

# South Plainfield Observer

JAN 25 2008  
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50 CENTS

JANUARY 25, 2008

## Council Votes 4-2 for Municipal Tax Hike

The Borough Council voted at Tuesday night's meeting to approve the amended SFY 2008 budget, which increases municipal taxes by approximately \$100 per average household. The vote was taken after almost two hours of heated discussion and, in some cases, pleas from the standing room only crowd to hold off and take a closer look at the expenditures before

raising taxes.

Councilman Ray Rusnak began by reading a statement explaining the reasons why a tax increase is needed. "Without borrowing, we can solve the deficit caused by the tax refund from tax appeals and, most importantly, we will be on the path towards fiscal responsibility," he said. "Our seniors that have an income of less than

\$53,000, including Social Security, have the option of applying for a property tax freeze. All they need to do is complete the PTR1 form, which is available at our senior center, the tax office or here at Borough Hall. This freeze may not take affect for this current situation, but all situations going forward," he added.

When residents receive their third

and fourth quarter tax bills, the tax increase will be closer to \$125 per quarter (average) since the first and second quarter tax bills are estimated at 49% of the actual tax bill. This means the municipal tax will increase \$250 (average) for the second half.

Former Mayor Mike English asked the council if the \$670,000 in land sale money comes through before June,

would they guarantee taxpayers that they will use that money for assets or a tax reduction, and not for further spending. Councilman Matt Anesh said if the land sales close the council will use that money for tax relief.

Freeholder John Pulomena expressed his disappointment that the members of the Finance Committee did not say  
(Continued on page 6)

## BOE Ousts 16 Students

By Libby Barsky

Sixteen students attending South Plainfield schools were removed from the district because they could not produce enough evidence that they are residents of South Plainfield.

Before their regular meeting on January 16, the Board of Education Student Residency Committee held a hearing on the status of 16 students who have been attending district schools since Sept. 5, 2007. After the meeting, the board went into executive session and returned with a resolution on the residency hearing.

For the time enrolled in the district,

September 5, 2007 through January 16, 2008, the board assessed each student \$5,439.82 for their ineligible attendance.

The resolution stated that the families have the right to contest the decision within 21 days before the commissioner of education. However, if the family makes an appeal, the board reserves the right to collect additional tuition for the days the students remain in the district while an appeal is pending.

BOE President Jeff Seider said that hearings are scheduled in February to remove an additional 12 students from the district.

## Sacred Heart to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week

All across our country, Monday, January 27 begins the celebration of Catholic Schools Week. A week of various celebrations and recognition of teachers, staff, students and parents for their dedication to Catholic education and its mission.

Sacred Heart School, will begin their celebration with an opening Mass at 9:30 a.m. with an open house to follow from 10:30 to noon. All are welcome to visit during that time.

Other activities planned for the week include student treat of Rock-roots, a history of American pop music on Monday; grandparents day for grades PK-5 on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m.; Career Day for grades



6, 7 and 8 on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. Parents in various professional careers will speak to the students about their pro-

fession and the importance of their educational journey; Student Day when teachers will swap classes and students have time to play board games on Thursday at 12:30 p.m. The older students will work with the younger ones and there will be a Mass at 9 a.m. honoring our teachers and staff on Friday. Home School will provide a luncheon for them after dismissal.

We look forward to this special week and invite all to come and see what happens inside the halls of Sacred Heart School.



Members of the SPSHS 1964 State Championship Basketball Team (L-R): Lou Calderone, Roger Catarino, Ben Crawford, Bob Yackanin, Greg Cisson, Coach Anthony Cotoia, Art Beirn, Ward Spisso, Rich Steele, Coach Charlie Garafano and Bob Fulton.

## Teacher, Coach, Friend Celebrates 80th

By Patricia Abbott

Former coach and educator Anthony Cotoia was fond of saying, "Hard work is never wasted." These words live on in the memories of his players spanning 50 years. Anthony Cotoia is a South Plainfield High School icon for all the things that make a great coach. He was a teacher and a friend as well, and did more than teach his players the game. He taught them to work as a team espousing good sportsmanship and much more. He truly liked these young athletes; he motivated them, listened to them and cared for them.

To celebrate his 80th birthday, daughters Margaret and Patty Cotoia decided to host a reunion of his former players. This was an ideal solu-

tion to the party he clearly stated he did not want. They decided to focus the celebration on a period of his career which was the most successful 1956-1968.

Rich Steele, Class of 1964, was instrumental in tracking down players and rounding up memorabilia. Although the calls (reading from a script) were a long, tedious process at times, Margaret said, "Planning this reunion was as enjoyable as the event itself. I met a lot of wonderful people and learned even more about the lasting impact my father had on the lives of those he taught and coached." She also mentioned that people she contacted were able to locate and/or contact other players.

Over 60 former players and coaches attended the reunion at the North

Plainfield Italian American Club. In an effort to keep Cotoia in the dark about the upcoming celebration, he was told that a few of his friends, local former players Rich Steele, Jim Kahora and Paul Thievon, were treating him to lunch at the club. The deception worked until he walked into a room filled with memorabilia, trophies, photos, yearbooks, SPSHS jackets and sports bags. Cotoia arrived at the club early so that he was able to greet each of his guests as they arrived.

Despite the decades gone by, many former players traveled from as far away as Florida, South Carolina and Nevada to honor their coach. There were members from the undefeated 1960 basketball team, the 1964 State  
(Continued on page 6)

## Patrick Diegnan Finds a Blessed Life in His Hometown



Patrick Diegnan

"South Plainfield was a terrific place to be brought up in... [and] it's still a very safe and secure community."

By Michael Duquette

Patrick Diegnan was late in meeting this writer one afternoon at his cozy law practice on Plainfield Avenue. This probably sounds like a petty complaint, but it was excit-

ing to have the time to talk to him at all.

Diegnan, 58, is an unquestionably busy man. As one of South Plainfield's most recognizable residents, an attorney who until recently served as the borough's legal counsel for nearly a quarter-century and a member of the state general assembly since 2002, he has made quite a name for himself. But in talking to him, it soon became clear that his enthusiasm and dedication to his jobs is genuine.

Diegnan, a lifelong resident, also made plain his love for the community. "I had a great childhood," he said. "South Plainfield was a terrific place to be brought up in... [and] it's still a very safe and secure community."

Growing up as the youngest of seven children born to Irish immigrants, Diegnan quickly learned the value of hard work, delivering *The Courier News* from the age of six until high school. In spite of his early vocation, however, he knew what he

wanted to do.

"Even in my high school yearbook, under 'profession,' I put 'lawyer.' I always liked debating, I always had an interest in history and I was a political science major," he said. "I can't remember wanting to do anything else."

After attaining both undergraduate and law degrees at Seton Hall University in South Orange, Diegnan immediately took to his own practice, not unlike one of his  
(Continued on page 6)

Photo by Christopher Abbott





**January 14 Special Council meeting will air again on Comcast Channel 74, on Saturday, Jan. 26 at 8 p.m.**

**Jan. 22 Regular Council meeting will air on Monday at 7:30 p.m. (Check community bulletin board for last minute time changes.)**

**The January 16 BOE Public Meeting will air on Comcast Channel 74 Thursdays at 8 p.m. until their next public meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 20. Comcast will air two hours of a meeting. To purchase a copy of a complete council or BOE meeting, contact the Observer.**

## council meetings

**Meets twice a month on Mondays, except as noted.\* All meetings begin at 7 p.m. Borough Hall Council Chambers • Questions? 908-226-7605**

Agenda Meeting	Public Meeting
Monday, February 4	Monday, February 11
Tuesday, February 19*	Monday, February 25
Monday, March 3	Monday, March 10
Monday, March 17	Monday, March 24

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**

Feb. 26\*, March 11, March 25, April 8, April 22, May 13, June 10, June 24, July 8, July 22, Sept. 9, Sept 23, Oct. 7, Oct. 21, Nov 18\*, Dec. 9\*.

## zoningboardofadjustment

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

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

February 14 and 28, March 13 and 27, April 10 and 24, May 8 and 22, June 12 and 26, July 10 and 24, August 14 and 28, September 11 and 25, October 9 and 23, November 30\*, December 11\*.

## boardofeducationmeetings

**Roosevelt Administration Gymnasium on Jackson Ave. unless otherwise noted**

**Committee of the Whole, Wednesdays 7 p.m. 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, 7 p.m.**

**February 19, March 18, April 5, May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16,**

**October 21, November 18, December 16.**

## 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 on the fourth Wednesday of the month 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.**

**South Plainfield Observer**

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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.

## To The Editor:

On behalf of my family, I'd like to thank everyone for their condolences, prayers and sympathies following the recent passing of my father, William C. Morgan. Your kindness and consideration have made a trying time much easier to bear. Thank you all very much.

**KENNETH MORGAN  
PISCATAWAY**

## Dear Editor,

On January 11 a retirement party was given at the Pines Manor. It was an honor to celebrate my retirement with Paula Dick and Ginny Bruno, both of whom were my co-secretaries and good friends.

I was overwhelmed by the many who were at the party; friends, board members, past and present employees of South Plainfield, present and former administrators, my children, grandchildren and my husband, John. There were many speeches, some brought laughter and some tears.

In my 32 years in South Plainfield, I have made many friends who will always be dear to my heart. Thank you, South Plainfield, for giving me the opportunity to be part of a wonderful district. I will miss you.

Many thanks to Adele Veirs. My friend, you really know how to organize a great party.

Thank you to all who attended the party, and to those who could not be there but contributed to the gift.

I love you all.

**MADELINE MARKHAM**

## Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter because I am in serious need of answers. I am risking getting reprimanded for writing it, but someone needs to say something before the situation gets out of hand.

I firmly believe that South Plainfield High School is going down the tubes. I am a very good student who does not cause any problems at school. This is my senior year and so far, I hate it with a passion.

I come to school each day not knowing whether I'm entering pre-school or prison. Three years ago when I started school at SPHS, I could not foresee being searched for weapons or having a police officer on guard at all times while school was in session. Are administrators not bothered by this? Do they think this is normal? I can assure them that it's not.

People can talk about it all that they want to, but they don't sit in school

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Corporate Accounts Welcome

# IN MY OPINION

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

## Submit Letters to the Editor:

**Please be advised that the Observer does not publish anonymous letters.**

Letters may be submitted to the Observer, 1110 Hamilton Blvd. Suite 1B, South Plainfield, NJ 07080, or fax 908-668-8819 or by email: spobserver@comcast.net. Deadline is Monday, 5 p.m. Letters must be accompanied by a name and telephone number for verification. Please limit letters to no more than 200 words. We reserve the right to refuse a letter, to edit for clarity or length, and to limit the number of letters submitted on the same subject.

for six hours a day like I do to see what I see. This is about the students, not about you. I think people in this town need to get over the political aspect of our education system and start getting down to business. It's always about the budget or about teachers or administrators—when was the last time it was about the students?

If people want to know what's really going on in school, ask the students, because anyone else is going to tell you what you want to hear. I have not seen any positive changes since I entered the building.

Every year, the school declines. It would be easy to say that I'm graduating in June and that I really don't care about what happens, but I'm not taking the easy approach.

Maybe you should follow my lead and stop taking the easy approach, too. Since when do teachers refuse extra help? That's shocking to me. It is amazing to me how many of the teachers on staff have busy schedules and can't be bothered with students in need of extra instruction.

I have altered my own schedule to come in at 7:15 in the morning just to get some help because teachers want to avoid rush hour in the evening. A grade of mine reflected this problem, and when I went to guidance to fix it, I was told to get a tutor. A tutor might initially bring up my grade, but it won't change the fact that some teachers don't care.

What's really amusing is the fact that no one takes a student's side. If I have a problem with a teacher, I confess it—and somehow, it always seems to be my problem.

I think the problem is that you are afraid because I'm speaking my mind and you don't know what to do about it. I can understand not hearing out a student who is in guidance every day complaining, but I have not caused a single problem since I walked into high school. I can assure you that I don't make things up. If I ask for help from my teachers, I should get it. But I guess this is a step up, right? After all, last year we were refused ex-

tra help altogether. See, there's the politics.

But it's all about the students, right? Here's another problem: problematic students. If you want that issue solved, you may want to start by not giving them second chances. If a student does something drastic enough, don't think that a five-day out of school suspension is going to straighten them out. Why don't you just kick them out of school and make it a safer environment for those of us who actually want to be there?

I'm really hurt by the fact that I'm not enjoying my senior year. I couldn't even get dressed up for Halloween. If you want more mature students, then stop treating them like kids. If I can pinpoint these problems, then the administration can, too. Do something about it and stop running away.

I refuse to be the product of your carelessness.

**DEEPLY CONCERNED,  
NATIA KATSANTONIS**

## To The Editor:

February is Boy Scout Anniversary Month. The Boy Scouts of America were founded in 1910 by Lord Baden Powell, so this will be the 98th anniversary of the organization.

Millions of youth have participated in this program and as grown men are very proud of the adventures they had in the many camporees.

The merit badge program introduces young men to crafts and occupations that they may get into later in life.

The program starts out with boys six years of age. They move up in rank as they earn different merit badges. To earn the rank of Eagle Scout, a young man has to earn 21 badges, perform community projects and show leadership, all before he reaches his eighteenth birthday. It is not easy. About 15 out of 100 boys have the "stick-to-it-ness" to do all that is required. It is well known that when a man applies for different positions and his resume says that he is an Eagle Scout, he is looked at in a "brighter light."

I hope we can say to many new boys soon, "Welcome to the club."

**WILLIAM TUTHILL**

## Dear Editor,

One of the most difficult jobs on the council is resolving budget issues. In the past 10 years the council has dealt with just about everything—from large increases in our medical costs to many more snow storms that were budgeted for. We never overreacted,

(Continued on page 10)

# Here's some great news for newspaper advertisers....

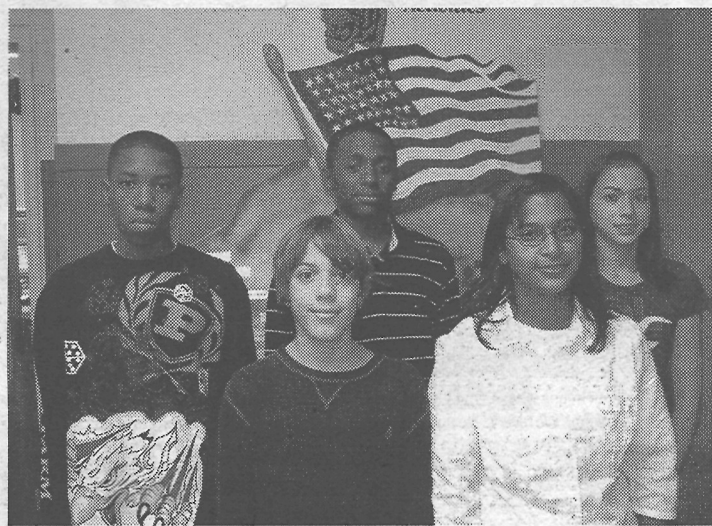
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Information reported in a Statewide Market study conducted by Belden Associates for New Jersey Press Association





### Middle School Students of the Month

South Plainfield Middle School announced the December Students of the Month from each team. Pictured are (L to R) JaQuan Neal-Lightning, Robert Benwell-Cyclone, Justin Glover-Monsoon, Angela Sami-Tsunami and Amanda Tjong-Thunder. Not pictured is Danielle Butrico-Avalanche.

From the South Plainfield Library

## Bookmarks

By Chris Grippio

In a little over one week voters in the State of New Jersey will be able to participate in the multi-state primary that will go a long way towards choosing the major party nominees for president. New Jersey primary election law does not allow open or cross-over voting. If you are registered as a Democrat you can only vote for those candidates, the same for Republicans. Therefore, in the primary Republicans cannot vote for Democratic candidates and Democrats cannot vote for Republicans. However if you are not affiliated with any political party, but are registered to vote in the general election, then on primary day you can choose one political party and vote in that party's primary. But you cannot switch parties on that day. That would have had to have been done by December 17.

Now the interesting part. For Republicans, it is a winner takes all primary, which means that whoever gets the most votes wins all the delegates. The Democrats have a different formula for assigning delegates. The 127 delegates to the Democratic convention will be split proportionately among all candidates who receive at least 15 percent of the vote in the February primary. For more information on this subject the best site is <http://www.lwvnj.org/> which belongs to the League of Women Voters of New Jer-

sey, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, or you can call the reference desk at the library (908-754-7885). Also you can still get absentee ballots for the primary until January 29. The form is on the aforementioned Web site or you can get it from the county clerk in New Brunswick by 3 p.m. on February 4.

The second program in the "Decluttering and Organizing" series will be held on Sunday, Jan. 27 at 2 p.m. Called "Piles of Paper," professional organizer and program presenter Eva Abreu will help you dig out from under that mound of paper sitting on the dining room table.

Also, there is an adult contest going on at the library until 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 31 called, "Pick-a-Prize." All you need to participate is a valid South Plainfield Library card and then come in and fill out an entry form. The prizes are on display in the glass case next to the front door. Good luck!

Miss Linda and Miss Mija are back with all their story times and programs. For three year olds and up the times are Tuesday at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday at 1:15 p.m. Time for 2's is held Wednesday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m., Wednesday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m. Books & Babies takes place on Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call the library and speak to a staff member. Hope to see you soon!

## Massaro Named SPHS Interim Asst. Principal

By Libby Barsky

Anthony Massaro, interim principal at Kennedy School, is trading places with Kelly Richkus, assistant principal at South Plainfield High School. Massaro is taking over Richkus' position as interim assistant principal of SPHS until a replacement is hired. Appointed by the board last month, Richkus is now Kennedy School principal. She replaces Fred Oberkehr, who became assistant superintendent of instruction on December 3. Oberkehr replaces Kaye Crown, who officially retired on December 1.

Both Massaro and Richkus began their new positions on January 17.

Voting on the interim appointment was not unanimous, with board member John Markham abstaining.

The board also approved the appointment of Lori Tirone as school district accountant, beginning on January 17 at a salary of \$65,000.

While abolishing the position of part-time accounts receivable clerk, the board created a full-time accounts receivable clerk position. Mary Jo Walsh, who held the part-time position, will become full-time starting January 17 at the pro-rated salary of \$30,857.

Louis R. Centolanza, Ed.D., was appointed investigative consultant at a rate of \$75 an hour on an as-needed basis. Dr. Centolanza will complete an investigative assignment at the direction of Superintendent of Schools Jose Negron.

## AARP Seeks Volunteers

Chapter #4144 of AARP is recruiting retired or semi-retired persons to join their chapter and engage in community service activities. Volunteers must be a paid-up member of the national organization and be looking for meaningful volunteer work to do in their retirement. The group meets at South Plainfield Senior Center on the third Monday each month.

If interested, call Mary at (732) 752-3764. Don't call the senior center.

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Celebrating 25 Years

## SOUTH PLAINFIELD Cultural Arts Commission

## Cultural Arts Commission Expanding Membership

The South Plainfield Cultural Arts Commission is looking to expand its membership and its audience in 2008. "Last year was an amazing year for us," said Pamela Stefanek, chair and treasurer. "We had a number of extraordinary programs."

Beginning with our concert program at Wesley Methodist Church, a free performance of "A Christmas Carol," the Spring into Dance Festival and the Winter Holiday December Tea, the 2007 cultural arts calendar provided a wide variety of events. It also included the very successful children's theatre presentation of Jim West's dinosaur puppets and an in-school program of "Sweet Potato Pie" performed during Black History Month in all four elementary schools. "We're eager to build on last year's success and make 2008 even better as we celebrate the organization's 25th anniversary," Stefanek said.

In order to accomplish that, she is

not only looking to expand the roster of the seven-member commission, but to increase community awareness and attendance at the public cultural arts events.

"We have exceptional, enjoyable and free programs which take place right in South Plainfield and this year we are going to focus on getting the word out! We want more members and more people in the community to take advantage of these wonderful programs."

The community can look forward to a gala event this September as the Cultural Arts Commission celebrates its 25th anniversary of bringing cultural arts to South Plainfield.

The purpose of the South Plainfield Cultural Arts Commission is to promote interest and support for the arts throughout the borough. If you are interested in becoming a member of the commission, please contact Pamela Stefanek at (908) 754-2381.

## Woman Assaulted in Home, Male Suspect Still at Large

On January 16 at approximately 11:20 a.m. South Plainfield Police responded to the 300 block of Lexington Avenue on report of a burglary in progress, according to Lt. James Parker. The suspect had left the scene by the time police had arrived.

The female victim stated that while in the kitchen of the residence, she was grabbed from behind by an unknown assailant. As this occurred, a struggle ensued and the victim was struck in the head with an unknown object,

along with being punched in the abdomen. The assailant then fled the scene by exiting the rear of the residence. The victim described the assailant as a male, approximately 5'5" to 5'10" and wearing a mask.

Lexington Avenue is located off Hamilton Boulevard, three blocks south of Montrose Avenue.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Detective James Darby of the South Plainfield Police Department at (908) 226-7662.

### Brenda Vallecilla, Esq.

Attorney at Law

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## Sacred Heart Church

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

### Mass Schedule:

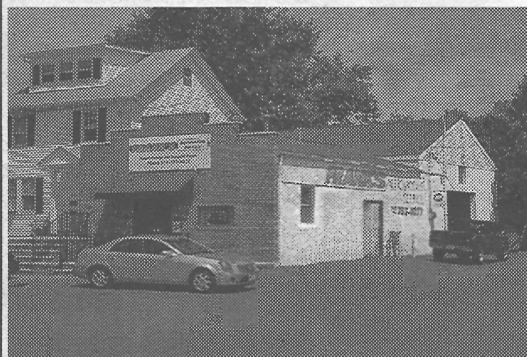
Saturday Evening Mass 5:00 p.m.

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

Weekdays Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat. 9 a.m.; 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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# around town

## Open House at Sacred Heart School

January 27

Sacred Heart School will hold an Open House on Sunday, Jan. 27, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. Sacred Heart has classes for children pre-K through eighth grade and boasts an all-day kindergarten. Join us for a tour and light refreshments.

For more information, please call (908) 756-0633, ext. 32.

## 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, preemie hats for DYFS and Muhlenberg Hospital. Call Georgie at (732) 968-3128.

Refreshments will be served. New members and guests are welcome.

## Wine and Cheese Business Reception

January 30

The directors and officers of Commerce Bank and South Plainfield Business Association cordially invite members of area businesses to attend a wine and cheese business reception on Wednesday, Jan. 30 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Commerce Bank, 2473 Plainfield Ave. Guest speaker is Joel L. Naroff, Commerce Bank chief economist. Your business card is your admission.

RSVP to Carolyn Allen at (908) 561-3275.

What's happening at the South Plainfield

## SENIOR CENTER

JAN/FEB

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p><b>UPCOMING EVENTS</b></p> <p><b>February 4 - Noon</b> Presentation of Pre-Arrangements by McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals, with lunch</p> <p>... Hunterdon Hills trip to see "Barefoot in the Park" - March 13</p>				
<p>Crocheting 9:30am-11:30am Yoga 10:30-11:30am Art Class 11:30am Program by McCriskin on Pre-planning noon</p> <p><b>28</b></p>	<p>Bingo 10am-2pm Ladies Social Group 10am</p> <p><b>20</b></p>	<p>Aerobics 8:45 am Computer 10 am 11:30am, 1pm Crocheting 1pm Tai Chi 2pm</p> <p><b>30</b></p>	<p>Pathmark Shopping 9am Computer Class 10am 11:30am, 1pm Exercise Class 1:15p</p> <p><b>31</b></p>	<p>Bingo 10am-2pm</p> <p><b>1</b></p>
<p>TO SIGN UP FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTER, VISIT THE CENTER.</p>				

## "Don't Cook on Friday" Dinner

February 1

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus is sponsoring a "Don't Cook Friday" Italian dinner on Friday, Feb. 1 at the Knights of Columbus Hall located on Hamilton Blvd. from 4 until 7:30 p.m. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors and \$4 for children under 12. Dinner includes pasta, sausage, meatballs, salad, bread and dessert with coffee/tea. Proceeds benefit the Knights of Columbus local charities fund. Come out, have a delicious meal and support this worthy cause. For more information, please call Bill Butrico at (908) 561-8128.

## Filipino-American Dinner Dance

February 2

The Filipino-American Association of Sacred Heart will be celebrating

its 10th dinner-dance on Saturday, Feb. 2 at the Pines Manor in Edison.

Proceeds benefit Sacred Heart Church and Sacred Heart School and for other community activities. For information, call (732) 248-8372.

## Lenten Fish Dinners at Sacred Heart

February 8, 15, 22, 29  
March 7 & 14

The South Plainfield Knights of Columbus Council #6203 and Sacred Heart Church will be sponsoring their world famous Lenten fish dinners during Lent on Friday, Feb. 8, 15, 22, 29, and on March 7 and 14. Dinners served in Sacred Heart School cafeteria, 149 South Plainfield Ave., 5 to 7 p.m. The menu features fillet of fish (fried, broiled, pamesan), cheese ravioli, manicotti, linguini, pizza, fresh garden salad, rice pilaf, french fries, macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, coffee, tea or cold drink, plus dessert.

For information, call parish center at (908) 756-0633, ext. 10 or Bill Butrico at (908) 561-8128.

## SDW Fundraiser Magic/Illusion Show

February 24

On Sunday, Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. the

"Art of Imagination" will be presented at SPSHS auditorium. All ticket sales support the South Plainfield Summer Drama Workshop (SDW). Doors open at 1:30 p.m.

Purchase tickets at the *Observer* office, 1110 Hamilton Blvd. or Jay Bee Screen Printing on New Market Avenue.

For additional information or to purchase tickets, contact (908) 561-5255 or info@spsdw.com.

## Trip to Mary Poppins, The Musical

March 2

The Recreation Department has 43 tickets left for Mary Poppins! The show is Sunday, March 2. Bus leaves the PAL at 3 p.m. for the 6:30 p.m. show. Register at the PAL Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Tickets are \$100.

## Class of 1982 Reunion

April 5

The SPSHS Class of 1982 25 year reunion is set for Saturday, April 5 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Piscataway from 7 p.m. to midnight. Overnight rooms will be available at a discount rate. Register/update your contact information with classmates.com or contact Rosanne Demico-Illardo directly at jrilardo@roverusa.com.

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## — Out of Town —

## Post Katrina Fundraiser

January 26

A fundraiser for post-Katrina reconstruction, "Jazz and Jambalaya," featuring a traditional New Orleans dinner and The Marshalls Dixieland Band will be held on Saturday, Jan. 26 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church, 170 Watchung Ave. in North Plainfield.

Tickets are \$40, with \$30 going toward Katrina rebuilding materials (tax deductible receipt will be provided).

For tickets and information, contact Watchung Avenue Presbyterian Church at (908) 755-2781 or Cathy Boleyn at (732) 690-2952

## Monmouth Symphony Orchestra Concert

January 27

The Monmouth Symphony Orchestra will present a concert on Sunday, Jan. 27 at 3 p.m. at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank. A pre-concert talk will be presented at 2:15 p.m.

For more information, visit their Web site at [www.monsym.org](http://www.monsym.org).

## Depression/Bipolar Meeting

January 30

On Wednesday, Jan. 30, the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance will feature at its monthly educational meeting Jill Brown, an experienced licensed clinical social worker. The meeting will take place at 7:45 p.m. at the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, 21 Normandy Heights Rd. The public is invited; a nominal donation is requested from non-members.

For more information, visit the Web site [dbsanewjersey.org/morristown](http://dbsanewjersey.org/morristown) area, call (973) 994-1143 or the New Jersey Self-Help Group Clearinghouse at (800) 367-6274.

## Willow Grove's Mardi Gras Jazz Worship

February 3

To celebrate the religious roots of Mardi Gras, Willow Grove Presbyterian Church invites the public to its Mardi Gras Jazz Worship Service on Sunday, Feb. 3, at 10:30 a.m. Come celebrate the religious roots of Mardi Gras and feast on all that God provides for a good life. Childcare and children's classes are provided during the worship service, but children are also welcome to stay in the worship service. A free brunch will follow.

Reservations are appreciated. Call the church office at (908) 232-5678.

The AREA's only 8:00 a.m to 6:00 p.m....Boys & Girls...Ages 6 - 13

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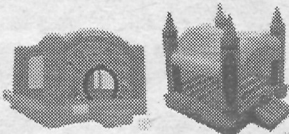
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## LIFELINES

Having a hard time keeping your New Year's resolution to get in shape? It's because we spend too much time running! We find ourselves running from one task to the next, running out of time to fit anything else into an overloaded schedule.

Ron Winner of South Plainfield finds himself running too, but for a different reason. While many of us don't have enough time for our own lives, Ron takes time to run for others. Two years ago, Ron ran his first marathon to benefit The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society as a member of their Team in Training (TNT) program. He ran a second marathon with them in January 2007. Both runs raised money to support blood cancer research and advocacy for patients and their families.

More recently, Ron found a new motivation to run. In November 2007, he completed the Philadelphia Marathon to benefit a young woman he had never met, a tsunami orphan in India. Abina escaped the December 2004 tsunami by running away from the invading waters. She was thirteen at the time. Abina later came to live in an orphanage in India funded by Wesley United Methodist Church. She excelled in high school and graduated with hopes of becoming a nurse to provide health care to the poor of her country. Members of Wesley

Church financed her first year at India's Madras Medical College. Ron's goal was to fund Abina's second year tuition. He's still accepting contributions for Abina, even as he is planning to run again with TNT in May.

Ron's incentive to train for marathons isn't about getting in shape. The people he hopes to help through his running are his inspiration. While running for TNT, his thoughts—and prayers—were with personal friends and sponsors' friends and relatives who are battling leukemia or lymphoma. While training for the Philadelphia Marathon, Ron served as Wesley Church's stewardship committee chairman for their Time & Talent program. His run for Abina was an extension of this commitment, a way for him to share his time and talent to fill someone's need. He has become a lifeline for a once desperate girl who wanted to make a difference in her own community.

Take a cue from Ron. We each have our own special way to make a positive impact on the world around us. Perhaps we need to slow down and spend a little time thinking along those lines. And once we find our own way to help, then it's time to run with it!

*LifeLines is a monthly Observer column, written by area churches. This article comes from Rev. Nehemiah Thompson and members of Wesley Methodist Church.*

## FYI: The Business Advisory Group

The Observer will occasionally feature information on South Plainfield's boards, commissions and groups to help residents become familiar with their function and how they might be of use to them.

The Business Advisory Group (BAG) reviews ordinances and resolutions which effect the establishment or operation of businesses within the borough and gives their input and suggestions. They also give advice to the

mayor and council to improve the relationship between local businesses and government.

Members of the Business Advisory Group are appointed to three year terms. They meet the first Wednesday of every month at 5 p.m. in the Borough Hall council chambers. The public is invited to attend. Applications to become a member are available at the Municipal Clerk's office.



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## southplainfieldpeople Milestones



Susanne Jones and Robert Aiken

### Jones, Aiken Announce Engagement

Susanne (Susie) Jones and Robert Aiken met while residing at the South Plainfield Senior Residence on Morris Avenue.

The couple plans to be married on

April 27 at South Plainfield Baptist Church on Hamilton Boulevard.

Robert is an officer at American Legion Post #243.

### Mt. Saint Mary Academy Celebrates 100 Years

Mount Saint Mary Academy in Watchung began its centennial year celebration with a liturgy and reception on January 5. Bishop Paul Bootkoski, Bishop of Metuchen, officiated at the Mass. Donna Toryak, chair of the Centennial Committee, welcomed guests. In his sermon the Bishop praised the Sisters of Mercy and the lay leaders whose vision and tenacious hard work made the celebration possible.

Sr. Lisa Gambacorto, RSM, Ed.S., Directress of the Academy, spoke with passion about the enduring mission of educating young women. "As soci-

ety changed, the Mount changed to meet the needs of our students." Sister listed World War I and II, technological advancements, and elicited amusement from the congregation when she mentioned changes from Vatican Council II and Woodstock in the same sentence.

Other events in 2008 planned to celebrate the year are as follows: the Centennial Festival and Alumnae Homecoming, September 2; the Centennial Gala Dinner/Dance, November 8 and the Centennial Christmas Concert and Reception, December 14.

### Boy Scout Troop 309 Open House

Boy Scout Troop #309 will hold an open house for boys ages 12 and up wishing to join the Boy Scouts. The open house takes place Monday, Jan. 28 from 7:45 to 8:30 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, 1500 Plainfield Ave. No previous scouting experience is necessary to join.

For further information or to make an appointment, contact Jeff Pauls at (908) 755-6133.

### Golan Publishes Baseball Book

Bob Golan, a 22-year resident of South Plainfield, is about to publish his first book and has been named assistant library director of the Plainfield Public Library.

Golan's first book entitled, "No Minor Accomplishment: The Revival of New Jersey Professional Baseball," published by Rutgers University Press will be on the bookshelves in March.

Golan began his new position at Plainfield Library on January 2. After a 20-year career in the technology industry, this was a culmination of a successful career change which included obtaining a Masters Degree in Library and Information Science from Rutgers University at the age of 52, and spending the last three years as Labor Archivist at Rutgers University Library.

Bob Golan



He has been active in the South Plainfield Junior Baseball Club (a Lifetime Member) and other school and youth activities for many years. He has been a baseball historian his entire life, has published numerous articles and has appeared on television. He has also made presentations at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y.

For additional information on the book, log onto [http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/no\\_Minor\\_Accomplishment.html](http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/acatalog/no_Minor_Accomplishment.html).

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# Teacher, Friend and Coach Celebrates 80th

(Continued from page 1)

Championship basketball team and football players from 1960-1965. Former coaches Jay Tregellas, Doug Boelhouwer, Ralph Demech, Hal Wyckoff and Charlie Garafano were also in attendance. Many who could not attend sent letters, including football coach Phil Graham, 1964 championship team members Laney McLaughlin, Wally Cirafesi and former professional basketball player Wolfgang Fengler, who currently lives in Germany.

An educator and athletic director, Cotoia retired in 1992 after dedicating 38 years to the South Plainfield school district. He mainly coached basketball, but also coached football for a while. In his third year of coaching, his team had an undefeated season. His teams won three Central N.J. Group championships, as well as a state championship in 1964—to date the only state basketball championship in SPHS history.

Margaret expanded on his dedication, "As athletic director, he handled

the expansion of boys and girls sports teams. He oversaw the construction of two state of the art athletic facilities, the Frank Jost Football field and track and the SPHS gymnasium, which was named in his honor upon his retirement. He served as an assistant principal in the high school and middle school and was principal at the middle school when he retired."

She noted that her father's reach extended beyond the boundaries of our schools. "He started a basketball program when there was but one outdoor basketball hoop in the entire town. He helped develop players in summer and youth leagues," she said. "What is it about the bond between coach and players, between my dad and these guys, that brought them back (in some cases 50 years after graduating high school) from great distances at personal expense? The strength of those relationships, the loyalty and respect for my dad is staggering."

Her sister, Patty, had similar feelings about the amazing bond between



Tony Cotoia's service was evident in the memorabilia displayed at his birthday party.

these grown men and their former coach/teacher. She said, "As I mingled and learned about the lives of all of these former players, I was struck by the number of guests who were in leadership positions in their current professions. I knew the guidance and inspiration provided by their leader, Coach Cotoia, shaped them into who they are today."

During the formative years of a teenager's life, coaches instill values, work ethic and commitment to a team. Dad is a man of few words, but many actions. He modeled leadership by example, while also stressing personal responsibility and service to others. His impact has been far reaching and lasting and for many, life changing.

"The relationship that develops between a coach and players is complex, incredibly awesome and sometimes difficult to describe. Many of his former players have become friends, calling dad to attend sporting events or go to dinner. For the ones who have moved far away, it is not unusual for them to drop by the coach's house when they are back in town for a visit,

often bringing their children to meet the man they consider to be their hero. Several of the players at the reunion remarked that he was like a father to them."

The *Observer* was given several of the letters Cotoia received from those unable to attend. The sentiments expressed ran the gamut from humorous to touching memories. Bill Anderson, who coached football for 40 years said, "Coach Cotoia brought wisdom, compassion, knowledge, humor and rational thinking to our program—a program that was suffering from a lack of all these same characteristics." He also said, "When I took the field for the first time as a head coach I had Coach Cotoia's playbook in hand and all his guidance in my head. The end result—Wardlaw's first undefeated, untied, unscored upon season in over 38 years! Thanks to a man who took the time to mentor me—Coach Cotoia."

Another writer said, "Someone said to me as I was attempting to make the roster on my college team, 'Anyone who can play on a team coached by Tony Cotoia, can play on

my team anytime.'"

Carl Sheran, Class of 1960, said, "If you remember, my mother was a single parent...you became a role model for me that I looked up to through my high school years. I watched you coach and teach us. You were firm and fair. You demonstrated that you can get your message across and be successful and a gentleman. I would like to think that I have lived my life following that example."

SPHS graduate and former teacher Ron Kuboski said, "Through your example, hard work and caring, you fostered a devotion that extended to many years beyond our playing days. Congratulations coach. You are at the head of the success line. You reflect the career and life of a coach, an educator and individual who never forgot the importance of what he was doing, nor stopped caring for his players and students—who reached out to all of those with whom he came in contact; who left his indelible mark on a generation of young people—not so young any more."

## Council Votes for Tax Hike

(Continued from page 1)

a word about cutting expenses, nor a hiring or purchasing freeze, rather just a tax increase. He pointed out several items in the budget that might be used to offset the budget deficit. He said the council did not study the budget closely enough.

One resident summed up her feelings saying, "It makes me nervous when I hear you say, 'I didn't look at this and I didn't look at that.' Don't

take the easy way out; let's take another look."

At the end of the lengthy debate, Mayor Charles Butrico proposed that the council table the amended budget and send out estimated tax bills and see if they can find a way to avoid raising taxes. His proposal was defeated along party lines. The vote was then taken on the amended budget and passed 4-2, also along party lines.

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## A Conversation with Patrick Diegnan

(Continued from page 1)

childhood heroes, former mayor and municipal court judge, John George. "John always had his office in his house. When I was a kid I always said, 'Boy, I'd love to do the same sort of thing that John George does,' and when I graduated that's pretty much what I did."

While Diegnan wears many hats during the day, from court appearances to meetings with clients among other tasks, he is undoubtedly pleased with the pace he keeps. "Every day is a little bit different, and to me, that's what makes it interesting," he said. "The longest day, in my mind, is the day you have nothing to do. I'd always rather be busy."

In the assembly, Diegnan serves as parliamentarian and is a member of the Committees for Education,

Higher Education (of which he is chair), Regulated Professions and Independent Authorities and the Joint Committee on the Public Schools. But in South Plainfield, he is likely best known for his time as municipal attorney, which began in 1984.

"I handled all the legal obligations of the borough," he said. "Any contractual work, employee grievances, ordinances and resolutions, tax appeals, land sales, property acquisitions for road widening—anything that required legal review for the borough."

He cited the variety of cases as his favorite part of the job. "It's not a cookie cutter; every day is something different."

While Diegnan confesses to "a real change in the tenor of the council" of late—ultimately, the factor that led him to step down from his position—he is

proud of helping South Plainfield move forward to the town it is today. "As I drive around town, I think of all the things that have been done in that 25-year period. We didn't have senior citizens housing 25 years ago. The PAL has been improved threefold. Over 200 acres have been preserved as open space."

One of his proudest moments, he said, was preserving the corner of Oak Tree Road and Park Avenue, which was acquired willingly from developers who had initially planned a Walgreens.

"Obviously, the ideas come from the mayor and council," he said, "but they give you your marching orders, [I like] to be able to make it happen."

Although he is no longer borough attorney, Diegnan will still be busy—he has no plans to retire from his practice, and he was recently re-elected to his assembly seat—and he will still enjoy living in South Plainfield with his wife and two daughters—both of whom still reside in the borough.

"I have lived a blessed life," he said. "I wouldn't change my life for anybody's. I have a beautiful wife, great daughters, terrific friends, an interesting life—every morning I get up and pinch myself."

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# 2007-08 JUNIOR JOURNALIST

## Emily Mazellan Named Junior Journalist!

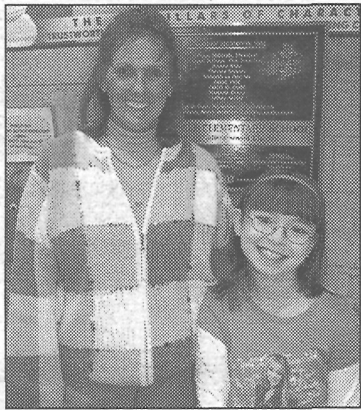
Emily Mazellan, Roosevelt School third grader, is this week's winner in the Hometown Heros-South Plainfield Observer sponsored 2007-08 Junior Journalist Contest with her poem, "A Rap Song."

Emily will be the recipient of a dinner for her family courtesy of Hometown Heros. She will also receive a t-shirt. At the end of the school year, she will be honored at a banquet, along with all the contest winners.

Open to all school-aged children in South Plainfield, The Junior Journalist Contest is a weekly program promoting the art of writing.

Students can submit their original poetry, articles, opinion pieces or essays to their English teachers, who will submit them to the Observer.

If you have any questions, call the



Junior Journalist winner Emily Mazellan with third grade teacher Margaret Celentano.

Observer at (908) 668-0010, stop by Hometown Heros, located at 340 Hamilton Blvd. or call them at (908) 755-4376.

### A Rap Song

By Emily Mazellan

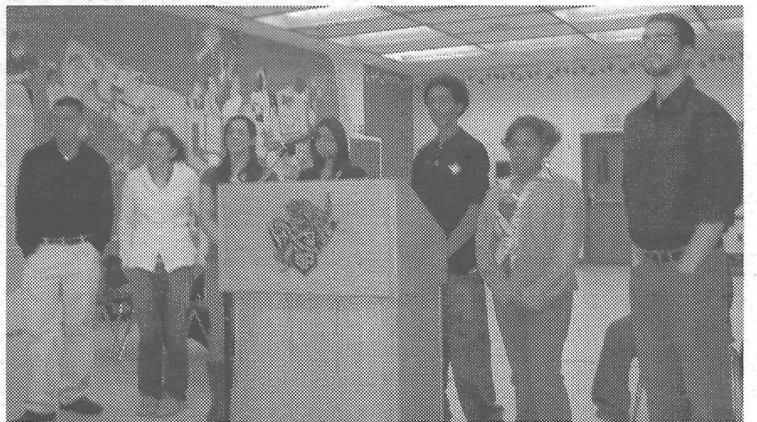
I know a teacher named Mr. B  
Sometimes he's really funny to me  
And he likes to write poetry  
He makes me laugh with all his jokes  
Then I run home and tell my folks  
You have a daughter younger than two or three  
I bet she's sweeter than a bumblebee  
I hope you enjoyed this rap  
Maybe later we should go and chat

## Parents and Students Attend SPHS Freshman Orientation Program

Three hundred parents and guardians of incoming freshman attended the annual South Plainfield High School orientation program held at the high school on January 16. The evening was hosted by Principal Dr. Kenneth May, along with Assistant Principals Kelly Richkus, Robert Dichl and Ralph Errico. Elaine Gallo, director of guidance, and Kathy Reilly, guidance counselor, were also present. Also in attendance were a select group of seniors who were on-hand to answer questions and describe their experience at SPHS. Seniors included Brooke DeNitzio, Chris Pennisi, Sydney Gentile, Vinal Patel, Trevor Hankins, Shamiko Reid and Chris Duquette. Also present was SPHS Freshman Class President Bacilio Averado.

The evening was structured to familiarize parents/guardians with the academic programs offered at SPHS. Dr. May provided statistics in the following areas: student attendance rate 97%; college placement rate 91% and 92% of the student body achieved a cumulative GPA of C or higher.

A question and answer format followed where Dr. May posed questions to the seniors regarding student leadership, interscholastic sports, arts and activities. Parents gained insight into the high school environment so they can better understand homework, academic recognition, methods to obtain academic assistance, the importance of student participation in co-curriculum programs, and the options and opportunities available



South Plainfield High School seniors take part in freshman orientation for eighth graders. Pictured (L-R) are: Chris Pennisi, Brooke DeNitzio, Sydney Gentile, Vinal Patel, Trevor Hankins, Shamiko Reid and Chris Duquette.



Parents and guardians listen to speakers at the orientation program for eighth graders entering SPHS in the fall.

through career and post high school planning. Parents had the opportunity to ask specific questions about the learning environment and general climate of the school.

The general session concluded after Averado offered his insight into

the transition from middle school to high school. He addressed the same topics discussed by the seniors, but from a ninth grade perspective.

The evening concluded with the seniors providing a guided tour of the high school.

## Beringer House Has Vacancies for Seniors

Beringer House, a shared living senior citizen residence located in Metuchen, has vacancies available.

Residency in Metuchen is not necessary. If you are 55 and over and are

in need of low to moderate income housing, contact Jean A. Vick, director of senior citizen services for the Metuchen Branch YMCA, at (732) 548-2044 for more information.

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# Sports

By Gary Lampasona



## JUNIOR BASEBALL CLUB NOTES

As the thermometer plummets, preparations for the the 2008 Spring season continue.

**Current activities:** Businesses interested in becoming a sign sponsor should contact the club. A Rutgers Certification class will be held on February 7. Time and location are yet to be determined.

Visit our Web site to download the form or you can call the clubhouse. Those interested in an opening day program ad sponsorship can visit our Web site for more information. Anyone interested in becoming an umpire can sign up by calling the clubhouse. Classes will fill up quickly.

The clubhouse phone number is (908) 754-2090, Web site is [www.leaguelineup.com/spjbc](http://www.leaguelineup.com/spjbc).

The next meeting will be held on Monday, Feb. 4 at 7:30 p.m.

RECREATION WRESTLING Submitted by Joe Sacco

## Ashnault Wins Tulsa Nationals

### Whalen takes 4th, Painton finishes in Top 8

This weekend three South Plainfield Middle School wrestlers competed in the 2008 Tulsa Nationals in Tulsa, Okla. This two-day national tournament featured over 2,000 wrestlers representing 40 different states and is one of the oldest and most prestigious junior wrestling tournaments in the world.

In the 76 lb. weight class, Anthony Ashnault battled to a first place finish by pinning top seed Micah Perez from Merced, Calif. in the championship match. On the way to his first place finish Anthony pinned Justin Shrum from Oklahoma beat third seed Jacob Trujillo from Colorado 8-3 and second seed James Rothwell from Colorado 3-1.

At 105 lbs., Scott Whalen took a

fourth place finish. Scott wrestled a total of eight matches going 6-2 over the course of the weekend. After losing a close match to eventual champ Chris Wilkes from Missouri 6-5, Scott pinned his next five opponents including top seed Adam Drain from Iowa before losing to Jorge Jimenez from New Jersey 7-6 for a fourth place finish.

At 84 lbs. Dylan Painton wrestled to a Top 8 finish out of 32 wrestlers in his weight class. Dylan wrestled a total of six matches, winning four and losing two. In route to his Top 8 finish Dylan pinned Evan Wilson from Oklahoma, beat Matt Victor from Iowa 4-2 in overtime and had impressive decisions over Dallas Vesta from Kansas and Bret Hildebrand from Iowa.

## Rec Wrestlers Roll in Weekend Tourney Action

This past weekend, the South Plainfield Recreation Wrestling team participated in both the Monroe Mid Season Tournament and the Middlesex Novice Tournament.

At Monroe the young Tigers struck gold, winning six championships. Taking first place were Joey Heilmann,

Tommy Fierro, Michael Marrero, Jacob Painton, Jake Hoffman and Christopher Maszczak. Silver medals went to Brendan Hedden, Danny Hedden, Ryan Walsh, Raymond Jazikoff and Antunee Adams. Finishing in third were Sebastian Santos, Kyle Bythell, Desmond Santos, Dion Pender and Dakota Pauls. Fourth place went to Matt Hurst.

At Middlesex, the Tigers lone champion was Alex Amato, who took home the gold. Silver medals went to Brandon Cangialosi, Jordan Hamberg, Joseph Anesh, Connor Schunk, Michael Marrero and Jeff Plungis. Bronze medals were won by Anthony Penyak, Anthony Barge, Divon Pender, Peter Marotta, Dylan Kolvites, Thomas Sikanowicz, Sebastian Rohrer, Mitch McKee, Harrison Anesh, Zachary Villares, Anthony Massaro and Ryan Boettcher.

SPHS BOWLING

Submitted by Ralph Fech

## Joe Romer Memorial XXXII

### Ladies Qualify in "Baker" Shootout

Out of a solid field of 20 GMC teams, the eight teams that have the highest 12 game total, will advance to the next round which will contain head to head "Baker" game competition. The Tigers 1927 pinfall easily earned them the seventh seed.

The Tigers opponent was second seeded Woodbridge. The powerhouse

Barons won the first game. The Tigers evened the match as they stunned the former state champion 181-171. However, any chance of an upset was foiled as the third game went to the Barons 203-155.

Third seeded East Brunswick dumped Woodbridge in the finale to win the championship.

### 3 Tigers in GMC Individuals Finals

#### Boys Division

Jeff Pryor fired games of 197-203-209 for a 609 set and moved from 42nd to 28th place finish in a starting field of 210 contestants battling for the coveted crown.

Evan Simon of Woodbridge, who blasted a 299 game and a monstrous 801 set, won the step-ladder final championship.

#### Girls Division

In a starting field of 165 girls, Jackie Kukuch posted a 533 set on games of 202-183-148 for a 25th place finish.

Katie Yon's 490 set was good for 27th place.

Rachael Pearce of North Brunswick was the GMC individual champion.

### Ladies Sweep Perth Amboy, Monroe

4	SPHS	809	800	911—2520
0	Monroe	730	747	686—2165

The Tigers coasted to an easy three game shutout victory over Monroe. Jackie Kukuch led all scorers with games of 187-160-210 for a solid 557 set. Gina Curcio added 204-507, Kelly Pauls 214-506 set and Katie Yon 185-492 as the Tigers rolled their high series of the season.

4	SPHS	784	792	825—2401
0	Perth Amboy	564	652	553—1769

The Tigers bolted out of the starting gate and never trailed as they were too much for young Panthers. Katie Yon topped the scoring firing games of 178-156-186 for a high set of 520. Jackie Kukuch shot 183-176-499. Kelly Pauls added 174 while rookie Nikki Disch posted a 156 game.

### Tiger Bowlers Pummel Perth Amboy and Monroe

#### Esposito (279-715)

4	SPHS	1080	1020	936—3036
0	Monroe	849	932	761—2532

Chris Esposito crushed the pocket with games of 279-215-221 for an outstanding 715 set. Teammate Mike Dandola added 224-218-211 for a 653 and Ryan Pauls 217-213-197-627 set. Kevin Reviello chipped in with 192-181-161 for the Tiger scoring parade.

4	SPHS	919	977	904—2800
0	Perth Amboy	732	709	668—2109

Mike Dandola took scoring honors as he unleashed games of 223-245 enroute to a 632 set. Chris Esposito was right behind with a posting of 220-203-188 and 611 set. Ryan Pauls chipped in with a 206 game.

## LEGAL NOTICES

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD—MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

ORDINANCE 1807

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

Ord. 1807 entitled: AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING RATES FOR USE OF THE SOUTH PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY POOL FOR THE YEAR 2008 was adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, January 25, 2007 and that a public hearing be scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080.

ORDINANCE NO. 1807

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING RATES FOR USE OF THE SOUTH PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY POOL FOR 2008

BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Borough Council of the Borough of South Plainfield that the following rates shall be established for use of the South Plainfield Community Pool for 2008:

Individual—Resident of South Plainfield age 12 or over (Applicants under 18 years of age must have parental consent):

Fees:	Resident on or before 4/15/08	\$150 plus 10 free passes
	Resident after 4/15/08	\$200 plus 10 free passes
	Non-Resident on or before 4/15/08	\$240 plus 10 free passes
	Non-Resident after 4/15/08	\$240 plus no free passes

Family — A husband and wife and their children (if any) residing at the family home in South Plainfield. Children included under this membership are those born after September 1, 1988 or who are a full time college student (valid college ID required) or fully dependent (severe physical/mental disability)

Fees:	Resident on or before 4/15/08	\$275 plus 10 free passes
	Resident after 4/15/08	\$325 plus 10 free passes
	Non-Resident on or before 4/15/08	\$500 plus 10 free passes
	Non-Resident after 4/15/08	\$500 with no free passes

Senior Citizen — 62 years of age or older who reside in South Plainfield

Fees:	Resident on or before 4/15/08	\$50 plus 10 free passes
	Resident after 4/15/08	\$70 plus 10 free passes
	Non-Resident on or before 4/15/08	\$100 plus 10 free passes
	Non-Resident after 4/15/08	\$100 with no free passes

DAILY ADMISSION PASSES (proper identification required)

	Monday – Friday		Weekends and Holidays	
	Resident	Non-Resident	Resident	Non-Resident
All ages before 5:00 p.m.	\$8	\$15	\$10	\$20
All ages after 5:00 p.m.	\$5	\$8	\$5	\$8
Groups – 20 or more*	\$5		\$5	

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that this Ordinance shall become effective immediately after final adoption and publication in accordance with the law.

ATTEST:  
Vincent Buttiglieri/Municipal Clerk

\$117.00

January 25, 2008

## LEGAL NOTICES

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE

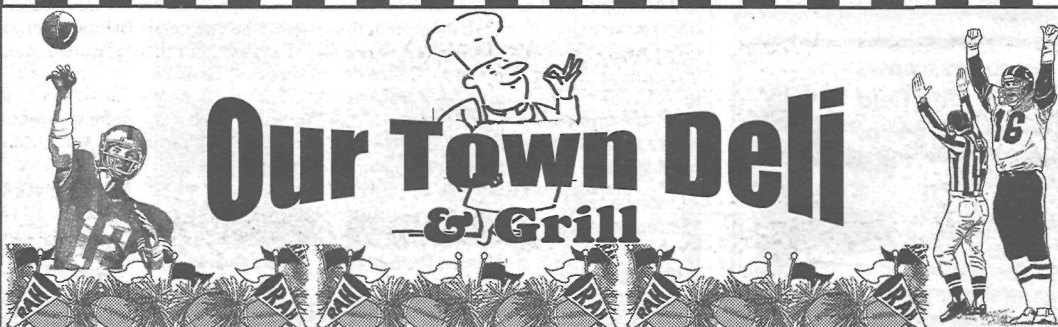
An appeal has been filed by Arnaldo Ferrara requesting a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance of the Borough of South Plainfield to permit (1) existing shed 20 x 14 = 280 sq. ft.; 20' allowed; and (2) proposed garage 32 x 20, proposed garage height 17', allowed 15', and other variances that may be required, said property being located at 3312 Evergreen Lane, Block 222, Lot 46 on the South Plainfield Tax Map.

For the purposes of hearing objections to or protests against the granting of said appeal, the South Plainfield Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 28, 2008 in the Council Chambers, Borough Hall, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, New Jersey at 7:00 p.m.

The files and documents pertaining to this appeal are available for public inspection in the Planning/Zoning Office in Borough Hall between the hours of 8:00 a.m and 4:00 p.m.

\$38.50

January 25, 2008



## SUPER BOWL SPECIALS

### The Extra Point...

Serves 10-15 People  
½ Tray Wings  
½ Tray Fried Ravioli  
Sloppy Joe Tray  
2 2-lt. Bottles of Soda  
**\$149.99** plus tax

### The Kick Off...

Serves 8-12 People  
Fancy Cold Buffet  
½ Tray Caesar Salad  
½ Tray Chicken Fingers  
**\$145.50** plus tax

### The Fumble...

Serves 10-15 People  
3 ft. Fried Chicken Breast Sub  
½ Tray Antipasto  
½ Tray Meatballs  
**\$129.50** plus tax

### The Safety...

Serves 8-12 People  
3 ft. Sub-  
Italian, American or  
Ham & Cheese  
½ Tray Wings  
2 2-lt. Bottles of Soda  
**\$69.00** plus tax

### The Field Goal...

Serves 15-20 People  
½ Tray Fried Ravioli  
½ Tray Meatballs  
½ Tray Baked Ziti  
½ Tray Tossed Salad  
½ Tray Garlic Bread  
**\$135.50** plus tax

### The First Down...

Serves 10-15 People  
6 ft. Italian Sub  
Turkey, Roast Beef, Tuna, Etc.  
Choice of  
Potato, Macaroni or Cole Slaw  
**\$109.95** plus tax

### The Third & Long...

Serves 8-12 People  
Sandwich Buffet  
½ Tray Sausage, Peppers &  
Onions  
1/2 Tray Jalapeno Poppers  
**\$135.00** plus tax

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SCHOOL BOARD Notes

The following actions were taken by the Board of Education:

- Books approved for 2007/2008 school year were: "Differential Equations Course; Essential Elements 2000 in Strings" and "Grades 5-12 ESL."
- Anthony Massaro was appointed as high school interim assist. principal.
- Lori Tirone was appointed as school district accountant.
- Louis R. Centolanza, Ed. D. was hired as investigative consultant on an at will, as needed basis.
- Barbara Boyer was appointed Grant School after school ESL teacher.
- Steven Valente was appointed as Grant School NJASK test teacher, John Greco-mathematics, Cameron Green-mathematics and Bonnie Vigneri-English as after school SAT prep instructors.
- The position of part-time ac-

counts receivable clerk was abolished.

- A position of accounts receivable clerk-SEC III was created and Mary Jo Walsh was appointed to that position.
- The board authorized bidding for one 2009 type "B" passenger van.
- The board approved the advertising of sealed bids for maintenance and repair services on school vehicles.
- The following contracts were approved: Smitty's Door Service to install an exterior door and screen at the high school, Electro Maintenance to install an electrical switch gear, T.R.S. Container of Avenel and E-Plus of Hamilton for network services.
- The Adult High School Education Program will purchase 63 computers from Dell, using monies from state aide.
- The BOE voted to remove 16 students as a result of residency hearings.

SPHS Music Boosters

MUSIC NOTES

Welcome to 2008! We have an exciting winter schedule in our music department!

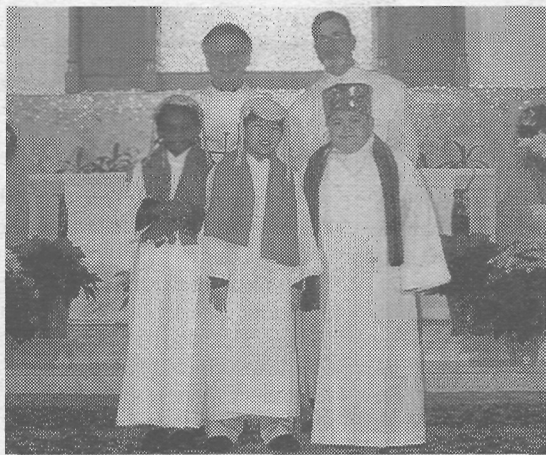
If you missed the holiday concert in December, you missed an incredible evening of music. The orchestra, chorus and concert band had a combined event that warmed your soul.

Congratulations to Nathaniel Udell on making Region II Orchestra. He has been selected as the soloist with Region II Orchestra as the winner of

the second annual concerto competition. You can see this special performance on Saturday, Jan. 26 at 7:30 p.m. at Watchung Hills Regional High School.

Taylor Kurilew and Nora Stasio were selected for Region II Chorus. Congratulations. They will be performing on Sunday, Jan. 27 at 2 p.m. at Hopewell Valley Central High School.

Please check the CJMEA.org Web site for more details on times.



Father John Alvarado, Deacon Wayne Otlowski and "The Three Kings" at the Sacred Heart School celebration of Epiphany of the Lord at the First Friday Mass on January 4 (above left) and "The Three Kings" who helped celebrate Epiphany of the Lord at the 9:30 a.m. Mass at Sacred Heart on January 6.



policereport

- On January 16 Angel Rios Chic-lana, 25, of South Plainfield was arrested for possession of fraudulent documents for identification and an outstanding warrant.
- On January 17 a student of Engine City Technical Institute reported the theft of a Matco tool box and various tools from an unlocked cabinet.
- A Plainfield Avenue resident reported their social security number had been used to open a Bell Atlantic phone company account.
- On January 18 Ernesto Muniz, 36, of Camden was arrested at Hall's Warehouse for shoplifting seven pieces of Buckhead beef and a wallet.
- Asion Q. Harris, 18, of South Plainfield was arrested for no insurance, driving on a suspended license,

no registration, fictitious plates, failure to wear a seatbelt and failure to exhibit a drivers license.

- A West Crescent Avenue resident reported that their Sears Mastercard information had been used for identification in Germantown, Wis.
- On January 19 Christopher T. Curran-Hogrelus, 23, of South Plainfield was arrested for fictitious plates and an outstanding warrant.
- RJP Repair Service Co. on Roosevelt Avenue reported the theft of 20 scrap car batteries and other scrap metal from their fenced in yard.
- An employee of Unique Thrift Shop on Oak Tree Avenue reported the theft of credit cards from their purse and clothing from an unlocked locker.

- On January 20 Athenee Wright, 38, of Edison was arrested for driving on a suspended license, failure to maintain lamps and safety glass and an outstanding warrant.
- Jamie Rachelle Mann and Clifford N. Hayden, both 29, of Charlotte, N.C. were arrested at Best Western for possession of a controlled substance.
- D & A Transportation of Georgia reported the theft of a 53-foot Freightliner tractor trailer carrying \$20,000 worth of Irish Spring soap while parked on Helen Street.
- On January 21 Delfino Romero, 52, of Plainfield was arrested for exhibiting fraudulent government documents for identification and an outstanding warrant.

Obituaries

Frank X. Rose, 95

Frank X. Rose died on Tuesday, Jan. 15 at the Baker House in Vineland.

Born in Irvington, Frank resided there for most of his life prior to moving to Vineland in 2005.

He was a 4th Degree Knights of Columbus member of the Bishop Widger Council formerly of Irvington

and he was also a founding member of the Immaculate Heart of Mary RC Church in Maplewood, where he served as the Bingo chairperson throughout the life of the church.

As a young man he was an accomplished violinist playing throughout Europe and the United States.

He was predeceased by his wife, Constance (Romano) Rose, who died in 1998; a sister, Maria Tartaglia and

four brothers, James, Michael, Daniel and Louis.

Surviving are two children, Gloria Guidera and husband John of Vineland and the Rev. Frank Rose of Plainfield; three grandchildren, Mary Guidera of Vineland, Suzanne Guidera of Pittsgrove and Vincent Guidera, Sr. of Pitman and a great grandson, Vincent Guidera Jr. Also surviving are many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews and great-great nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held at McCriskin-Gustafson Home For Funerals.

Donations in his name can be made to St. Bernard and St. Stanislaus RC Church, 368 Sumner Ave., Plainfield, N.J. 07062.

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**Ann Zazzara 1-29-08**  
**5th Year in Heaven**

Mom, as your 5th year in Heaven approaches, we wanted to remember you with one of those beautiful poems or sayings but couldn't find one with exactly the right words. Instead we wanted to say THANK YOU MOM! Thank you for continuing to do your job from Heaven, by blessing us with your love and guidance when we each need that little extra voice of encouragement. Thank you for continuing to bless us with love for each other, with our "every day phone calls," Friday night pizza, Saturday night "get togethers" of laughter, tears and sweet memories. Although you had to take back Uncle Tony and then Carol, you've blessed us by sending Dean and then our Guiliana. We can't wait until she starts to talk and tells us her "Nanny secrets" that you've sent her with. Thank you for those times when we needed a little embrace, the "sweet smells," the flight of the "butterfly." Thank you for those private dreams, the visits in the night, the "speckles" in all our pictures. Thank you for still being on our shoulders reminding us to "mind our P's and Q's." Thank you for always being there to remind us to be the "Strong-Loving-Close" family that you spent your whole life to keep that way. We are all very proud to have you as our Mom and we love and miss you terribly more and more each and every day. We get you now and we so appreciate all that you have done for us all those years. Thank you for continuing to do this now, even from Heaven. It is true, "a mother's work is never done." Thank you Mommy, we love you and miss you, "all the way up to Baby Jesus and past," but you know that already...

*Love, Denise and Bill, Doreen, Darleen, Cookie and Paul, Jay and Sue Deanna and Bill (soon 1st great-grandchild), Krissy and Jeff, Nikki, John, Anthony and Gina, Nicholas, Vinny and Frankie, Joey, Dean and Giuliana.*

LEGAL NOTICES

BOROUGH OF SOUTH PLAINFIELD  
MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

LEGAL NOTICE  
ORDINANCE 1806

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

Ord. 1806 entitled: AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE COMPENSATION OF VARIOUS EMPLOYEES AND THE METHOD OF COMPENSATION FOR THE YEARS 2007 THROUGH 2011 was adopted on first reading and advertised in The Observer on Friday, January 25, 2007 and that a public hearing be scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building, 2480 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield, NJ 07080.

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR AND THE METHOD OF PAYMENT of such compensation for the years 2007 through 2011.

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

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

POSITION	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
PBA 100 SUPERIOR OFFICERS	3.90%	3.90%	3.90%	3.90%	3.90%
SERGEANT	96,386	100,145	104,051	108,109	112,325
LIEUTENANT	107,952	112,162	116,536	121,081	125,804
CAPTAIN	120,906	125,621	130,521	135,611	140,900
CHIEF	135,415	140,689	146,184	151,893	157,825

ATTEST:  
Vincent Buttiglieri/Municipal Clerk

\$97.50

January 25, 2008

After all, you "shop" for other things.

We apologize for using the word "shop," but the fact is, for most people a funeral service is a major purchase and families want to prevent overspending. Preplanning is the best thing a family can do to avoid spending too much. Let us answer any questions you may have.

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Tamara L. Hawbaker, Director N.J. Lic. No. 4577  
Glenn J. Scarponi, Director, N.J. Lic. No. 4411



# IN MY OPINION

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

(Continued from page 2)

we worked together and we balanced the budget by tightening our belt and cutting costs.

The previous council did not believe in preemptive taxing. We stressed a "pay as you go government" and still showed progress in the infrastructure and recreation. The decision last week by the Republican council to adopt the tax increase was hasty and not the right decision for the taxpayers in the town. The removal of many revenue items in the Democratic budget, so it can be used as revenue in the Republican budget is political, but unfortunately it is the taxpayer that suffers.

RAYMOND S. PETRONKO

Dear Editor,

I am disturbed by the callous disregard shown by the Republican Majority's decision to increase the financial burden on the hard-working people in our community. Within only

days of taking office, they have already voted to raise property taxes. The reckless dismissal of the cost as insignificant does a great disservice to so many families already struggling to keep up with the fast-rising cost of living.

As a lifelong resident of South Plainfield, I recently became one of its newest homeowners. I happily invested in my hometown, where I have appreciated that town leaders of both parties have looked out for the average person. For this reason, I am troubled by the new direction of our Republican-led town leaders to quickly move away from the desire to keep taxes low and towards raising them for everyone.

CHRISSY BUTEAS

Dear Editor,

South Plainfield's budget crisis shows what happens when politicians put re-election over all else. In their effort to promise a "tax cut" last fall, the Democrats under-funded the budget and left the town in a fiscal mess.

Others have already documented the huge hole the new majority inherited. It's not complicated. By trying to play games with the tax rate, the Democrats not only left us with a defi-

cit this year, they left us open for a giant tax increase next year.

I can't believe how irresponsible they've been. What really galls me, though, is one of their "solutions" to the problem they created. They want to borrow some of the money to fill the hole. That doesn't solve the problem. Taxpayers will still pay, but instead, it will be spread out and we'll be paying more than if we confronted the problem now.

As our state is learning, gimmicks and one-time fixes used to artificially lower taxes lead to huge troubles down the road. Unfortunately, our town is now learning this same lesson.

I give credit to the new Republican Majority. Rather than do what was politically expedient, they did what was right for the town. Even knowing they would be criticized, they put us on a path toward fiscal responsibility. For that they deserve our respect.

ALLEN LEVINE

Dear Editor,

Kathy Thomas's letter to the paper last week got my attention, and not in a positive way. The language she chose borders on the hysterical.

Is it really appropriate to call some-

one "arrogant" and accuse them of "intimidation" because they forcefully disagree with positions you took politically? Apparently Mrs. Thomas thinks so.

After reading her rant, I went back and re-read the prior week's letter to the editor about which Mrs. Thomas complained. Granted, it contained strong criticism of her, the mayor and the Democratic Party for trying to disrupt the new council majority's transition, but since when is name-calling the proper response to honest criticism? It seems that she doesn't mind dishing out criticism, but she can't take it.

I'll try to make my point without the same kind of high-drama language. Here's my observation: Notably absent from Mrs. Thomas's diatribe is a defense of her position. Apparently she could not defend her own actions or those of her party and rather than continue (and likely lose) the debate, she resorted to name calling.

These tactics reinforce for me the electorate's wisdom back in November when it decided not to invite Mrs. Thomas back as a councilwoman for 2008.

YOURS TRULY,  
GEOFFREY CHAMPION

## School Board Candidacy Info Available

The deadline for filing nominating petitions to run for positions on the South Plainfield Board of Education is Monday, Feb. 25 at 4 p.m. The election is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15.

Prospective school board candidates can obtain a "School Board Candidate Kit" at the administration building, 125 Jackson Ave., between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily.

Published by the New Jersey School Boards Association, the School Board Candidate Kit includes the nominating petition and information about legal qualifications for school board candidacy and the role of the school board member. Information about the New Jersey School Ethics Act, important dates in the school election process, and briefing sessions for school board candidates are also included in the kit.

"School board membership is a meaningful way to make a contribution to your community and its schools," said Kevin E. Ciak, NJSBA president. "I urge all qualified citizens to consider board of education membership. Serving on your local school board doesn't require a degree in education. The most important attribute a candidate can bring to office is a sincere interest in the community, its children and their education."

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# Plan Now for Selecting a Preparer

With the tax season now upon us, it is never too early to start thinking about choosing a tax preparer. During the tax season about 65 percent of New Jersey filers will use a paid tax professional to prepare their tax returns. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) wants to offer tips for taxpayers contemplating using a tax preparer.

"The most reputable preparers will request to see your records and receipts and will ask you multiple questions to determine your total income and your qualifications for expenses, deductions and tax credits," said IRS spokesperson Gregg Semanick. "By doing so, they have your best interest in mind and are trying to help you avoid penalties, interest or additional taxes that could result from later IRS contacts."

"Taxpayers who pay someone to do their taxes should choose a preparer wisely. If you choose to use a paid tax preparer, it is important that you find a qualified tax professional," said Semanick. "Taxpayers are ultimately responsible for everything on their return even when it's prepared by someone else."

• Ask about service fees. Avoid preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers, or those who guarantee results or base fees on a percentage of the amount of the refund.

- Plan Ahead. Choose a preparer you will be able to contact after the return is filed.
  - Get References. Ask questions and get references from clients who have used the tax professional before.
  - Research. Check to see if the preparer has any questionable history with the Better Business Bureau, the state's board of accountancy for CPAs or the state's bar association for attorneys. Find out if the preparer belongs to a professional organization that requires its members to pursue continuing education and also holds them accountable to a code of ethics.
  - Determine if the preparer's credentials meet your needs. Are they an enrolled agent, certified public accountant, tax attorney or public accountant? Only attorneys, CPAs, enrolled agents and public accountants can represent taxpayers before the IRS in all matters including audits, collection actions and appeals.
- If a taxpayer suspects tax fraud or knows of an abusive return preparer, this activity should be reported using IRS Form 3949-A, Information Referral. Form 3949-A can be downloaded from the IRS Web site at [irs.gov](http://irs.gov) or requested by calling 1-800-829-3676. The completed form, or a letter detailing the alleged fraudulent activity, should be sent to Internal Revenue Service, Fresno, Calif. 93888.

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# South Plainfield Observer

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JANUARY 25, 2008

## Council Votes 4-2 for Municipal Tax Hike

The Borough Council voted at Tuesday night's meeting to approve the amended SFY 2008 budget, which increases municipal taxes by approximately \$100 per average household. The vote was taken after almost two hours of heated discussion and, in some cases, pleas from the standing room only crowd to hold off and take a closer look at the expenditures before

raising taxes.

Councilman Ray Rusnak began by reading a statement explaining the reasons why a tax increase is needed. "Without borrowing, we can solve the deficit caused by the tax refund from tax appeals and, most importantly, we will be on the path towards fiscal responsibility," he said. "Our seniors that have an income of less than

\$53,000, including Social Security, have the option of applying for a property tax freeze. All they need to do is complete the PTR1 form, which is available at our senior center, the tax office or here at Borough Hall. This freeze may not take affect for this current situation, but all situations going forward," he added.

When residents receive their third

and fourth quarter tax bills, the tax increase will be closer to \$125 per quarter (average) since the first and second quarter tax bills are estimated at 49% of the actual tax bill. This means the municipal tax will increase \$250 (average) for the second half.

Former Mayor Mike English asked the council if the \$670,000 in land sale money comes through before June,

would they guarantee taxpayers that they will use that money for assets or a tax reduction, and not for further spending. Councilman Matt Anesh said if the land sales close the council will use that money for tax relief.

Freeholder John Pulomena expressed his disappointment that the members of the Finance Committee did not say  
(Continued on page 6)

## BOE Ousts 16 Students

By Libby Barsky

Sixteen students attending South Plainfield schools were removed from the district because they could not produce enough evidence that they are residents of South Plainfield.

Before their regular meeting on January 16, the Board of Education Student Residency Committee held a hearing on the status of 16 students who have been attending district schools since Sept. 5, 2007. After the meeting, the board went into executive session and returned with a resolution on the residency hearing.

For the time enrolled in the district,

September 5, 2007 through January 16, 2008, the board assessed each student \$5,439.82 for their ineligible attendance.

The resolution stated that the families have the right to contest the decision within 21 days before the commissioner of education. However, if the family makes an appeal, the board reserves the right to collect additional tuition for the days the students remain in the district while an appeal is pending.

BOE President Jeff Seider said that hearings are scheduled in February to remove an additional 12 students from the district.

## Sacred Heart to Celebrate Catholic Schools Week

All across our country, Monday, January 27 begins the celebration of Catholic Schools Week. A week of various celebrations and recognition of teachers, staff, students and parents for their dedication to Catholic education and its mission.

Sacred Heart School, will begin their celebration with an opening Mass at 9:30 a.m. with an open house to follow from 10:30 to noon. All are welcome to visit during that time.

Other activities planned for the week include student treat of Rock-roots, a history of American pop music on Monday; grandparents day for grades PK-5 on Tuesday at 12:30 p.m.; Career Day for grades



6, 7 and 8 on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. Parents in various professional careers will speak to the students about their pro-

fession and the importance of their educational journey; Student Day-when teachers will swap classes and students have time to play board games on Thursday at 12:30 p.m. The older students will work with the younger ones and there will be a Mass at 9 a.m. honoring our teachers and staff on Friday. Home School will provide a luncheon for them after dismissal.

We look forward to this special week and invite all to come and see what happens inside the halls of Sacred Heart School.



Members of the SPSHS 1964 State Championship Basketball Team (L-R): Lou Calderone, Roger Catarino, Ben Crawford, Bob Yackanin, Greg Cisson, Coach Anthony Cotoia, Art Beirn, Ward Spisso, Rich Steele, Coach Charlie Garafano and Bob Fulton.

## Teacher, Coach, Friend Celebrates 80th

By Patricia Abbott

Former coach and educator Anthony Cotoia was fond of saying, "Hard work is never wasted." These words live on in the memories of his players spanning 50 years. Anthony Cotoia is a South Plainfield High School icon for all the things that make a great coach. He was a teacher and a friend as well, and did more than teach his players the game. He taught them to work as a team espousing good sportsmanship and much more. He truly liked these young athletes; he motivated them, listened to them and cared for them.

To celebrate his 80th birthday, daughters Margaret and Patty Cotoia decided to host a reunion of his former players. This was an ideal solu-

tion to the party he clearly stated he did not want. They decided to focus the celebration on a period of his career which was the most successful 1956-1968.

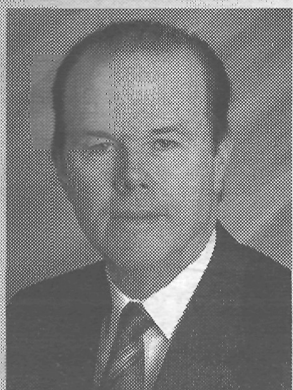
Rich Steele, Class of 1964, was instrumental in tracking down players and rounding up memorabilia. Although the calls (reading from a script) were a long, tedious process at times, Margaret said, "Planning this reunion was as enjoyable as the event itself. I met a lot of wonderful people and learned even more about the lasting impact my father had on the lives of those he taught and coached." She also mentioned that people she contacted were able to locate and/or contact other players.

Over 60 former players and coaches attended the reunion at the North

Plainfield Italian American Club. In an effort to keep Cotoia in the dark about the upcoming celebration, he was told that a few of his friends, local former players Rich Steele, Jim Kahora and Paul Thievon, were treating him to lunch at the club. The deception worked until he walked into a room filled with memorabilia, trophies, photos, yearbooks, SPSHS jackets and sports bags. Cotoia arrived at the club early so that he was able to greet each of his guests as they arrived.

Despite the decades gone by, many former players traveled from as far away as Florida, South Carolina and Nevada to honor their coach. There were members from the undefeated 1960 basketball team, the 1964 State  
(Continued on page 6)

## Patrick Diegnan Finds a Blessed Life in His Hometown



Patrick Diegnan

*"South Plainfield was a terrific place to be brought up in... [and] it's still a very safe and secure community."*

By Michael Duquette

Patrick Diegnan was late in meeting this writer one afternoon at his cozy law practice on Plainfield Avenue. This probably sounds like a petty complaint, but it was excit-

ing to have the time to talk to him at all.

Diegnan, 58, is an unquestionably busy man. As one of South Plainfield's most recognizable residents, an attorney who until recently served as the borough's legal counsel for nearly a quarter-century and a member of the state general assembly since 2002, he has made quite a name for himself. But in talking to him, it soon became clear that his enthusiasm and dedication to his jobs is genuine.

Diegnan, a lifelong resident, also made plain his love for the community. "I had a great childhood," he said. "South Plainfield was a terrific place to be brought up in... [and] it's still a very safe and secure community."

Growing up as the youngest of seven children born to Irish immigrants, Diegnan quickly learned the value of hard work, delivering *The Courier News* from the age of six until high school. In spite of his early vocation, however, he knew what he

wanted to do.

"Even in my high school yearbook, under 'profession,' I put 'lawyer.' I always liked debating, I always had an interest in history and I was a political science major," he said. "I can't remember wanting to do anything else."

After attaining both undergraduate and law degrees at Seton Hall University in South Orange, Diegnan immediately took to his own practice, not unlike one of his  
(Continued on page 6)