had a wall removed, and the soil was surrounded by fencing and covered with plastic.

### Borough Gets Grant for Artificial Turf Field

Mayor Charles Butrico announced that South Plainfield will receive a grant of \$1.5M for the installation of an artificial turf field on a borough-owned sports field. Funding for the field will come from a grant from the Middlesex County Open Trust Fund.

### Old Timers Go the Distance For Kids Battling Cancer

The Old Timers Motorcycle Club held its second annual "Run for the Children" and raised \$36K. The event, co-sponsored by Open Your Heart to Children Battling Cancer Foundation, Inc., was a huge success. The unusually warm October weather brought out 437 riding participants and over 500 people who attended the event.

### Buddy Walk Raises Record \$31K

South Plainfield resident Michele Both's year of planning and hard work paid off. The 2007 Buddy Walk held on October 6 was the most successful walk to date. The fourth annual event held at Putnam Park drew more than 460 people and raised over \$31,000.

### Details of Pinto Settlement Made Public

The South Plainfield Republican Organization received the details of the settlement agreement in the discrimination case against the Borough and its officials brought by former Democratic Councilwoman Darlene Pinto.

### Full-Time Police Officer Assigned to Schools

The South Plainfield Police Department, in cooperation with the South Plainfield Board of Education, instituted a School Resource Officer Program. A police officer will be assigned to the schools on a full-time basis to assist in reducing juvenile delinquency through a collaborative effort between law enforcement and school staff.

## NOVEMBER

### Arrests Prompt SPHS Lockdown

South Plainfield Police responded to five physical fights at various locations in the Borough and subsequently made three arrests. After conducting interviews with SPHS students, police informed school administrators about a possible weapon sitting at the school. Administrators had also received information from students about guns being brought into the high school. This information prompted a lockdown.

### Republicans Win Control of Council

Republicans will control the South Plainfield Borough Council for the first time in more than a decade with their victory. Republicans Tim McConville and Ray Rusnak

(Continued on page 8)



# Notable Moments: 2007 in Review

(Continued from page 7)

## NOVEMBER

defeated incumbent Democrats Dennis Cerami and Kathy Thomas. Cerami had been on the council since 1996, while Thomas served three short terms during the past few years. McConville and Rusnak will both be serving a first term on the council.

### First Responders Train for Crisis

Middlesex County tested its First Responder Distribution Program during a county-wide, full-scale event to demonstrate how medication would be distributed to emergency personnel throughout the county in the event of a public health emergency. The distribution program offers oral medication to first responders, critical infrastructure personnel and those living in their households during a public health emergency.

### Legislature Honors Retired Pastor

Recognizing his "service and commitment to the community of South Plainfield and on behalf of the citizens of Middlesex County," members of the New Jersey State Legislature honored Retired Pastor Reverend Charles Mingle with a Joint Legislative Resolution initiated by Senator Barbara Buono and Assemblymen Peter Barnes and Patrick Diegnan.

### Fate of Helen Street Discussed

At a special Borough Council meeting, the fate of the Helen Street Extension Project was the topic of discussion. More than 100 residents attended the meeting.

Mayor Charles Butrico told the filled chamber that time has run out for the project. The N.J. Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) has

given the borough until December 31 to decide whether to end the plans for the Helen Street Extension or to pursue other means.

### Franklin Honors Former Student Trista Moretti

Franklin School honored a local fallen hero during their annual Veterans Day Program. Sgt. Trista L. Moretti, 27, died on June 25 in Nasir Lafitah, Iraq when her unit was attacked by insurgents using indirect fire. In a touching ceremony, the school presented Trista's parents, Frederic and Judith Moretti, with a memorial plaque of Trista that will hang in the hallway of the school.

### Owen Kelly, Nancy Pauls Cappy Winners

Owen Kelly and the late Nancy Pauls, two pioneering volunteers from the early days of the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club (SPJBC), were honored as recipients of this year's Cappy Award.

### Ecumenical Thanksgiving Services Held

Choirs from four South Plainfield churches joined forces to present an ecumenical Thanksgiving service at Wesley United Methodist Church.

## DECEMBER

### BOE Business Admin. Tolley Resigns, Put on Leave

BOE Business Administrator/Board Secretary Donna Tolley resigned effective January 28, 2008. Tolley's resignation was the last item listed on the agenda at the November 28 Board of Education meeting. The board further approved a paid leave of absence for Tolley effective that day. No explanation was given. George Sarnoff was hired as acting business administrator.

### Council Gives In on Helen Street

Mayor Charles Butrico asked council members to offer input on the Helen Street Extension Project. The consensus was that the cost to continue was too high to pass on to the taxpayers without any guarantee of receiving approval to start the project.

### Tigers Fall One Game Short

The South Plainfield Tigers Football Team competed for the NJSIAA North 2 GROUP III Championship and lost to third-seeded Newark West Side (10-2) by a score of 20-0. Conditions at game time were slippery, with snow covering the field. When the Tigers returned to town, they were honored with an escort from the South Plainfield Police, Fire and Rescue Squad.

### Investors Savings Bank Coming to Borough

The South Plainfield Zoning Board of Adjustment approved a preliminary site plan approval to subdivide the lot at 2449 Plainfield Ave. and build an Investors Savings Bank, and a variance to build a single family residential house.

### BOE Names Fred Oberkehr Assistant Superintendent

Fred Oberkehr was appointed to the position of assistant superintendent of schools for instruction and operations.

### Families Pledge 10K For Students

The South Plainfield Education Foundation (SPEF) telethon, an annual event at South Plainfield High School, raised \$10,945 in pledges from the parents of the students of South Plainfield.

### McCriskin Tree Lighting

Rick McCriskin and Frank Febus placed a wreath in memory of 101st Airborne Division members lost in a

plane crash in 1985 during their annual tree lighting.

### Council Holds Off on Bond Ordinance

A \$340,000 bond ordinance providing for improvements to Tompkins Avenue and sidewalks on Spicer Avenue was put on hold. Before the vote for the final adoption was called, Mayor Charles Butrico asked the council for their consensus to hold the ordinance until the new council is seated in January and the council voted to table the ordinance.

### SPBA Officers Sworn in At Holiday Luncheon

The South Plainfield Business Association (SPBA) held their annual holiday luncheon. Assemblyman Patrick Diegnan introduced the incoming SBPA officers, Debra Anne Leporino, marketing director of Slim & Tone as president; Carolyn Canavan, branch manager of Mobile Storage Group as vice president; Tom Stillman, owner of Stillman Photographic Services as recording secretary; Carolyn Allen, VP/Sr. manager Commerce Bank as financial secretary; and Jeff Yingling, owner of Graphix One as corresponding secretary. Paul Grzenda, attorney-at-law, will continue as treasurer.

### Students Perform at Rockefeller Center

South Plainfield students performed at the 34th Annual Tuba Christmas Concert at Rockefeller Center in New York. Approximately 450 tubas, baritones and euphoniums per-

formed 30 minutes of Christmas carols on the ice rink under the gigantic Rockefeller Center Christmas tree.

### Weekend Storm Creates Hazardous Conditions

The after effects of a storm that dumped sleet, rain, snow and subsequently slush, left roadways, sidewalks and parking lots slick with ice after temperatures dropped overnight.

### SPHS Senior Paints Wall of Heroes

The Borough Council unveiled the "Wall of Heroes" commemorating the service of South Plainfield residents who are currently serving in the armed forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### Final Library Plans Unveiled

Plans for the proposed 15,000-square-foot library were unveiled at the last council meeting of the year. The new building, located on Borough owned property on Plainfield Avenue between Unity Bank and South Plainfield James W. Conroy Funeral Home, will be almost twice the size of the present library.

### Kelly Richkus Appointed Kennedy Principal

Kelly Richkus has been appointed the new principal at Kennedy School, replacing Fred Oberkehr, who moved to central administration as assistant superintendent of instruction. Richkus came into the district 11 years ago as sixth/seventh grade Language Arts and Reading teacher.

### LEGAL NOTICE

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### LEGAL NOTICES

#### BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD

Public Notice

#### RETURN OF PERFORMANCE BOND

To Gem Estates Inc. for public improvements at Stacey Court in South Plainfield Lot 4.01, 5 and 32; Block 77.

A public meeting has been scheduled by the Governing Body of the Borough of South Plainfield to hear objections, if any, to the release of a Performance Bond posted by Gem Estates Inc. for public improvements at Stacey Court in South Plainfield known as Lot 4.01, 5 and 32, Block 77 listed on the official tax maps of the Borough of South Plainfield. Said public hearing will be held January 14, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 2480 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080.

Gem Estates Inc.  
225 Maple Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
\$38.50      January 4, 2008

#### BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD

Public Notice

#### RETURN OF PERFORMANCE BOND

To Scott and Jackie Dickerson for public improvements constructed at 1457 Fox Place in South Plainfield Lot 14.01; Block 144.

A public meeting has been scheduled by the Governing Body of the Borough of South Plainfield to hear objections, if any, to the release of a Performance Bond posted by Scott and Jackie Dickerson for public improvements at 1457 Fox Place in South Plainfield known as Lot 14.01, Block 144 listed on the official tax maps of the Borough of South Plainfield. Said public hearing will be held January 14, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 2480 Plainfield Ave., South Plainfield, New Jersey 07080.

Scott and Jackie Dickerson  
1457 Fox Place, South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
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From the South Plainfield Library

## Bookmarks

By Kenneth Morgan

All together now! Should auld acquaintance be for-... Oh, yeah, we sang that on Tuesday, right? Sorry about that. While I'm adjusting to the new calendar, here's some early 2008 news from South Plainfield Library.

Following a brief hiatus, our usual schedule of children's programs returns on Monday. For those who missed it the last 20-or-so times we've mentioned it, here it is again: "Storytime," for children ages three and over, is 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 ages two and three, is held on Wednesday and Thursday mornings at 10:30. And "Books & Babies," for children ages three and under, is held on Friday morning at 10:30. Each program lasts about an hour and features stories, songs and a craft activity for older kids. No pre-registration is required for these programs. For more information, please call and ask for Miss Linda or Miss Mija.

The next meeting of the Library Board of Trustees will be held on Tuesday evening at 7:30. Members of the public are invited to attend and learn more about the library's current and future plans, including the proposed new library building and important matters of library policy. As this is the first meeting of the new year, it will also serve as the annual reorganization meeting. There will be a public question/comment time early in the meeting.

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Here is some advance word on an upcoming event: professional organizer Eva Abreu will present a series of program called "Decluttering and Organizing" at the library starting this month. The first program, "Where Do I Start" (on how to begin the job of de-cluttering) is set for Sunday, Jan. 13. The next two programs, "Piles of Paper" (on dealing with records and documents) and "Attics, Garages and Closets, Oh My" (on dealing with storage spaces) are set for Sunday, Jan. 27 and Sunday, Feb. 10, respectively. Each program starts at 2 p.m.; no pre-registration is required.

We're between groups on the video circuit today. Due to some procedural changes, the latest group won't be available for another few days, but we'll get them out to you ASAP. Meanwhile, today is the last day (and I mean the *last* day) for the audiobook circuit here at South Plainfield. So, if there are circuit titles you're interested in, now's the time to get them.

Another last chance reminder: long-time unclaimed occupants of our lost and found box will be disposed of next week. So, if you think you've left something here and you want to check, get yourself in gear and take a look before they're tossed.

Finally, some congratulations are in order. South Plainfield's contribution to the recent "Books to Keep" program turned out very well, with a total of 358 books donated, in addition to financial contributions. Special recognition is due for the South Plainfield Business Association for a sizable donation, and to everyone at Kennedy School who contributed 127 books. And our thanks to everyone who contributed, no matter the amount; it's all greatly appreciated.

That's about all for now. If you have any questions or comments, please call us at (908) 754-7885. Or you can visit our Web site at [www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us](http://www.southplainfield.lib.nj.us). See you next Friday.

## Gas Station Robbed at Gunpoint

A gas station attendant at Jersey Oil on Hamilton Boulevard was held up at gunpoint while closing at 9 p.m. on December 22.

Two black males walked into the office with one pointing a small silver handgun with a black grip at him and asked "where the money was." The suspect began opening drawers and took \$116 in cash. He then asked where the rest of the money was. The attendant pointed to a locked door for which he did not have a key. The suspect demanded that he kick the door in and the attendant was able to force the door open with his shoulder.

The attendant could not open the safe; however, he gave the suspects the \$200 to \$300 in cash in his pocket. The suspects fled west on Amboy Avenue on foot. Before leaving, they also took the attendant's North Face book bag with an AM/FM radio which was in the outside booth.

The male brandishing the gun was described as approximately 20 years old, 5'9", thin build, wearing a black leather jacket, dark jeans, and a hood pulled over his head and a ski mask covering his face. The other suspect was also about 20 years old, 6'1", wearing a black leather jacket, dark jeans and a hood pulled over his head. The description of the two suspects, including the silver gun, also matched those of suspects at robberies at a gas station in Union Township and a liquor store in Woodbridge that occurred after this incident.

## BSA Troop 207 Holds Open House

Boy Scout Troop 207 would like to invite all second year Webelos and 12-year-old boys to come to their open houses on Thursday, Jan. 10, 17, 24 and 31.

Come and see the different types of activities that they all enjoy. The troop meets at the American Legion on Oak Tree Avenue from 7:30 until 9 p.m.

All are cordially invited to be part of a great scouting experience.



Holding the hand-crocheted afghan are (L-R): Dian Collucci, Beverly Wilson, Helena Gromosaik, Christel Takacs and Diana Degnan.

## 'Tis the Season to be Giving

That's exactly what the Metuchen Edison Women's Club (MEWC) does best! At the December meeting, the general membership sponsored a paddle auction and raffled off a hand-crocheted afghan. Gifts were donated by Ann Guarino of Top Drawer Kitchen Remodeling and Essex Interiors of Metuchen, while the members, pictured above, got together to crochet the comforter.

All monies raised went to a charitable cause. Past fundraisers included

a tricky tray, the Metuchen Country Fair and Metuchen's town-wide garage sale.

Guests are always welcome to attend meetings prior to joining. The monthly meetings of the MEWC are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at The Heritage House at Clara Barton, located at 1015 Amboy Ave. in Edison.

For more information on MEWC, contact Beverly at (732) 494-9536 after 4 p.m.

## Kathy Thomas Calls Open Meetings a Farce

By Libby Barsky

As one of her last acts as a member of the Borough Council, Kathy Thomas attended last Thursday night's open public meeting devoted to interviewing the principals of three engineering firms and three insurance companies about their background and experience before the council make their appointments for 2008.

The change in the political makeup of the council from a Democratic to a Republican majority after 12 years is the reason for possible changes in appointments of professional services contracted by the borough.

On Friday night, Thomas didn't show up to listen to the resumes for municipal counsel, bond counsel, municipal judge, prosecutor, appraisal and auditing services.

"The meetings held Friday night were a farce," said Thomas. "They (the Republican councilmembers) had already decided who they would appoint," she said. "The Republicans held private meetings at an offsite location without a borough representative present. They interviewed and handpicked those coming in for the public interview before applications were ever received. To me the whole public hearings—although it was interesting—was a farce. It wasn't open. It wasn't fair and I wasn't going to be part of it. I wasn't going to be part of anything whose purpose would deceive the residents."

"One of the engineering firms actually introduced the individual that would be the person handling South Plainfield's business. At that point it

(Continued on page 10)

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## Grant Students Entertain Guests at Holiday Concert

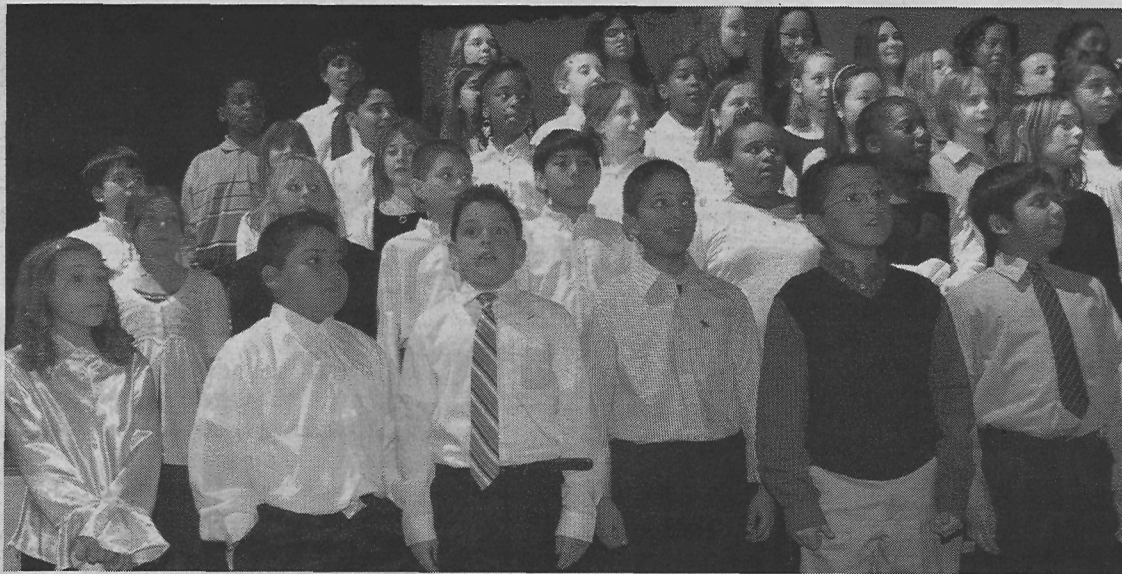
Grant Elementary School held their Holiday Concert in the high school auditorium on December 17.

The orchestra, conducted by Diane Lee, played "A Christmas Canon," "Classic Bits & Pieces" featuring Charles Butrico, Ryan Temple, Marc Stasio, John DeLaCruz and Kayla O'Neil and "Ukrainian Bell Carol" featuring Charles Butrico, Ryan Temple and Marc Stasio.

Mark Tweed's jazz band repertoire, which practices after school, played "Groove City," "Bubbert Goes Retro" and "Absolutely, Positively." Fifth grade flute choir members Jasmine Martin, Nicole Bythel, Samantha Tercek, Moriah Garcia, Rebecca George and Kayla Bishop played "Aura Lee" and "Ode to Joy." Fifth grade clarinet choir members Jordan Anderson, Kim Schuetz, Debbie

Persaud, Susan Pipolo, Joseph Risoli and Claire Hageman played "Up on the Housetop," "Bottom Bass Boogie" and "Kum Ba Ya." The concert band repertoire played "Jolly Old Saint Nick," "Christmas Stomp," "Chanukah Lights," "Jingle Bells" and "Holiday March."

Joan Stasio conducted the sixth grade band who played "Drummer's Christmas Carol," "Fantasia On Three Ships," "Hanukkah Celebration" and "Christmas Bossa Nova" with "Christmas Carols" played by Roweena Kanj and Lukas Cabanas. The chorus, also directed by Stasio, was accompanied on piano by Paul DiDario and sang "Three Jazz Carols Saint," "Jamaican Noel," "Candlelight," "Let it Snow/Winter Wonderland" and "Button Up Your Overcoat."



## Thomas Calls Meeting Farce

(Continued from page 3)

became clear that a decision had been made before the public meeting was ever held. I have never been a part of intentionally deceiving the residents of South Plainfield and I am not going to start now. With that said I left the public meeting and did not return for the remainder of the interviews," Thomas added.

When questioned, Councilmen Bengivenga and Anesh admitted to the meetings and felt they had done nothing wrong.

"For the first time in the last decade, the appointments will be based on merit, not whether the professional gave money to the Democratic Party. Mrs. Thomas should look at how appointments (including her own) were handled when she was on the council. There was no newspaper advertising, no consultation of the minority party or community, and no interviewing," explained Bengivenga.

"When you're giving out contracts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, it's ludicrous to cram 108 ten-minute interviews into the last week of the year, which is what would have happened if the Democrats had honored what was in the ads they placed without our consent. It would have been irresponsible to wait until the last week of December to start talking to potential professionals. Maybe that works when one or two people make all the decisions, but it's not how we wanted to plan the transition. We pre-interviewed firms, interviewed firms, spoke to them on the phone, called references, consulted with the community, and consulted with borough employees. Given the improvement over how things were handled when she was on the council, Mrs. Thomas's complaints make her sound like a sore loser," he concluded.

Thomas, a member of the borough council on and off for three years, lost her seat in the last election. She has been shepherding plans for a new library, seeing that it was an open process. She also worked to create the Library Foundation to raise funds to build the library and after one and a half years, the organization received tax exemption status from the state and county. The library is currently selling candy bars as an ongoing campaign. Thomas doesn't have plans for a large fundraiser at this time. "It depends on the direction the town is going in," she said.

At the last meeting of the borough council, Thomas told the council the library could begin building in the spring since receiving approvals from the state on environmental concerns. The 15,000 sq. ft. library will be almost double the size of the current one and provide space for a children's craft room and two separate individual rooms for adults. There will be 21 parking spaces and computers at the end of each aisle and an upper level will provide a meeting room seating 90 people and offices for the staff.

Thomas is concerned the plans to build the library will be overruled by the new council. "They [Republicans] seem to have a big hang up on the amount of parking spaces. Once the parking lot is relined and police vans moved from a location near the proposed library there will be more parking spaces than there are now," she added. "It would be a real shame if they don't go through with the project because the borough has already spent \$700,000 for the property and the architect and engineers." Thomas estimated the cost of building the new library would be approximately \$4 million dollars.

## policereport

- On December 20, Virginia Lee Davis, 38, of Elizabeth was arrested at Sears Essentials for shoplifting \$134 worth of sheet sets.
- One Horn Trucking Inc. of Wayne reported the theft of a Dorney flatbed trailer from Harris Steel.
- On December 21, Taj Mahal Boutique on Stelton Road reported that their front glass door was broken and a cash register with \$360 in it and a box with \$200 worth of quarters was taken.

- On December 24, a Plainfield resident reported the theft of the front license plate of their vehicle that was parked at Regal Cinema.
- On December 22, a Piscataway resident reported the theft of a bag of items that was purchased at Macy's and was tagged and left in a locker at Burlington Coat Factory.
- On December 23, Marco A. Adame, 36, of Plainfield was arrested for driving while intoxicated, driving on a suspended license, reckless driving and failure to wear a seat belt.
- A Jersey City resident reported that the driver side window of their vehicle had been smashed while parked at the Polish National Home. Nothing was taken.
- On December 24, Lyle A. Quinn, 30, of South Plainfield was arrested for driving while intoxicated, driving on a suspended license, reckless driving, no insurance and possession of a controlled substance in a vehicle.

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# SCHOOL BOARD Notes

The Board of Education approved the following recommendations by the superintendent of schools:

- Fredrik Oberkehr, as assistant superintendent of instruction and operations replacing Kaye Crown, who retired and affirmative action officer in educational programs, replacing Jose Negron.

- Elena Buccino, Grant School part-time physical education teacher, replacing Melissa Geoghan who resigned.

- Activity Fund Treasurer Alissa Pecora for the high school and Joann Plate, activity fund treasurer for the middle school.

- Debbie Czech, high school, 12 month secretary to the assistant principal, replacing Paula Dick who is retiring.

- Rudolph Coleman, Grant School instructional support aide (autistic class).

- Kavita Sinha, M.D., FAAP, re-

lated service provider for neurological evaluations.

- Maria Rivera, high school Spanish teacher, replacing Ms. Pazdera who resigned.

- A temporary computer technician from E-Plus for eight hours a day, for a maximum of forty days to assist the Technology Department in the completion of district-wide computer upgrades.

- Kelly Richkus as Kennedy School

principal on or before January 31, replacing Fred Oberkehr who was promoted.

- Andrea Gustafson and Karen Kozak, 10 month secretaries at the high school to the assistant principal, replacement for Virginia Bruno who is retiring and Debbie Czech who was promoted.

- Full-time accounts payable clerk-SEC III Position Creation/Revised Job Description.



A tree damaged a car recently on Maple Avenue during the high winds. No one was injured.

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Run an ad 4 consecutive issues, get a 10% discount. Call 908-668-0010; or email your ad to: [spobserver@comcast.net](mailto:spobserver@comcast.net).

Call in your classified ad by 5 p.m. on Monday to make Friday's paper.

**908-668-0010**





fabrics furniture trimmings

GOING ON NOW THROUGH SUNDAY JANUARY 13<sup>TH</sup> OPEN DAILY 9AM - 5PM

# WAREHOUSE SALE !

## NEW Open to The Public



**Needlepoint Rug**  
Regularly \$540  
Sale Price \$100



**Hand-Knotted Kazak Rugs**  
Regularly \$450  
Sale Price \$95

**RARITAN CENTER**  
**300 McGAW DRIVE,**  
**EDISON, NJ**  
**(732)225-8380**  
**EXT.300**



**FROM ROUTE 287**  
Take 287 South till it becomes NJ-440N  
Exit CR-514 W / WOODBRIDGE AVE  
toward BONHAMTOWN (1st exit after NJ TPK)  
Take the Raritan Center Exit (Stay Left)  
Go through the first light  
Make immediate left onto McGaw Drive

**FROM THE GSP**  
EXIT 127- RT-440/ toward I-287.  
Bear right and merge onto  
CR-514 W / WOODBRIDGE AVE.  
Take the Raritan Center Exit (Stay Left)  
Go through the first light  
Make immediate left onto McGaw Drive  
Follow McGaw to end in cul de sac



**Bar Stools**  
Regularly \$725  
Sale Price \$175



**Kravet Furniture**  
Regularly \$2450  
Sample Sale Price \$1400



**Oil Painting in a Gold Metal Leaf Frame**  
Regularly \$2575  
Sale Price \$325



**Kravet Furniture**  
Regularly \$4400  
Sample Sale Price \$475



**Oil Painting**  
Regularly \$340  
Sale Price \$50



**Screen**  
Regularly \$2600  
Sale Price \$1475

**Thousands of Handmade Oriental Rugs in Stock.**



**Kravet**  
Over 2000 Different  
Closeout Fabrics in Stock  
Regularly from \$300  
Sale Price \$15 Per Yard  
Minimum of 15 Yards



**Brass**  
Regularly from \$265 Sale Price \$65



**MIRRORS**  
Regularly \$380 Sale Price \$100



**Urn**  
Regularly \$450  
Sale Price \$75



**Porcelain**  
Regularly \$450 Sale Price \$65



**Loveseat**  
Regularly \$1845 Sale Price \$895



**Carved Desk**  
Regularly \$4560  
Sale Price \$365



**Round Table**  
Regularly \$850  
Sale Price \$200



**Arm Chair**  
Regularly \$765  
Sale Price \$65



**Bed Bench**  
Regularly \$4550  
Sale Price \$225



**Kravet Furniture**  
Regularly \$2850 Sample Sale Price \$1500

**Exclusive D'Angelico EXL-1DP**  
Regularly \$4599  
Sale Price \$850  
**NY-SD**  
Regularly \$4599  
Sale Price \$995  
and more...



**Buffet Louis 16 w/Beveled Glass**  
Regularly \$29,999 sale Price \$5,500



**Belgian Armoire**  
Regularly \$9850 Sale Price \$700



**Aubusson - Over a Hundred Available**  
8x10 Regularly \$2400 Sale Price \$595  
9x12 Regularly \$3250 Sale Price \$795  
10x14 Regularly \$4200 Sale Price \$995



**Aubusson Pillows**  
Regularly \$650  
Sale Price \$50

65 BROAD STREET, RED BANK, NJ  
(732) 747-9797

795 BROAD STREET, SHREWSBURY, NJ  
(732) 576-8550

We Offer In Home Design Consultation

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